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*To send light into the darkness of men's hearts
- such is the duty of the artist. Schumann*

Perspective in Drawing

Perspective (from [Latin](#): *perspicere* to see through) in the graphic arts, such as drawing, is an approximate representation, on a flat surface (such as paper), of an image as it is seen by the eye. The two most characteristic features of perspective are that objects are drawn:

- Smaller as their distance from the observer increases
- Foreshortened: the size of an object's dimensions along the line of sight are relatively shorter than dimensions across the line of sight

Any perspective representation of a scene that includes parallel lines has one or more [vanishing points](#) in a perspective drawing. A one-point perspective drawing means that the drawing has a single vanishing point, usually (though not necessarily) directly opposite the viewer's eye and usually (though not necessarily) on the horizon line. All lines parallel with the viewer's line of sight recede to the horizon towards this vanishing point. This is the standard "receding railroad tracks" phenomenon. A two-point drawing would have lines parallel to two different angles. Any number of vanishing points are possible in a drawing, one for each set of parallel lines that are at an angle relative to the plane of the drawing.

[Wikipedia.com](#)

Thoughts on Perspective:

There are three aspects to perspective. The first has to do with how the size of objects seems to diminish according to distance: the second, the manner in which colors change the farther away they are from the eye; the third defines how objects ought to be finished less carefully the farther away they are. ([Leonardo da Vinci](#))

Your eye level is your reference point for drawing the perspective lines. All lines above your eye level will go down to the horizon vanishing point and all lines below your eye level will go up to the horizon vanishing point. ([Robert Lovett](#))

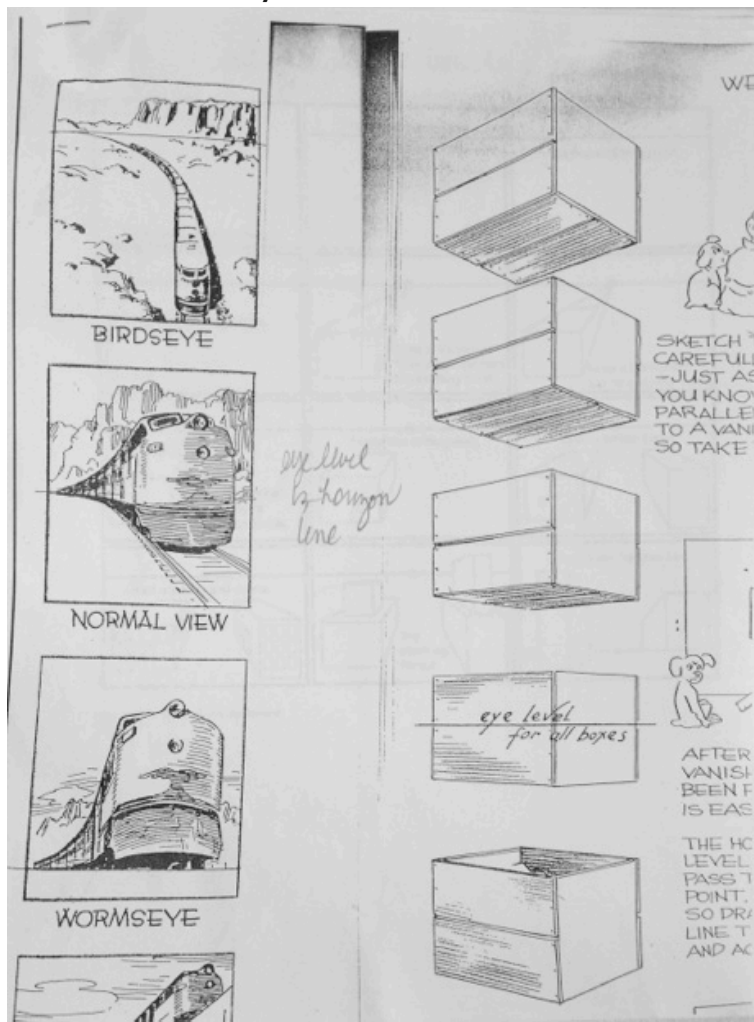
We shouldn't be dogmatic slaves to linear perspective, yet it is important to understand it. ([Ron Gang](#))

If you intend to make a living at drawing, by all means learn it [the rules of perspective] now, and do not have them bothering you and your work for the rest of your life. ([Andrew Loomis](#))

If the artist does not understand perspective and how to see and use it, all the applications of paint and ink and pencil will not overcome the lack of good perspective. ([Helen Scott](#))

For more control in achieving depth in a landscape, divide the picture into a foreground, a middle ground and a background. Keep each of these separate with atmospheric perspective. ([Ted Smuskiewicz](#))

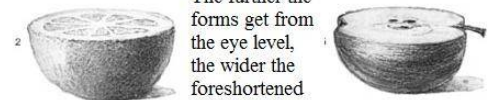
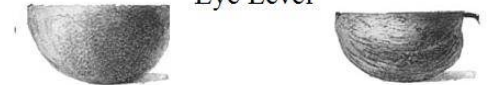
Determine Eye Level



Above Eye Level

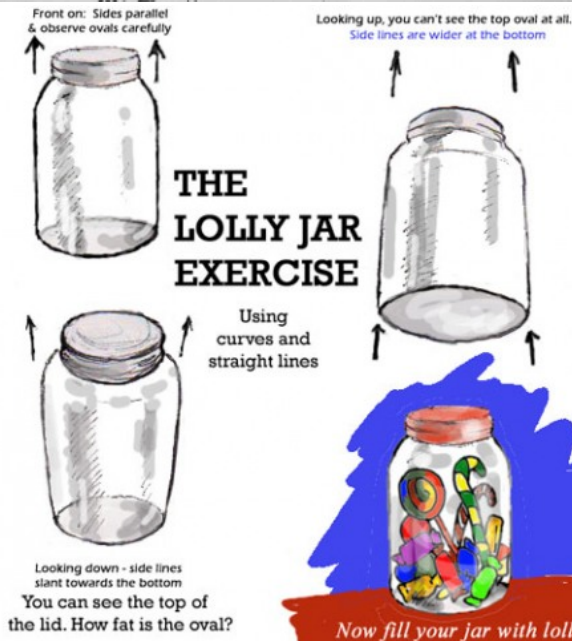


Eye Level



The further the forms get from the eye level, the wider the foreshortened circle gets...

Below Eye Level

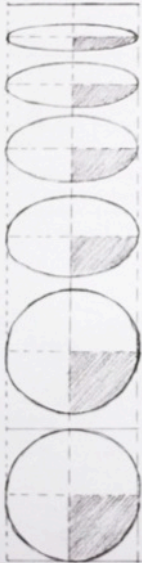


ELIPSES

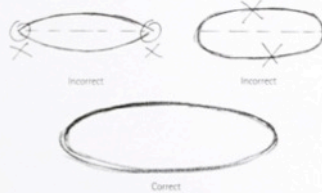
FIRST STAGES

Ellipses

Drawing ellipses is another of those necessities that the aspiring artist has to learn to do. Unfortunately, there is no foolproof way of drawing them mechanically. You just have to practise until you become proficient.



Ellipses are continuous curves and at no time do they become straight edged or create angles. Look at the three elliptical shapes below. Compare the two incorrect versions, which have almost straight edges or angles, with the correct version, which has neither.



The column of ellipses shows what happens when a circular-shaped object is viewed at various levels. At eye level a circle appears as just a horizontal line. When the object is lowered, the ellipse increases in depth while maintaining its width. Lower it further still and the circle will reappear.

You can practise drawing ellipses by placing a circular object – such as a plate or jug – at eye level.

The shaded area on each of the ellipses (left) is one quarter of the area of the ellipse bounded by the vertical axis and the horizontal axis. Your ellipse is incorrect if these quarters are not identical in shape. However, although each shaded area should be the same shape, it should be seen as a mirror image vertically, horizontally and diagonally. If you can observe this distinction when you come to draw an ellipse, then your drawing is more or less correct.

All shapes that are based on a circle – e.g., cylinders and wheels – become ellipses when they are seen obliquely or from an angle.

Even more interesting than placing an object at eye level and drawing it, is to draw the wheels of a cycle or car from ahead or behind. In this instance the vertical axis of the ellipses will be long and thin. Changes in the width of an ellipse are dictated by the point from which you view the object.

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alone by themselves. So – please don't kiss on canvas (Figure 2 – Correct).

6. Don't make your elements the same size, such as the size of the vase facing the same size as the flowers. Again, you'll have monotony. Of course, with a bouquet that contains the same kind of flower, there will be a repetition of size of each flower but shapes or patterns of light and dark can disguise this repetition, as you can see in Figure 3b.

7. Don't make a round-shaped silhouette of a bouquet.

8. Don't paint your flowers all facing in the same direction.

Here are a few compositional 'dos':

1. Make sure your picture has only one focal point.

2. An object can be placed in the middle of your canvas, but the focal point can't.

3. A focal point happens where there is interesting, strong contrast.

The all-important focal point can never be in the middle, can never be near the edge of the canvas, and can never make an equal division. The only area that's left for the focal point is any area on the canvas that's left over, as seen in the right-hand diagram in Figure 4b.

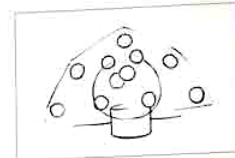


Figure 1 – Wrong

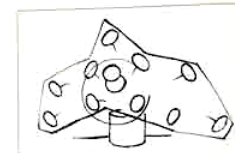


Figure 1 – Correct

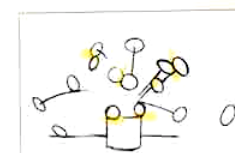


Figure 2 – Wrong

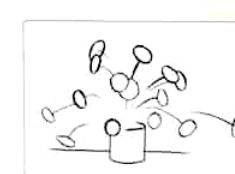


Figure 2 – Correct

Figure 1 – Wrong. Shows how many places equal divisions can occur: equal spaces between flowers, equal distance of the entire bouquet from edges of the canvas, the focal point dividing the canvas in half and the table line dividing the vase in half.

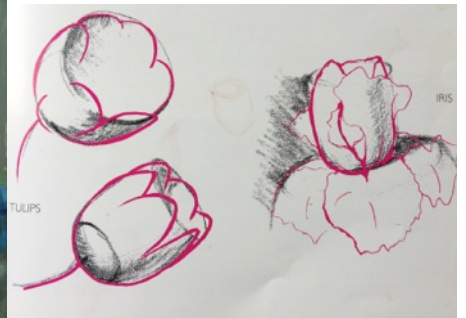
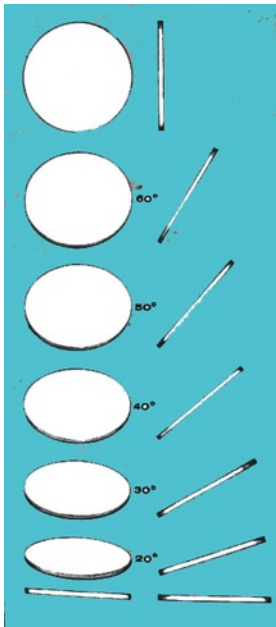
Figure 1 – Correct. Shows how a varied distribution of space is more pleasing to look at.

Figure 2 – Wrong. Shows how the beautiful appearance of flowers is jeopardized by having flowers just touching. They look like one big flower and they give the appearance that they're on the same plane instead of being one in back of the other: I call this 'kissing on canvas'.

Figure 2 – Correct. Shows how overlapping the flowers suggests more dimension and presents a variety of shapes.

above pages from Complete Book of Drawing by Barrington Barber and

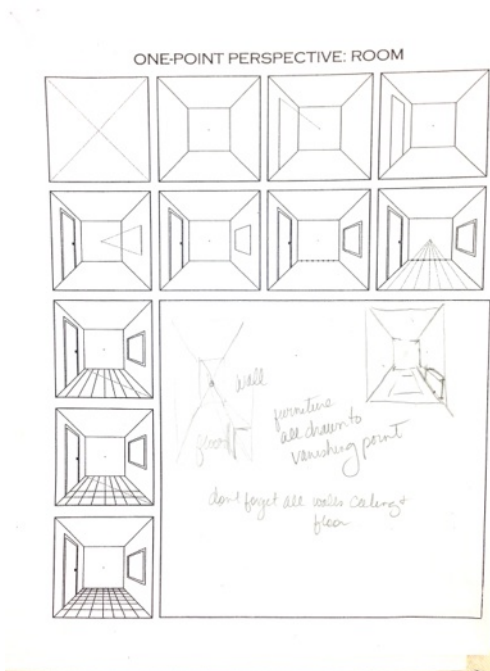
Helen Van Wyk Painting Flowers



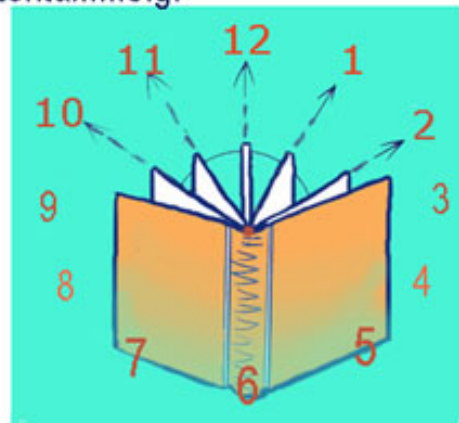
painting by Ignat Ignatov- TeaKettle

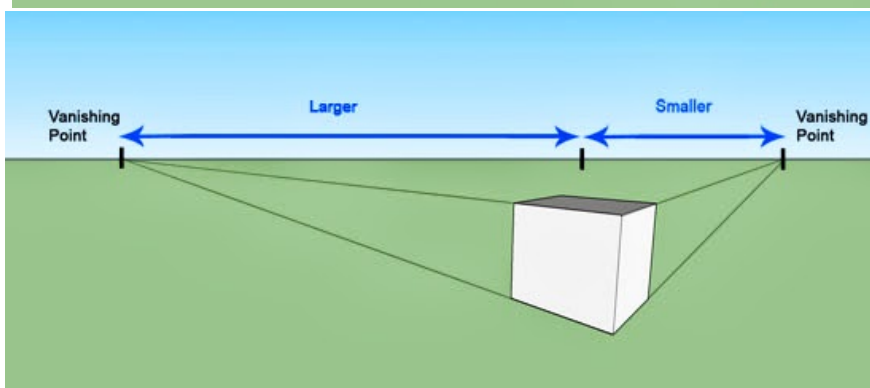
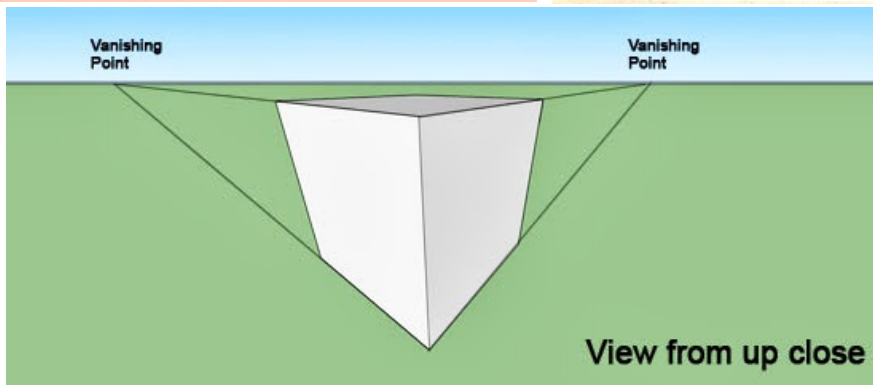
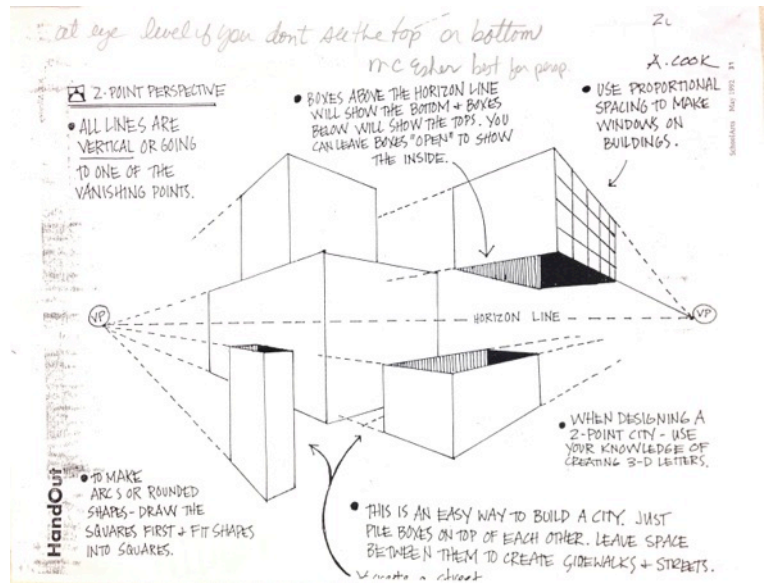
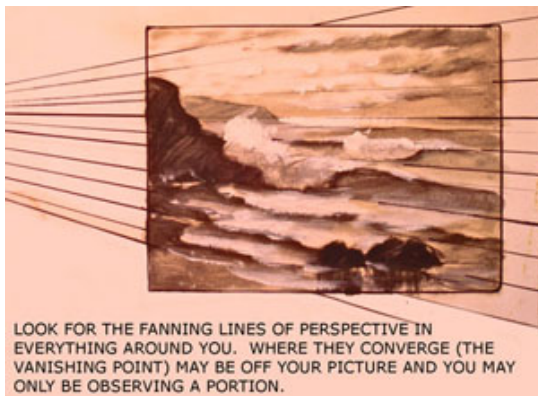
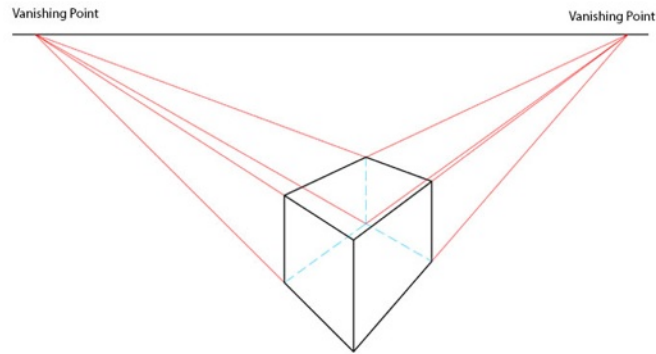
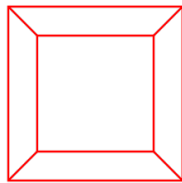
flowers H. VanWyk Painting Flowers

Size & color of object can change according to distance...

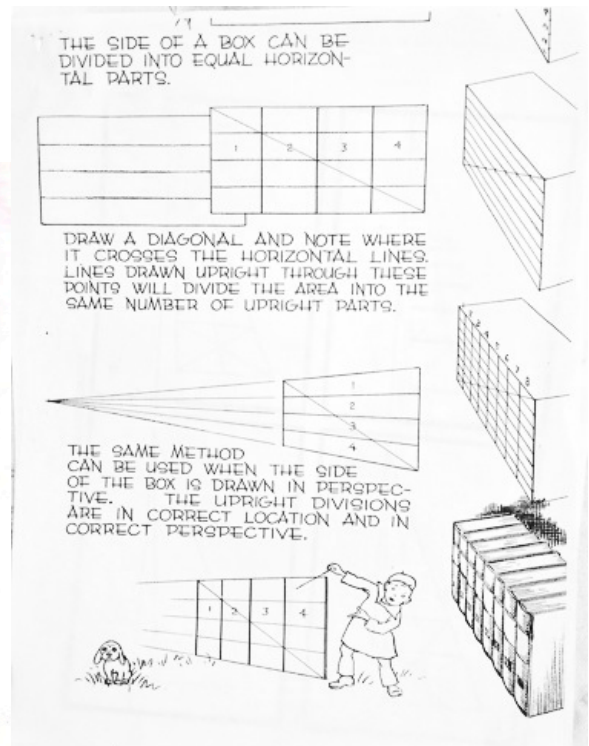
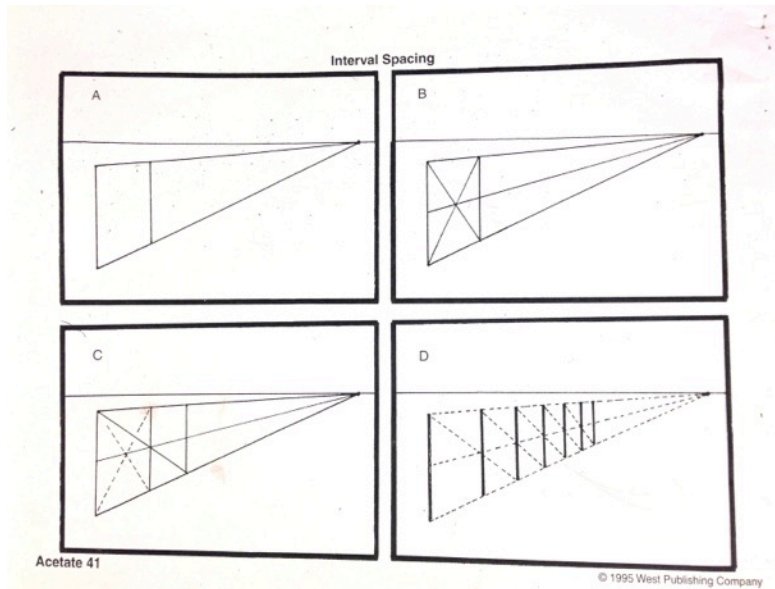
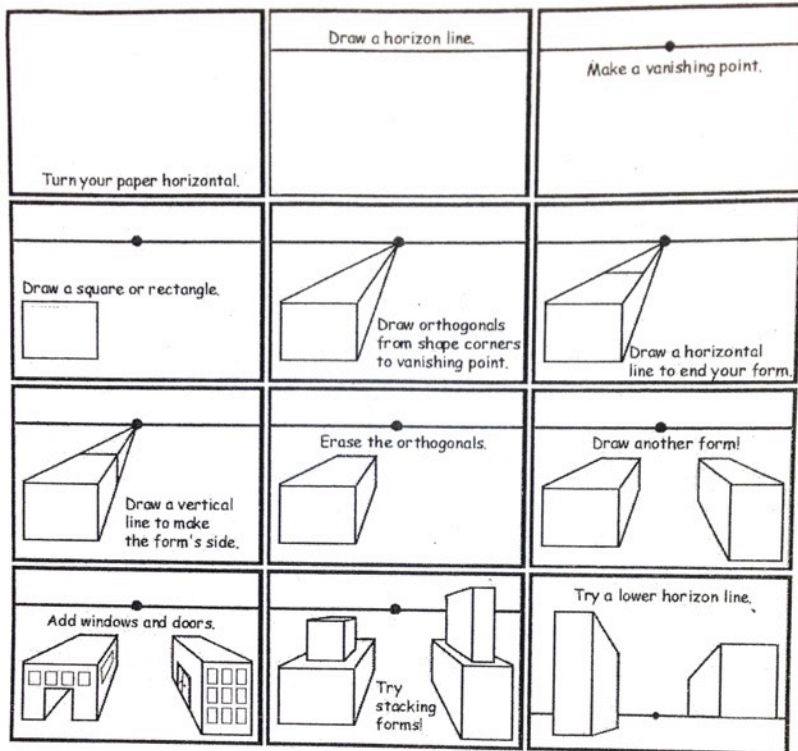


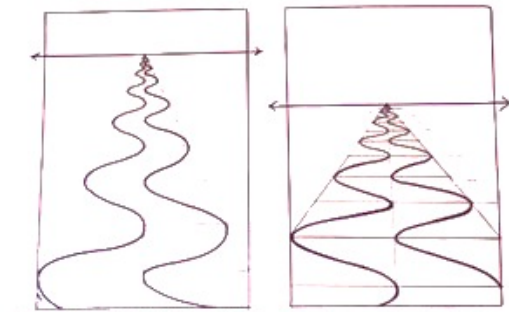
Angles can be assessed as if coming from the centre of a clock, using the sides of the page representing vertical & horizontal.....e.g.



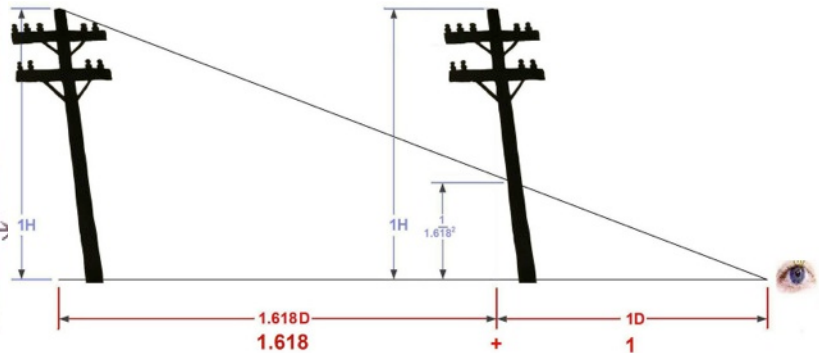
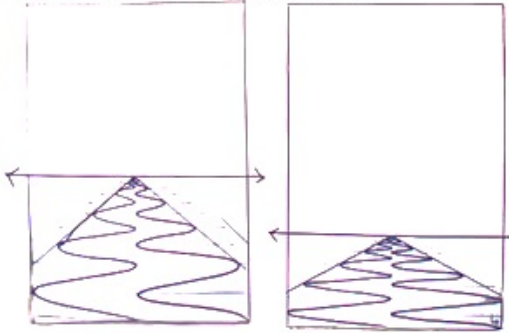


Don't forget the vanishing point

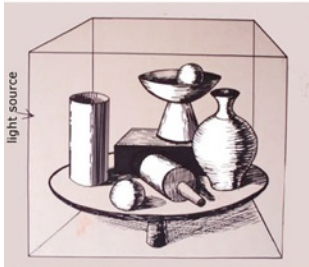




CURVES IN PERSPECTIVE: The lower the horizon level in relation to your eye, the more elliptical will be the curve if the surface is flat.



Sometimes it helps to imagine what you are drawing inside a cube to feel the perspective!



Note that the shadows on the rounded objects are in from the edges. This is because light reaches around them, giving 'reflected light' on the shaded side.

The artist can use the golden mean as a starting point for distances. If the object uses the golden mean in its distances from the viewer, its perspective will have a golden mean proportion to the back corner

COLOR CHANGE and ITEMS LESS FINISHED to show perspective & field of depth.

atmospheric - A quality of two-dimensional images which has to do more with space than with volume; an 'airiness,' seen more in contemporary than traditional images. Also refers to atmospheric perspective, which is a less technical type of perspective, using faded and lighter colors to denote far distance in landscapes.

atmospheric perspective - Atmospheric, or aerial, perspective, is a less technical type of perspective, which consists of a gradual decrease in intensity of local color, and less contrast of light and dark, as space recedes into the far distance in a landscape painting or drawing. Often, this far distance will also be represented by a light, cool, bluish-gray.

From glossary of Terms taftschool.org.



Edgar Payne



DunAengus, Ireland



Homer



Joel Knapp



Qiang Huang brass kettle



Mary Whyte



John William Waterhouse 'Narcissus'