

LET'S KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE

A photo is **always** a flat two dimensional image. By exploiting its perspective we can produce an illusion of depth and width.

Perspective sounds like a dry boring topic, but it is a very useful tool to **serious** photographers. To give our projected and printed images a three dimensional effect and to get rid of the flat appearance we need to employ a trick or two. Perspective is one important tool we can use.

Four linear perspective effects.

1. **Convergence.**

This is best illustrated by **parallel lines** disappearing into the distance, such as railway lines which appear to meet at what is called "THE VANISHING POINT" We know that they do **not** meet, but just give the illusion of doing so. This gives depth to what is in reality a flat image.

2. **Foreshortening.**

Very similar to convergence, this appears as **compression** of objects as they appear in the distance, [or disappear into the distance,] such as an avenue of trees. The far trees appear to be packed closer together and appear smaller. Foreshortening also makes rounded objects and faces in the distance appear flatter and lacking depth.

3. **Diminishing Size**

Objects and people, as they **recede** into the distance, give an image depth.

4. **Texture Gradient**

Textures and **regular** patterns can give the illusion of great depth particularly if the pattern slopes sharply away from the camera, eg cobblestones, ripples in the sand or a textured brick wall.

We can use all of these with great effect to improve our images.

A **change of viewpoint** is a way to change linear perspective. While we can change to a wide angle or a long telephoto lens, we usually need to step closer to, or farther away from, our subject in order to change the final image. Lying on the ground **lower** than our subject or getting ourselves **high above** the subject can give an interesting perspective to our images.

Tall buildings with a convergence of lines at the top make great images. If however, we want the buildings "straight up" we need to move well back prior to taking the shot. The alternative is to buy a Perspective Control lens.

Shadows in our images also create an illusion of depth. A photo backlit by low light can have long shadows which establish perspective. Frontal lighting gives receding shadows.

Sharp Focus in an image has less apparent depth than one with blurred areas, as occurs with a shallow Depth of Field. Differential focus can create an illusion of depth, or otherwise, in our images. So why not try changing your viewpoint and look for converging lines. You might be surprised how good your image appears.

Fran



