Evoke Depth with Vanishing Point Perspective

Plus seven other techniques

By Tanya Riseman

Silver Spring Camara Club Photo Forum

December, 2023

Part 1: Vanishing Point Perspective
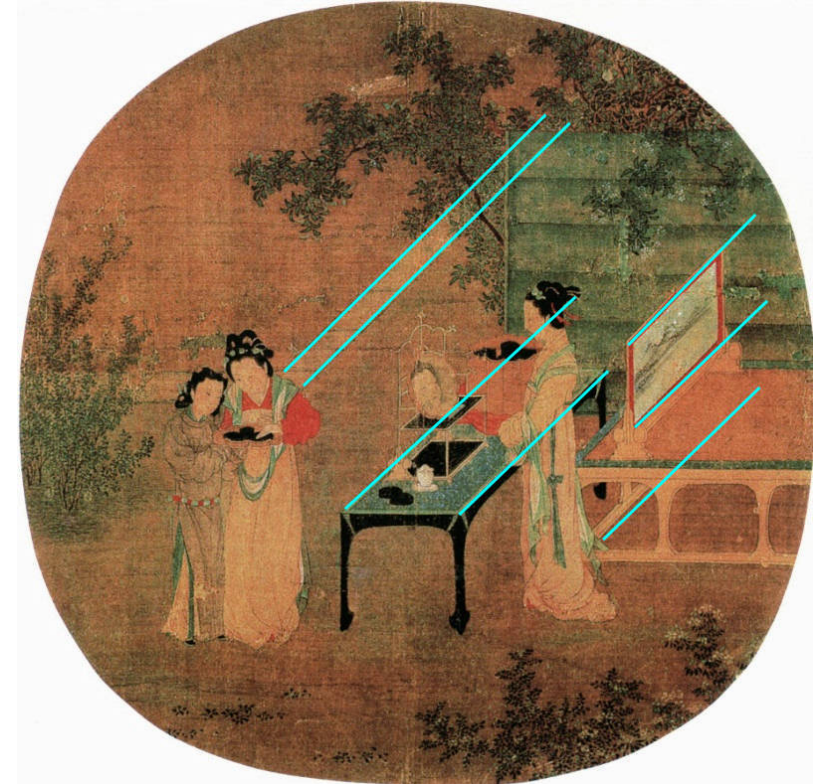
Long ago, no use of perspective
(of the vanishing point, geometric kind)

Ancient Egypt: Gloriously flat. Size according to rank.

Medieval: Some things get smaller in the distance but the shape of the buildings is a little funky and people have heights that vary by rank.

Oriental: Systematic parallel lines to indicate depth.
Wang Shên (c. 1036–c. 1093)
Southern Sung dynasty

http://www.essentialvermeer.com/technique/perspective/history.html

One vanishing point perspective,
come the **Renaissance**
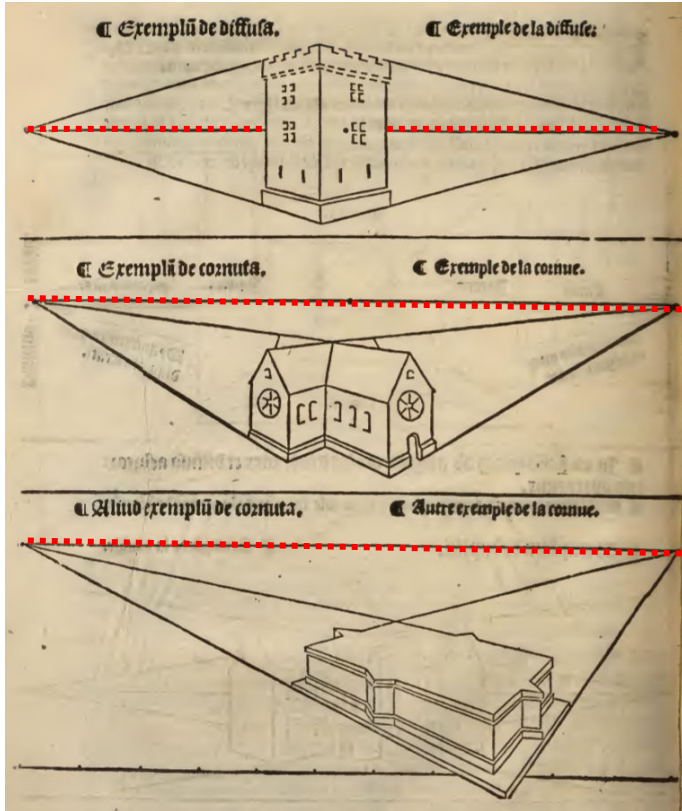

Carlo Crivelli, 1486

Leading lines often follow perspective lines

Two vanishing point perspective – a favorite

Verticals appear parallel.

Jean Pélérin, 1505
The horizonal line is eye-level.

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1772

Three vanishing point perspective
From the 1800's

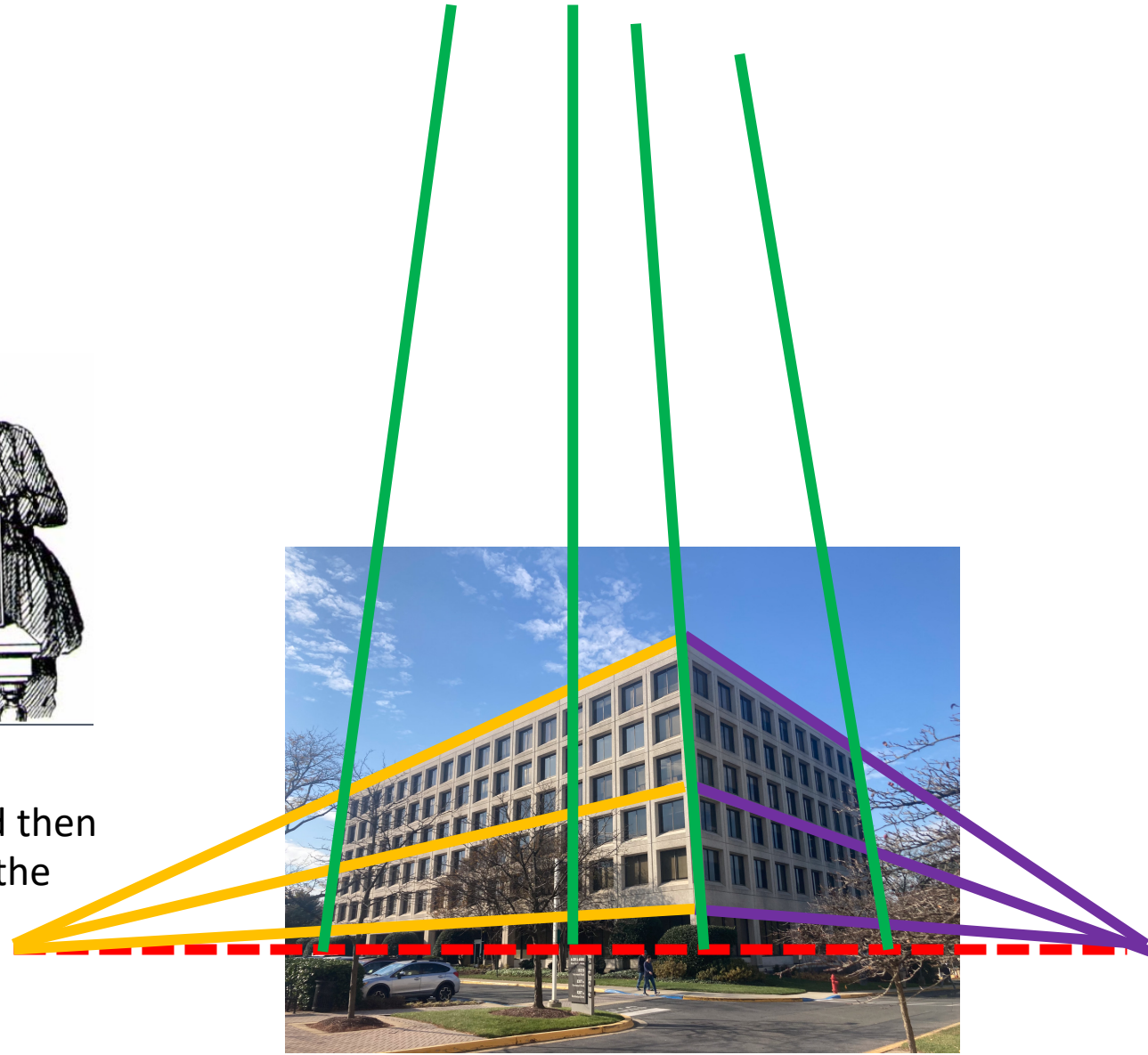PLATE VII.   THREE

FIG. 24

FIG. 25
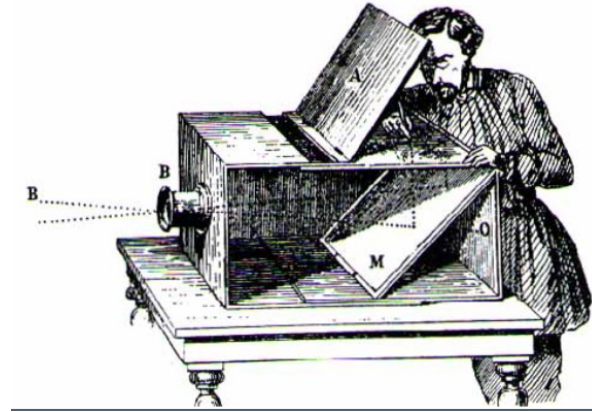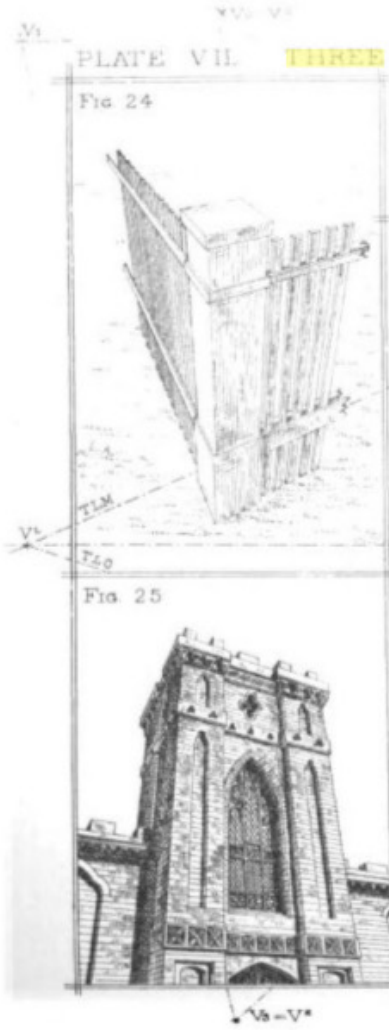
Camera obscura and then photography drove the development.

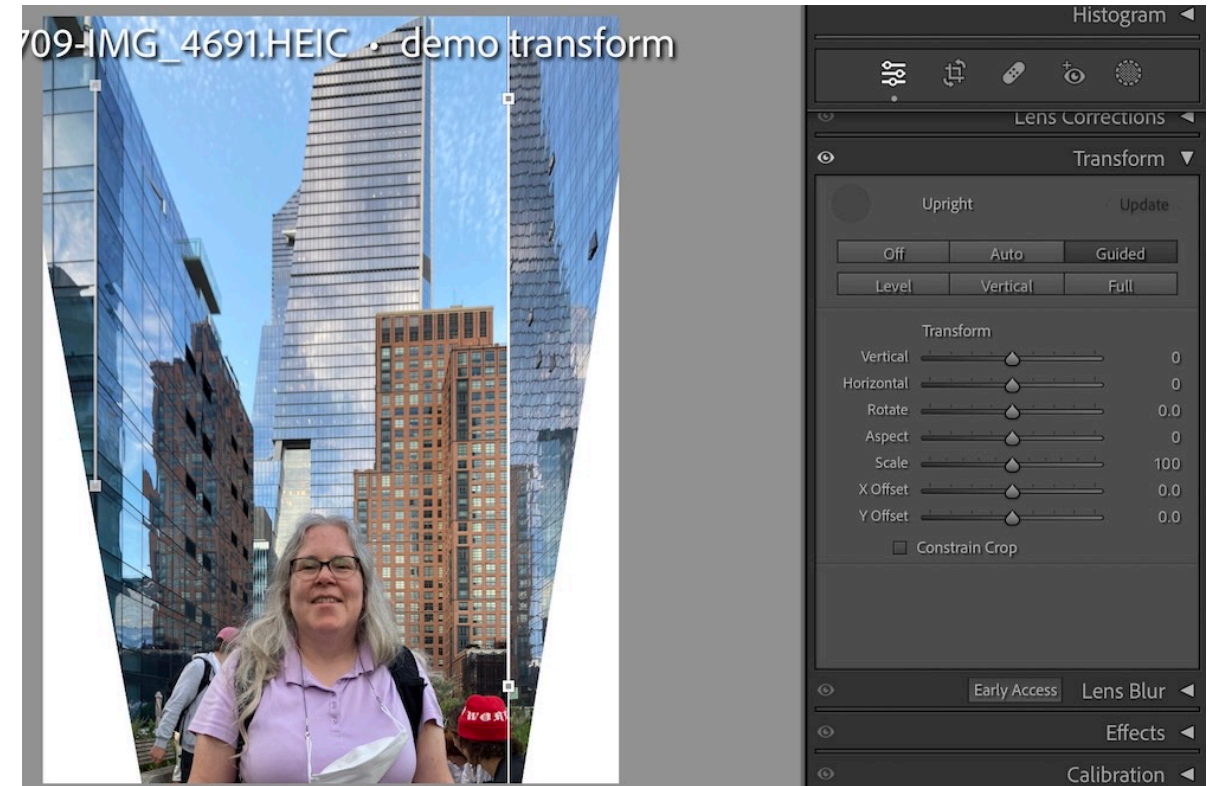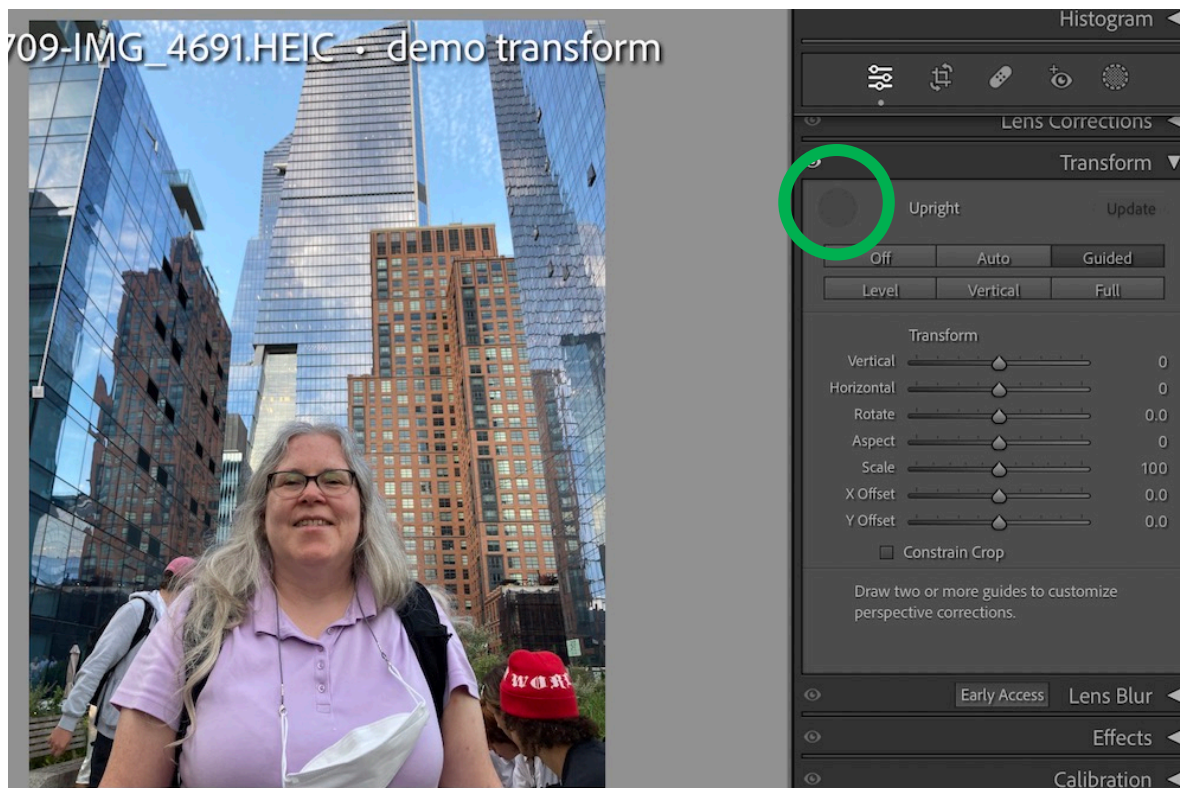# How to "Correct" the Verticals in Lightroom (to satisfy judges in part)

Click on the funky hash icon (green circle) in the Transform module.

Drag out lines along two of the vertical edges (or use auto).

In the screenshots, these are the white line segments with squares at the ends.

(You can also make two horizontal lines, to square things up if needed.)

Now crop.

In the absence of software:

If eye level is mid-way up the subject, you get the least foreshortening. Also, keep the camera sensor parallel to the subject (don't tilt up or down). Move far away to get the whole subject. Great for real estate photos.

As shot

Square as shot – all lines are parallel. Crop later.

Tilted up

Tilted up

Lightroom Transform

As shot

Square as shot
Vertical lines are parallel

Tilted up

Tilted down

Lightroom Transform

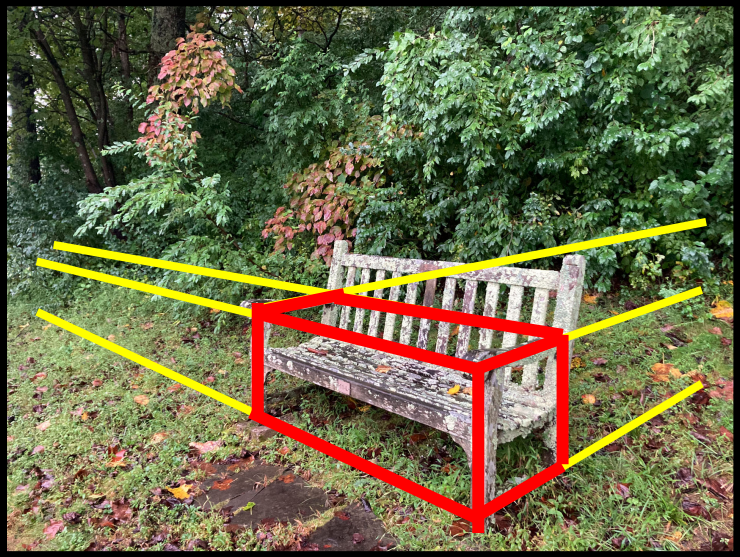Does the upper corner look a little odd?

Speculation as to why 2 point is favored over 3 point perspective

- **People move horizontally** on the ground, so they are more familiar with the changes in perspective with the two left/right points.

- **People stand vertically** and sense verticalness through hard wiring in their brains, inner ears, and proprioception receptors (in the muscles, tendons, and skin). Note that the visual cortex has horizontal and vertical detectors. Zero gravity messes with the sense of "up".

- *Really speculative:* **Verticals are perceived as parallel** (2 point perspective)**… Until** you get so close that you have to tilt your head back and **you can no longer deny 3 point perspective**. In the extreme, you feel like you're toppling.

- **Most architectural photographers** want the photographs to look a bit like the **blueprints as well as being traditional**, i.e. using 2 point perspective. Or **reflect how buildings are perceived by humans, not cameras.** But conversion to 2 point can look a bit forced.

Me and https://www.photo.net/forums/topic/385548-architecture-is-removing-converging-verticals-overdone/page/2/

Perspective is not just for architecture

Diagonals add energy

Perspective is not just for rectilinear things

Gesture and behavior

Mr. DeVille, I am ready for my close-up

Great for ID'ing but flat

Some action about to happen

Use boxes to rough out body position and gesture