Art of Architecture

Draw complex buildings and structures using one-point perspective techniques.

draw from the
COLLECTION
... at home!

**Supplies:** pencil, paper, eraser, ruler

Bernardo Bellotto (Italian, 1720—1780), *The Pantheon*, about 1742, oil on canvas. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Elton F. MacDonald. 1957.141

Step 1:

Draw the horizon line. Place a perspective point (the area at which all roads, buildings will converge) on that line.

Helpful hint: the horizon line in this artwork is located approx. ¼ of the way up from the bottom*.* The perspective point is located on the horizon approx. ¼ of the way from the right side.
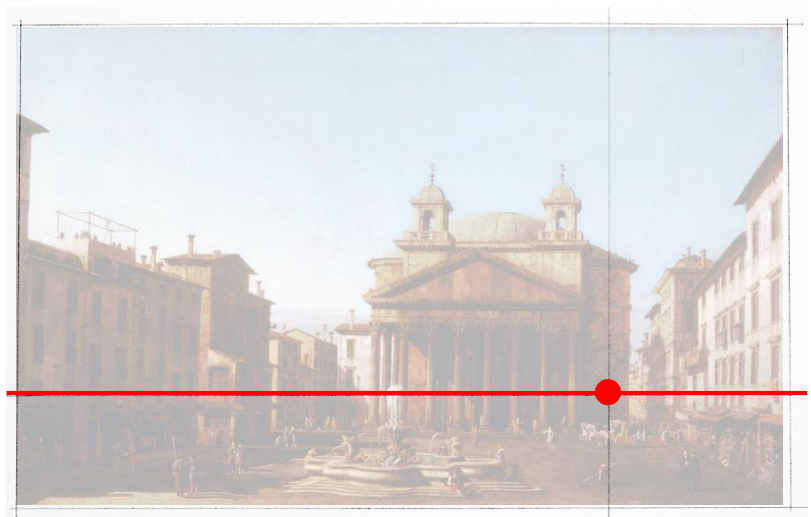
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Step 2:

Using a ruler, draw lines from both sides to the center (the perspective point.) These lines will serve as guides for the tops and bottoms of buildings on each side of the scene.

Helpful hint: the bottom guidelines should fall under the horizon line, otherwise buildings will appear to float above the horizon. Draw all guidelines lightly so they can be erased easily later.
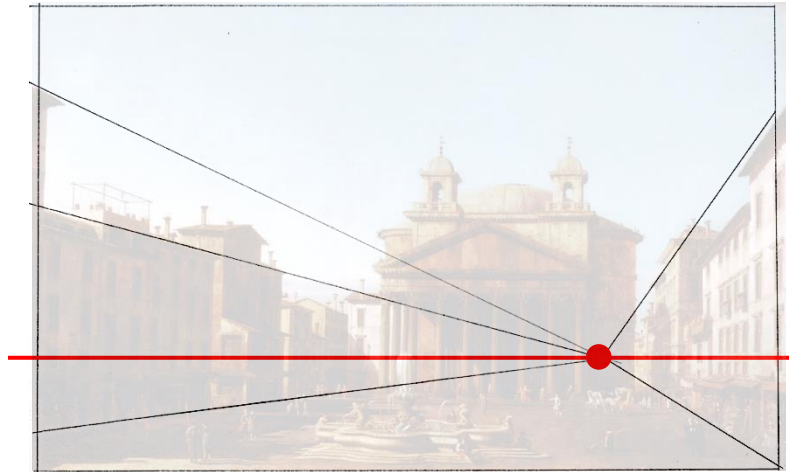

Step 3:

Using a ruler or drawing freehand, loosely define the basic shape of the Pantheon and center buildings. Do the same to define buildings on either side.

Helpful hint: start by adding vertical lines to determine the width of each building within the guidelines. Draw new horizontal guidelines to create accurate proportions of buildings, as needed. Raise or lower the height of each building where needed.

Note: buildings in the center will not need perspective guidelines if only the front is in view.
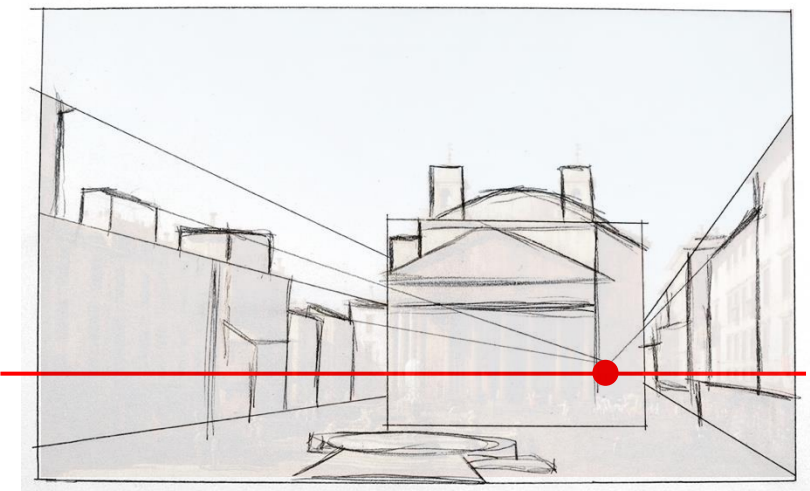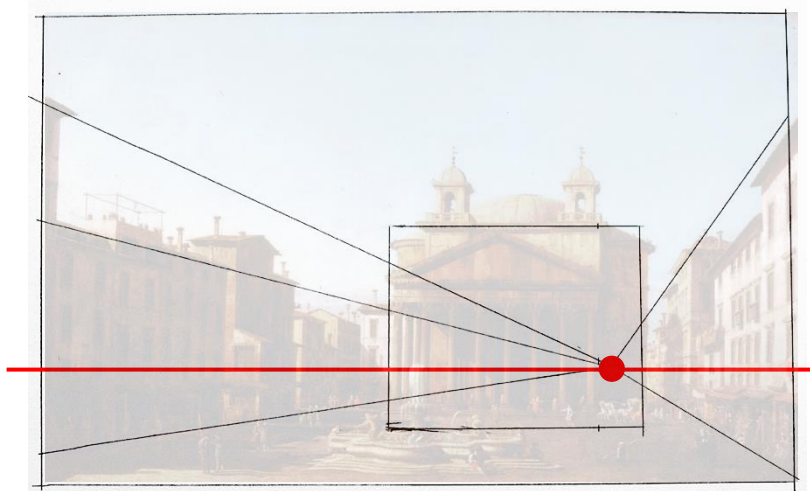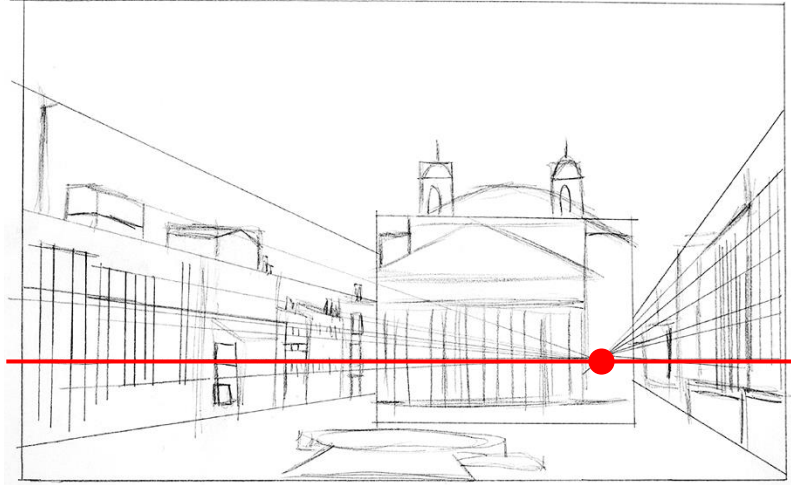
Step 4:

Add interior details to buildings by drawing basic shapes (rectangles and squares for windows, doors, etc.). Use a ruler to check the perspective of these shapes.

Helpful hint: any horizontal lines used to create interior details should be parallel with the top / bottom guidelines and connect to perspective point. Draw all lines lightly.

Step 5:

Erase all guidelines, leaving only the final details and shapes behind. Refine shapes to more closely represent the objects they depict (ex: round off sharp edges of a square to create a circular object).

Step 6:

Add value to the drawing to further create depth and realism.

Helpful hint: use hatching and cross hatching lines that run parallel with sides of buildings to enhance the illusion of structural depth.

Helpful hint: use a wide range of lights and darks for comprehensive value. Mechanical pencils work well for hard to reach areas.

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DAYTON ART INSTITUTE

Extra Challenge

Video tutorial: Two-point perspective drawing: house
Video tutorial: Three-point perspective drawing: city

Resources

One-point drawing perspective with the Westmoreland Museum of American Art
Video tutorial: One-point perspective basics
Drawing Techniques: The Rules of Perspective with the Victoria & Albert Museum

Questions?
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