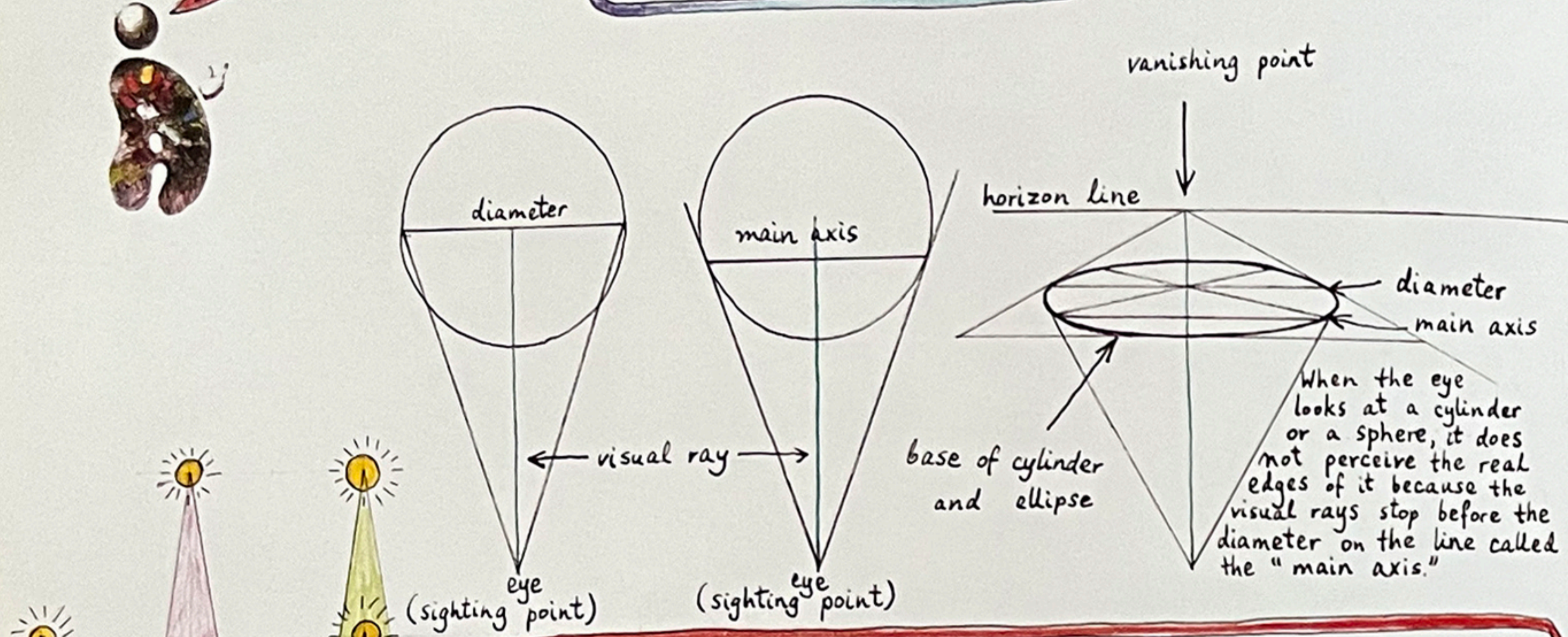


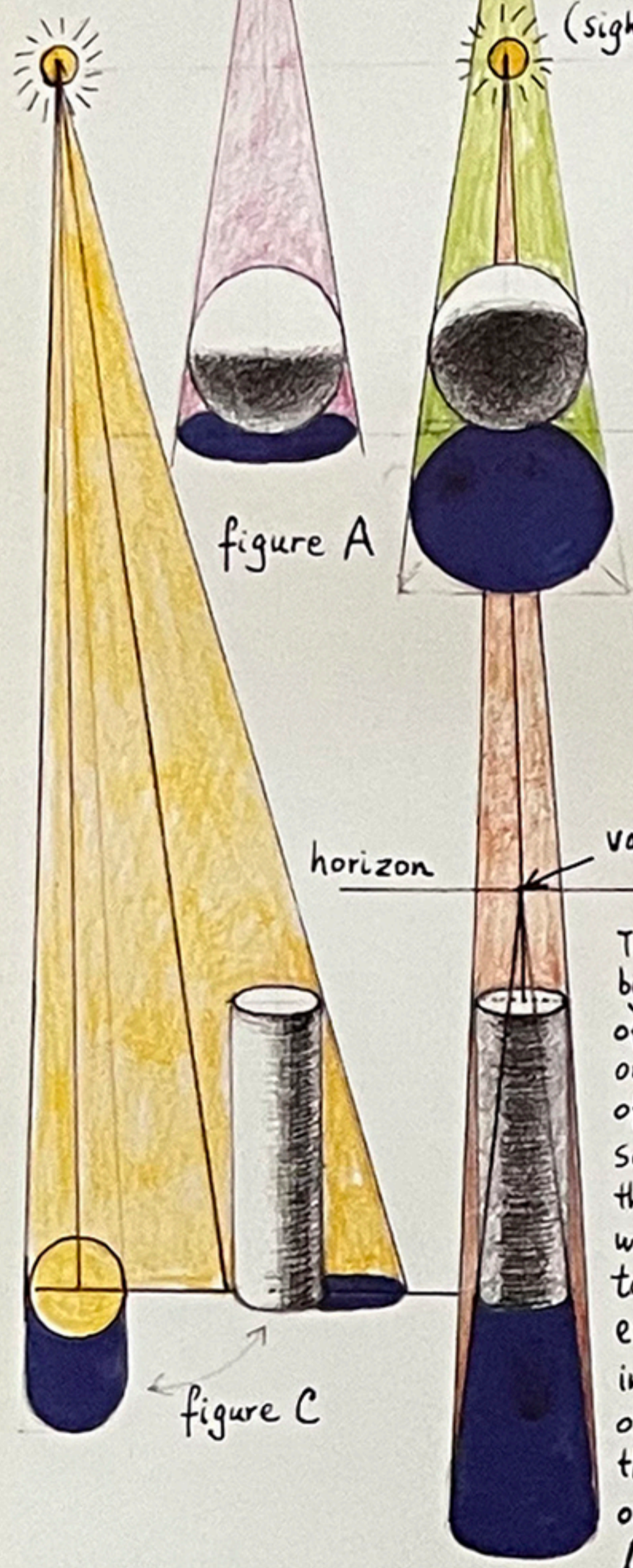
You're making my head spin

"To draw a circle before beginning to paint is to be present at the very founding of the universe, at the instant before original chaos when the tempest was at its height." -Ding Gao

If the head is associated with the shape of a sphere, the body is more akin to a cluster of cylinders, truncated cones, and other tubular forms, which lend themselves very well to vanishing perspectives (we have not yet reached the level of an anatomy lesson, but we're getting close.) Foreshortenings are based on changes in the proportions of the parts of the body, which vary according to the location of the onlooker.



In this drawing we have identified the foot as the element closest to the draftsman's eye. The leg leads to the pelvis, which in turn leads to the torso. The head is partly obscured by the shoulder and shoulder blades. The other leg slants in the direction of the head, pivoting the foot inward, revealing the sole. In this way Adam, just created by the God of Michelangelo, races away from the Creator at top speed toward the horizon, bequeathing to each one of us, his descendants, his fascination for the infinite.

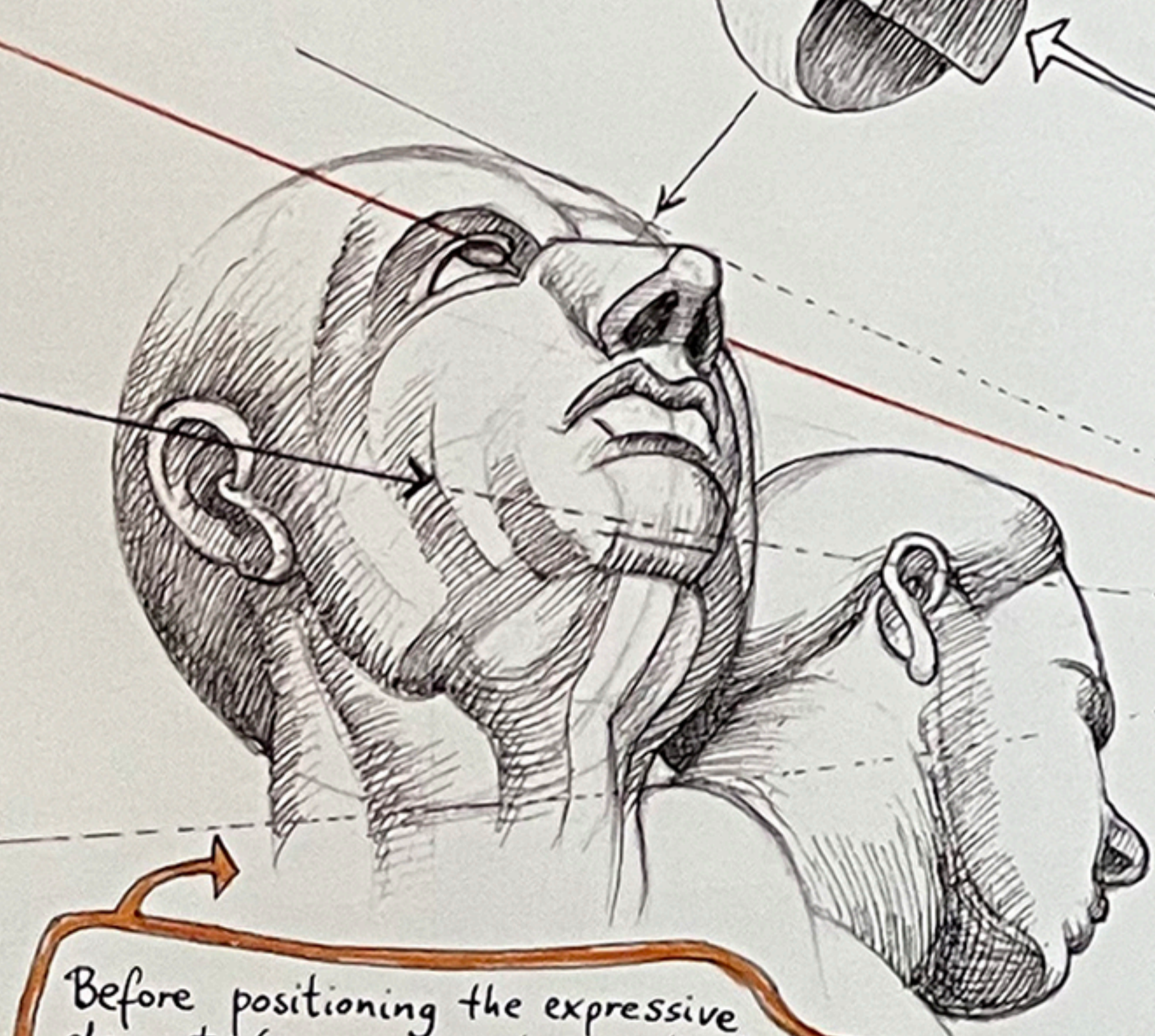


The circle is related to the sphere; a section of the sphere is a circle, and, with the effect of perspective, a circle can become an ellipse. The sphere, in contrast to the circle, undergoes no distortion from perspective. If we attach to its surface some other shape, the problems of perspective will re-emerge, notably that of foreshortening. If we view the human head as a truncated sphere (a skull), to which is attached a half cylinder (a jaw), we can couple the two in such a way that the effects of perspective on the elements of the figure become more understandable. By representing the nose as a box of matches cut in half diagonally, we add the notion of a "front" to this construction. With a little soft clay we can physically create this ensemble and swivel it about as we like, adding the illusion of three dimensions.

"The primary tool of painters is found not in our hands but in our brains, and even - if it is mastered to perfection - in our souls. That tool is our conception of objects in space, our knowledge of volumes and how to represent them on a flat surface. In a word, it is perspective." Giorgio di Chirico

Here the element that is closest to the eye is the bulge of the chin. From this zone, the facial muscles rise toward the projecting cheekbone, where the eye socket is deepened to the protrusion of the nose. The nose itself overshadows the rest of the face, while hollows and swellings roll upward from the eyebrows to the hairline like a landscape of hills and valleys. By contrast, in the woman's face the distance between the subject and the onlooker's eye presents its contours at a more habitual angle. The various reliefs are attenuated by distance, and the drama of distortion in the perspective of the expression is a bit more conventional.

from the base of the figure toward the vanishing point (figures A and C).



Before positioning the expressive elements (eyes, nose, brows, lips) we must build up the basic structures beneath them.

