

## 2021 Awards

### Timeline

We extended our usual April Awards deadline by a few months again this year to make time for as many entrants as possible to get their work to us despite restrictions. As a result, our other Awards processes - logging entries, judging, writing feedback, preparing certificates - are all happening a little later this year.

Here are the key dates for the rest of the 2021 Awards cycle:

**25 October 2021: Awards results announced on Koestler Arts website**

**Early December 2021: Certificates and Awards cheques sent to entrants**

**31 January 2022: Sales cheques sent to entrants**

**By end of March 2022: All unsold visual artwork returned to entrants**

To ensure as many entrants as possible receive feedback on their work, we will be inviting lots of arts volunteers to write feedback over the next few months and much of this year's feedback will be sent in the new year.

### Judging

Judging of the 2021 Awards is underway! We're delighted that most categories are being judged in our Koestler Arts Centre again this year, where judges each come for a day to look over your work, assign awards and write feedback.

Our 2021 Themed Category, 'Together', was suggested last year by two ex-Koestler entrants and mentees, James and Charlotte. We were delighted to invite them this summer to judge over 400 works entered into the category they had come up with.

C: "The standard of the work was really high. There were some really outstanding pieces and a huge range of styles and techniques."

J: "We fell back on what we responded to the most, what gave us the immediate tug on the heart strings, what made us think. There was so much of that."

J: "Enter the best pieces you can but don't worry too much if it's not 100% finished or absolutely perfect because I certainly came in here today and every piece was considered on its merits. Both the strength of the idea behind it as well as the execution."

J: "It's been a real eye-opening experience to the commitment of the staff here, the commitment of the judges. It's been a really tough day in terms of deciding where to place people in awards and recognition within the scheme, but also the emotional tug of so much of the work."



*Family Meal, HM Prison & Young Offender Institution Cornton Vale, Themed Category: Together*



Robert Taylor, Photography judge

“Be as bold and creative as you can. The materials and equipment may compromise the final result, but we love to discover and acknowledge effort in thought and expression.”

“Creative work involves risk taking, courage and even discomfort, but the things you can learn about yourself, those around you, and the wider world often make it well worth the effort.”

“I responded to works where I could get a sense of the artist’s personality and their passions. I also really liked the works where it looked like they’d lost themselves in the process and created something unexpected.”



Shama Khanna, Mixed Media judge



Charles Darwent, Mural and Wall Hanging judge

“[What stood out was] the general strength of the entries - perhaps the strongest category I’ve ever judged. I suppose it stands to reason that walls would have a special resonance for people locked inside them.”

“We recognise that not every entrant will have access to the same equipment. Therefore it’s important to focus on the core aspects of your recording - e.g. vocals. Practice makes perfect, so begin by thinking about how you can use your voice to portray the emotions of your song - this adds a great deal of depth to your entry.”



Grace Lindley, Cover Version judge

***The I and The We*, Southbank Centre,  
London: 29 October - 5 December 2021**

We are delighted that our annual national exhibition of art, music and writing from the Koestler Awards will return this year to Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, after last year's exhibition *No Lockdown in the Imagination* was presented across the windows of the then closed Southbank Centre site.

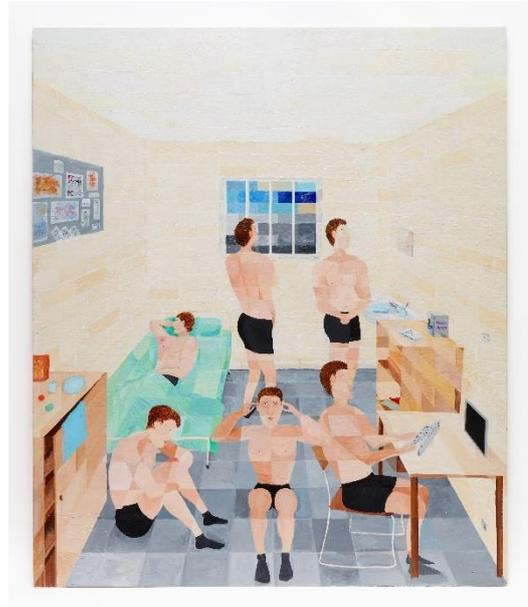
*The I and the We* has been curated by artist Camille Walala and her sister, curator Sarah Ihler-Meyer, and will feature around 200 works the pair have selected from over 6400 entered into the 2021 Koestler Awards.

Many of the selected works reflect on states of isolation and (actual, desired, or remembered) togetherness that have characterised the past 18 months. Themes include solitude, relationships, loss, hope, family, nature, and community.

The exhibition will showcase a diversity of techniques, styles and materials, and entrants' skill, emotion, and sense of humour.

"I like every single piece of this show. I couldn't choose one of them [as a favourite]."

- Sarah



*Kept Together*, HM Prison Haverigg,  
Painting



Camille and Sarah curating at Koestler Arts Centre

"There's so many incredible pieces. I found them all quite emotional. All the ones we selected give us a strong feeling, whether tears or laughter. It was quite interesting to see so much emotion." - Camille



"It's amazing when they put their emotion into it, when something becomes more personal than just a beautiful picture. I think personally that's when they stand out. And it doesn't have to be amazingly drawn, it doesn't matter. That's not what it's about. Just bring everything you've got in you. I find that quite beautiful." - Camille

## 2022 Awards

### 2022 Themed Category

We are excited to announce our Themed Category for the 2022 Koestler Awards will be...

### Taste

Work made in any artform - visual, written or performed - can be entered into this category. We are always thrilled to see the huge range of work the category inspires, and the various ways our themes are interpreted by different entrants. We are interested in personal interpretations of the word and what it means to you, however abstract. Below are past Koestler entries we loved that relate in different ways to the theme, which may spark some inspiration. We can't wait to see what you come up with!

**But remember!** ...As always, our Themed Category will be just one of 52 categories - the others all being different artforms such as sculpture, life story, and spoken word, to which you can enter work on any subject or theme. Full guidance notes on how to enter the 2022 Awards will be sent out in the new year.



*What's the Soup Today?*  
Littlehampton  
Probation  
Gill Hope Highly  
Commended Award for  
Mixed Media, 2019



*A Journey Back to Childhood  
Memories*  
HM Prison Dovegate  
J Whelan Highly Commended  
Award for Ceramics, 2015



*Let's Celebrate  
International  
Women's Day*  
HM Prison Bronzefield  
Weavers' Company  
Platinum Award for  
Fashion, 2020



*Coke Head Cara*  
HM Prison  
Whitemoor  
Caro Millington  
Commended  
Award for  
Mixed Media,  
2015



*Ice Cream Man*  
Atkinson Secure Unit  
Kath & Harry Bryan  
Under 18s Special  
Award for Drawing,  
2015



*The Paper Bag*  
HM Prison Send  
David Wentworth Gold  
Award for Fashion, 2018



*My Lovely K.I.R.A.  
Spoon*  
HM Prison Isle of  
Wight (Albany)  
Craft, 2015

*Are We There Yet?*  
HM Prison Lewes  
Mixed Media, 2015



## 2022 Awards Timeline

We're planning to be back to our usual timeline for the 2022 Awards. The key dates to remember are:

**January 2022: Entry forms and guidance notes sent to establishments and Koestler Associates**

**7 April 2022: Deadline for 2022 entries**

## More Ways to Get Involved

### Koestler Associates

Since 2016, we have been inviting entrants who would like more regular communication from Koestler Arts to sign up to be Associates. Associates receive regular newsletters (like this one!) with information about events and exhibitions, interviews with judges, and tips for creating new work.

Associates are also directly sent Awards entry forms and guidance notes, posters and flyers at the start of every year, when we ask that they help us spread the word about the Koestler Awards within their establishments. They might stick posters up around their wing or education department, encourage others to enter the Awards, or help someone fill in an entry form.

If you're not already and would like to become a Koestler Associate, write to us and let us know, and you'll be added to our mailing list and continue to receive newsletters like this one.



*Inside (My Grey Lockdown)*, HM Prison Isle of Wight (Albany), Sculpture

### Art Aid

We know how important creativity is to our entrants and wanted to provide some inspiration in a difficult time, so began creating and sharing our Art Aid activity sheets in Spring 2020. Each month, we commission a former or current Koestler Mentee to set a creative task that can be done in cell, and ask them to share their own experiences of creativity and the criminal justice system, in the hopes it will inspire you.

The latest Art Aid sheet is enclosed with this newsletter. It features a drawing task set by Koestler Award winner, exhibited artist, and former Mentee, Paul. We hope you will enjoy giving it a try!

We send out the latest Art Aid sheet with each Associates Newsletter, so please sign up to our Associates Scheme if you wish to receive them. To access the new Art Aid sheets each month please speak to a member of your education department - they can be downloaded from the Koestler Arts website from the first Monday of the month.

## Arts Mentoring

For the past 13 years, we have run an Arts Mentoring Scheme at Koestler, alongside our Awards and other activities. We match each successful applicant with a relevant and experienced local arts professional, who we have specially trained as a Koestler Arts Mentor. Mentees and mentors then meet in the community 8-10 times over a 12 month period, where together they identify and work towards the mentee's goals. These might include applying to a course, building up a portfolio of work, or developing techniques.

Additionally, mentees stay in regular contact with us at Koestler, and we are able to offer support and creative opportunities. We invited mentees to decide the 2021 Koestler Awards themed category, and we currently offer paid commission opportunities for mentees to create activities for our Art Aid sheets. In 2019 we held an exhibition of the work of past mentees, 'Our Journey', at the House of St Barnabas in London.

The mentoring scheme is aimed at individuals making the transition from custody to community, but we welcome applications at any stage and can keep them on file until close to an applicant's release. We have arts mentors across England and Wales with a range of interests and experience - including writers, visual artists, musicians, and craftspeople.

A leaflet with more information on the scheme and how to apply is enclosed with this newsletter. If you would be interested in applying, please write to us to let us know, and we will send you an application form to complete.

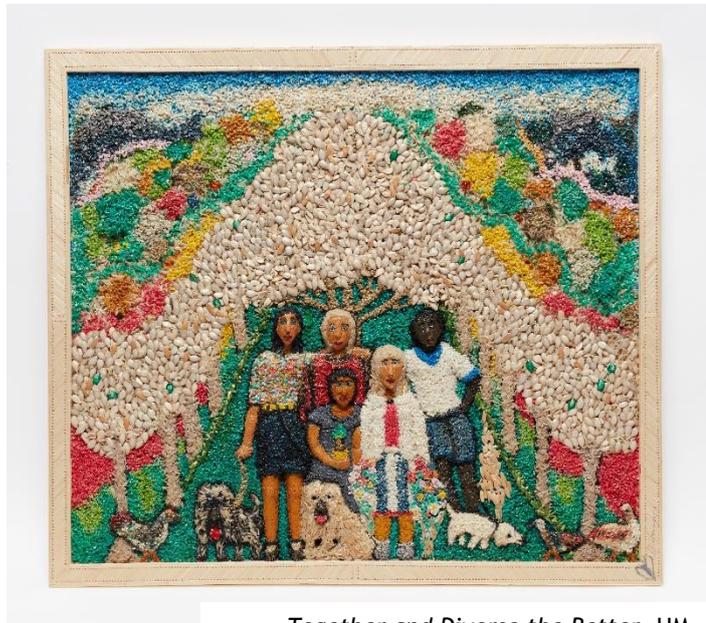
"I kept a diary everyday in prison and was involved in a couple of writing projects, but I think engaging with the Mentoring Programme was definitely the time that I started to take it really seriously and think yeah, I can definitely do this. My mentor was absolutely fantastic and I learnt so much from him. I went from saying that I couldn't possibly write a novel to being able to write one and submitting drafts to literary agents. The whole process from start to finish was just amazing."

- Former Koestler mentee

## Reminder

Please remember to write and notify us of changes to your address and contact details, so we can ensure future Associates newsletters, certificates, feedback, Awards and sales money, and returned artwork reach you! You can always write to us for free at: FREEPOST KOESTLER ARTS.

**Take care and stay safe**  
**The Koestler Team**



*Together and Diverse the Better, HM  
Prison Full Sutton, Mixed Media*