

4 William Congdon

India Temples no. 1, 1954
 (Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Tiruchirapalli)
 Oil, gold paint and enamel on hardboard
 1250 x 1400 mm
Adjacent to the door, above the wooden chest

5 William Congdon

India Temples no. 2, 1954
 (Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Tiruchirapalli)
 Oil, gold paint and enamel on hardboard
 945 x 1240 mm
By the foot of the steps, above the side table

In 1954 William Congdon (an American artist and close friend of Jim Ede) travelled to Delhi, Benares, Calcutta, Madras and Colombo, consistently sending his notes and sketches to Ede in France. Ede responded encouragingly, expressing how Congdon's letters arrived 'like a charming caress', and sharing his memories of the subcontinent. With Ede's words to 'stimulate me [...] work me deeper into my own impressions', Congdon returned to his Venice studio to evoke the 'shapes of belief and pure feeling' in South Asian religious architecture, using his characteristic technique of scoring forms into thick paint. Congdon gave these two resulting works to Ede in 1955.

Cover: Detail of *phulkari* textile
 © Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge

Right: Avinash Chandra, *Black Feast*, 1962
 © The estate of Avinash Chandra

Left: Letter from William Congdon to Jim Ede, 14 February 1954, p. 3
 © The William G. Congdon Foundation, Milan



6 Avinash Chandra

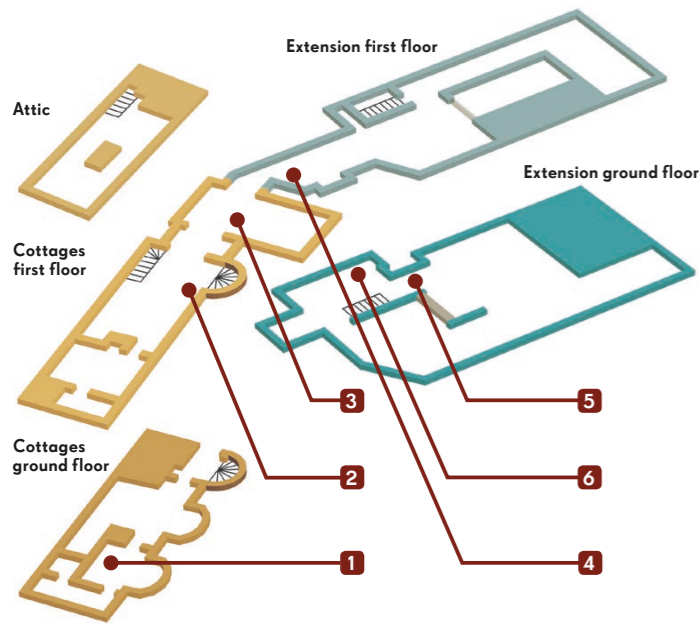
Black Feast, 1962
 Pen, ink and watercolour on paper, 560 x 780 mm
On display until 2 February, at the foot of the staircase

Avinash Chandra arrived on the British art scene from Delhi in 1956. After bringing works including *Black Feast* to Kettle's Yard in 1963, he wrote to Jim Ede: 'it is difficult to find a friend [like you] or a home like yours'. From the 1970s onwards, Chandra kept his own open house in London. He also shared the Edes' enthusiasm for music and used to launch his creative process by listening to jazz. Once inspired, he would work intensely at superimposing layers of paint – shifting between geometric compositions, strong outlines and negative shapes – until he perceived a sense of unity.

JIM EDE AND INDIA

Guide to South Asian objects
in the Kettle's Yard House

KETTLE'S YARD



- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 Phulkari textile | 4 William Congdon
<i>India Temples no. 1, 1954</i> |
| 2 Yak bell | 5 William Congdon
<i>India Temples no. 2, 1954</i> |
| 3 Bookcase | 6 Avinash Chandra
<i>Black Feast, 1962</i> |

This guide to South Asian objects in the Kettle's Yard House accompanies the temporary display *Jim Ede and India*, on view in the Edlis Neeson Research Space until 2 February 2020.



Photograph of Jim Ede's Indian rug in Kettle's Yard by John Haselgrove, 1967–68. © Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge

In his unpublished memoir (1946), Jim Ede (the founder of Kettle's Yard) reflected that his travels in India between 1917–19 had the 'most reverberations of any period' of his life. While residing at Kettle's Yard, he incarnated this sentiment by placing a rug that he had bought in India near the entrance, where he would wait to receive guests.

Although this rug only survives in photographic form, several objects that remain in the House, and others that have been put on temporary display, attest to Jim Ede's profound attachment to the subcontinent. This guide highlights some of these pieces, providing context, and describing how Ede's display made subtle gestures to other corners of his life.

1 Phulkari textile

Unknown maker, c.1860

On display until 2 February, on Jim Ede's bed

Jim Ede's fellow collector and friend, Jan Ellison, described this textile as a 'wall hanging' in his 1977 bequest to Kettle's Yard. However, it is in fact an example of *phulkari* ('floral work') that has been traditionally made and worn by women from the Punjab region (between present-day India and Pakistan). *Phulkari* consists of floss silk embroidery on hand-woven *khadi* cotton cloth, worked in darning stitch from the reverse side to economise on valuable silk. The generous floral embroidery, auspicious red cloth and border detail on this version identify it as a *bagh* ('garden'), or a ceremonial *phulkari* worn as a bridal head covering. Customarily prepared by a bride's family member, a *bagh* could take over a year to complete.

Phulkari fabrics were exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition and consumed in nineteenth-century Europe as soft furnishings. During this period, when the import of industrially produced British cotton cloth was forcing Indian cotton spinning into decline, many Punjabi women who had traditionally spun cloth for wages turned to commercial *phulkari* production.

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2 Yak bell

Maker and date unknown

At the top of the spiral staircase

This Tibetan yak bell and stand was given to Jim Ede in Kashmir in 1917. At Kettle's Yard, he positioned it strategically amongst other sonorous objects: above the front door bell and opposite the Bechstein piano. When Jim and Helen Ede were residents at Kettle's Yard, the yak bell was used to ring for tea.

3 Bookcase

Dividing the landing from the Dancer Room

This bookcase of spiritual literature includes a number of South Asian titles, revealing the scope of Jim Ede's metaphysical curiosity. Rather than residing in the Library, these texts are situated at the threshold of the Dancer Room, where Ede would often wander at night. He wrote in *A Way of Life* (1984) that the moonlight streaming in through the arched window led to creative and spiritual 'revelations'. The shelves of religious literature act as a gateway to one of the most contemplative parts of Kettle's Yard, which Ede founded as a temple for 'creative prayer'.