

A Gift for the Future



Your Guide to Remembering Koestler Arts

After more than 18 months of uncertainty and challenges, as we embark on our 60th year at Koestler Arts we've been taking some time to make sure our future plans are secure, and that they will help the greatest number of people.

We want to know we've done everything we can to make sure Koestler Arts will be there for the next generation of people using creativity in the criminal justice system.

When you make or update your will, it's really straightforward to provide for those you care about and remember Koestler Arts too. So whatever happens after you're gone, your commitment to the people and causes you care about most will be felt.

We've put together this booklet to let you know the impact your gift could make. There's also information on our partnership with Farewill, who are offering free wills to supporters of Koestler Arts.

**By leaving a gift in your will,
you can join us to make sure
that opportunities are still
open to people in secure
settings.**



Our Awards

Just like for Gary, the certificates which every person who enters the Koestler Awards receives is often the first time they have won anything.

Koestler Arts is proud to be able to offer validation and encouragement to over 2,500 men, women and young people each year.

As well as this, each year professional artists volunteer their time to judge the 52 artforms, giving out an additional 2,500 Awards.

Some of these Awards come with cash prizes, but every year we hear how much the certificates mean as a symbol of achievement and success.

“To me, just to **win anything** made my life so much better, I really started feeling better in myself and proud – something I haven’t felt for a very long time.”

Gary, HM Prison & YOI Grampian

Winning a Koestler Award can be that first step to reimagining yourself as more than the sum of your past. And we are committed to giving even more people this chance to see themselves as a winner. Join us to create brighter futures for more people in the criminal justice system across the UK.

Feedback

Each year, we send thousands of letters, activity packs, posters, and certificates into prisons, secure mental health facilities and immigration removal centres across the UK. But for so many of the men, women and young people we work with, the most important piece of paper received from Koestler Arts is the feedback form.

Feedback forms are unique to each individual who enters the Awards. They feature advice and encouragement from experts and enthusiasts on each specific artwork and show that there are people on the outside committed to helping entrants like Mike to succeed.

We know how important these A4 sheets of paper are. They can help people imagine a future where they're a painter, a poet, a musician.

We can't create these opportunities without the time and generosity of our supporters. Join us to help re-build the communities which prison walls divide, and celebrate the best in every single person who enters the Koestler Awards.

“The **feedback cards** to the inmates mean more than words can say... Certainly to me they are cherished more than any prize.”

Mike, HM Prison Brixton

created using all the kind amazing words that people have said about my artwork in the last two Kewster exhibitions. They provide me so much comfort.

Thank you and keep sending these cards to the artists!
Date of visit 2016



Artwork 4-digit reference number
Your comments on this artwork

To YOU THE VIEWER
YOUR WORDS HAVE MEANT
THE WORLD TO ME!
THANK YOU!
Date of visit 2016



JESUS
STILL
LOVE
CODES HE

I JUST WANNA GO
WANNA GO
HOMEL

WENT
BANKERS
WERE

...AND WHILE THE CARDS MADE ME SMILE, I WASN'T...
...I FOUND THIS ART VERY INTERESTING, IN FACT, AND THE BEST...
...I WASN'T IN THE MIND OF THE WORDS YOU WROTE TO YOURSELF...
...I CAN IDENTIFY WITH BUT EXPRESSES IT IN AN ELEGANT AND MOVING...
...REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS, VERY IMAGINATIVE. POSTCARDS WERE GREAT...
...THE WORDS ACCOMPANYING THE IMAGES W...

“It’s not an exaggeration to state that Koestler Arts helped me save and rebuild my life.”

When I was ‘inside’, each day could be incredibly inconsistent and isolating. All of this added to a deteriorating self-esteem.

My first real reconnection with a sense of my own humanity and creativity was from the same place, Koestler Arts. Once released, I looked them up and this led to me being given a mentor who I’m still working with to nurture my creative progress. I cannot emphasise enough how profoundly Koestler Arts have aided and supported my rehabilitation.



John's Story

Koestler Arts helps so many artists and makers repair their self-esteem. It offers an essential oasis of hope for rehabilitation in the face of the harsh, daunting and disorientating reality of returning to normal life.

So back to me, a rehabilitated and working ex-prisoner. I can only tell you what I know ... Koestler Arts is a constant reminder, to me, that we are all human and can all make mistakes, but that we are also capable of remorse, healing, positive change, compassion, redemption and, in all its forms, love!

Mentoring

Our volunteer mentors offer life-changing support for people looking to continue their creative journey on release from prison.

Leaving prison can be a daunting experience, as people leave behind the structure of classes, the advice of teachers and the support of friends inside. There are uncertainties about housing and work, and it can often feel like you're facing all this alone.

We want to make sure we can be there for as many people as possible who have felt the benefits of being creative in prison.

*“The **mentoring support** system is an excellent way of maintaining stability, continuity, and community cohesion”*

Sarah, Koestler Arts Mentee

Our mentors help mentees to build the foundations for a positive, creative future, whether it's applying for a college course, joining a local life-drawing class, submitting work to competitions, or building an online presence.

Join us to help make sure our mentees receive the support they need when they need it the most.



Since my trial, I'd applied for around 1,400 jobs, with no success. I couldn't even get a job washing pots and pans in a restaurant.

Then one day, I stumbled across a job as a Koestler Arts exhibition host. I went along to the interview and for the first time in a long time, a potential employer looked beyond my past mistakes.

A few days later they got back in touch and by some miracle I was selected to be a host! Then it dawned on me, I hadn't worked in two years and I had no experience in this field. Fortunately, excellent training was provided. So often, having been through the criminal justice system you feel employers and society are setting you up for failure. Koestler Arts was unique, it set you up for success!



Andrew's Story

As the exhibition went on my confidence grew and I developed skills which I had both lost and never had. I was able to speak to the public about the artwork, draw on my life experiences and those of the artists on show to really make a connection with the public.

For so long, it felt like my life would not change, that I would never make my family or friends proud of me again, and that wider society would never give me a second chance. Through working at Koestler Arts this has all changed. The job has given me a second chance, and hope for the future.

*“It's amazing to think that 3 months ago I couldn't **get a job**, but now I have one; it's all down to the opportunity you gave me.”*

Michelle, Koestler Arts Exhibition Host

Employment

Having a job can be so much more than a regular pay cheque. It's a chance to contribute meaningfully to your community; to provide for yourself and those you care for, and to feel accepted.

But for many people, finding a job on release on prison can be hugely challenging.

Our employment and commissioning programmes give people with lived experience of the criminal justice system the opportunity to realise the value of their experiences, skills, and thoughts.

Exhibition Hosts bring a new perspective to our UK show at Southbank Centre, and paid commissions are also available to our alumni, giving more people a chance to develop their skills and share their story.

We are committed to creating a full range of paid opportunities to suit the inspiring diversity of interests among Koestler entrants. Join us to support those who have left the criminal justice system to realise their potential on the outside.

Janet's Story

When my parents passed away I decided to give a portion of their residual estate to Koestler Arts, having been aware of their wonderful work for some time. I was touched by the sensitivity in which this was handled. The letters I received about how the gift would be spent reassured me that I had made the right decision in choosing them.

I also appreciated the named award that was granted in the name of my parents which I got to see in person at their National Exhibition and also see in print in their beautiful exhibition catalogue – which was sent to me with the loveliest of letters from their Director of Development. It was clear the artwork chosen for the award in my parents' name had been carefully selected based on what Koestler Arts had been told about my mum and dad.



It is good to know that the money my parents left behind when they died was put to good use by Koestler Arts and, more personally for me it was heartening to be treated by Koestler with such care and compassion at a difficult time.

Claiming your Free Will using Farewill

We've partnered with Farewill, the UK's largest will-writing service, to offer free wills to our friends and supporters.

✓ Trusted

They're rated 4.9 stars on Trustpilot from over 9,000 reviews, and have won multiple awards for their service at the British Wills and Probate Awards, including National Will Writing Firm of the Year in 2019 and 2020

✓ Simple

Write your will from the comfort of your own home in under 30 minutes, and the Farewill team can talk you through writing a will at various levels of complexity

✓ Secure

Each will is approved by a specialist, so once your will is signed and witnessed it's completely legally binding

✓ On-hand

Farewill's specialist team are available to help you over the phone 6 days a week, and if you don't feel confident writing a will online, you can make your will over the phone

✓ Flexible

It's easy to update your will with Farewill and free for the first year, and there's no obligation to include a gift to Koestler Arts to use the free service

**For more information on
leaving a gift to Koestler Arts
please contact Mali Clements
Development Director
020 8740 0333
mali@koestlerarts.org.uk**



'Koestler Arts' is the working name of the 'Koestler Trust'. The Koestler Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales no. 1105759. Company limited by guarantee no. 4961363. Registered office 168a Du Cane Road, London, W12 0TX