

Perfectly Plain Perspective

Perspective lies at the heart of competent art. Learn from an expert ... as our special art tutor guides you through the basics of this important topic.

By Dalerie Patterson

This is the second episode in our 'Perfectly Plain Perspective' Series. You would have to admit that Part One of 'Perfectly Plain Perspective' – last month – was easy, wasn't it? I hope you do have a copy ... because it is almost impossible to continue without that first essential building block.

Our intrepid 'Baldy' was into landscapes last month. But now we are about to introduce him to the building game.

Baldy and I will eventually show you how to draw a simple building from scratch.

Actually, the building is more like a plain Australian shack with a

verandah out the front. You and I have seen many little pioneer huts like this in historical villages or reconstructed models in our museums. Don't you wonder how quite large families crammed into these small spaces? Nowadays, some folks have huge homes, huge mortgages and still huge conflicts over maintaining 'personal spaces'. Anyway, I digress again.

BACK TO BALDY.

Remember last month we talked about how Baldy could position himself in BIRD'S EYE, NORMAL, WORM'S EYE or OVERHEAD positions to give each landscape a different slant.



These were the different angles of elevation from which Baldy viewed his subject.

I am also going to remind you of how the two visible planes of a building disappear to their respective vanishing points – 'V1' and 'V2' from Part One.

I have done a quick sketch of an Aussie dummy from the NORMAL position. The front wall (1) disappears to V1. The side wall (2) vanishes to V2.

My Dutch art teacher stressed that the vanishing points should be placed as far apart as I have shown in my first drawing. If I make them too close (as I did in the second drawing) the old dummy looks completely distorted.

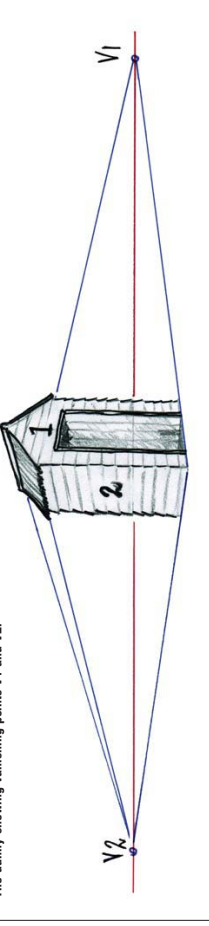
But how do I know exactly where I should place these vanishing points?

That's a really good question. Stay with me as I ask Baldy to sketch a large cardboard carton, and all will be revealed.

For this exercise, Baldy will stand exactly where I tell him on the artist's position (AP) marked 'X'. Further on, we will investigate how the appearance of his sketched box varies when he moves his AP to the left or right.

You do this all the time when you are taking a photograph, jiggling this way and that, searching for the perfect picture.

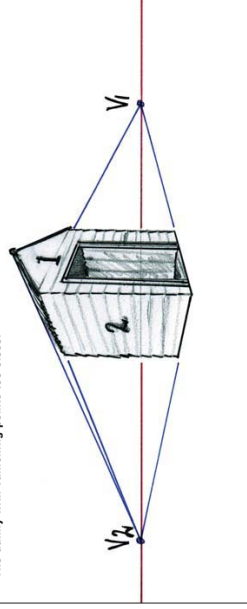
The dummy showing vanishing points V1 and V2.



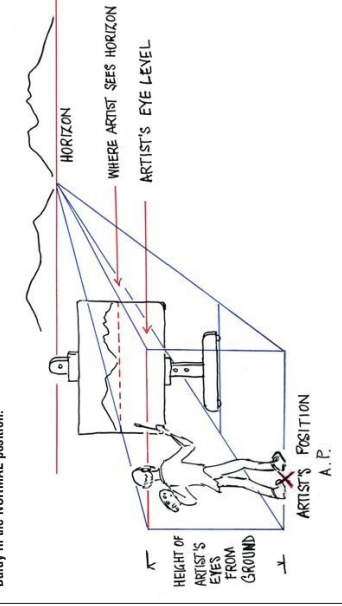
Now it's time for Baldy to get cracking on his sketch of the large box.

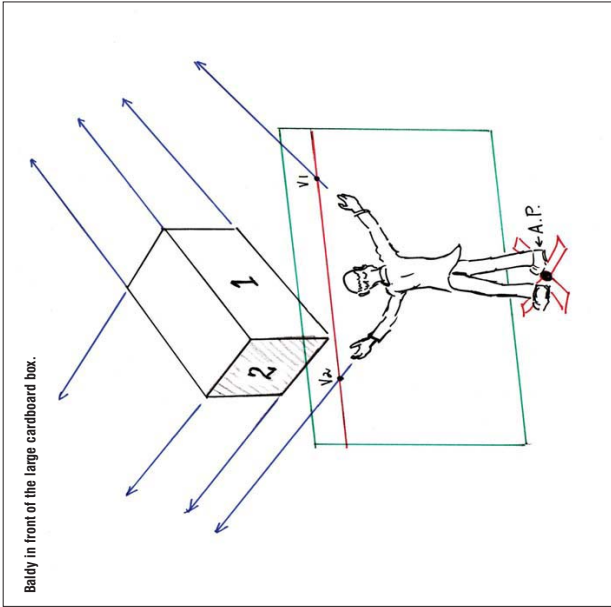
He is standing in the NORMAL position. You will notice at this vantage point he sees much more of the Number 1 side of the box than the Number 2 side. In the above illustration, the green rectangle in front of him is what he sees. The red line across is the eye level line. He holds out his arms at 90 degrees at the angle he views the box. Those blue lines

The dummy with vanishing points too close.



Baldy in the NORMAL position.





extending from his arms intersect the Eye Level Line at V1 (for Side 1) and V2 (for Side 2).

How about you try this exercise with a large box – and see how you can figure out the position for V1 and V2?

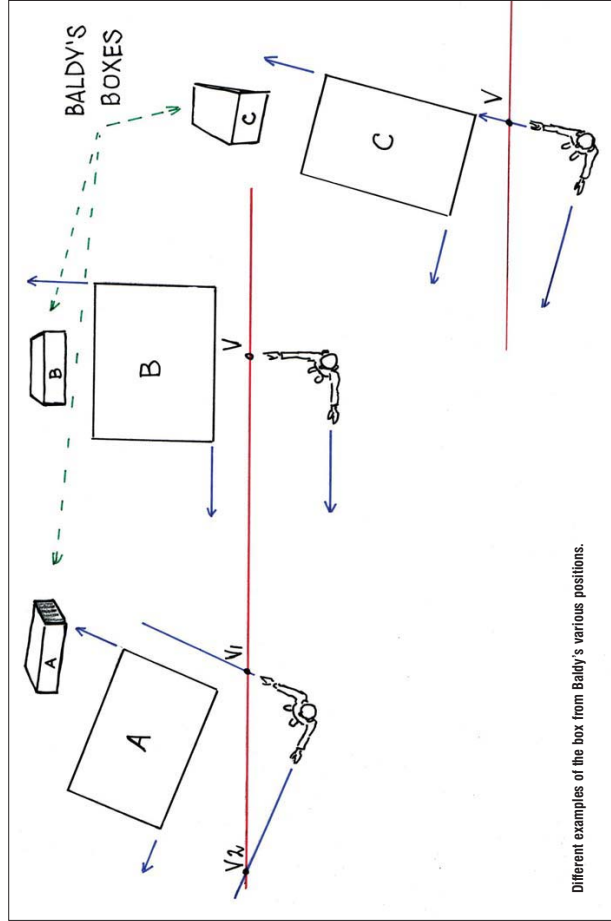
I have now requested that Baldy move his position to the right and left; and have made some drawings to show how the aspect changes when he moves his position. Take some time to digest all of this.

A. In Drawing A, Baldy can see three planes of the box – the plane disappearing to the right, the other to the left; and, of course, the top of the box.

B. In Drawing B, Baldy can see only two planes – the front and top of the box. The parallel sides are closing in as they head towards a single vanishing point.

C. In Example C, Baldy has moved to the right-hand corner of the box and this alters his aspect yet again.

As soon as you have digested all of the above, it is time to move to creating our shack.



Different examples of the box from Baldy's various positions.



Photograph of drawing materials.

The material you require is: Some white paper (preferably A3 size); 2B pencil and clean rubber; long ruler; and clear plastic set square or Tee square (illustrated above). By the way, this aged set square was once clear, but it has been in constant use in the studio for over 30 years.

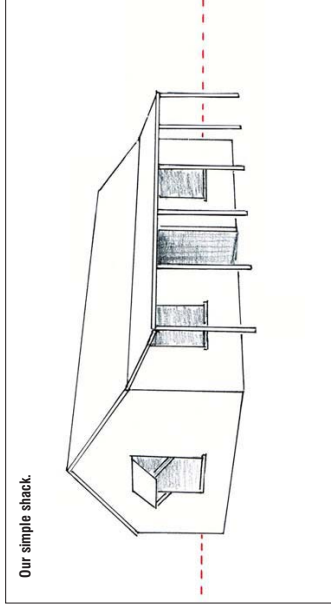
VERTICAL LINES

All perpendicular lines must be vertical. It is easy in a drawing or painting to veer a little to the left or right. This is where the set square comes in handy. It is placed over a drawing or painting with the smaller side aligned to the horizontal base of the paper or canvas. Then it can be moved across the surface to check that all vertical lines on buildings, posts, etc, are correct.

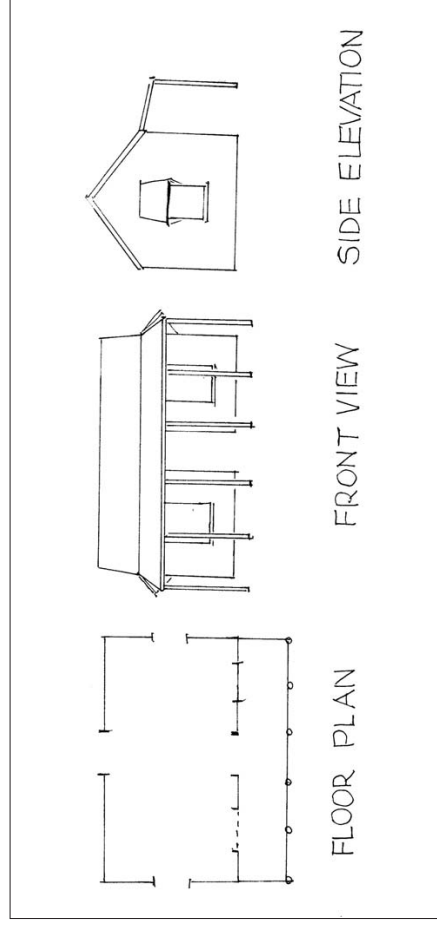
I have concluded with a drawing of the shack, the floor plan, the front view and the side elevation.

Join me next month for Perfectly Plain Perspective, Part Three – when I take you through the step-by-step process of accurately drawing this building.

The websites of Dalerie Patterson ... your personal on-line art trainer ... can be found at www.artist-tutor.com and www.artstudio91.com



Our simple shack.



FLOOR PLAN

FRONT VIEW

SIDE ELEVATION