

## ***How to Draw a Room***

It has been a little over an hour shivering, shoes off, in the exam room, when I realize I've forgotten a pen. I will have to borrow one so I don't forget the doctor's answers, though I wish I had one now just to pass the time

sketching, trying to recall the rules of perspective. Something about convergent parallels, a singular vanishing point, the way the coin vaults stack along a diagonal in Fra Angelico's *Annunciation* above Mary, whom the painter un-throned, placed

on a milking stool. Tricky to sketch the room I am in. It's shallow and acutely angled. Fra Angelico knew the anterior plane of the back leg of Mary's stool should be shaded, this simple discovery a leap forward for western aesthetics. It had to be drawn,

I realize, the scene I watched last night on my laptop while chopping vegetables: Leather-clad bikers smash into a warehouse where naked women slump against the bars of their cages as a man rapes another woman, cutting her with a razor.

The bikers shoot the man so he crushes her, driving the knife into her neck. They pry the cages open and the women run off screen. But first the scene had to be imagined, drawn—not into wet plaster, but into CAD by a drafter or some lucky kid with an internship.

The computer rendered the cages and the mattress in 3D to be emailed to a fabricator or prop master and whoever figured out lighting, casting, whatever else went into this scene reminding us the bikers are heroes, despite what they did

in the previous season. CAD realizing that vision using what Angelico discovered kneeling to mark the grid of tile under where Mary sits. The key to understanding the genius of Angelico's fresco is knowing it is at the top of a flight of stairs,

first encountered from below. When viewed head on the proportions are off: Mary can't stand up without banging her halo on the ceiling, the angel scrunches into the portico. There was always something about the annunciation that didn't

feel like a choice to me, though Angelico bathes the scene in a soft gold light, paints Mary's face sweetly impassive, and gives the angel comically colorful wings. The curtain drew back

just long enough for the trucker to spot a gaunt face. Discomforted, he called the police. The article describes his shock when the trailer opened. How to draw the interior where they kept her, travel funded by her body. The darkness

would skew the perspective, make the corners disappear. Angelico's painting was viewed in low-light, a high window making flecks of mica sparkle in the angel's wings, the only flourish in the painting otherwise clear of symbolic clutter, the miracle

brought home with a row of Tuscan cypresses. The angel could be next door, the trailer any trailer. The magazine story calls it *miraculous* but what to call the men who entered the trailer, bowing their heads to accommodate the low ceiling. I am in this exam room

because I have a condition caused by injury, pain triggered fight or flight and I was unable to do either. Now my nerves

endlessly loop those messages. I can't follow the story  
of the bikers, the tale of the trucker and think only of pain  
lingering in women's bodies, wonder if it could be like mine,

which arises with no apparent cause, my inconsolable body  
wailing *warning* in the absence of danger. Angelico references  
a Giotto, but if you trace Giotto's lines they look  
like spilled pick-up sticks. You can't find the vanishing point  
in Angelico's painting either—he knew that—the space

too shallow for convergence. I count paces from one wall  
to the other. The medical student described my pain as  
*a ghost who doesn't know it's a ghost*. If I were to draw this room  
there would be no woman in it. Though I'm not sure there are women  
in any of these rooms, however ingenious they are in their design.

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