

KOESTLER TRUST'S NATIONAL EXHIBITION *RE:FORM* OPENS AT SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Re:Form is the UK's annual national showcase of arts by prisoners, offenders on community sentences, secure psychiatric patients and immigration detainees. It is produced by the prison arts charity, the Koestler Trust and Southbank Centre.

The exhibition is open daily from 1 October to the 29th November 2015 at Southbank Centre on the Spirit Level of the Royal Festival Hall.

This year's exhibition has been curated by the Southbank Centre and Koestler Trust teams, selecting from over 8,400 entries to this year's Koestler Awards for arts in criminal justice. The selection includes works awarded Koestler Awards by judges including Jeremy Deller, Hot Chip, Speech DeBelle and poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy. The works cover fine art, design, literature, music and applied arts and provide a unique snapshot of the creative achievements of prisoners, secure patients and detainees across the UK.

'Southbank Centre's relationship with the Koestler Trust and in particular our long association with the Art by Offenders exhibition and events is deeply cherished. We believe that everyone can be creative, whatever their background and whatever their personal story. Looking at the exceptional work which this competition never fails to produce is proof of this belief. Exploring the many entries together creates unlikely connections between people which remind us of our common humanity whatever our circumstances. We are very proud to be part of such an endeavour.'

Shan Maclennan, Deputy Artistic Director, Southbank Centre

'The Koestler Trust is delighted once again to be working with the Southbank Centre to showcase outstanding work from our annual awards. This is a unique opportunity for the public to see and respond to work which would not normally be available to them, and to form their own views about it. Importantly there is also the opportunity to send their thoughts to the artists themselves through the exhibition's Visitors' Feedback cards and Awards.'

Sally Taylor, Chief Executive, Koestler Trust.

To present the exhibition to the public, ex-offenders have been specially recruited, trained and employed by the Koestler Trust as exhibition hosts. They will work alongside Southbank Centre staff to invigilate the exhibition and welcome visitors throughout the exhibition run. As well as gaining unique work experience and new skills, the ex-offender hosts will deepen visitors' engagement with the exhibition, enabling everyone to hear first-hand how the arts reflect and enrich the lives of people in secure and criminal justice settings. They will run free tours: Mon – Thu 1.30pm and 6pm, and Fri – Sun 1.30pm, 4pm and 6pm.

For the first time, writers have been commissioned to create texts interpreting the artwork. Artists Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane, writer and curator Shama Khanna, editor of *Afterall Books* Caroline Woodley, and Koestler Award-winner Ben have each give their unique perspectives on the artwork in essays published in the exhibition brochure.

For more info please contact: Fiona Curran, Director of Arts, Koestler Trust on 0208 740 0333 or fcurran@koestlertrust.org.uk

For press information on Southbank Centre please contact Helena Zedig, Press Manager (Visual Arts) on 0207 921 0847 or helena.zedig@southbankcentre.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. **Re:form** – *Art by offenders, secure patients and detainees from the 2015 Koestler Awards.*

1 October to 29 November 2015

Spirit Level, Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, London SE1 8XX

Daily 10am – 11pm

Free

Associated **events programme**, including Voices from Prison, an evening of performance and spoken word from criminal justice settings:

<http://www.koestlertrust.org.uk/pages/exhibitions/re-form/events/>

Free tours by ex-offender exhibition hosts run Mon – Thu 1.30pm and 6pm, and Fri – Sun 1.30pm, 4pm and 6pm. Meet at the entrance to the exhibition, no booking required.

The **Koestler Pop-up Shop** will be open at various times throughout the exhibition run across the Southbank Centre site. It provides a chance to see and purchase even

more original art by entrants to the Koestler Awards, as well as merchandise. A 25% donation from sales of original artwork goes to Victim Support. See <http://www.koestlertrust.org.uk/pages/exhibitions/re-form/events/> for details.

Images available on request to fcurran@koestlertrust.org.uk or helena.zedig@southbankcentre.co.uk

2. The **Koestler Trust** is the UK's best-known prison arts charity. Founded by writer Arthur Koestler (author of the classic prison novel *Darkness at Noon*), it has been awarding, exhibiting and selling artworks by offenders, detainees and secure patients for 52 years. The Koestler Awards receive over 8,400 entries a year in 61 artforms from over 300 prisons and other establishments - inspiring offenders to take part in the arts, raise their aspirations and transform their lives. Koestler exhibitions attract 50,000 visitors at venues across the country annually - showing the public the talent and potential of offenders and people in secure settings. The Trust has no endowment or capital - its work depends entirely on grants and donations.

The Koestler Trust's aims are:

- To help offenders, secure patients and detainees lead more positive lives by motivating them to participate and achieve in the arts
- To increase public awareness and understanding of arts by offenders, secure patients and detainees
- To be a dynamic, responsive organisation, which achieves excellent quality and value for money.

Log on to www.koestlertrust.org.uk for more details of the Trust's work.

3. **Southbank Centre** is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and the Hayward Gallery as well as The Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection.

For more information visit www.southbankcentre.co.uk