



## Perspective of Meaning & Central Perspective

**The Perspective of Meaning** (also called *hierarchical perspective*) shows the *order of the world* and *arranges* the sizes of figures according to inherited religious or social significance. The guiding question is: “What is essential – *either* this *or* that?”

In the **early Italian Renaissance**, at the beginning of the 15th century, a decisive change took place. People no longer asked: “What is large? What is important?” but rather: “From where do I see – and what becomes relevant from this point of view? – Both *this* and *that*?”

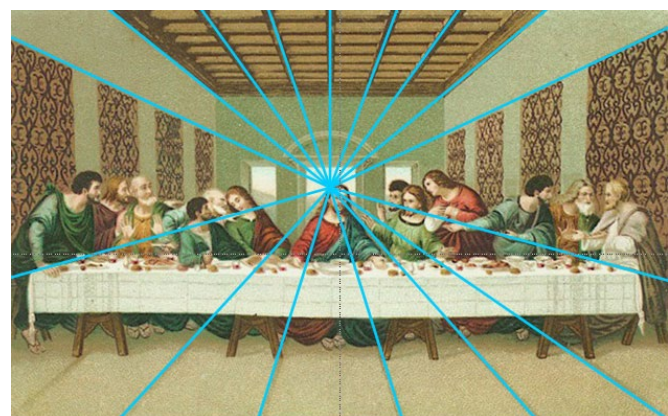
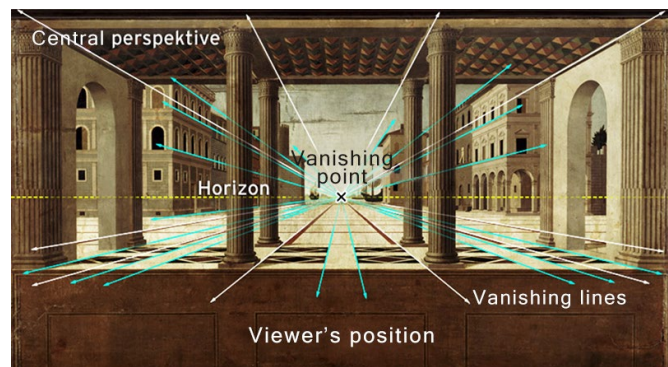
[Leon Battista Alberti](#) formulated the theory of perspective in 1435/36 (*de pictura*). Painters such as [Masaccio](#), and later [Leonardo da Vinci](#), [Raphael](#), and [Michelangelo](#), consistently put this new way of seeing into practice.

What has greater significance  
is depicted larger – *2-dimensional*



The Angel proclaims the joyful message of the birth of Jesus Christ to the shepherds in the stable in Bethlehem

Spatial depth is created through the  
vanishing point – *3-dimensional*



Below: [The Last Supper](#) (1494-97) by the Italian painter [Leonardo da Vinci](#)

The transition to **central perspective** expresses a **very profound cultural shift**. While hierarchical perspective **fixes** what is essential by making it visible, central perspective says: “**I show you the world as it appears – what is essential, you must recognize for yourself.**”

This represents an enormous step.

The viewer looks objectively. Through attentive observation, meaning is discovered, chosen, and distinguished by the viewer themselves, which presupposes a calm and mature person. Such a person is receptive to what does not have to be bigger, closer, higher, louder, more beautiful, or better in order to truly *be THERE* – but is instead subtle, delicate, quiet, and gentle, like a breath of wind.