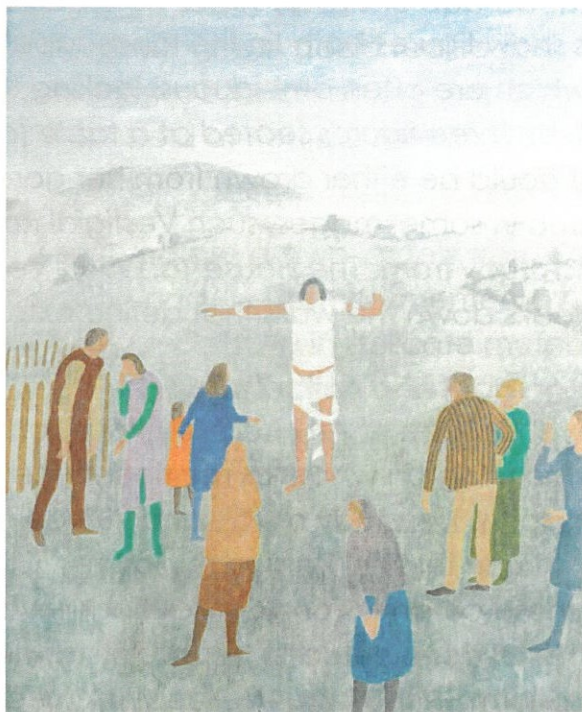


Elisabeth Vellacott

Figures in the Landscape

2 November 2016-15 January 2017 at Murray Edwards College

Curated by Kettle's Yard and New Hall Art Collection as part of **Kettle's Yard In New Places and Spaces** – a programme celebrating the 50th anniversary of Jim Ede's gift to Kettle's Yard to the University of Cambridge.



Lazarus, 1975

A newly commissioned text by William J Simmons accompanies the exhibition

Elisabeth Vellacott (1905-2002) had her first solo show aged 60 and painted her last work aged 92. Her detailed chalk and pencil studies of rock formations, trees and water, document her travels across the British Isles. It is these works that have received most critical attention since the artist's death in 2002. This display showcases a group of figurative paintings and sketches often overlooked that remain a distinctive and less traditional part of her art practice.

The works show figures both 'in the landscape' and interiors, which are often ambiguous, lacking formal perspective. *Three figures seated at a table* (date unknown) could be either drawn from her garden or kitchen, and in some images, such *Vestigial Room* (1963) and *Study from 'The House'* (c.1990), Vellacott literally breaks down the walls that define exterior and interior.

At the Royal College of Art (1925-29) Vellacott studied with Tom Monnington who was married to the artist Winifred Knights. Her study of 15th and 20th century paintings, Indian textiles, Persian miniatures, Chinese and Japanese ceramics and Serge Diaghilev's ballet productions all contributed to her understanding of colour and form. In the 1930s Vellacott moved to Cambridge, where she had spent part of her childhood, and worked as a designer and printer of textiles. She often designed sets and costumes for the

Cambridge University Musical Society with her friend Gwen Raverat. After World War Two Vellacott moved away from design to concentrate on drawing and painting and was a founding member of the Cambridge Society of Painters and Sculptors in 1954.

Vellacott met Jim Ede, the creator of Kettle's Yard in the late 1950s. After visiting her studio they became friends and Ede began to purchase her drawings. Ede said 'never in the drawing itself does her paper become empty, so subtly does she approach it with her pencil. No photograph could realise this'. Vellacott exhibited regularly in London and retrospective exhibitions were held at Kettle's Yard in 1981, 1995 and 2005.

The works displayed are drawn largely from Kettle's Yard's Collection and are complemented by *Vestigial Room*, an exquisite painting in delicate muted colours from the Arts Council Collection and *Man and Cat* kindly lent by Ms Gillian Recordon.

Elisabeth Vellacott & Gwen Raverat

Vellacott first met Gwen Raverat 1934 when they were both involved in the Cambridge University Musical Society production of Handel's oratorio Jephtha. Despite Raverat being 20 years her senior, they become close friends. Raverat was already an

established member of the artistic scene in Cambridge as a renowned wood engraver and the author of *Period Piece*. The New Hall Art Collection contains one of Vellacott's tree studies and many works by Raverat and this year 18 works by Raverat have been bequeathed to the Collection by Ben Duncan and Dick Chapman. **These are currently displayed in the Jocelyn Bell Burnell room near to the Porter's Lodge (you are welcome to view them if the room is not in use).** Kettle's Yard's Collection holds an intimate portrait that Vellcote made of Raverat in 1954.

New Hall Art Collection at Murray Edwards College (University of Cambridge) is the world's second largest collection of modern and contemporary art created by women with over 450 works. It is of international, national and regional artistic and social importance, enabling viewers to trace movements in art over more than 60 years. It is open to the public daily.

Kettle's Yard was created by Jim Ede in 1957. It was gifted to the University of Cambridge in 1966. It is composed of a historic house containing Ede's renowned collection of over 1500 modern British and international artworks and other objects, and modern and contemporary exhibition galleries. Kettle's Yard is currently closed for a major capital project to enhance its spaces and facilities.



KETTLE'S YARD



Murray Edwards
College
University of Cambridge