

Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel

The Painted Architecture

The framework that supports the figures is constructed (even though only painted) according to rigorously architectural principles, and the way that its elements have been represented in perspective makes them appear to project strongly. This was exactly the opposite principle to that of fifteenth century decoration in perspective, which tended to create the illusion of sinking into the wall. The effect is amplified by the insertion of the colossal figures, which protrude forward in opposition to the natural curve of the ceiling. All this increases the overall tension and enhances the observer's sensation of perceiving the exertions made by the gigantic figures.