

North Shields #4 – Anthony Downie (Audio Transcript)



Introduction

You are standing on Trevor Terrace in North Shields, near the Gunner. On the gable end of a terraced house, a large mural transforms the brick wall into a vivid celebration of everyday beauty.

This artwork, created by Anthony Downie, is a tribute to the back lanes of North Shields. A subject often overlooked yet deeply loved by locals.

Visual Overview

The mural spans the entire side wall of the tall, narrow building. It is painted in bold, geometric blocks of colour, creating a stylised urban scene. The composition captures the golden hour, that fleeting time when sunlight casts long shadows and everything glows with warmth.

Overall Composition

The mural is set against a bold sky-blue background, creating the sense of a bright, cloudless day. Against this, the artist constructs an urban streetscape using large, angular blocks of colour.

Warm oranges, sandy ochres, and terracotta tones form the sunlit faces of buildings, while deep navy and midnight blue create long dramatic shadows that stretch across the scene.

Foreground Details

At the centre, a tall, thin orange pole rises vertically, splitting the mural almost in half. This represents a telegraph pole, and thin black lines radiate from its top, depicting telephone wires stretching across the sky.

Below, the foreground shows a cobbled lane cast under a dark shadow, with a shaft of bright orange light cutting horizontally through a gap in the buildings.

Buildings and Shadows

The rooftops glow in orange and yellow tones, suggesting sunlight hitting their surfaces. Deep navy blue blocks form the shadows of the buildings, creating a sense of depth and perspective.

The shapes are simplified, bold planes of colour that evoke the feeling of a quiet back lane behind a residential street, bathed in sunlight.

Colour Palette and Texture

The mural uses only a few colours: bright sky-blue for the background, warm orange and yellow for sunlit areas, and dark blues, greys, and teal for shadows.

The texture is smooth and flat, with crisp edges, giving it a clean, modern look.

Atmosphere and Sensory Details

Imagine the warmth of sunlight on brick walls, the stillness of an empty back lane, and the faint hum of overhead wires.

If you could touch the mural, the orange areas would feel warm and dry like sunbaked brick, while the deep navy shadows would feel cool and heavy under your fingertips.

The image feels calm and orderly, like a frozen moment in a sunny day.

Artist Information

Anthony Downie is a North Shields-based artist and set builder.

His career spans community mural projects, album artwork, and scenic design for theatre and events.

In recent years, he has returned to painting, creating richly coloured images of local streets and buildings exhibited at venues like the Biscuit Factory, Baltic, and Woodhorn.

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