

Form and relating in painting

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The origin

40 years of looking at and making paintings

25 years of child psychiatry

*Experiencing other minds and experiencing
paintings have similarities*

The embryology of behaviour and the
formation of form

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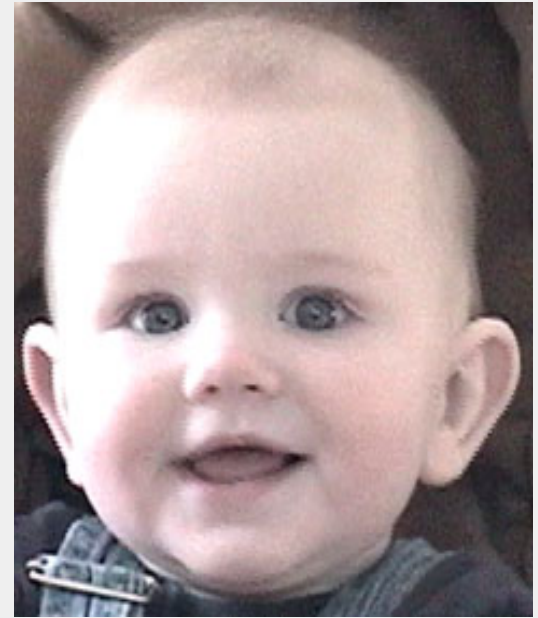
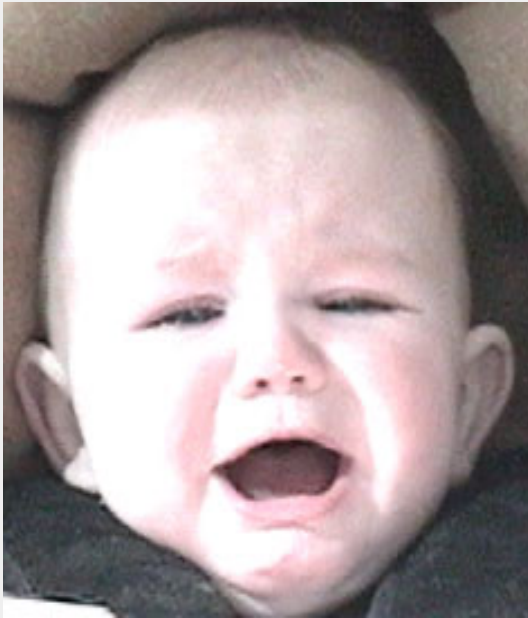
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The embryology of behaviour and the
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Empathy and mind-reading

Initial origins of empathy – emotional resonance

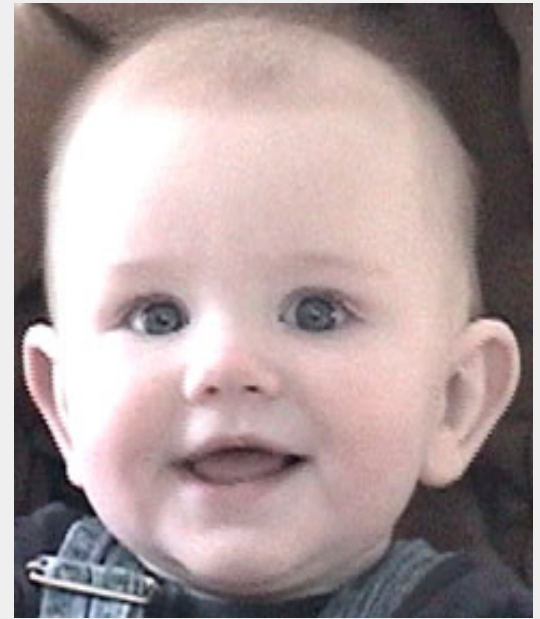
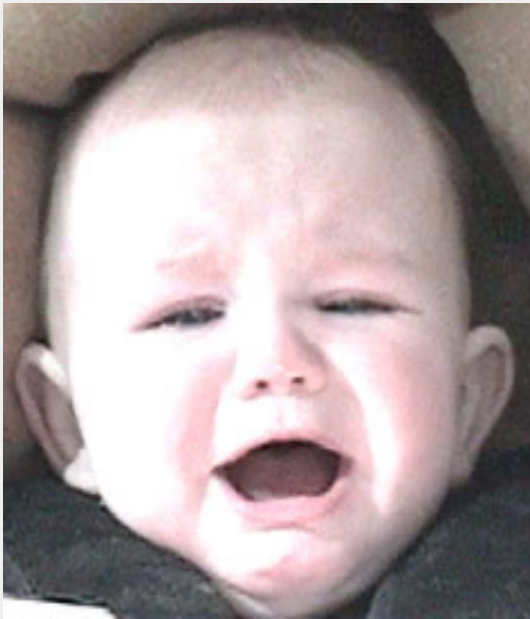


Feeling and relating

Imitation and mimicry

‘Shared representation’ of perception and felt action –
psychology, cognitive neuroscience and neurophysiology

Initial origins of empathy – emotional resonance

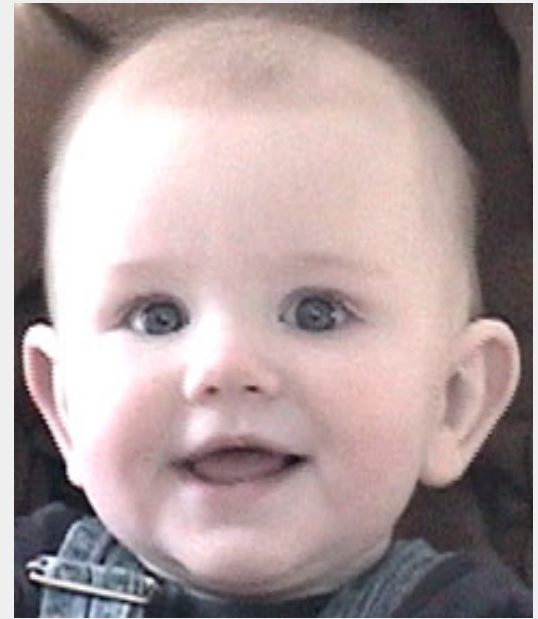
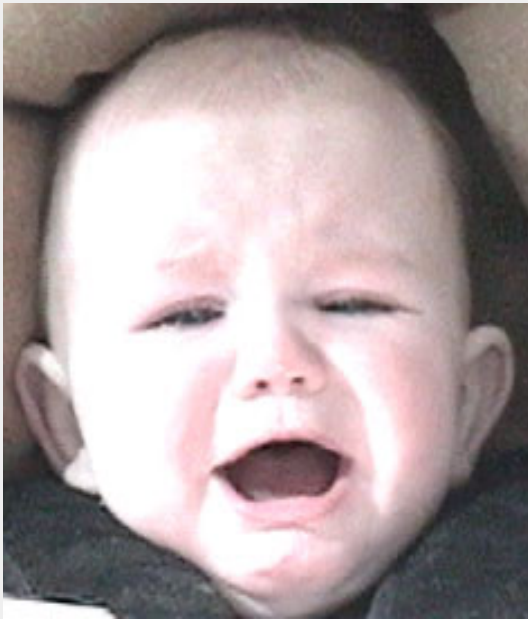


Feeling and relating

Imitation and mimicry

‘Shared representation’ of perception and felt action –
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Initial origins of empathy – emotional resonance



Feeling and relating

Imitation and mimicry

‘Shared representation’ of perception and felt action –
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...and its not just us.....



...but more: “feeling directed outwards – more congruent with another’s situation than one’s own”



Unmarked mirroring

Marked mirroring

Intersubjectivity and mind-reading

Empathy and identification

Awareness of self and other

Sense of self and agency in babies

Perspective taking and emotional flexibility

Regulation of emotion

formative influence

‘who’s feeling belongs to whom?’

‘marked mirroring’

‘Inter-subjectivity’

relating within awareness of difference

Perspective taking

development through life

Emotional
sharing



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graph TD; A[Emotional sharing] --> B[Self and other]; B --> C[Perspective taking];
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Self and
other

Perspective
taking

Experiencing minds

Intuition – inference beyond
the evidence of social signals

Entails relating

Emotional resonance

Formative influence – self and
other

‘Feeling and form’

“...and did thread our eyes, upon one double
string.”

The proposition

Visual art embodies a quality of ‘state of mind’

Formal characteristics of the painting carry this embodiment

Artists build this form out of an intuition of relationship

Viewers intuit a mental quality through this form and by doing so
enter into a relationship with the painting

This is the ‘aesthetic’ experience...

...it uses our facility for intuiting states of mind in others

Building up....

The initial impulse, 'petit sensation'

Intuition of a relationship (internal/external)

The painting becomes an expression of that imagined relationship by becoming an object that can be related - forming the other pole

(to do this it must have necessary and sufficient characteristics of mind)

Later it becomes autonomous

(not simply an expression of the artist's mind)



The one bird's plunge through's
not that trusty space where each confiding
form's intensified.

(Out in the open there you're self denied and
go on vanishing without a trace.)

Space spreads transposingly from us to
things;

really to feel the way a tree upsprings,
cast round it space from that which
inwardly expands in you.

Surround it with retention. It has
no bounds. Not till its ascension in your
renouncing is it truly tree....

Rilke, trans Leishman 1906-16

Building up....

The initial impulse, 'petit sensation'

Intuition of a relationship (internal/external)

The painting becomes an expression of that imagined relationship by becoming an object that can be related - forming the other pole

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Building up....

The initial impulse, ‘petit sensation’

Intuition of a relationship – recognition (internal/external)

The painting becomes an expression of that imagined relationship by becoming an object that can be related - forming the other pole

(to do this it must have necessary and sufficient characteristics of mind)

Later it becomes autonomous

(not simply an expression of the artist’s mind)

Formation of form

Just as there is a development to the capacity to relate – so there is a development in the capacity of the painting to stand at this other pole – this is the formal development of the painting

Tracking this gives us a clue as to the paintings intention

Build the form

Affect traces

Affect traces – marks of content and feeling - memory

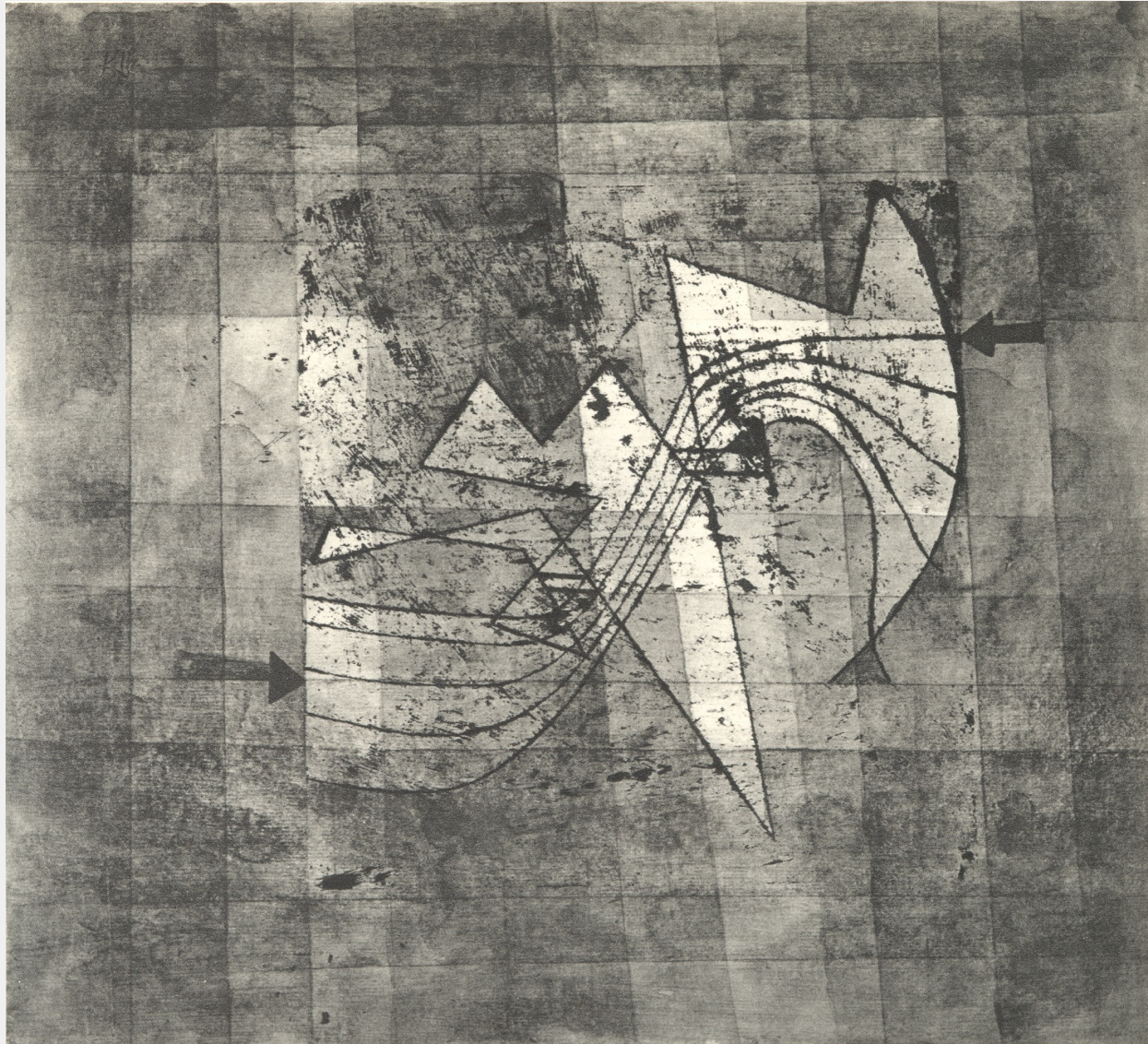


Howard Hodgkin – Lovers 1984-1992

Building the form....

Visual grammar – pictorial logic
'Taking a line for a walk'

The formal development



Paul Klee – Mountain Formation 1924

Cezanne

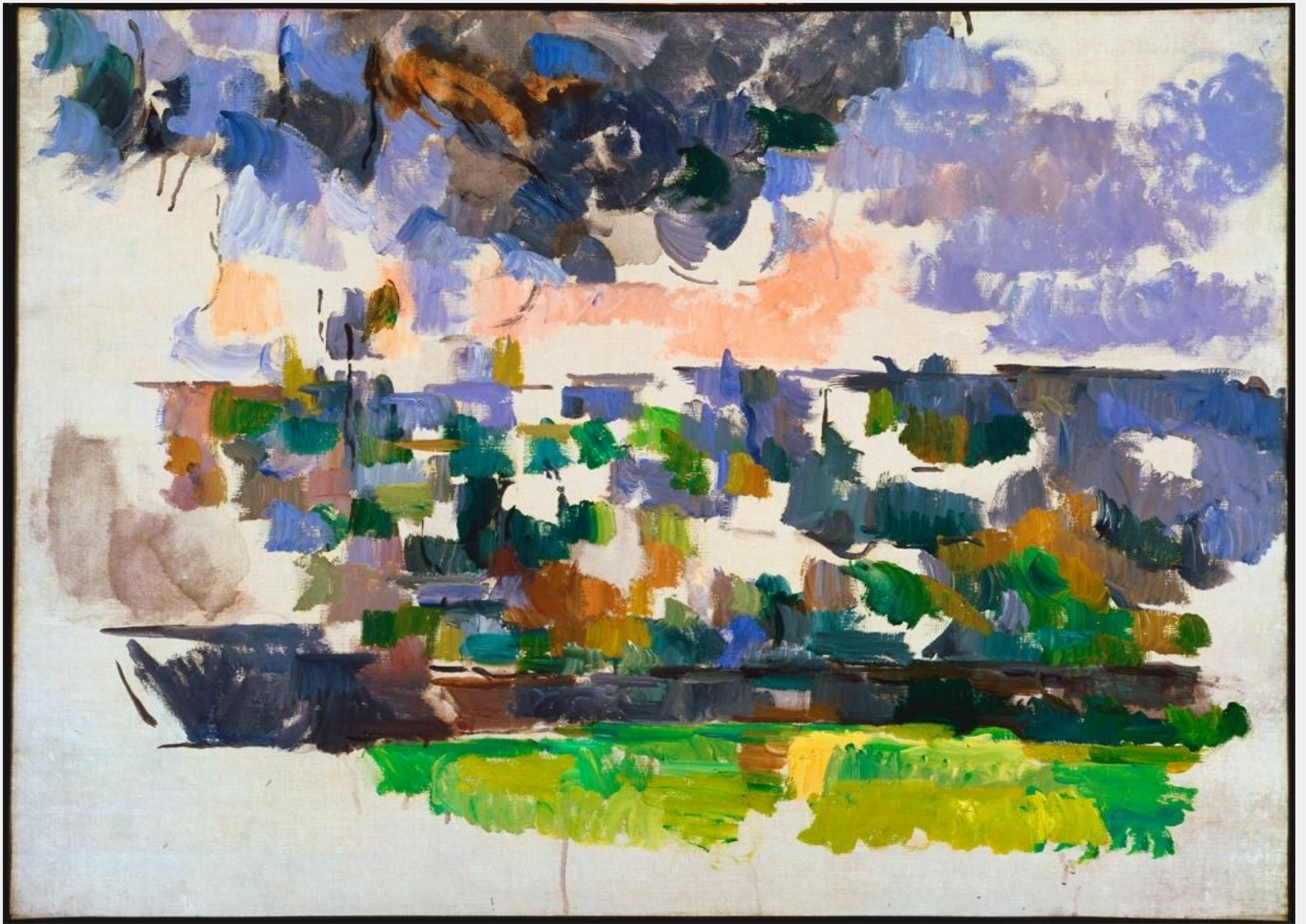
- Painting in an empirical tradition
- The experience of looking



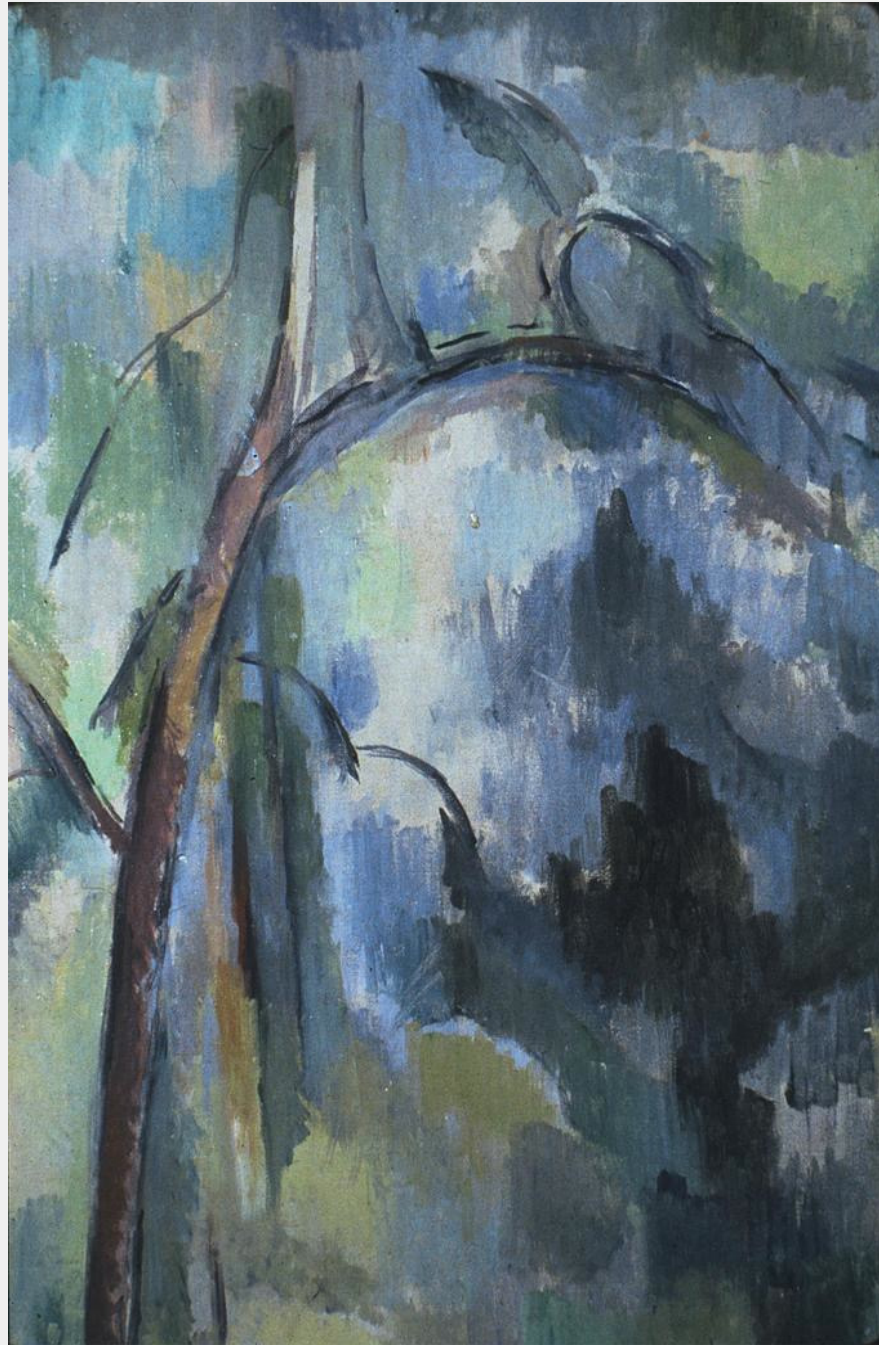
Still life 1902-6 Courtauld Institute



Still life with Melon 1906 Courtauld Institute



Garden at Les Lauves Phillips Collection



Morning on Provence det
Albright Knox



Chateau Noir 1900
Nat Gallery



*Cézanne Old Woman
with Rosary 1900-04
National Gallery*



Isaac

Toby





MUM



DAD



AISIE



DARRIN



SIOBHAN



Maternal depression

✦ Overlapping child/mother figures



Cidirenum

...and its not just us.....



Reading the painting

Intuiting form/meaning facilitates empathy and relating

cf The growth of the child's mind

Kinds of ways this can go wrong

Loss of central coherence/Rigidity in autism



Reading the painting

In the room with the patient for the first time (Skynner)

Perplexity and attentiveness

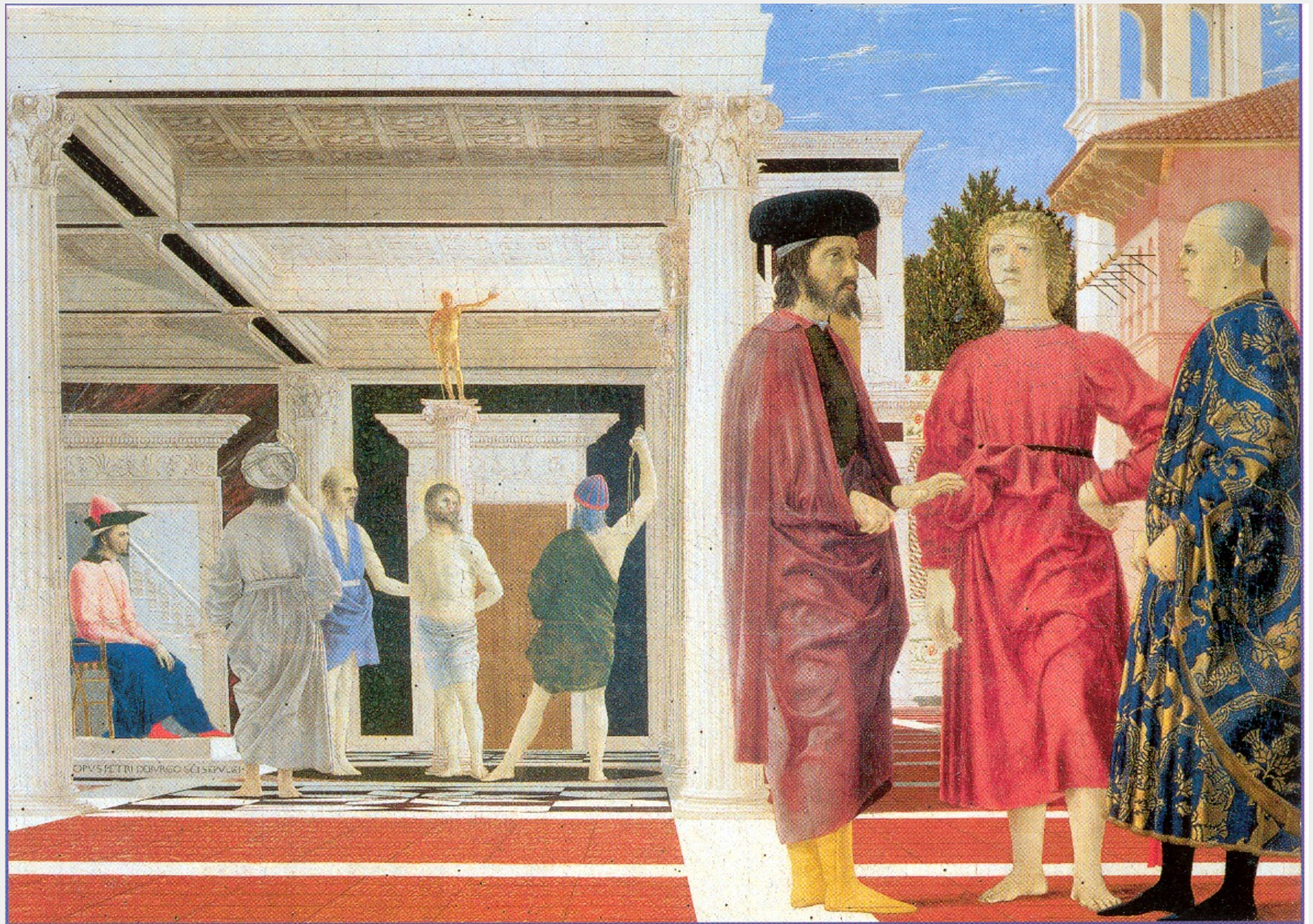
Waiting for the pattern to emerge

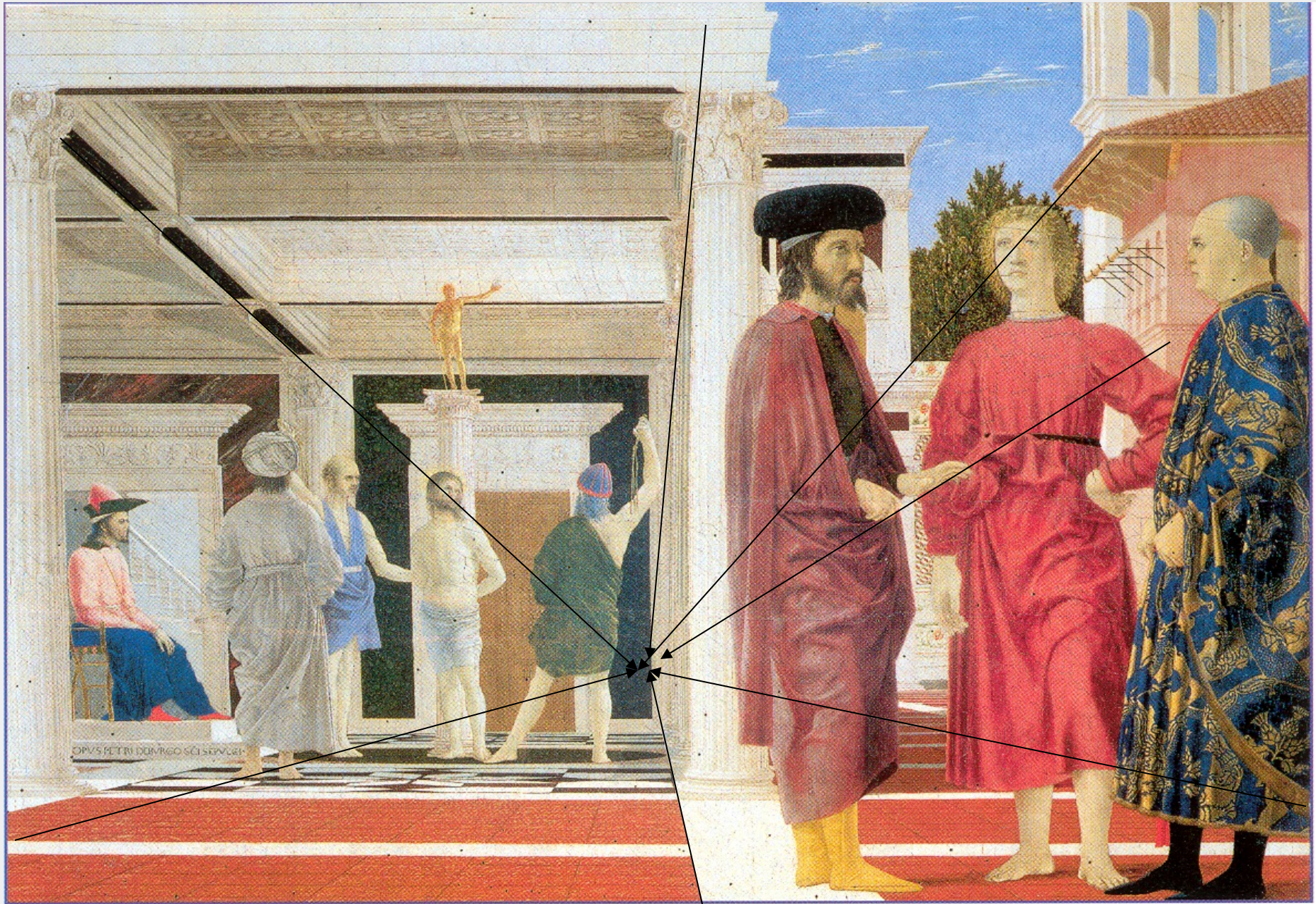
Piero della Francesca

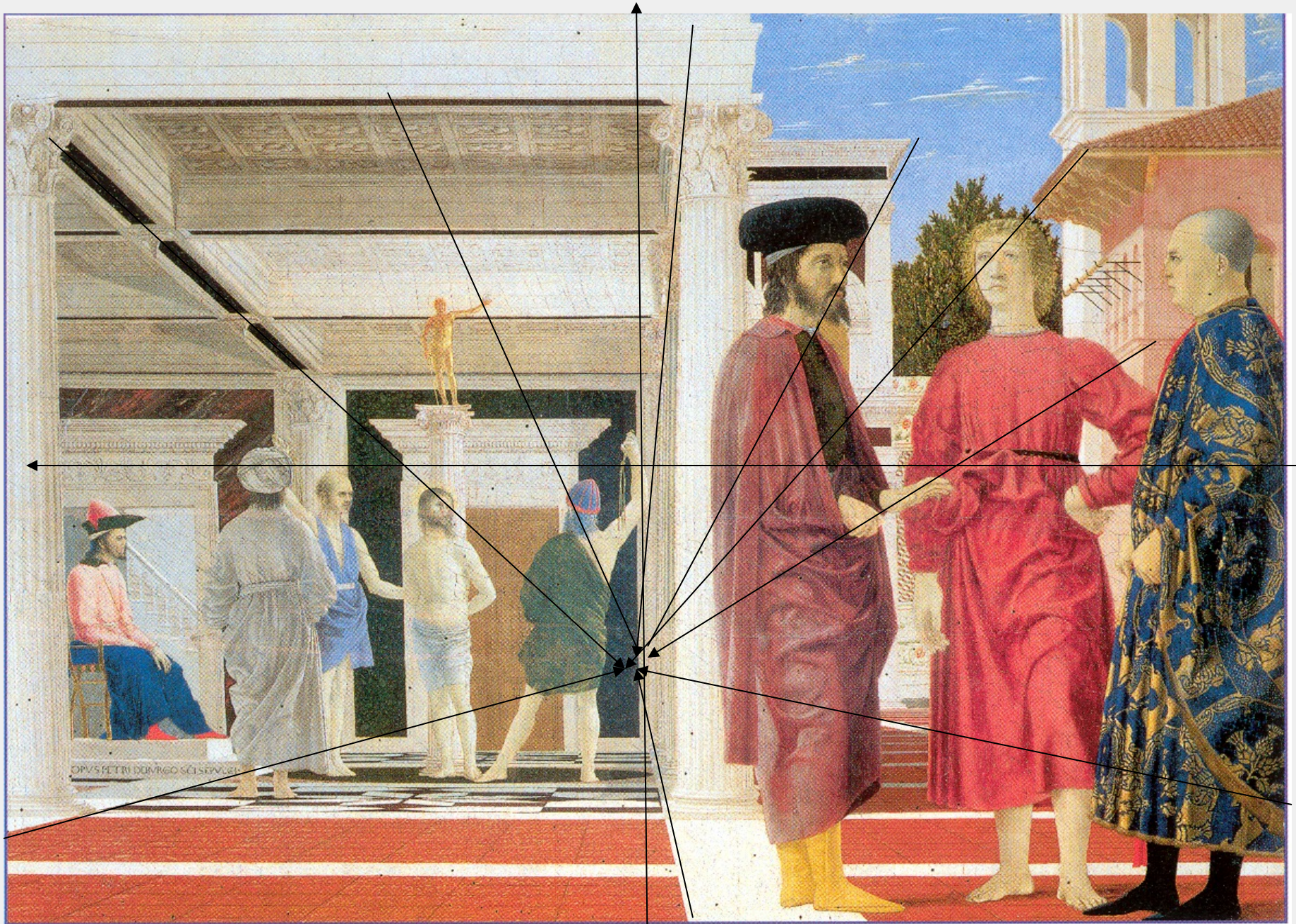
Formal structure and the mind of the painting

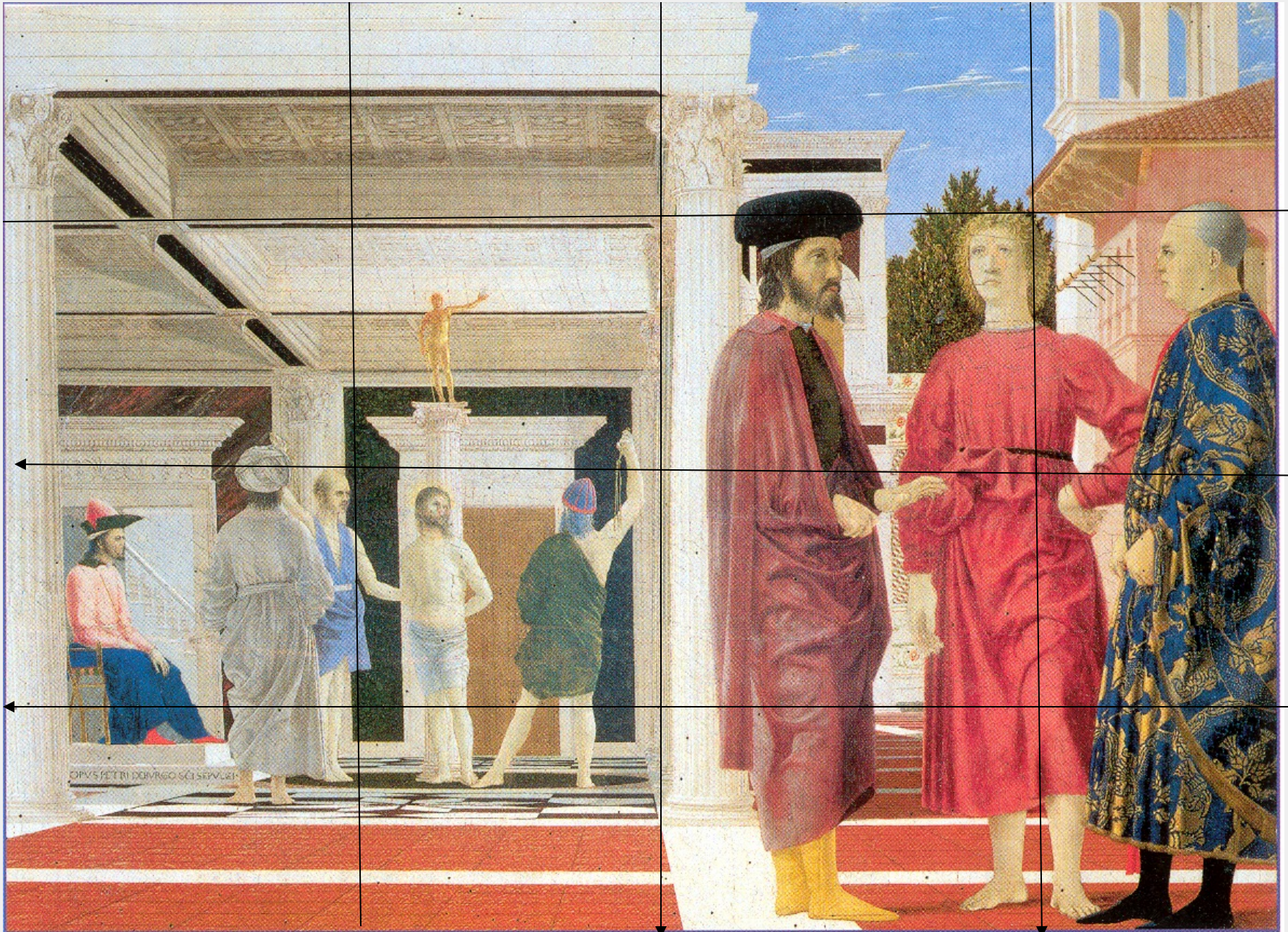
The Flagellation of Christ at Urbino

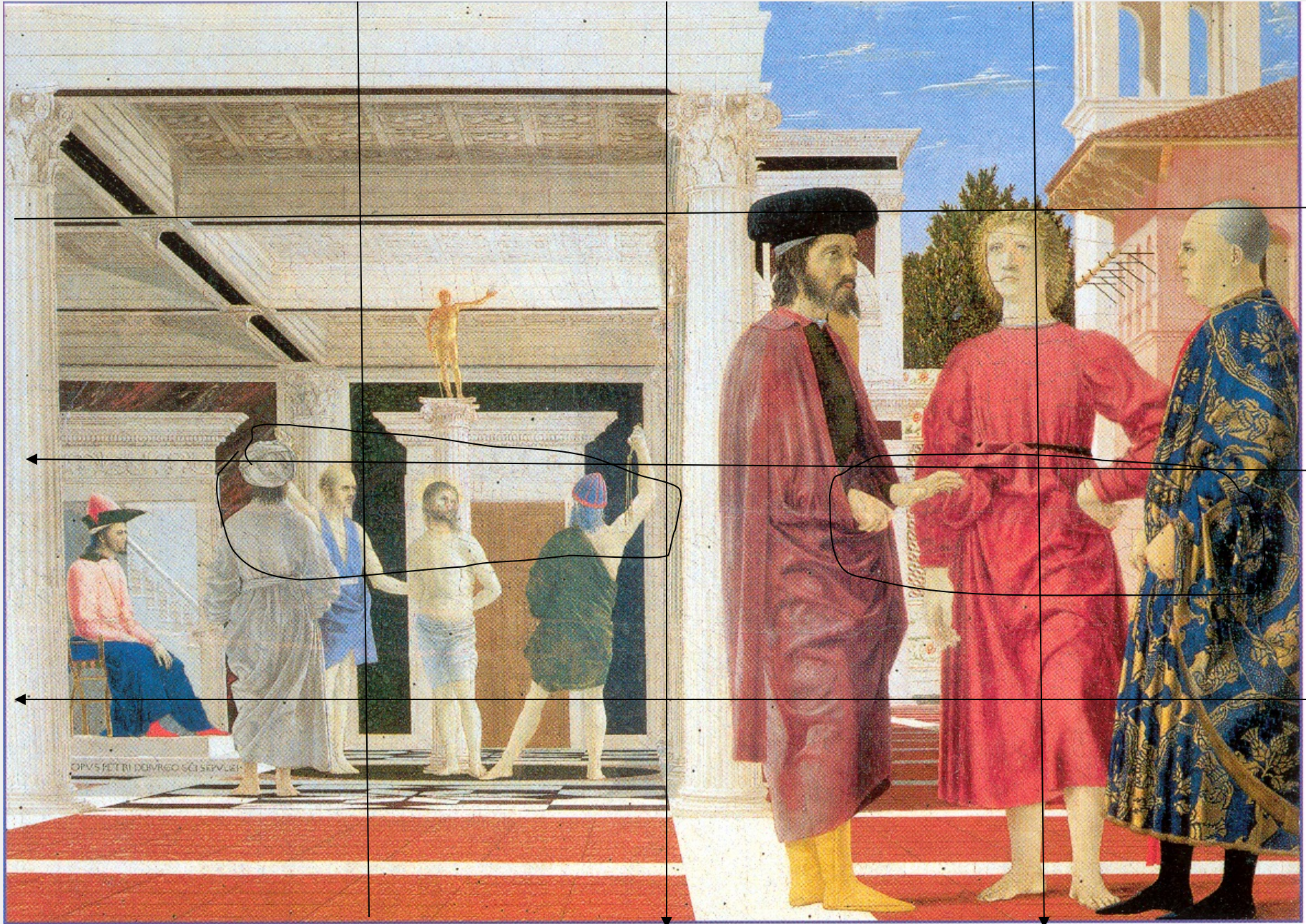
c.1450's







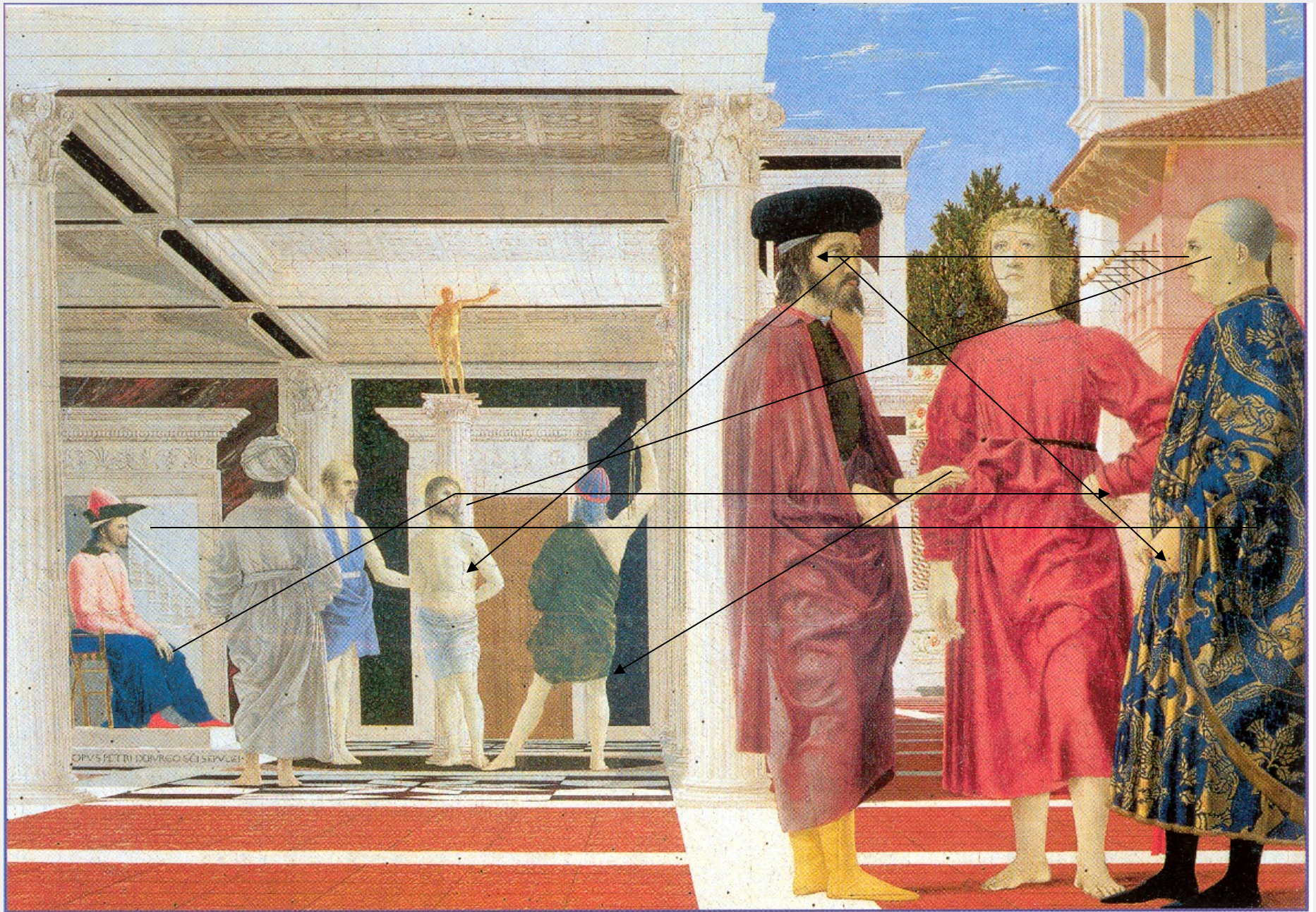








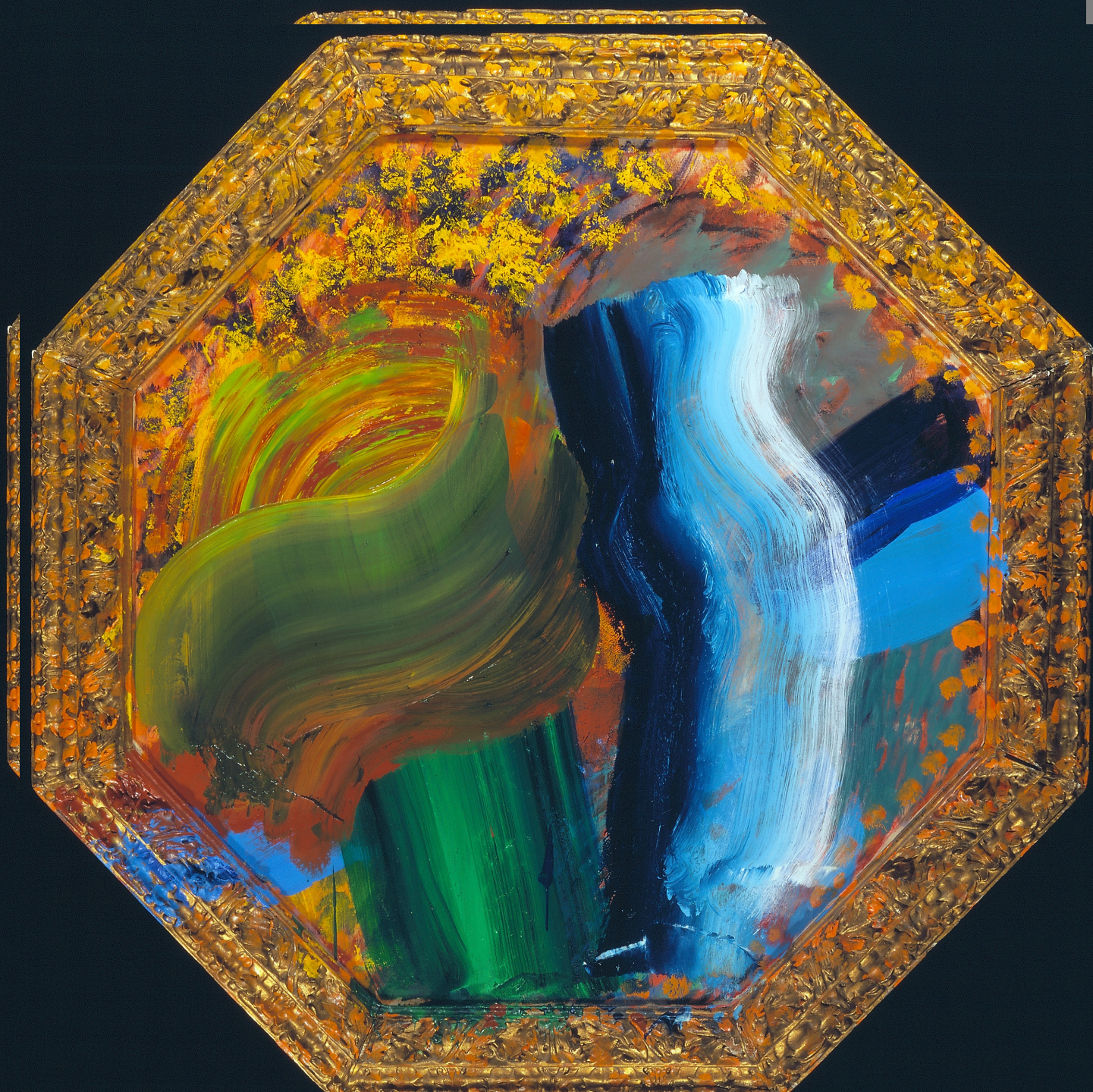




The role of context



*Howard Hodgkin
Mr and Mrs Kathy Sacks
1988-1991
Gagosian Gallery*



*Howard Hodgkin
Mr and Mrs Kathy Sacks
1988-1991
Gagosian Gallery*

Goya

Archeology of form and post-traumatic mental
state in the 'Pinturas Negras' 1820s

Asmodea



T. 553





1750







Post modernism

Subverts the unitary image/engagement

Meta-cognition and reflection

Culture proceeds on a broad front

Cindy Sherman – Untitled Film Stills 1978













Jonathan Green Field of Vision 2007/8

Thank you!

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1.

Evidence for shared representations

Cognitive psychology

- ◆ **observation has a strong influence on movement execution (e.g. Brass et al., 2000, 2001, Kilner et al., 2003, Stuermer et al., 2000)**

Social psychology

- ◆ **chameleon effect (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999)**

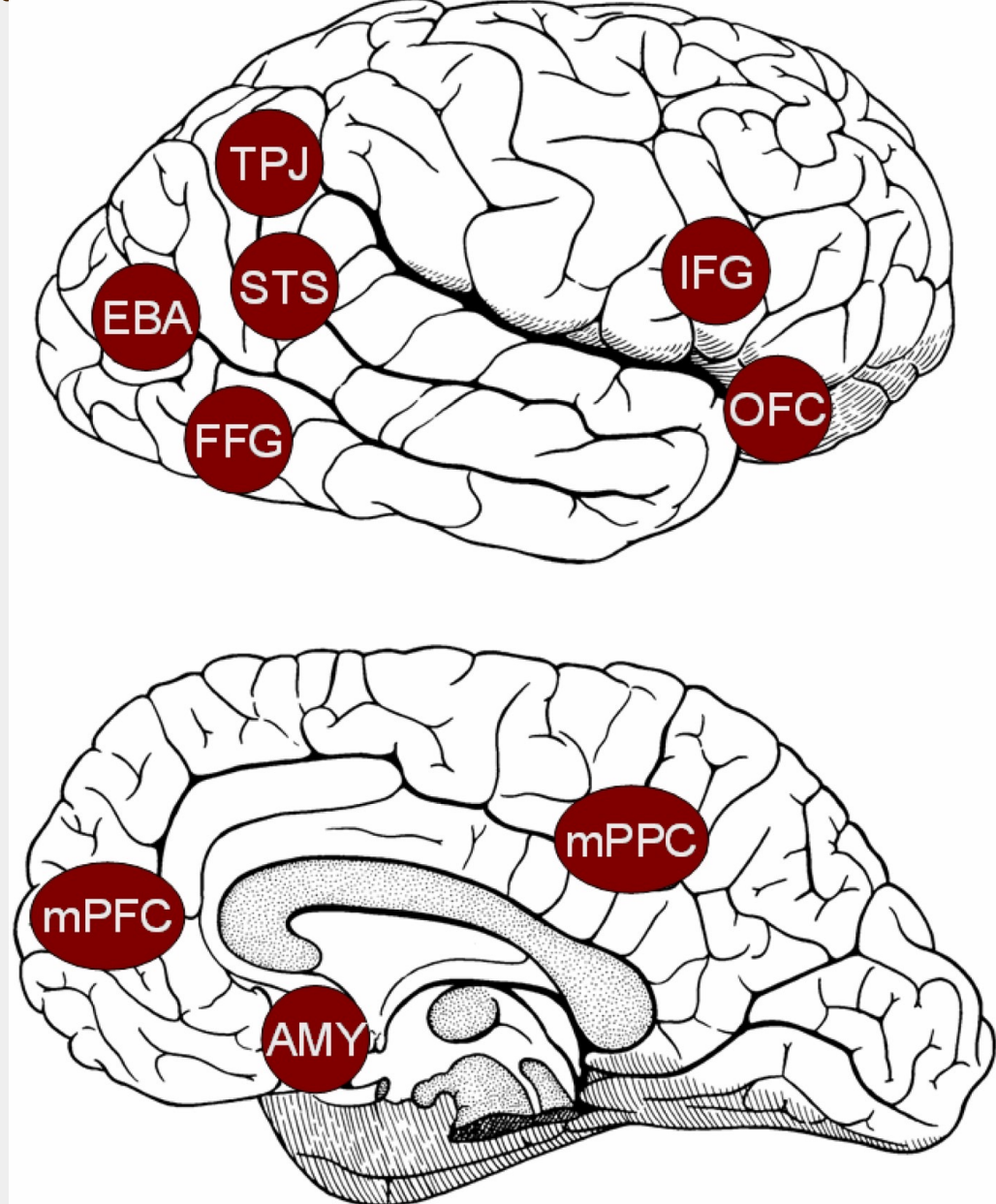
Cognitive neuroscience

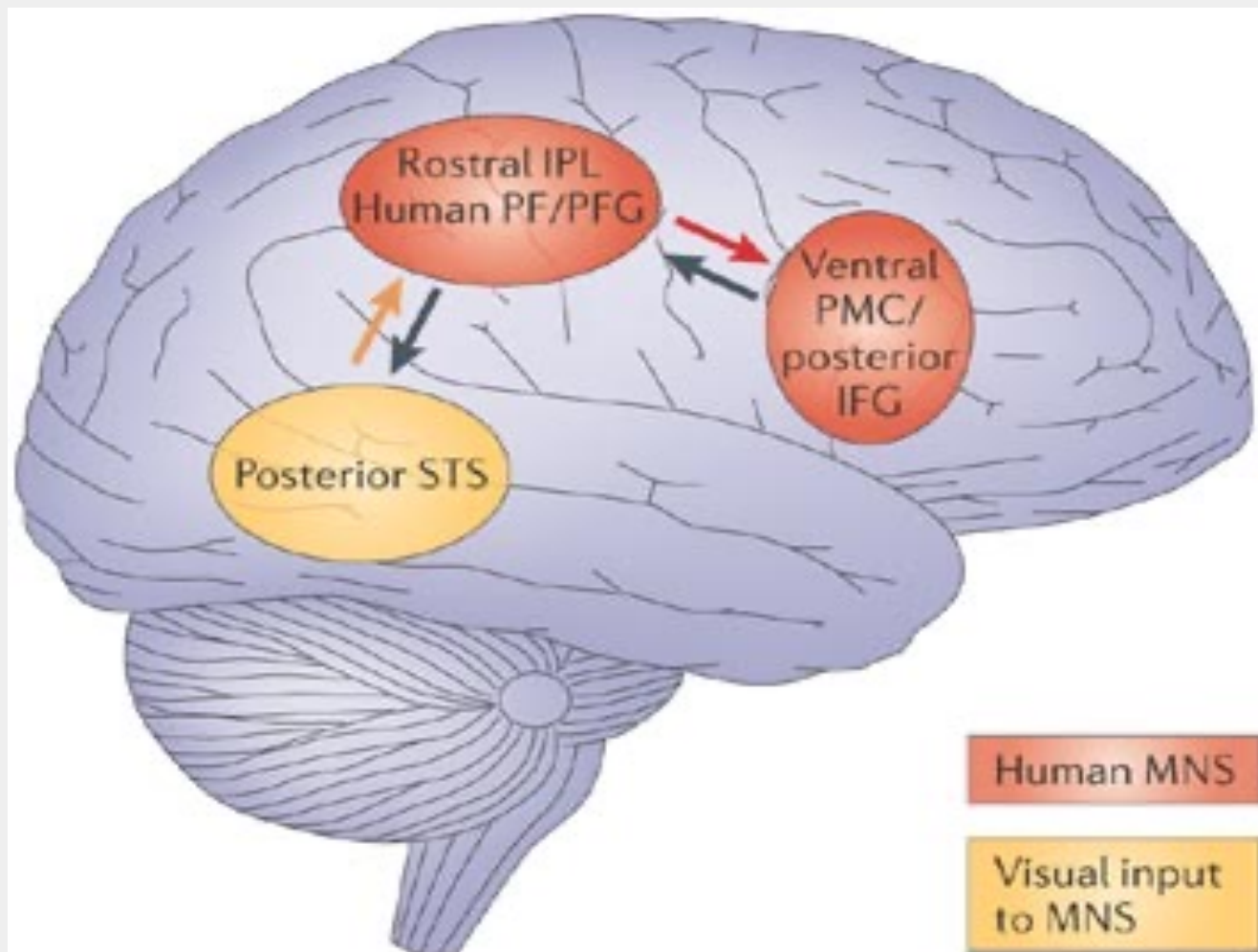
- ◆ **activation of motor related areas by action observation (e.g. Grezes & Decety, 1999, Iacoboni et al., 1999, 2001, Calvo-Merino et al., 2005, 2006)**

Neurophysiology

- ◆ **mirror neurons (e.g. Rizzolatti & Craighero, 2004)**

Brain regions that have been implicated in various aspects of social cognition





The origins of shared representations

