

LIGHT



a learning resource for Kettle's Yard

KETTLE'S YARD



LIGHT

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.

Light is the first of three publications which focus on one of the key themes of the house – Light, Nature and Space. Each resource includes:

- ▶ detailed information on selected artworks and objects
- ▶ artists' biographies
- ▶ examples of contemporary art
- ▶ discussion-starters and activities

You will find useful information for pre-visit planning, supporting groups during visits and leading progression activities back in the classroom. Group leaders can use this information in a modular way – content from the sections on artworks and objects can be 'mixed and matched' with the simple drawing and writing activities to create a session.

This publication was written by the Kettle's Yard Learning Team with contributions from: Sarah Campbell, Bridget Cusack, Rosie O'Donovan, Sophie Smiley and Lucy Wheeler.

With many thanks to teachers Lizzy McCaughan, Jonathan Stanley, Nicola Powys, Janet King and students from Homerton Initial Teacher Training course for their thoughtful ideas and feedback.



CONTENTS

Introduction

What is Kettle's Yard?	5
Light at Kettle's Yard	7

Artworks and Objects in the House

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, <i>Wrestlers</i>	9
David Peace, <i>Canst thou bind the Cluster of the Pleiades</i>	13
Dancer Room	17
Winifred Nicholson, <i>Cyclamen and Primula</i>	21
Gregorio Vardanega, <i>Disc</i>	25
Bryan Pearce, <i>St Ives Harbour</i>	29
Kenneth Martin, <i>Screw mobile</i>	33
Venetian Mirror	35
Constantin Brancusi, <i>Prometheus</i>	39

Contemporary works exhibited at Kettle's Yard

Lorna Macintyre, <i>Nocturne</i>	45
Tim Head, <i>Sweet Bird</i>	46
Edmund de Waal, <i>Tenebrae No.2</i>	49
Contemporary Artists' Biographies	51

More Ideas and Information

Talking about art	55
Drawing activities	57
Word and image	59
How to book a group visit to Kettle's Yard	61
Online resources	62



WHAT IS KETTLE'S YARD?

Kettle's Yard was the home of Jim and Helen Ede from 1957-1973. Every afternoon the house was opened 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. Interspersing his collection of art with natural found objects, antique furniture, glassware and ceramics, Jim aimed to create a perfectly balanced whole, 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 essential.

When Jim was working at the Tate Gallery 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 works early in their careers. Their paintings, prints and drawings formed the origins 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 ..."*¹

The house and collection were given to the University of Cambridge in 1966; the Edes stayed on until 1973, when they moved to Edinburgh. The site has grown over the years and includes an extension to the house (1970) and an exhibition gallery (1970, with further extensions in 1981, 1986 and 1994). The gallery presents an exciting programme of modern and contemporary art – a constantly changing counterpoint to the continuity of the house and collection.



LIGHT at KETTLE'S YARD

*"My thought was that the one thing a human being really needed was a room to live in, and scarcely any human being lived in one, it lived on him. I advocated clearing it of everything, and furnishing it with light and air which were its nature; wonderful empty rooms all over Britain, havens of rest in an over-complicated life."*²

Jim Ede

An appreciation of light was central to Jim's thinking about Kettle's Yard. In different weather, at different times of day and during different seasons, light transforms the rooms in the house. Jim carefully positioned each artwork and object to encourage visitors to find visual links between them, but visitors were rewarded by returning again and again; as the light shifts, the emphasis in a room changes, and new connections are made. For example, *Radar II*, by Romanian sculptor Ovidiu Maitec, only casts its shadow onto Ben Nicholson's *Still Life with Knife and Lemon*, in October. The dots of clear autumn light form a new relationship between these artworks that is hidden at other times of the year.

The house is rich with architectural features that create a dynamic space flooded with light: semi-circular bay windows in the cottages; skylights in both levels of the extension; and roughly-finished white walls. Jim capitalised on these features by filling the house with reflective surfaces – mirrors, pewter goblets, paperweights, coloured fishing floats and delicate glassware.

Jim's artist friends shared his fascination with light and shadow. Sculptors manipulate the fall of light to create interesting forms. Painters manipulate colour, shape and pattern to create a light within their compositions. As the following examples demonstrate, light at Kettle's Yard can be discussed in relation to individual artworks as well as objects and entire rooms.



WRESTLERS

HENRI GAUDIER-BRZESKA, 1913 (posthumous cast in herculite, 1965), 725 x 915 mm

What is it?

Wrestlers is a plaster relief depicting two figures in combat; their body parts overlap and merge in entangled knots. The carving is executed in undulating lines and the figures' faces bare close resemblance to ethnographic masks. The relief relates closely to a number of sketches Gaudier-Brzeska made from life, which are on display in the attic at Kettle's Yard. This relief mediates between drawing and three-dimensional sculpture. *Wrestlers* hangs above the piano in the lower level of the extension on the ground floor. Here, shifting natural light from skylights and windows falls on the surface of the relief, emphasising bodily contours, muscular texture and movement.

Links and Associations

HISTORY AND CULTURE

- ▶ Wrestling represents one of the oldest forms of combat, with literary references dating back to Homer's *Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.
- ▶ Wrestling was one of the sports played at the first modern Olympic games in Athens, in 1896.

INFLUENCES

- ▶ Gaudier-Brzeska wrote enthusiastically about wrestling, describing the experience of watching a match in 1912 as "*two athletic types, large shoulders, taut, big necks like bulls*."³ Gaudier-Brzeska and other modernist artists including Wyndham Lewis were inspired by the aesthetics of the body in combat, their work drawing on the energy and violence of wrestling rather than anatomical detail.
- ▶ Like many early 20th century artists including Paul Gauguin and Jacob Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska gained inspiration from non-western art on display in ethnographic museums across Europe including the British Museum, London. These artefacts influenced sculptors to abandon modelling in favour of direct carving.

TECHNIQUES

- ▶ Gaudier-Brzeska would have made the original *Wrestlers* using a sculpting technique known as relief carving, in which the three-dimensional elements are raised from a flat base. Plaster is often used by sculptors to create maquettes, which are used as models in the preliminary stages of making finished sculptures in other materials such as bronze or stone. In this piece, however, Brzeska works into plaster to create a finished work of art.
- ▶ *Wrestlers* is part of a series of drawings and sculptures in which Gaudier-Brzeska explored the mechanics and disciplined musculature of the wrestling body in movement. This was observed from life, but pared down to simplified lines of reduced, stylized forms which are closely related to the artist's drawings.

Biography: Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (1891-1915)

Henri Gaudier was born in St. Jean de Braye, near Orleans, France. He first came to Britain in 1908. He met Sophie Brzeska while working as a student in the evenings at Ste. Genevieve Library in Paris in 1910. In the same year he left France under a cloud of social hostility and settled in England, adding the name Brzeska to his own soon after. He worked in isolation until he met Middleton Murray in 1912 and subsequently built up a circle of artists and intellectuals, which included Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis and T. E. Hulme. Gaudier-Brzeska became involved in Pound's and Lewis' *Vorticist* group, contributing to the two issues of their magazine *Blast*. Gaudier-Brzeska was killed in action during the First-World-War in Belgium in 1915.

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Kettle's Yard

Jim Ede came across Gaudier-Brzeska's work in around 1926 whilst he was working at the Tate. After the death of both Gaudier and his partner Sophie Brzeska (whose surname Gaudier added on to his own), all of his works had been passed to the Treasury, who were consulting art experts for their opinion. Jim describes how "a great quantity of his work was dumped in my office ... it seemed my task to get Gaudier established in the rightful position he would have achieved had he lived into this present time."⁴ Jim persuaded both the Tate and the Contemporary Art Society (of which he was the secretary) to buy three works and

he purchased the remaining drawings, sculptures, sketchbooks and notebooks, which form a large part of the Kettle's Yard collection. The collection formed the basis of Jim's book *Savage Messiah*, a biography about Gaudier-Brzeska published in 1931.

To further promote Gaudier-Brzeska as an important modern artist of the twentieth century, Ede had casts made of many of the sculptor's works, including nine casts of *Wrestlers*. He sold these casts to many important collections including the Tate and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Discussion-Starters and Imagination-Expanders

EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ How would you describe the action happening in this artwork?
- ▶ How many colours can you see in this work?
- ▶ What is making the shadows?

SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ Explore why the artist has chosen a relief to depict this scene.
- ▶ What effect does natural light have on our understanding of this piece? What happens when the sun goes down?
- ▶ Write a short story about the two wrestlers in this scene – what are their names? Where is this wrestling match taking place? Who wins?



CANST THOU BIND THE CLUSTER OF THE PLEIADES OR LOOSE THE BANDS OF ORION

DAVID PEACE, 1961, engraved glass panel, 950 x 465mm

What is it?

Pleiaides is a glass panel suspended in front of a window in the house extension. It is engraved with a quote from the Old Testament Book of Job (38:31), in which God asks, does Job believe he can control the stars and, by extension, events affecting his life? Engravings on the reverse side illustrate both constellations, the Pleiades (or Seven Sisters) and Orion. With an artwork in glass, you can either focus on the object or *through* the object. The references to stars in the panel are nicely echoed by the actual sky beyond.

Links and Associations

ASTRONOMY

- ▶ The Pleiades is one of the nearest star clusters to Earth – a mere 400 light years away.
- ▶ Betelgeuse, one of the stars in the Pleiades, is a 'red supergiant'. Nearing the end of its life, it will at some point explode in a supernova that if viewed from Earth could appear as bright as the Moon.

CULTURE AND FAITH

- ▶ In the Northern Hemisphere, the Pleiades appear in winter and early spring night skies. Part of the Taurus constellation, their transit across the sky has traditionally been used as a calendar – farming and sea-faring seasons began and ended with the Pleiades appearing on the horizon at dawn.
- ▶ In Greek mythology, the Pleiades were seven sisters, the daughters of Atlas and Pleione. Pursued by the hunter Orion, Zeus rescued the young women by transforming them into a flock of doves.
- ▶ In the Old Testament, Job is the first of five books known as *The Books of Poetry*. The others are Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.

POETRY

- ▶ Both the Pleiades and Orion feature on Achilles' Shield in Homer's *Iliad*. The first written versions of the *Iliad* date to the eighth century BC.
- ▶ In 1825, artist and poet William Blake published 21 engravings titled *Illustrations of the Book of Job*. The Fitzwilliam Museum owns a sketchbook of Blake's preparatory drawings for the series.

TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS

- ▶ Stone carver Eric Gill and the Stephenson Blake Type Foundry in Sheffield were early influences on Peace's interest in lettering. Peace considered *Pleiades* a good example of his 'structural lettering'. He enjoyed balancing the shapes of, and spaces between, the letters. In this case he paid particular attention to the Os (five of which are directly above or below the vertical line of another letter).
- ▶ Many of Peace's glass engravings were made with a diamond-coated, pedal-powered, dentist drill. For windows engraved in situ, he used a carborundum (a compound of silicon and carbon) tip rotating in an electrical hand tool. Sand-blasting was also used for larger scale commissions.

Biography: David Peace (1915-2003)

Peace was born and raised in Sheffield. He studied at the Sheffield School of Architecture before serving in the RAF during World War II. He worked for Cambridge County Council as a town planner from 1961-1980. He is credited with preventing high-rise developments in central Cambridge and supporting the transformation of Duxford airfield into a museum. He was awarded an MBE in 1977.

Peace was also a master of contemporary glass engraving. He learnt wood engraving in high school. He began engraving glass in 1935 and his many commissions include bowls, goblets, screens and windows. In 1975, he became the first chairman of the Guild of Glass Engravers and was president from 1980-1986. He applied the same design criteria to town planning as he did to glass engraving: Peace states "*Let the site talk to you!*"⁵

David Peace and Kettle's Yard

Pleiades is one of two glass panels acquired for Kettle's Yard between 1971-72. Both were installed in the new extension, opened in 1970. The other panel reads "*While thus they sing your monarch; those bright angelic bands; Rejoice, ye vales and mountains; ye oceans, clap your hands!*" This quote comes from the Christmas carol, *A Great and Mighty Wonder*. Peace made the panel for reproduction as a Christmas card.

Peace's solo exhibition at Kettle's Yard in 1973 gave Jim the opportunity to write warmly of his skill:

*"The beauty of the glass itself is seldom obstructed by his markings, but instead vibrates and glitters; and for myself, who love the never ending changes of light, its warmth, its coldness, its mysterious pervasion and enfoldment, this 'kissing with golden face' so much to be found in David Peace's work, as it was in that of the early Dutch painters – it becomes indeed miraculous."*⁶

Discussion-Starters and Imagination-Expanders

EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ Why did the artist write on glass instead of paper? How has the artist made the lines?
- ▶ Why has the artist chosen those words? What line from a song or a poem would you choose?
- ▶ Why has Jim hung the panel in a window? How would it look different against a wall or a curtain?

SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ How would people interpret this panel differently if it were in a supermarket or a church?
- ▶ What is the relationship between the words, images, material and location?
- ▶ What materials would you use to express a favourite quote?
- ▶ How would you describe the personality of the lettering? Imagine the text in 'Comic Sans' to feel the difference.



The DANCER ROOM

What is it?

The 'Dancer Room' is the space located in between the Bridge and the upper floor of the extension. The arched window, installed by Jim himself, makes this one of the most dramatically lit spaces at Kettle's Yard. The play of light fluctuates with the differing time of day and the seasons. The variation of reflections and the intensity of light reveal different viewpoints into the space and interplaying relationships between each object. Good examples of this include George Kennethson's alabaster sculpture *Construction (Birds)* that glows a honey-pink colour in the sun, echoing the peach hues of William Congdon's painting *Piazza San Marco No.25 (White Piazza)*, which hangs opposite. When light shines on or through it, the transparency of the alabaster material of *Construction (Birds)* gives the piece a sense of weightlessness. This is juxtaposed with Gaudier-Brzeska's sculpture, *Dancer*, which, although made from a heavy dark bronze, is animated and lifted by the light which sits in reflective pools on the surface of the piece. Fleeting shadows on the bare walls of the Dancer Room made by chairs, table legs and the changeable black silhouette of *Dancer* reveal numerous ways of interpreting the space.

Jim Ede and the Dancer Room

Jim Ede wrote fondly of the fleeting moments of light and shade in the Dancer Room in his publication *A Way of Life*: "I have wanted to show the immense pleasure I got each evening as I walked around Kettle's Yard in the dark ... every month there was a great beauty of moonlight. All this created a new and special adventure, so much was blotted out and so much revealed ... the mystery of shadows revealing to me the presence of hidden objects."⁷



Contemporary Artists responding to the Dancer Room

MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN

In 1995 Michael Craig-Martin took part in an exhibition at Kettle's Yard called 'Open House' where he dramatically repainted a wall of the Dancer Room bright pink, replacing the soft, white washed walls with brilliant vibrancy (pictured left). Craig-Martin then replaced a real object, a wooden chair with a painted apparition of the piece of furniture, floating on the wall. By adding this vibrant colour Craig-Martin disrupted the harmonious integration of the Dancer Room. Craig-Martin hoped this intervention would be challenging for viewers, just as Jim's original vision of placing natural objects such as stones and shells next to priceless works of art was challenging at the time. Craig-Martin states: *"By confronting the existing aesthetic of Kettle's Yard with another, I have sought to revitalise the sense of challenge that was the original characteristic of this unique place."*⁸

PAUL COLDWELL

In 2008 Paul Coldwell was invited to make new works in response to the idea of domesticity at Kettle's Yard, which were then exhibited in the House. Coldwell set himself two objectives for these new works: *"to make works which would respond to individual pieces and locations within the house at Kettle's Yard and secondly to suggest things that were now missing or concealed"*⁹ *Roller Coaster – Three Objects* 2008 (pictured right), installed on the shelf overlooking the Dancer



Room, relates to Coldwell's first objective. The lattice-like bronze piece could be understood as a response to the broken patterned dress of the Max Ernst sketch *Figure*, positioned close by, as well as responding to the linear structure of the French window. Coldwell describes that the *"piece was made as a three dimensional drawing around three objects. As it evolved, it became more playful and suggested a rollercoaster."*¹⁰



CYCLAMEN and PRIMULA

WINIFRED NICHOLSON, c.1923, oil on board, 500 x 550mm

What is it?

Cyclamen and Primula is a painting of two potted flowers wrapped in white tissue paper on a window ledge, seen against the Alpine landscape. The piece was painted in Ticino, Switzerland where Winifred and her then husband, the artist Ben Nicholson, spent their winters between 1921 and 1923. This artwork is one of a series of works where Winifred explored the effect sunlight has on the colour of objects. The painting was described by the artist as “sunlight on leaves, and sunlight shining transparent through ... the mystery of the tissue paper.”¹¹

Links and Associations

COLOUR THEORY

- ▶ In 1666 Isaac Newton discovered that white light was made up of many colours. Newton made a small hole in a blind and placed a glass prism in front of the beam, producing a rainbow on the wall. This is caused by *refraction*: when light hits a prism, the wavelengths of each colour bend at different angles.
- ▶ Our visible spectrum is a very small portion of the electromagnetic spectrum. The light that we see can be split into the seven colours of the rainbow, which comprises different wavelengths of light. Red has the longest wavelength and violet the shortest.

BOTANY

- ▶ In the past, cyclamens were thought to cure many things – for example, in Ancient Greece it was believed that the flower could cure snake bites, counteract poison and heal wounds.
- ▶ The name primula comes from the Latin word *primus*, meaning first or early, perhaps because the primrose is one of the first flowers to bloom in spring.

clay	mud	dust	earth	shadow	slate	lead
terracotta	dun	putty	khaki	mist	pewter	prune
brick	fawn	beige	faded oak leaf	sea grey	steel	mulberry
roan	bistre	hay	sage	air force blue	blue grey	vieux rose
rust	ochre	straw	willow	fell blue	knife blue	musk rose
coral	sand	amber	crab apple	turquoise	royal	wine
ruby	flame	topaz	emerald	azure	sapphire	amethyst
RED	ORANGE	YELLOW	GREEN	BLUE	INDIGO	VIOLET
sugar pink	alabaster	sulphur	duck's egg	baby ribbon blue	ice blue	pale lilac
scarlet	apricot	lemon	pea green	sky	french blue	lavender
vermilion	fire	canary	grass green	forget-me-not	hyacinth	heliotrope
tomato	fox	brass	cabbage	larkspur	ultramarine	purple
dragon's blood	copper	daffodil	forest green	lapis-lazuli	electric blue	maroon
mahogany	tobacco	mustard	laurel	horizon	midnight	damson
RAVEN	BLACK COFFEE	TIGER SKIN	BLACK VELVET	ZENITH	PITCH	CHOCOLATE

Colour Chart, 1944. In 1944, World Review commissioned Winifred Nicholson to write a new article about colour; wartime printing restrictions permitted the use of only three colours. Winifred invented words to substitute for the colours she could not print.

LANDSCAPE/ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ The Alps, pictured in the background of this painting, were formed over hundreds of millions of years when the African and Eurasian tectonic plates collided. Extreme shortening caused by the event resulted in rocks, that once formed the seabed, rising into high mountain peaks.
- ▶ In 218 BC the Cathaginian general Hannibal, his army and 37 elephants famously crossed the Alps to attack the Roman Empire. Taking this treacherous passage surprised the Roman army but Hannibal and his army were eventually defeated by the Romans.

TECHNIQUES

- ▶ Winifred Nicholson used prisms to unlock all the different shades of colour inside the rainbow. She believed that each colour of the rainbow had 7 degrees of depth and 7 degrees that rise above the colour to its neutralisation (see left). For Winifred, this scale of colour was not unlike a musical scale: *"These scales are the chart on which colour artists build the conceptions of their painting. They play their melodies and their harmonies to and fro, up and down on such as chart, very much like the composer uses a keyboard."*¹²
- ▶ Winifred Nicholson's main focus in her painting was to show the effects of colour, rather than concentrating on the outline of shapes. She wrote that her paintings talk in colour and any of the shapes are there to express colour but not outline.
- ▶ Travelling to the Mediterranean and India, Winifred was fascinated by the different hues of colour created, depending on the intensity of light. Her painting could be understood as a visual essay on her discoveries of tonality and light; she states: *"The scale of colour is held within the fullness of sunlight, which is forever breaking apart, revealing its diverse hues, contrasts and affinities and then closing again upon this scale in the oneness of white light."*¹³

Biography: Winifred Nicholson (1893-1981)

Winifred Nicholson was born in Oxford. She studied at the Byam Shaw School of Art in London in 1912 and married Ben Nicholson in 1920. She exhibited with her husband in the 1920s and was a member of the Seven and Five Society between 1925 and 1935.

Winifred Nicholson travelled extensively to paint, visiting India, Greece, France, Catalonia and Scotland. She was fascinated by the myriad quality of light from place to place. These experiences informed her radical theories on colour, outlined in the essay 'Unknown Colour' which was published in *Circle*, a key journal of writings about constructivist art in 1937.

Winifred Nicholson and Kettle's Yard

Jim Ede and Winifred Nicholson's friendship spanned over fifty years, and in this time Ede acquired 10 works for the collection at Kettle's Yard. Jim met Winifred and her then artist husband Ben Nicholson in 1924. The couple influenced Jim's vision of Kettle's Yard as a home that fused art and daily life and introduced him to many contemporary artists. Jim wrote warmly of Winifred, describing her as "a leader – not only in a transformed style of painting – but in life itself."¹⁴

Cyclamen and Primula was not bought during Jim's early friendship with Winifred. It was acquired in the late 1950's when Jim discovered the piece in very bad condition and bought it from a dealer in Cambridge. He beautifully described *Cyclamen and Primula* as a "delight of sunlit shadows and insubstantial substance."¹⁵

Discussion-Starters and Imagination-Expanders

EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ At what time of day do you think that this picture was painted?
- ▶ How would you describe the shapes and colours in this painting?
- ▶ Are you looking at the inside of a room or the outside?

SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ How would you describe the way colour is used in this painting?
- ▶ What colours would you use to describe the view from your bedroom window?
- ▶ How has Winifred used colour to differentiate between still life and landscape?

DISC

GREGORIO VARDANEGA, 1960 (circa), Plexiglas, 310 x 40 mm

What is it?

Disc is a transparent Plexiglas disk suspended in front of a window in an area reserved for plants, stones and shells known as 'The Bridge'. Hung from a fine, almost invisible fishing cord, the sculpture rotates with the movement of air as visitors pass by it. As the mobile structure turns, it catches and reflects light from the window, allowing perpetual movement of the still nature behind. Vardanega offers different ways to engage with his work. You can focus on the object, exploring the chance viewpoints of patterns of light, colour and shadow in flux, or you can look *through* the object, using it as a lens to distort and change the appearance of the natural objects beyond.

Links and Associations

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- ▶ When light shines through Plexiglas it refracts – bending the light as a result of the change in speed which occurs when light enters a different medium.
- ▶ *Disc* is a slightly magnified surface, which results in the alteration of the shape of objects when viewed through the curved lens. This is called distortion.

TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS

- ▶ Plexiglas, or acrylic glass, is a lightweight shatter-resistant alternative to glass that can be easily moulded into different shapes. It can be cut and used for resin casting.
- ▶ Vardanega enjoyed the malleability of Plexiglas, using the material to create sculptures that vary from smooth, flat surfaces (*Disc*) to kinetic, twisted structures (such as *Spherical Construction*, also found in the window of 'The Bridge'). He liked to go beyond the boundaries of the physical object, using the material qualities of Plexiglas to blur the distinction between object and reflection. The effect distorts and transforms our perception of the piece and the appearance of space beyond it.



Biography: Gregorio Vardanega (1923 -2007)

Vardanega was born near Venice in 1923. He studied in South America and became a member of the Art Concrete Group. After exhibiting in Europe in the 1950s and meeting artists including Constantin Brancusi, Antoine Pevsner and Sonia Delauney, he settled in Paris with his wife, the artist Martha Boto in 1959. During this time Vardanega was constructing Plexiglas works, often suspended in space, exploring the potential of a material that could modify, absorb and reflect light. His later works include experimentation with electronic light boxes, neon light sculptures and geometric, minimalist painting.

Gregorio Vardanega and Kettle's Yard

Kettle's Yard owns three works by Vardanega, which are all displayed in the house. Vardanega's *Disc* and *Spherical Construction* both hang in front of the large window of 'The Bridge', installed to exploit the afternoon light. Like a giant magnifying glass, *Disc*'s careful placement amongst natural plant life creates a space for us to consider these objects individually.

Vardanega's works are placed with a number of other reflective objects, including a selection of coloured glass buoys used in fishing. All of these reflective objects contain and diffuse light, projecting moving patterns across the space. Jim described this effect as follows: "This is an interior which looks into the outer world and has for me a transparent stillness through which to find and hold a sense of peace ... peace which will, I hope, create a touchstone for life."¹⁶

Discussion-Starters and Imagination-Expanders

EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ Why does this artwork turn even though no one is moving it?
- ▶ What happens when you look *through* this object?

SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ Why do you think Jim decided to hang this object by a window?
- ▶ Spend some time focusing on *Disc* – why do you think the artist was interested in this material?
- ▶ What happens to light when it hits *Disc*?

St Ives Harbour

BRYAN PEARCE, no date, oil on board, 606 x 860 mm



What is it?

This oil painting depicts Pearce's personal portrayal of St Ives Harbour in Cornwall. In the foreground a range of sailing and rowing boats bob in the sea, back-dropped by chimney-flanked houses with alternated coloured doors. *St Ives Harbour* is bathed in sunlight and untroubled by human activity. Living in St Ives all his life, Pearce captured his hometown in a personal style characterised by simple renditions of line, colour and light. Disregarding perspective and scale, his works give us the essentials about buildings and boats in a direct and original manner.

Links and Associations

LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ St Ives Harbour once connected the town to much of the globe. The town had its own shipping company, the Hain Line, operating across the Mediterranean and beyond, and transporting goods such as West Indian sugar and Brazilian coffee. St Ives was hard to reach by land, until 1877 when a new railway line was built and St Ives started to become known as a popular holiday destination.
- ▶ The region of West Penwith has a three thousand year legacy of human activity, from extraordinary free standing stones from the Bronze Age, Celtic carvings and sculptures, heritage and indigenous craft traditions to modern art made in this region in the 20th century.

ART ASSOCIATIONS

- ▶ Pearce's artwork is often associated with the work of Alfred Wallis. Both artists were essentially untrained, and both chose to record their memories of St Ives in their paintings. Wallis and Pearce share a style that disregards conventional rules of perspective, scale and composition.

- ▶ Many artists have created personal responses to the particularities of place. Some interesting examples include Paul Gauguin's intimate paintings of Tahiti, J.M.W. Turner's expressive paintings of Venice and John Constable's sketches and paintings of the Suffolk countryside.
- ▶ Pearce's work is often regarded as 'naive' art. This is a classification of art that is often characterised by child-like simplicity in its subject matter and technique.

TECHNIQUES

- ▶ Bryan Pearce's working method was to start by mapping out the scene with a very faint line drawing in pencil, often done in situ. He would then go over the essential lines with a thin brush, often in yellow ochre. He would then add colour to the painting. This way of working is sometimes referred to as Pearce's 'outline' technique.
- ▶ Pearce did not consider there to be a 'right way up' and often rotated his board whilst working, resulting in some buildings being inverted. The effect of this is to create a map-like quality to his depiction of towns, giving the viewer a highly personal bird's eye view.

Biography: Bryan Pearce (1929–2007)

Pearce was born in St Ives, where he lived all of his life. From infancy he suffered from the rare genetic disorder phenylketonuria. Pearce started painting in the early 1950s, encouraged greatly by his mother, who went on to manage and promote his professional art career. He attended the St Ives School of Painting between 1953 and 1957, studying under Leonard Fuller. By 1959 Pearce was exhibiting with the Penwith and Newlyn Societies of Artists. Tate St Ives held a retrospective of Pearce's works in 2007.

Bryan Pearce and Kettle's Yard

Jim Ede greatly enjoyed Pearce's vision and became an enthusiastic collector of his work. Kettle's Yard has 16 works by Pearce in the collection, including *Kings College Chapel, Cambridge* painted in the Spring of 1966 when Pearce stayed with Ede during an exhibition of his work at the Bene't Gallery. Jim wrote fondly of Pearce's talents: *"If anyone is in need of peace, trust and joy, they will find it in the work of Bryan Pearce. He gives with his whole being ... I know of no artist with whom I can compare him in this direct simplicity and devotion."*¹⁷



Discussion-Starters and Imagination-Expanders

EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ Describe the type of day and weather conditions in this painting.
- ▶ How do the colours of this painting make you feel?
- ▶ Write down any words you would use to describe this painting.

SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ What characteristics of St Ives does this painting suggest?
- ▶ What do you think the artist was trying to communicate in this painting?
- ▶ Do you think the background of the artist can inform us about how or why this painting was created, or what it might be about?



SCREW MOBILE

KENNETH MARTIN, 1969, brass, 660 x 290 mm

What is it?

Screw Mobile is a brass mobile that incorporates a vertical rod with bars attached to it at regular intervals to create a spiral structure. The mobile hangs from the ceiling by the window in the upper ground floor of the extension. Hung from a wire, the mobile spins and turns according to the movement of air in the room. The unpredictable movement and the play of light on the surface of the mobile casts shadows on the walls and neighbouring artworks, adding an element of chance to the piece. As Martin wrote: “[a mobile] can enliven our consciousness of environment, moving as it does in our space and casting its moving shadow.”¹⁸

Links and Associations

MATHS

- ▶ Martin often used mathematical rules such as mathematical progression, sequences and rules of proportion to create his constructions. For *Screw Mobile*, the distance between the bars is determined by a system called the Fibonacci sequence; a pattern found in nature, where each number is the sum of the previous two.

SCIENCE

- ▶ Scientific forms such as the double helix, the strong shape closely associated with the structure of DNA molecules may have influenced the design of *Screw Mobile*.

ART ASSOCIATIONS

- ▶ Martin’s work is most often associated with post-war British Abstract art. Artists including Adrian Heath, Victor Pasmore and Martin’s wife Mary were part of a group committed to establishing a new wave of constructed abstract art in Britain that rejected imitative art in favour of geometrical relief sculptures, mobiles and constructions.

TECHNIQUES

- ▶ Martin was committed to working with commercial and readily available materials, which he then constructed by hand. His interest in modern industrial materials suggests an optimism for the future, echoing the reconstruction phase of post-war Britain.
- ▶ Martin described the working process for his mobiles in three phases; designing and making; decision making in regard to the final outcome of the piece; and the progress of the piece growing autonomously.¹⁹ For Martin, the kinetic movement and uncontrolled chance movements of the mobiles was integral to the act of making and character of the work.

Biography: Kenneth Martin (1905-1984)

Martin was born in Sheffield in 1905. He studied at the Sheffield School of Art and the Royal College of Art, London. In 1930 he married the artist Mary Balmford. She and Kenneth rarely worked in collaboration but occasionally exhibited together. Martin's work was exhibited at the Tate Gallery (1975), the Yale Centre for British Art (1979), the Serpentine Gallery (1985) and Kettle's Yard (1999).

Kenneth Martin and Kettle's Yard

Jim met Martin whilst he was living in London; Martin was a visitor to Jim's 'open house' in Elm Row, Hampstead in the 1930's. Jim purchased *Screw Mobile* in 1976. The correspondence between Jim and Martin focuses on the importance of shadow and reflection in this mobile.

Discussion-Starters and Imagination-Expanders

EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ How many shadows does this mobile cast on the walls?
- ▶ Describe *Screw Mobile* in five words.
- ▶ Try and draw the shape of this mobile – what do you find?

SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ Why do you think it is important that this sculpture is able to move?
- ▶ What materials and processes do you think Martin used to make this work?
- ▶ Look closely at the sculpture – can you see a pattern in the structure of the piece?

The VENETIAN MIRROR

What is it?

Hanging on your right as you walk up the spiral staircase onto the first floor of the cottages is a very large ornate, octagonal 18th century Venetian mirror. It is embellished with raised flower adornments and cut glass detail. The weathered, patinated surface of the mirror offers us an intriguing, silvery reflection of the Bechstein room, much like an albumen silver print. The bevelled surfaces of the mirror give us clipped glimpses of objects and the architecture of the house, suggesting a depth of space. The reflective surface bathes the space in pools of light and, in the winter sun, refracted dots of rainbow colours dance across the walls.

Links and Associations

GLASS AND VENICE

Venice is famous for its glass making industry and continues to be an important centre of production. Its routes date back to the 13th century when the main hub of glass craftsmanship was based in Murano, a small Island off the Venetian Coast. Venetian glass reached the peak of its popularity in the 15th and 16th centuries when Angelo Barovier discovered the process of producing clear glass called *cristallo*, allowing Murano glass-makers to become the only producers of mirrors in Europe.

HOW DO YOU MAKE A MIRROR?

Three materials are required to make glass:

- ▶ Sand
- ▶ An alkaline flux to lower the melting point, enabling the glass to be worked at a lower temperature.
- ▶ A stabiliser, usually lime which makes glass water resistant. Heating these materials together at 1500°C makes a liquid, which can then be shaped in the desired shape. Further ingredients can be added to give the glass colour, remove unwanted colour, or make the glass opaque.



The Venetian Mirror and Kettle's Yard

Jim and Helen were given this mirror as a wedding gift from the artist and collector F. Leverton Harris. Jim wrote that *"when I first hung it in our bedroom we could not sleep all night, it was like having the moon for company, so bright it shone ... it has always astonished me how simply it fits into Kettle's Yard."*²⁰ The mirror is a good example of the juxtaposition of modern art and antique furniture in the house. This was to a certain extent deliberate, but also a consequence of Jim's limited resources, which made old furniture the only affordable option.

Discussion-Starters and Imagination-Expanders

EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ Who might have looked in this mirror?
- ▶ How old do you think it might be?
- ▶ How has this object changed over time?

SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ Why do you think the Murano glassmakers safeguarded the process of making clear glass?
- ▶ Can you write a description of the mirror that would give a clear picture to someone who has never seen this object before?
- ▶ Should this mirror be preserved?



PROMETHEUS

CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI, 1912, Cement Cast, 137 x 178 x 136 mm

What is it?

Prometheus is an oval shaped sculpture made from cement. Carved into the surface are very faint features of a head. *Prometheus* is one of a sequence of works in which Brancusi dealt with reclined, isolated heads. Positioned on the piano in the Bechstein room, the smooth, polished surface of the sculpture offsets reflections cast in the black lid of the piano. As a result, the sculpture appears as if it is almost floating, creating a remarkable tension between weight and lightness.

Links and Associations

GREEK MYTHOLOGY

- ▶ In Greek mythology Prometheus is one of the Titans, best known for creating man out of clay and for defying the Gods by stealing fire and giving it to earth, which in turn enabled civilisation. As punishment, Zeus had him chained to a rock and sent an eagle daily to eat his liver, which constantly replenished itself.

GEOGRAPHY

- ▶ Brancusi was born in Romania and he often drew on ideas from his own culture, namely Romanian folk art. He was also influenced by the environment of turn of the century Paris, where he lived from 1904, and the movement in art away from imitation towards abstraction.

TECHNIQUES

- ▶ Brancusi had an in-depth knowledge of the materials he was working with. Like a scientific investigation, Brancusi utilised these properties, using sculpture to express and heighten the natural qualities of the materials he used. This process became known as ‘truth to materials.’
- ▶ Brancusi directly carved into stone to create his sculptures. This differed from many artists at the time, who created a plaster or clay model, which was then given to specialist stonemason to reproduce the piece in stone. Brancusi felt strongly that technical skill and understanding of materials could release something from them, something which became important to many artist movements in the 20th century, such as the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain and Die Brücke in Germany.
- ▶ Brancusi understood sculpture to be in flux, capable of having changeable properties, differing from conventional sculptural characteristics like mass, solidity and permanence. Brancusi explored different strategies to achieve this, including polishing works to create a shiny surface that would reflect light and include the surrounding environment in the sculpture. For example, in *Prometheus*, Brancusi included metal dust and gave the piece a highly polished surface. The artist would photograph his sculptures using various light sources to illuminate the piece and to cast shadows, demonstrating the fluid and multifarious qualities of his sculptures.

Biography: Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957)

Brancusi was born in Hobitza, Romania. In 1904 he moved to Paris, where he lived and worked for the rest of his life. His early work was influenced by traditional Romanian carving, but in Paris he evolved a pure, abstract manner that strove to depict the formal essence of objects and the natural world.

Constantin Brancusi and Kettle’s Yard

Jim Ede met Brancusi in 1926 in Paris, where Brancusi lived and had his studio. Brancusi’s studio environment had a huge impact on Jim, who wrote: *“When I first went to see Brancusi I felt that all the elements were there collected in his studio, almost as though it were nature’s workshop. There I found air and light, and the poise and rhythm of his carvings ... the light would start revolving on its plate of clear reflection ... and all the time some new object would come upon my wonder.”*²¹ For Brancusi, the studio was a work of art in its own right, just as the environment of Kettle’s Yard was to Jim. Jim was enthused by Brancusi’s use of light and shade to demonstrate the shifting impermanence and changeability of works of art, which was readily adopted in Kettle’s Yard, along with the bell outside the House, which is not unlike the bell in the courtyard of Brancusi’s studio.

Discussion-Starters and Imagination-Expanders

EARLY LEARNERS AND PRIMARY

- ▶ What words would you use to describe the texture and shape of this sculpture?
- ▶ Does this sculpture look like anything – if so, what?
- ▶ What do you think of the sculpture and its placement in the House?

SECONDARY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

- ▶ Describe the expression of the outlined face in this sculpture.
- ▶ Why do you think Jim decided to place this sculpture on the piano?
- ▶ Discuss the myth of Prometheus. How does the story effect your reading of this sculpture?



CONTEMPORARY RESPONSES TO LIGHT



NOCTURNE

LORNA MACINTYRE, 2012. Exhibited in 2012

What is it?

Nocturne is a large mirror that leans against a wall and is raised from the floor by a weighty slab of wood. Using a range of techniques Macintyre has manipulated the surface of the mirror, so that areas have darkened and become unreflective. Installed in St Peter's Church, the silvery surface absorbs and reflects light that filters through the church windows and doors, creating fleeting, surreal viewpoints into the fabric of the building.

Chance

Macintyre likes to use processes that reduce the control of the artist's hand, allowing chance to play an important role in the outcome of her artwork. For example, in *Nocturne* she allowed bleach to burn the surface of the mirror from top to bottom, using a sponge to add gestural blur. She then dripped black paint on the surface; following its own course, the paint sunk into the burnt marks, resulting in a dual surface of inky blackness and reflective streaks.

Mythology

Macintyre often takes historical, literary and mythological sources as a starting point for making art. Macintyre found a rich history in the area that surrounds St Peter's Church. The site was the heart of Roman Cambridge and rumoured to have been a temple to Diana, the Roman goddess of hunting and the moon. *Nocturne* evokes the atmosphere of a moonlit evening, both absorbing and reflecting the distinctive light that filters through the church. This effect is similar to the Venetian mirror in Kettle's Yard House, described by Jim as "*having the moon for company, so bright it shone.*"²²

SWEET BIRD

TIM HEAD, 2004, digital projection from real-time computer programme.

Exhibited at Kettle's Yard in 2010

What is it?

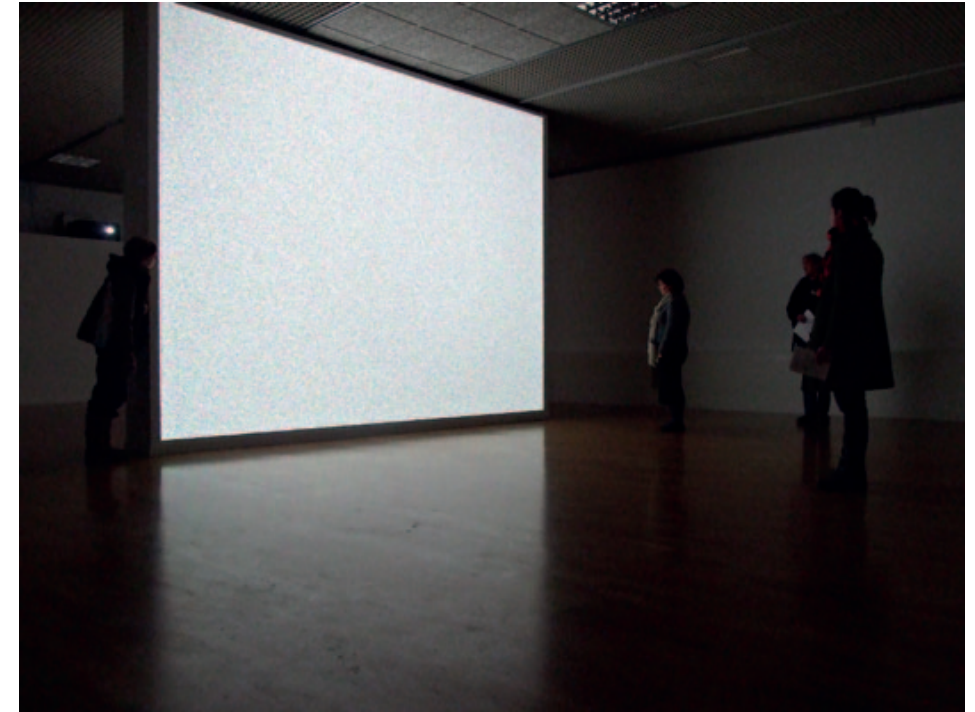
Sweet Bird is a digital projection created by a real-time computer programme. Working with specialists, Head developed a programme that would select random colours to fill every pixel on the screen and move across the screen in four different directions: left, right, up and down. Each pixel at any moment is therefore a mixture of four separately programmed colours. As a result, the whole screen is animated and active, with varied tonalities of colour rising and falling up and down and moving side to side.

The medium of technology

In his exploration of image technology, Head removes the 'use' value of the computer, moving away from the image-forming process to focus on the medium – the pixel – in its natural state, treated as an individual unit. He allows us to re-comprehend mass forms of information technology. For example, in *Sweet Bird*, fleeting displays of colour make visible the speed of computer processing capabilities, revealing the usual silent functioning of the machine.

The materiality of pixels

Head's exploration of information technology enables him to find out what kind of a tool computer programmes are and what kind of materials they work with. In *Sweet Bird* we perceive the materiality of coloured light pixels on screen in its raw state. Unlike printed images, in which ink binds with paper to produce coloured matter, screen colour is already coloured light, closely linked to energy rather than matter or stuff.²³



Analysing the Computer Age

The raw state of technological matter in Head's work has been described as creating visual exhaustion.²⁴ Our vision cannot keep up with the successive pace of coloured pixels, often leading to a frustrating or uncomfortable viewing experience. For example, art critic Ian Hunt has said the following of *Sweet Bird*:

*"You can try and grasp the irregular illusions of movement that are produced – waves, runs, falls, flurries ... but there is no 'through', no near or far. None of the four overlaid fields in movement is on top of one another ... you can follow ... a single particle, though you can never actually 'see' the base colour it is programmed with."*²⁵

It could be suggested that Head's work is commenting on the subsuming presence of technology and systems that dominate our age.



TENEBRAE No.2

EDMUND DE WAAL, 2005, 15 thrown porcelain vessels, 16 glazes, dimensions variable.
Exhibited at Kettle's Yard in 2007

What is it?

Tenebrae No.2 is made up of 15 small white ceramic disk-like vessels each marked with a distinctive yet variable outlined black circle. *Tenebrae No.2* was installed in the dining area in the house for an exhibition of de Waal's work in 2007, the vessels replacing the candlesticks, tiles and shells that usually lie down on the centre of the table.

The Title

Tenebrae means shadows in Latin and is a religious service within Christianity. Traditionally held on the evening or early morning of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, the service commemorates the death of Christ. The ceremony of Tenebrae involves the gradual reduction of light; from a lit room with candles, to total darkness.

The Placement

It could be suggested that the ceremonial connotations of the title are explored in de Waal's placement of *Tenebrae No.2*. The vessels were placed on the long wooden table in the recess where undergraduates and visitors lucky enough to be invited were gathered every afternoon for tea, toast and conversation with Jim. The placement of *Tenebrae No.2* could be understood as an altar to this unique ceremony.

Space and Architecture

It is central to the philosophy of Kettle's Yard that light and shade play a vital part in the reading of the space. These same concerns are significant to an understanding of deWaal's porcelain installations. Stating that his work is 'site sensitive' rather than 'site specific', the artist is interested in how an environment can change through the transitions of weather and light and how the subtleties of the pots are affected.²⁶ In *Tenebrae No.2* the light coming through the window in the dining room caused transient colour changes, and flickering reflected shadows appeared on the wooden table. Drawing our attention to the environment and positioning of his work, the experience of the piece would change depending on the time of day the work was viewed.

Multiples

De Waal is interested in the effect created when many pots are positioned together. For the artist, the 'charge' from a single object can only create a small impact, whereas a group of objects can have a greater effect on a larger space. Yet within each collection of vessels that makes up an artwork, there is a great deal of variation in shape, colour, shade and scale. Discussing the materiality of porcelain, deWaal states that the material is "susceptible to gesture, to how you handle it, to your movements around it."²⁷ As a result, his work is characterised by the repetition of the simplest cylindrical forms yet each work is personalised by the hand in the process of making.

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Craig Martin

Michael Craig Martin was born in Dublin in 1941 and educated in the United States, where he studied at Yale University. He came to Britain on completion of his studies in 1966, and has lived and worked there ever since. He taught at Goldsmiths College from 1974-1988 and 1994-2000.

Craig Martin has done exhibitions and site-specific installations in numerous museums and public galleries including the Centre Pompidou, MoMa, the Kunstvereins in Hannover, Düsseldorf and the National Art Center, Tokyo. He represented Britain in the 23rd São Paulo Biennial. A retrospective of his work was presented at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London 1989 and at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin in 2006.

Paul Coldwell

Professor Paul Coldwell is a practicing artist and researcher. His art practice includes prints, book works, sculptures and installations. He was selected for the for the Ljubljana Print Biennial in 1997 and 2005; for the International Print Triennial, Cracow in 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009; and the Northern Print Biennial in 2009 and 2011. He has had solo exhibitions at the Universities of Canterbury and Greenwich (2013) and the Scott Polar Institute, Cambridge (2013). His work is included in numerous public collections, including Tate, Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A), the British Museum and the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva.

Coldwell has also curated a number of exhibitions, including *Digital Responses*, V&A and *Morandi's Legacy; Influences of British Art* at the Estorick Collection, London and published a major survey of print-making, *Printingmaking: A Contemporary Perspective* in 2010.

Tim Head

Tim Head was born in 1946 in London. He studied at the University upon Tyne (1965-69) and St Martin's School of Art (1969-70). Head has had solo shows at Kettle's Yard in 1978 and 2010 and contributed to the group show *Upside Down/Inside Out* (2009). Other solo shows include Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (1974), Serpentine Gallery, London (1979) Osterwalder's Art Office, Hamburg (1995, 1997, 2002) and most recently at Modern Art Oxford (2013). Head has taught at Goldsmith's College School of Art, University of London (1971-79) and the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London (1976-2011).

Lorna Macintyre

Lorna Macintyre (born 1977, Glasgow) uses a diverse range of materials and techniques in her practice, from ferric ferrocyanide crystals or marine coral to sun and moonlight. Her photographic works and installations draw on a wide range of references from psychology to surrealism, symbolism and literature, and she often takes literary and mythological sources as a point of departure.

Between 2012-2013 Macintyre worked with Kettle's Yard as an Associate Artist, along with Matei Bejenaru, Matthew Darbyshire and Jeremy Millar. During the project she responded to the House and collection with a particular focus on the work of Constantin Brancusi. She compiled a digital sketchbook *Groupe Mobile* alongside her project which you can view online at groupemobile.tumblr.com.

Other recent projects include: *Midnight Scenes and Other Works* at Mary Mary, Glasgow (2012); *A Tree of Night*, at Galerie Kamm, Berlin (2011); *Granite and Rainbow*, Wiels, Brussels (2010); *Form and Freedom*, Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel (2010).

Edmund de Waal

Edmund de Waal was born in 1964. He studied English at Cambridge University and ceramics in both England and Japan. He is best known for his large scale installations, which have been exhibited in many museum around the world. Much of de Waal's recent work has been concerned with ideas of collecting and collections; how objects are kept together, lost, stolen or dispersed. His work comes out of a dialogue between minimalism, architecture and music, and is informed by his passion for literature.

DeWaal has had major interventions in many museums and public collections, including Kettle's Yard, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate Britain and the National Museum of Wales.

De Waal is also known as a writer. His recent book, *Hare with the Amber Eyes*, which traces his family history, has been an international bestseller and won many literary prizes.

MORE IDEAS AND INFORMATION



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 the proposed questions

- ▶ Good question – 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 find a personal link

- ▶ How does the artwork make you feel?
- ▶ Does it remind you of anything you've 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 matter, abstraction

ARTIST: intentions, interests, beliefs, location, nationality, dates, gender, influences

CONTEXT IN WHICH THE ARTWORK WAS CREATED: social, political, historical, geographical, environmental, religious, cultural, artistic, and 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

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

POETRY: haiku (5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables). Choose a little detail in a painting, with an interesting use of light and dark to start a haiku. This type of poem often captures a fleeting movement or moment, and frequently contains a sense of change.

RESTRICTED WORDS: build a bank of words by writing down ten book titles from the house that you like. Rearrange the words from the titles to make a piece of writing. You can add up to five extra words. The result may be quite surreal.

NARRATIVE: the house was a home to Jim and Helen Ede and is full of stories of their lives here. Create a narrative where a character explores the house and encounters the objects within it.

OBSERVATIONAL WRITING: imagine you are guiding someone around Kettle's Yard. Imagine they are blind-folded. Give clear instructions about navigating the building. Describe what is around you, and how it makes you feel. Aim to be precise and concise.

WAYS OF SEEING: try seeing someone in a different light. Choose a person in a painting or sculpture. Write in the first person about the way they see themselves. Then shine a different light on your character. Describe them from the point of view of another person meeting them for the first time. Write this piece in the third person. Aim to give two contrasting descriptions.

FOOTNOTES

1. Jim Ede, *A Way of Life*, Cambridge University Press, originally printed in 1984: pp.17-18
2. Jim Ede, *Kettle's Yard and its Artists*, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, 1995: p.8
3. Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, letter to Sophie Brzeska, 3 December 1912, quoted in Jim Ede, *The Savage Messiah*, William Heinemann, Portsmouth, 1931: p.218
4. Jim Ede, 'Introduction to the handlist of 1970', reprinted in S. Barassi (ed) *Kettle's Yard House Guide*, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, 2002: p.6
5. Laurence Whistler, *The Engraved Glass of David Peace: The Architecture of Lettering*, Ruskin Gallery, Sheffield, 1990: p.8
6. Jim Ede, *Kettle's Yard and its Artists*: p.52
7. Jim Ede, *A Way of Life*: p.120
8. Michael Craig Martin, 'Open House', reprinted in M. Harrison (ed), *Upside Down/Inside Out*, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, 2009: p.9
9. Paul Coldwell, 'I called while you were out: Absence and Presence : an artist's intervention within the House at Kettle's Yard', in M. Harrison (ed), *I Called While You Were Out*, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, 2008: p.7
10. Paul, Coldwell, *I Called While You Were Out*: p.33
11. Winifred Nicholson, 'Unknown Colour: Paintings, Letters, Writings by Winifred Nicholson', in E. Fisher (ed), *Winifred Nicholson: Music and Colour*, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, 2012: p.25
12. Winifred Nicholson, 'Unknown Colour: Paintings, Letters, Writings by Winifred Nicholson': p.56
13. *IBID*
14. Jim Ede, 'HS Jim Ede on Winifred Nicholson, reprinted in E.Fisher (ed), *Winifred Nicholson: Music and Colour*, Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, 2012: p.17
15. Jim Ede, *A Way of Life*: p.40
16. Jim Ede, *A Way of Life*: pp.92-93
17. Jim Ede, *Kettle's Yard and its Artists*: p.53
18. Kenneth Martin, 'Construction and Change: Notes on a Group of Works Made between 1965 and 1967' printed in *Leonardo*, vol. 1, no. 4, Oct. 1968: pp.363-372
19. *IBID*
20. Jim Ede, *A Way of Life*: p.69
21. Jim Ede, *A Way of Life*: pp.199-200
22. Jim Ede, *A Way of Life*: p.69
23. For further information, please see Ian Hunt, 'Inside the Head of the Machine', in S. Brown, R.Hall and S. Kyriacou (eds), *Tim Head: Raw Material*, Huddersfield Art Gallery, 2010: p.36
24. *IBID*
25. Ian Hunt, 'Inside the Head of the Machine': p.31
26. Helen Waters, 'Edmund de Waal: Specific Objects and the Space In-between' in *Edmund de Waal*, J.Beighton and E. Fisher (eds), Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, 2007: p.26
27. *IBID*

HOW TO BOOK A VISIT

The Learning team at Kettle's Yard aims to respond to the needs of teachers, tutors and those working with people outside formal education. Experiencing works of art in such a unique setting provides a fascinating springboard for discussion, creativity and developing knowledge and skills.

We can provide a general introduction to Kettle's Yard and/or an introduction to the exhibition which can be tailored to meet curriculum needs. Talks have a strong element of discussion, where pupils are invited to contribute their own responses to the artworks and spaces.

We work with practicing artists to offer workshops that combine creative thinking and discussion with practical activity, taking inspiration from works in the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions. Practical workshops provide the opportunity for pupils to explore artist techniques, experimenting with new processes and materials.

Please contact education@kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk for further information.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Collection database and virtual tour: www.kettlesyard.co.uk/house/collection

ReCollection, Kettle's Yard Oral History Archive: www.recollection.kettlesyard.co.uk

Teachers packs: www.kettlesyard.co.uk/education/schools

Kettle's Yard blog: www.kettlesyardonline.co.uk



LIGHT

ISBN 978 1 904561 48 4

© KETTLE'S YARD 2013

Published by Kettle's Yard
University of Cambridge
Written and edited by the
Kettle's Yard Learning Team
Design by paulallitt.com
Printed by C3 Imaging, Colchester

Kettle's Yard
Castle Street, Cambridge, CB3 0AQ
United Kingdom
+44(0)1223 748100
www.kettlesyard.co.uk

Director: Andrew Nairne
Chair: Anne Lonsdale

Kettle's Yard is a department of the
University of Cambridge

This resource was made possible by the generous
support of The National Lottery through the
Heritage Lottery Fund and the Ernest Cook Trust

KETTLE'S YARD



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

IMAGE CREDITS

pp. photo 1-19, 26, 31, 36-44, cover, inside back cover: Paul Allitt
p. 38 © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London, 2013
pp. 20, 22: copyright and courtesy of the
Trustees of Winifred Nicholson
p. 28: photo Public Catalogue Foundation, © The Estate of Bryan
Pearce. All rights reserved, DACS 2013
p. 32: photo Peter Mennim
p. 47: photo courtesy Tim Head
p. 48: photo H el ene Binet

All images are copyrighted and may not be reproduced
without permission

All rights reserved

LIGHT

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 as well as useful ideas for pre-visit planning, supporting groups during visits and leading progression activities back in the classroom.

KETTLE'S YARD



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
MUSEUMS