

SUN AND SNOW



Archibald Ziegler, *Safed*, 1950



George Him, *Shikun Petach Tikva*, date?

CONTENT AND IDEAS

What similarities and differences can you see between these two pictures?

Similarities

Both pictures show:

- a street scene with buildings – probably in a town or city.
- a single building in the centre of the picture.
- other buildings on either side of the central building.
- central buildings with a pointed roof.
- only one building with a pointed roof – the rest have flat or sloping roofs.
- central buildings with three floors.
- a blue sky.
- Both artists have signed their surname in the lower right-hand corner of their picture.
- Both pictures are full of shadows.

Differences

- Ziegler's picture has people in it, whereas Him's picture does not.
- Ziegler's picture looks down a street, whereas Him's picture looks across a street.
- Ziegler's street has pavements, whereas Him's street does not.
- In Ziegler's picture, the windows of the main house have closed shutters; in Him's picture the shutters on the main house are open.
- In Ziegler's picture, the doors of the central building are open; in Him's picture the front door is shut.
- The central house in Ziegler's picture has balconies and awnings. The house in Him's picture is flat-fronted.
- The central house in Him's picture has chimneys, whereas Ziegler's house has no chimneys.
- Him's scene is more cluttered than Ziegler's. Notice, for example, the telephone lines, the various different signs, the palm tree.

NOTE: Both pictures are set in Israel. Safed is an ancient holy town in northern Israel, 3,200ft above sea level with clear mountain air. Shikun is a neighbourhood of Petach Tikva, an industrial city near Tel Aviv.

What is the weather like in these two pictures? How can you tell?

- The weather is hot.
- You can tell because:
 - the sky in both pictures is blue.
 - the artists have mainly used yellow, orange, pink and red. These vivid, 'hot' colours remind us of the sun and fire and create the effect of sizzling sunlight.
 - there are strong shadows, which are always cast on sunny days.

Why do you think the artists chose to paint these particular scenes?

There is no right or wrong or single answer to this question.

- It could be because they were interested in the different variety of shapes of the buildings.
- Maybe the main house belonged to the artists or to someone they knew.
- The artists may have been interested in capturing the effect of light on buildings at a particular time of day.

Compare Safed and Shikun Patch Tikva with these other sunny scenes with buildings:

Edward Hopper, Early Sunday Morning, 1930 (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York)
This wide painting depicts a long terrace of solid, darkened shop fronts as the sun arrives. This is a silent street. There are no people or cars. Nothing moves except the light, casting long shadows.

Charles Sheeler, Skyscrapers, 1922 (The Phillips Collection, Washington)
This vertical painting captured the height of immensely tall skyscrapers and the play of light and shadow between and around them.

David Hockney, Neat Lawn, 1967 (Private Collection)
A single building stands centrally in this quiet picture, set against a solid blue sky and behind a textured green lawn. The windows are a series of rectangles. In front of the house a sprinkler sprays two jets of water in opposite directions.

FORM AND COMPOSITION

How would you describe the atmosphere of both pictures?

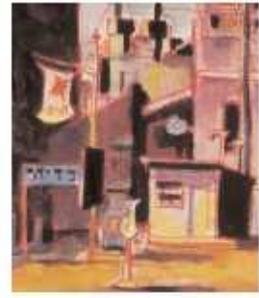
- Both pictures feel calm and quiet.

How have the artists achieved this atmosphere? (A difficult question.)

- Shapes and lines in art can send messages. Ask children to look at the main repeating shapes and lines in the picture to arrive at their answer. Give them the following clues:
- If shapes are close together, they give a picture a feeling of energy.
- Shapes that are far apart make a picture feel calmer.
- Vertical lines make a picture feel stable.
- Horizontal lines make a picture feel quiet.
- Diagonals, zigzags and curves give painting a feeling of movement.

How have the artists shown that their scenes are set in dazzling sunshine?

- By their use of colour.



In Safed:

- The buildings that are in full sunlight are painted yellow, so that they glow against the blue sky.
- The wrought-iron balconies and door fanlights are painted red to help give a feeling of warmth.
- The shadows under the eaves, the balconies and roof awning are painted pink, adding more warmth.
- The two central figures have vivid red clothes. By contrast, the figures in shadow are painted in blue and grey.
- Even the buildings in full shadow have a pinkish tinge.

In Shikun Petach Tikva:

- The outlines of everything in the picture have been drawn in red ink.
- The road in the foreground is painted in warm yellow, orange, pink and brown, which conjure up warmth. Put your hand over the road and notice how much colder the picture feels without it.
- The central building is painted in shades of pink and violet (the complementary colour to yellow - for an explanation of complementary colours, see page 6).
- The buildings on the right (which are probably white) have been tinged with yellow to suggest they are in full sunlight.
- The buildings out of the sun are painted in dark, but warm, reds and browns, so are many of the shadows, which all contribute to the feeling that the picture is set in a stiflingly hot place.
- There is a rhythm of very dark vertical shadows across the picture – how many can you spot?
- Note the almost total absence of green in the picture.

Look at how two other artists painted shadows:

Claude Monet

Monet was fascinated by how light changed from moment to moment, making things and places look very different in the morning from the afternoon and in cold or hot weather. He painted series of paintings of the same subject – poplars, haystacks, Rouen Cathedral and water lilies – day after day for months, trying to capture the changes in light, depending upon the season, the weather and the time of day. To do this, he worked on several canvases at once, painting each one for only half an hour each day until the light changed and then moved on to the next canvas. Monet knew that light is made up of a colour spectrum of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Look closely at his pictures to see his varying use of colours for shadows.

André Derain

Derain was a Fauve ('wild beast') artist, who used bright, bold colours to express his feelings about places and people rather than to make exact likeness of them. In his scenes of boats and landscapes in and around the Port of Collioure during the hot summer of 1905, he painted the beach and boats in vivid reds and their shadows in contrasting bright green.



*Lillian Holt,
Ronda in the Sun,
Andalusia, Spain
1955*

Compare Ziegler’s and Him’s pictures with Holt’s picture Ronda in the Sun, Andalusia, Spain.

- Holt painted not what Ronda looked like, but the way it felt on a scorching hot day.
- Note the intensity and range of reds, oranges, pinks and yellows.
- Look at the variety and direction of the brushstrokes.
- Consider what the long horizontal brushstrokes might represent – perhaps a sudden rush of hot wind.
- Ask children to imagine how they might feel standing in Ronda.



*Harry Weinberger,
In Winter,
Manchester*

Compare the three sunny pictures with Weinberger’s winter picture.

What colours did Weinberger use to give the feeling of a cold day?

- Weinberger used a range of cool blues, greys and mauves and browns to suggest the chill outside on a snowy winter’s day.

- The colours in the sky range (from left to right) from violet through light blue to bright blue to grey.



- The branches of the leafless garden trees are painted in very dark greys.



- In vibrant contrast, the houses are painted in warm oranges, pinks and reds, suggesting the warmth and snugness within them and making the day seem even more bitter.



- The blue, grey and white dashes of paint could be interpreted either as falling snow or snow sitting on the tree branches and the garden wall.



- The white and grey patches on the ground could indicate fallen snow.



- The beige patch might be a cleared path.



Find different brushstrokes that the artist used:

- short and stubby
- curved
- vertical
- wavy
- diagonal
- horizontal
- square

Use your finger in the air to copy the shapes.

Where do you think the artist was sitting to see this particular view?

- High up – perhaps looking out of a first or second floor front window, seeing the view across a street of the houses opposite as well the house next door.

Look at how other artists have painted wintry landscapes with trees and houses:

Pieter Brueghel, Hunters in the Snow 1565 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

This was one of a series of pictures depicting everyday life during different seasons. Notice the touches of warmth – the red brick buildings and a roaring fire – that contrast with the vast snowy landscape with jagged rocky mountains and bare trees. The picture is enlivened with numerous people – three tired hunters, skaters, people fishing, carrying firewood and playing on the ice, as well as a pack of dogs and roosting birds.

Alfred Sisley, Snow at Louveciennes 1878 (Orsay Museum, Paris)

Camille Pissarro Street in Pontoise, Winter 1873 (Florence Gould Collection, Cannes)

Camille Pissarro The Louvre under Snow (National Gallery, London)

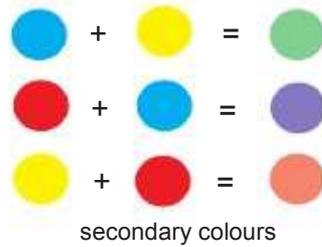
Notice how both artists have used a narrow range of pale greys and blues to suggest the bitter chill of a snowy winter's day. Even the buildings have been made to look washed out and cold.

Robert Henri, Snow in New York 1902 (National Gallery of Art, Washington)

Henri used a narrow range of dull browns and greys to create this gloomy city scene.

An explanation of complementary colours

- The three primary colours are red, yellow and blue.
- Two primaries can be mixed to make secondary colours:
yellow + blue = green
red + yellow = orange
red + blue = purple
- The complementary colour of each primary is the mix of the other two:
red's complementary is green (blue + yellow);
yellow's complementary is violet (red + blue)
blue's complementary is orange (yellow + red)
- Placed side by side, complementary colours seem to look brighter, clearer and to stand out more.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Archibald Ziegler

Ziegler was born in London in 1903 and studied art at the Central School, the RA Schools and the RCA. He travelled widely in Europe and the United States. In 1932 he executed murals at Toynbee Hall, London and from 1938 was visiting lecturer at St Martin's. He exhibited at a number of galleries in London between 1932 and 1965. He died in 1971.

George Him

Him was born in 1900 in Lodz, Poland. He briefly studied law in Moscow in 1917, until the law faculty was closed down after the Russian Revolution. He moved to Germany and obtained a PhD in comparative religions, before enrolling in the Leipzig Academy for Graphic Art and Book Industry. He worked as a graphic designer in Germany and Poland before emigrating to England. In partnership with Jan Lewitt, between 1933 and 1954, he designed posters, adverts and exhibitions. During the World War II, Him produced posters for the MoI, Post Office, Ministry of Food and the exiled Polish and Dutch Governments. Post-war, he worked on advertising campaigns for American Overseas Airlines and Schweppes. After the establishment of Israel, Him designed the Warsaw Ghetto Exhibition, the Masada Exhibition, wrote the script for the Israel Pavilion at the expo in Brussels, was the Chief Designer of the Israel Pavilion in Montreal, and design consultant for El Al Israel Airlines. Him illustrated a great number of books, both for adults and children. He was Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design at Leicester Polytechnic and was elected RDI in 1977. Look at www.georgehim.co.uk to see numerous examples of his work.

Lilian Holt

Holt was born in 1898 in London and studied at Putney Art School, but economic necessity forced her to work for Prudential Assurance Company from 1915-22. Later she attended evening classes at Regent Street Polytechnic in London. She was married to antiques dealer Jacob Mendelson between 1923 and 1928, but then met and later married the artist David Bomberg. She spent long periods painting in Spain with Bomberg. After Bomberg's premature death in 1957 she visited remote and rugged places in Mexico, Turkey, Spain and North Africa where she continued to draw and paint and devoted her later years (with the support of her daughter Dinora Mendelson) promoting Bomberg's achievements. Holt died in London in 1983.

