

ART AT HMP SPRING HILL ARTIST IN RESIDENCE 2025: JESSICA OSTROWICZ



Jessica Ostrowicz, Artist in Residence at HMP Spring Hill (2025). Photo by Tod Jones. Image courtesy Ikon.

Ikon is pleased to announce Jessica Ostrowicz as Artist in Residence at HMP Spring Hill, Buckinghamshire (until December 2025), funded by the Rothschild Foundation. The project further expands Ikon's *Art in Prisons* programme, focused on the rehabilitative role of the visual arts in criminal justice.

Ostrowicz will deliver a programme of workshops, exhibitions and events from a new art studio within the prison estate. Previously Art Lecturer at HMP Bullingdon (2023 – 2025), Ostrowicz supported prisoners to find an artistic voice, giving them time, encouragement and skills to develop a visual mode of expression.

The Ikon residency at HMP Spring Hill gives Ostrowicz the opportunity to rethink what a studio can be: *"A place of autonomy, experimentation and exchange is an incredible freedom in a carceral environment. I hope to create a space where art is not only seen as rehabilitative but critically and creatively [re]generative. Like caddis flies assembling their protective cases from gathered fragments, or birds weaving their nests, I hope this environment will be shaped by adaptation and resourcefulness; a place for drawing, painting, technique-building, constructing and reimagining, where experimentation is central and where both the men and I can explore new ways of making and thinking together."* Jessica Ostrowicz, Artist in Residence, HMP Spring Hill

About Jessica Ostrowicz

Jessica Ostrowicz is an artist and researcher based in Buckinghamshire. Having worked as an art lecturer at HMP Bullingdon (2023 – 2025), their art practice is focused on the concept of home and (be)longing from the perspectives of displacement, diaspora, up-rootedness and confinement. Their doctoral research is focused on the concept of ‘home’ for men incarcerated in the UK and how this understanding plays out as a sense of self in prison cells. They have a particular interest in the prison cell as a space of retributive justice and confinement, but also as a site for individual expression. In 2024, they undertook an artist residency at Cordts Art Foundation, Berlin, and exhibited at the Nogallery, Berlin and Kunsthaus Dahlem. Future exhibitions in 2025 include *10 Jahre 10 Tage* at Kunsthaus Dahlem, Germany, *Remaining without Returning* at Op Enheim, Poland, and *Common Threads*, a group show at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Oaxaca, Mexico.

Supported by the Rothschild Foundation, *Art at HMP Spring Hill* aims to develop the cultural environment at the prison, building links with the wider Buckinghamshire community. The programme is tailored for prisoners living in open conditions, focused on their acquisition of knowledge and skills in support of a return to work and education prior to release. To this end, Ikon is building connections with local educational and cultural partners for the commissioning and showcasing of prisoner artwork.

“The Rothschild Foundation grant allows Ikon to further develop a network of ‘art schools’ in UK prisons. We are excited to collaborate with artist Jessica Ostrowicz to model art education at HMP Spring Hill, working alongside the prisoners to transform the new studio space and, we hope, taking elements of this creativity into other contexts. Through our work in prisons, we know how people are empowered by engaging with visual art practice, positively influencing their mental health, wellbeing, education and skills for work.” Linzi Stauvers, Artistic Director (Education), Ikon

About HMP Spring Hill

HMP Spring Hill is a category D men’s open prison, jointly managed with HMP Grendon, located in the village of Grendon Underwood, in Buckinghamshire. Originally known as Grendon Hall, the main building at Spring Hill was constructed in 1872. In 1953 the site was converted by the Prison Service, becoming the first open prison in the United Kingdom. Almost a decade later, in 1962, HMP Grendon opened on an adjacent site.

About Art at HMP Grendon

In 2022, with a focus on the development of the prisoners’ artistic practice, Ikon opened the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Studio at HMP Grendon – a dedicated art school-inspired space used for weekly workshops and biannual exhibitions featuring artwork by prisoners and professional artists. This space was made possible with the support of the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust and the senior team at HMP Grendon. Ikon has managed several artist residences at HMP Grendon, by Edmund Clark (2014 – 2018), Dean Kelland (2019 – 2023), James Lomax (2024) and, current Artist in Residence, Simon J. Harris (2024 – 2025), resulting in major exhibitions at Ikon Gallery.

For more information, press appointments, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Rebecca Small by email r.small@ikon-gallery.org or call Ikon on 0121 248 0708.

Social Media: @ikongallery #IkonGallery @ace_national @aceagrams @ace_midlands
@rothschildfoundation

Notes to Editors:

1. **Ikon** is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art gallery, situated in Birmingham's city centre. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2024. It is an educational charity with free entry for all, and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features international and local artists working in a variety of media, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Ikon aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. ikon-gallery.org
2. **Ikon** is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am-5pm. Free entry, donations welcome. Ikon is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.
3. **The Rothschild Foundation** is a charity supporting arts and heritage, the environment, and social welfare by awarding grants, fostering dialogue and debate, and through our support of Waddesdon Manor. The Foundation is Chaired by Dame Hannah Rothschild DBE, and managed by a board of Trustees, including other members of the Rothschild family. The Rothschild Foundation offers grants for the benefit of Buckinghamshire delivering our commitment to address the needs of local communities. Beyond Buckinghamshire, the Foundation supports major initiatives which encourage enjoyment of the UK's rich cultural heritage. Visit rothschildfoundation.org.uk or follow on Facebook or LinkedIn.
4. **Arts Council England** is the national development agency for creativity and culture. ACE have set out their strategic vision in *Let's Create* that by 2030 they want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 ACE will invest over £467 million of public money from Government and an estimated £250 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. artscouncil.org.uk