

Icy Cold Colors



VISIT THE BMA and see how many colors you can find in the ice and snow in *Artist in Greenland*.

Artist in Greenland Rockwell Kent

Brrrr. The air feels cold out on this Arctic snowfield. Your huskies huddle together to rest after pulling your sledge to this pristine spot where a jagged iceberg dominates the frigid landscape. With your canvas attached to the back of your sledge and your paintbrushes hanging at the side, you are ready to paint. But what colors should you use in this land of ice and snow? Glaring white, certainly, for the icy slope of the iceberg, but cold blue for the side that faces away from the sun. Brilliant blue-green for the northern sky and paler streaks of blue for the snow-covered ground. Dark blue for the long shadows cast by the dogs and for the small shadows that collect in your footprints.

As an artist, Rockwell Kent knew that blue is a “cool” color that makes us think of chilly lakes. By using an overwhelming amount of blue in this frozen landscape, he makes us all but shiver in the arctic cold.

Rockwell Kent was fascinated by the majesty of icebergs. During a visit to Greenland, he built himself a hut in a village north of the Arctic Circle and asked an Eskimo friend to teach him how to drive a dog sled over treacherous ice fields. Soon after, he bought his own dog team and sledge so that he could camp out in some of the starkly beautiful places far from the village. Look closely at the small canvas on Kent's easel. He has already painted the iceberg, but will add the dogs and the portrait of himself after returning to a warmer climate.

Challenge for Students

Use cool colors (blue, green, purple) to create a cold landscape in paint, colored pencil, markers, or colored paper collage.

Find a map of Greenland and look for the village of Uummannaq where Rockwell Kent built his hut, 225 miles north of the Arctic Circle (http://greenland-guide.gl/towns_regions.htm). In a different section of the same web site, (http://greenland-guide.gl/ice_snow_photo.htm) find a photo entitled “A large iceberg in front of Uummannaq.” Do you think this is the same iceberg that appears in Kent's painting? What has changed?

Print the image on page 2 for your students.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART



Rockwell Kent. *Artist in Greenland*. 1935/60. The Baltimore Museum of Art: Purchase with exchange funds from the Edward Joseph Gallagher III Memorial Collection, BMA 1991.10. Courtesy of the Plattsburgh State Art Museum, Rockwell Kent Collection. Bequest of Sally Kent Gorton.