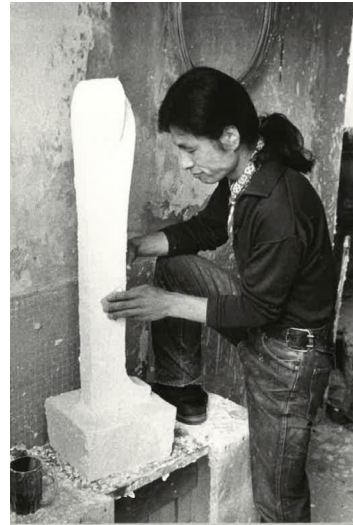


Kenji Umeda: A Journey

25 April – 6 September 2026



Kenji Umeda, photo courtesy of Jacqueline Benard

Kettle's Yard is pleased to present a new display in the Edlis Neeson Research Space celebrating the life and work of artist Kenji Umeda (1949 – 2019). From 25 April – 6 September, the presentation will bring together a 1977 marble sculpture by Umeda from the Kettle's Yard collection, observational sketches revealing the influence of the house and the collection on Umeda's practice, as well as archival materials detailing the artist's friendship with Kettle's Yard founder, Jim Ede (1895 – 1990).

Catalysed by the recent gift of never-before-seen drawings from the Umeda Family, this display will reveal the untold story of Umeda's career in Europe and the United States. Moving to Cambridge from Japan in the early 1970s, Umeda befriended Jim and Helen Ede and worked in the Kettle's Yard house. In helping to care for the collection, Umeda became drawn to the work of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, inspiring him to begin his sculptural practice in Carrara, Italy. Despite moving away from Cambridge, Umeda continued to be influenced by Kettle's Yard, describing Ede in a series of letters as his master, or teacher. From his studio in Italy, Umeda sent the Edes his marble sculpture *Spirality* (1977), which is still displayed in the Kettle's Yard house, adjacent to works by Lucie Rie and William Scott.

Alongside *Spirality*, the display will feature Umeda's 1982 *Cantos* print portfolio - his first professionally produced prints - as well as correspondence with Ede and a series of photographs and catalogues from the Kettle's Yard Archive. A number of Umeda's observational sketches will also be on display, which contain references to the house's fresh cut flowers, as well as the circular forms favoured by artist John Blackburn, whose work Ede collected at the time. These sketches will reveal the formative influence that the Ede's collection had upon Umeda.

Together, the works and archive materials in this display will illustrate an artists' progress shaped by a remarkable friendship and a shared devotion to the Kettle's Yard house.

From 19 March – 12 April 2026, a preview of 'Kenji Umeda: A Journey' will be staged in the Margaret Howell flagship store in Marylebone, London. The display will also include the presentation of clothes belonging to Umeda, presented in dialogue with the British designer's Spring/Summer 2026 collection.

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.

About Margaret Howell

Margaret Howell has quietly shaped British clothing design for over five decades. Her design philosophy is rooted in an appreciation for well-made, functional clothing. By reinterpreting classic designs with a softer structure, she creates modern clothing that balances ease of wear with the integrity of traditional craftsmanship.

For over 55 years, the brand has been committed to functional, enduring clothing for men and women, made from natural fabrics with meticulous attention to detail. Margaret Howell collections are available globally, with 11 stores across Europe, over 70 outlets in Japan and an international presence through discerning independent retailers.

MARGARET
HOWELL

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Kenji Umeda, *Spirality*, 1977. Photo: Harry Sowden
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Kenji Umeda, *Cantos - 1*, 1982. Courtesy the Estate of
Kenji Umeda