

## Kettle's Yard acquires six works by Ben Nicholson in generous legacy gift

**Monday 8 December 2025**

Kettle's Yard is delighted to announce the acquisition of three paintings and two block printed fabrics by Ben Nicholson (1894–1982), alongside a mochaware jug from the artist's studio, recently gifted to the gallery by artist Angela Taunt through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme, administered by Arts Council England. The three paintings, *1929 (Kingwater Valley, Cumberland)*, *1965 (Kos – project for freestanding relief wall)* and *Sept' 55 (monte Oliveto)*, as well as the fabrics and jug, will be on display in the Kettle's Yard house for the next five years.

Ben Nicholson studied at the Slade School of Art and, during his formative years, travelled extensively in Europe and America. In the 1920s he began creating figurative and abstract works inspired by Post Impressionism and Cubism. In 1927, painting alongside his wife Winifred (née Roberts) and Christopher Wood, Nicholson developed a consciously naïve landscape style, influenced by Alfred Wallis. By 1933, Nicholson was living in Hampstead with sculptor Barbara Hepworth, who he married in 1938, and producing his first geometric reliefs in the highly abstract style for which he is most famous. Between 1939 and 1958, Nicholson lived in St. Ives in Cornwall, where other artists and critics had moved during the Second World War, including Naum Gabo and Adrian Stokes.

Ben Nicholson met Angela Verren Taunt at a Christmas party in Cambridge on 29 December 1971. Angela was a talented painter herself and had been a great admirer of Nicholson's work, eventually becoming his studio assistant during the last ten years of his life. Taunt and her husband Derek were also fundamental early supporters of Kettle's Yard, encouraging their networks of artists and friends to support the organisation in its formative years.



Ben Nicholson, 1965 (*Kos - project for freestanding wall*), 1965. Courtesy Kettle's Yard. Photo: Mark Dalton.

*1929 (Kingwater Valley, Cumberland)* reflects a key stage in Nicholson's artistic journey towards abstraction, relating to another early landscape by the artist in the Kettle's Yard collection, *1928 (Banks Head – Cumbrian Landscape)*. By contrast, *Sept' 55 (Monte Oliveto)* references a trip to Italy that the artist made with Cyril Reddihough, where the views of mountains informed his return to relief forms with colour. In this work Nicholson uses a sharp green-yellow. It relates to a later work in the collection at Kettle's Yard, *March 1962 (Argos)*, which forms part of an important constellation of works by Nicholson displayed in the house's 1970 modern extension. *1965 (Kos – project for freestanding relief wall)* was made following Ben Nicholson's architectural relief wall presentation at the third Documenta at Kassel in 1964, which Kettle's Yard founder Jim Ede travelled to see.

The linocut printed fabrics are two variants of Nicholson's *1933 (letters and numbers)*, and are rendered as bedspreads, providing Kettle's Yard with the opportunity to reintroduce the print into the house's attic space, where it was found during Jim and Helen Ede's lifetime. The 'Moon Jug' from Nicholson's studio corresponds to that depicted in the painting *1930 (plate, cup and jug)* in the Kettle's Yard collection, which hangs today in the lower extension.

These careful additions to the collections at Kettle's Yard will enable the gallery to tell a range of new stories, exploring the nature of Nicholson's artistic practice at key periods throughout his career, as well as Jim and Helen Ede's friendship with the artist over six decades. These acquisitions will also inform and inspire future learning programmes, building upon Kettle's Yard's long-term engagement with communities and schools in Cambridge.

Andrew Nairne, Director of Kettle's Yard said: *"We are delighted to be acquiring these outstanding works by Ben Nicholson, a renowned artist in the Kettle's Yard collection. This generous legacy gift from Angela Taunt will have an enduring impact; enabling us to tell more of Nicholson's story, further enriching the experience of visiting Kettle's Yard, and as a new resource for researchers."*

## Notes to Editors

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## About Kettle's Yard

Kettle's Yard, part of the University of Cambridge, is a leading gallery and unique house with a remarkable collection of 20th-century art. Its founders Jim and Helen Ede believed in art's ability to transform lives, a vision upheld today through critically acclaimed exhibitions, pioneering community and learning programmes, and research of the highest quality. Our aim is to offer an inspiring and enriching experience for everyone who visits. Find out more and get involved at: [www.kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk](http://www.kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk).

## About the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme

The Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) scheme is administered by Arts Council England. AIL allows those who have a bill of Inheritance Tax to pay the tax by transferring important or pre-eminent cultural, scientific or historic allocations to the nation. AIL is not a philanthropy scheme and items are not 'donated' to museum, library or archive: pre-eminent works are offered in lieu of tax. Material accepted under the scheme is allocated to public collections and is available for all. The Acceptance in Lieu Panel, chaired by Michael Clarke CBE, advises on whether property offered in lieu is of suitable importance (pre-eminent) and offered at a value which is fair to both nation and taxpayer.

## About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Our vision, set out in our strategy Let's Create, is that by 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. Between 2023 and 2026 we will have invested over £467million of public money from Government, alongside an estimated £250 million each year from The National Lottery, to help ensure that people in every part of the country have access to culture and creativity in the places where they live. Visit our website to learn more about our work: [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

## For further information and images

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Jug from the studio of Ben Nicholson, mid-19th century. Mochaware. Courtesy Kettle's Yard. Photo: Mark Dalton.



Ben Nicholson, 1929 (Kingwater Valley, Cumberland), 1929. Courtesy Kettle's Yard. Photo: Mark Dalton.



Ben Nicholson works at Kettle's Yard. Photo: Paul Allitt.