

Press release

For immediate release

September 2017

Leading Scottish Author Curates a New Exhibition of Art by Offenders

Jenni Fagan supports the Koestler Trust in promoting rehabilitation through art

A new exhibition of artwork from prisons, secure hospitals, secure children's homes and community justice services in Scotland is being curated by acclaimed author and poet Jenni Fagan.

Narrative, which takes place at Tramway in Glasgow, will feature up to 180 works entered from Scotland for the 2017 Koestler Awards – a charitable scheme that recognises artistic achievement in the criminal justice and secure sectors.

The exhibition, which takes place from 10 November to 22 December, will include paintings, sculpture, needlecraft, nail art, printmaking, woodcraft, audio, animation and writing.

The range highlights the variety of categories covered by the awards scheme, which has now been running for more than 50 years.

Jenni Fagan said: *“Some of the work is phenomenal, this will be a really compelling exhibition. The chance to practice art should be available to everyone in the prison system, it can be a vital part of their rehabilitation.”*

“The exhibition will get people to think beyond their ideas of who prisoners are. Narrative will present them with work of real creativity and brilliance.”

Jenni Fagan's 2012 debut novel *Panopticon*, which is currently being turned into a feature film, is about a female young offender living in a young person's unit. She has recently been shortlisted for the BBC National Short Story Award 2017.

The Koestler Awards receive thousands of entries from across the UK, ranging from paintings and drawings, to matchstick models, poetry and music, with 1,131 this year from Scotland.

Entries into the Koestler Awards from Scottish establishments have increased rapidly since the first Koestler Scotland exhibition in 2009 with Filmhouse, Edinburgh and through an ongoing partnership with Tramway, Glasgow.

The exhibition is part of *Freedom in Expression*, a festival presented by the Koestler Trust to celebrate the arts within criminal justice and secure settings.

Sally Taylor, Chief Executive of the Koestler Trust, said: *“We are thrilled to be returning to Tramway to showcase the amazing artwork from Scottish prisons and secure establishments with the support of our partners.”*

“Jenni Fagan's curation has produced a fascinating and moving exhibition. Once again, the quality of work generated by Scottish establishments has been truly outstanding and we look forward to sharing this with the public at this very special venue.”

Holly Rumble, Public Engagement Coordinator, Tramway, said *“Tramway has supported the Koestler Trust since 2011, and we are pleased to welcome them back.”*

“The exhibitions are always of exceptionally high quality, and the opportunity for participants to gain feedback on their creative practice from members of the public is uniquely valuable.”

“We hope this exhibition will allow us to support Koestler to achieve their ambitions of inspiring offenders to take part in the arts, work for achievement and transform their lives, as well as raising the profile of Tramway as a space for dialogue and learning, including raising the awareness of the benefits of arts participation.”

The festival includes a programme of events, exhibitions tours, outreach visits and feedback for the exhibited artists.

James King, Head of Offender Learning, Scottish Prison Service, said: *“The Scottish Prison Service is once again delighted to participate and support the arts in custody awards by the Koestler Trust.”*

“Each year the competition provides a positive channel to showcase the breadth of talent and creative abilities of those in our care and this year is no exception. We would like to thank Koestler Trust and Creative Scotland for supporting this year’s display at the Tramway which will undoubtedly generate much interest and praise.”

“The range and depth of the work submitted bears testimony to the hopes of our population in embracing new ways of being and their aspirations for a more positive future.”

“The work also reflects the often unacknowledged efforts of dedicated staff and education partners in teaching, advising, motivating and making manifest the embryonic ideas and future ambitions of our learners.”

The project is supported by the National Lottery through Creative Scotland, with additional support from the Robertson Trust.

Joan Parr, Head of Creative Learning at Creative Scotland, said: *“The Narrative exhibition at Tramway offers audiences a powerful example of the Koestler Trust’s carefully considered programme. Through creative engagement, the Trust helps inspire personal change and aspiration to people in secure settings.”*

Notes to editors

For images and/or further information please contact:
Nami Ralph, Exhibitions & Events Producer at the Koestler Trust
Email: nralph@koestlertrust.org.uk or call 020 8740 0333

1: About the Exhibition

Tramway
25 Albert Drive,
Glasgow
G41 2PE

Exhibition open 10 November – 22 December 2017

Daily 12pm–6pm

Free entry

**For more details and a programme of associated events visit
www.koestlertrust.org.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 over 50 years. The Koestler Awards receive over 7,000 entries a year in 52 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 over 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.

Visit www.koestertrust.org.uk for more details of the Trust's work.

3: Writer Jenni Fagan was born in Scotland, and currently lives in Edinburgh. An acclaimed novelist, poet and screenwriter, Fagan has a BA, MFA and is completing her PhD thesis on the metamorphosis of society. Her debut novel is published in eight languages and received great critical response. It was selected as Waterstones Best Worldwide Debut and saw Fagan become one of the Granta Best of Young British Novelists, a once-in-a-decade accolade. Her second novel *The Sunlight Pilgrims* came out last year, seeing her receive Culture Awards Scottish Author of the Year Award. She has also been on lists including The Sunday Times Award, Royal Society of Literature Encore Award, James Tait Black and Desmond Elliott. She was also shortlisted for the 2017 BBC Short Story Award.

4: Tramway, Glasgow, is a leading international art-space which commissions, produces and presents contemporary arts projects and has been at the heart of the changes that have seen Glasgow re-born as one of Europe's leading centres for contemporary visual arts. Based in the south of the city and a former tram depot, Tramway has a high quality, agenda setting, experimental and dynamic programme; it is one of the most sought after and prestigious spaces in Scotland for artists to present new work. Tramway enjoys a very strong reputation for working closely with and being artist led in its approach.

Tramway is supported by Glasgow City Council and Creative Scotland.

Tramway, 25 Albert Drive, Glasgow G41 2PE

Box Office: 0845 330 3501

www.tramway.org

5: Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. For further information about Creative Scotland please visit www.creativescotland.com. Follow @creativescots and www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland