

Press Release

February 2016

***LOUD!* The Koestler Exhibition for the North East opens at BALTIC and The Gallery at Gateshead Central Library**

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and **The Gallery at Gateshead Central Library** have come together with the **Koestler Trust** for a remarkable project which will display over 90 paintings, drawings, poems and other artworks from prisons, secure hospitals, secure children's homes and probation services from across the North East of England.

The exhibition, ***LOUD!*** has been curated by a group of young people, aged 12 to 16, from **Gateshead Behaviour Support Service**, a service for young people excluded, or self-excluded, from mainstream schools. The two presentations are made up of different artworks but run simultaneously from **5 February to 12 March 2016** at **Quay Gallery, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art** and **The Gallery, Gateshead Central Library**.

During the project the group worked alongside artist Paul Merrick and met with curators and technicians to support them in curating ***LOUD!*** The works have been selected from over 400 entries from the North East to the 2015 Koestler Awards – a charitable scheme which has been run for over 50 years by the UK's best known prison arts charity to promote artistic achievement in the criminal justice system and secure sectors.

Sally Taylor, Chief Executive, Koestler Trust said:

"We are delighted to be working in partnership with BALTIC and The Gallery at Gateshead Central Library to showcase the fantastic artwork and writing from prisons and hospitals in the region. The young curators from Gateshead Behaviour Support Service have put together an insightful, challenging and thought provoking display that we hope the public enjoy."

The paintings and drawings in the exhibition cover a wide range of themes including home, escapism, freedom and conflict. The exhibition will include work from HM Prison Durham, HM Prison Kirklevington Grange near Yarm, HM Prison Frankland in County Durham, HM Prison and Young Offender Institution Low Newton near Durham, Northgate Hospital in Morpeth, and St Nicholas Hospital in Gosforth.

Steve Williamson, Head Teacher, Gateshead Behaviour Support Service added:

“The confidence of the group has improved steadily over the period of the project and they have agreed to take part in making an ‘APP’ to form part of the exhibition. The behaviour of these ‘challenging’ young people has been excellent throughout.”

Sarah Bradbury, Community Programmer, BALTIC said:

“We are really excited to be co-hosting the Koestler exhibition; it’s such a popular exhibition with our visitors. This year visitors can explore the journey of the young people involved in the curation of the work through beacon technology. This is a great opportunity for visitors to engage with artwork and lives of offenders.”

Councillor Angela Douglas, Cabinet member for Children and Young People, Gateshead Council said:

“The Koestler Trust has given these young people from Gateshead the chance to do something absolutely amazing.

Offering these youngsters the opportunity to curate an exhibition of art has given them the chance to explore depths they probably never thought they had. I’m sure everyone involved will be immeasurably richer for the experience.”

Each year the Koestler Awards receive thousands of entries from across the UK, ranging from paintings and drawings, to matchstick models, poetry and music. In 2015 the total number of entries was 8,509. The Koestler Trust holds a yearly exhibition with London’s Southbank Centre in the autumn, as well as exhibitions elsewhere in the UK. This is the second Koestler Exhibition in the North East, the first was held in 2013.

This project is kindly supported by the Sir James Knott Trust and The Barbour Foundation. The Koestler Trust is supported by Arts Council England and NOMS (the National Offender Management Service), with additional support from individual trusts, donors and sponsors.

ENDS

For images and/or further information about *LOUD!* at The Gallery, Gateshead Central Library please contact:

Iain Lynn, Gateshead Council Tel: 0191 433 2072 iainlynn@gateshead.gov.uk

For images and/or further information about *LOUD!* at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, please contact:

Alison Brown, BALTIC Tel: 0191 440 4912 alisonb@balticmill.com

For more information about The Koestler Trust please contact:

**Juliane Hémon, Exhibition and Event Producer at the Koestler Trust
Tel: 020 8740 0333 jhemon@koestlertrust.org.uk**

BALTIC


www.gateshead.gov.uk

#

NOTES TO EDITORS

1: About the Exhibition

Where: BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Quay, Level 2, Gateshead Quays, South Shore Road, Gateshead, NE8 3BA. Open daily 10am-6pm except Tuesdays 10.30am-6pm. Call 0191 478 1810 or visit www.balticmill.com

The Gallery, Gateshead Central Library, Prince Consort Road, Gateshead, NE8 4LN. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9am-7pm, Wednesday 9am-5pm, Saturday 9am-1pm. Call 0191 433 8420 or visit www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

When: 5 February to 12 March 2016 at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and The Gallery at Gateshead Central Library

Entry price: Entry to the exhibitions is free.

2: About the Koestler Trust

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 54 years. The Koestler Awards receive over 8,000 entries a year in over 50 art form categories 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. Visit www.koestlertrust.org.uk for more details of the Trust's work.

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.

3: About BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

BALTIC is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England and has welcomed over 6 million visitors since opening to the public in July 2002. BALTIC presents a distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation and commissioning of contemporary visual art. Housed in a landmark ex-industrial building, BALTIC consists of 2,600 square metres of art space, making it the UK's largest dedicated contemporary art institution.

4: About Gateshead Arts Development Team

Gateshead Council's Culture Team provides an innovative and accessible arts programme across the borough for Gateshead residents and visitors. Covering all ages and all art forms and utilising cultural venues, schools and community settings, parks and outdoor spaces; the majority of the programme is about engagement and audience development for the arts. The Gallery at Gateshead Central Library is part of this programme and has two floors showing six exhibitions each year curated by the Culture Team. Exhibitions mainly showcase work by regional, professional artists but we also exhibit national touring exhibitions and shows that are a culmination of an arts project or residency. There is a supporting education and outreach workshop programme.

5: About Gateshead Behaviour Support Service

The service works with school aged children from across Gateshead and is committed to engaging children in the arts alongside a broader, balanced, curriculum. The children who are involved with the service have all experienced barriers to their learning often due to behavioural, social or health reasons. The service works to re-engage these children and support them in and out of school – building self-confidence and self-belief. Gateshead council is fully committed to supporting vulnerable youngsters and works in close partnership with the Head teacher, Steve Williamson. #