

# Artist Activities

## Perspective Drawing with Jess Johnson

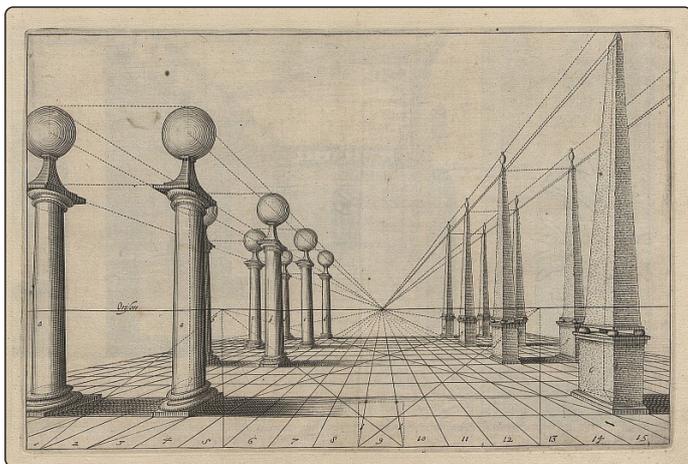


Jess Johnson is an artist whose drawings stem from her interests in science fiction, vintage video games, comics, architecture, and many other things. In her drawings she creates a fictional world set in a futuristic alien realm. She works with video artist Simon Ward to turn her drawings into animated video and Virtual Reality.

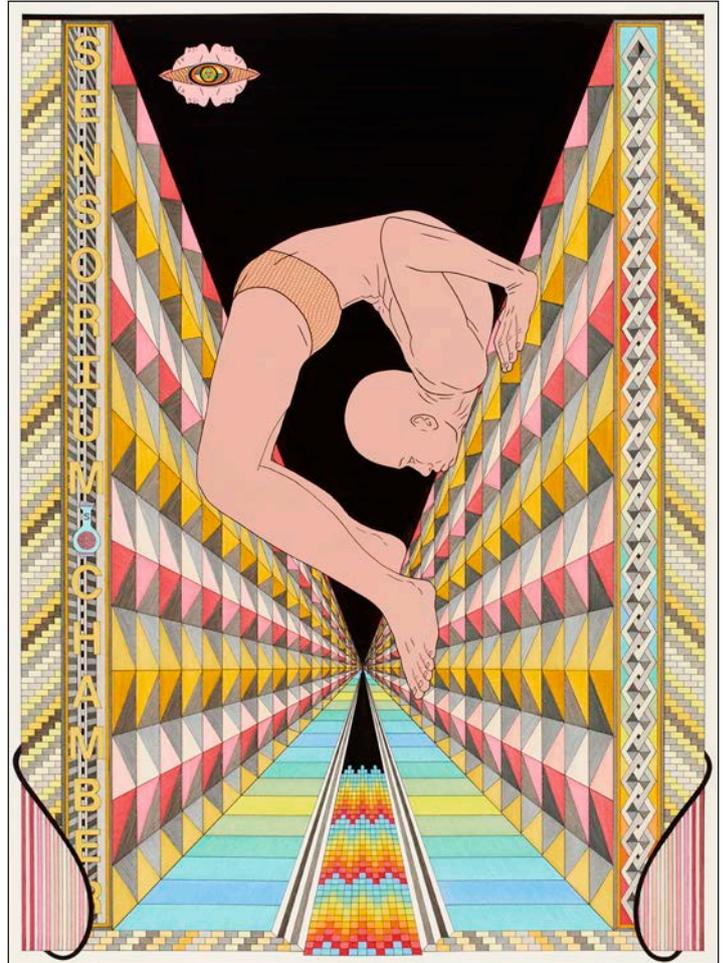
### How I Use Perspective

When I started drawing my own world, my early drawings were flat and two-dimensional. As my drawing evolved, I wanted the world I was drawing to look more lifelike and 3D. That is when I started learning about perspective tricks that could create the illusion of depth. Even the simplest use of perspective, one point perspective that we will be using here, is very effective.

Many of my drawings begin with creating a stage-like setting. Using one point perspective, I first sketch out an environment of floors, buildings, stairs, or other structures. I then populate that setting with humans, creatures, and strange objects. The use of perspective means the world looks like an actual place you could visit, even though it is much more fantastical than the world we know.



Hans Vredeman de Vries, *Pillars and pyramid pillars in a central perspective*, 1605, Image: Deutsche Fotothek/Wikicommons



Jess Johnson, *Sensorium Chamber*, 2015 (top) and *Virtual World Kiss*, 2018 (below), Images courtesy of the artist; Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney; Ivan Anthony Gallery, Auckland and Jack Hanley Gallery, New York





## Materials



- Paper
- Ruler
- Lead and coloured pencils or markers
- Shape template or objects to trace around

## Practice!

Use the above diagram to practice making a vanishing grid like the sample drawing.

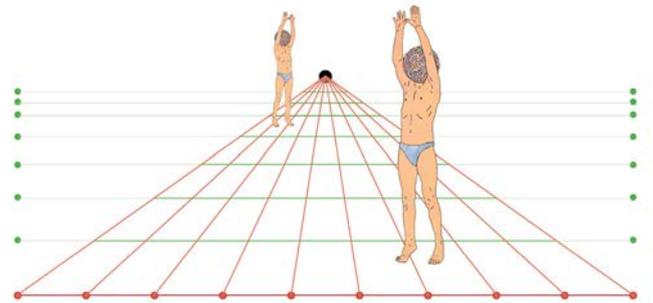
First, use a ruler and a pencil to connect all of the red dots at the bottom to the vanishing point, the black dot in the centre.

Next, connect the green dots on the left to the corresponding green dot on the right. Make these pencil marks light so that you can erase parts of them later.

Finally, use a heavier pencil line or pen to retrace only the angled and horizontal lines that make up the floor grid. Erase any pencil marks that fall outside the grid or floor space.

## Make Your Own Vanishing Grid

**Step 1** – About a third of the way down from the top of your paper, use a ruler to draw a horizontal line. This will be your Horizon Line, where the ground meets the sky. In the centre



of the Horizon Line, make a dot. This will be your Vanishing Point.

**Step 2** – Draw the rest of your horizontal lines at gradually increasing intervals using a ruler. Make the first line about 2mm below the Horizon Line, the next line 4mm below that one, the next 8mm, and so on until you are nearing the bottom of the page.

**Step 3** – Draw or collage objects, people or creatures onto your vanishing grid. Place bigger things at the front near the Foreground Line and smaller things towards the back of the grid. Colour your grid to create a pattern and complete the rest of the artwork.

**What next?** Experiment with different measurements or vanishing point positions. Once you learn the trick of one point perspective you can use it in many ways.