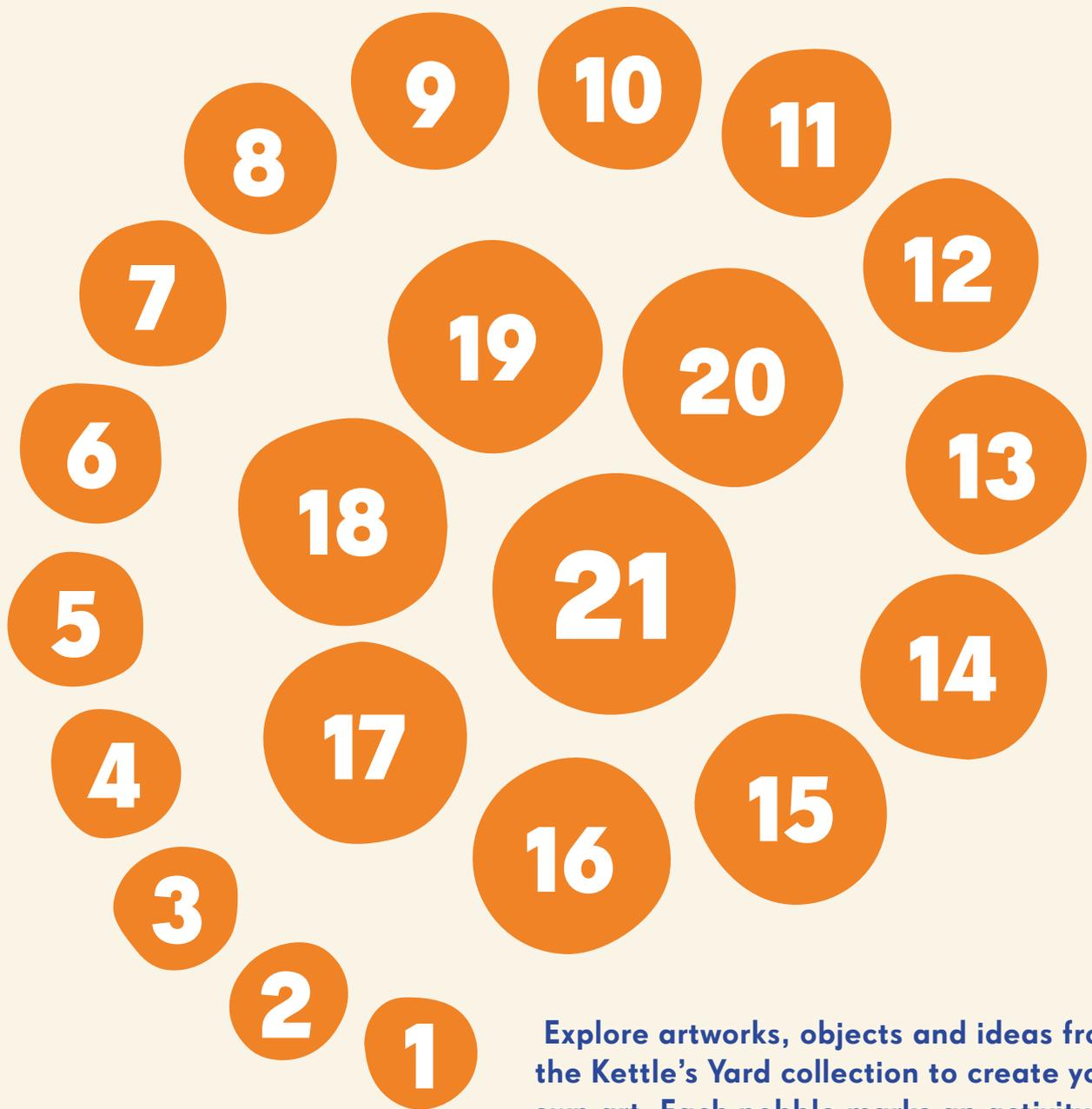


# Pebble Challenge

KETTLE'S YARD



**get  
creative  
at home!**

Explore artworks, objects and ideas from the Kettle's Yard collection to create your own art. Each pebble marks an activity to make and do at home, using the things you find around your house. If you can, check online for more info and inspiration and cross off the pebbles as you go.

[kettlesyard.co.uk/pebblechallenge](http://kettlesyard.co.uk/pebblechallenge)

Share your creations:

#pebblechallenge @kettlesyard

or email us with feedback

[learning@kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk](mailto:learning@kettlesyard.cam.ac.uk)

# What is Kettle's Yard?

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Kettle's Yard is a house and art gallery in Cambridge. It was the home of Jim and Helen Ede from 1957 to 1973. Every afternoon they opened their home to visitors; a tradition that continues to this day. Jim created a new way of looking at art by displaying it in his home, which was very different from looking at it in a gallery. He mixed up his collection of art with antique furniture, glassware, ceramics and especially natural found objects – like shells, feathers and pebbles! He even created a whole spiral shape made out of round pebbles which he found on the beach.

Jim placed the objects very carefully so that each highlights or connects with the other objects around it. In this way Jim aimed to create a perfectly balanced whole that is 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 all-important.

**Today is a day for getting yourself ready. Think about the things you have in your home. What do you display and why? Examine this picture of the House at Kettle's Yard or, if you can, have a look through the virtual tour of the House:**

**[tour.kettlesyard.co.uk](http://tour.kettlesyard.co.uk)**

**What do you notice about Jim and Helen's house?**

**For the challenges ahead, you can start to collect some items together: a mix of different types of papers and card, old magazines or newspaper, pencils, crayons, scissors, string or thread, some sticky tape or glue. Paints if you have them.**

# Week 1

## 3

### WINIFRED NICHOLSON'S RAINBOW

At the moment, we are seeing rainbows in windows everywhere! Artist Winifred Nicholson would keep a special object in her pocket called a prism, to help her find rainbows whenever she wanted.

**You can make a prism by putting a glass with water in direct sunlight near the edge of a table. Put a piece of plain white paper on the floor just beyond the table and move it around until you discover a rainbow. (If it's not sunny, try shining a torch through the glass of water instead.) Draw the outlines as they change with the light.**

## 4

### SECRET COMMUNICATIONS

Ovidiu Maitec created a sculpture called 'Radar' during the Cold War, when radars were being used to send secret messages.

**Can you create your own language using shapes and symbols – or your own body – to secretly communicate with someone else who has the code? How can you communicate from a distance, or without using words?**



## 2

### BRIGHT LEMONS

Jim Ede was interested in creating a 'visual balance' at Kettle's Yard. You can see this in the fresh lemon that he placed in a dark corner of his dining room. It almost switches on a light!



**Are there dark spots in your home? Try placing something bright there – it could be a lemon, a bright flower or even a rubber duck. Close your eyes for ten seconds and reopen them. How does it look now? You can do the same with an image. Draw a yellow circle or cut one out of a magazine. Find a dark-coloured photo and place your yellow circle there. How does the image change? What happens when you move the circle?**

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### TWIRLING MOBILE

In Kenneth Martin's sculpture, 'Screw Mobile', metal bars are attached to a rod and hung from the ceiling so it turns with the movement in the air.



Try cutting out different sized rectangles from card or cardboard packaging. Pay attention to what colours you use or, if you have any, you could cover your rectangles in tinfoil to make your sculpture reflective. Now arrange and stick your rectangles to a length of string and watch how it spins. Why is it important that your sculpture can move?

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### DRAWING FROM MEMORY

The artist Alfred Wallis was a fisherman for most of his life. He painted the seas, ships, boats, villages and seascapes he remembered from his travels across the sea.



Think of somewhere you have travelled to and draw it from your memory. Let your memory shape the drawing – like Alfred Wallis, you could draw your favourite parts of the memory bigger than everything else, or choose the colours according to how you remember feeling.

Ovidiu Maitec, *Radar 2 (or Radar II)*, 1970

Kenneth Martin, *Screw Mobile*, 1969

Alfred Wallis, *Land, fish and motor vessel*, 1932–37 (circa)

# Week 2

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## DANCING SHADOWS

Light can do amazing things. See this sculpture called, 'Dancer' by Henri-Gaudier-Brzeska. It's made of heavy bronze, but when the light hits the curves of the dancer, she looks like she's full of lightness and about to step off the table.



The light also casts shadows which reveal new ways to see objects. Standing near a window, see if you can cast dancing shadows on the wall behind you.

Ask someone in your house to cast a shadow, or find shadows around the house. Draw them at different times of the day. Can you identify the object from the shape of the shadow?

## A CIRCLE OF PATTERNS

Potter Lucy Rie used a needle to draw patterns into her ceramic bowls.

Cut out a circle of card (you might want to draw round a plate). What patterns can you fill it with? Can you draw a series of lines from the edge to the middle, or work your way from the edge round and round to the centre.

Think about the different textures you could use to make your pattern. Perhaps you could try sticking on wool, string or strips of fabric. What other ways can you repeat a shape or lines to create a pattern?



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## PLINTH PRACTICE

In Jim Ede's dining room an egg-shaped pebble is placed upright on a small plinth on the mantelpiece. This encourages us to think about the pebble as an artwork in its own right.

P.T.O.



**Make your own small plinth by covering a small cardboard box in white paper. Place the plinth in a prominent place in your house, such as on top of a chest of drawers.**

**Find an object that you love but that you wouldn't normally think of as art. Perhaps a small toy, or a shell, or a chocolate. Place the object on top of the plinth. How does this change the way you feel about it?**

## 10

### FONT-TASTIC!

Jiří Kolář used text and symbols cut from newspapers and music to create poems and collages.



**Take a newspaper or magazine page full of text and cut it into tiny pieces so that you**

**can no longer read the words. Use these to make a collage. What patterns or images can you create with the jumbled-up letters?**

## 11

### ABSTRACT LINES

On top of a piano at Kettle's Yard sits a sculpture by Constantin Brancusi. It's called 'Prometheus' and is a cement cast of the marble original. On the sculpture, the features of a head and face barely emerge from the cement, and yet we can still recognise it as a face. It looks like the person might be sleeping.



**Choose an object or a person to draw, or find an image to trace. Draw the image as you usually would. Now take an eraser, and rub out one line or part of a line that you feel you can remove without losing the sense of what the object is, or how it makes you feel. Keep removing lines until you are left with the bare minimum that you need to recognise the object.**

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, *Dancer*, 1913 (posthumous cast, 1967)

Lucie Rie, *Bowl (brown and white inlaid line)*, 1974

Jiří Kolář, *Words in Music*, 1966 (circa)

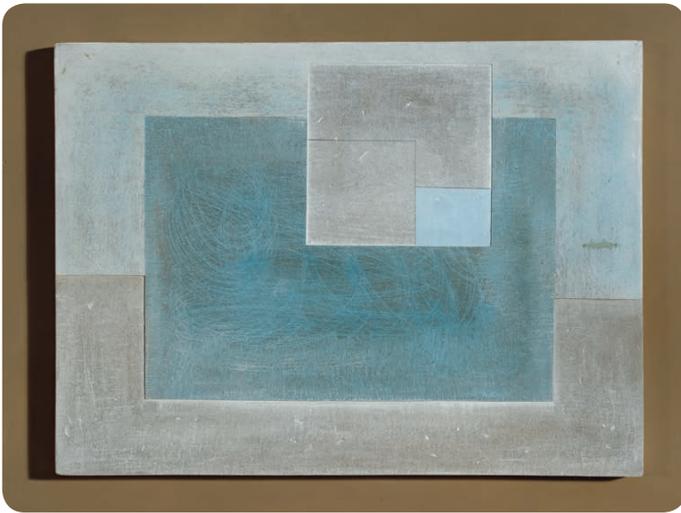
Constantin Brancusi, *Prometheus*, 1912

# Week 3

12

## COLOUR-BLOCK LANDSCAPES

Close your eyes and picture a special place where you feel relaxed. How do you feel when you are there, and what colours can you see?



Look through magazines and cut out 5 different-sized squares that match the colours in your place.

Take your plain piece of paper, and test out various ways of arranging your 5 coloured squares on it.

It doesn't need to look exactly the same as in your head – it is a picture to help you remember the colours and feel relaxed – just like Ben Nicholson has in this painting above.

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## SHAPE POEM

One artwork made just for the Kettle's Yard House was Ian Hamilton-Finlay's carved

pebble. He was an artist and a poet, and was interested in the relationship between words and the world around us. He wrote 'Concrete Poetry'; where the form and arrangement of the words contributes as much to the poem as their sound and meaning.



Choose a subject that interests you. This could be the view from your window, a leaf, an animal, or a game. Write down a list of words that your subject makes you think of. How can you arrange those words to give a better idea of your subject? Should the line they're written on be the outline of the shape? Should some be bigger than others? Which words should go together? Can you add in different colours? Try a few different arrangements and see which one works the best.

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## THE POWER OF PERSPECTIVE

Every chair in Kettle's Yard has been carefully placed so that you see a particular view from it.

Find a window in your house and take a photograph\* of what you can see. Now move to the left or right, get close or further away, and try standing up or sitting down. Take a photograph every time you move.



How do these different perspectives change what you see? Do you focus on something different? How about the lighting – does this change the colours or the mood? How do the different images make you feel? Could you reposition one of your chairs so that when you sit in it you always see your favourite view?

\*try quick sketches if you don't have access to a camera

## 15

### STRINGING SCULPTURE

In his sculpture 'Construction in Space Suspended' at Kettle's Yard, artist Naum Gabo used plastic thread to criss-cross over a see-through frame. The work challenges how we think about mass (weight) and void (emptiness). Although the threads in his sculptures are straight lines, they create the illusion of curves and define spaces inside the sculpture.

You can use paper and string to create your own curvy structures. Take a roughly A4 sized piece of thick paper or bendy card. Cut it diagonally in half and make 6–10 holes at points along the edges of your triangle. If you have a hole punch, that is perfect, if not ask for help to use a sharp pencil to push through the paper (onto something squishy like a folded towel). Tie your thread to one hole and start to

thread across your sculpture. See how the paper bends when you pull on the string. Test out the different ways you can string up your sculpture. Try hanging it from a string so it turns.

How many different shapes can you see within it? Try with larger triangles, or tie several together so they hang as one piece.

## 16

### CARDBOARD CANVAS

Alfred Wallis used to paint on whatever he had to hand – packaging, cardboard, even plates! He would then shape his picture according to the shape of the surface he had available.



Find some left over packaging in your house and take it apart so it lies flat. Fill the whole surface with a painting or drawing – including the folds and tabs. Do this again, this time cutting a piece of packaging to create an unusual shape, and creating a new scene to fill that space. What do you end up adding in or taking away from your new picture to make it fit the space available?

Ben Nicholson, 1962 (*Argos*),

Ian Hamilton Finlay,  
KETTLE'S YARD / CAMBRIDGE / ENGLAND IS THE / LOUVRE  
OF THE PEBBLE, 1995

Alfred Wallis,  
*Boats under Saltash Bridge (Royal Albert Bridge)*, 1935-37 (circa)

# Week 4

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## LIGHT DISTORTIONS

'Disc' by Gregorio Vardanega hangs above lots of plants in the window of Kettle's Yard. The Perspex disc acts as a magnifying glass and spins gently, changing how you see the plants and objects behind it.



Try this for yourself - find a small plant/leaf and a glass or glass jar. Place your plant/leaf in or next to the glass and look at it through the glass. How does it change? Use a camera\* to document this, photographing it from above, below, close up and far away.

What happens if you fill your glass with water? Or what happens if you use more than one glass?

Look back through your images. Which do you like the best and why?

\*try quick sketches if you don't have access to a camera

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## PANEL PIECES

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska made hundreds of drawings from wildlife he saw in the park. But he was an artist who was also fascinated by the energy and speed of modern life. In his drawing 'Bird Swallowing a Fish' (he also made a sculpture of this), you can see how he showed these creatures as a collection of contrasting shapes and tones of light and dark.



Choose an object and draw a basic outline of it on a light-coloured sheet of paper. Next, take a piece of dark-coloured paper and cut out shapes to stick on your drawing - use them to fill in darker patches you can see on your object. Can you use a third colour for a middle tone (neither light nor dark)? In what ways does the contrast change your drawing?

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## SHAPE PRINTING

Artist Richard Pousette-Dart gave Jim Ede a circle made of brass as a symbol of their friendship.

Dip the end of a loo roll cardboard tube into paint and print circles onto a piece of

paper. If you don't have paint, try using food colouring with water, or just enjoy the colour change of printing water onto slightly absorbent paper or card.



Can you cut or fold the tube to make other shapes? Is there a shape that you'd like to print for a friend as a symbol of your friendship? Perhaps you could print a pattern for them and send it in the post.

## 20

### JIM'S WINDOWS

Jim felt that natural light was central to the experience at Kettle's Yard. At different times of the day and year, light transforms the rooms and the artwork. Jim and Helen even had special windows built to let in more light.

To test this out, take a cardboard box, or packaging box and put a few of your favourite (small) objects inside – mark where you've placed them or use blue tack to hold them in place. Now cut out windows and a door into the sides of the box, thinking carefully about where and how you want the light to fall.

Can you make the light illuminate your objects, or cast interesting shadows? Try moving your box around the house, check it at different times of day, draw out where the shadows fall, or make a dark space and shine a torch inside.

## 21

### SORTING SPIRALS

Jim Ede brought together a spiral of pebbles by ordering his collection from little to big. Each pebble had been chosen because it was the 'perfect' shape for him.



On the final day of your challenge, find your own selection of 'perfect' or special things in your home, garden or out on your walk. How would you order or categorise them? What is the best placement to display your objects so your collection can be seen at its best? Capture this in a photograph and share it.

Congratulations on completing your Pebble Challenge. We hope to welcome you in person at Kettle's Yard soon. Until then, please keep sharing your artworks with us.

#pebblechallenge or @kettlesyard

Gregorio Vardanega, *Disc*, 1960 (circa)

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, *Sketch of 'Bird Swallowing a Fish'*, 1914 (circa)

Richard Pousette-Dart, *Four brass rings and one jade ring*, n.d. (pre-1966)



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