# SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES



# DR FAN DONGWANG

# THE DANCING SHADOWS

# SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

## AND THE BODY

BY

# DR FAN DONGWANG

**MA (UNSW)**

**DCA (UOW)**

**2013**

# ABSTRACT

Shifting perspectives in visual art from a *method* point of view are the systems of space rendering, which differ considerably in many cultures and traditions. Shifting perspectives from a *metaphor* viewpoint have philosophical, technological, social, sexual, and emotional significance. Such perspectives broaden our perception of bodies in space. This study has developed from the examination of diverse shifting perspectives employed in historical and contemporary Western and Chinese art. Through detailed analysis of various art practices dealing with the representation of human identities in relation to changing social and technological environment, the focus of this study is on a new way of viewing the body in space. The contribution of this study to the discussion of shifting perspectives is found in the notion of two kinds of shifting perspectives: first, the relation to the technique of representing three dimensional objects, and secondly, relationships of depth on a two dimensional surface. This research claims that apart from the notion of linear perspective, there more importantly also exist perspectives of receding and ascending third-dimensions which are the compressed third-dimensions leading to the "converted three-dimension" or "two-dimension with three-dimensional attribute". All these perspectives, whether be *methods* or *metaphors*, have been used to combine different visual languages to produce an ambiguous and diverse system of space presentation for the body, "the shadow perspective of sculptural painting". This visual synthesis of cultural differences created by a system of shifting perspectives is embodied in the paintings that accompany this thesis.

# CONTENTS

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The logical thinking of my work originated eight years ago, when I came to Australia for the hope of advancing my artistic endeavour. I went though an extremely uncertain period in a constantly shifting and diversified environment. While moving from different platforms and viewpoints, I started my journey of searching for a visual solution regarding the perspectives of this new world. This thesis owes much to the outcomes of my two early projects: *Human Conflicts* and *Descendants* for my Master's study at the College of Fine Arts, University of NSW. The issues generated by these two projects demanded further scrutiny, and I hence embarked on the present Doctoral work.

In this I have been aided by the many people, most particularly my supervisor Dr. Diana Wood Conroy who kindly provided critical direction, invaluable information on my research, and patiently read through many drafts and offered extraordinarily important comments. My thanks also to Professor Bert Flugelman for his extremely kind assistance, constant advice on my artwork and unfailing encouragement; to Michael Young for photographic documentation of my work.

I am also grateful to the staffs of the Faculty of Creative Arts and the Dean and Professor Sharon Bell, grateful to the University of Wollongong Postgraduate Award, which gave me the opportunity to pursue my study at the Faculty.

I am especially grateful to my first supervisor Dr. Peter Shepherd who accepted me as his doctoral student affectionately and helped me to lay down the solid foundation of my study. My thanks here are only a token of what I owe to his support of my work.

My thanks are also to my parents who have supported my study continuously in many years, to my wife who has sacrificed greatly in supporting my work. Without their help, my study would not have been possible.

# INTRODUCTION—SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

*Holding a jug of wine among the flowers,*

*And drinking along, not a soul keeping me company,*

*I raise my cup and invite the moon to drink with me,*

*And together with my shadow we are three.*

*But the moon does not know the joy of drinking,*

*And my shadow only follows me about.*

*Nevertheless I shall have them as my companions,*

*For one should enjoy life at such a time.*

*The moon loiters as I sing my songs,*

*My shadow looks confused as I dance.*

*I drink with them when I am awake.*

*And part with them when I am drunk.*

*Henceforward may we always be feasting,*

*And may we meet in the Cloudy River of Heaven.*

Li Bai *Drinking Alone Under Moonlight* (172-3).[1]

The three spirited figures described in this lyric by the celebrated Chinese poet Li Bai were *the moon*, *the poet himself* and *his cast shadow*. The moon was the origin of light that fell onto the poet's body and cast a long shadow on the ground. The ground of the place where they had this joyful party, however, was the fourth friend the author had not acknowledged in his poem. The relationship of the four is not only requisite but also delicate—any change between them would give a different result. It seemed that no one else was there that night, but the poet imagined someone was just watching him nearby who was constantly changing his or her position to gain different viewpoints. These are the four main concepts that are being pursued in this thesis: *shifting perspective*, *body* and its *cast shadow* in *space*.

The unusual thing in Li's poem is the raising status of the *cast shadows*, as if it were an equal human being. This put Li's poetic picture in vivid contrast to traditional Chinese paintings that seemed to ignore light, shades and cast shadows. Li's treatment of the cast shadow contained a western flavour, which exerted an influence on my undertaking to emphasise the role of cast shadows in my painting.

My investigation is a cross-cultural survey dealing with different intellectual and creative activities concerning the body and its spatial representation in artwork. I strive to explore the ways in which artists in both west and east shared an interest in delineating body in space by using a painting method named *shifting perspective*. It has a diverse significance

---

[1] A note on Romanisation: the system used in this document is the Chinese official Pinyin for most of the names and places.

with two main areas of emphasis. One is the *method* viewpoint—shifting visual perspective that examines how the system of space representation in artworks differs due to the artist's divergent cultural conditions. The other is the *metaphor* viewpoint—shifting social perspective which investigates the body's various philosophical, political, social, technological, sexual and emotional perspectives. These two interweaving approaches to *shifting perspective* are the central structure of my study.

To define *shifting perspective* more closely, we need to look at these two terms separately: *shifting* and *perspective.* The first term *shift* is to "exchange" one thing for another of the same class, or to "move" or "transfer" from one place or position to another, to "alter" position or place.

However, there are various meanings of the second term *perspective* which came from a Latin word "perspectiva", meaning "looking through". Albrecht Durer's definition of perspective was from the Latin *perspectiva naturalis*:

> Note: five things pertain to this "looking through":
> The first is the eye, that sees.
> Next is the thing that is seen.
> Third is the space between them.
> Fourth [is that] everything is seen by straight lines, which are the shortest lines.
> Fifth is the parts of the thing that is seen (Elkins "Renaissance Perspectives" 213).[2]

Today the word *perspective* first refers to the technique of representing three-dimensional objects and space relationships on a two-dimensional surface in an artwork. Second, it refers to a wider concept of view or vista, even a mental view or outlook. Third, *perspective* refers to the relationship of aspects of a subject to each other and to a whole: a perspective of history. It refers to the subjective evaluation of relative significance; a point of view: the gender perspective.

James Elkins in his book The Poetics of Perspective points out that because the term *perspective* has a much broader and uncertain meaning, "the conceptual field of perspective is a chronic fragmentation (xiv)":
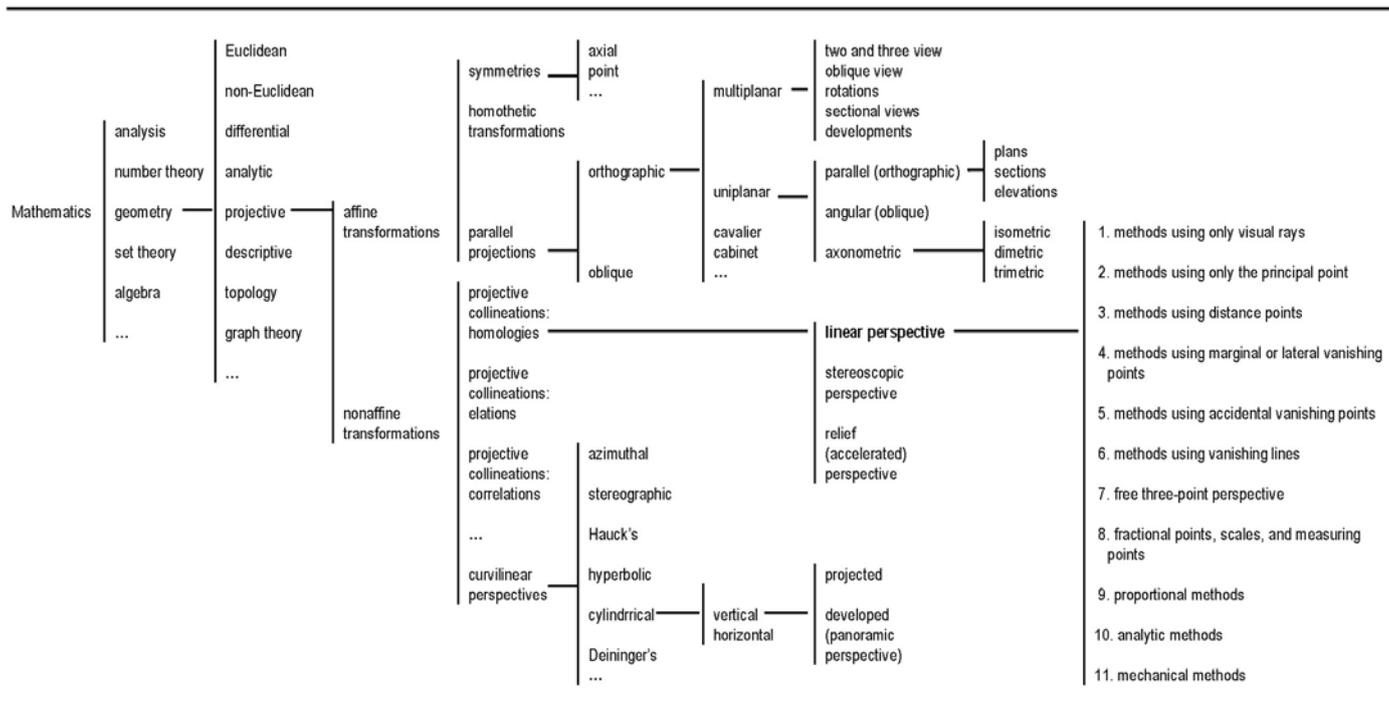
> Perspective has no canonical site, no single definition or description that can provide an adequate or standard account of what it is. Writing on perspective is currently done in a variety of more-or-less distinct fields, including experimental and cognitive psychology, linguistics, literary criticism, analytic and existential philosophy, phenomenology, semiotics, psychoanalysis, metaphorology, and various strains of art history, mathematics, engineering, and pedagogy (xii).

Elkins proffers that perspective forms a very complex system in relation to other projections and to branches of mathematics. Linear perspective is only a small part of it (see *Table 1*).

---

[2] Note that Durer did not mention the intersection (window) as a crucial element of linear perspective but only implied it in the first sentence. This was because the Renaissance artist did not use linear perspective for mainstream picture making. For details see *chapter 2* about Renaissance perspective.

Table 1

Perspective in relation to other projections and to branches of mathematics (Elkins, <u>The Poetics of Perspective</u> 4-5).

| Mathematics | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| analysis | Euclidean | | symmetries — axial point ... | | multiplanar | two and three view / oblique view / rotations / sectional views / developments | | 1. methods using only visual rays |
| number theory | non-Euclidean | | homothetic transformations | | | | | 2. methods using only the principal point |
| geometry | differential | affine transformations | orthographic | | uniplanar | parallel (orthographic) | plans / sections / elevations | 3. methods using distance points |
| | analytic | | | | | angular (oblique) | | 4. methods using marginal or lateral vanishing points |
| set theory | projective | | parallel projections | | cavalier cabinet ... | axonometric | isometric / dimetric / trimetric | 5. methods using accidental vanishing points |
| algebra | descriptive | | oblique | | | | | 6. methods using vanishing lines |
| ... | topology | | projective collineations: homologies | | | linear perspective | | 7. free three-point perspective |
| | graph theory | | projective collineations: elations | | | stereoscopic perspective | | 8. fractional points, scales, and measuring points |
| | ... | nonaffine transformations | | | | relief (accelerated) perspective | | 9. proportional methods |
| | | | projective collineations: correlations | azimuthal / stereographic / ... | | | | 10. analytic methods |
| | | | curvilinear perspectives | Hauck's / hyperbolic | | projected | | 11. mechanical methods |
| | | | | cylindrical — vertical horizontal | | developed (panoramic perspective) | | |
| | | | | Deininger's ... | | | | |

Instead of a single perspective, Elkins prefers to speak of *multiple perspectives*—meaning "prospects" or "views in different directions" ("Renaissance Perspectives" 214). We thus have two basic approaches to perspective: *method* and *metaphor*. If perspective is used as a space rendering method in panting, it sometimes refers to a rational modern concept—*linear perspective*. It also refers to different methods of space rendering in the cultures other than Renaissance.[3] It is mathematical and geometrical. On the other hand, if perspective is used as a *metaphor*, it refers to "vision", "culture", "state of mind", "epochs of art" and "social point of view". It is philosophical, artistic, semiotic, metaphoric and poetic. Hence, the definition of *shifting perspective* can be said as: a, the changing of space rendering system in artworks (*method* point of view); b, the changing of viewpoint, whether it is social, political, technological or artistic (*metaphor* point of view).

*Perspective* in this study, therefore, sometimes is used as a geometrical *method*, as in *chapter 1-3,* meaning *visual perspective*. In other times, it is used as a *metaphor*, as in *chapter 4—Bodies and Their Shifting Social Perspectives*, meaning *philosophical, technological, social, sexual* and *emotional perspectives*. Both approaches are complementary in many aspects, and interwoven in my study of the shifting perspectives. For instance, shifting visual perspective between screen (frame) images is the fundamental mechanism for shifting social perspective, while the shifted social

---

[3] The term "perspective" is largely a western expression that in this document is not only referring to linear perspective. In other art (Chinese art and Egyptian art) there are also perspectives, if we define perspective as the system of space representation. There are similarities (in aerial perspective) and differences (linear perspective verses shifting perspective). Aerial perspective applies to the effect of the atmosphere on the appearance of objects, such as the change in colour of distant mountains. Although it played an important part in both western and Chinese art, the aerial perspective is of less concern in my work. I therefore devote my research more to the linear perspective.

perspective directs artists to shift their visual perspective. There is no clear-cut separation between these two approaches.[4]

Artists in different cultures have used different kinds of perspective to create an illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional picture surface. My study is concentrated on shifting perspective as a method and metaphor for space representation of the body utilised by eastern and western artists.

In *Chapter 1—The Western Vision,* I first summarise the historical shifting perspectives in western art from Egyptian to Renaissance. Than I point out that *linear perspective* was a method used against shifting perspective. Modernist artforms returned to shifting perspectives and Postmodernism further advances shifting perspectives in art and other cultures.

In *Chapter 2—The Chinese Dispersing Panorama,* I investigate the Chinese understanding of shifting perspective as a principal method of representing the body in space. As visual devices, the *Double Screen* depicts shifting perspectives in Chinese figurative painting, and *Seven Viewing Methods* outlines shifting perspectives of Chinese landscape painting. The *Sculptural Shifting Perspective* that existed in Chinese carving is also analysed as well as the changing perspective of Chinese art in the twentieth century.

In *Chapter 3—My Dancing Shadows*, I offer a detailed analysis of shifting perspectives in my paintings. The *Ten Diagrams* leads to *A Visual Solution—Shadow Perspective* that presents a system of space representation by mixing all cultural differences discussed previously.

In *Chapter 4—Bodies and Their Shifting Social Perspectives,* I argue shifting perspectives from the *metaphor* viewpoint. *From Biological To Cultural* observes the body's shifting philosophical perspective, and *Human Versus Machine* reflects on the body's shifting technological perspective. Then *Social Inscription* envisages the shifting social perspective of the body. *The Gender Inquest* watches the shifting gender perspective of the body while *Pure Screen and the Body without Organs* focuses on the body's shifting emotional perspective.[5]

Finally, the *Conclusion* sums up the main points of the postmodern Shifting Perspectives and the Body.

My contribution to the discussions of shifting perspectives is found on the notion of two kinds of shifting perspectives in relation to the technique of representing three-dimensional objects and depth relationships on a two-dimensional surface. That is: first, "two-dimensional shifting perspective" which can be seen in landscape paintings and some figure

---

[4] See *Diagram 11: The System of Shifting Perspective and the Body* in *Chapter 4—Bodies and Their Shifting Social Perspectives.* This diagram demonstrates the system of the relationships of all the critical concepts investigated in this thesis—*perspective methods* in *Chapter 1-3* and the *philosophical, technological, social, sexual* and *emotional metaphors* in *Chapter 4.*

[5] The notion of *the Body without Organs* is explained in the section *Pure Screen and The Body without Organs* in *Chapter 4—Bodies and Their Shifting Social Perspectives.*

paintings; second, "three-dimensional shifting perspective" (or "ascending and receding perspective") which can be seen in Chinese lacquer work or other forms of carvings.[6] The ascending third dimension is slightly above the painting's surface, and the receding third dimension is slightly beyond that surface. These two are the compressed third dimensions that have barely being discussed by others in this field. It leads to my claim of the "converted three-dimension" or "two-dimension with three-dimensional attribute". I also analyse the ways in which merge different perspective systems to produce my ambiguous and diverse system of space presentation.[7] All these form my original contribution to the knowledge of perspective in artwork.

---

[6] This ambiguous third dimension can be seen in Chinese lacquer work or other carvings. For detailed accounts see *Chapter 3, Diagram 6.*

[7] See *Diagram 11: The System of Shifting Perspective and the Body* in *Chapter 4—Bodies and Their Shifting Social Perspectives.*

# CHAPTER 1—THE WESTERN VISION

In this chapter I canvass shifting perspectives as diversified visual vocabularies in formulating the body image in western art. Throughout history, artists have produced endless masterworks without linear perspective, using many different systems of composition to achieve a sense of space. Historically shifting perspectives were used by Egyptian Art and Renaissance. Then the modern one point linear perspective was in essence against shifting perspective. However shifting perspectives returned to modernist painting, and are prospering in the postmodern era.

## Shifting Perspectives from Egyptian Art to Renaissance

Egyptian Painting embodied an idealised shifting perspective, which used the scale of the body to indicate the importance that determined its perspective and space occupation. For instance, the king (the pharaoh), who was considered a god on earth dominating the state and religion, is shown taller than his consort, children, or courtiers. The basic intention of Egyptian art, therefore, was not to create an image of things as they look to the eye (as linear perspective does), but rather to represent the essence of a person or object for eternity. Therefore, there was no perspective concern with the receding space, and the scale of the figure did not indicate space distance. A body in the background could appear larger than that in the foreground if it was more socially important.

In Egyptian painting, as in Egyptian sculpture, the images of the bodies, being conceptual rather than realistic, presented their most characteristic anatomical features. Thus, two stylistic constants prevailed: a combination of frontal and profile views of the same figure (Gombrich Art and Illusion 3-4). An Egyptian relief Stele of Amenemint (illus. 1) served two important purposes: on the walls of temples, it glorified the king; in the tombs, it provided the spirit with the things it would need through eternity. The method of representing the human figure in two dimensions, either carved in relief or painted, was again dictated by the desire to preserve the essence of what was shown. Consequently, the typical depiction combined the head and lower body as seen from the side, with the eye and upper torso as seen from the front. The most understandable view of each part was used to create a complete image. This rule, or canon, was applied to the king and members of the nobility, but the representation of servants and field workers was not so rigidly enforced. Clearly some complicated actions had to be conveyed with the use of other views of parts of the body, but the face was rarely shown from the front.

1. Stele of Amenemint. Nineteenth Dynasty (?) Egyptian limestone carving.

Life activities were arranged on the Egyptian wall painting in bands or registers that could be read as *continuing narratives*, not as happenings in actual time but as timeless occupations. This method of combining different perspectives to form an idealised image set a precedent for the "shifting perspective" in Chinese landscape painting.[8]

Shifting perspectives were also evident in Renaissance painting.[9] To study the western traditional perspective, scholars often refer to the work of Erwin Panofsky, one of the most prominent humanist art historians of the twentieth century.

His writings in this area are of fundamental importance (Fernie 181). However, my study focuses on *shifting perspective* rather than the entire area of the perspective in European art. I find the writing of James Elkins is of greater relevance to my project.

James Elkins in his book The Poetics of Perspective believes that the Renaissance sense of perspective was less unified than ours, and there could be various incommensurate perspectives within a single picture (xiii). Elkins argues in another essay "Renaissance Perspective" that perspectives in Renaissance artist's view such as Vasari's were "small parts of paintings, rather than entire paintings or ways of making paintings". To Vasari, good painting could be "full of perspectives" (215-216).

Nevertheless, this research of Elkins is at odds with the common belief that Renaissance perspective was *linear perspective*.[10] This common belief assumed that before the Renaissance the ancient world knew little of the accurate portrayal of depth in pictures. A crude three-dimensional illusion was sometimes suggested in frescoed scenes by the device of placing one figure in front of another. The Romans arrived at a partial understanding of the convergence of parallel lines but never evolved a consistent idea of vanishing points. Consequently around 1400, the Italian Renaissance artists developed an intuitive understanding of perspective. However, it remained for the Florentine architect Filippo Brunelleschi to codify the laws of perspective through a series of experiments between 1417 and 1420. The Florentine painters Masaccio and Paolo Uccello were among the first to use Brunelleschi's rules to achieve perspective illusion in painting. In 1435 the architect Leon Battista Alberti wrote a treatise on painting as "Della Pittura" (On Painting). The work was an explication of Brunelleschi's method and became the basis of all later use of perspective.[11]

However, according to Elkins, it is important to remember that the so-called scientific understanding of perspective (linear perspective) was a relatively recent development in western art history. It is incongruous to declare linear perspective was accurately formulated during the Italian Renaissance in the fifteenth century, as Elkins explains:

> Most Renaissance authors do not connect perspective windows, either real or imagined, to the mainstream of picture making. There is geometric evidence that the [Renaissance] perspective methods themselves were designed for the depiction of individual objects rather than the establishing of the "infinite, isotropic, homogeneous" Euclidean space that Panofsky mentions as the priori organising principle for correct perspective. Pictorial evidence, too, points in this direction. The fifteenth century Florentine paintings by Domenico Veneziano, Paolo Uccello, Masaccio, Ghirlandaio, and others included perspective constructions that did not order the entire spaces of their paintings, but instead placed correctly drawn objects within a less determined space ("Renaissance Perspectives" 209-10).

---

[8] This method of continuing narrative can also be seen in Chinese art, although they have slight differences in depicting time. Notes that the continuing narrative is somewhat different to the shifting perspective, it needs a separated study that is not possible here.

[9] For details see Hubert Damisch's book: The Origin of Perspective. There are also many graphic images in Alison Cole's book, Perspective: A Visual Guide to the Theory and Techniques – from the Renaissance to Pop Art.

[10] This common belief can be seen in the "Perspective" section of Microsoft Encarta CD-ROM. Microsoft Corporation. 1994.

[11] "Perspective." Microsoft Encarta. CD-ROM. Microsoft Corporation. 1994.

Elkin's readings of the paintings re-emphasise the expressive disunities that are caused in paintings by Uccello, Piero della Francesca, Ghirlandaio, and in *intarsia* decorations in Urbino and Gubbio, by the use of multiple, geometrically incommensurate methods in one picture. Renaissance historians, critics, and geometers generally did not speak of pictorial space, or even of a unified space within a picture, but of the *objects* that went into the pictures ("Renaissance Perspectives" 223-234). [12]

The Renaissance concept of perspectives, in the plural, was *in* pictures rather than a single perspective as a generator *of* pictorial space. Drawings of objects set against indeterminate or empty backgrounds, appeared ready to be inserted in paintings wherever a painter might want. Sometimes we can see the lack of interest in the relation among the perspectives of individual objects and the larger fictive spaces for which they were intended. Perspective methods that without horizon lines, such as Piero's, Alberti's, Filarete's, and Gauricus's, can also produce drawings of objects that seem isolated, ready to be copied and used in other compositions. Where they might or might not fit with a pre-existing perspectival scheme (Elkins "Renaissance Perspectives" 217).[13]

Among Renaissance writers was the idea that there were several generally compatible perspectives, and that perspective was not simply "discovered' all at once. Perspectives were understood to have been adopted at different times and put into different uses. One Renaissance painting could combine as many as three perspectives harmoniously—Leonardo had used three kinds of perspective and even more methods. Therefore, *Multiple perspectives* (Elkins' term) or *shifting perspectives* (my term) were evident in the sixteenth century when there existed not one but twenty-odd different perspective methods. The rules of perspectives were secret, personal and complex. Lencker's manuscript <u>Perspective</u> (c. 1600) had endless descriptions of proportional dividers, compasses, quadrants, astrolabes, geometric solids and more exotic instruments "all under the rubric of perspective" (Elkins "Renaissance Perspectives" 222). *Table 2* describes ten Renaissance perspectives proposed by Elkins as the commonly used space rendering methods (<u>The Poetics of Perspective</u> 87).

According to Elkins, Renaissance authors did not try to reduce their techniques to sets of axioms. "Laws, examples, and rules of thumb commingled, and there was a welter of more-or-less independent set of applications." Durer's methods of *enlarging* or *reducing* pictures or objects in pictures were considered by him as parts of perspectives. It is very interesting to compare these Renaissance methods with the Chinese "perspectives" (*Seven Viewing Methods*): *TuiYuanKan* (push away viewing) and *LaJinKan* (pull closer viewing). Much the same could be seen in Chinese notion of shifting perspective in contrast to Johann II von Pfalz-Simmern's flexible "constructive" perspective in making his drawings which contained human features "not according to proportion" ("Renaissance Perspectives" 221).[14]

---

[12] In composing a picture, Chinese artists also relied on selected images instead of a unified perspective system. See *Double Screen* in *Chapter 2——The Chinese Dispersing Panorama.*

[13] It is intriguing to compare "*objects* that went into the pictures" with the notion of constructive collage (see *A Modernist Return* in *Chapter 1——The Western Vision*).

[14] See *The Aesthetics of the Seven Viewing Methods* in *Chapter 2——The Chinese Dispersing Panorama.*

Table 2. The ten classes of Renaissance perspective methods (Elkins <u>The Poetics of Perspective</u> 87).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Workshop constructions | (Unwritten late medieval practice) Principal point, diagonal, bifocal, and monofocal constructions |
| 2 | Distance-point construction | Pelerin, Vignola |
| 3 | The *costruzione legittima* | Alberti |
| 4 | Reformed workshop methods | (Inaccurate mixtures of classes 2 and 3) Filarete, Gauricus, Ringhelbergius; also in Serlio and Leonardo |
| 5 | Visual-ray method | Plans and elevations, with lines drawn to a centre of projection) Vignola, Piero, Cataneo, Sirigatti, Cousin, Barbaro, Commandino, Benedetti, Guidobaldo del Monte |
| 6 | Circumscribed-rectangle method | (Rectangle with triangular foreshortened version on top) Alberti, Piero, Cousin, Barbaro, Benedetti, Serlio, Guidobaldo del Monte |
| 7 | Direct method | (A plan below a ground line, without the use of a surrounding rectangle) Vignola, du Cerceau, Ringhelbergius |
| 8 | Vanishing-point method | (Based on the generalised law of the vanishing point) Guidobaldo del Monte |
| 9 | Inverse method | (Reconstructing plans from perspective) Leonardo, Guidobaldo del Monte |
| 10 | Mechanical methods | Alberti, Leonardo, Durer, Lauretti, Lanci, Jamnitzer, Cigoli |

Northern European Renaissance painting also ignored linear perspective. An interest in ancient art and the knowledge of linear perspective did not develop in the North until the sixteenth century. Even then, not all artists benefited from the discoveries that were made in Italy. Painters who were more interested in the expressive value of their subjects than linear perspective created many great masterpieces in the early 1500s. They focused on emotional drama in their religious paintings, ignored perspective, anatomy, and correct proportions. An example is the <u>Garden of Earthly Delights</u> (1500, Prado, Madrid), a triptych by the Netherlandish painter Hieronymus Bosch; it was a surreal conglomeration of sensuously suggestive human and animal shapes and strange plant forms. Nevertheless, their achievements with oil glazes and tempera had never been surpassed.

After the Renaissance, the Baroque and Rococo Artists emphasised *light* and *shadow* rather than perspective. Two French painters in particular assimilated the Caravaggesque style. Georges de La Tour, primarily a painter of religious subjects, was a master of light and shadow. He demonstrated his virtuosity by illuminating faces and hands with the translucent light of a single candle. Louis Le Nain also used light and shadow dramatically in his monumental paintings of peasant life. Foremost among Dutch Baroque artists was Jan Vermeer, whose paintings gave a sense of ordered space

and were, above all, masterpieces of the effect of light. Rococo art, which flourished in France and Germany in the early eighteenth century, was in many respects a continuation of the baroque, particularly in the use of light, shadow, and compositional movement.[15]

## The Modern One Point Linear Perspective

It is impossible for me to envisage a picture as being other than a window, and why my first concern is then to know what it looks out on.

André Breton. Surrealism and Painting (1928).

Breton's assertion reflects the common western belief in the system of space rendering in artwork—*linear perspective* (illus. 2)*,* which is the opposite of *shifting perspective.* In the following section, I will temporally move away from shifting perspective to discuss the linear perspective—the most common perspective of the twentieth century. Today it is considered that it originated from Renaissance art, but as we discussed previously, it was developed by the artists and theorists after the time of the Renaissance.
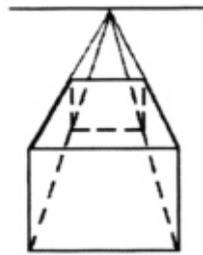


2. One vanishing point perspective.

In western art, linear perspective is said to be based on elementary laws of optics; in particular the law stating that objects in the background appear smaller than those in the foreground.[16] The western artist considers a painting surface to be limited by its four edges. The basic premise of the linear point perspective system is that the picture plane is a flat window intersecting a cone that extends indefinitely into space from its apex at the viewer's eye. Sandro Botticelli's painting Pallas and the Centaur (illus. 3) shows traditional ideas about the illusion of three dimensionalities on a flat picture surface (Santi 49). This flat window (painting surface) is two-dimensional (2D), and the image on top of this surface is representing the three-dimensional (3D) scenery beyond the window frame. Thus, the two-dimensional

---

[15] The emphasis on shadow becomes a source of my inspiration for formulating *Shadow Perspective*, which will be discussed in *Chapter 3—My Dancing Shadows.*

[16] A comprehensive explanation of linear perspective can be seen in Martin Kemp's book The Science of Art—Optical Themes in Western Art From Brunelleschi to Seurat.

imagery gives the viewer a third dimensional illusion. In my study, this third dimensional illusion is called a *receding 3D*.[17]



3. Botticelli. <u>Pallas and the Centaur</u>.

---

[17] I will discuss *Ascending 3D* later in *Sculptural Shifting Perspective and Chinese carving* in *Chapter 2—The Chinese Dispersing Panorama.*

This "single point" system (linear perspective) was believed to be invented by Filippo Brunelleschi. It is mathematically constructed so that all receding parallel lines appear to converge towards each other, and eventually meeting at a single point, the vanishing point. Linear perspective applies to the way objects optically appear to grow smaller as they recede in the distance. In perspective drawing, the flat surface of the painted picture is known as the picture plane. The horizon line is the horizontal "eye-level" line that divides the scene in the distance; and the vanishing point is located on the horizon line where the parallel lines in the scene appear to converge. Therefore in essence, linear perspective is against shifting perspectives.

Panofsky notices that it has been difficult since the Renaissance to overcome the habit of seeing things in linear perspective, which was no mere arbitrary imposition upon the public eye. However, he undermines the legitimacy or naturalness of linear perspective by pointing out that it was employed by the painters as "a construction comprehensible only for a quite specific, indeed specifically modern, sense of space, or if you will, sense of the world" (34). In other words, one point perspective is not sufficient for a world of diversity.

## A Modernist Return

Nevertheless, the development of the shifting perspective had not stopped at the dominance of linear perspective in western art world, but produced rich varieties of modernist art styles that took place in the twentieth century parallel to the rapid scientific, technological, and social changes.[18]

### *SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES OF CUBISM—COLLAGE, CONSTRUCTION, ASSEMBLAGE AND READY-MADE*

Cubism, which became the most influential of all art styles in twentieth century, was primarily concerned with abstract forms and object/background relationship rather than lifelike representation. The 20th-Century Art Book defines cubism as:

> This revolutionary method of making a pictorial image was invented by Picasso and Braque in the first decade of the twentieth century. Although it may appear abstract and geometrical, Cubist art does in fact depict real objects. The objects are 'flattened' onto the canvas so that different sides of each shape can be shown simultaneously. Instead of creating the illusion of an object in space, as artists had endeavoured to do since the Renaissance, Cubist art defines objects in terms of the two-dimensional canvas. This innovation gave rise to an extraordinary reassessment of the interaction between form and space and changed the course of Western art forever (506).

In cubism, the flat, two-dimensional surface of the picture plane was emphasised; and traditional linear perspective, foreshortening, modelling, and chiaroscuro (contrast of light and dark) was rejected. Before Cubism, artists like

---

[18] The word *modernism* or *modernist* refers to the rich varieties of art styles in the twentieth century such as fauvism, expressionism, cubism, futurism, constructivism, surrealism, and minimalism.

Cézanne were working towards an idea of new pictorial space that abandoned single viewpoint perspective as the basis for painting composition (Stalnaker 287-93). Synthetic cubism used an abstract and analytical approach to a subject, in which the artists shifted their perspective away from one fixed point. Their views of an object from different angles, not simultaneously visible in life, were rearranged into a unified composition. Forms were thus broken down, analysed, and radically fragmented to show several sides simultaneously. There is no attempt to reproduce in detail the appearance of natural objects from only one fixed point of view.

Experiments with collage (from a French word *coller*, "to paste") were also introduced by Cubism. Foreign and heterogeneous ready-made materials such as bits of newspaper, wood, and steel were pasted onto the picture in combination (synthesis) with painted surfaces. The image's shapes remained fragmented and flat, and the works were more decorative. Nevertheless, there was a real third dimension (ascending 3D) on the painting's surface caused by pasted real objects.

By incorporating the *real objects* and *printed images* into the picture plane, the Cubism picture was *constructed* rather than *painted*. The practice of collage led to the invention of *ready-made*, which defined by The 20th-Century Art Book as:

> [Ready- made is] A term originally coined by Duchamp to describe a **found object** selected by the artist and placed on its own in an art context. The most famous example is the urinal which Duchamp exhibited in its original state, calling it *Fountain*. His intention was to challenge the viewer's preconceptions about what created 'value' in art. He implied that it was not the object itself which carried artistic content, but the context in which the object was displayed (505).

Collage as an art practice had its roots in many art movements from Cubism to Minimalism. The Dada artist Marcel Duchamp assembled ordinary objects, known as ready-mades, invested them with significance by removing them from their normal environment or position to a gallery space. This overturned the traditional concept of artwork (The 20th-Century Art Book 123). Many other artists have since used the collage of ready-mades as their artworks.

Raoul Hausmann pushed technique of collage further by creating photomontage to overcome the limitation of hand-painted images in visual expression. He arranged and glued photographs or other found illustrations onto a flat surface (Collins 12).

The Surrealists extended this conception into the realm of fantasy by assembling the found objects or printed images into meaningful relationships to create a kind of magical metaphor. One of the greatest Surrealist painters Max Ernst was a collagist (Krauss The Optical Unconscious 33-72).[19]

---

[19] Krauss devoted the second chapter of her book *The Optical Unconscious* to analysis Max Ernst's collage, which used printed images in paintings.

Pop artist Peter Blake introduced "painted collage" to realise his visual expression—playing on the differences between reality and illusion. Collins describes Blake's employment of a variety of techniques to produce the mimetic effects of collage in his work:

> At first glance parts of *On the Balcony* the magazine covers and postcards, for example—appear to be collaged, a technique frequently employed by Blake. But every detail is painted: '… when I'm expected to paint it, I collage it, and when you might think I might collage it, I paint it—it's a kind of aesthetic game,' Blake commented. 'A picture like *On the Balcony* was purely a photo-realist, magic-realist picture where one was trying a *trompe l'oeil* technique—it wasn't about whether it should be collaged or not—it was just painting a picture and those questions came up afterwards (142)'.

Photorealism had a new variation on the theme of *painted collage* and *Ready-made*: the Photorealist artists "copied" photos exactly onto the canvases with little regard for the contents.[20]

Minimalism also used the Ready-made techniques to transfer and manipulate the existing images that could effectively provide innovative visual languages dealing with the new social and cultural issues. Construction and Assemblage had their origin in collage, and many Minimalist artists have produced both abstract and representational works by means of assemblage and construction, frequently employing junk and found objects (The 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Art Book 507).

After examining varies of art practices concerning collage, here I propose that there are two kinds of collage: one is the *3D collage* in which three-dimensional materials are attached. The other *is 2D collage* (*painted collage*) in which different images are "painted out" in the painting to give an impression of a collage. There exists a characteristic difference between the technique of 3D collage and 2D collage. In 2D collage, the visual impression is built up by composition of colour and line, whereas 3D collage is built up by the attached three-dimensional materials. *Collage* can also be an assemblage of the above two types of diverse elements: contrasting 2D visual images and ready-made 3D materials.[21]

## *SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE OF OBJECTS AND BACKGROUND*

One of the most important aspects of this phenomenon of assemblage in modernist art was that artists became increasingly preoccupied with style—how a subject should be painted. Traditional linear perspective realism was no longer regarded as the only approach at this time, but one of many alternative structures and visual languages. Modernist painting had a strong tendency to dispense with the third dimension and to treat a painting as an object with a flat surface. It developed toward flattened perspective, toward arbitrary or multiple perspective systems, and toward

---

[20] See *Abstract Painting and Photorealism Realist Painting* in next section.

[21] My painting, however, is to paint two-dimensional images with three-dimensional impression. This will be argued in *Chapter 3──My Dancing Shadows.*

non-objective representation, in which there was no attempt to reproduce any illusion of an object but rather to create one, the painting itself. They had no desire to look through a window but rather to place an object on its surface, or on their wall. This had been achieved by shifting away from linear perspective to the modernist *objects and background perspective*.

The theoretical analysis of this new structure of modernist painting can be seen in Rosalind Krauss' book The Optical Unconscious. In *chapter 1*, the author claims that the universe of visual perception is generated from a fundamental pair of oppositions: *figure* and *ground*. The vision exists primarily in the detachment of the figure from its ground, "If no figure-detached-from-ground, then no vision":

> Vision occurring precisely in the dimension of difference, of separation, of bounded objects emerging as apart from, in contrast to, the ambiance or ground within which they appear. (13-15).

However, the universe that Krauss is mapping is not just a binary opposition but a fourfold field: figure versus ground, and not figure versus not ground. But also, there are figure versus not figure and ground versus not ground (illus. 4):

Ground                Figure

Not ground         Not figure
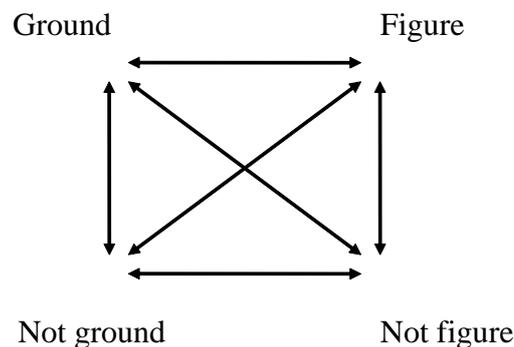
4. A fourfold visual field (Krauss The Optical Unconscious 14).

According to Krauss, many modernist icons of this figure/ground distinction have been generated: the grid, the monochrome, the all-over painting, the colour-field, and the collage. In modernist art, the perspective of vision shifted from the perceptual visual field to the structural visual field. The perceptual field is behind its objects (or a window frame) while the structural visual field "has nothing of this behind, this afterward, this successiveness". The very notion of ground and the figure are being modified. Ground can be captured by vision immediately like figure, thus the status of the ground is as equal as that of the figure (The Optical Unconscious 15).

This is the form of the modernist logic proposed by Krauss which rejected the secondariness of the background to reverse its former status and give it the simultaneity which previously only been seen in figure. This has opened a new field of vision: the background now to become exactly coincident with its foreground as the figure (The Optical Unconscious 16). Vision thus is shifted from *perception* (figure versus ground) to *structural vision* (the not figure versus the not ground).

This modernist notion of figure/ground has seen its further development in postmodernism as one of the important features of contemporary art. For example, in my painting Descendants—Red Environment (illus. 6) there are several elements in it that can be explained by the following illustration:

Red background          Figure-Descendants

Not ground-shadows     Not figure-flowers
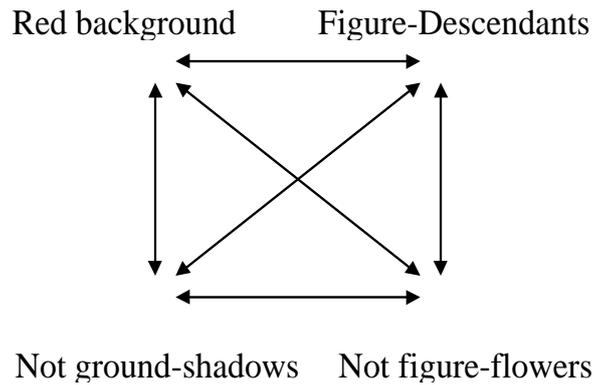
5. A fourfold visual field of my painting Descendants-Red Environment (see below).
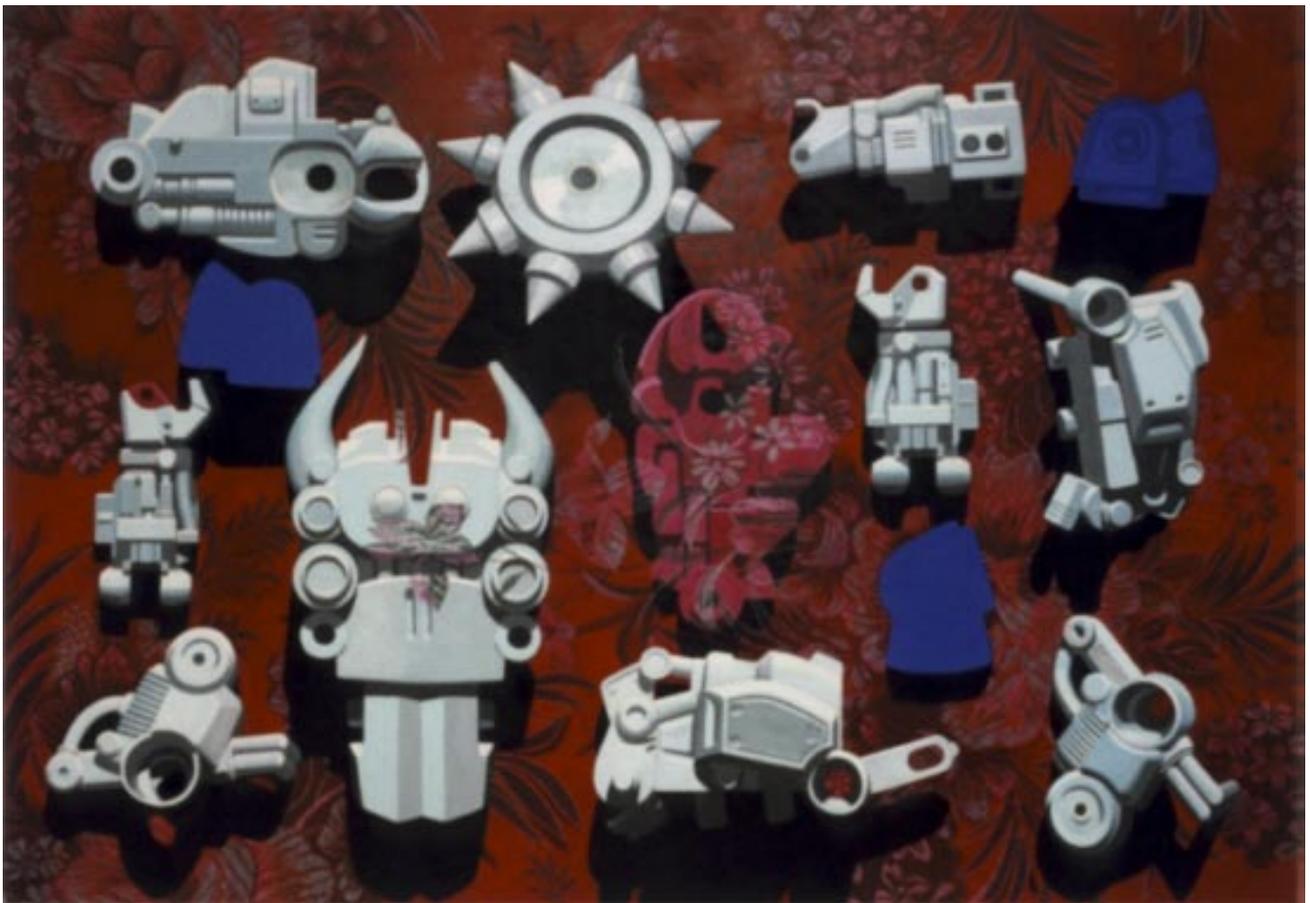


6. Fan Dongwang, Descendants-Red Environment

There are several contrasting aspects to the work, especially in the relationship between the objects and background. When the background patterns—flowers become alive over the top of objects—Descendants, the patterns themselves become objects and the objects underneath them become background. Hence at that moment there is another background created beneath the objects. A more complicated *structural vision* is thus achieved.

## GRID, ABSTRACT PAINTING AND PHOTOREALISM PAINTING

The grid was a device used by Renaissance artists Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Durer to help their pursuit of perspective (Cole 26-27). It was also used by modernist abstract artists to emphasise the shift in their work from a linear perspective of deep space to modernist object/background perspective.

Abstract artists emphasised the expression of pure synthetic forms by narrowing its range of colours, sticking to primaries, using straight lines to create *grids*, and eliminating the illusion of depth by respecting the flat, two-dimensional surface of the canvas. Krauss in "Grids" The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths commented that the role of the grid in this process of switching perspective is substantial (10). The grid helps the artist shift away from traditional perspective to modernist perspective, that is, to focus on the painting's surface. The traditional perspective is a system of transferring the reality of the three-dimensional world onto its representation by a two-dimensional surface. That representation is a form of knowledge about what it signifies, the reality. However, everything about the grid opposes that relationship:

> Unlike perspective, the grid does not map the space of a room or a landscape or a group of figures onto the surface of a painting. Indeed, if it maps anything, it maps the surface of the painting itself. It is a transfer in which nothing changes place. The physical qualities of the surface we could say, are mapped onto the aesthetic dimensions of the same surface. And those two planes—the physical and the aesthetic—are demonstrated to be the same plane: coextensive, and, through the abscissas and ordinates of the grid, co-ordinate (Krauss "Grids" 10).

By mapping both the picture plane (the window) and painting's surface, the grid transfers the space inside (beyond) the frame onto itself.[22] It declares the boundaries of the world into the interior of the work. It is a habit of copying, the content of which is the conventional nature of art itself. The contrast between frame and grid enforces the sense of fragmentation. By concentrating on the surface of the work as something complete and internally organised, the artist makes the canvas itself the object of vision (Krauss "Grids" The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths 19). An abstract painting or a Photorealist painting is such an object.

The Photorealism that developed in 1960-1980s America combined aspects of realistic photography and abstract painting. Although it had a strict linear perspective appearance, its principle concern was the abstract quality of the painting surface. Some of the artists used the grid while others used a slide projector to "copy" or transfer images onto canvas surface. The new realists who received the most attention in the 1970s and 1980s were those who had assimilated some of the aesthetic concerns of abstract art. It was a kind of realist painting that was meticulously rendered with the help of the photograph, grid and projector, resulting in a precisely detailed, impersonal verisimilitude.

---

[22] See *Diagram 11, System of Shifting Perspectives and the Body* in *Conclusion—The Postmodern Shifting Perspectives and the Body*.

The realistic aspect of a Photorealist painting would certainly impress a viewer, but the artist's intention was to paint an "abstract" painting by concentrating on its surface.

The 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Art Book describes a leading Photorealist artist Chuck Close, who has continued to paint colossal portraits. In his more recent work the image is made up of minute multicoloured dots, so that the viewer's attention fluctuates between the surface pattern and the overall picture, which can only be read from a distance. One of Close's large-scale painting John is quite disturbing:

> Though appearing straightforward at first, on closer scrutiny it confuses us with shifts of focus and scale. The blurring around the ears and shoulders makes the face loom towards us. With great technical virtuosity, Close has transcribed and enlarged a photographic print and in the process the defects of the camera's vision are exactly replicated. In turn commonplace and uncanny, the image exists somewhere between *trompe l'oeil*- an illusionistic painting technique in which the subject seems tangible and three-dimensional—and photographic reproduction, which although true to life, is always limited by the depth of the camera lens (94).

With the help of the grid, the Photorealist artists "copied" photos exactly onto the canvases with little regard for the contents. The idea was that a painting was a painting, that is, a flat surface filled with paint. To fill this surface was more important than to "copy" the reality. The perspective was thus shifted way from traditional realism.[23]

Photorealism emerged at the beginning of the postmodern era. Adam Gopnick points out in his review of a Chuck Close show: "Though Photo-Realism never had much of an art-world following—it was too easy to get, and was got too quickly by the wrong people. …[But] it was in fact the first movement in American art that now seems vividly (rather than doggedly) postmodern (76)."[24]

## Changes in the Postmodern Era

The art movement that developed in reaction to modernist practice became known as postmodernism. Postmodernism did not emerge as a cohesive movement relying, like modernism, on narrow theoretical principles and approved style. It called for greater individuality, complexity, and eccentricity in art and design, while also demanding acknowledgement of historical precedent and continuity. Primarily, the postmodern style of assemblage was achieved through the innovative reinterpretation of traditional symbols, styles and patterns.[25]

In this era of change, the concept of shifting perspective is flourishing in postmodern art, and is becoming increasingly fluid and complex. Here I will us the body as the object, and space as its background to examine the complexity of the postmodern shifting perspective.

---

[23] This Photorealist idea inspires me greatly in my painting. See my explanation for *Diagram 9* in *Chapter 3——My Dancing Shadows*.

[24] Also see Linda Chase's article "Photo-Realism: Post Modernist Illusionism."

[25] "Modern Art and Architecture," Microsoft Encarta. Microsoft Corporation. 1994.

## THE CHANGING BODILY PERSPECTIVE

Postmodernism assumes that the space is perceived and organised by our bodily perspective, and our bodies are not only passively occupying space but also actively constructing the space around us.

French existentialist philosopher Merleau-Ponty in his phenomenological account of the body and space observed that it is only through certain relations we have to our body that we comprehend the notion of the outside space (The Primacy of Perception 5). From the perspective of the body, we do not encounter the space as a series of relations between various objectively located and equally valued points. We see space as a relation between these points and our bodily perspective. "These relations are different ways for external stimuli to test, to solicit, and to vary our grasp on the world" (Merleau-Ponty The Primacy of Perception 5). In other words, space is organised by our perspective. Space exists in the way in which our body perceives it. Insofar as bodily perspective decides the relations between spatial points, the body and its movement are the condition of our access to and conception of space.

This could be best illustrated by an Australian painter William Robinson's landscape Creation series: Man and the Spheres (illus. 7). This work identifies his bodily relationship to the landscape by abandoning the traditional linear perspective and embodying his extraordinary multiple viewpoints to reach the sweeping organic forms of the mountainous rainforest. His landscapes are the expansive constructions of a world floating in space rather than being only ground planes and horizon. The experience conveyed in his painting is of a boundless, energetic, spiral flying movements of the body and its shifting perspectives to embrace all the universal truths*: darkness and light, water and fire, maintain and river, tree and sky, sun and moon, the different seasonal phenomena, the human inner world and the overwhelming galaxy* (Considine-Cummings 121).



7. William Robinson. Creation Series: Man and the Spheres. 1991. Oil on canvas, 182.5 x 730.5 cm.

8. Details of William Robinson Creation Series: Man and the Spheres.

Thus by considering the body in movement, we can see how it inhabits space (and possibly time). Because movement is not limited to submitting passively to space and time, it actively assumes them (Merleau-Ponty The Phenomenology of Perception 102). For example, my painting Descendant Bodies #1 (Blue) (illus. 9) can be used as an illustration of this postmodern relationship between the body and space. The structure of this painting creates a new opportunity for the body to perceive, to shift, and to travel from context to context and space to space. This ability is uncontainable, and the relationship of the body to other bodies is uncontrollable.

To determine space through bodily activities (perspective movements), the body often uses tools like computer to extend its ability to perceive objects (Grosz 91). The instruments used are then absorbed by the body (become body parts) to locate space. This is the spatially extended body image, the plasticity of body image (Grosz 91). One cannot take up a perspective on one's own body; one has to see oneself through the mirror. Likewise, one can use things like computers to overcome the distance, boundary, and time limit to see others in the world. The computer screen is not only a mirror to reflect one's own body, but also a window, a vehicle for the body to explore a new cybernetic world.[26] As an instrument of our body, the computer keys are invisible sticks used for scratching out to distant space. The tool is absorbed into the subject's perceptual faculties or body parts (Grosz 91). The body is thus able to jump, to shift among different spaces to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of a postmodern world.

---

[26] Computer screen will be explained further in *Double Screen* in *Chapter 2—The Chinese Dispersing Panorama.*

9. Fan Dongwang, <u>Descendant Bodies #1 (Blue)</u>

This is the intent of the computer screens portrayed in my large painting <u>Shifting Perspectives and the Body</u> (illus. 10). There are double screens in this work, one is the traditional Chinese screen, and in front of it stands a computer screen. These two screens have their differences and similarities.[27] Both are devices to display images imported from another space, but the computer screen also produces an additional bodily freedom in the space. As Judy Annear claims, the computer screens become the mechanism for bodies to perceive and construct the environment around them:

> Here, the possibility of changing the racial, sexual and physical boundaries of the body, and definitions of what constitutes the individual [in the West] through the computer screen, is causing what may be one of the most radical shifts in human existence (8). [28]



10. Fan Dongwang, <u>Shifting Perspectives and the Body.</u> (subtitles of each panel from left to right: 1, Double Screens; 2, Bardi Madonna; 3, March; 4, Performance; 5, Discourse).

---

[27] For detailed analysis of the screen, see *Double Screen* in *Chapter 2——The Chinese Dispersing Panorama.*

[28] For further explain, see page 86.

## THE SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE AND EXTENDED BODY

The body is considered by postmodernism as an object with flexible boundaries which can only be adequately viewed by shifting perspectives. By contemplating Schilder's neurophysiological body image, Grosz envisages that the body is a most "peculiar thing"(Grosz xi): an *object* containing a *subject*, an exclusive object that is not reducible to other objects. Thus "it is both a thing and nothing"(Grosz xi) which has the ability to always outstretch the infrastructure that endeavours to enclose it. It has permeability and uncontainability within any specific territory, and refuses to accept the boundaries between individual and social, inside and outside (Grosz xi). We "do not have the body in the same way that we have other objects." "Being a body is something that we must come to accommodate psychically, something that we must live" (Grosz xiii).

Schilder (in Grosz's term) shows that the body image cannot be unquestionably signified with the sensations delivered by a purely anatomical body (Grosz 79). The formation of the body image is not only anatomical but also psychological and social-historical. The body image cannot be limited by nature or confined to the skin—the anatomical "container". The body image is exceedingly fluid and dynamic, powerfully and ceaselessly embracing and interchanging all the objects existing inside and outside the body (Grosz 79). Body image is capable of accommodating and incorporating an extremely wide range of objects that come into contact with the body surface, whether clothing, jewellery, computer or car (Grosz 80). In this way, the "body image can shrink or expand; it can give parts to the outside world and can take other parts into itself" (Schilder 202). External objects, implements and instruments all become parts of body image. Even detachable objects (body wastes, blood, skin, hair, voice, odour, etc.) are parts of body image. Because they are objects that were once connected with the body, and always retain something of the quality of the body image in them (Grosz 213). They are libidinously distinguished parts of body image; objects of disgust, loathing, repulsion, envy and desire (Grosz 81).

What constructs the body is no longer a fixed one point view but invariably shifted perspectives. In my work Descendant Bodies #1 (illus. 7), all the objects which come into contact with the body are part of its image. The boundaries that once separated physical and psychical, organic and mechanical, public and private are ultimately transgressed by the artist's imagination.

## THE SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE AND ASSEMBLED BODY

The postmodern shifting perspective of the body as an assemblage rejects the hierarchy of the traditional object and subject relationship. The body, in Grosz's phrase, is not a definable organic totality that contains the subject's emotions, attitudes, beliefs or experiences. But "is itself an assemblage of organs, processes, pleasures, passions, activities, behaviours linked by fine lines and unpredictable networks to other elements, segments, and assemblages" (120).

Grosz further utilises Deleuze and Guattari's work to demonstrate the philosophical perceptions of the multiplicity of the body image. We no longer regard subject and object in binary terms, and no longer see rigid boundaries between material and psychical things, nor, do we see them as genetically unified or solitary. We see that the subject and object

"are series of flows, energies, movements, strata, segments, organs, intensities—fragments capable of being linked or severed in potentially infinite ways other than those which congeal them into identities" (167-168). The body is hence an assemblage, a collection of bodily fragments and other objects:

> An assemblage has neither base nor superstructure, neither deep structure nor superficial structure. It flattens all of its dimensions onto a single place of consistency upon which reciprocal presuppositions and mutual insertions play themselves out (Deleuze and Guattari 90).

Colin Gordon explains that Deleuze and Guattari's notion of multiplicity relates closely to the concept of assemblage and machine. The assemblage embodies a "flatness" that is "a situation where condition and conditioned inhabit the same space, with no extra dimension for an overview in depth" (35-36). This allows our perspectives to be shifted without limitation.

For example, the images in my work Descendant Bodies #1-2 (illus. 9, 11) are assemblages, as described by Grosz, that have provisional linkages of elements, fragments, flows, disparate status and substance (167). Spaces, things—human, animate, and inanimate—all have the same ontological status. There is no hierarchy of being, no predetermined order to the collection and conjunction of these various fragments, no central organisation or plan to which they must conform. Their "law" is rather that of endless experimentation, transformation, or arrangement and rearrangement. These assemblages are composed of lines, shadows, colours, movements and intensities rather than of things and their hierarchical orders (Grosz 167). This postmodern worldview is thus inherently shifting and fragmented.



11. Fan Dongwang, Descendant Bodies #2 (Green)

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Annear, Judy. "Partial Cultures." Exhibition Catalogue Essay of Australian Perspecta 1995.

Chase, Linda. "Photo-Realism: Post Modernist Illusionism." Art International vol. XX, no. 3-4 (Mar.-Apr. 1976), p 14-27.

Cole, Alison. Perspective: A Visual Guide to the Theory and Techniques – from the Renaissance to Pop Art. Auckland: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993.

Collins, Judith. Techniques of Modern Art. Sydney: Golden P, 1983.

Considine-Cummings, Fran. "William Robinson." Identities: Art from Australia. Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1994.

Damisch, Hubert. The Origin of Perspective. Trans. John Goodman. London: The MIT P, 1994.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Trans. Brian Masssumi. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1987.

Elkins, James. The Poetics of Perspective. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1994.

---. "Renaissance Perspectives." Journal of the History of Ideas. 53.2 (1992) 209-230.

Fernie, Eric. Art History and Its Methods—A critical Anthology. London: Phaidon, 1995.

Forman, Werner and Bedrich Forman. Egyptian Art. Trans. Till Gottheiner. London: Peter Nevill, 1962.

Gombrich, E. H. Art and Illusion. London: Phaidon, 1972.

---. Shadows: The Depiction of Cast Shadows in Western Art. London: National Gallery Publications, 1995.

---. The Image and the Eye—Further Studies in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation. Oxford: Phaidon, 1982.

Gopnick, Adam. "Close-Up". The New Yorker 24 Feb. 1992.

Grosz, Elizabeth. Volatile Bodies. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994.

Kemp, Martin. The Science of Art—Optical Themes in Western Art From Brunelleschi to Seurat. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1990.

Krauss, Rosalind. The Optical Unconscious. London: The MIT P, 1994.

Krauss, Rosalind. The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths. Cambridge: The MIT P, 1986.

Li Bai "Drinking Alone Under Moonlight." Trans. Tsang Bing Ching. Ed. Robert Payne. The White Pony—An Anthology of Chinese Poetry From the Earliest Times to the Present Day. New York: The New America Library, 1960.

Meisel, Louis K, Photorealism Since 1980. Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1993.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. <u>The Phenomenology of Perception</u> Trans. Colin Smith. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.

---. <u>The Primacy of Perception</u>. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1963.

"Modern Art and Architecture." CD-ROM. <u>Microsoft Encarta</u>. Microsoft Corporation, 1994.

Panofsky, Erwin. <u>Perspective as Symbolic Form</u>. New York: Zone Books, 1991.

Santi, Bruno. <u>Botticelli</u>. Florence: Scala/Riverside, 1991.

Schilder, Paul. <u>The Image and Appearance of the Human Body: Studies in the Constructive Energies of the Psyche</u>. New York: International Universities P, 1978.

Stalnaker, Nan. "Another Look at the 'Multiple Viewpoint' theory: A Reply to Richardson." <u>The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</u>. 54 (1996): 287-93.

The 20th-Century Art Book. London: Phaidon, 1996.

Books, 1991.

## LISTS OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. <u>Stele of Amenemint</u>. Nineteenth Dynasty (?) Egyptian limestone carving. <u>Egyptian Art</u>. By Werner and Bedrich Forman. Translated by Till Gottheiner. London: Peter Nevill, 1962. 109.

2. Fan Dongwang. Illustration of one vanishing point perspective.

3. Botticelli. <u>Pallas and the Centaur</u>. Tempera on canvas, 205 x 148 cm. Florence, Uffizi. <u>Botticelli</u>. By Bruno Santi. Florence: Scala/Riverside, 1991. 49.

4. Illustration of a fourfold visual field. <u>The Optical Unconscious</u>. By Rosalind Krauss. London: The MIT P, 1994. 14.

5. Fan Dongwang. Illustration of a fourfold visual field of painting <u>Descendants-Red Environment</u>.

6. Fan Dongwang. <u>Descendants #1—Red Environment</u>. 1995. Acrylic on canvas, 118 x 173 cm.

7. William Robinson. <u>Creation Series: Man and the Spheres</u>. (details). 1991. Oil on canvas, 182.5 x 730.5 cm. Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney. "William Robinson." By Fran Considine-Cummings. <u>Identities: Art from Australia</u>. Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1994. 122-123.

8. Details of William Robinson Creation Series: Man and the Spheres.

9. Fan Dongwang. <u>Descendant Bodies #1 (Blue)</u> 1996. Acrylic on canvas, 178 x 254 cm.

10. Fan Dongwang. <u>Shifting Perspectives and the Body</u>. 1997-99. Acrylic on canvas, 244 x 900 cm, (subtitles of each panel from left to right: 1, Double Screens; 2, Bardi Madonna; 3, March; 4, Performance; 5, Discourse).

11. Fan Dongwang. <u>Descendant Bodies #2 (Green)</u>. 1996. Acrylic on canvas, 170 x 280 cm.