

This is our Summer Koestler Associates Newsletter and we have loads of things to tell you about....

Please note!

in order to remain a Koestler Associate and to carry on receiving these newsletters you will need to have entered the 2018 Koestler Awards. If you weren't able to enter but would like to remain an Associate then you must let us know in writing. Address letters to Sarah Matheve, FREEPOST, The Koestler Trust.



Thank you for sending us your entries! We now have a house full of wonderful artworks from a tiny Chinese dragon carved from a bar of soap, to a cardboard hydra the size of a small car. The sun is, finally, shining through the Art Centre's barred windows and lighting up the many rooms filled with wonderful creations. Everyone at the Koestler Trust loves this time of year because it is when the House itself wakes from a state of hibernation and comes to life with art. It is also when we see our team increase in size as we are joined daily by a number of dedicated volunteers who help us with the vast task of logging in entries and preparing the house for judging.



Judging 2018

The Koestler Awards have 52 different categories, from matchstick models to handmade books, and our judges are drawn from many different professions. Our fantastic team of judges this year includes Emma Bridgewater, Hot Chip, Jeremy Deller, Cariad Lloyd, Mark Wallinger, Reggie Yates, and many more. We have only just started the judging process which will continue throughout the summer.



Interviews with our Judges

Matchstick Models & Radio Play

Matchstick Models

The Koestler Awards 2018 judging period kicked off this year with matchstick model expert, Andrew Wright, judging the category which he loves dearly. As a returning judge who has supported the Koestler Trust for over a decade, Andrew never ceases to be amazed by the time, effort and enthusiasm that is put into the entries. From dreamlike human figures, to prison cells, to a minimalistic depiction of the twin towers, Andrew thoroughly enjoyed his day spent amongst the 2018 Matchstick entries. He told us more about his thought process;

Have any of the pieces stood out for you, and why?

There is a model which is just called 'Shank', and this is a very impressive piece of art, more than a model because when I look at it I can see the human form and there is a lot more meaning to this than even I have fully understood at first look.

What would you like to see more / less of in the matchstick category?

I would definitely like to see more of the models being here. It is unfortunate that some of the models are only represented by photographs.

It is surprising that there is not one gypsy caravan here. This I think is the first year in all of my time... that there hasn't been a gypsy caravan, but please don't take that as, 'oh gosh, he's looking for... next year there's got to be lots of Gypsy caravans', because that's not the case! Times change, and if I look at it this year, there are more windmills than there have been before. Perhaps that's the current fashion.

What advice do you have for matchstick makers?

Keep modelling. You will only become a more proficient modeller with practice. Some people are fortunate to be given the talent that when they do it for the first time, they produce an excellent model.

The one thing that I would say that would set some of the models apart from the others, is know when to stop. There are one or two models here today where it looks to me as though people have been adding pieces on and that has begun to take away from the model. I know that that sounds peculiar, adding pieces and taking away, but that is definitely the case.

*Also, consider whether you need to use paint and colour. Sometimes you need colour to offset the colour of the wood. Sometimes there are models that are completely covered in paint, and it does not help the model. So, think carefully about the other materials that you introduce.
But number one piece of advice: keep on modelling, keep practicing and you will improve!*

Radio Plays

The second week of judging saw Katie Redford arrive at the Koestler Arts Centre to judge the small yet intriguing category of Radio Plays. Katie is writer and actor, (she plays Lily Pargetter on the *The Archers*). Asked what surprised her most about the judging she said it was the diversity and ingenuity of this category.

Which stories have stood out to you the most?

People say that you should write about what you know, I think that's really clear with some of these pieces. There are certain pieces that have been not only interesting to read but are an insight into their background. I'm not saying they're autobiographical, but you can tell that some of these writers have written about what really means something to them and their experience. Writing is a really good way of dealing with things that have happened to you as well. A real insight into the environment of a prison – something I know nothing about. There's a truth to it as well, it's not just what you see on Orange is the New Black – there's so much more to it.



Katie reading through some of the many entries in this category

What have you been surprised by?

The variety of things. I've gone from a spoken word piece about being in prison, to a sci-fi fantasy piece about aliens invading a cricket pitch. It's the variety of it that has really surprised me.

How have you found the Koestler judging process in general?

Well, I think it's a lovely way to spend a day reading, so many imaginative pieces from voices that I wouldn't usually hear from. It's – I mean this in a positive way, it's more intense than I thought it would be. Because you can't just shut off – you have to read every piece because every piece matters, and you have to really think not just about what you like but what makes a good radio piece. The sound effects, the way the scenes link to each other. With radio it's really easy sometimes for the writing to be expositional because you're not seeing it. You have to explain to the listener what's happening. It's really interesting reading who's nailed that.

What advice would you give to radio play writers?

This sounds really silly, but just write. Don't worry about what audience it will be for, or whether it's been done before. Just write about something that you're passionate about, and that you know about.

I think it's subjective to each person, but for me, when working in radio as an actor, the scripts that work best are the scripts that aren't just dialogue. I think that people have this thing that with radio, because it's voices, that if you have a really dialogue-heavy piece it will be brilliant for radio. But I don't think that's true. I think that it's harder for the listener to keep engaged without hearing some sort of action.

I wrote a radio play earlier this year, and the reason I wrote it for radio was because there were two characters that I just really wanted to write for. I could have written it for anything really, but I like the world

of radio because there's no limits with what you write. You can write anything, anywhere. You don't have to worry about budget – when it comes to making it. You can write anything for anyone. I just wrote a play about a napkin – the world and the life of a napkin. And it was lovely. There are no limitations on what you write. You can make anything come to life, and I think that's something really interesting from a writer's perspective, and from an actor's perspective. For instance when I was on Radio 4, one morning I'd be doing a script for a period piece like Jane Eyre, and then the next minute I'd be a caterpillar. You can literally be anything you want!

We are extremely grateful to Andrew Wright and Katie Redford for taking time out of their busy timetable to give us their insights into their judging process. We will be interviewing a selection of our judges throughout the summer and we will share more of their responses with you in our next newsletter.



The Supreme Court

On Wednesday 6th June we opened a new display of 32 paintings, drawings, sculptures and poems at the UK Supreme Court. The display forms part of our art trail '100 Years On' which has seen the Koestler Trust displaying artwork by women in prison in key sites across the UK. The project plays a part in the Vote 100 celebrations which will be taking place throughout 2018, celebrating the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act which granted women the right to vote. Koestler's display at the Supreme Court is open to the public until the end of the year.

The cabinet displaying the artwork is on the lower ground floor of the court, where prisoners used to enter the building on the way to their holding cells - a nice connection for a prison art display!



RA Summer Exhibition

We're delighted that one of our former entrants, and current member of Koestler staff, artist Lee Cutter is featured in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, which opened to the public on Monday 5th June. His work 'Prison Culture' is made of 99 soap carvings, with buttermilk soap from HMP Wormwood Scrubs.



Postcards From Prison

Public Exhibition: 8 – 9 May 2018

Koestler Associates who entered visual artworks into last year's award scheme were encouraged, earlier this year, to submit postcard sized artwork for an exhibition and fundraising event at Sotheby's, where their work would be exhibited alongside renowned British artists including Jeremy Deller, Tracey Emin, Maggi Hambling, Anish Kapoor, Cornelia Parker and Mark Wallinger. With Sotheby's support and the help of their excellent technicians, events team, PR team, and many others involved, we were able to put together a first-class exhibition featuring 160 original artworks by high-profile artists and artists from prisons across the country. On 9th and 10th May, members of the public had the opportunity to see the incredible display at the Conduit Street Gallery in Sotheby's.

James Sevier, Senior Director and specialist in contemporary art at Sotheby's, awarded platinum, gold, silver and bronze awards to four of the postcards by prisoners. He had an extremely difficult task, but eventually settled on four deserving winners of the awards, and a Highly Commended award for notable artworks. The chosen artists will receive certificates and a cheque in the post shortly.

Across all our activities, the Koestler Trust aims to give feedback to artists who submit work. A breakfast event for Sotheby's staff encouraged them to give feedback and thoughts on the artwork, feedback that will be sent to the Associate Artists who generously donated their artwork for the lottery fundraiser event.



Hosted by comedian Griff Rhys Jones at Sotheby's London and accompanied by champagne and canapés, the Postcards from Prison lottery and champagne reception on 9th May 2018 was a huge success. Our CEO, Sally Taylor was joined on stage by Sotheby's Director of HR Business Partner, Kathryn Ward, and Simon, a previous Exhibition Host, all speaking passionately about the ambition and impact of The Koestler Trust.

We are delighted that we were able to raise over £12,500 from event and lottery tickets sales, every penny of which will go towards Koestler Trust's vital and ongoing work rewarding, awarding, exhibiting, selling and championing artwork by prisoners, people in secure hospitals and immigration removal centres. We are extremely grateful to every Associate who produced and generously donated their artworks for the event.

This is the second time we have run our Postcards From Prison fundraiser and we now hope that it will become an annual event in the Koestler calendar.



Turner Contemporary

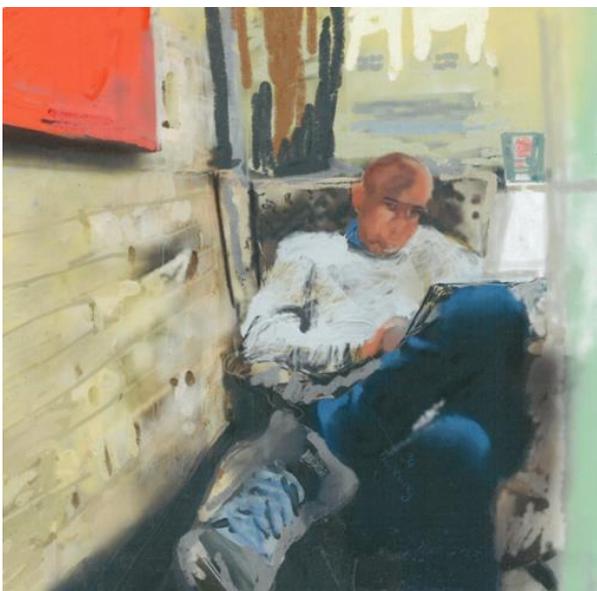
In early 2019, we will be having an exhibition at Turner Contemporary, Margate. The exhibited artwork will be selected from 2018 Koestler Awards entries from the South East region (Kent and Sussex). Those entrants whose work is selected to be exhibited at Turner Contemporary will have the opportunity to receive feedback on their work from gallery visitors. The artist whose piece receives the most feedback will also receive our Visitors Choice Award and a £100 prize.

We are really excited to be partnering with Turner Contemporary for this exhibition, particularly in the same year the gallery will host the prestigious Turner Prize competition.

Turner Contemporary opened in Margate in 2011, on the site of the boarding house where painter J. M. W. Turner stayed on regular visits to the town in the 1800s. The gallery enables visitors to experience the views Turner saw here, which inspired much of his work.

The gallery has the largest exhibition space in the South East outside of London and presents a programme of temporary exhibitions and events year-round. The gallery has exhibited work by historic and contemporary artists including Tracey Emin, David Hockney, Marina Abramovic, Marcel Duchamp and John Constable. Many prominent artists who have previously collaborated with the Koestler Trust on exhibitions have also exhibited at the gallery, including Antony Gormley, Jeremy Deller, Bob and Roberta Smith, and Grayson Perry.

In 2019, as well as the Koestler Trust's exhibition of artwork by people in secure settings and on probation in Kent and Sussex, the gallery will host an exhibition of work by Katie Paterson, a Scottish multimedia artist, and the prestigious Turner Prize competition and exhibition.



...and remember

If you move prison do let us know! We are independent from the prison service and will not automatically be told if you move prison or are released. If you don't tell us you have moved we can't send you more newsletters and we cannot ensure you will get your Koestler Awards Certificate.