

Chapter 1

Finding Your Footing in Fashion Drawing

In This Chapter

- ▶ Getting started drawing fashion
 - ▶ Recognizing the differences between fashion and figure drawing
 - ▶ Drawing a basic fashion figure
 - ▶ Looking at careers for fashion illustrators
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If you picked up this book to figure out how to draw fashion illustrations, you likely want to be a fashion illustrator or to work in the fashion industry. Although they're two very different types of jobs and industries, fashion illustration connects them. In this chapter, we talk about how to get started in drawing fashion and the ways in which fashion drawing differs from figure drawing. We also cover where to find work and how to get started in your career.

Getting Started with Fashion Drawing

Maybe you've been copying figures from magazines or dressing paper dolls with your own creations since you were a kid. If so, you already know how much your art improves when you work at it. If you've been drawing since you were young, you may also have picked up a number of bad drawing habits or have skipped drawing certain types of clothing or body parts because they're more complicated. And if you haven't been sketching everything in sight up to this point in your life, now is the time to start.

Fashion drawing tends to be much more stylized than figure drawing, so you may have to change your techniques. In the following sections, we offer some ideas about how to get started in fashion drawing.

Filling your sketchbook

Getting good at any kind of drawing is like getting to Carnegie Hall — you need to practice, practice, practice! To practice drawing no matter where you are, you need a sketchbook, better known in the industry as a *design process notebook*. Anything that fires up your brain and helps you create goes into the sketchbook. Your design process notebook may be full of fabric swatches, magazine clippings, drawings, words, or anything and everything you use to inspire yourself when designing. It's like a glimpse into your brain working out all the details of a design.



Saving every scrap

When sketches pile up in your work space, resist the urge to dump your older sketches, and never throw out your old work! You never know when a throwaway sketch will jog your imagination and turn into a saleable idea.

Marianne knew musicians who talked about getting great ideas from pressing the record button even when they were just messing around. She learned from them that you never know when something you're just fooling around with can become a great idea. The same holds true with your design ideas. You may just be doodling around with a sketch and end up with a fantastic design idea that sells itself someday! That's what happened with the notebook sketch of an evening dress shown here.



So what do you sketch when you're out and about, watching television on the couch, or paging through the latest fashion magazine? Whatever catches your eye! You can also use your notebook to practice the sketches we outline later in this chapter and throughout the book — they're even marked with a Sketchbook icon!

Studying the masters

Great fashion illustrations are not generally hanging on the walls of famous museums. Instead, you find these works of art in fashion magazines, on billboards, in the newspaper, and on the Internet. Spend time looking at fashion illustrations and pay attention to the poses they use, along with the amount of lines and details. Check out the work of artists such as John Galliano, Karl Lagerfeld (for Chanel), and Betsey Johnson.

Certain illustrations will just wow you, although you may not understand exactly why. Try to figure out what you like about certain illustrations.



Keep a file of art that appeals to you by saving pictures of the types of work you'd like to do yourself. After a while, you'll see a pattern emerging. Collecting images of what you like helps you learn visually and develop your

own style. (For more about developing your own style, see the later section “Making Your Art Your Own.”)



Use the images you collect for inspiration, not for copying in your own work! You don't want to violate any copyright laws. A work is protected by copyright as soon as the artist creates it.

Grasping the Basics of Fashion Drawing

If you're a born artist, doing fashion illustration will certainly come easily to you. But if you want to draw but hate the way your figures come out, don't throw in the towel. Anyone can learn how to draw. We can't stress this enough.

A desire to draw is a huge motivator. If you have a picture in your head, you can figure out how to translate it to paper step by step. Drawing starts with a single line — and anyone can draw a line! In this book, we show you how to use shapes to draw the human body and the clothing people wear. All drawings start with circles, triangles, ovals, squares, rectangles, trapezoids, and cylinders, shapes you've been drawing since you were a child.



Learning how to draw is really all about learning how to see, paying attention to what you see, and understanding what you see. Many of the most amazing artists were formally trained, proving artistic skill isn't all about being born with the talent to draw — although it certainly does help! In the end, illustration is all about mastering the basics of fashion drawing, creating your own style, and practicing, practicing, practicing.

Separating fashion from figure drawing

Although related, fashion and figure drawing are two different approaches to the same craft. Yes, they both draw the human form, but that's where the similarities end. You can find the differences in the details.

The most noticeable difference between the two styles is the fact that fashion drawing depends on exaggeration, and figure drawing features a more realistic drawing style. A woman drawn by a figure artist looks pretty true to life. Her body is in a natural pose, her features may be plain, and her arms and legs are in scale with her physical dimensions.

Ask a fashion artist to draw the same woman, and you're not likely to recognize her on paper. She'll be as thin as a rail, her arms and legs will be extremely long and lean, and she may have limited facial features — or even none at all! The goal of fashion drawing is to express style and create a specific effect, and you use exaggeration, movement, and attitude to get it!

Choosing a good pose

Watch how the fashion models move on the runway, and you'll instantly realize that fashion models don't move or stand like normal people — they pose. Fashion models are trained to stand in certain ways in order to show off the styles of the time.

Not all poses you see on real-life models translate well onto paper, but it's helpful to recognize different poses and understand what types of poses work well with different types of clothing. A fashion model in an evening dress doesn't strike the same poses as a teen dude in an urban outfit. The fashion model stands tall and straight to show off the gown's bodice and skirt; the teen dude is likely to assume a slouched pose to demonstrate how the clothing moves with ease over his body.

In fashion illustration, you utilize four different views of poses for most of your artwork (see Chapter 4 for details):

- ✓ The back view (Figure 1-1a)
- ✓ The front view (Figure 1-1b)
- ✓ The three-quarter view (Figure 1-1c)
- ✓ The side view (Figure 1-1d)

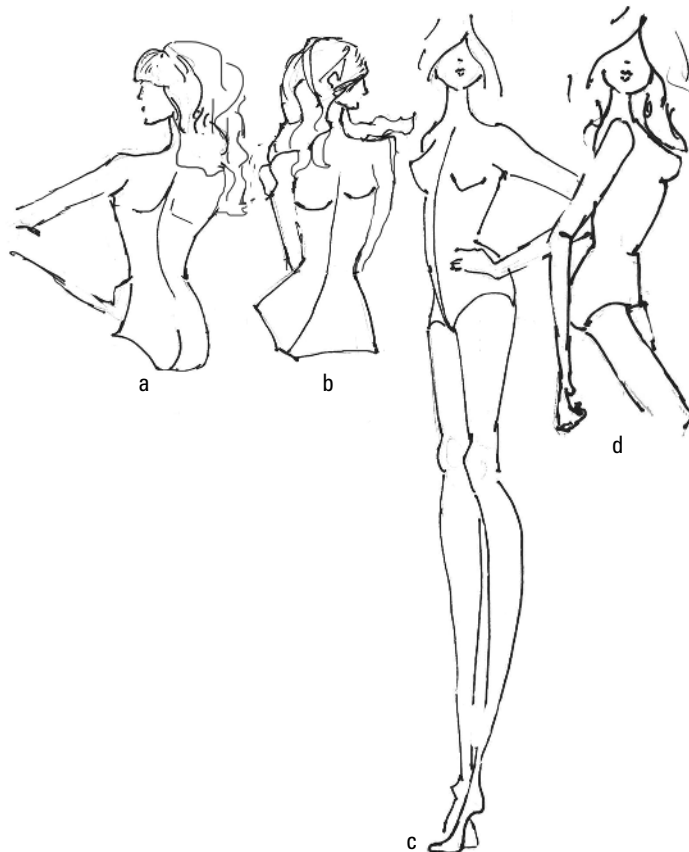


Figure 1-1:
Four views
of fashion
poses.



To draw a basic fashion figure, you must first understand what a “good” pose is. When drawing fashion poses, follow these informal rules:

- ✓ Make sure your model isn’t leaning on anything. She should be standing on her own two feet.
- ✓ Keep your model from falling over on the page like the model in Figure 1-2. You create balance by keeping the head, shoulders, hips, knees, and feet in a straight line from head to toe (more on this in Chapter 5).
- ✓ Angle the shoulders in one direction and the hips in the opposite direction, as in Figure 1-3. Doing so gives the impression of movement and attitude — two must-haves in fashion drawing. We talk more about angles in Chapter 4.

Drawing a basic fashion figure

When drawing fashion illustrations, you first create a rough sketch of the body, also referred to as a *croquis*. Then you draw the clothes that go on top.



Figure 1-2:
Fashion figures should never look like they’re falling over.



Figure 1-3:
Angling is
an important
part of the
fashion look.



Are you ready for your first dip into fashion drawing? Grab your pencil, a black pen, some tracing paper, sketch paper, and a fashion magazine if you have one handy. Here's how to begin drawing a front view *croquis*:

1. Lay tracing paper over a full-body picture of a model from a magazine (or use our outline in Figure 1-4a) and trace around the perimeter of her body using a pencil.
2. Draw lines to show the angles of the shoulders and hips. Trace a center line down the front of her body and draw an oval for the head, as in Figure 1-4b.

We give you more details about the center front line and angled lines in Chapter 5.
3. Break your figure down into basic shapes, using trapezoids for the torso and cylinders for the arms and legs. Include circles for the elbows and knees, as in Figure 1-4c.

Breaking the body down into basic shapes simplifies the drawing process. To find out more about using shapes in your drawings, flip to Chapters 3 and 4.

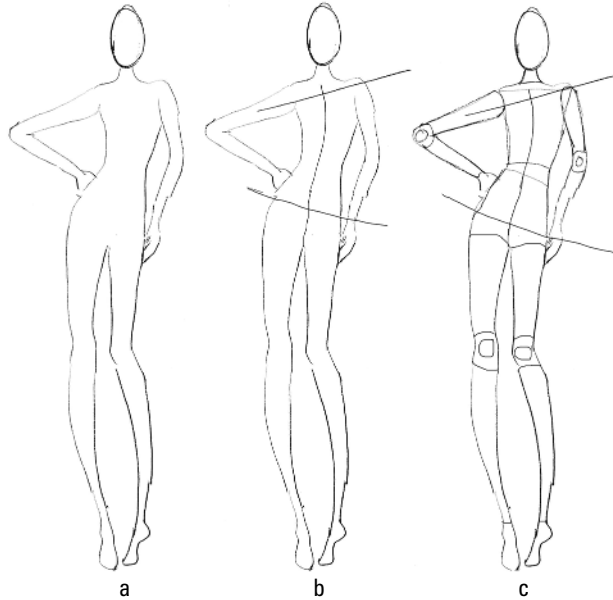


Figure 1-4:
Tracing over
an outline
of a posed
figure.

4. Remove the tracing paper from your model.
5. On a piece of sketch paper, redraw your fashion model freehand, but lengthen the torso, arms, and legs, as in Figure 1-5a.

The new figure is taller and narrower and has a smaller head in comparison to the rest of her body. Fashion figures almost always have long, slim torsos and long, slender limbs, which make the clothes look better. Find out more about drawing the torso in Chapter 5 and drawing arms and legs in Chapter 6.

6. Use a black pen to draw over the areas of the body that you want to show. Erase the pencil lines.

See the final croquis in Figure 1-5b.

After you've drawn a few croquis, you can move on to adding the clothes on top. After all, your goal is to illustrate the fashions!

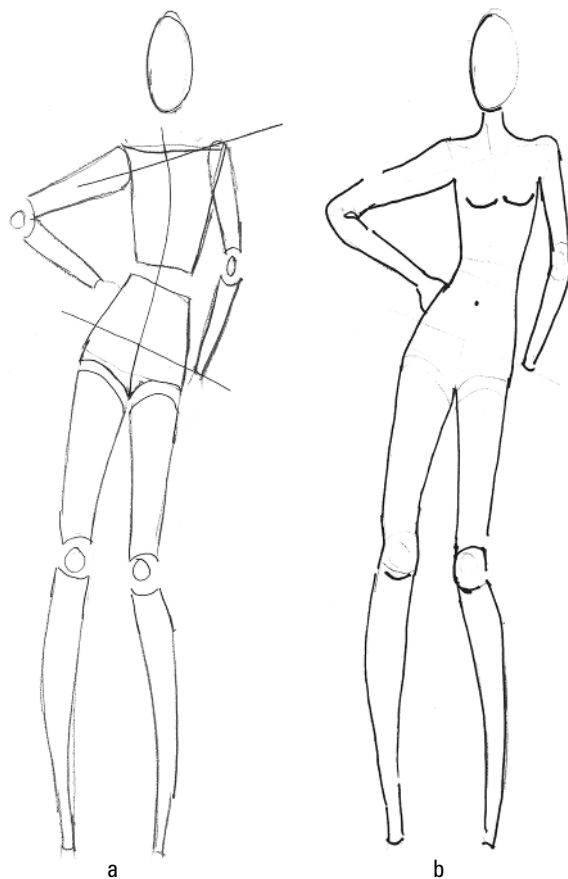


Figure 1-5:
Freehanding
a fashion
drawing
with basic
lines and
shapes.



For this exercise, you need a croquis drawn in pencil because you'll erase the form of the body as you add clothes to it. Follow these steps to draw a dress and knee-high boots on your croquis:

1. To create the neckline, begin with two V shapes on the neck, as in Figure 1-6a.

Make sure the ends of the V shape curve to show that they're going around the neck. You want the clothing to look dimensional and wrap around the body.

2. Add a sleeve, as in Figure 1-6b.

To form the top of the sleeve, trace over the shoulder of the bent arm and go down to the midpoint of the upper arm. For the hem of the sleeve, draw a long line that starts at the end of the sleeve and angles in toward the body; curve the line to wrap around behind the arm. Draw

a line from the sleeve's hem to the line of the croquis' torso to form the bottom of the sleeve. The sleeve is loose and needs to fall with gravity.

3. Draw the other sleeve, as in Figure 1-6c.

For the top of the sleeve, draw a line curving over the shoulder and down the arm, ending slightly above the elbow. Draw a hem across the arm, ending at the torso.

Add in a line for the armhole seam of each sleeve by connecting the line at the shoulder to the bottom of the sleeve.

4. Follow the sides of your model's torso and hips and draw lines for both side seams of the fitted dress, as in Figure 1-6d.

End the side seams below the crotch and draw a slightly curved line for the hem. Curved hemlines keep the clothing from looking flat.

5. Add in details such as topstitching, ribbing, and curved lines on the sides of the waist, as in Figure 1-6e.

Topstitching, which you represent with dashed lines, is stitching visible from the outside of the garment. Draw topstitching on the sleeve hems, on the hem of the dress, and on the seams of the curved shapes at the sides of the waist. Draw short, parallel lines to add ribbing to the neckline. For more on details such as topstitching, head to Chapter 9.

6. Draw slightly curved lines above the knee for the thigh-high socks and two slightly curved lines below the knee for the tops of the knee-high boots, as in Figure 1-6f.

7. Trace along the calf lines and around the feet to draw the boots, as in Figure 1-6g.

Don't forget to add a wedge heel to the boots. To get the skinny on drawing ultra hip boots, check out Chapter 13.

8. Finish the drawing with a fun face, hair, and arms, as in Figure 1-6h.

Turn to Chapters 7 and 8 for pointers on drawing a fashion face and hair.

Don't worry if your fashion figure doesn't turn out exactly how you want her to look. Perfecting your drawing skills takes time and practice. In Parts II and III of this book, we give you lots of Sketchbook exercises that allow you to practice drawing individual parts of the body and various pieces of clothing. After you've worked through those exercises, come back to this exercise and redraw it. You'll be amazed at how far your skills have come.

This book shows you how to draw a basic fashion figure and a variety of clothing. However, it's impossible to show every variation of every piece of clothing out there. When you feel you've mastered the exercises we include in this book, look for other garments you like and try your hand at drawing those. This is where your sketchbook comes in handy.

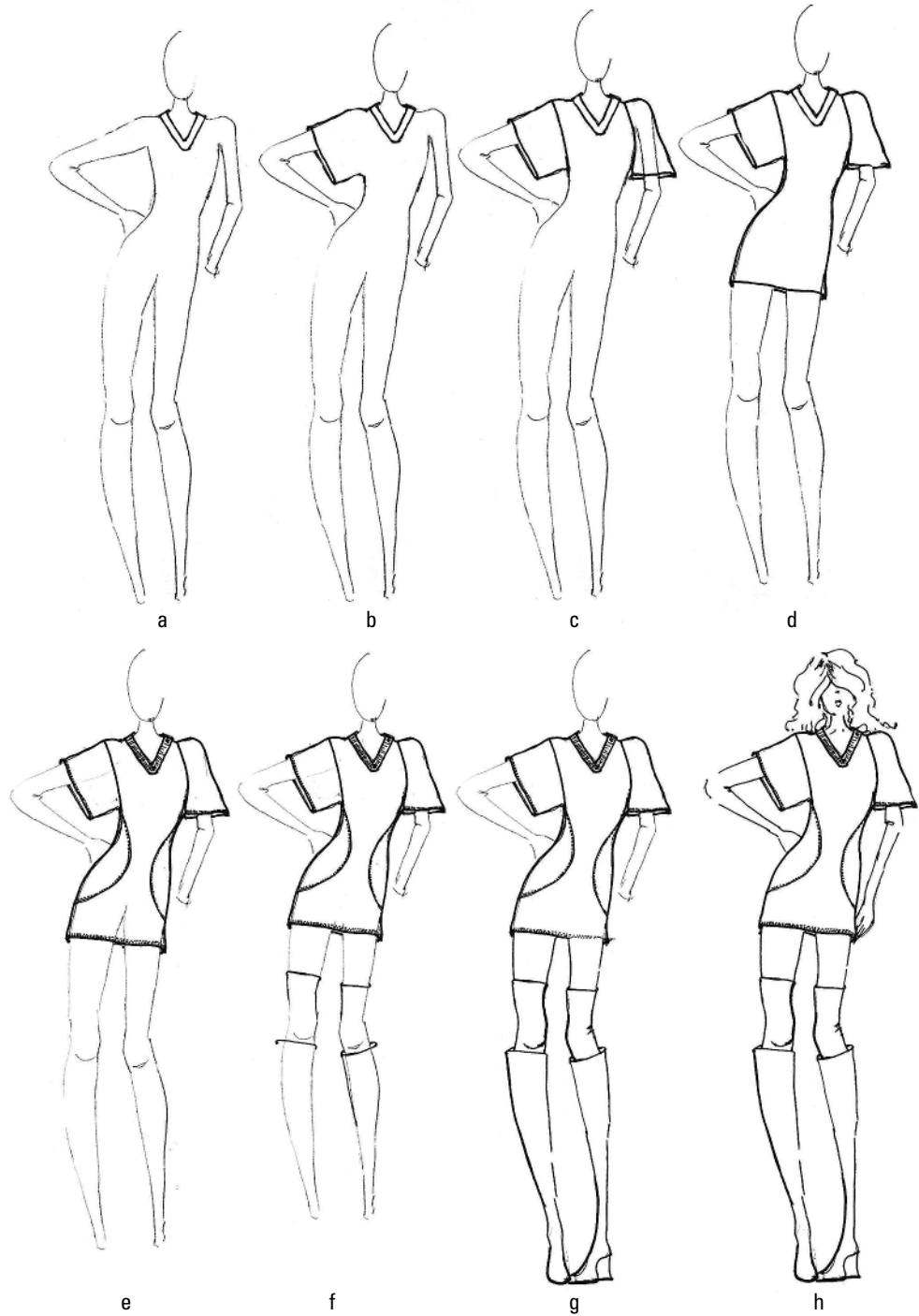


Figure 1-6:
Rocking a
cute dress
and boots!

Making Your Art Your Own

As you expand your drawing experiences, you'll want to include more of yourself in your art. No, we don't mean that you should sketch your own face on your models! As you get more comfortable with pencil and paper, work on incorporating a technique or two that tells the viewer that this drawing was done by *you*, not one of the hundreds of other artists out there. The following sections give you some tips on putting your own stamp on your art.

Developing a signature style

The Great Masters of art have recognizable styles, and you need to have a distinctive style as well. You see the world with your own lenses and put your own spin on it — that uniqueness needs to come through in your artwork!



Look at other artists and take from them the things you love, but never try to imitate someone else's style. Here's why:

- ✔ You won't do it as well as they do.
- ✔ You won't have as much fun as you would creating your own style.
- ✔ Imitating someone else is harder than following your instincts.

So what exactly makes a style, especially in the fashion world? Generally, fashion illustration styles fall into one of two types: loose rendering and tight rendering:

- ✔ Loose leaves out lots of details and draws as few lines as possible; the viewer has to use her imagination and fill in the missing details.
- ✔ Tight is very detailed; the viewer has a better idea of what the illustrator or designer intended.

Figure 1-7 shows two versions of the same drawing with different levels of detail.

Along with the loose versus tight rendering styles, illustrators find other ways to add their own signatures to their drawings. Some illustrators are very realistic with human details, and others let their imaginations run wild with poses and body parts that don't really exist! See Figure 1-8 for a rather wild style. When you're ready to develop your own style, turn to Chapter 16, where we offer some ideas about other ways to render fashion illustrations.

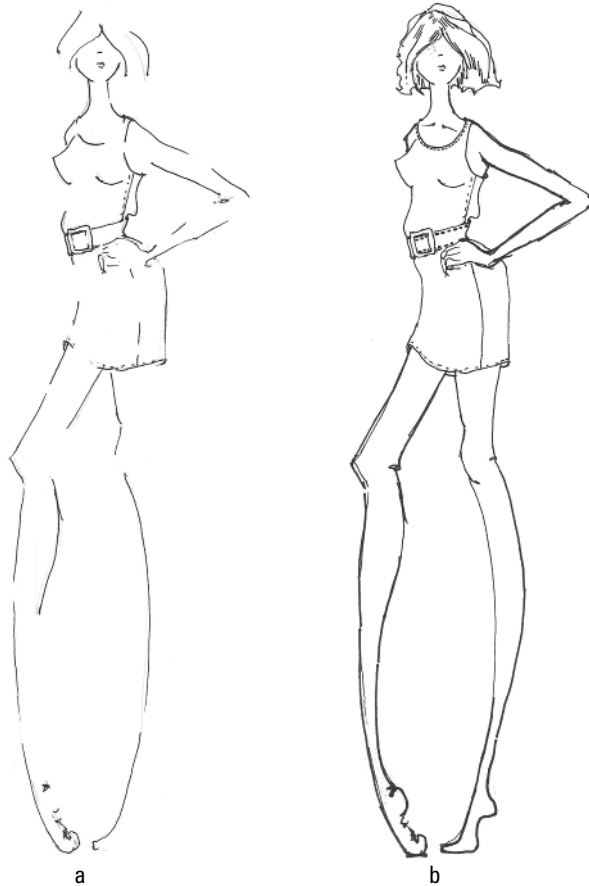


Figure 1-7:
Loose or
tight, make
your style
your own.

Keeping your work fresh and refining techniques



After you find ways to make your drawings your own, continue to practice and work on your skills. Be open to taking classes or experimenting with different styles. Even after you develop a drawing style, you can continue to improve or change up your work. Remember, improving doesn't mean your drawings aren't good the way they are — there's always room to develop your technique.



Never stay satisfied with the status quo in your art, or your drawings will get stagnant as you draw things the same way every time. It's one thing to develop a signature look and quite another to draw *predictable* work.

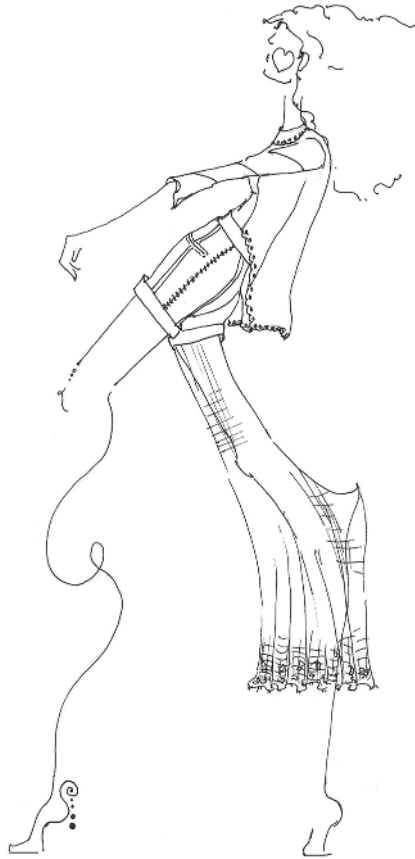


Figure 1-8:
Some
illustrators
add a lot of
whimsy.

Marianne loves to explore other artists and build off their influence — she’s constantly changing her inspirations while staying true to her techniques. This allows her to get out of her box and to experiment with new ideas. We think it’s a great way to constantly stay fresh, and it keeps you drawing all the time!

Other ideas for branching out include getting inspiration from anything and everything you see, from still life to real life and everything in between! Look at the physical part of illustrating, too — experiment with other mediums, such as paint and digital design using a mouse or drafting tablet. Your techniques will always be your own, but they’ll evolve when you expose yourself to new ideas.

Exploring the Field of Fashion Illustration

Back in the days before the Internet and great cameras, fashion illustrators were essential for showing a designer's creations. Today, you find fewer true fashion illustrators who make their living through drawing fashion.

But the art of fashion drawing itself will never die, no matter how advanced technology gets. Illustrating is and always will be important because it gets the idea out of your head and makes it real on paper. That's why illustration is an important skill for a designer to have. Can you imagine how hard it would be to just use words to describe a design and expect someone to be able to make it? Drawing transcends language and is the perfect visual representation of your design.

To see why drawing will never go out of style, look at a designer's process notebooks and watch an idea grow from a rough sketch to a finished product. Doodling on a computer doesn't allow you to work through a sketch like a series of hand drawings does — at least not yet!

Considering careers in fashion illustration

Making a career out of drawing today in any field is tricky, not just in fashion drawing. A lot of art has gone digital, and some illustrations are done solely on the computer using a mouse or drafting tablet. But don't throw away your drawing paper just yet — even artists who work on computers need the ability to draw.



The truth is that the need for hand design will never disappear completely. Magazines may no longer *need* illustrations of the latest trends because the camera captures it all, but readers still like to see drawings and organic art. Illustrations can exaggerate and introduce elements of fantasy in ways that are difficult or impossible for cameras.

Can you make a living in fashion illustration? Perhaps. A lot of fashion illustration overlaps with fashion design. Most people who want to draw fashion also want to design their model's clothes. Most of the time, when you show your skills in illustrating, you're also showing your designing skills.

Consider some of the following potential career choices beyond designing and marketing your own line of clothing:

- ✔ Work for a designer who has great ideas but has trouble transferring them to paper!
- ✔ Teaching others to draw is a thriving career choice. You have to complete some schooling to teach others, but inspiring new artists to develop their talent is a great way to spend your professional life.

- ✔ Be open to illustrating jobs that aren't directly related to fashion. Children's books especially depend on illustrators to capture the story and bring it to life, and the human characters in the story have to wear clothes! Try your hand at drawing some cute kids and let them play dress-up — we include some kid-specific tips throughout the book.
- ✔ Check out a career creating *line sheets*, which are drawings of garments that the manufacturer plans on producing. Merchandising garments and designs are cheaper when the garment simply has to be illustrated, not made. Line sheets help buyers see products so they know whether they want to order them.

Looking at careers in fashion design

The textile industry is the largest industry in the world — one walk through the mall can clearly illustrate the power of clothing in the retail world. Everyone wears clothes! Because clothing styles change frequently and because clothes don't last forever, fashion is a constantly changing market. Careers in fashion design are abundant! From *sourcing* (which is finding all the notions and fabrics to create the garment along with finding a factory to construct the garment) to product development, fashion employs millions around the world.

If you want to get into the design industry as an illustrator, learning the trade and creating a portfolio is the way to go (check out Chapter 17 when you're ready to put together your portfolio). Schools offer two- to four-year programs about pattern drafting, grading, fashion design, textiles, and fabric design, giving people the skills to go out into the fashion design world and create living, breathing designs.

Breaking into the fashion world

To be an artist is to be a salesperson, if you ever want anyone else to see your work. No one will come knocking down your door to see your work unless you put it out there. Working in a creative field today requires not only some knowledge of social media but also a working knowledge of the Internet.

Marketing online is not only easy but also less painful for artists who don't have the killer instincts that make great salespeople great. Rejection is always easier online than in person! Although getting noticed is easier than ever, there's tremendous competition, because everyone else is using the same channels to show their work.

You can do it, though, with talent, luck, and persistence (and the advice we provide in Chapter 19). Marianne now teaches fashion illustration, and she never went to school to teach. She was persistent about recording her work, loved to network at all times, and found a way to incorporate her passion into her work.

