

## OBJECT of the month

*January 2021*



### BEGIN TRANSCRIPT

Hello, my name is Fabienne and I'm a Museum Guide at the Dayton Art Institute. Isn't this a wonderful glimpse of a day on the Piazza di San Marco in Venice, Italy? See the merchants under canvas tents

selling food and souvenirs to the tourists as they stroll through Venice. Notice how it seems to be a windy day. The tent walls are billowing, and a flag is fluttering in the wind. It almost feels like you're standing there with them.

Have you ever wondered how perspective was developed? Before the 1400s, attempts made by artists to show distance and depth in paintings and in drawings was very limited by their technical ability and their understanding of science. In the early 1200s, an Italian painter, Duccio, explored perspective by using shadows to help create space and depth. This helped a lot, but, as you see here in this painting, it still leaves a flatness.

Around 1420, Filippo Brunelleschi, an architect and artist, made several drawings of the Baptistery in Florence. By following the lines of buildings, Brunelleschi found that all the lines followed patterns and would eventually disappear off into the horizon. These are called vanishing points. Brunelleschi conducted many different experiments before arriving on a foolproof method.

Paintings can have 1-point perspective, (where all the lines merge together and disappear on the horizon at one point), 2-point perspective, (where all the lines merge to two different points and finally disappear on the horizon), or 3-points of lines disappearing off into the horizon.

Here at the Dayton Art Institute, we have this wonderful perspective painting by Francesco Guardi, *The Clock Tower* in Venice. Do you think this is a 1-point perspective, 2-point perspective, or a 3-point perspective? If you guessed 1-point, you are correct. We do not have an exact date on this painting, but we do know that it was painted after 1755 because that is when the clock tower on St. Mark's Square was restored, as shown in this painting.

In this artwork, atmospheric perspective is also used with linear perspective to help provide the illusion of distance and depth in the painting. Notice how the windows on the buildings get smaller as they recede to the background. Details also become fuzzy. There's less contrast in colors and shapes. The farther away the object is, the more difficult it is to recognize.

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Here in this painting, *View of the Cannaregio Canal*, also Francesco Guardi, we notice that the colors on the horizon shift to a bluish, smokey, greyish quality as they get further away and disappear off into the horizon.

Thank you for joining me today. I hope you enjoyed this introductory talk on perspective. If you would like to see this painting by Francesco Guardi, it hangs in The Gray Gallery of 18th Century European Art, gallery 213, at the Dayton Art Institute.

## END TRANSCRIPT

Click [here](#) for full multimedia presentation.

## ARTWORKS FEATURED IN VIDEO\*

Giovanni Baronzio (Italian, active c. 1320 – 1350), *The Birth, Naming, and Circumcision of Saint John the Baptist* about 1335, tempera on panel. The National Gallery of Art, Washington. Samuel H. Kress Collection. 1952.5.68

*Birth of the Virgin* fresco, c. 1314, King's Church, Studenica Monastery, Serbia (photo: Blago, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Duccio di Buoninsegna (Sienese, c. 1250/1255 - 1318/1319), *The Nativity with the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel*, 1308-1311, tempera on single poplar panel. The National Gallery of Art, Washington. Andrew W. Mellon Collection. 1937.1.8

Duccio di Buoninsegna (Sienese, c. 1250/1255 - 1318/1319), *The Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew*, 1308-1311, tempera on panel. The National Gallery of Art, Washington. Samuel H. Kress Collection. 1939.1.141

Francesco Guardi (Italian, 1712 – 1793), *View on the Cannaregio Canal, Venice*, about 1775-1780, oil on canvas. The National Gallery of Art, Washington. Samuel H. Kress Collection. 1939.1.113

## IMAGE CREDITS\*

[www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)

[www.filippo-brunelleschi.com](http://www.filippo-brunelleschi.com)

[www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org)

[www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)

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## QUESTIONS?

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