

Tip #57

A Few Tips on Linear Perspective

Funny how you learn more about a subject when you try to explain to someone else how to do something! Perspective IS tricky business, or it can be ... it can be explained in simple enough terms, but putting it into practice takes ... well, practice!

Here are some simple facts about perspective...

The horizon line generally corresponds with the artist's eye-line. (Not always, in reality, because sometimes there are hills and mountains, etc., but if the earth really WERE flat, that would be the horizon line.)

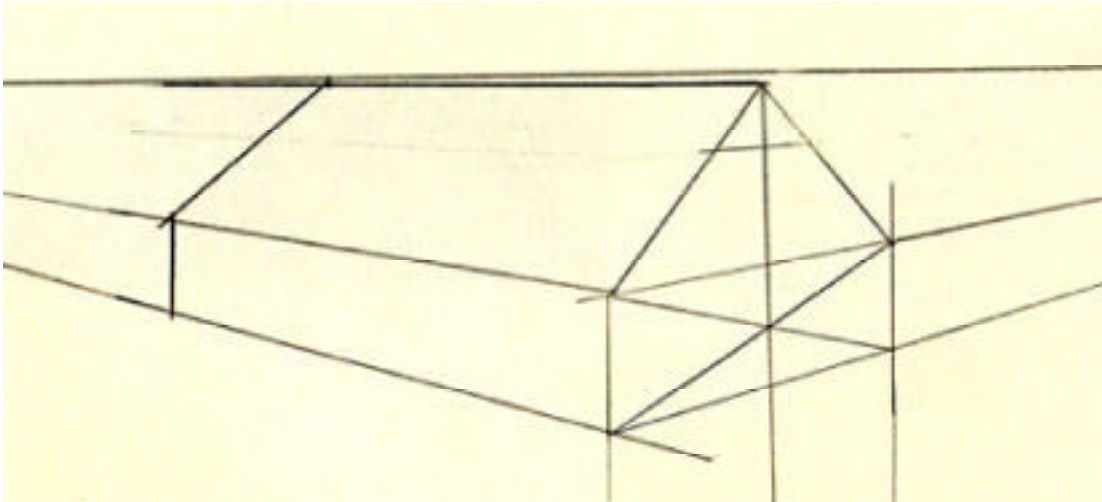
- If you're considering *linear perspective*, where everything converges at that point directly in front of you (think of a field with straight-plowed rows, or lines of tile on a floor), then everything above the eye-line appears to go down to that point, and everything below that line goes up to the point.

- *One-point perspective* is like when you look down a street or avenue or a long hall toward the very end—everything converges on that single point.

- *Two-point perspective* is what we normally deal with when drawing buildings, unless we face them head on. That is the sides of the building relate to two vanishing points on the horizon line. (Again, the horizon line, or the artist's eye-line, is the imaginary straight line that everything else relates to.) Notice where things fall above and below that line, as shown. If the horizon line is above the subject, as in the barn, then everything appears to go up.



- If you have a roof peak to deal with and you don't know where to place the highest point, draw the basic rectangular building in perspective, as shown, then make an X, corner to corner, of the end of the building. The peak of the roof will be directly above the center of the X. Again, in this case, the building is below the horizon-you're looking slightly down on it.



- Unless you're painting or drawing a ramshackle building that's about to fall down, verticals will always appear straight up and down-parallel with the sides of your paper.

- When drawing a cylinder or cone, remember that perspective still applies, depending on where the line of sight (or horizon line) falls. The top ellipse will probably look flatter than the bottom one, as shown in this "In N Out Burger" coffee cup, here:



- Try to visualize a simple cylinder, as if you could see lines drawn around it at intervals, and as if the cylinder were transparent. You'd see something like the drawing at left.

Here are a couple of good websites with further information on drawing cylinders in perspective.

http://www.ider.herts.ac.uk/school/courseware/graphics/cylinders_in_perspective.html

http://www.artfactory.com/perspective_drawing/perspective_9.htm

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