THE TECHNIQUE OF PERSPECTIVE AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

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Perspective is an art technique for creating an illusion of three-dimensions (depth and space) on a two-dimensional (flat) surface. Perspective is what makes a painting seem to have form, distance, and look "real". The same rules of perspective apply to all subjects, whether it's a landscape, seascape, still life, interior scene, portrait, or figure painting.

Artists use perspective to represent three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface (a piece of paper or canvas) in a way that looks natural and realistic. Perspective can create an illusion of space and depth on a flat surface (or the picture plane).

Perspective most commonly refers to linear perspective, the optical illusion using converging lines and vanishing points that makes objects appear smaller the farther away from the viewer they go. Aerial or atmospheric perspective gives things in the distance a lighter value and cooler hue than things in the foreground. Foreshortening, yet another type of perspective, makes something recede into the distance by compressing or shortening the length of the object.

The rules of perspective applied in Western art developed during the Renaissance in Florence, Italy, in the early 1400s. Prior to this time painting was stylized and symbolic rather than realistic representations of life. For example, the size of a person in a painting might indicate their importance and status relative to other figures, rather than their proximity to the viewer, and individual colors carried significance and meaning beyond their actual hue. The Renaissance artist Leon Battista Alberti and architect Filippo Brunelleschi are credited with the "invention" of linear perspective. Alberti set out his theory in his book "On Painting," published in 1435. We're still using Alberti's one-vanishing-point system today.

Perspective is possibly the most feared aspect of learning how to paint. The mere word "perspective" makes many a hand tremor. But it's not the basic rules of perspective that are hard, it's the consistent application of the rules to every bit of a painting that's hard. You need to have the patience to check the perspective as the painting progresses, and to take the time to fix it. The good news is that learning perspective is like learning how to mix colors. Initially, you have to think about it all the time, but with practice, it becomes increasingly instinctive.

There is a fair bit of terminology used in perspective, and if you try to take it in all at once, it can seem overwhelming. Take it slowly, one step or term at a time, and get comfortable with a term before moving on to the next. That's how you master perspective.

Horizon line is a confusing perspective term because when you hear it, you tend to immediately think of "the horizon" we see in nature. That is the horizon as in the line where the land or sea meets the sky in the distance. In a painting, the horizon line *might* be this if you're painting a landscape, but it's best to disconnect the two. Rather, when you hear "horizon line," you want to be thinking "eye-level line."

Spend some time observing how objects are positioned related to your eye level, whether they're sloping up or down (or parallel to it). Sit somewhere that's got lots of strong lines, such as a large room with lots of furniture and shelves. Use one finger as the horizon line, and a finger on the other hand to judge the angles of various objects concerning the horizon line.

If you draw an imaginary line across the scene at the level of your eyes, that's the horizon line. As you change position, for instance, walk up a hill, the horizon line moves up with you. When you glance down or up, the horizon line doesn't move because the level of your head hasn't moved.

The horizon line is an imaginary line used to create accurate perspective in a painting. Anything above the horizon line slopes down towards it, and anything below the horizon line slopes up towards it. Depending on what it is and how it is positioned, this may be very obvious or it may be very slight. Something that straddles the horizon line will slope both up and down. The horizon line is important because the painting's perspective is constructed from this.

Linear perspective uses a geometric system consisting of a horizon line at eye level, vanishing points, and lines that converge toward the vanishing points called orthogonal lines to recreate the illusion of space and distance on a two-dimensional surface. Renaissance artist Filippo Brunelleschi is widely credited with the discovery of linear perspective.

Three basic types of perspective: one-point, two-point, and three-point – refer to the number of vanishing points used to create the perspective illusion. Two-point perspective is the most commonly used.

One-point perspective consists of a single vanishing point and recreates the view when one side of the subject, such as a building, sits parallel to the picture plane (imagine looking through a window).

Two-point perspective uses one vanishing point on either side of the subject, such as a painting in which the corner of a building faces the viewer.

Three-point perspective works for a subject viewed from above or below. Three vanishing points depict the effects of perspective occurring in three directions.

Aerial or atmospheric perspective can be demonstrated by a mountain range in which the mountains in the distance appear lighter in value and a bit cooler, or bluer, in hue. Because of the increased layers of atmosphere between the viewer and objects in the distance, objects that are farther away also appear to have softer edges and fewer details. Artists replicate this optical phenomenon on paper or canvas to create the sense of distance in a painting.

Understanding perspective is a matter of both theory and practice, and the theory of perspective becomes easier in direct relationship to the amount of practical experience you undertake. Perspective allows a painter to create the illusion of depth and dimension on a two-dimensional surface.

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