LINEAR PERSPECTIVE

Development. As these other cultures developed, Europe experienced its Renaissance, a period of great educational and social development which began in Italy (1400–1550s). During this period, artists began to become interested in the “Science” of art, a desire to learn how things worked and how people perceived them.

Renaissance artist Giotto came very close to our modern understanding of perspective. By then, artists understood that lines seemed to go into the distance at an angle, which is clear if you study buildings or pictures of them. Look at the photographs below. Visually, the sides of buildings are not straight, but seem to slant downward.

The same idea is shown in the diagram below. The box on the left appears flat, but what about the box on the right?

The difference is the diagonal edges on the right box. The mind perceives diagonals as disappearing into the distance. Giotto used this observation in his work, The Meeting of Anna and Joachim. The edges of his building travel off at angles rather than being horizontal. You will also notice that two sides of the building are shown, going off into two different directions, adding to the illusion that it takes up space.