

**Meet the Masters**

**February Program**

**Sandro Botticelli “Adoration of the Magi”****Gustave Caillebotte “Paris Street Rainy Day”****About the Artist:**

(See the following pages.)

**About the Artwork:**

The Renaissance (rebirth) was time in history which followed “the Dark Ages”. During the Renaissance, art, knowledge, and science were of supreme importance. The center of this “rebirth” was Italy. Florence was one of the wealthiest cities in Italy thus support for the arts was available to many artists. Sandro Botticelli and Leonardo Da Vinci were two Renaissance artists whose paintings set the standard for the development of art for future generations.

One of the most outstanding developments for the visual art was *perspective*. Previous to the Renaissance artists placed elements in a painting on a baseline along the bottom of the painting or floating in space in the picture plane. Leonardo Da Vinci and Botticelli painted objects overlapping to express the illusion of depth on a flat surface, such as a painting. The world of art had forever changed during the Renaissance.

**Topics for Discussion:**

1. How are each of these paintings alike? How are they different?
2. The Renaissance was a time of great learning and developments in art and science. The artists of the Renaissance realized that overlapping shapes created a sense of space and depth in a drawing. By placing one form behind another, the artist can produce the illusion of a third dimension on the two dimensional picture plane. Look at the objects in your classroom; notice how objects *overlap* one another in space. How did Botticelli and Caillebotte make use of this Renaissance discovery?
3. Can you find other evidence of perspective (linear perspective) in these two paintings?
4. The basics of linear perspective depend on four rules. The overlapping of shapes as they move back in space is one we’ve discussed thus far. Can you think of the other three?
  - A. Objects appear smaller as they get further away.
  - B. Parallel lines appear to get closer together as they move back in space, until they disappear at the *vanishing point*.
  - C. Shape and angle of any given object will vary depending on where you are standing in relation to that object.

**Hands-on Art Project:****Lines in Space: Discovering Two-point Perspective****Materials:**

White drawing paper 11 “x 14”  
Drawing pencils  
Erasers  
Rulers

**Teacher Preparation:** It may be helpful to copy the two-point perspective example, on the following pages, to hand out to the students, in addition to demonstrating the technique on the chalkboard for the class to observe. Copies of Draw 3-D by Doug DuBosque, found in the Meet the Masters room, will also be of additional help in class.

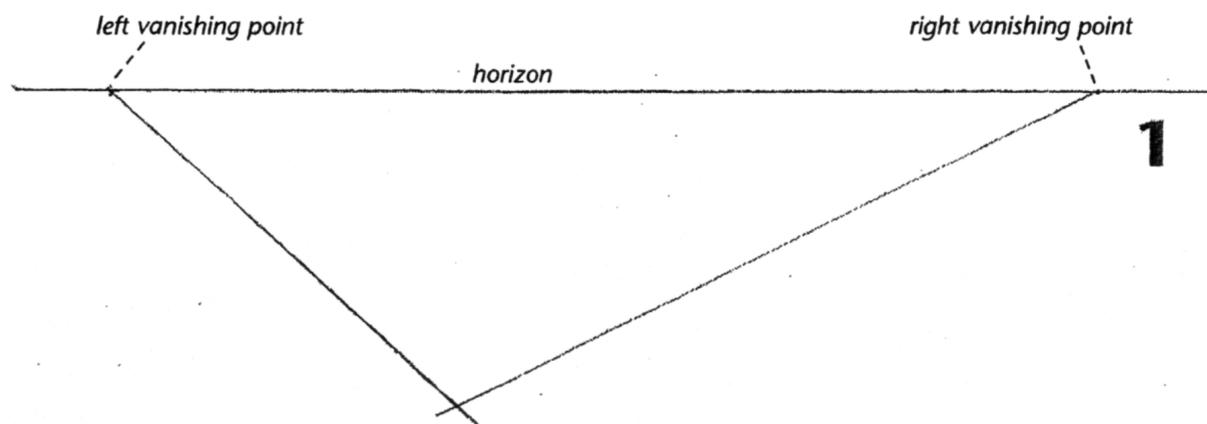
**Directions:**

1. Draw a *horizon line* (the point where the ground and the sky seem to meet) across the middle to upper third of the paper.
2. Mark two widely spaced vanishing points on the horizon line. From the vanishing points, draw line downward until they intersect. **Do not draw the lines too heavily**, much of it will be erased before the composition is finished.
3. Draw a second line from each vanishing point, to create the base of a box.
4. From the three closest corners of the base, draw vertical lines for the edges of the box. (Parallel to the side of the paper).
5. Decide where the top of the box will be, by marking the closest vertical line. From that point, extend lines toward the two vanishing points to create the top edges of the box. (You do not have to draw the lines all the way to the vanishing point – just far enough to complete the top of the box.)
6. From the point where the top intersects the *right* vertical line, draw a line toward the *left* vanishing point. From the point where the top intersects the *left* vertical line, draw a line toward the *right* vanishing point.
7. Erase guide lines and you have a box in two-point perspective.
8. Try adding more boxes and make them into buildings. You can add roads, sidewalks, fences, etc. using the same basic rules of linear perspective.
9. You are now ready to add detail and shading. Remember windows, bushes, trees, clouds, etc.
10. Write your name the front of your paper.

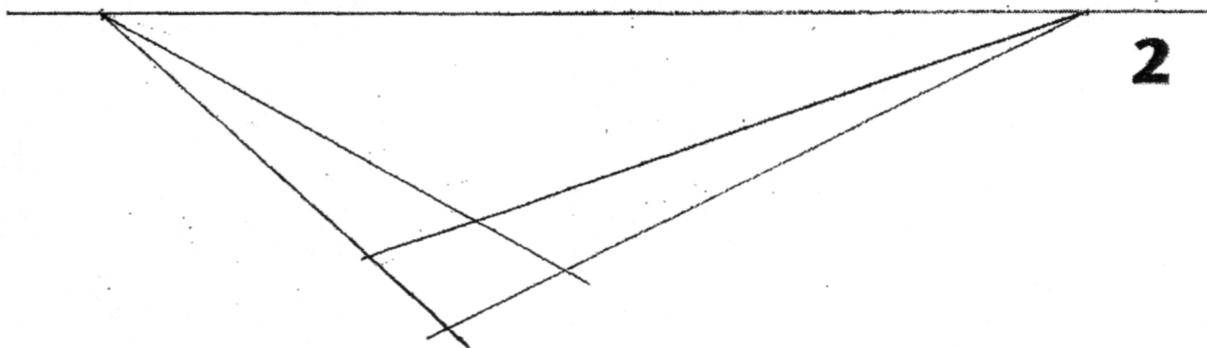
# Two-point perspective

A box drawn with a single vanishing point has limitations. Adding a second vanishing point opens up new possibilities.

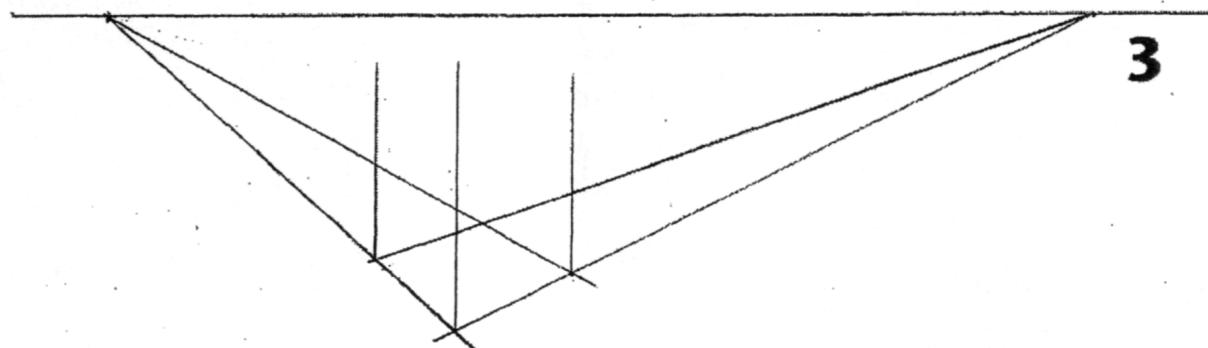
1. Draw a horizon, and two widely spaced vanishing points. From the vanishing points, draw lines downward until they intersect.



2. Draw a second line from each vanishing point, to create the base of a box.



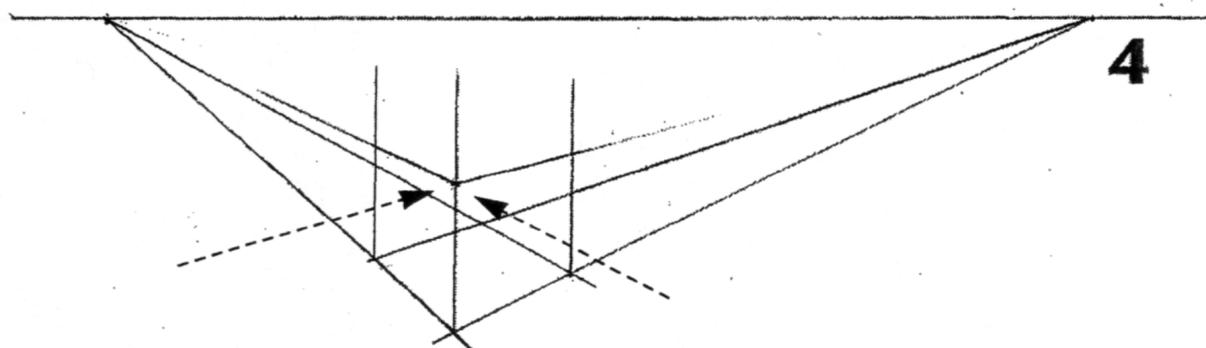
3. From the three closest corners of the base, draw vertical lines for the edges of the box.

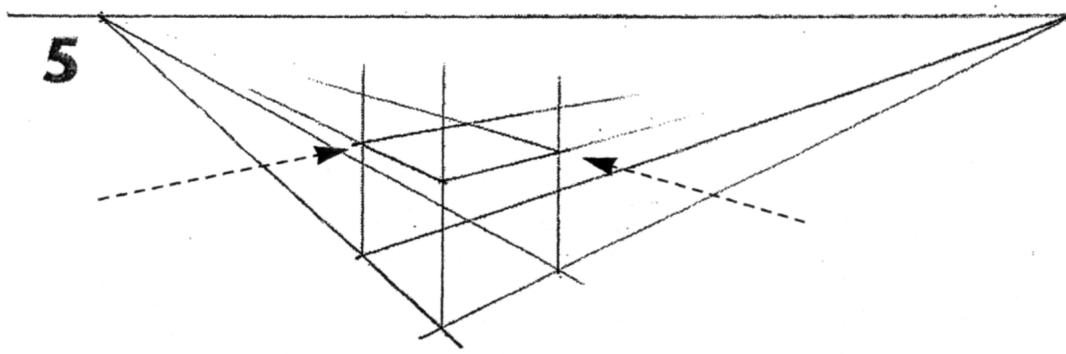


4. Decide where the top of the box will be, by marking the closest vertical line.

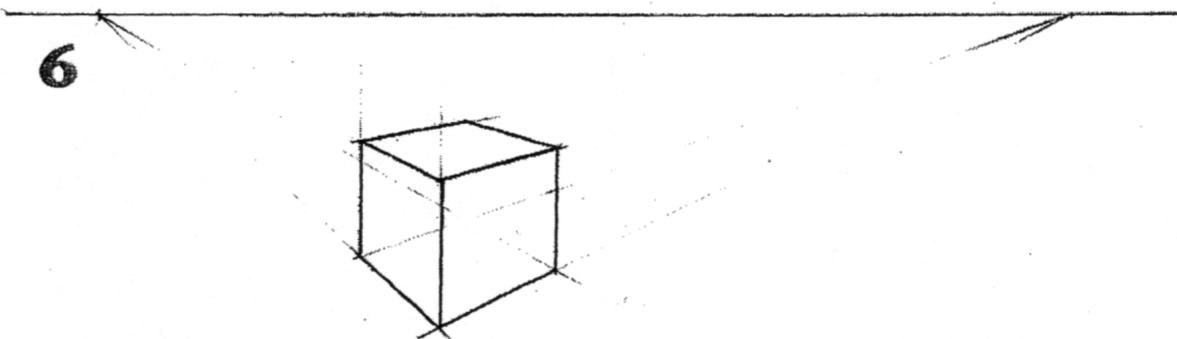
From that point, extend lines toward the two vanishing points to create the top edges of the box.

*You don't have to draw the lines all the way to the vanishing point—just far enough to complete the top of the box!*

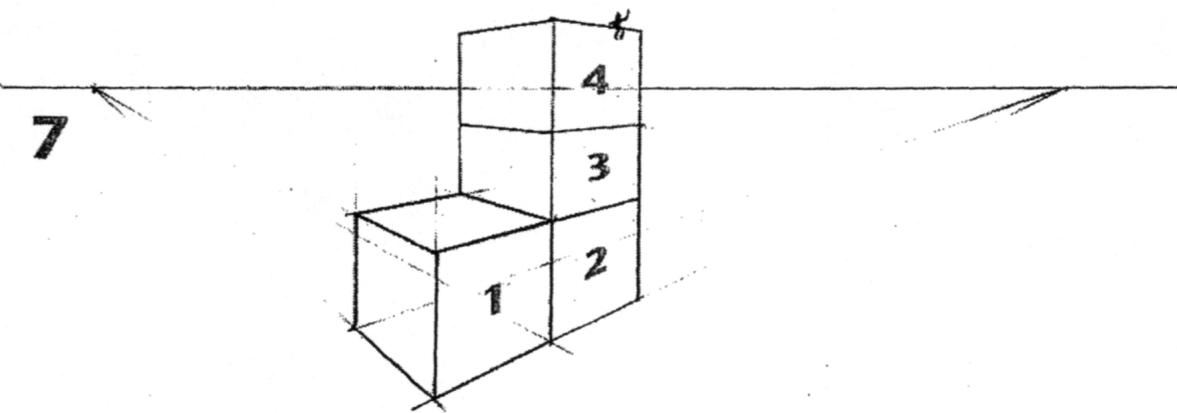




5. From the point where the top intersects the *right* vertical line, draw a line toward the *left* vanishing point. From the point where the top intersects the *left* vertical line, draw a line toward the *right* vanishing point.

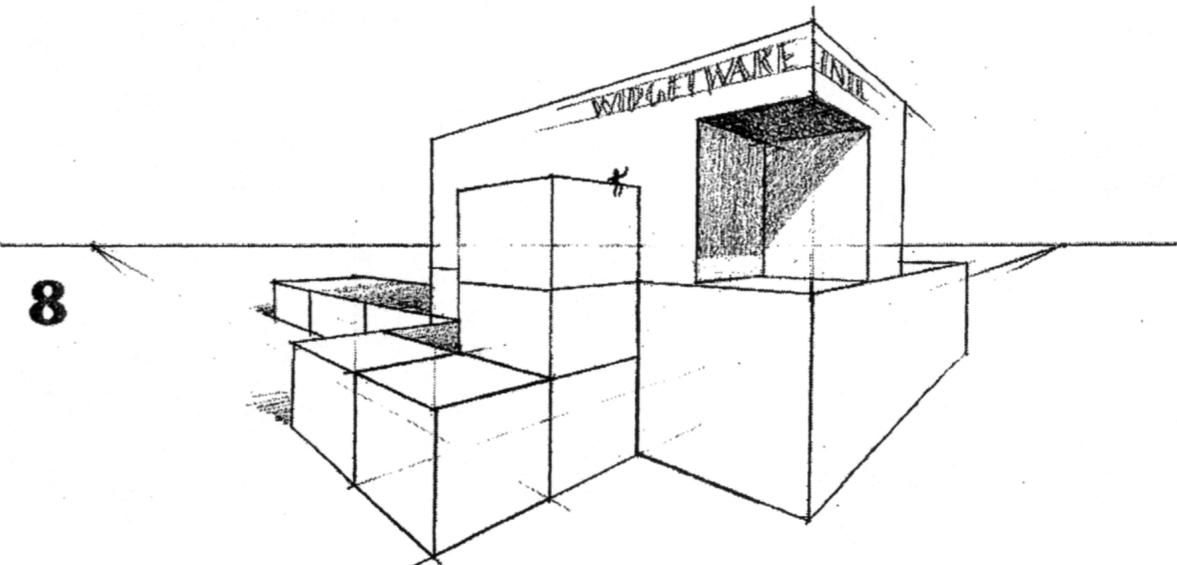


6. Erase guide lines, and you've got a box in two-point perspective!



7. Try adding more boxes around the one you've drawn. As you can see, nothing stops you from going above the horizon.

*Remember: horizon is your eye level. You're looking down at the first three boxes; the fourth is at eye level.*



8. No, you don't have to get quite this carried away...but why not? Keep adding boxes!

**Sandro Botticelli**  
**(1444-1510)**

Sandro Botticelli was an Italian Renaissance painter who lived and worked in Florence. His pictures are distinctive for their clear, rhythmic line, delicate color, lavish decoration, and poetic feeling. He did not share the interest of his fellow Florentines in nature and science, but chose to express his art through a lyrical colorful arrangement of figures and landscapes.

Botticelli's work is of two kinds. In one, he showed worldly splendor, complex moral allegory, and beautiful mythological subjects. He derived much of his subject matter from ancient myths.

His other kind of work shows a more restrained, serious feeling. Even in his early years he painted several sweet but grave Madonnas. In the late 1490's in Florence, Botticelli became so moved by Savonarola's preaching against worldliness that he burned some of his own non religious pictures and painted only religious ones afterward.

Botticelli was born Allesandro Filipepi. The name Botticelli is derived from botticello, Italian for small barrel or tub. It was originally the nickname of the artist's older brother. He studied with Fra Filippo Lippi and was greatly influenced by the sculptor Andrea del Verrochio and the painter and sculptor Antonio del Pollaiuolo.

Botticelli showed his painting skill early when he painted a figure of Fortitude in the Mercanzia of Florence, among the pictures of Virtues. For the Chapel of the Bardi in S. Spirito at Florence he painted a panel depicting nature. He became well known as an artist and was commissioned by the Church as well as the wealthy merchants of Florence, to paint many panels and murals.

## Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894)

By 1877, the Impressionist movement had reached its full maturity, and the third Impressionist exhibition, attended by some eight thousand people, has been considered the finest of all eight shows. It has also been called "Caillebotte's exhibition." Upon Degas's recommendation, Gustave Caillebotte had first exhibited in the second group show of 1876. Around that time, the well-to-do artist had also begun buying the work of his young and often penniless friends. These acquisitions, made over many years, today comprise the core of the world's largest Impressionist art collection, at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Wearing both hats, that of artist and patron, Caillebotte donned a third, that of impresario for the 1877 group show. He found and rented the exhibition space, hung the show with Renoir, and paid for the publicity. He also managed to exhibit six of his own works. One of them, *Paris Street, Rainy Day*, 1877, was singled out by a critic as "the most outstanding work in the exhibition" [see Slide 10].

"I do not mean that the boulevard is Paris," a late nineteenth-century observer noted about Haussmann's spacious new streets, "but surely, without the boulevard we should not understand Paris." To capture in true *plein air* technique this new urban vision, Caillebotte literally took his easels and paints to one of these streets and worked, it is said, from inside a glassed-in omnibus. His site was the Europe Quarter, one of Haussmann's new residential areas, so-called because the streets were named after the capitals of European countries. Centered by one of the prefect's complex, star-formed intersections of six major streets, the Quarter was constructed entirely during the artist's lifetime. Caillebotte grew up five streets away and actually moved to the neighborhood in 1888. Just off this boulevard was the building which housed the 1877 Impressionist exhibition. Six of the Impressionists' eight shows, in fact, would be held in this area.

Considered by many to be the masterpiece of his career, *Paris Street, Rainy Day* gives us Caillebotte's vision of Haussmann's new Paris — its rigorous architecture, its wide straight streets, its impersonality, its order. For this contemporary scene, Caillebotte adopted the grand scale generally used for history and religious paintings. The canvas measures almost seven-by-ten feet. Its gray-blue palette captures the mistiness of



Figure 13. Gustave Caillebotte. *Self Portrait*, c. 1892. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

the “fleeting” moment that the Impressionists sought to convey. The limestone buildings are damp; the cobblestones and sidewalks are rain-slicked and reflective. Even the sky, with its delicate hint of peach, bears the burn-off of the shower. Likewise, Caillebotte’s near life-size foreground figures portray the Impressionists’ emphasis on a moment in time. These elegant urbanites wear the latest winter fashions; even the curved steel-framed umbrella had just arrived on the scene, having been invented only two years before.

Caillebotte’s rigorously controlled technique mirrors the relentless modernity it describes. Like Degas, he made numerous preparatory drawings and oil sketches, and relied on traditional Renaissance perspective to order his composition. In the final painting, though, he has skewed both to create his unique urban view. The image is far deeper and wider than a normal eye would see. Foregrounds are too large, backgrounds too tiny; streets zoom back with a suddenness that startles. Buildings have been widened and the space between them made too broad. The composition is divided into a giant plus sign formed by the green lamppost and horizon. The deepest point is almost the painting’s exact center — a suctioning reinforced by the receding pattern of the cobblestones, chimneys, and umbrellas. Onto the overpowering buildings and funneling streets, Caillebotte has literally plotted his people. He constantly tinkered with and manipulated his preliminary figure studies until, ultimately, he stuck people on in collage-like fashion, according to his intentions. Instead of the Impressionist flux, the men and women seem glued to their positions, frozen in time, permanent. Like the stark and rigorous impersonality of the restructured city, the figures are anonymous and isolated, as if encapsulated by their umbrellas, separated from their surroundings and each other. Every aspect of *Rainy Day* adheres to the demanding order of Caillebotte’s meticulously devised technique, the epitome of which is in the right foreground: beneath a delicate veil, a single pearl gleams in the woman’s ear.