

# PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

The art of creating pictures – paintings and drawings is our ability to create a three-dimensional reality on a totally flat piece of paper. So how can we create these illusions.

Firstly, there is absolutely no substitute for **observation** – looking at the way objects grow smaller as they go away from us; how objects overlap one another; as they disappear the colour seems to disappear too. However there are a number of guidelines and principles to help us with our drawing and observation .

Hundreds of books are available on the subject – these go into great detail with masses of exercises to enable production of geometrically accurate drawings. These are very useful for architects but really not necessary for artists. As we not only wish to accurately represent a subject, we also want to create feelings and emotions otherwise we might as well just take a photograph, however an understanding of some fundamental principles are valuable tools to help us produce the pictures we are happy with, in other words they ‘look right’.

## Perspective ~ Basic Principles

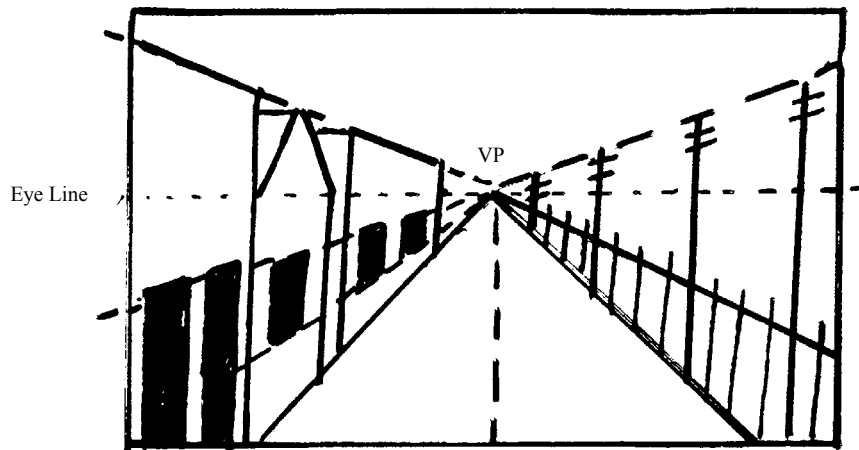
- 1 *The Horizon Line* this is also known as *Eye Level* - it is always in front of you and a perfect example can be found in a seascape. If you look straight ahead, without raising or lowering your head, the horizon is the line formed by the edge of the water and the sky. This applies whether you are standing or sitting. If you crouch down – so long as you are looking ahead – the horizon line comes down with you. If you climb up to the top of a cliff the horizon line will go up with you.
- 2 *The Viewpoint* – always located on the horizon line or eye level it is the centre of your field of vision – right in front of you, in single point perspective this will also be the Vanishing Point.
- 3 *The Vanishing Point* – this is also always found on the horizon line or eye level and is the place where the receding parallel lines appear to converge into just a dot. By locating the vanishing points on the line we get the impression of depth or a third dimension. The easiest way, I find, to discover where the vanishing points are is to put a finger at each side of your head at your eye level then spread them sideways away from your head until you cannot see them – this is the ‘*vanishing point*’.

These are the three classes of perspective drawing we will be exploring

- Parallel - single point perspective
- Angular - two point perspective
- Oblique – three point perspective

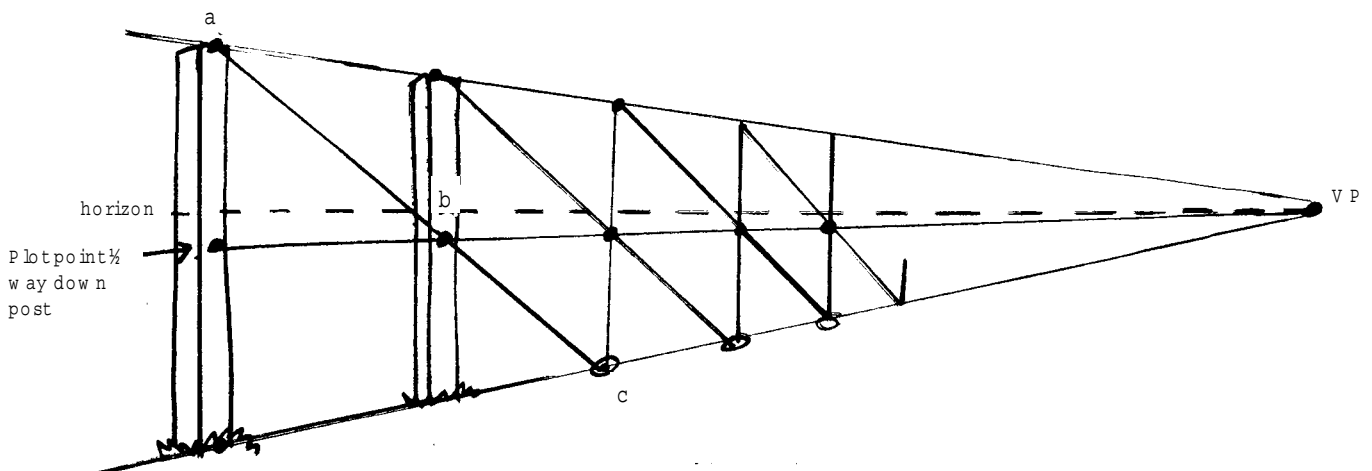
## PARALLEL - SINGLE POINT PERSPECTIVE

When you are drawing a scene and viewing it from the centre of a street or lane, all the lines vanish to one point on the horizon – the eyeline.



When you are spacing objects such as posts, fences, windows and buildings etc going into the distance and want to show equal spacing it is important to consider the right perspective.

- 1 Establish your eye line/ horizon line then plot the height of the first post
- 2 Plot a line halfway down the post
- 3 Draw 2 lines, 1 from the top and 1 from the bottom converging through to the vanishing point
- 4 Draw a line from the top of the first post (a) through the centre of the second post (b) this will give you the location of the next post (c) then continue 'down the line'.



Note: Any object *above* eye level all the receding parallel lines go *down* to the vanishing point  
Objects *below* the eye level all the receding parallel lines go *up* to the vanishing point