

LANDSCAPES



Barnett Freedman, Country Lane, 1926

CONTENT AND IDEAS

What can you see in Freedman's Country Lane?

- A narrow country lane with an avenue of large trees on either side
- A horse and cart. The driver is standing up, guiding the horse with long reins.
- A person sitting under a tree
- A house in the far distance

What time of year is it? How can you tell?

- Summer
- The trees are in leaf.

What is the weather like? How can you tell?

- Sunny
- The trees are casting strong shadows on the ground.

Why do you think the artist chose this particular scene?

- The picture is alive with light and shade. The artist probably wanted to try to capture the effect of light through the trees.

How would you describe the atmosphere of the picture?

- Peaceful, calm, balmy, still, summery, unspoilt, restful, welcoming

Activity

Ask children to imagine they are either the driver of the cart or the person sitting under the tree and to describe what they are doing.

- Why are they here?
- Where have they come from?
- What will they do next?

- How are they feeling?

FORM AND COMPOSITION

How does the artist draw your eye into his picture?

- The strong lines of the country lane, the path on the bank to the left of it and the long rows of trees draw your eye into the picture.
- The horse and cart in the foreground lead your eye along the lane to the middle ground where the road curves out of view. Put your fingers over the horse and cart and see how different the picture would feel without it.
- The trees on either side of the lane hide most of the view beyond, making your eye concentrate more on the foreground.
- The gap between the row of trees allows you a glimpse of land, a house and more trees in the far distance.

How has the artist emphasised the size of the trees?

- By cutting off the tops and the sides of the trees in the foreground, leaving you to imagine them stretching far up and out beyond the edges of the canvas.

What tricks of perspective has the artist used to give the picture a feeling of depth? (See also AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE)

- The trees in the foreground are bigger, darker and more detailed than those further away.
- The trees overlap one another, making those in front appear closer than those hidden behind.
The tree on the left bottom corner seems the nearest.
- The sides of the lane narrow to make it appear that the road stretches into the distance.

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE

What materials did Freedman use for *The Country Lane*?

- Freedman used pen and ink to draw the outlines and textures of the scene.
- When the ink had dried, he added a wash to give more tone to some of the shadows.

What sort of lines did Freedman draw?

- Ask children to spot some of these lines below in the picture and to say what they depict, e.g. u-shapes, horizontal strokes and zigzags for leaves, curves for tree trunks and branches; thick lines, lines close together and criss-crossed lines (cross-hatching) for areas of shadow; thin lines and lines further apart for lighter areas.

vertical
horizontal
scribbly
curved
u-shaped
thick
thin
cross-hatched



Why did Freedman use so many different sorts of lines?

- To achieve different sorts of leaf textures.
- To suggest different tones of light and shade.

You might like to compare the use of lines in these other pictures in this pack:

Leon Kossof Christ Church, Spitalfields, Spring 1989/92

Joseph Oppenheimer Piccadilly Circus

George Him Shikun Petach Tikva

Which are the lightest parts of the picture? Which are the darkest?

Activity

- Ask children to make as many different kinds of lines as they can with a pencil
- Encourage them to draw lines in different directions – vertical, horizontal or diagonal.
- Suggest they experiment with all sorts of shapes – straight, wavy, zigzags, spirals, crosses, curves, scribbles, loops, etc.
- Explain that the closer the lines, the blacker the pencil and the harder they press, the darker the tone will be.
- Encourage children to experiment with grading the thickness of their lines and using crosshatching to deepen tones.

- Now ask them to draw a picture of a tree, using a variety of marks and different media, such as different grades of drawing pencils, charcoal, coloured pencils, pen and ink. Use papers with rough and smooth textures to see how this affects the quality of lines.

Compare A Country Lane with Van Gogh's drawings

Vincent van Gogh, A Garden with Flowers, 1888 (Winterthur, Oskar Reinhart Collection)

Pollard Willows and a Shepherd 1884 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Van Gogh's drawings are a fantastic example of the potential of textural marks. Van Gogh made more than 1,000 drawings, often sketches for paintings, and also included sketches in letters to his brother.

There is a collection of all Van Gogh's drawings, including landscapes, at:

www.vggallery.com/drawings/main_az.htm

Picture credits

Hans Feibusch Longstowe Park 1983

Henri Epstein Forest of Rambouillet

Lucien Pissarro The Pagoda, Kew 1919

Compare Freedman's picture with these three landscape paintings.

How have the artists created the effects of light and shade?

- By using a wide variety of lighter tints or darker shades of green. (A shade is a colour with black added to it. A tint is a colour with white added to it.)
- Ask children where in the paintings they can find the darkest shade and the lightest tint of green.
- Notice the bluey greens that Pissarro has used to paint the long shadows of the trees, which contrast strongly with the yellows and pale greens of the grass.

Activity

- Ask children to mix as many different shades and tints of green as they can and use these to create their own landscape picture with trees.

How have the artists created the shapes of the trees?

- In the foreground of both pictures, Epstein and Feibusch have painted distinct tree trunks and branches, but painted the leaves as blocks of varying colours, rather than showing each leaf distinctly. In the background, the shape of the individual trees are not defined.
- Pissarro has painted the trees with short dabs of colour to give shape to the leafy branches.

Artists have to choose a viewpoint and a focus for their pictures. Consider why these artists might have chosen their particular viewpoints.

- Pissarro's picture leads your eye towards a tall pagoda at the end of a grassy path between trees. He seemed interested in the interplay between the trees and their shadows.
- Feibusch focuses on the plants and bridge that surround a patch of water in a country park. This is a quiet, peaceful and quite intimate view.
- Epstein takes your eye on a walk from an open clearing into the denseness of a forest beyond, where tall trees soar towards the blue sky.

Compare the variety of greens and the way leaves have been painted in these pictures:

Claude Monet, *The Water-Lily Pond* 1880 (The National Gallery, London)

Monet's picture of his luxuriant garden at Giverny was painted in summer afternoon light. The plants around the pond are painted with long diagonal or vertical strokes, whereas the pond plants and the reflections of the trees in the water are a dense weave of short flicks, stabs and smears of different greens, blues, yellows and browns, punctuated by the pink of the water lilies.

Henri Rousseau *Tropical Forest with Monkeys*, 1910 (National Gallery of Art, Washington)

Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised!) 1891 (National Gallery, London)

Rousseau was a self-taught painter who created exotic jungle scenes, filled with the tropical plants and animals that he studied at the Jardin de Plantes in Paris. He painstakingly painted each leaf and blade of grass separately in varying greens to create his lush effects.

What do you think these three artists felt about the landscapes they painted?

What time of year and what time of day was it when the artists painted their pictures and what was the weather like?

Can you see far into the distance in these pictures or are their views quite near at hand? How have the artists achieved an effect of distance? See *As Far as the Eye can See* for information about tricks of perspective.

Activity

Ask children to imagine what they might see if they could see beyond the edges of these pictures. Can they draw this?

Game

Choose one of the pictures and ask children in turn how they would feel if they jumped into it and what they could see, touch, smell, hear and taste, e.g. I would feel hot, I could touch the water, I could smell the grass, I could hear rustling leaves, I would see flowers etc.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Barnett Freedman

Freedman was born 1901 in the East End of London, the eldest son of Russian Jewish immigrants. His childhood was marred by ill health. He spent four years between the ages of 9 and 13 in hospital, where he taught himself to draw. At 15, his talent for drawing led to jobs as a draughtsman to stonemasons, architects and sign writers. At the same time, for five years, he also went to evening classes at the St Martin's School of Art. In 1922, he got a scholarship to the Royal College of Art, where he later taught, became an examining visitor and was elected as an Honorary Fellow.

Freedman became a successful and prolific book illustrator and book jacket designer. His illustrations include work for Faber and Faber, such as Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1931), *The Folio Society*, and the Baynard and Curwen Presses. Using pen and chalk for reproduction by line blocks for black and white and auto-lithography for colour, Freedman developed an immediately recognisable style. He also became a distinguished letterer and typographer.

In the 1930s Freedman worked for London Transport, designing posters, as well as designing publicity for Shell, the BBC and the General Post Office and Ealing Films. In 1935 he designed the George V Silver Jubilee postage stamp. An official war artist, from 1941, first with the British Expeditionary Force in France, then with the Admiralty until 1946, Freedman won the CBE in 1947 for his work. This included large-scale paintings, portraits of entire ships' crews and a lithograph of the 15-inch Gun Turret in HMS *Repulse*. After the war, he became a TV and radio personality. He was made a Royal Designer for Industry in 1949. Freedman died in 1958

Henri Epstein

Epstein was born in Lodz, Poland in 1892. He began painting in his home town, working in a collective workshop of local Jewish painters. He left for Munich to study at the Academy of Art, and then settled in Paris in 1931. He became friendly with Maurice Utrillo and met many other contemporary Parisian artists. He was also associated with many of the Jewish artists who lived in Paris, sharing their concern for Jewish art. Epstein's work, lavishly and vividly painted, depicts landscapes, peasants working in the fields, fishermen at work, interiors, portraits, and nudes. He

exhibited both at the Salon d'Automne and the Salon des Tuileries. In 1944, Epstein was interned in the Drancy concentration camp and was deported to Auschwitz. A retrospective exhibition of Epstein's work was held in Paris in 1946.

Hans Feibusch

Feibusch was born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1898. He studied medicine in Munich before settling in Berlin in 1920 for his art studies. He was becoming successful as an artist when the Third Reich made life in Germany impossible. He was one of the artists exhibited in the 1937 Degenerate Art Exhibition - Entartete Kunst - put on by the Nazis to highlight the modernist trends in art that they opposed. Feibusch was one of a minority of artists whose work was relatively conservative but was probably included for his Jewish heritage. His works in that exhibition, now lost, were two paintings of angels.

Escaping to England, Feibusch converted to Christianity. Befriended by the Anglican Bishop Bell of Chichester, he received the first of his many church commissions to create a mural in the private chapel in the Bishop's Palace. Feibusch made use of the existing medieval wall with blocked windows at the chapel's West end by depicting people looking out of the windows. He worked in other Anglican churches – depicting the Pilgrim's progress at St Elizabeth's Eastbourne, the Prodigal Son in All Saints, Iden and St John Baptising Christ in the baptistry of Chichester Cathedral. His largest single work is a huge mural of the Judgement in St Albans, Holborn, alongside a set of paintings depicting the Stations of the Cross. He also carried out several murals in the village of Portmeiron, in Wales through his friendship with Clough Williams-Ellis and his portrait of Ellis is in the National Portrait Gallery. He also created 12 murals, each more than 20 feet (6 m) high, around the central hall of Newport Civic Centre which told the history of Newport. These were painted between 1961 and 1964.

Feibusch's work was always representational but he developed an Expressionist use of colour and intensity of vision. He used colour to accentuate intent and meaning. He especially liked orange against pinks and acid yellow against blues. His compositions, often of closely-grouped figures, are almost neo-classical in their arrangement and mannered poses. His figures often have an ethereal quality, as if defying gravity. Feibusch continued to do portraits and easel paintings and took up sculpture when his eyesight began to fail, but he is best known for his murals. He wrote a book Mural Painting, in 1946, and also wrote about mural painting in a number of journals. Feibusch died just days before his 100th birthday in 1998, soon after attending a celebration of his work at the Royal College of Art. In his years he reverted to Judaism and was buried at Golders Green Jewish Cemetery. His estate bequeathed the entire contents of his studio to Pallant House Gallery in Chichester.

Lucien Pissarro

Pissarro was born in 1863 in Paris, the eldest son of the Impressionist artist Camille Pissarro. Taught by his father to paint, Lucien began his career as a landscape artist and in 1886 participated in the 8th and last Impressionist exhibition with 10 paintings and graphic works. He was one of the first to join the Neo-Impressionist movement and exhibited at the first Salon des Indépendants. In 1888 he exhibited with the avant-garde group Les Vingt in Brussels. However, he became more interested in woodcuts and wood engravings and worked for the printer Manzi.

Pissarro moved to London in 1890 and established friendly contacts with the Pre-Raphaelites and plein-air painters. He became a British citizen in 1916, although he preferred to call himself a 'Channel painter', spending several months of each year in France. In 1894, he founded the Eragny Press (the name comes from a place near Dieppe), which played a significant role in the development of European book art. He ran the press with his wife Esther L. Bensusan until 1914. In 1911, Pissarro co-founded the Camden Town Group of artists, forging an important link between French Impressionists and early 20th century British painters. He held his first one-man exhibition at Carfax & Co. 1913. In 1919, he formed the Monarro Group to propagate Impressionism in England, but the group ceased three years later. He had retrospective exhibitions at the Hampstead Art Gallery in 1920, at Manchester and Blackpool in 1935 and at the O'Hana Gallery in 1955. In 1943, he was represented in the exhibitions of Three Generations of Pissarro at Miller's, Lewes, 1943, and the O'Hana Gallery in 1954. Pissarro died on 10 July, 1944. His only daughter, Orovida, was also an artist.