

# NATURE



a learning resource for Kettle's Yard

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This learning resource is designed to help teachers and educators engage and inspire their students through the house and collection at Kettle's Yard.

Nature is the second of three publications which focus on key themes of the house – Light, Nature and Space. Inside, you will find:

- ▶ information on artworks and objects
- ▶ artists' biographies
- ▶ examples of contemporary responses to nature
- ▶ ideas and information for visiting with groups

Content from different sections on artworks and objects can be mixed and matched with the simple drawing and writing activities to create the right session for your group.

**KETTLE'S YARD**



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## WHAT IS KETTLE'S YARD?

Kettle's Yard was the home of Jim and Helen Ede from 1957 to 1973. Every afternoon they opened their home to visitors; a tradition that continues to this day. Jim created a new way of looking at art by embedding it in a domestic setting. He interspersed his collection of art with natural found objects, antique furniture, glassware and ceramics. In this way Jim aimed to create a perfectly balanced whole that can be understood as a work of art in its own right. He viewed the arrangement as similar to a composition of music – each part was significant on its own, but its contribution to the whole arrangement was equally vital.

When Jim was working at the Tate Gallery, London, in the 1920s and 1930s, he befriended a young generation of artists including Ben and Winifred Nicholson, Christopher Wood and David Jones. Jim supported his artist friends by purchasing artworks early in their careers. Their paintings, prints and drawings formed the basis of the Kettle's Yard collection.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the Edes lived in Morocco and France. They regularly travelled to America and Europe and continued to collect works of art, ceramics and textiles. When they moved to Cambridge, Jim's vision for Kettle's Yard was very clear; it was a place that should not be: *"an art gallery or museum, nor ... simply a collection of works of art reflecting my taste or the taste of a given period. It is, rather, a continuing way of life from these last fifty years, in which stray objects, stones, glass, pictures, sculpture, in light and in space, have been used to make manifest the underlying stability ..."*<sup>1</sup>



Helen and Jim in the United States, c. 1941

The house and collection were given to the University of Cambridge in 1966. In 1970 the Edes built an extension to the house along with a small exhibition space. Jim and Helen stayed on until 1973, when they moved to Edinburgh. The adjoining exhibition space was further extended in 1981, 1986 and 1994. In 2018 following a substantial capital redevelopment, Kettle's Yard reopened with two new state of the art galleries, a three floor Education Wing and a café. This development has enabled Kettle's Yard to present an exciting programme of exhibitions and activities that reflect the diversity of contemporary art practice. This provides a constantly changing counterpoint to the continuity of the house and collection.



# NATURE AT KETTLE'S YARD

*"I have always been fascinated by pebbles without, I think, ever asking myself why – in flowers too and shells. Such things have been for me a sudden contact with the miraculous."*

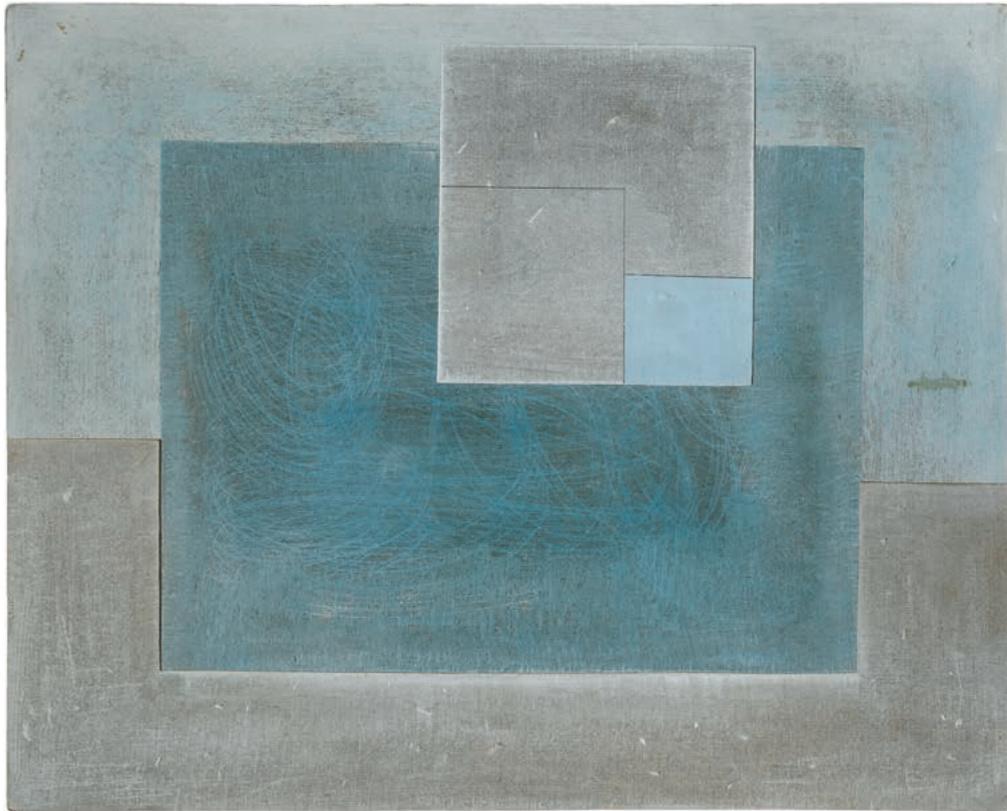
Jim Ede<sup>2</sup>

Objects from the natural world play a very important role at Kettle's Yard. Pebbles are arranged on the round tables in Jim Ede's bedroom and sitting room, plants are displayed in the two large windows, and seeds, shells and bones are scattered amongst the rooms. There is even the breastbone of a bird displayed amongst the plants.

Jim Ede was very fond of the found object. He saw joy in the simplicity of nature and in presenting items from the natural world among a range of man-made objects. He would spend many hours searching the beaches of North Norfolk for a perfectly round pebble. His artist friends understood this and Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and William Congdon donated pebbles and rocks to his collection. Many of the shells on display in the house were purchased as part of the Henri Gaudier-Brzeska estate that Jim acquired in 1927.

The House itself has often been described as an artwork, with all parts of the collection essential to the whole. Natural forms, man-made objects, plants, light and space all contribute to its sense of balance and harmony.

In this resource we explore the response of artists to the natural world and look at the ways they are inspired by nature, landscape and the environment.



Ben Nicholson, *1962 (Argos)*, 1962  
Oil on carved board on wood, 350 x 445 mm

## BEN NICHOLSON, 1962 (ARGOS)

*1962 (Argos)* is made up of six rectangular shapes carved into board, painted in different shades of blue and light brown. Although it is an abstract work, it can be seen as a reflection of the coastal city of Argos. This is an ancient Greek city, not far from the Argolic Gulf. The top blue plane might represent the sky, the bottom plane the sand, and the dark blue rectangle in the centre the sea. In an essay titled 'Notes on "Abstract" Art' that was published in 1941, Nicholson wrote that;

*"One of the main differences between a representational and an abstract painting is that the former can transport you to Greece by a representation of blue skies and seas, olive trees and marble columns, [...] whereas the abstract version by its free use of form and colour will be able to give you the actual quality of Greece itself, and this will become a part of the light and space and life in the room [...]."*

*1962 (Argos)* is placed on a large wooden table in the downstairs extension of the Kettle's Yard House between several other works by Nicholson. The arrangement reflects the diversity of Nicholson's artistic production in the period between the 1920s and 1960s.

### Links and Associations

#### LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Nicholson was living in Ticino, Switzerland when he made *1962 (Argos)*. Many of the titles of his works from this period refer to places he had visited in Europe, including Switzerland, Greece and Malta.
- ▶ Despite the suggested specificity of place in the title, Nicholson's late reliefs do not always refer to a particular location. They are more broadly inspired by the different shapes, textures and colours that can be found in earth, water and rocks.<sup>3</sup> For Nicholson it was more important to capture an experience or an idea, than to depict a specific landscape, mountain or lake.

## HISTORY AND CULTURE

- ▶ The Greek city of Argos plays an important role in Greek history and mythology. It was the most powerful city of Ancient Greece and was highly regarded for its military feats. Argos flourished as a cultural city and archaeological excavations have revealed remnants of one of the largest ancient theatres in Greece, with a capacity of 20,000 seats.
- ▶ Homer's *The Illiad* mentions Argos as the home of Agamemnon, the king.

## ART ASSOCIATIONS

- ▶ In the early twentieth century many artists started to move away from imitating reality in their works. Instead, they chose to focus on other aspects of their art form, such as line, form, shape, structure, material and colour, and to use these to create abstract images.
- ▶ Abstraction and simplification of forms are central to many of Nicholson's artworks. In the 1930s he produced a series of highly abstract white reliefs, for which he gained international fame. These originated in a context of international abstract and 'constructive' movements. Nicholson was part of the Paris-based group *Abstraction-Création*, who experimented with the relationship between painting and sculpture and promoted abstraction.

## MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

- ▶ The creation of a relief was a physically demanding exercise. Nicholson would carve into the board with a chisel, scraping the surface several times to create the various depths. The technique he used was based on his experience with linocuts earlier in his career and he would sometimes use razor blades to incise lines in the material. Scraping, scouring and scrubbing the paint over and over again resulted in the weathered finish that is typical of his style.
- ▶ Nicholson's treatment of the surface meant that the paint absorbed into the material of the board and the two became inseparable, in the same way that natural stone absorbs colour over time.<sup>4</sup>

## Biography: Ben Nicholson (1894–1982)

Ben Nicholson was born in Denham, Buckinghamshire. He was the son of the landscape and still life painter William Nicholson and his wife Mabel. In 1920 Nicholson met the artist Winifred Roberts, whom he married later that year. Working alongside Winifred, Nicholson painted in a figurative style inspired by cubism and, in the late 1920s, progressed to naïve landscapes influenced by the work of Alfred Wallis.

In the early 1930s Nicholson lived in London with Winifred and was associated with a community of modern sculptors that included Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore. Nicholson became familiar with the work of other modern artists by taking trips to Europe. Barbara Hepworth became his second wife in 1938 and together they moved to St Ives. Still life was a persistent theme in Nicholson's work in the 1940s and 50s, but in the 1960s this shifted to a focus on landscape, themes that become increasingly abstract. His work from this period comprises line drawings and carved reliefs that were of an increasingly large scale. Nicholson died in 1982.



Ben Nicholson,  
1928 (*Cornish Port*)  
Oil on card  
215 x 350 mm

## Ben Nicholson and Kettle's Yard

Jim Ede met Ben Nicholson in 1924. Ben and Winifred Nicholson became close friends of Jim's and they introduced him to many artists. Jim became familiar with the work of Alfred Wallis through Nicholson – an introduction that proved highly influential on the development of his collection and vision.

Of 1962 (*Argos*) Jim Ede wrote: *"In 'Argos' I was so happy to obtain this example of new life. It cries out for colour, in which it so excels; so subtle a combining of blues and greys, entirely personal to Ben Nicholson."*<sup>5</sup>

## Discussions and Activities

### EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ How would you describe the shapes and colours in this work?
- ▶ Does this work make you think of anything – if so what does it make you think of?

### SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ Have a look at the other artworks around this table. Can you see any resemblances? Do you think they were made by the same artist?
- ▶ What tools do you think the artist used? Do you think it was easy to make this work?
- ▶ How would you paint the sea? Which colours and shapes would you choose? What details would you add? How would you reflect the sea through abstract shapes and forms?



# PEBBLES IN THE HOUSE

Pebbles and stones can be found throughout the house at Kettle's Yard. By mixing natural and found objects together with artworks, Jim Ede attempted to challenge the traditional ideas about what art is and could be. Ede's arrangement of pebbles are as much a part of what make Kettle's Yard special as the works of art in the collection.

## Placement

In the same way that artworks are carefully selected and positioned in the house, Jim Ede deliberately placed pebbles in particular arrangements. In the dining room, an egg-shaped pebble is placed upright on a small plinth on the mantelpiece. This encourages us to contemplate the pebble as an artwork in its own right. Jim felt that our contact with a pebble was contact with something miraculous; an example of the divine beauty of nature.<sup>6</sup>

One of the most remarkable displays at Kettle's Yard is the spiral of pebbles in Jim's bedroom. It has often been compared to a mandala: a spiritual symbol stemming from Hinduism and Buddhism that is meant to bring tranquillity and enlightenment. Jim hoped that Kettle's Yard would be a place where people could find inner peace and tranquillity, and often referred to the house as a work of devotion or a house of prayer.

Stones and pebbles are sometimes integrated into the way that works of art are displayed in the House. Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's sculpture *Bird Swallowing a Fish* is placed on a large tree trunk with a group of stones at its base. This serves to reinforce associations with the coast.<sup>7</sup>



## Sculpture

*"It is perhaps strange that great sculptures should have many of the qualities which are to be found in pebbles – the smoothly rounded forms – the sense they have of evolving – the pebble out of the action of the elements and the statue out of the power of the human mind which has acted upon the nature of the statue, just as sand and water have acted on the pebble."*<sup>8</sup> Jim Ede

A small pebble with a hole in it on the mantelpiece in the Bechstein room is reminiscent of Henry Moore's and Barbara Hepworth's sculptures. Indeed, many of Jim's artist friends took inspiration for their sculptures from natural forms and even had pebble collections of their own. Occasionally the artists would send each other and Jim stones that they had found.

## Discussions and Activities

### EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ How big can a pebble be before it stops being a pebble?
- ▶ Have you ever picked up a pebble and kept it? Why? What did you like about it?

### SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ Can pebbles be art?
- ▶ Can you see which pebbles are shaped by wind and which by water?
- ▶ Why do you think pebbles are arranged alongside the display of art?

# CONTEMPORARY RESPONSE TO PEBBLES

## IAN HAMILTON FINLAY

Ian Hamilton Finlay's sculpture is a stone inscribed with the words *KETTLE'S YARD / CAMBRIDGE / ENGLAND IS THE / LOUVRE OF THE PEBBLE*. The work was especially made for the exhibition 'Open House' at Kettle's Yard in 1995. It is placed on the table in the bay window of the dining room in the house and is one of the first objects visitors encounter when entering Kettle's Yard. By comparing Kettle's Yard to the Louvre with its immense collection of art and riches, Finlay draws attention to the fact that in this house pebbles are revered. It encourages the visitor to consider the natural objects in the house with as much attention as the artworks.

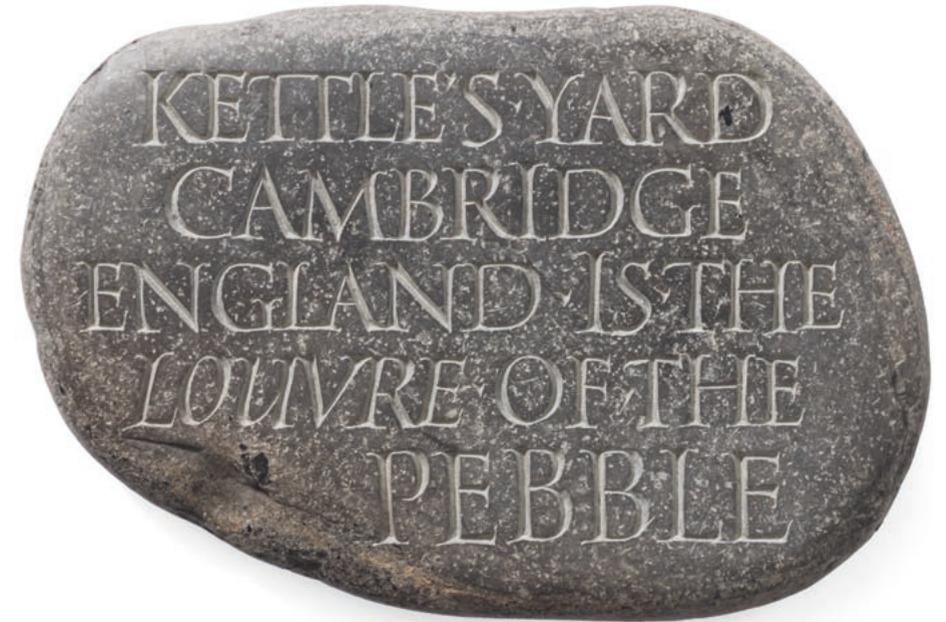
## Links and Associations

### FOLKLORE AND LEGENDS

- ▶ Stones with holes in them have a long history in British folklore and legends, with references going back as far as Roman times. They were generally believed to have magical powers that could keep evil away. Eighteenth century sources tell us about farmers in Yorkshire who would hang 'hag stones' in their stables to keep out witches.<sup>9</sup>

### GEOLOGY

- ▶ The Krumbein phi scale of sedimentology classes rocks according to size. A pebble is 4–64mm, a cobble 64–256mm and a boulder greater than 256mm.
- ▶ Water erosion creates smooth, spherical-shaped pebbles. Angular-shaped stones with flat surfaces are commonly formed when the wind gradually wears down a piece of rock from different directions.



Ian Hamilton Finlay

*KETTLE'S YARD / CAMBRIDGE / ENGLAND IS THE / LOUVRE OF THE PEBBLE, 1995*

## Biography: Ian Hamilton Finlay (1925–2006)

Finlay was born in Nassau, Bahamas. He went to art school in Glasgow before joining the army. He published many different kinds of visual and concrete poems through his own magazine 'Poor. Old. Tired. Horse'. At his home in Lanarkshire, Little Sparta, he created a garden filled with sculptural and landscape versions of his pastoral and militarist imagery. Finlay often acknowledged the influence of Kettle's Yard in his work.

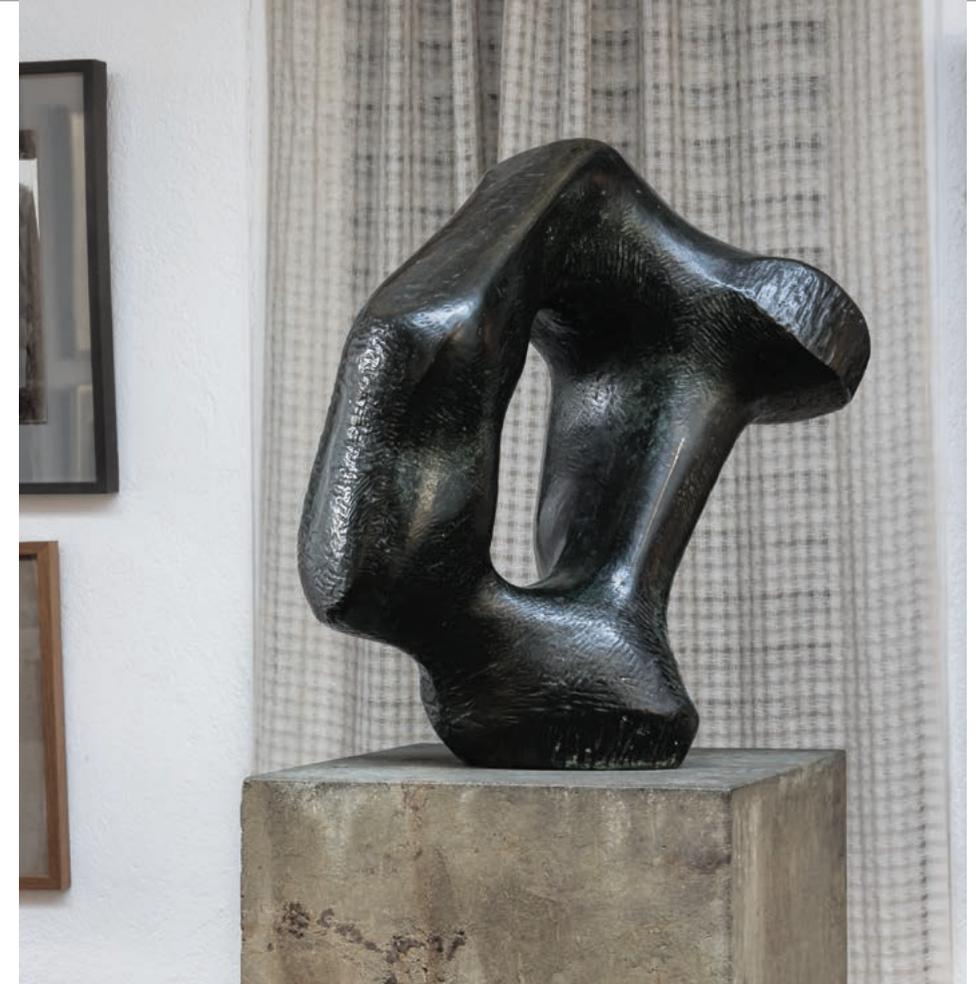
# HENRY MOORE, SCULPTURAL OBJECT

*Sculptural Object* is a textured bronze form with a hole in the centre. The piece echoes the pelvic bone of an animal that is preserved in Moore's studio. *Sculptural Object* is positioned on a concrete plinth on the ground floor of the extension. It is surrounded by artworks by Italo Valenti and you can catch clipped glimpses of these through the sculpture. The piece is typical of Moore's work during this period, which moved away from more recognisable figurative forms while retaining a strong anchor in nature.

## Links and Associations

### TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS

- ▶ From 1938 Moore began to experiment with bronze as a casting material. This allowed him to produce multiple editions of his sculptures.
- ▶ Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. It has a melting point of around 950 °C. When poured into a casting mould it fills every space, so it captures fine details.
- ▶ *Sculptural Object* went through a number of transitional phases before being cast in bronze. First, Moore made a small plaster model, known as a maquette. He then made a larger working model and added surface detail using tools such as graters, spatulas and knives. This intermediate maquette was then prepared for casting.
- ▶ Moore worked with foundries to cast his sculptures. His work was cast using two different techniques:
  - LOST WAX:** a wax model is made of the maquette and this is used to create a flexible mould. Molten bronze is poured into the mould, melting and replacing the wax, which drains away. The bronze hardens and the mould is removed.
  - SAND CASTING (METALLURGY):** sand is tightly packed around the maquette to form a mould. Molten bronze is poured into the mould and,



Henry Moore, *Sculptural Object*, 1960,  
bronze on limestone base, 465 x 390 x 370mm

once cool, the sand is brushed off. This leaves a dimpled surface which can be polished and smoothed.

- ▶ Moore would sometimes treat his sculptures with artificial patinas. These are chemical solutions which react with the surface of the bronze to form a thin layer of coloured corrosion. The patination of *Sculptural Object* varies from deep brown to greenish-yellow hues.

## Science and Nature

- ▶ Moore frequently used natural objects as a source of inspiration. His maquette studio had what he called a 'library of found objects': a collection of stones, flints, seashells and bones. Moore was particularly interested in the latter. A bone literally upholds life, supporting weight and tensions, therefore he regarded it as a useful starting point to infuse vitality and strength into the sculptures. He explained this by using the example of the clenching of a fist, describing how "you get ... the bones, the knuckles, pushing through, giving a force ... you get a sense of pressure of the bone outwards – these for me are the key points."<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ The hole is a further example of Moore responding to organic shapes found in nature. He was fascinated by holes running through pebbles or caves carved into hillsides and cliffs, describing these natural phenomena as 'nature's way of working stone.'<sup>11</sup>

## Biography: Henry Moore (1898–1986)

Moore was born in Castleford, Yorkshire in 1898. In 1915 he trained as an elementary school teacher and worked in local schools until enlisting in the Civil Service Rifles in 1917. He was in active service until 1920. In the early 1920s he was influenced by the work of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and primitive art. In 1921 he won a scholarship to train at the Royal College of art, and in 1924 he began teaching on the course. During the following decade he was a member of the Seven & Five Society and Unit One, and helped found the British Surrealist movement in 1936. He was an official war artist during the Second World War. A sculptor of major international reputation, he gained many public commissions. His works, whether carved or modelled, show an intimate awareness of natural forms.

## Henry Moore and Kettle's Yard

Jim Ede and Henry Moore both lived in Hampstead during the 1920s, and Moore frequently visited the Edes. Through these visits Moore was exposed to the work of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (Jim bought a large selection of Henri Gaudier-

Brzeska's estate in 1927), and this influence can be seen in Moore's works. *Sculptural Object* is one of two sculptures by Henry Moore in the Kettle's Yard collection. Jim bought *Sculptural Object* from Henry Moore in 1962. Jim wrote the following about the sculpture: "The work derives from some bone structure; perhaps the pelvis, but has so much more. The wonder of a circle, the nave of a cathedral, the constant interest of going through, the adventure of this side and that side and the dynamic magnetism of the whole."<sup>12</sup>



Henry Moore, *Head*, 1928, Stone carving on plaster base, 173 x 75 x 105 mm

## Discussions and Activities

### EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ Spend some time moving around *Sculptural Object* and draw what you see through the hole. Which is the most interesting view?
- ▶ Imagine you could touch this sculpture – what words would you use to describe its texture?
- ▶ What do you think this sculpture is made of? Do you think it would be heavy or light to hold?

### SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ Does this sculpture remind you of anything?
- ▶ Many of Henry Moore's sculptures were made to be displayed in public spaces – what do you think the role of public sculpture is?
- ▶ How do you think this sculpture was made?

# WILLIAM CONGDON, LUNA 7, SUBIACO

*Luna 7, Subiaco* is an oil painting that depicts dark rocky hillsides and a misty sky, lit by the pale, green glow of the moon. The paint has been applied with a spatula and the different textures suggest the contrasting roughness of the rock and smoothness of the sky. The painting leans against the wall on the right in the Dancer Room, which is characteristic of Jim's tendency to position works at different heights at Kettle's Yard. The darkness of *Luna 7, Subiaco* is balanced against the pastel palette of another of Congdon's works, *Piazza San Marco No.25 (White Piazza)*, which is positioned just above it. *Luna 7, Subiaco* is one of a series of drawings and paintings in which Congdon explored the varied illumination and glow of moonlight on a landscape.

## Links and Associations

### GEOGRAPHY AND PLACE

- ▶ *Luna 7, Subiaco* was painted from Congdon's studio – an abandoned Benedictine monastery in the Apennine mountains, Subiaco, east of Rome. Subiaco is the site where Saint Benedict of Nursia founded the Benedictine Order in AD 529 (circa).
- ▶ Congdon tried to externalise his personal thoughts and feelings about a place into his paintings. Aligned with the Abstract Expressionists, whose work is often characterised by gestural brushstrokes and spontaneity, he attempted to paint his feelings about the world rather than his external experience of it: *'I paint from the unconscious (desire to paint, vague promptings of a jelled image) to the conscious (a painting).'*<sup>13</sup>

### MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

- ▶ Congdon's paintings are constructed from thick layers of paint, which the artist then incised and drew into. In *Luna 7, Subiaco* you can see how some layers are evenly applied – such as the tonal reds – whereas other colours are applied in thick, uneven gestural strokes – such as the rhythmic layers of black paint.



William Congdon, *Luna 7, Subiaco*, 1967,  
oil on hardboard, 694 x 893mm

- ▶ Congdon would often apply paint with knives and spatulas rather than brushes. He wrote the following to Jim about his method of painting: *'Use a knife – never a brush which only compromises. A knife constructs!'*<sup>14</sup>

## Discussions and Activities

### EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ What tools do you think the artist used to apply paint to this piece?
- ▶ How many layers of paint can you see?
- ▶ What time of day do you think this painting shows? Why?

## SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ What clues does this painting give us about the natural environment?
- ▶ Try writing a haiku about the atmosphere Congdon creates in this painting
- ▶ Discuss how Congdon applies paint – did he paint quickly or slowly?  
How does he create different textures and light sources through his use of paint?

## Biography: William Congdon (1912–1998)

Congdon was born in Rhode Island, USA, and studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He began to paint whilst studying English and Spanish literature at Yale University. He travelled extensively in Europe in the 1930s, before returning to the US in 1937 and sculpting for a period. Following war service as an ambulance driver in Africa and Italy, Congdon returned to New York, where he began to paint semi-abstract landscapes and urban scenes. In 1950 he returned to Italy, accompanied by Jim Ede, and painted intensively in Venice and Rome. Congdon lived in Assisi in the 1960s and 1970s, and from 1979 he lived in a monastery in Gudo Gambaredo, near Milan. In 1980 he created the Foundation for Improving Understanding of the Arts, now known as the William G. Congdon Foundation.

## William Congdon and Kettle's Yard

Jim Ede met Congdon in 1950 and they maintained a lively correspondence and friendship over the next 40 years. In letters to Congdon, Jim discusses the time spent finding exactly the right spot for *Luna 7, Subiaco* at Kettle's Yard so that people could feel the presence and feeling of night in the piece. He wrote the following of the painting:

*'In Subiaco a moon so pale and so green irradiates all the land, which none the less remains in darkness ... It is an intensely realistic painting – I walk through the woods and feel the warmth and steepness of the hills ... As I look at the moon in all this obscurity which it illuminates, I feel, almost as I look, that it grows brighter, so much so as to be blinding.'*<sup>15</sup>

# THE BRIDGE

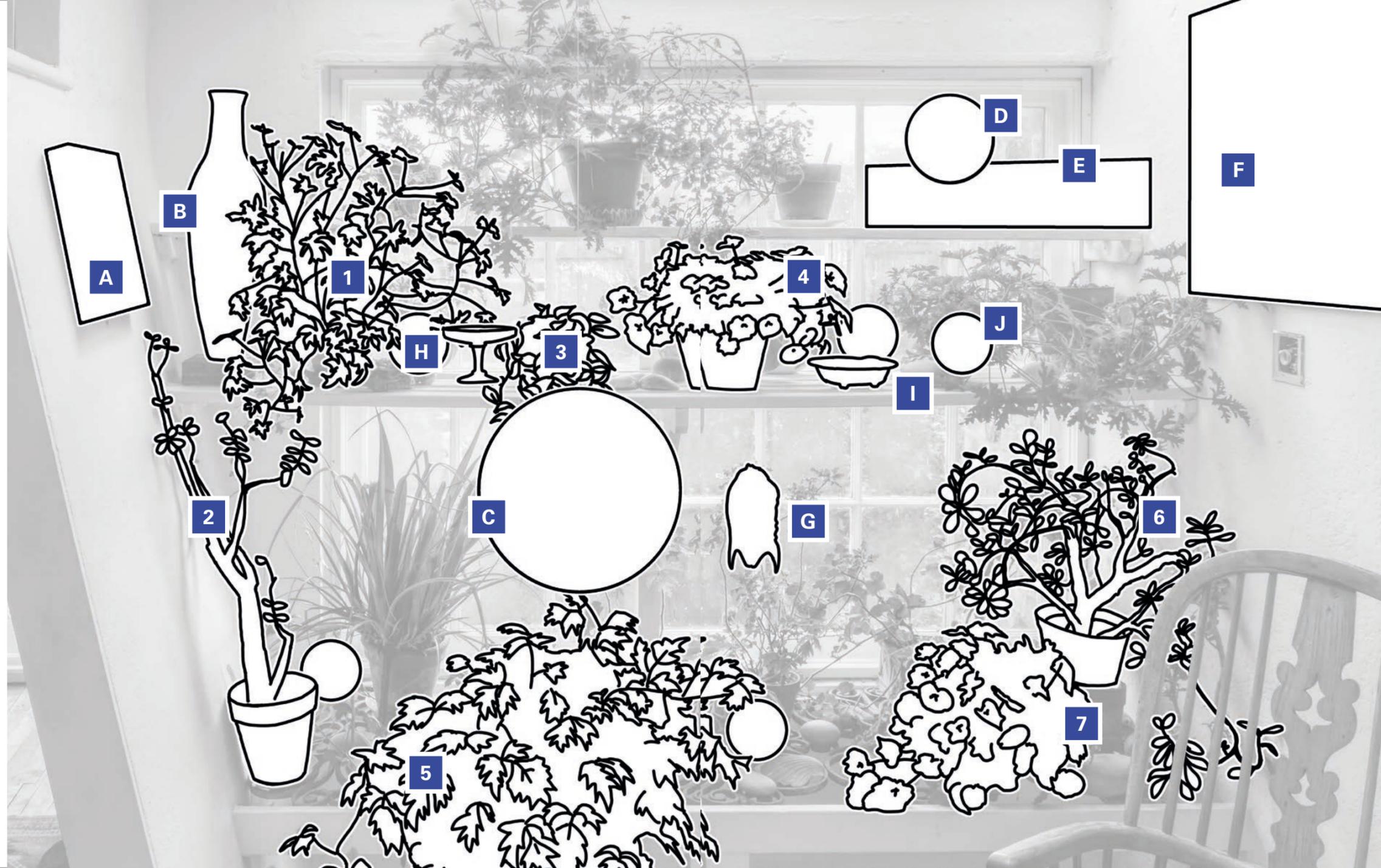
When Jim and Helen remodelled their derelict cottages to create Kettle's Yard in 1956, they constructed a walkway to connect a row of three small cottages to a fourth separate cottage. This walkway is called The Bridge.

Jim installed a large window on The Bridge and created a small conservatory of plants. The interspersing of greenery among shells, stones, glass buoys and works of art reminds us that Jim viewed his collection as a living and ever-changing entity. Here, the importance Jim placed on the inclusion of natural objects in his collection is emphasised.



## Plants

- 1** Pelargonium ('Lady Plymouth')
- 2** Crassula ovata ('Jade Plant,' 'Friendship Plant' or 'Money Plant')
- 3** Tradescantia fluminensis variegata ('Wandering Jew Plant' or 'Inch Plant')
- 4** Begonia bowerae ('Eyelash Begonia')
- 5** Cissus rhombifolia ('Grape Ivy')
- 6** Crassula ovata ('Jade Plant,' 'Friendship Plant' or 'Money Plant')
- 7** Begonia bowerae ('Eyelash Begonia')



## Artworks

- A** Ben Nicholson, *Mugs*, 1944
- B** William Staite Murray, *The Heron*, c.1928
- C** Gregorio Vardanega, *Disc*, c.1960
- D** Gregorio Vardanega, *Spherical Construction*, c.1963
- E** Ian Hamilton Finlay, *The Land's Shadows*, 1987
- F** Elisabeth Vellacott, *Bare Trees and Hills*, c.1966

## Other objects include:

- G** Breastbone of Bird
- H** 19th Century English Glass-stemmed Dish with pebbles
- I** Dish, c.1912–21, by Reginald Fairfax Wells (1877–1951) inscribed 'SOON' on the base
- J** A selection of 19th and 20th century glass fisherman's floats



William Staite Murray, *The Heron*, c.1928, stoneware (glazed), 520 x 170 mm

## WILLIAM STAITE MURRAY, *THE HERON*

*The Heron* is a tall, high-necked stoneware pot positioned on the top shelf in front of the window in the part of the house known as 'The Bridge'. The pot is glazed in a celadon colour and is adorned with one gestural deep-purple brushstroke. The smooth surface of *The Heron* is tempered with the delicate echo of throwing rings, evidence that the pot was made on a potter's wheel. The size and soft colourings of *The Heron* are suggestive of the characteristics of the coastal bird that the pot is named after. This is further emphasised by its placement in the house amongst plants, natural objects and fishing buoys.

### Links and Associations

#### ART ASSOCIATIONS

- ▶ Staite Murray was one of the most influential British potters of the first half of the twentieth century. He developed his own kiln design and made original earthenware and stoneware pieces decorated with abstract designs. He regarded his pots as fine art rather than functional objects and regularly exhibited them alongside works by artists including Ben and Winifred Nicholson, Christopher Wood and Ivon Hitchens.

### Materials and Technique

- ▶ Staite Murray made his pots by throwing them on a wheel. A practising Buddhist, he viewed the act of making pots as a spiritual process: a fusion of consciousness between the potter, the material and the action of throwing.<sup>16</sup> He saw the spiral movement of the clay on the wheel as a smaller representative of the natural world, writing that '*the earth itself might almost be a vast potter's wheel...this spiral formation is to be seen everywhere in nature.*'<sup>17</sup>
- ▶ In 1921 Staite Murray met Shoji Hamada, a Japanese potter working in England. Hamada taught him how to paint using Japanese brushes to create bold marks on the surface of pots.

### Biography: William Staite Murray (1881–1962)

William Staite Murray trained at Camberwell College of Art, London. He taught pottery at the Royal College of Art between 1926 and 1940. He was a member of the Seven and Five Society, along with Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore.

### William Staite Murray and Kettle's Yard

Jim Ede was a friend of William Staite Murray and wrote an article in the magazine *Artwork* in 1928 that discussed the artist's pottery as fine art rather than craft. This greatly pleased Staite Murray, who gave Jim *The Heron* in gratitude for the article and his enthusiasm. Jim writes in his book about the forming of Kettle's Yard, *A Way of Life*, that the pot was broken by artist David Jones when he came to visit the Ede's in London. It was subsequently mended with gold by Staite Murray, giving him the chance to use the Japanese technique of repairing broken pottery, Kintsugi.



Elisabeth Vellacott, *Bare Trees and Hills*, 1960 (circa), drawing, graphite on paper, 369 x 384mm

### Biography: Elisabeth Vellacott (1905–2002)

Vellacott attended the Royal College of Art between 1925 and 1929. At the beginning of her career she worked as a textile and theatre designer. After the second world war she moved away from design to concentrate on drawing and painting. She exhibited regularly in London and held retrospective exhibitions at Kettle's Yard in 1981 and 1995.

## ELISABETH VELLACOTT, BARE TREES AND HILLS

*Bare Trees and Hills* is a graphite drawing of a delicate line of bare trees, flanked by steep hills in the foreground and background. The paper is partitioned diagonally by the upward-sweeping lines of the hills. The various tree types are differentiated through shading and cross-hatching. *Bare Trees and Hills* is positioned to the right of the window of 'The Bridge,' an area reserved for various plant forms and natural objects.

### MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE

► Drawing from nature is at the core of Vellacott's practice. Her work is predominantly observational; she often drew in situ and offers a single viewpoint in her drawings. Vellacott spent time tracing the rhythms and delicate movement of nature in tonal and fragile lines.

### Elisabeth Vellacott and Kettle's Yard

Jim Ede met Elisabeth Vellacott when he moved to Cambridge in 1957 and the pair remained firm friends until Jim's death in 1990. Jim's arrival in Cambridge with his collection of 20th century art was a huge inspiration to Vellacott. She recalls that: '*when Jim first arrived in Cambridge few people... were aware that they lacked any place where they could see and enjoy any contemporary 20th Century Art... Jim was a beam of light to us.*'<sup>18</sup>

Jim Ede greatly admired Vellacott's work, finding in it formal and spiritual qualities which reminded him of Indian and Chinese art. Of *Bare Trees and Hills* he wrote: '*It was a great joy to me to find an artist who could leave untouched a large area of paper and yet keep it full. Never in the drawing itself does her paper become empty, so subtly does she approach it with her pencil.*'<sup>19</sup>

# CHRISTOPHER WOOD, *LANDSCAPE AT VENCE*

*Landscape at Vence – Little White House*, 1927, is a small painting of a house that is almost hidden by trees in a wooded valley. The painting is displayed above the toilet in Jim’s bathroom. There is a small Alfred Wallis painting of a boat positioned underneath the work, together with various ceramic and glassware objects. The canvas is tempered with bold brushstrokes that evoke the texture of trees and the surrounding woodland. Wood’s use of vivid blues and browns suggests an ethereal quality of light, hinting that the sun has either just set or is just about to rise.

## Links and Associations

### GEOGRAPHY AND PLACE

- ▶ Vence is situated in the hills of the Alps in the Cote d’Azur region of southern France. Wood spent large parts of the year travelling around Europe. He would frequently visit the south of France, taking the train from Paris to the Cote d’Azur.
- ▶ Many 20th century artists were inspired to paint the Cote d’Azur region. Both Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso were residents, and artists including Henri Lartigue, Fernand Leger and Jean Cocteau were drawn to the area.

### SCIENCE AND NATURE

- ▶ In *Landscape at Vence – Little White House*, Wood captures the time of day known as the ‘blue hour.’ This is the period of twilight when the sun is a particular distance below the horizon. During the blue hour the sky has a deep blue hue and colours appear saturated.
- ▶ Blue and red light frequencies are part of the visible light spectrum. Blue light waves are shorter than red light waves, and during the blue hour the longer red light waves pass straight into space, while the shorter blue light waves are scattered, or diffused, in the earth’s atmosphere.



Christopher Wood, *Landscape at Vence – Little White House*, 1927,  
Oil on canvas, 260 x 450 mm

### ART ASSOCIATIONS

- ▶ Wood experimented with a variety of styles and techniques, learning from his English and French contemporaries. In *Landscape at Vence, Little White House* Wood uses Cubist techniques to gently distort the landscape.
- ▶ Wood spent time in Paris from 1921–1924 and met many significant artists whilst in the French capital. In 1923 he met Pablo Picasso, whom he regarded as ‘the greatest painter of the day.’ Picasso visited Wood’s studio and gave him advice on his work.
- ▶ Wood greatly admired the work of Vincent Van Gogh. He experimented with a variety of techniques that bear close resemblance to Van Gogh’s use of strong colours and fierce brushwork. The use of strident blues and textured patterns in *Landscape at Vence – Little White House* are good examples of this.

## Biography: Christopher Wood (1901–1930)

Wood was born in Liverpool in 1901. Through extended visits to Paris between 1921 and 1924 he came into contact with many significant artists of the European avant-garde. In Britain he became close friends with Ben and Winifred Nicholson and painted with them in Cumberland in 1928. That year he also met Alfred Wallis on a visit to St Ives. During his Parisian years Wood was introduced to opium by Cocteau. He became addicted to it and was under the drug's influence when he was killed by a train at Salisbury station in 1930.

## Christopher Wood and Kettle's Yard

Ben Nicholson introduced Christopher Wood to Jim Ede in 1926. Wood and Ede quickly became good friends and were in regular correspondence between 1927 and 1930. Ede was greatly saddened by the death of Wood. His appreciation of Wood's art, his efforts on behalf of the artist and the scope of his collection of works by Wood grew significantly after the artist's death. Jim described Wood's artwork as follows: *'his work is the crystallisation of a deep enjoyment of fundamental things – and his ideas become alive – so living that when we see a place in one of his paintings you immediately wish to go there – you are there.'*<sup>20</sup>

## Discussions and Activities

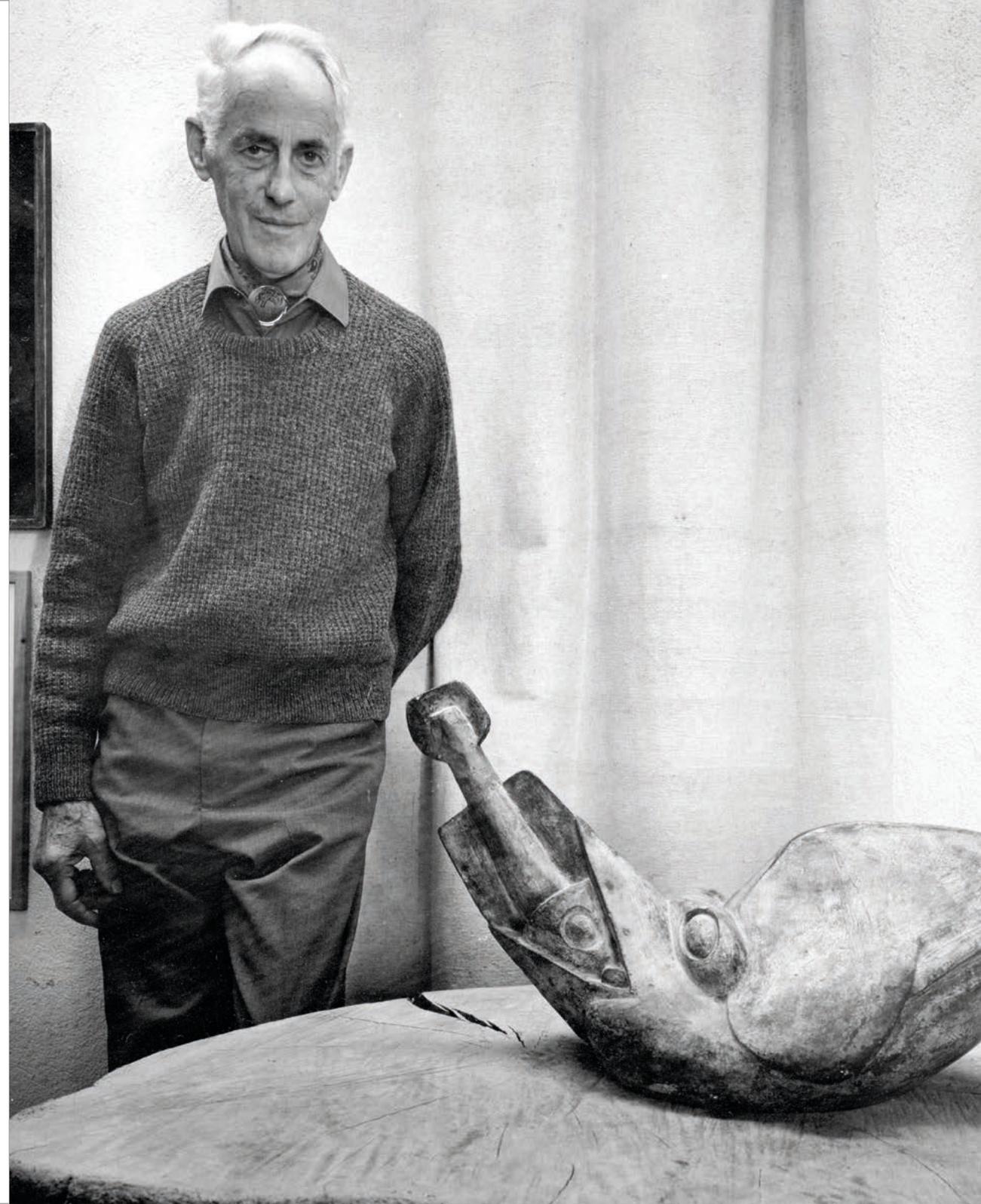
### EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ How many different colours and patterns can you see in this painting?
- ▶ Who do you think may have lived in the little white house?
- ▶ What's your favourite time of day? Describe what happens to the light then.

### SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ What do you think Wood was trying to tell us about the landscape?
- ▶ What words would you use to describe brushstrokes in this painting?
- ▶ Write a short narrative based on this painting – Why is this house there? What is it like inside? How did you find it?

Jim with Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's *Bird Swallowing a Fish*, 1914,  
plaster and green paint, 330 x 580 x 270mm



# HENRI GAUDIER-BRZESKA

## BIRD SWALLOWING A FISH

*Bird Swallowing a Fish*, 1914, is a sculpture showing a large bird struggling to swallow a fish. Henri Gaudier-Brzeska was inspired by seeing a large sea bird wrestling with a writhing fish on the Serpentine lake in Hyde park, and immediately made a series of drawings from which he made this sculpture. The strong lines and clearly defined edges and planes create a clear sense of the bird's aggression and menace, but the fish's powerful stance also suggest that it is putting up a tough fight and may even claim victory. The simplified shapes and flattened planes show Gaudier-Brzeska's preoccupation with the tension between nature's organic forms and the mechanical forces dominating society and international relations in 1914.

The sculpture sits on a large piece of wood which Jim Ede found newly washed-up on a beach in the Scilly Isles. It came from the wreck of a cargo boat that had been shipping wood. Jim was delighted by the link between the bird and fish sculpture and the shipwrecked wood that it he had placed it upon.

### Links and Associations

#### MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

▶ Gaudier-Brzeska was committed to making sculpture through the technique of carving directly into stone. Like many other artists at the time, Gaudier-Brzeska felt this technique allowed a 'truth to materials' by embracing the natural physical properties of stone. However, Gaudier-Brzeska often had very little money, and at times could not afford to use expensive materials such as stone or bronze. For this sculpture, he carved plaster and then painted it to look like oxidised bronze.

▶ Although Gaudier-Brzeska felt very strongly about the importance of working directly with the material of a sculpture, after his death Jim Ede made a number of casts of his works, often in different materials than they were originally made from. These included 6 bronze casts of *Bird Swallowing a Fish*.

#### ART ASSOCIATIONS

▶ Gaudier-Brzeska was involved with a group of artists called the Vorticists, who aimed to capture the energy and dynamism of the modern world in their work. They were interested in the new forms of movement and power demonstrated by machinery. The name Vorticism draws on the word vortex, a central point of a whirling mass of fluid or air that pulls everything that surrounds it to the centre, in an inescapable and often destructive force.

▶ These interests can be seen clearly in the rigid and almost mechanical shapes in *Bird Swallowing a Fish*. The striking resemblance between the fish and a type of hand grenade used in the early 20th century also echoes the tensions preceding the outbreak of World War One, and foreshadow the destructive use that these mechanical forces would be put to during the war.

### Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Kettle's Yard

Gaudier-Brzeska's work is central to the Kettle's Yard collection. Through his role at the Tate Gallery, Jim oversaw the gifting and purchase of Gaudier-Brzeska's entire estate after his partner Sophie Brzeska died without a will. Few of his colleagues at the Tate or the National Museums were interested in the buying the work, so Jim bought most of it for himself for very little cost ("for a song"), and dedicated himself to championing what he described as Gaudier-Brzeska's 'genius'.<sup>21</sup>

In many ways, Gaudier-Brzeska and Jim Ede owe their success to one another – Jim's promotion of his work was central to Gaudier-Brzeska's later renown as a leading figure in modern British sculpture. Likewise, the money that Jim received from the sale of Gaudier-Brzeska's work to galleries across the world was a key source of funding for the establishment of Kettle's Yard.

## Henri Gaudier-Brzeska Sketches

During his short but prolific career, Gaudier-Brzeska produced hundreds of sketches, many of animals. A selection of these sketches are always on display in the attic of the Kettle's Yard House.

This is one of a series of sketches made by Gaudier-Brzeska in preparation for the construction of the sculpture. The sweeping pencil lines capture the rapidity and desperation of the struggle between the bird and the fish, and show Gaudier-Brzeska's initial steps towards translating this dynamic movement into sculptural form, using very few marks on the paper.



Sketch for *'Bird Swallowing a Fish'*, 1914,  
Graphite on paper, 315 x 480 mm

This ink study is far more detailed than Gaudier-Brzeska's preparatory sketches. Here he uses intricate cross-hatching, and has unusually included a plinth. This suggests that the drawing may have been made after the sculpture was finished.



Sketch of *'Bird Swallowing a Fish'*, c. 1914,  
Pen and Indian ink on paper, 305 x 370 mm

## Biography: Henri Gaudier-Brzeska 1891–1915

Henri Gaudier was born in St Jean de Braye, near Orléans, France, in October 1891. Gaudier never had any artistic training, but sketched constantly, filling sketchbooks with his observations of everyday life. Aged 19 he decided to devote himself to becoming an artist. In 1911 he moved to London with his partner, Sophie Brzeska, and he added her name to his own. He worked in isolation until he met the writer Middleton Murray in 1912, and subsequently built up a circle of artists and intellectuals including Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis and T.E. Hulme. He became involved in Pound and Lewis's Vorticist group, contributing to the two issues of their magazine *Blast*. Gaudier-Brzeska lived in London for three and a half years and produced thousands of drawings and over one hundred sculptures. In 1914 he joined the French army and fought in the First World War. He was killed in action in 1915 when he was 23 years old.

## Discussions and Activities

### EARLY-LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ How would you describe the bird?
- ▶ Look carefully at the sculpture and imagine what might have happened next between the bird and the fish.
- ▶ Make a drawing or a sculpture of something you saw in the park and thought was exciting.

### SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ How do you feel about Jim making casts of Gaudier-Brzeska's work?
- ▶ Look closely at the sketches that Gaudier-Brzeska made before and after making this sculpture (find them in this book or in the attic at Kettle's Yard). Now look back at the sculpture – can you notice anything about it that you didn't see first time?
- ▶ Do you think this sculpture is a celebration of energetic forces, or a warning about something? Why?



# CONTEMPORARY RESPONSES TO NATURE

## KATIE PATERSON

*"The huge history of geological time is held within the tiny bead, almost like a sense of a cell containing DNA which holds this code of life within it"*<sup>22</sup>

Katie Paterson

*Fossil Necklace* is a string of 170 fossils that have been cut and carved into spherical beads. Each bead modestly represents a major event in the evolution of life through a vast expanse of geological time. From the mono-cellular origins of life on earth to the shifting of the continents, the extinction of the Cretaceous period triggered by a falling meteorite, to the first flowering of flowers, it charts the development of our species and those alongside us. Each fossil has been individually selected by the artist from all corners of the globe, and then painstakingly carved into a miniature world in a secondary process of excavation.

### What are fossils?

Fossils are the preserved remains of plants or animals. There are two main types of fossils: body fossils and trace fossils. Body fossils are the preserved remains of a plant or animal's body. Examples in the necklace include the leg bone of a mammoth, a whale's ear bone, and a bee that has been fossilised in amber. Trace fossils provide us with evidence of an animal's activity, such as footprints or nests. Examples in the necklace include a fossilised burrow from Namibia and Presbyornis bird tracks. The necklace also contains living fossils. These are organisms that have remained essentially unchanged from earlier geologic times such as the *Mississippiensis* alligator.

Katie Paterson, *Fossil Necklace*, 2013,  
Fossil beads, variable dimensions

## How was it made?

The idea for the necklace came about when Katie Paterson was working as a visiting artist at The Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, a genomics and genetics research institute located just outside Cambridge. There, she met scientists who were mapping the evolution of species through DNA sequencing. Paterson became interested in the idea that there is a tree of life that links all living and extinct species together right back to the origin of life, and that this history can be studied through both fossils and through DNA.

Paterson began the project by learning everything she could about fossils, then started collecting fossils from international fossil fairs, auctions and magazines. She even found some of them herself. She then categorised the fossils by geological era and mapped them onto a drawing of the necklace. Next, the fossils were sent to an expert stone cutter who fashioned the fossils into small cubes then hand carved them into tiny round beads. He then drilled a small hole through the centre of each bead so that it could be incorporated into the necklace.

## Katie Paterson Biography

Katie Paterson was born in Glasgow in 1981, and now lives and works in Berlin. She studied at the Edinburgh College of Art and has a Masters degree in Fine Art from the Slade School of Art. Paterson's work focuses on nature, ecology, geology and cosmology, and her work are simultaneously minute and intergalactic in scale. Time and space are compressed into concise, poetic gestures. Katie Paterson has exhibited internationally and in 2014 she became the first artist to send an art work to the International Space Station.



Katie Paterson, *Beads from Fossil Necklace*, 2013

## Discussions and Activities

### EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ What different colours and textures can you see here?
- ▶ Do you think each bead would feel different to touch? How would they feel if you held them: warm, cold, rough smooth?
- ▶ Necklaces have been around almost as long as there have been humans to make them. Why do you think people wear necklaces?

### SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ Do you think that there is a social or political message here about the connectedness of life on Earth?
- ▶ Imagine you were going to chart the evolution of your own life through a series of beads made from objects in your house. Sketch out a plan for a necklace like the one Paterson used for *Fossil Necklace* and include information about what each bead would be made from. You might start with a bead made from the cot you had when you were a baby, and then a first toy, and so on.

## ANDY HOLDEN

*".. for an object to work it has to have more than one set of reasons for coming into being... let's take the stalagmite... On the one hand it's a thing from the trapdoor, or a dripping down, on the other... a sense of duration, geological time, an honesty, a weight and bulk, corporeality, something that requires you to pull a muscle when you try to move it... It has to be all these things at once to make the thing itself appear."*<sup>23</sup> Andy Holden

Andy Holden's work frequently explores the relationship between artifact and artifice, between the authentic and the fake. His stalagmites are totemic, organic structures. Created through the laborious process of dripping coloured plaster, each layer takes one hour to form and set before the next can be applied.

For Holden, these sculptures are the manifestations of studio time – the slow building up of an idea, the thought processes which happen in the studio. Here the forms reveal the time of their own construction. They are authentic and honest; the nature of the material dictates the time it takes to construct. At times these constructions are cut into slices with a saw, excavated, and presented like geological artifacts on plinths or in cases, revealing the strata inside.

As the quote above demonstrates, Holden's interest in the stalagmites goes well beyond the time invested in their manufacture. His interest also extends to an exploration of the change of meaning that occurs when a stalagmite is cut down to a cross-section, becoming an 'artifact'.

Andy Holden, *Untitled Slice*, 2008, plaster.



## Discussions and Activities

### TIME MARKERS

Andy Holden uses plaster as a marker for the time spent on an activity, but can you see the evidence of time spent on artworks? For example, do your drawings change the more time you spend on them?

During the visit, choose an object or exhibit to draw.

Give yourself 30 seconds to draw it.

On a separate piece of paper, spend 3 minutes drawing the object.

See the difference?

Did you notice more about the object when you drew for longer?

### Andy Holden, Biography

Andy Holden was born in Blunham in Bedfordshire in 1982. He graduated from Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2005. He is a multi-media artist and musician with a varied body of work that utilises a variety of techniques. He works with plaster, bronze, ceramics, found objects, paint, video, sound and performance. His pieces combine a childlike appreciation of the world with a bleak appreciation of the burdens of existence. Some of the recurring themes in his work are time, nature, history, memory and nostalgia.

Exhibitions of Holden's work have included *Chewy Cosmos Thingly Time* at Kettle's Yard, 2011 and *Art Now: Andy Holden* at Tate Britain, 2010. Other works include stage adaptations and performance lectures. He co-runs the record label Lost Toys Records and has released several records with his band Grubby Mitts.

## ANTHEA HAMILTON, Reimagines Kettle's Yard, 2017

*'In the house, I was thinking about it specifically in the journey that you take to the library; there are several natural objects – for example there's a seed pod that looks like bird and I remember having a sense of 'ah that's it!' I just like the beauty of these natural objects – it's the pull that I have towards them, it's the sharing them and the looking at them and understanding how they can be displaced...so maybe merely handling them and positioning them in such a way that you can make them into performative elegant objects'*<sup>24</sup> Anthea Hamilton

Anthea Hamilton is an artist renowned for her sculptures and installations that are inspired by contemporary culture and incorporate references from the worlds of fashion, design and cinema. While Kettle's Yard was closed for a building project Hamilton was invited to reimagine the Kettle's Yard collection for an exhibition at the Hepworth Wakefield gallery in Wakefield.

In her research visits to Kettle's Yard, Hamilton was struck by the ways in which the care and attention afforded to the natural objects in the house can help the visitor to understand Jim Ede's intentions for Kettle's Yard. For Hamilton, the careful placement of all objects, natural and man-made, was an invitation that, *'everything is to be noticed, everything is to be looked at.'*<sup>25</sup>

For the exhibition, Hamilton 'extracted' elements from the house. She repurposed the set of 74 stones from the pebble spiral in Jim's bedroom. Hanging the stones from strings high above in the gallery she re-made them from the carefully ordered spiral into a mobile, finely balanced in a hand stung net, but chaotic in its order. By displacing them, Hamilton gave them a new energy, perhaps that of stars or returning them to the waves.



Installation of *Anthea Hamilton Reimagines Kettle's Yard*, Hepworth Wakefield, 2017

Hamilton commissioned a set of five huge woven grass spiral mats that were enlarged versions of a mat that is found at the bottom of the spiral staircase in the entrance to the Kettle's Yard cottages and previously in the attic space. Positioned on both floor and walls, these mats gave interesting backdrops to the objects she selected to exhibit. The mats helped to position the artworks in the space of the empty white gallery and bring attention too, as well as disrupt, the scale of objects positioned with them. The strong smell of the freshly drying grasses pervaded the entire gallery and brought the element of living nature to the gallery space much in the same way that the fragrant citrine peletoniums and fresh cut flowers do to the house.



Installation of *Anthea Hamilton Reimagines Kettle's Yard*, Hepworth Wakefield, 2017

### **Anthea Hamilton Biography**

Anthea Hamilton was born in London in 1978. She has a BA from Leeds University and graduated with a Masters degree from London's Royal College of Art in 2005. She creates ambiguous, multi-media theatrical environments that surprise the viewer with unexpected materials, scale and humour. Hamilton wants us to have a physical, bodily response to her work, and talks about being strongly influenced by the early 20th century French dramatist Antonin Artaud and his call for the 'physical knowledge of images.' Her work explores our associations to surreal and seductive cultural imagery while examining the histories of art, film and performance. Hamilton exhibits internationally and was one of the four artists to be nominated for the Turner Prize 2016 at Tate Britain.



# MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR VISIT

In the following pages you will find ways of using the information about the artists to create interesting drawing, writing and discussion activities for use in the house, or back in the classroom. There are also a range of online resources for you to make the most of your visit to Kettle's Yard.



# TALKING ABOUT ART

## Guiding a group discussion

**LOOK:** spend time generously and allow the group to really explore the artwork.

What are we looking at? What can you see? What have you noticed?

**QUESTION:** others may draw our attention to something we have missed.

What would you like to know more about? Imagine interviewing the artwork, what would you ask of it?

**THEORISE:** use the knowledge of the group to address some of their proposed questions.

– does anyone have a theory for why the artist carved in plaster / – why the colours are smudgy / – why the picture is low on the wall?

What other clues can we find (in or near the artwork) to answer our question?

**INCORPORATE NEW INFORMATION:** Our understanding may shift as new ideas are introduced, but allowing your group time to discuss and uncover the answers will have a greater impact than declaring them at the beginning.

– How has your understanding of the artwork changed from when you first encountered it?

**CONNECT:** encourage participants to make a personal link – How does the artwork make you feel? Does it remind you of anything you have seen before?

**EXTEND:** encourage participants to push their thinking and add more detail to initial responses. Could you explain that a little further? Why do you think you've responded in that way?

## Springboards for discussion

**ARTWORK:** scale, materials, colour, texture, form, pattern, subject, abstraction.

**ARTIST:** intentions, interests, beliefs, nationality, dates, gender, influences.

**CONTEXT IN WHICH THE ARTWORK WAS CREATED:** social, political, historical, geographical, environmental, religious, cultural, artistic, technological factors.

**CONTEXT IN WHICH THE ARTWORK IS DISPLAYED:** how is the artwork shown (lighting, plinths and frames, labels); where is it (gallery, park, street) and what impact does that have; how does it relate to other artworks and objects nearby?



# DRAWING ACTIVITIES

## Activities to try at Kettle's Yard or in the Classroom

**BLIND DRAWING:** draw an object without looking at the page. It can be either self-regulated or holding the paper to your chest, focusing all of your attention on the subject of your drawing.

**DRAW AGAINST THE CLOCK:** draw the same object in two minutes, one minute, 30 seconds, 10 seconds. What happens?

**SINGLE-LINE WHIP:** draw without taking your pencil off the page.

**MASH-UPS:** combine the best of two objects/artworks to create something new.

**SMALL AND MIGHTY:** draw what others may have overlooked. Collect a page of chair legs, light switches, teacups, and little corners of artworks.

**CLOSE OBSERVATION:** choose a section of a room and capture every single detail.

**NEGATIVE SPACE:** draw the space around objects. Focus on light and shadow only.

**FROTTAGE:** using the side of a pencil to shade, collect the different textures in the house (wood grain, rough plaster, rugs). Follow up activity: cut up and collage the patterned paper. Go large – fill the page.



## WRITING ACTIVITIES

### Word and Image

**POETRY:** write a shape poem. Look at something in the house and draw its outline – for example a spiral of pebbles, a boat at sea, or a bowl of feathers. Write a poem which recreates the shape you have drawn and captures the mood, colours and feelings of the subject.

**NAMING:** go around the house and give objects names. A fine cup and saucer, for example, might be Lady Isabella Spendifera; a cushion might be Brenda, a pot might be Bob Boggis. Imagine that each one is writing an advertisement for a dating agency. How would they describe themselves? Fun loving? GSOH? Tall and handsome?

**NARRATIVE:** choose something in the house and tell its story. The story of a chair, for example, might start with a child planting an acorn which becomes a tree in a wood, which is then cut down and carved into a chair as a wedding present. The story of a rug might start with a silk worm; perhaps a group of women sit in a tent unravelling the silk and talking about where it will be sold and how much they'll get for it.

**INTERVIEW:** choose a sculpture or a person in a painting to interview. Think of questions that you'd like to ask, making them as varied as you can. Examples might be 'what are you afraid of?', 'what kind of music do you like?' or 'what are you thinking right now?'. What answers do you think they'd give?

**BOXES:** read Kit Wright's poem, "The Magic Box." Go round the house and choose things to put in a magic box. Include sensations, a smell, a touch, a colour that reminds you of a feeling. Say what your box is made of, and perhaps where and how it was made.



# BRINGING A GROUP TO KETTLE'S YARD

## Booking a Visit

Visiting Kettle's Yard is free, and you can choose from a variety of different activities and types of visits to suit your needs.

We offer introductory tours and drawing activities in the house and galleries for free to all UK-based state schools, and practical studio workshops with artists can be booked for an agreed fee. We tailor every visit and workshop to fit your requirements, and are always willing to provide additional access support. We have certain visit times in the mornings set aside outside of opening hours exclusively for schools, and self-led visits can be booked in advance during opening hours too.

It is essential to book any group visit in advance (including self-led groups) using the booking form on our website. We will get in touch to discuss your visit further and then send a booking confirmation with final details. Further information about visits and bookings, including transport and coach parking, can be found at our schools webpage [www.kettlesyard.co.uk/schools](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/schools)

You will also find a range of resources for teachers including artist and exhibition teachers packs on our website.

## Teachers Programme

We offer a range of activities to support teachers make the most of Kettle's Yard. This includes introductory tours for new exhibitions and a regular programme of workshops and activities to inspire your own practice and support you to bring new ideas into the classroom.

More information can be found at [www.kettlesyard.co.uk/schools](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/schools)

## Stay in Touch

To stay updated on all opportunities for schools and teachers at Kettle's Yard, join our mailing list by emailing [learning@kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk](mailto:learning@kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk)



## ONLINE RESOURCES

Our website hosts a wide range of information about Kettle's Yard, including film and video content, a what's on guide to activities and events and visiting information. **GOTO:** [www.kettlesyard.co.uk/](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/)

### Useful links when planning a group visit.

**A HANDFUL OF OBJECTS:** [www.kettlesyard.co.uk/handfulofobjects/](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/handfulofobjects/)

Explore five key objects from the collection through film, sound, images and 360-degree views

**KETTLE'S YARD VIRTUAL TOUR:** [www.kettlesyard.co.uk/tour/](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/tour/)

Take a look around the interior of the house with close up images and contextual information about Kettle's Yard's history, objects and artworks in each room of the house

**RECOLLECTION: ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVE:**

[www.kettlesyard.co.uk/collection/recollection/](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/collection/recollection/)

Listen to Kettle's Yard creator Jim Ede, artists, visitors and staff talk about Kettle's Yard. Explore the clips by interviewee or theme, and view a timeline of Kettle's Yard history with archival images

**TEACHERS RESOURCES:** [www.kettlesyard.co.uk/learn/resources/](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/learn/resources/)

Find a range of teachers packs including information on current and past exhibitions as well as free to download learning publications such as *Light*, the first of this series of three resources and *Making Conversations*, an activity book aimed at Year 3 students to improve literacy.

**COLLECTION DATABASE:**

[www.kettlesyard.co.uk/collection/collection-database/](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/collection/collection-database/)

Information about all the artworks listed in the collection with images and artist biographies

# FOOTNOTES

- 1 Jim Ede, *A Way of Life*, Cambridge University Press, originally printed in 1984, pp.17–18.
- 2 Jim Ede, undated manuscript, Kettle's Yard Archives
- 3 Peter Khoroché, 'Ben Nicholson the European', in: S. Barassi (ed.), *The Roundhouse of International Spirits*, Kettle's Yard, 2009, p.77.
- 4 Virginia Button, *Ben Nicholson*, Tate, London, 2007, p.32.
- 5 H.S. Ede, *A Way of Life*, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, 2007 (1984), p.227.
- 6 Sebastiano Barassi discusses "the role of natural objects as tokens of the Divine perceptible in everyday life" in his essay, 'Kettle's Yard: museum or way of life?', in: P. Sparke, B. Martin and T. Keeble (eds.), *The Modern Period Room*, Routledge 2006, p.132.
- 7 H.S. Ede, *A Way of Life*, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, 2007 (1984), p.191.
- 8 H.S. Ede, unpublished typescript, undated, Kettle's Yard Archive.
- 9 Steve Round, *The Penguin Guide to the Superstitions of Britain and Ireland*, Penguin, 2006
- 10 Henry Moore, *Henry Moore: Writings and Conversations*, Alan Wilkinson (ed), published by Ashgate Publishing, Hants, 2002: p.198
- 11 Henry Moore, *Ibid*, p.198
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# COLOPHON

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# NATURE

**a learning resource for Kettle's Yard**

This learning resource is designed to help teachers and educators engage their students with the house and collection at Kettle's Yard. It includes cross-curricula information about objects and artworks from the collection, examples of how contemporary artists have responded to Kettle's Yard and the theme of Nature, as well as useful ideas for supporting groups during visits and leading progression activities back in the classroom.

**KETTLE'S YARD**



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