

# The Case of Distortion

Painting originated in primitive times, according to Pliny, when someone began to trace his shadow cast on a wall.





The use of **unnatural proportions** in art can also be related to theoretical requirements, such as those derived from principles of rhetoric, where the artist's willfulness is a result of his striving for **variety** (*varietas*), and of the free play of his imagination, that is, of his working from memory and *di fantasia*.

El Greco, *The Nobleman with His Hand on his Chest*, 1583



El Greco, *Christ Blessing (The Savior of the World)*, 1600



Parmigianino: Madonna with the Long Neck



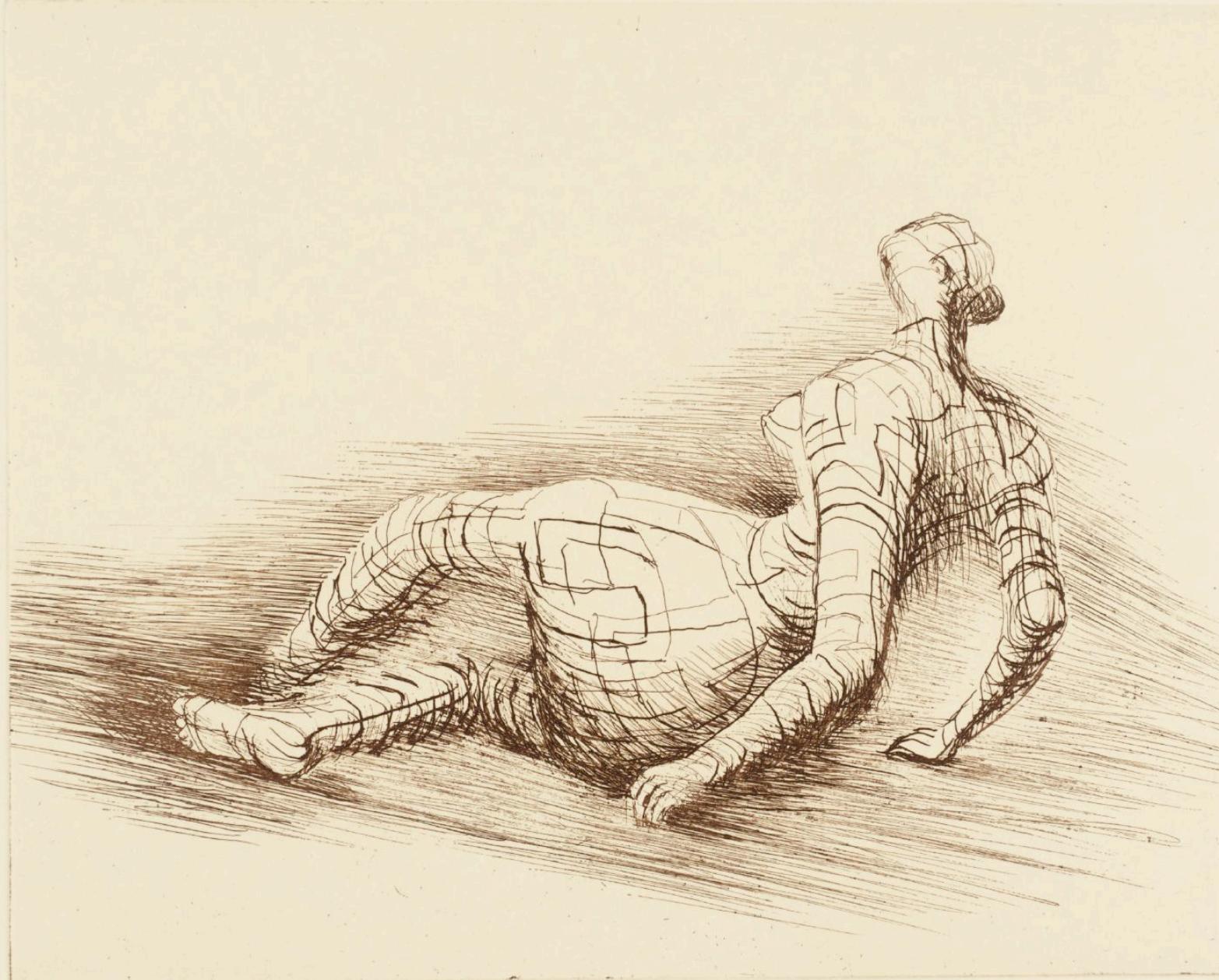
Michelangelo, *Our Lady of Pity* (1400)

Figure distortion does not generally appear in Roman relief carvings, but it can be associated with another workshop convention, namely, the studio practice of **copying** free standing figures in artificial light. The study of clay or wax models in controlled light trained the aspiring painter in interior modelling and the articulation of musculature.









For/The Tate Gallery

Moore

How does distortion suit the artist's purpose?



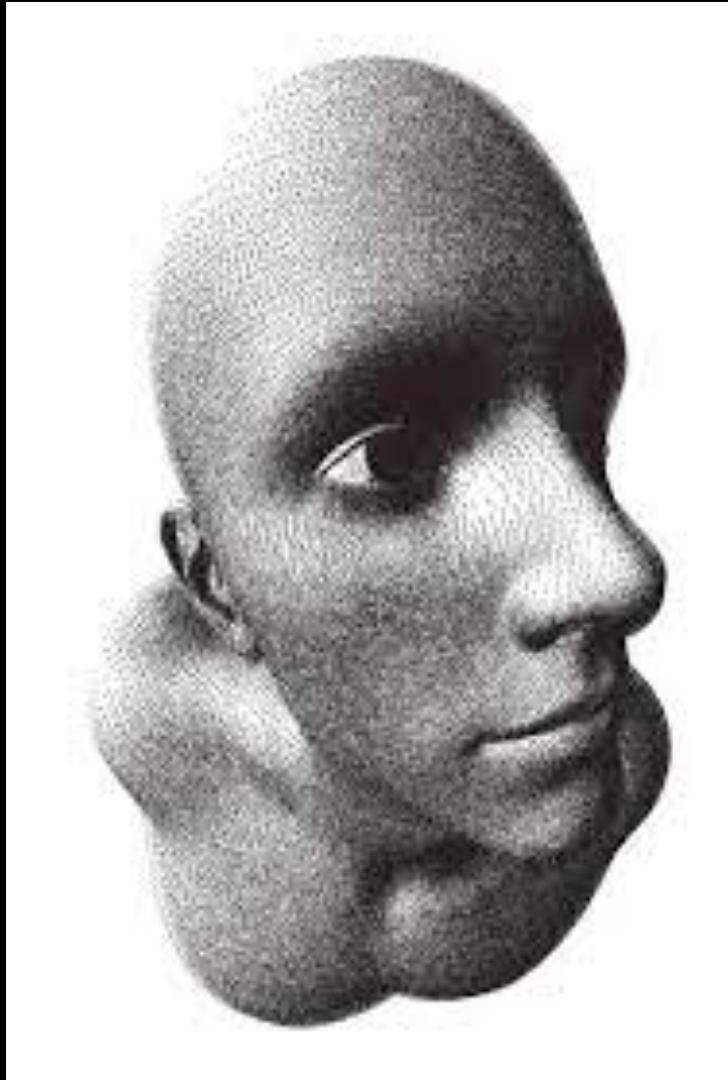
Alfred Munnings, *Portrait of Mahmoud*

Brett Whiteley,  
*Washing the Salt Off*



There are many ways the human figure can  
be purposely distorted.

Wide-angle



# Foreshortening

Andrea Mantegna, *The Mourning over the Dead Christ*



Enlargement

Travis Collinson, *untitled*



# Narrowing

Alberto Giacometti, *Man Pointing*

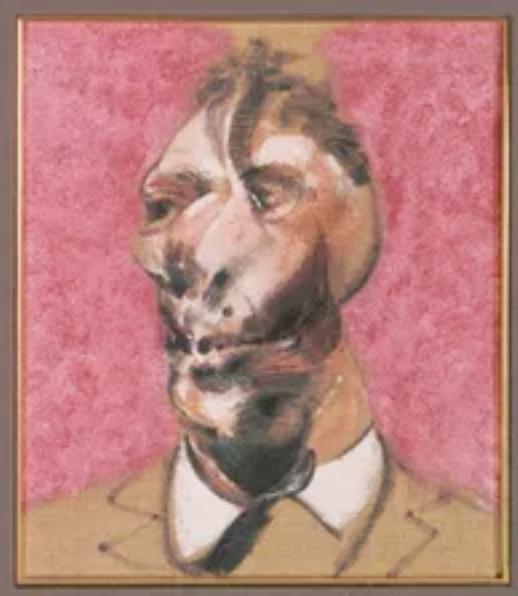
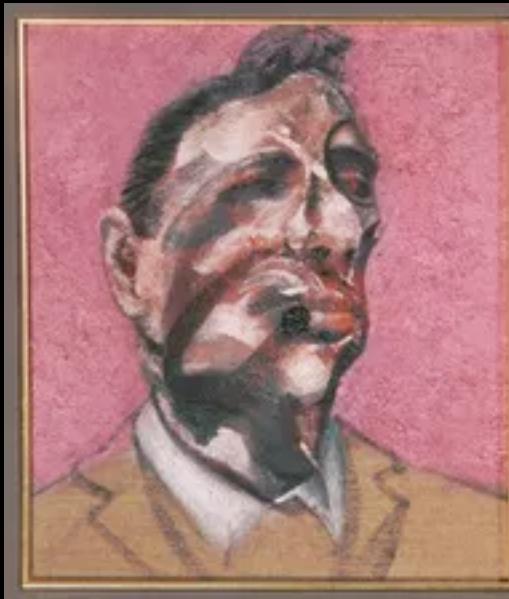


# Abstraction



Alberto Giacometti, *Man  
Pointing*

# Dysmorphia (flawed appearance)



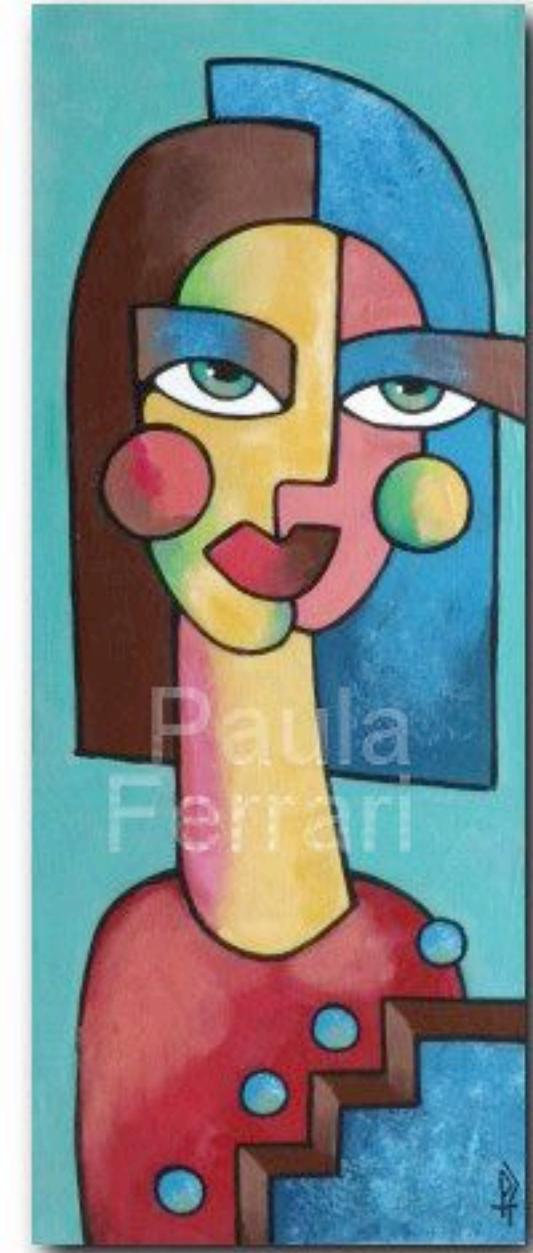
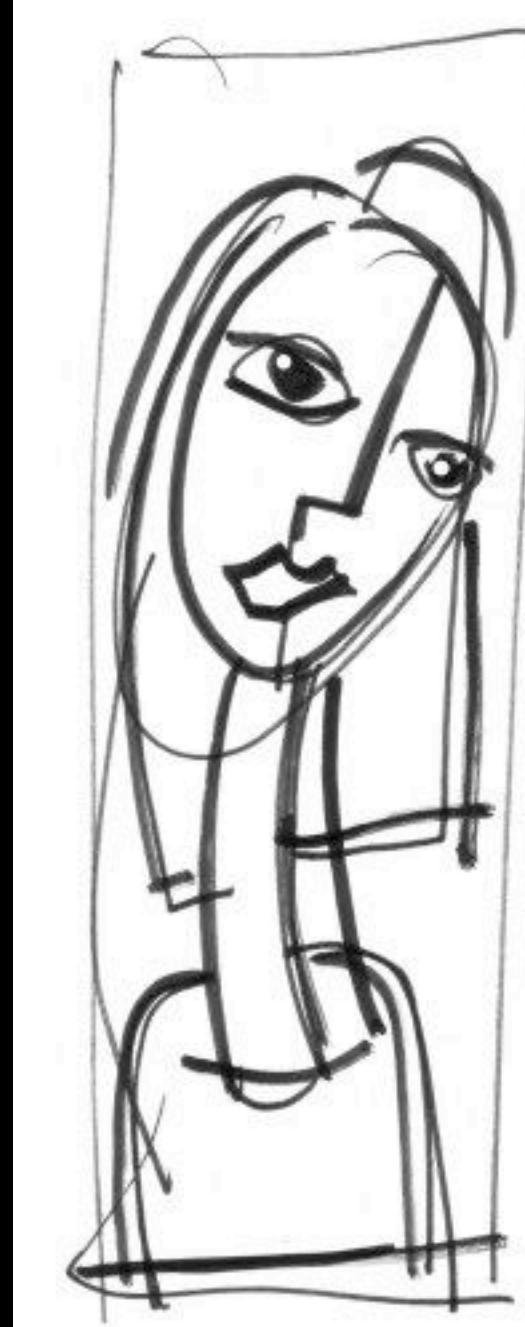
## Dysmorphia (flawed appearance)

“ Deconstructing the Velázquez painting and  
reappropriating it for his own ends.” – Rina  
Arya

Francis Bacon, *Study after Velázquez's  
Portrait of Pope Innocent X*



# Hyper- geometry



# Activity

Create a cubist face. You can modify the shape of the face in the way you like, as long as there are two perspectives – the front and the side of the face. Apply colors using your preferred medium (crayons, watercolor, acrylic, ink, etc).

