

KETTLE'S YARD ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

Draft for review by Kettle's Yard Committee

Approved on: April 2025

Policy due for review: 2030

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

1 Mission statement

The mission of Kettle's Yard is to contribute to society by inspiring and engaging audiences through art, learning and research of the highest quality.

2 Existing collections

2.1 Permanent Collection

The founding collection of Kettle's Yard consists of the artworks, ceramics, glassware, textiles, natural and domestic objects that belonged to H.S. 'Jim' Ede and his wife Helen, which – along with the Kettle's Yard house – were gifted to the University of Cambridge in 1966.

The priority for the Collection is stated in the 1966 Memorandum of Gift, the purpose of which was:

*'to establish a permanent Collection in which the said contents and works of art will be maintained together for the exhibition in their present setting. The manner in which and the period for which the Collection shall be thus maintained shall subject as herein mentioned be within the discretion of the University who shall at times have power to sell, lend, part with or exchange, any of the items in the Collection without impairing the general nature of the Collection using the proceeds of any sale for the purchase of suitable additions to or otherwise for the benefit of the Collection.'*¹

The permanent nature of the display of art, objects and furnishings arranged by Jim Ede in the historic house, means that Kettle's Yard does not actively pursue acquisitions, although provision to add to the Collection is outlined in the Statutes and Ordinances of the University of Cambridge, which states that the Kettle's Yard Committee will:

¹ Memorandum of gift of monies and works of art; with carbon copy, 1966-11-28, GBR/0265/UA/Endow.IV.1, Endow.IV.1. Cambridge University Library.

‘decide, after consultation with the Curator, whether to accept, decline, or refer to the Council of the University of Cambridge for decision, gifts, bequests, or objects offered for purchase, for the benefit of the Collection’²

Acquisitions began during Jim Ede’s period as Curator (1966-1973) in discussion with the Committee. From 1973 to 2025, under the tenure of subsequent Curators and Directors of Kettle’s Yard, over 400 artworks have entered the collection by gift or bequest and, very occasionally, by purchase.

2.2 Archive and Library

The Kettle’s Yard Archive preserves the Papers of H.S. ‘Jim’ Ede and other smaller related collections as well as the institutional records of Kettle’s Yard.

The Kettle’s Yard Library preserves books and other published materials originally owned by Jim and Helen Ede, some of which are part of the permanent displays in the house. Subsequently acquired publications are intended to support staff, students and visitors in research and engagement with the house, collections and programmes at Kettle’s Yard.

2.3 Kettle’s Yard Art for Students Collection

The Art for Students Collection comprises works available for students at the University of Cambridge or Anglia Ruskin University to borrow through the Art for Students scheme (previously known as the Student Picture Loan scheme) and forms a separate collection outside the scope and not subject to this Acquisitions and Disposals Policy.

3 Criteria governing acquisitions

With reference to the criteria governing acquisitions detailed above (2.1), today what is deemed of ‘benefit’ to the Collection at Kettle’s Yard are acquisitions that reflect and enrich the nature of the founding collection, and which support our mission and organisational values of openness, creativity, collaboration, insight and sustainability.

All decisions regarding acquisitions will take into account the needs of the collection, the condition of the work, the costs of conserving and storing the work and the potential for display. In the rare case of works proposed for purchase, the availability of appropriate funding will also be considered, and whether the price represents the best possible value to Kettle’s Yard.

² *Statutes and Ordinances of the University of Cambridge*, Section 8: ‘Other Institutions Under the Supervision of the General Board’, pp. 662-685. Amended by Notices (*Cambridge Reporter*, 2018-19, pp. 27 and 652).

Kettle's Yard occasionally collects painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, print and time-based media as it pertains to the areas of collecting defined below (3.1 to 3.4) as well as Archive and Library material (3.5). These defined areas of collecting continue precedents set by Jim Ede and patterns established by curators and directors of Kettle's Yard after the period of the Edes' residence (1957-1973).

3.1 Works by Collection artists

The collection includes substantial holdings of work by certain artists through which visitors and researchers may gain a depth of understanding of the artist's practice and an insight into their place within histories of art not otherwise accessible. The role played by Jim Ede in advancing the careers of these artists is significant, and related materials are held in the archive. Works by such artists are considered of interest.

3.2 Twentieth century and contemporary British art

British art encompasses work by artists defined by their contribution to the history and development of art in Britain rather than by nationality. In the support offered by Jim Ede to artists, which encouraged the flourishing of new forms of art in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s, is the principle of support for younger artists working with new ideas, methods and materials. Works that enable us to continue this commitment are considered of interest to Kettle's Yard. Especially artworks that link to the programme of modern and contemporary exhibitions at Kettle's Yard since the new galleries were opened in 1970.

3.3 Twentieth century and contemporary international art

International travel and cross-cultural exchange was a feature of Jim Ede's experience. Particular places held special resonance for Jim Ede – including India, Italy, France, Morocco and the United States of America – and the influence of these places can be observed within the Collection and its mode of display. Works that relate to and extend our understanding of the resonance of art and culture from these regions for the Edes are considered of interest to Kettle's Yard.

3.4 Transfers from the Art for Students collection

Kettle's Yard bears the risk of works loaned to students as part of the Art for Students scheme. Over time, the increasing value of some artworks has necessitated a transfer into the main Collection, subject to the formal agreement of the Kettle's Yard Committee.

3.5 Archive and Library items

Kettle's Yard Archive selectively collects documentation in all media, including born-digital assets, that relate to Jim and Helen Ede and their circle and artists represented within the Collection. This includes correspondence, diaries, notebooks, sketches, models, maquettes, prints, proofs, photographs, records of sale or exhibition of works, administrative records, press cuttings, some printed ephemera and publications, posters and audio-visual material. Kettle's Yard Library selectively acquires through gift or purchase a range of published material including books, exhibition catalogues, printed journals and ephemera that relate to Kettle's Yard and artists represented within its collections or programmes.

4 Limitations on collecting

Kettle's Yard recognises its responsibility, in acquiring works for the collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

5 Collecting policies of other museums

Kettle's Yard will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisation, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. Joint acquisitions may be considered. Specific reference is made to:

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
The Tate Gallery

6 Acquisitions not covered

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the Kettle's Yard Committee, having regard to the interests of other museums.

7 Criteria governing disposals

The Kettle's Yard Committee does not seek to dispose of any objects from the Permanent Collection that were part of Jim and Helen Ede's gift to the

University of Cambridge. The primary circumstances in which the Kettle's Yard Committee may consider disposing of a work of art acquired by subsequent curators for the Collection are:

- The disposal of an object which has become useless by reason of damage, physical deterioration or infestation.
- The disposal of an object which is unsuitable for retention and can be disposed of without detriment to the interests of students or other members of the public.
- A transfer by way of sale, gift or exchange to another Accredited Museum, where the Kettle's Yard Committee feels the object would be more appropriately housed.

In assessing potential disposals, the process outlined below (Section 11) will always be followed.

STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

8 Finance

With reference to the acquisitions policy, the Kettle's Yard Committee seek to make best use of all other available funding sources including Kettle's Yard Patrons circles, Kettle's Yard Friends, restricted and unrestricted Trust funds; grants from funding bodies such as Art Fund, National Heritage Memorial Fund and National Heritage Lottery Fund; legacies and bequests; donations from private individuals, foundations and corporate supporters and any other sources of funding which from time to time may become available.

9 Acquisition process

Acquisitions to the Collection may be made by gift, bequest, allocation or transfer, and occasionally by purchase, fractional ownership or exchange. All works proposed for acquisition, including works proposed as promised gifts for future acquisition, are researched and discussed by the Director, Assistant Director and the Senior Curator, House & Collection, and involving other specialist staff as required. Acquisition proposals are then taken forward for decision to the Kettle's Yard Committee, which meets quarterly.

9.1 Collection care

Recommendations from conservators are taken into account prior to agreement to acquire. Due consideration is given to the advice of conservators but the final decision on whether or not to acquire a work rests with the Senior Curator (House & Collection), the Director and the Kettle's Yard Committee.

In general, the Kettle's Yard Committee acquires works which are considered to have an 'indefinite' life. However, exceptions to this will be made. For example, when deterioration or degradation of materials is acknowledged by the artist as being acceptable; when the works are made in media which may be replicated by mechanical processes, for example film and video; or when the Director and Kettle's Yard Committee consider a work so important that a high risk of deterioration is acceptable.

No work will be acquired which puts at risk other works in the Collection.

9.2 Due Diligence

- a. Kettle's Yard will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that Kettle's Yard can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- b. In particular, Kettle's Yard will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from 1 November 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, Kettle's Yard will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.
- d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, Kettle's Yard will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- e. Kettle's Yard will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures. In England, Northern Ireland and Wales the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.

- f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9.2a, 9.2b, 9.2c, or 9.2e will only be because Kettle's Yard is either:
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
 - acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
 - in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases, Kettle's Yard will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

- g. Kettle's Yard does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

9.3 Spoilation

Kettle's Yard will, in maintaining due diligence over acquisitions, research the ownership history of potential acquisitions, long-term and temporary loans with special scrutiny of the period of Nazi seizure and forced sales 1933–45.

Kettle's Yard will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

Any issues will be reported to the Kettle's Yard Committee and, if appropriate, referred to the Spoilation Advisory Panel.

9.4 Documentation of Acquisitions

Kettle's Yard will maintain acquisition and catalogue documentation that includes a work's inventory number (accession or temporary receipt number), legal status of the work, activity and history of the object within Kettle's Yard (e.g., a record of movement of the work), high resolution images of the work, loan and exhibition history, ownership history, copyright agreement, contractual history and legal agreements and credit line at the time of acquisition.

10 Management of archives

As Kettle's Yard holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

11 Disposal process

Any disposal must comply with the criteria and limitations set out in Section 7 above. Potential de-accessioning causes are initiated by the Senior Curator, House & Collection, for discussion by the Committee.

Disposal preliminaries

- a. The Kettle's Yard Committee will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, Kettle's Yard has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The Kettle's Yard Committee therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in Kettle's Yard's Collection.
- c. Kettle's Yard will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
- d. When disposal of a Collection object is being considered, Kettle's Yard will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons, the procedures outlined in paragraphs 11g-11s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below in paragraphs 11g-11m and 11s will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the Kettle's Yard Committee will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:
 - the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection,
 - the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit),
 - the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored.

The disposal decision-making process

- g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for Kettle's

Yard's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by Kettle's Yard will also be sought.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

- h. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the Kettle's Yard Committee acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

Use of proceeds of sale

- i. Any monies received by the Kettle's Yard Committee from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the relevant Museum Development organisation.
- j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

Disposal by gift or sale

- k. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal*, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- m. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be

expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, Kettle's Yard may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

- n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that Kettle's Yard will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited Museum. The Kettle's Yard Committee will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- o. In cases where the Kettle's Yard Committee wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 11a-11d and 11g-11h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 11p-11s.
- p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited Museum, other Accredited Museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the *Museums Journal* and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in Kettle's Yard's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Documenting disposal

- s. Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

12 Policy review procedure

The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

The regional Museum Development agency will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.