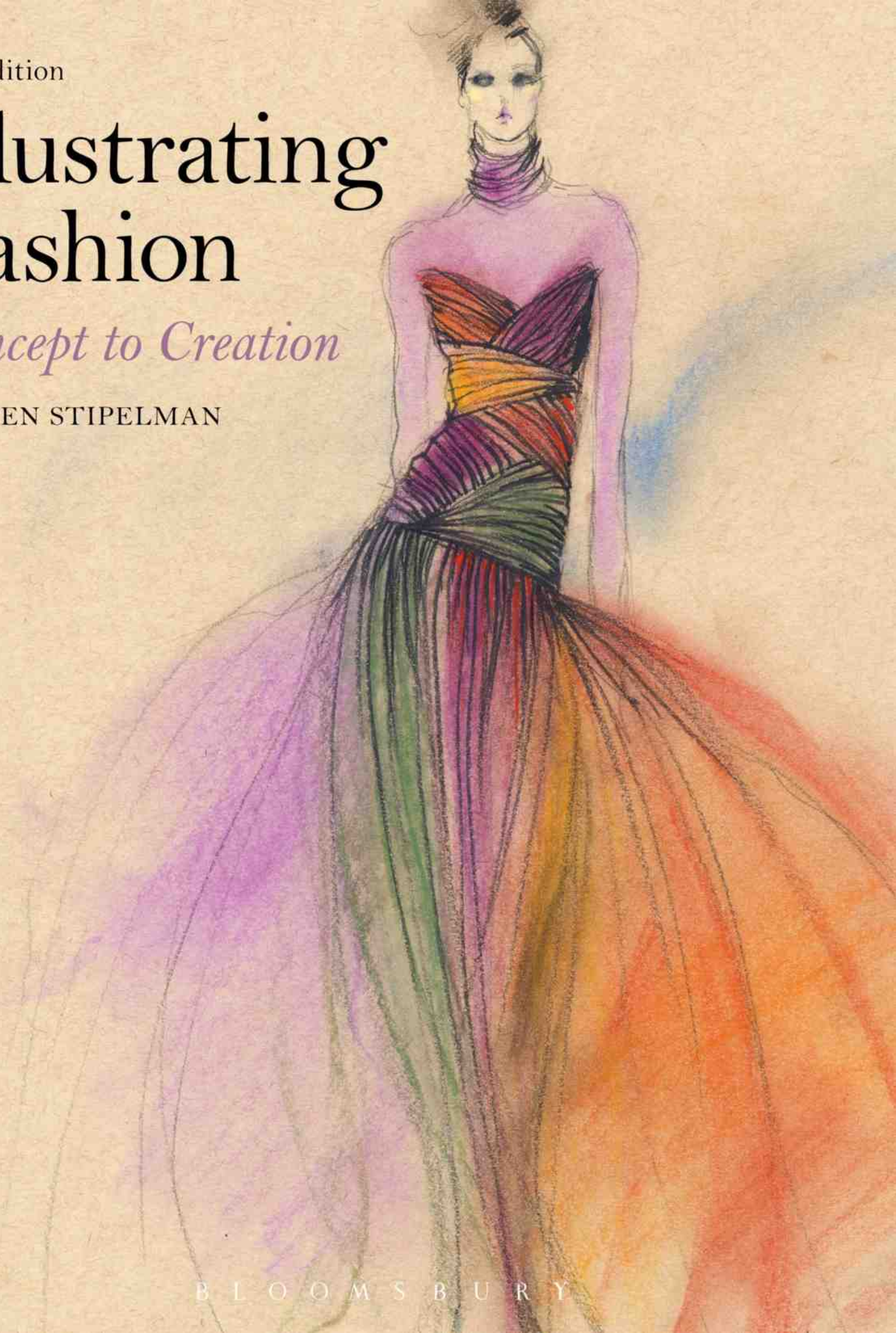4th Edition

Illustrating Fashion

Concept to Creation

STEVEN STIPELMAN

BLOOMSBURY

Illustrating Fashion

Concept to Creation

Fourth Edition

Steven Stipelman

Fashion Institute of Technology

This book is dedicated to my parents

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Preface

It has been well over thirty-five years since I taught my first class, but the memory of that day is still very vivid. There I was, standing in front of a group of students, ready to teach them everything I knew about fashion illustration. It would have been very simple if teaching was just about dispensing facts, but I knew—even then—that there was a greater responsibility ahead of me.

I thought back to when I was accepted to the High School of Music and Art. For the first time in my life I felt that I belonged. Everyone around me was an artist. We were all creative, full of energy, passionate about our work. The teachers inspired us, pushed us to the peak of our creativity, and opened up worlds that we never even knew existed. That was my first experience with this kind of learning. It was very different from the math and science classes that came before. Projects—no matter how complex—no longer seemed like a burden. I always wanted to expand on them, do more, and push myself to greater levels.

After high school graduation, I attended the Fashion Institute of Technology, where I majored in Fashion Illustration. I knew that this would be my career. The fantasy lessened and reality started to set in—I was studying the subject that was to be my future. There were more rules, more restrictions, and more realistic responsibilities. Even so, there were a handful of teachers that went beyond the classroom work and helped to bring out my fullest potential. When I think back, I don't exactly remember all facts that they taught me, but I remember that they cared, guided, and inspired me.

Years later, in 1978 I became a recipient of the Mortimer C. Ritter alumni award. In 2000 I received the Chancellors Award for Teaching Excellence from F.I.T. In 2004 I was selected for inclusion in Who's Who Among America's Teachers. These truly, were the results of those exceptional educators.

I remembered all these things as I started teaching my first class. Although I was younger than most of the students in the class, I was now standing in front of the room. The first years of teaching became tremendous learning experiences for me. It is not just facts and lessons. It is the inspiration and curiosity that you bring to the classroom. It is guiding and directing, helping to make the students curious and passionate about the subject matter. Above all, teaching is about seeing each student as an individual—not just one among the many. Each student brings a particular point of view, talent, and an ability to learn. Each student has a personal life in and out of the classroom, with problems, insecurities, and levels of learning skills. And it is my responsibility to form a relationship with each and every one of them. I have to divorce my own personal taste and feelings and be open to their point of view in order for them to reach their own potential. I try to establish trust and understanding and teach them without killing their creativity or vision.

The creative process has many levels. It begins with the raw energy that students bring with them. Over the years, the work becomes less raw—more polished, the taste level more refined. I sometimes think that it is sad that the raw energy and the sophistication do not take place at the same time. However, the teacher and the student must work together to try bring these two levels together. Is this always simple? No. Does it always work? No. But I try to reach every student and I feel that I am more successful than not.

Because fashion is alive and constantly changing, it is not an easy subject to learn or teach. Studying the facts and rules are the way that one begins. These are very important, but this is not always enough to guarantee a successful career. Understanding the concepts and growing the student's creativity must happen at the same time. You must know "why" before you can know "how," but as you are learning the "whys," you must constantly practice the "hows." This is what I hope to achieve in my book.

Writing this book brought back many of my early fears about teaching. Now I would be going out of the classroom, putting my methods and experiences in print. My artwork would be studied. I had to be aware of how different teachers and students would interpret this

information. I had to remember that this book would also be used by very competent teachers who had their own points of view and methodologies. Because learning how to teach never ends, I wanted my book to offer many methods, techniques, and additional insights that I have learned through teaching. I have many years of teaching and diverse professional experiences. My artistic background comes from many areas, all of which helped me to write this book. I wanted my book to impart all of these to the student.

My first professional illustration job was as staff illustrator for Henri Bendel, which at the time was one of the most chic stores in the world. I drew the artwork for all the newspaper advertising. I was exposed to the finest designs, the most exquisite clothing. Many times, I could be found in the stockroom of the designer salon, studying all the fashions from Norell, Galanos, and Trigère, to name but a few. I could not believe that I was actually touching a Norell suit! It cost $850 in 1964! I know that I was extremely fortunate to be surrounded by this level of fashion at such an early period of my career.

After Bendel's, I went to *Women's Wear Daily*, where I was a fashion artist for the next twenty-five years. I drew the clothing of the best designers in the world—often from sketches before the clothing was actually made. I sketched the finest garments from the collections in New York and I also covered many couture shows in Paris, sending sketches by wireless to New York for publication.

Additionally, I did portraits of such fashionable women as Babe Paley, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and Nancy Reagan—all in their chicest clothes. Most times they were from a designer sketch of the garment and a photo of them. Often just a written description of the outfit. It was of major importance to understand the celebrities' "look" as well as the philosophy of the designer.

My freelance accounts kept me in touch with international apparel designers, advertising agencies, and the cosmetic industry, and my work has appeared in newspapers, magazines, and trade publications.

Despite the glamour of the fashion world, some of the most rewarding and satisfying moments in my career have been in the classrooms and lecture halls of college campuses throughout the country. I am a professor of Fashion Design at the Fashion Institute of Technology, and have taught at Parson's School of Design, and Marist College. Teaching has afforded me the opportunity to transfer my knowledge and skills, which I believe has helped my students to optimize and experience new aspects of their art and work.

It is important to not only reach the "A" student, but it is sometimes even more satisfying and rewarding to reach those that have more difficulty in understanding the concepts or the actual drawing. What a thrill it is to see them produce something beautiful after all their hard work! I want all my students to achieve accuracy in the details in

their drawings and sketches, but still maintain spontaneity and excitement. It is very important that they bring their own points of view, feelings, and emotions to their artwork. This is what will give their work the magic and that special something that separates their art from the crowd. Above all, I want to arouse a curiosity about fashion art and to challenge the student to develop their talents to the fullest. This is one of the reasons that I chose to vary the approaches to drawing fashion art in this book. I feel that by offering more than just one way, the student will not feel pressured or locked into any one style or technique. To support this, as I was drawing the illustrations for this book, I tried to suit the technique to the garment. Even so, all the drawings are still recognizably mine—a fact that I hope will show students that while there are many drawing techniques, they can still maintain their own particular, unique style.

Because I want this book to serve as a textbook for the beginning fashion student as well as a reference book for the more advanced student, I have included the facts and basic concepts of fashion art in addition to more complex, abstract, difficult topics. Each chapter begins with an overview of the subject. Whether it is a brief fashion history, or the relationship of the sleeve to the arm, each chapter first explains what will follow. Throughout the book, I have drawn designer garments that I thought were important and that could help the student understand a specific concept. These fashions will help the student become acquainted with the designer's name and the garment's place in fashion history. I hope that it shows that a well-designed garment can look beautiful forever. It is also my belief that without a knowledge of the past, it is impossible to design for the future.

As I have stated before, I do not believe that there is ever just one way or one approach to artwork. Because of this, I have left the choice of art supplies and techniques quite open, so that the student will never feel locked in. Many times, I have shown alternative ways of approaching or understanding a subject. For example, I am not a very strong believer in the "ten-head" approach to drawing a figure, and prefer a more free hand approach, but I realize its importance for many students, as well as teachers. Therefore I have included it as one of many techniques, which include tracing, and blocking methods. I want students to understand that by borrowing a little bit from one chapter and applying it to another, they can develop their own technique, which—above all—should work for them.

New to this Edition

The book is divided into four parts. Before the first part, there is an introduction called "Getting Started". In this, I discuss the concepts of fashion art, developing your own

talent, the different qualities of line, and art supplies. This beginning, I hope, will guide the student as well as help them relax and not worry.

The first part, "The Fashion Figure", is divided into eleven chapters which cover the basic concepts of drawing the fashion figure, front, turned and profile. Some of the subjects covered are proportion, balance lines, center front, the fashion face, arms and legs, and shaping the body using seams and darts. Various ways of blocking off the figure are shown. After going through these initial chapters and practicing all the techniques and learning the concepts, I am confident that the student will be able to draw a fashion figure.

The second part, "The Fashion Details", is divided into fourteen chapters and covers drawing design details such as collars, sleeves, drapery, pants and skirts among others on the figure. The chapter on silhouettes is illustrated in more varied and contemporary techniques. Additionally, many of these chapters include a "drawing glossary" of various styles and garment details that are essential (but may be obscure) for the student to recognize. These chapters will help the student not only to draw these garments, but also to identify fashions and garment details, as well as understanding the history behind the clothing. There is a much more extensive chapter on rendering with new techniques as well as chapters on plaids, stripes, knits and accessories

The third part, "The Extras", has five very important chapters. The Walking Figure, Menswear, Children, Volume and Manipulating the Figure have been included for the more advanced student.

Last, I briefly discuss the concept of style. I am asked about this more than any other subject. It is my hope that by the time the student reaches the end of this book, they will have an understanding of the concepts of fashion drawing, both basic and advanced techniques, of their own talents, goals, and a glimmer of their own personal style.

Student Resources

Illustrating Fashion STUDIO

- **Watch videos** that bring chapter concepts to life including 15 video tutorials on basic, intermediate and advanced illustration techniques

- **Practice skills** with new drawing exercises for each chapter

Fairchild Books offers STUDIO access free with new book purchases (order ISBN 9781501323546); it is also sold separately through Bloomsbury Fashion Central (www.BloomsburyFashionCentral.com).

Instructor's Resources

- Instructor's Guide with grading guidelines for chapter exercises

- *BFC First Day of Class—Learning with STUDIO* PowerPoint presentation

- *BFC First Day of Class—Learning with STUDIO* Student Registration Flyer (PDF)

All resources are available via www.BloomsburyFashion Central.com.

I believe this book can be used as a textbook from the beginning to the end of a course of study. It can also be kept as a reference book to be used after the student is out of school. Teachers can use it as a text or to supplement what they already teach. Additionally, merchandising students can use it to help them with their courses in fashion and fashion art.

I care very deeply about the process of learning and the quality level for the students and teachers that are involved in this process. In the short time that we are involved with a student, a teacher has to create a minor miracle. A teacher must not only impart the facts, but also help to expand the student's world and bring out the best potential and talent in each and every one of them.

My hope is that this book will be of some help. I hope it will help students to conquer their fear of drawing and teach them how to take the rules and concepts and make them their own. And in making them their own, they will be able to draw a beautiful, rewarding piece of artwork that is—above all—personal and unique.

Acknowledgments

I was very fortunate to have parents that nurtured and encouraged my artwork as long ago as I can remember. I want to thank them for sending me to art school, letting me study what made me happy, and for supporting me throughout my career. Watching my mother make beautiful clothing was one of my inspirations to study fashion.

There have been many teachers—many who are no longer with us—that have been very special to me from the very beginning. I want to thank all of them, but especially Julia Winston, Mae Stevens Baranik, Ruth McMurray, Ana Ishikawa, and Beatrice Dwan. A most special thanks to Frances Neady and Bill Ronin, two teachers that taught me that caring, inspiration, and guidance were as important and as necessary as the subject matter.

Thank you to Geraldine Stutz who hired me for my first illustration job at Henri Bendel. From my years at *Women's Wear Daily,* a very special thanks to Rudy Millendorf, the art director who was greatly responsible for the early years of my career, and fashion editors Tibby Taylor and June Weir for their guidance, as well as all the exceptionally talented fashion illustrators that I worked with over the twenty-five years that I spent at *WWD*.

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I would like to thank the following people for their constructive, helpful, and thoughtful reviews: Lauren Rudd, Middle Tennessee State University; Mary Jane Matranga, Indiana University; Aleta Ballard De Ruiz, Tennessee State University; Charlynn Brandom, Phoenix Chicago. This book benefited greatly by their input.

When I was made an honorary member of the International Textile and Apparel Association in 1993, Olga Kontzias and Pamela Kirshen Fishman of Fairchild Books and Visuals suggested that I write the first edition of this book. I am grateful for the opportunity and the confidence that they had in me.

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An additional thanks to the Bloomsbury team who handled the development, art, and production of the text including Claire Cooper, Production Editor, and Eleanor Rose, In-House Designer.

And to Mary Capozzi, very special thank you for all her technical and moral support. I could not have finished this edition without her.

And last, to the hundreds of students who were (and are) in my classes; if not for their questions and curiosity, this book would never have been. A million thanks!

Getting Started

Fashion art is the combination of clothing (which has its own life) and the figure (with its own life) becoming one. The fashion artist can take a garment and transform it—convey a mood—set a style—or give it an attitude. The fashion artist can create that one woman wearing that one garment and make it perfect.

Fashion art is an historical record of a piece of clothing and a period of time. The earliest cave art showed people wearing certain garments. Throughout history, whenever someone was painted or sketched, what they wore became an important indication of their station in life. When we look at the portraits by Sargent or Gainsborough, the men and women they painted were wearing the clothing that they thought best represented their place in society.

In contemporary times, we have seen how the great fashion artists of the day illustrated the most fashionable women in their best clothing. Eric and Bouché's drawings of the elegant women of the 40s and 50s—for example the Duchess of Windsor or Marlene Dietrich wearing Schiaparelli, Dior, or Balenciaga—showed us the ultra-sophistication of that period.

Kenneth Paul Block's drawings of Babe Paley, Gloria Guiness, and Jacqueline Kennedy helped us sense the polish of the early 60s. Antonio's illustrations of the 70s and 80s showed us the new, young, modern women breaking the rules and setting their own styles.

Fashion art was also used by retail stores to project their images. Their illustrations often identified the store before the customer even saw the logo or name. In the 50s and 60s Dorothy Hood's wash drawings became the symbol for Lord & Taylor and Esther Larson's brush and ink drawings identified Bergdorf Goodman. Kenneth Paul Block and J. Hyde Crawford's charcoal illustrations were Bonwit Teller's image in the 60s and 70s.

When I was at *Women's Wear Daily*, the Paris couture was always covered by artists, because photographs were not permitted until a certain amount of time had elapsed after the collection was shown.

Fashion art plays a major role in the design world. After the concept and research of a collection are established the fashion designer does a series of drawings called *croquis*. *Croquis* is the French word for a small, rough sketch. They lack specific detail, but still show the proportions and silhouettes of the clothing with a sense of style and flare. They are also referred to as design development or thumbnail sketches

The next stages include more detailed artwork that begins to focus on fabrication and details. The final stage is a finished piece of art that conveys the feeling and attitude of the garment—along with all the elements of detail, fabrication, proportion, and accessories—as if the clothes were on the runway or photographed in a magazine.

Other than the traditional fashion illustration, there are other roles for the fashion artist, as well. For example, the flat sketch is another form of fashion artwork. These are sketches of the clothing, worked over a flats figure with realistic, rather than fashion proportions. They can be hand or computer generated. They are often hand drawn with rulers and French curves. The line is exact and all the pieces are in proportion to each other. Many items in sportswear, menswear, and children's wear are designed only in flats. Additionally, a "spec" (or specification) is a flat with the various garment measurements indicated, for example, center back, shoulder, and sleeve lengths.

Today, with more overseas manufacturing, the role of the fashion artist is even greater. Finished sketches, flats, and specs travel thousands of miles to be worked on by people who do not speak similar languages. Artwork is the universal means of communication. Because of this, accuracy, proportion, and detail are vital.

To be a fashion artist, you must understand concepts; have flexibility in drawing, plus an open mind that is always ready to accept change. You need all the technical knowledge of anatomy and clothing details, as well as a knowledge of fashion—both historical and contemporary. With time and practice, a sense of fantasy, passion, and the right amount of reality, you will see that there are no limits to what can be achieved.

How Artists Develop

Drawing is a combination of three elements: the brain, the eyes, and the hands. When you look at a blank piece of paper you know exactly what you want to see on it—a beautiful and exciting piece of artwork. In the beginning, your hands do not have the technical skills, nor your brain the wealth of knowledge to achieve this.

Growth involves time. No matter how much you practice, the element of time is most important. If you sat for one week and drew nothing but heads, they would certainly improve, but over a period of one year they would become drawings with much more substance.

As your work develops, you reach different levels of acceptance. At the beginning, you are probably happy to achieve anything that even resembles a fashion figure! Let's refer to this as level one. As time goes on, you want something better. This becomes level two.

The frustrating thing is that there is no smooth transition between these stages and you cannot get there in one step. You draw something, rip it up and throw it away—one after another. It is extremely frustrating until you realize that you are not losing your talent—you are just not ready to reach the next place. The positive part, however, is that level one is no longer acceptable.

The most valuable thing to do at this time is to relax and practice what you do well—a head, a garment detail, or a specific rendering technique. Not only will you improve your skills, you will build the necessary confidence that will enable you to advance and refine your skills.

You finally reach level two and after a while, the same thing happens again. This process goes on all our lives. If it doesn't, there is no growth. The positive part is that you begin to build a reserve bank of the techniques and skills you do very well and that you can refer to when you reach these plateaus.

In all the years that I have been an illustrator, I have accumulated a huge reserve bank of resources that I can use at any time. When I reach a level that is frustrating to me, I have many techniques and solutions that can get me through.

Am I always completely satisfied with my art? Not at all. I know that it is impossible to do the most perfect, wonderful, creative drawing every single time, no matter how long you've worked or how talented you are. The most you can do is the best possible level of work at the time you are doing it. We all have areas in which we are best and those that are more difficult, which require extra studying and practice. It is essential to accept the fact that there are techniques and concepts that will take years of practice to achieve even mediocre results.

A piece of artwork is not about attacking a piece of paper, nor should it be an accident. Granted, along the way an accident can produce an interesting result, but consistency is what your ultimate goal should be. Consistency comes from understanding concepts and developing skills. It is the combination of seeing, analysing, making decisions, and solving problems. It is setting the best possible—but not impossible—standards.

If you have no standards to look to, or no past to compare your work to, then how far can your work reach? If everything is acceptable and there is no growth and

experimentation, ultimately nothing will ever be great. Over the years and with hard work and dedication, you polish your skills and develop your technique so that your work will grow technically and creatively. Your concepts, design and art skills will become more sophisticated and refined.

Let's hope this process never stops; there should never be an end.

Line Quality

Think of writing. Writing is the most personal form of line quality. Write your name. You are not aware of dark, light, thick, thin, or how you are holding the pencil. A signature has the kind of line quality that is unique to you alone. It comes from within and seems quite natural. Was it always that simple? No!

Think back to when you were first learning how to write in script. The teacher was writing the letters on the blackboard. You were desperately trying to follow her, at the same time thinking of how you were holding you pencil. Never, never, will I ever be able to do this—you were saying to yourself—as you were also trying to stay between the lines of the ruled paper.

But one day, with much practice, you began to write easily. You were not using ruled paper anymore—but the words still are on a straight line. You became more aware of what you were writing than how you were writing. In fact, after a while, you were not even writing with all the loops and dots that you were taught originally.

Everyone develops a personal way of writing, and yet, you still are able to read what the others wrote. It became your own natural and unique line—your signature.

After a time, you used a bold line when you wanted to make an emphatic statement or a more gentle line when you wanted to write a gracious thank-you note. It came from within. You were at one with all the elements of writing without being aware of it.

The same principle applies to drawing. How can you make it look effortless and still have control at the same time? The line should come from within. You should feel comfortable, as if you are "at one with the pencil or marker."

In art, line quality is the sensitivity to what you are drawing. Capturing the thicks, thins, darks, lights, hards, softs, as well as the gentle and the bold. It is capturing the essence of a garment, using only line. Line quality is different than rendering. When you add tones you begin to render. The line brings us into the kind of garment it is, the rendering gives us the specifics. However, if you do not capture the line quality—no rendering in the world will make it correct.

Some of you have a light touch and would do well with extra fine or fine markers, harder pencils, and softer brushes. Others—with a heavier touch—will feel more comfortable with supplies that can be pressed down on without fear of breakage. Bolder markers, softer pencils, and bristle brushes would be preferable. It is extremely important that you feel at ease with the supplies you are using. Not everything works for everyone.

To begin to draw, hold your pencil or marker in a similar manner to the way you write. This is the way you have been doing it for most of your life and is the easiest way. It should move around in your hand naturally as you draw. Unless you are very comfortable with your supplies, you cannot get a smooth and flowing line. The most important thing is not how you hold your pencil—but the results that you are getting with it.

If at any point you are not satisfied, or feel inhibited with the kind of line you are drawing, consider changing that particular supply, or even the way you are working with it.

Developing Line Quality

Think of a line as the tool to interpret the garment you want to draw. Before actually putting your hand to the paper, think about the line necessary to illustrate the garment.

- Silk crepe would require a "slow" line.
- Taffeta would need a short, bouncy line.
- Satin would demand a smooth, round line.
- Mohair would be best with a fuzzy, soft line.
- Lace would be beautiful in a flowing, lyrical line.
- Chiffon would need a gently flowing line.

After thinking and deciding what kind of line is appropriate and "right" for you and your drawing, begin to make these same gestures or movements in the air, almost as if you were working on a sheet of paper. Try to think "if I had to represent this garment with only one line, what would be the most perfect one?" Fast and quick, slow and smooth, soft and shadowy, or hard and crisp? Keep doing this until your gestures begin to imitate the line that best represents the garment. Slowly, bring this down to a sheet of scrap paper and start scribbling in the garment, keeping it abstract. When you feel a certain rhythm taking place, begin to draw. In the beginning, the line will be self-conscious, but time and practice will slowly make it more natural.

The line should capture the feeling of the design and the fabric from which it is made. One should sense the different textures of the garment and try to capture a different line quality in each of the parts. Buttons, or trim, taffeta ruffles, a fur collar, a big satin-skirted ball gown, or a luxurious mohair sweater should not feel the same.

You will know that you are successful when you are not aware of the line quality at all, but are more involved with what you are actually drawing.

A bad habit to develop is to draw one line by drawing many lines. Don't use ten strokes to make a line, try to get it with fewer ones. Students generally use many more lines than are necessary. As an easy exercise, study a garment—either from life or a photo—and see how long you can draw before it becomes necessary to break the line.

Above all—economy of line will give you the best results.

Remember, the best line of all is the most natural—and the most personal.

Art Supplies

Art supplies are a means of enhancing or explaining a piece of artwork. Remember: Just a simple piece of paper and a pencil are all you need to do a drawing.

- No art supply will cover up a bad piece of artwork.
- No art supply will give your work a style.

Not everyone can work well within all mediums. Many factors determine how well we work with certain supplies. Some artists have a heavier touch and work better using something that they can press down with. Others have light, delicate touch and do well with fine pens and pencils. Some achieve better results with water color, others do better with markers. The most important thing to keep in mind it that you have to feel comfortable with the supplies you are using.

School should expose you to the many different kinds of supplies and their uses. Through practice and experimentation, you will learn those that work best for you and those with which you work best. However, what doesn't work well for you at one time in your life might work very well at another.

Every time you go to an art store there are new and different supplies. In the following section, I have broken them down into categories and have explained the different types of supplies and their uses.

Pencils

The most common supply is the lead pencil ("lead" pencils are made of graphite and are not a danger to the student or artist). This is what we grew up writing with. Leads come in gradations that range from H (or hard)—which is used for more technical purposes or to sketch a figure before rendering—to B, which is soft and used more for sketching and shading.

There are gradations that range from H to 9H and from B to 8B, all of which afford different hard or soft gradations. Many students find mechanical pencils—which can be filled with different leads—work very well. Additionally, I strongly suggest that you have a small, battery-operated pencil sharpener because it is much easier than the small, hand-operated ones. It doesn't break the pencil point and allows the artist to have a very sharp point at all times.

Colored Pencils

I find colored pencils to be some of the most useful and one of my personal favorite art supplies. They can work well on their own of be the perfect complement to markers, wash, or watercolor. Because they can be sharpened to a fine point at all times, they are wonderful for fine details, for example, topstitching, pockets or seams, as well as shadows and details on the face and hair.

Colored pencils come in hard and soft varieties, and in sets ranging from 12 to over 100 pencils. They are also sold separately, so a particular color can be purchased on its own. Drawings in this book were worked with 90% cool grey and black Prismacolor pencils.

Pastel pencils, which I have used for many renderings in this edition, offer a soft line that can be smudged with a tissue or Q tip. They too are available in sets or individually. White is wonderful for highlights and dark grey or black for accents.

Powdered Eye Shadows

When used with its foam-rubber applicator, powdered eye shadows produce velvety, soft lines with no distinct edges. The gray colors are good for shadows. The brown tones can be used for face and skin shadows. Colors produce wonderful effects for sheers and soft prints. E.L.F is an inexpensive brand available on line, many in sets of nearly 100 colors.

Erasers

I believe in the eraser. It can be very helpful in refining an underdrawing. Students are lead to believe that the first line must be perfect and because of this pressure they become very uptight when drawing. Erasing can make it much easier to achieve a good result, especially at the beginning. There are many pink and white erasers that are good for general use. Mechanical pencils have refillable erasers and there are erasers that come in a mechanical pencil form, which can be clicked up to give you an additional amount.

I find the kneaded eraser the most useful. It can remove lines from a light preliminary drawing without hurting the paper. I also find it excellent to lightly erase my line drawings before using color. It removes the top layer of lead and leaves just enough outline to guide me in my work. It can also be used to create a highlight and to clean up the paper after you finish the art.

Markers

Markers are an invention of the 1960s. We are very used to selecting from an infinite variety of them in every conceivable point size and color. It is difficult to imagine doing any artwork without them now.

Black ink markers and pens come in many widths, ranging from extra fine to bold. The most important consideration is that the marker be comfortable in your hand and easy to manipulate. Try them out before purchasing them. Most markers are waterproof, but whenever using any water with them, do test on a scrap—before you work on your original.

Colored markers come in such variety that it is often difficult to make a choice. They come in many different nibs—fine, medium, broad, and chiseled. Some markers have all the tips in one. Test color on the brand of marker paper that you are using, not on the scrap paper from the art store. Color does vary from paper to paper.

There are also "blenders." These are clear markers that blend marker or colored pencil colors together, making it possible to achieve various effects. Also, gray markers come in both warm and cool color ranges, from 1 to 9, with 1 representing the lightest, and 9 representing the darkest.

Remember, before using any marker draw a box to see if the color bleeds out. This will enable you to determine how close to the edge of your drawing you can go, and check the color on the actual paper you are using. In recent years, various size fine line marker pens have largely replaced the traditional pen and pen point.

Brushes

The best possible brush is made from sable hair. They are very costly, and, at the beginning, not that necessary.

There are many synthetic sable brushes that work very well.

A number 6, 7, or 8 brush with a pointed tip is a good one for starters. For very fine work, you can use a 00, 0, or 1.

Because these very fine brushes are not that expensive, it pays to buy one made of sable. In addition to sable or synthetic sable, bristle brushes also work well with acrylics and water color.

When you begin to add to your brush collection, you can experiment with different sizes and shapes. After using a brush, shake the excess water off and create a point. Never store a brush with the hair side down—rest them with the hairs up or laid on their side.

Watercolor

Watercolor comes in both cake and tube forms. The prices vary greatly, but student-quality watercolors are quite good.

Purchase the kind with which you feel most comfortable.

Some students find the tube colors easier to mix, but there are inexpensive cake sets that work very well.

Mixing dishes can be costly, so you could use a glass or plastic plate, and water can be put in any container or cup on hand.

Gouache

Gouache gives a more opaque color than watercolor, and is available in tubes. There is a wide range of colors available.

Paper

Paper can serve many needs, from very inexpensive varieties (that we can put ideas on) to very expensive ones (for elaborate finishes). They come in many sizes—5 × 7, 8 × 10, 9 × 12, 11 × 14, 14 × 17, or 18 × 24. Different sizes serve different needs. Various types of paper include:

- Photocopy paper. I find this wonderful for underdrawings and idea sketching. Because it is less expensive than tracing paper and can still be transparent, it does not inhibit the creative process as a more expensive paper might.
- Tracing paper, which is a thin, transparent paper that is very easy to see through. It is also used for corrections and for protecting finished art.
- Marker paper, which is made to work well with markers. It is slightly see-through to enable you to be able to trace. Some brands allow you to work from the back.
- All-purpose paper. Usually this is a very acceptable quality white paper. For a relatively low price, you get many sheets, which take both pencil and markers well.
- Bristol vellum paper with a rougher finish is very good for watercolor. Since there is no texture it works very well for fashion art.
- Newsprint, which is a lesser-quality paper that is very off-white in color. Generally, it is used for sketching rather than finished art.

Other Supplies and Equipment

These include pastels, oil pastels, acrylics, conté crayon, charcoal, watercolor and pastel pencils, luma dyes, as well as others. These all are used for specific needs. In addition to these supplies, there is other equipment that you will need to either buy or develop.

Tear Sheets

Tear sheets are your reference file and is one of the most helpful tools you can own. Each time you look through a fashion magazine or newspaper, clip what you like, what inspires you, or what you think is important. Buy clear plastic or manila envelopes in uniform sizes and label them—faces, collars, poses, hairstyles, and so forth, and place the appropriate photo or drawing in it. This must be started from day one. That way, whenever you have to refer to a specific pose, for example, a profile view of a face, you will have it on hand. Remember that if you need to see a certain style (for example, a plaid, a neckline, or a shoe), it might not be in a current fashion magazine. The clear plastic ones work very well for fabric swatches.

Fashion Magazines—Collection Issues

These come out several times a year. Often they are expensive, but they almost always have runway photos from the many fashion collections. It is a quick way to find a good pose, and also serves as a very good reference for specific fabrics that might not be easy to find. There are also many fashion websites available to keep informed of the latest collections.

These are the basic supplies and equipment used in fashion art. However, there are many more supplies— enough to fill an entire book and they are constantly changing and being refined! By the time this book is in print, there will be an entire new crop. Therefore, it is very important to visit art stores regularly to see what is new. Just remember, art students tend to overbuy art supplies. Often, too many can be too confusing.

The three most valuable art supplies are your brain, your eyes, and your hands. When these three work well with each other, you have the best beginning. Remember, a good artist can work wonders with any art supply.

Illustrating Fashion
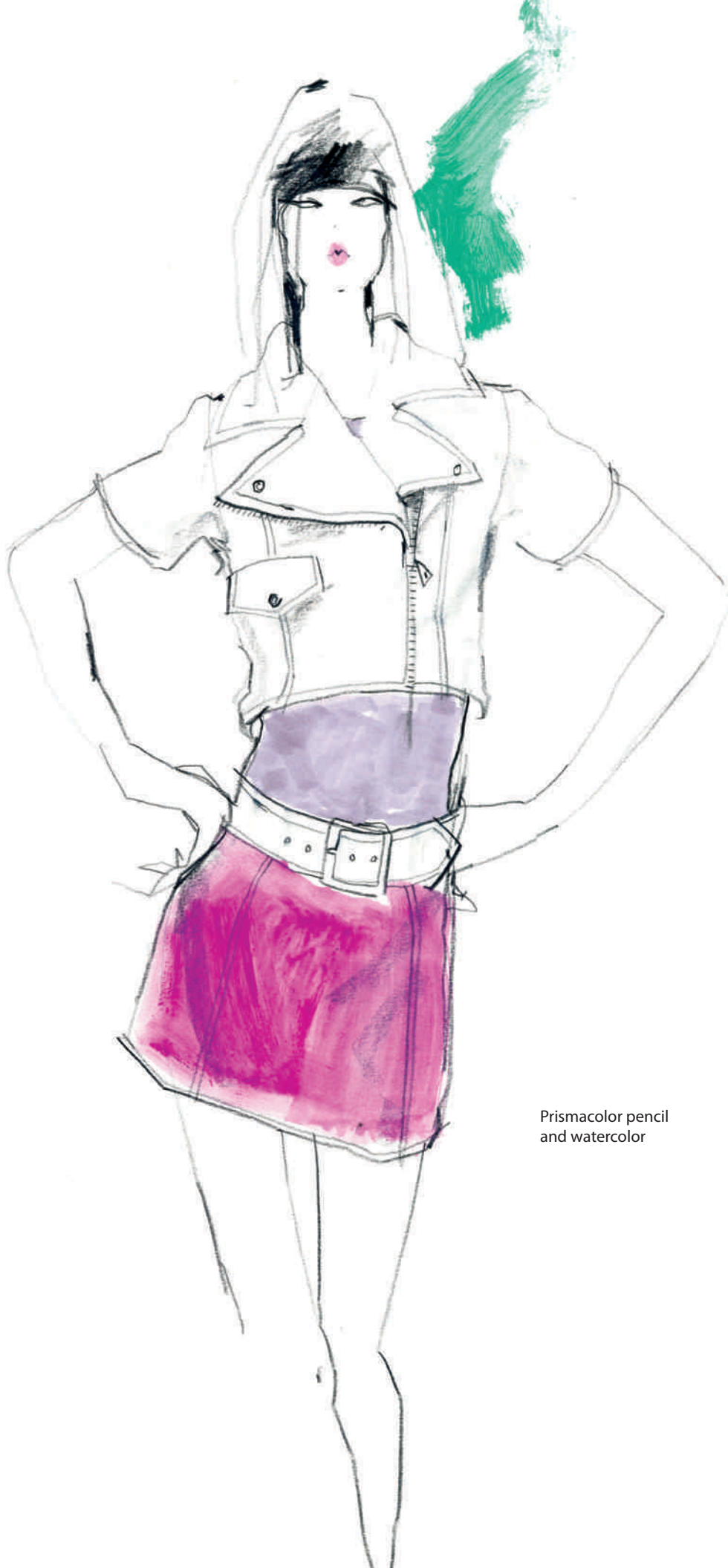
Prismacolor pencil
and watercolor

Part 1

The Fashion Figure

Lagerfeld/Chanel 2004
Prismacolor pencil and
marker

Proportion and the Fashion Figure

One of the most difficult concepts to grasp in fashion art is the determination of the right proportion for the fashion figure. The human body, whether in fashion or in life, basically has been the same throughout time—always two legs, two arms, a torso, and a head.

The fashion figure is that person whose look and body represents the perfect proportion at a given time. Everyone has a different idea of how many "heads" high the fashion figure should be. We can only think "generally" as opposed to "definitely," because we, as fashion artists, are drawing the ideal figure of the moment. When you look at old films, paintings, or magazines, the fashion figure seems to take a different focus in each decade.

To grasp this concept, you must be completely open to change, because the figure that worked in the 1940s will not work in the 2000s. The clothing and fit—as well as the undergarments—determine the proportions of the fashion figure. Sometimes something considered the "ideal" of the moment during one period looks very different in another.

When looking at photos of Marilyn Monroe from the 1950s, many might find her a bit heavy and untoned by today's standards.

Marilyn Monroe aside, in the 1950s, the ideal fashion model was about five foot eight and bone thin. The underpinnings that would further change the body (for example, girdles, waist cinchers, and padded bras) would make them appear even thinner and more perfect for the clothing of the period. The model looked sophisticated and aloof.

When studying the photographs of that period, you can see that their poses were the result of the restrictions the garments placed on them. Often, one leg was in front of the other and the arms were placed on the hips. The look was tall and willowy and the poses had studied movement.

Duchess of Windsor

Jackie Kennedy Onassis

Audrey Hepburn

Attitudes reflect the
change in fashion.

The look of the early 1960s was based on polish and perfection. Audrey Hepburn and Jacqueline Kennedy were forging the way to a younger sophistication. Givenchy designed the perfect clothing for them to wear. They became the ideals of the moment—thin and elegant. They were worldly and sophisticated with a hint of glamour and youth. Their look was studied, but had a less formal and more casual quality to it. This was in marked contrast to the very serious and formal style set by their predecessors, such as the Duchess of Windsor. They brought a new life to the fashion ideal.

The middle of the 1960s gave us one of the most dramatic changes in the fashion focus. Designers such as Mary Quant gave us the miniskirt and never has the attitude of fashion been freer. The short skirt allowed

the fashion model the ability to leap across the pages of the fashion magazines.

Photographers such as Richard Avedon and illustrators such as Antonio gave new movement to the fashion figure. Suddenly women wanted to look younger. The unapproachable look of the 1950s models, as with Dovima and Suzy Parker, gave way to Twiggy, Jean Shrimpton, and Penelope Tree. They were young and spirited and their bodies were virtually free of all underpinnings. Skirts were barely there and the figure seemed to be all legs. The fashion figure was less curvy and the look was more "girl" than "woman." The makeup was less serious—more fun. Falls gave hair more volume than ever before.

From the 1970s on, the fashion model became more natural. Makeup looked less artificial

The 1990's brought us the "supermodels", Kate Moss, Linda Evangelista, Naomi Campbell and Christy Turlington, and instead of underpinnings, the "perfect" fashion figure was exercised, toned, and healthy—no longer the thin, clothes-hanger, but a woman with a more real body. She was neither ultra-sophisticated nor little-girlish—instead, a liberated woman, completely at ease with herself.

We must learn from this to be flexible about what the ideal proportion is and to accept the fact that it is open to change. Remember, what looks perfect in one decade looks quite strange in another.

Even "retro" does not duplicate a decade perfectly. The inspiration might come from a certain time, but we bring our own time to it and change it just enough to look comfortable and "right."

A woman who is 5'7" can have a perfectly proportioned body, but so can a woman that is 5'5" or 5'2".

A fashion figure, however, must be taller than the average woman

so there is more of her with which to show the clothes—more to exaggerate and give great drama on the runway, either in a photograph or in artwork. When a model walks down a runway, the space she is in is larger than life. You are seeing her in a large, unnatural environment and if she were not tall, she would disappear in that space.

I have found that for now the ten-head fashion figure works best. Does this mean a nine- or eleven- head figure is completely wrong? Absolutely not.

Let's imagine a room filled with the most perfect models. Even among the perfect, each one will have something that another does not. Some will have longer legs, others a longer neck or torso, or perhaps squarer shoulders.

In a drawing, we want to represent the best possible figure for the clothing and so—to show an overpowering blouse with big sleeves, big collar, and a lot of bodice detail—the figure might have to have a bit longer waist and have a longer neck.

To show an exaggerated batwing sleeve, the arms might have to be a bit longer. To show a short miniskirt, the legs might have to be somewhat longer. Different clothing requires different focus. Different focus requires different exaggerations. As artists, we are choosing the most perfect of the perfect.

Let's look at the three figures on page 9, all in the same dress, all wearing a belt at the "waistline." The first one has a narrow belt, which sits on the waist. The second has a wider belt, which sits above the natural waist.

The third has a wide belt, which sits below the natural waist. You can see in all three cases that the definition of "waistline" changes. More important, the relationship between the top and bottom of the dress changes as well.

Many factors influence proportion. So, be open and flexible.

In this next section, we will discuss the fashion proportions of this century. You will see that in each decade, different parts of the body became more or less focused upon, for example small waists or no waists; emphasis on the breasts, the hips, or the shoulders; or a curvier figure.

As new dress forms are made each year, the measurements are determined by the ideal body type of that year.

When you line up size 8 dress forms over the last 10 years, you can see the most amazing variations of the same-size figure.

A fashion figure must be taller than average.

Clearly, the following criteria determine the ideal figure of a specific time:

- The model or celebrity of the moment.
- Focus on certain parts of the body, also the posture of the figure.
- Fit of the clothing and any undergarments, shoulder pads, or other devices—or lack of them.

Think back to Jean Harlow in the 1930s, Katharine Hepburn in the 1940s, Grace Kelly and Marilyn Monroe in the 1950s, Audrey Hepburn in the 1960s, Lauren Hutton in the 1970s, Madonna in the 1980s, Princess Diana in the 1990s, and Nicole Kidman and Halle Berry in the 2000s. Each is a perfect example of their time. The clothes they wore perfectly suited their look. It would be hard to imagine any one of them reversing places with each other.

The following is a very general overview of the way the fashion silhouettes of this century have changed the proportion of the body.

At the turn of the century, the body was almost completely covered. The corset gave the figure a very small waist. Skirts molded over the figure and touched the floor, often with bustles and trains. Hats were quite elaborate and gave great importance to the head. The stance of the figure took on a "S" curve. The major designers of this period were Charles Frederick Worth (the "father of couture"), Paul Poiret, Paquin, Doucet, and Fortuny.

The 1920s brought one of the most major changes to the fashion silhouette in the twentieth century. Women showed their legs for the first time in this century. They threw off the elaborate corsets that gave them a very unnatural silhouette and began to wear undergarments of knitted elastic that gave their bodies a flattened, boyish look. The straight

Different clothing requires different focus.
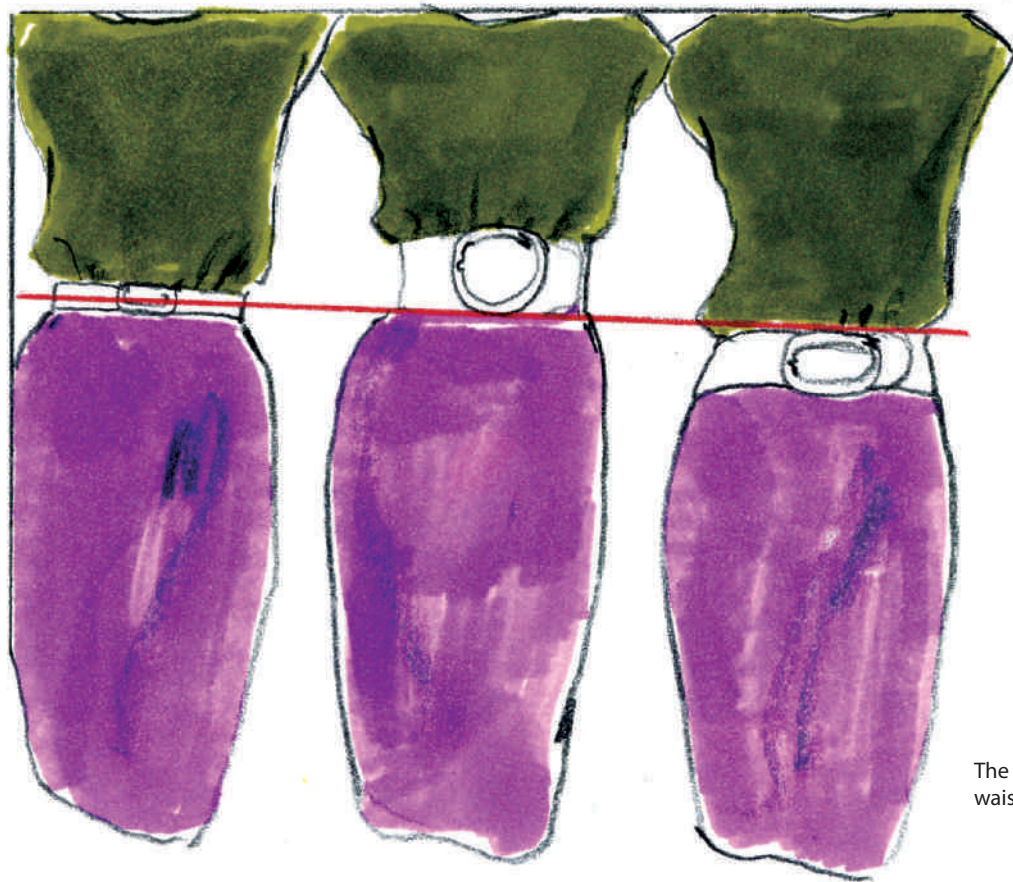
The same dress with three different waistlines changes the proportion.

silhouette was the most popular of the period. During this time, the waistline moved down to the hips. Chanel's "little black dress"— in wool jersey or silk crepe—was the look. Other important designers of this decade were Vionnet, Lanvin, and Patou.

The 1930s brought us such glamorous movie stars as Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Joan Crawford, and Ginger Rogers. The depression made women long for the glamour that their lives did not have. The bias-cut gowns of Madeleine Vionnet gave women a very feminine silhouette. Coats were trimmed with fur, lounging pajamas became fashionable, and suits were smartly

tailored, with hemlines longer at the beginning of the decade and shorter at the end. The look was glamorous and chic. The zipper was born. Schiaparelli, Molyneux, Grès, Mainbocher, Balenciaga, and Lelong were among the important designers of this decade.

World War II brought major changes to the world of fashion. When the Germans occupied France, most of the couture was at a standstill. War time restrictions on fabric gave clothing a short, tailored silhouette. Adrian gave movie stars a padded-shoulder silhouette, clothing had a definite military influence, and the hat became one of the really creative parts of an outfit.

Platform shoes brought new emphasis to the legs. In 1947, Christian Dior's New Look returned to the Paris couture the extravagance the war had taken away. Boned bodices, cinched waists, padded hips, and yards of nearly ankle-length skirts with elaborate petticoats brought the fashion silhouette back to almost what it was at the turn of the century. Other French designers of this decade were Jacques Fath, Maggy Rouff, and Pierre Balmain. The 1940s also gave American fashion a solid start. Designers such as Pauline Trigère, Norman Norell, Hattie Carnegie, and Charles James put Americans on the fashion map.

Doucet 1909

Chanel 1926

Vionnet 1930

Faith Early
1940s

Dior 1947

Charles James
1955

Givenchy 1962
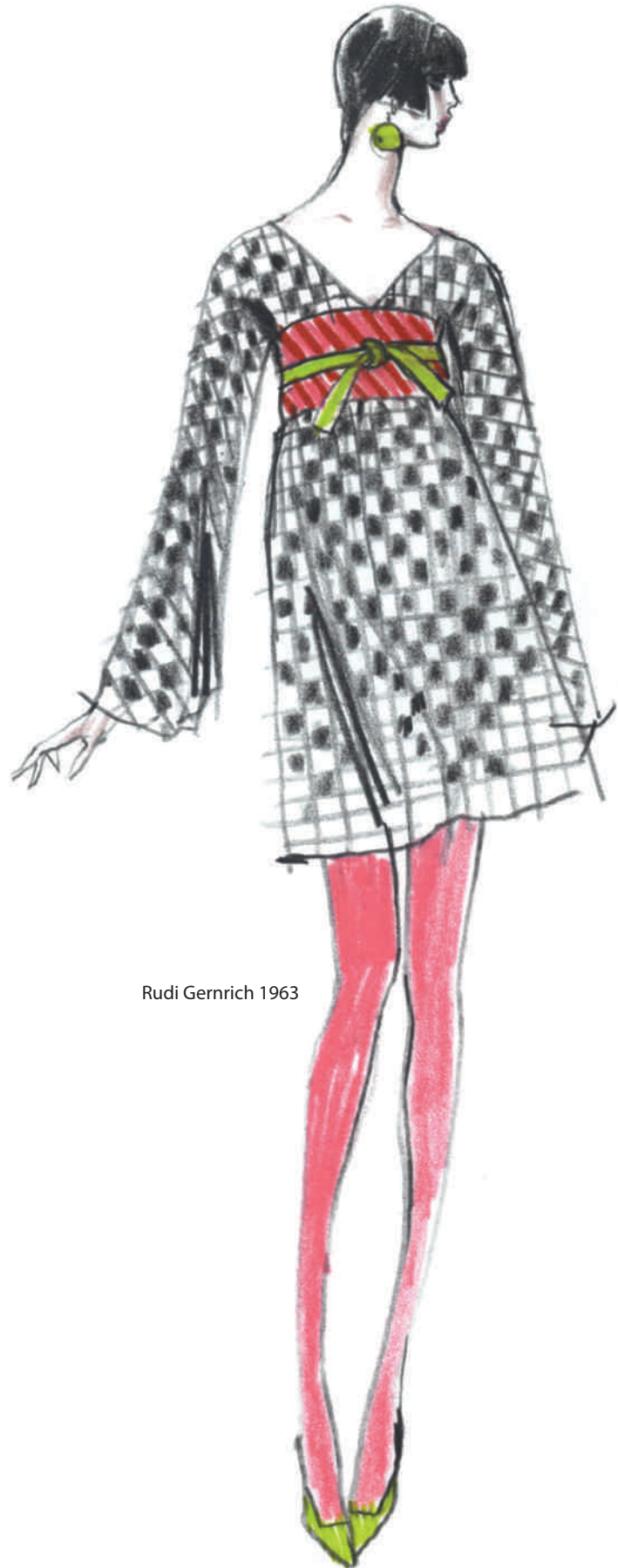
Rudi Gernrich 1963

Yves Saint Laurent
1978
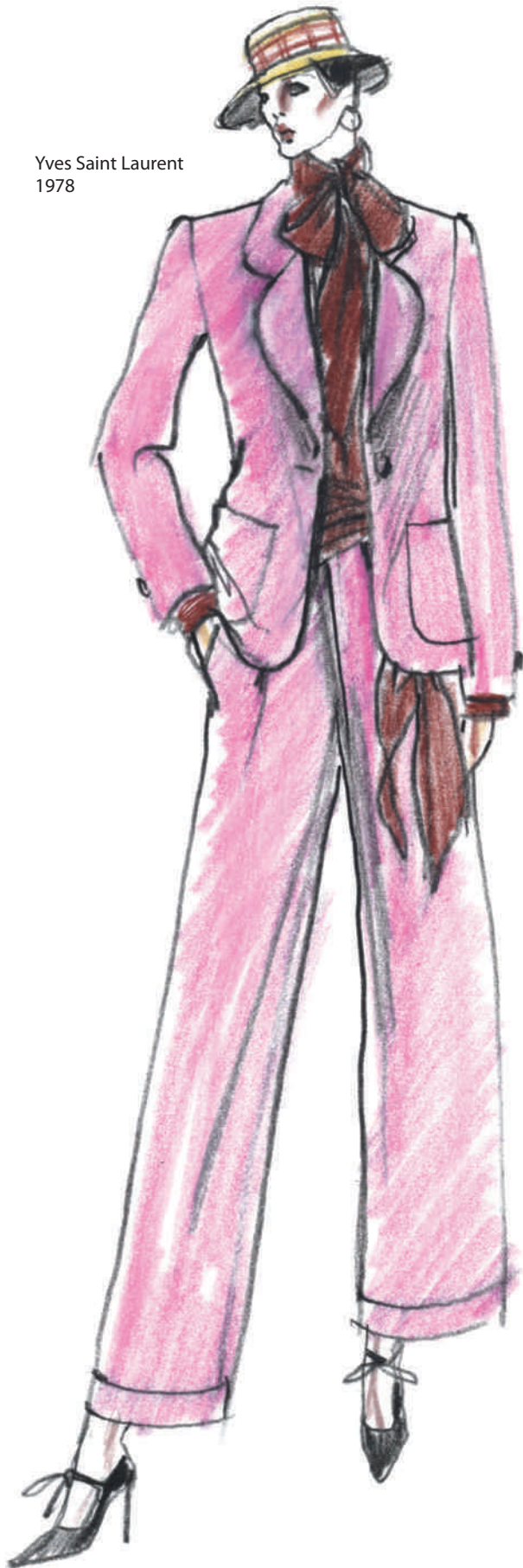
Claude Montana
1985
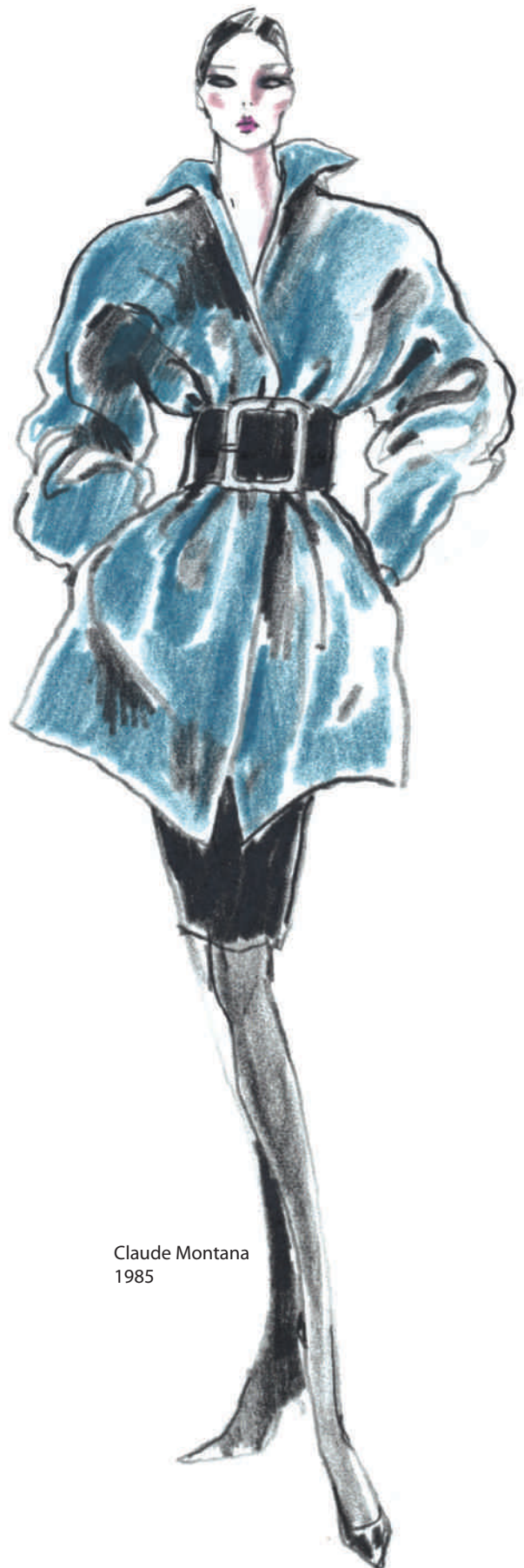
Armani 1991

Ann
Demeulemeester
2000

Celine 2016

The silhouette of the early 1950s gave us a fitted-waist shirtwaist, a more relaxed blouson, and a fitted sheath.

It was in 1957 that fashion was to have its next revolution—Balenciaga introduced the chemise or sack dress. These dresses hung straight, had no waistline, and the hemline was beginning to shorten toward the knee. The chemise, (also interpreted by Givenchy, as well as the "trapeze" introduced by Yves Saint Laurent) allowed the clothing to fall away from the body, which now moved within the garment. The silhouette was geometric and the body was lost under these shapes. Other important designers of the 1950s were Americans—Charles James, Claire McCardell, Anne Klein, Bonnie Cashin, and Vera Maxwell, who were bringing sportswear into its own.

The silhouettes of the early 1960s were continuations of the late 1950s—lightly fitting the body and slowly inching their way shorter. Such designers as Pierre Cardin in Paris, Valentino in Italy, and James Galanos in America were beginning to make their marks.

It was in the middle of the 1960s that fashion would be rocked by another revolution—the miniskirt. It was introduced by Mary Quant in London, André Courrèges in Paris, and Rudi Gernreich in America. Legs were now the focal point of the body. Pantyhose and boots were the new breakthroughs. Skirts were shorter than ever, undergarments were minimal, and hair was either blunt cut by Vidal Sassoon or piled with artificial falls. Rudi Gernreich was America's new avant-garde designer, who

also gave us the first topless bathing suit.

Models of all ethnic persuasions were on the runway and in the magazines. Youth was the look. Dress codes were being broken. Pants were becoming acceptable. Until this time, the influential designers often dictated the acceptable fashion look. Designers were beginning to take their inspirations from what was happening in the streets, the discos, the movies, and music. Young people were dressing their own way, combining the new with thrift shop finds, and making their own dress codes. Trends were coming from the street up, rather than from the couture down.

The 1970s gave us options—mini, midi, or maxi—three silhouettes at the same time, plus the option of pants. It was in 1976 that Yves Saint

Some twentieth-century fashion proportions.

Laurent designed his Gypsy Fantasy collection and the long length was the look for many years to follow. Layers and layers of soft fabrics—quite the opposite of the cookie-cutter look of the 1960s. Other prominent designers of the 1970s were Geoffrey Beene, Bill Blass, Oscar de la Renta, and Halston.

The 1980s gave us a "power dressing" silhouette—padded shoulders, big sleeves, and shorter skirts. Clothing was rich and extravagant. However, the punk look from London was in marked contrast to the rich look of Nancy Reagan. The punk look was defined by purple hair and safety pins, leather clothing and chains. Suddenly, rock stars were setting the fashion and Zandra Rhodes was right on target with her interpretations of this look from London where it began. Jean-Paul

Gaultier, Claude Montana, Kenzo, and Karl Lagerfield gave us fashion from Paris, Issey Miyake and Commes des Garçons from Japan, and Ralph Lauren, Donna Karan, Calvin Klein, Perry Ellis, and Norma Kamali from America.

One of the most important contributions of the 1980s came from Milan—Giorgio Armani, whose relaxed, softly man-tailored silhouettes brought us into the 1990s.

The 1990s brings many silhouettes at the same time—short and long, opaque and sheer. Women combined combat boots with georgette skirts.

Rules once again were broken. Madonna brought underwear into the streets—her bustiers, designed by Gaultier, made shock acceptable.

At the twenty-first century, body perfection ruled. Whether it was spending hours with a personal

trainer or actual cosmetic surgery, the human body reached toned flawlessness.

Movie stars and rock singers appeared in bias cut clinging evening gowns from Versace or Galliano, exposing more of the body than we had ever witnessed. Breasts were accentuated and the navel was exposed with low-rise pants or skirts.

Where will the next fashion revolution come from?

It will come from your world.

When you line up all the silhouettes of this century, you see that in less than one hundred years the silhouette changes to such a degree that is seems as though the body keeps reinventing itself. You also see that fashion is the relationship of the figure to the clothing. Not the body alone—not the clothes alone—both together. They are not separate.

Let's take this one step further.

Here we have the same figure divided in half—the left side represents the 1960s and the right side represents the 1970s.

It is evident that at different time periods certain parts of the body are more in focus than others. It is important in drawing the figure to remember that—even if it doesn't show—there is always a body under the clothing. Whether you can clearly see it or not, it determines how the clothing will hang. Fabric and fit are also determining factors.
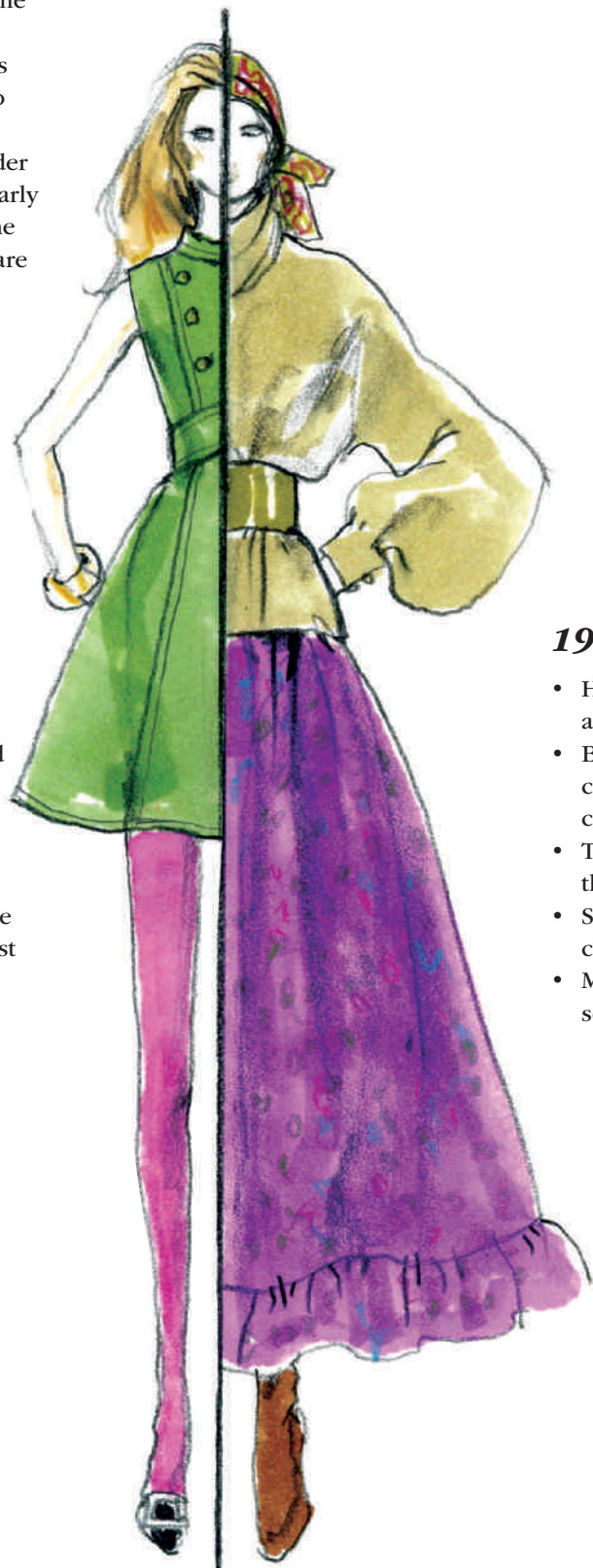
1960s

- Falls of hair cause the head to appear larger.
- Details of the dress are focused more to the top, due to the overall shortness of the dress.
- The waistline appears higher than a normal waist.
- Skirts are the shortest they have ever been. The legs are the most important part of the body.
- Dresses are very structured—fabrics are stiff.

1970s

- Head wraps make the head appear smaller.
- Because of the long length, we can cover the body with more clothing.
- The waistline appears lower than the normal waist.
- Skirts drop to nearly the ankle, completely covering the leg.
- More fluid fabrics allow for a softer silhouette.

Sometimes the body takes over. Sometimes the garment takes over. Sometimes it is more equal. When the body takes over, as in a slinky gown, the garment does not come to life until it is on the body. When the garment takes over, as in a voluminous coat, the body is merely a hanger for the clothing. But many times, it is a combination of both.

Charles Kleibacker
1969

Charles Kleibacker
1984

Prismacolor pencil and marker

Drawing the Fashion Figure

As discussed previously in the section on line quality in "Getting Started," learning to draw the figure is very much like learning to write. In the beginning, you worked on lined paper, used guide lines for directions, and followed the exact rules of penmanship. The letters soon turned into words, the words into sentences, and the sentences into thoughts. After you were really confident with this process, you were able to concentrate on the content, rather than on how the letters were being written.

Learning to draw the fashion figure is a similar process. It is the way you will be able to put your ideas on paper and show the finished product of your designs. Keep in mind that a body is not an exact measurement, and as we have learned in the last chapter, there are many factors that keep changing the fashion figure from one period to another.

The figure we will study is often referred to as a croquis figure. A croquis is a working sketch. It is also a basic fashion body on which clothing can be designed and flats can be worked. It may be the take-off point for more finished art.

Following chapters will concentrate more on such specifics as balance, center front, hands, and faces. In this chapter, we will study the factual breakdown of the fashion figure. This is the "working with lined paper" stage of figure drawing and analysis. After thoroughly understanding these principles, you will begin to slowly work your way into a simple blocking off and gestural approach to drawing the fashion figure. The ultimate goal is to understand the concept of the figure breakdown. Time and practice will give you successful results.

Remember—everyone has their own personal growth rate and no one follows a robot-like order. There will always be one part of the fashion drawing that is easier than another. For some, the face will be easy, for others, the torso, and yet others will find rendering to be simple.

The Fashion Figure

In the beginning, there are certain rules of proportion with which you must become familiar. The figure is measured in "heads," with each head representing one inch. These heads will be used to indicate and place the different parts of the fashion figure. After some practice, all the "heads" will suddenly become a figure and after a while you will be drawing!

Blocking off a Basic Croquis Figure

We will begin by studying the breakdown of the 10-head fashion figure. First, draw a line down the paper and divide it into 10 1-inch sections. Label each line, beginning at the top with 0 and ending at the bottom with 10.

The first section will contain the head, with the chin resting at the 1-inch line.

- 1½" is the shoulder line.
- 2¼" is the apex (or high point) of the bustline.
- 3¼" is the waistline.
- 4" is the fullest part of the hip.
- 4½" is the lowest part of the hip or the crotch. (This measurement is approximately the middle of the fashion figure.)

- 6½" is the knee.
- 9¼" is the ankle.
- 10" is the toe.

Now let's determine widths. Use the head—laid on its side—to measure the widths. This will give a guideline on how wide parts of the figure will be.

- The shoulders are approximately 1½- to 1¾-heads wide. Any particular fashion style may vary this measurement.
- The waist is approximately ¾-heads wide.
- The hips are approximately 1¼-heads wide.
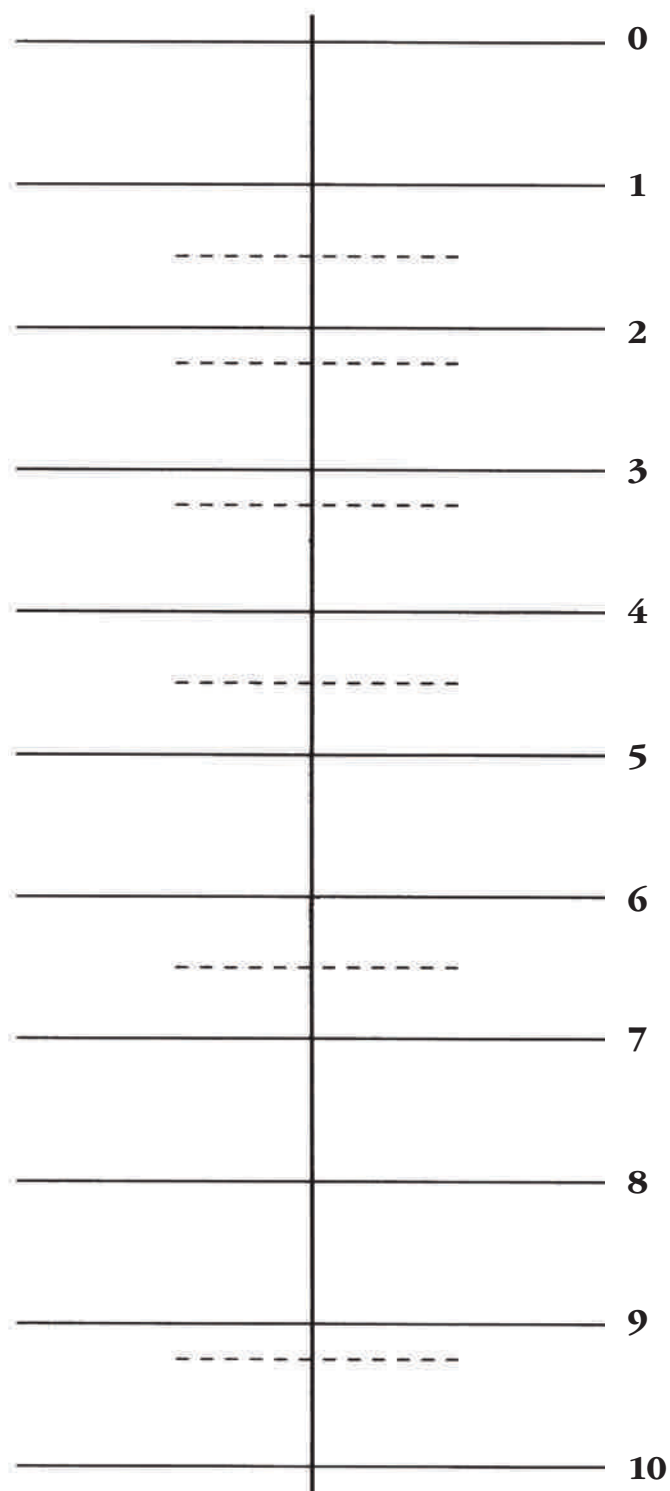
Now that you are aware of the sections and what they represent, you can start to block off the figure:
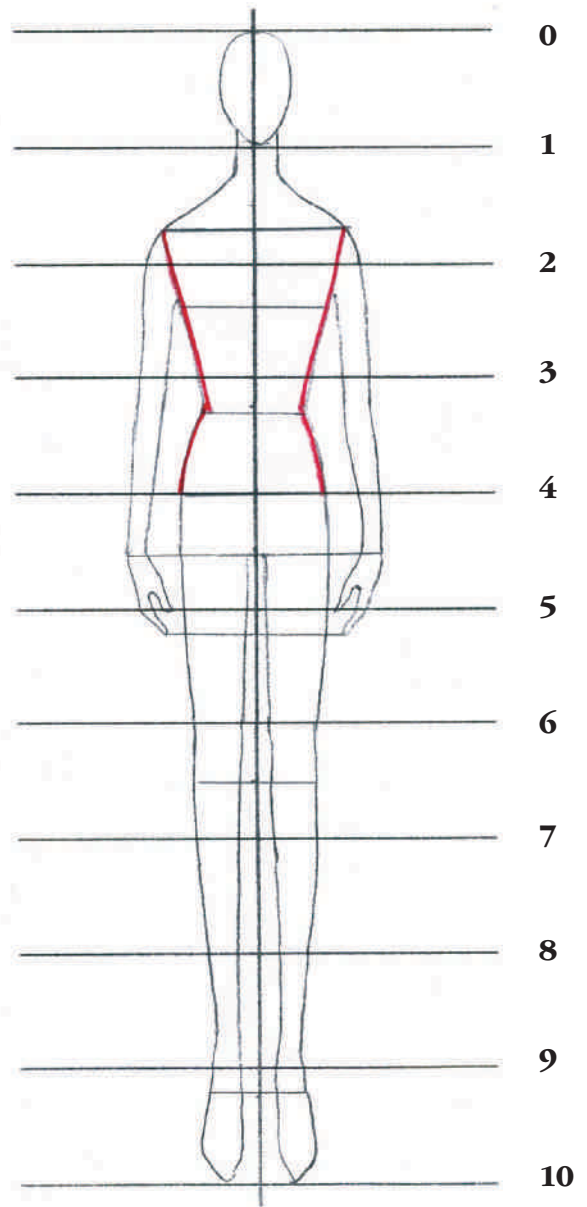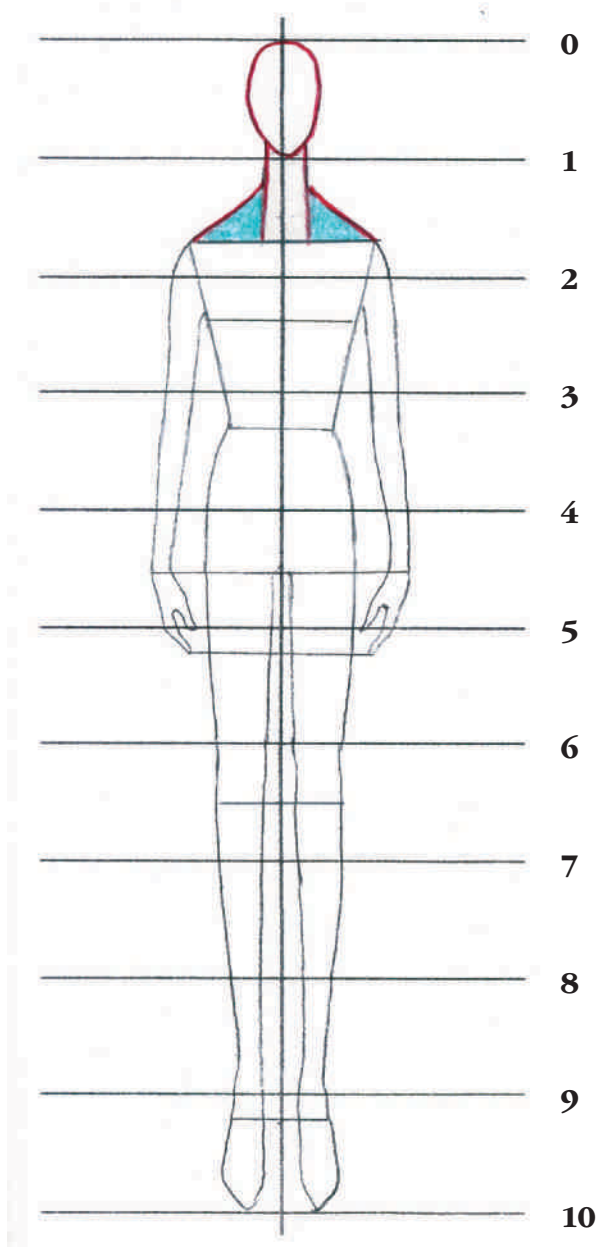
1 Draw an oval in the first section. The neck will touch the shoulder at first, but then you will have to indicate the trapezius muscles. To do this, place a shallow triangle beginning approximately ¼ inch down from the neck to the end of the shoulder (1½").

2 To form the torso, bring a line down from the end of the shoulder to the waistline (3¼"). To indicate the hips, draw a line from the waistline to the fullest part of the hip (4").
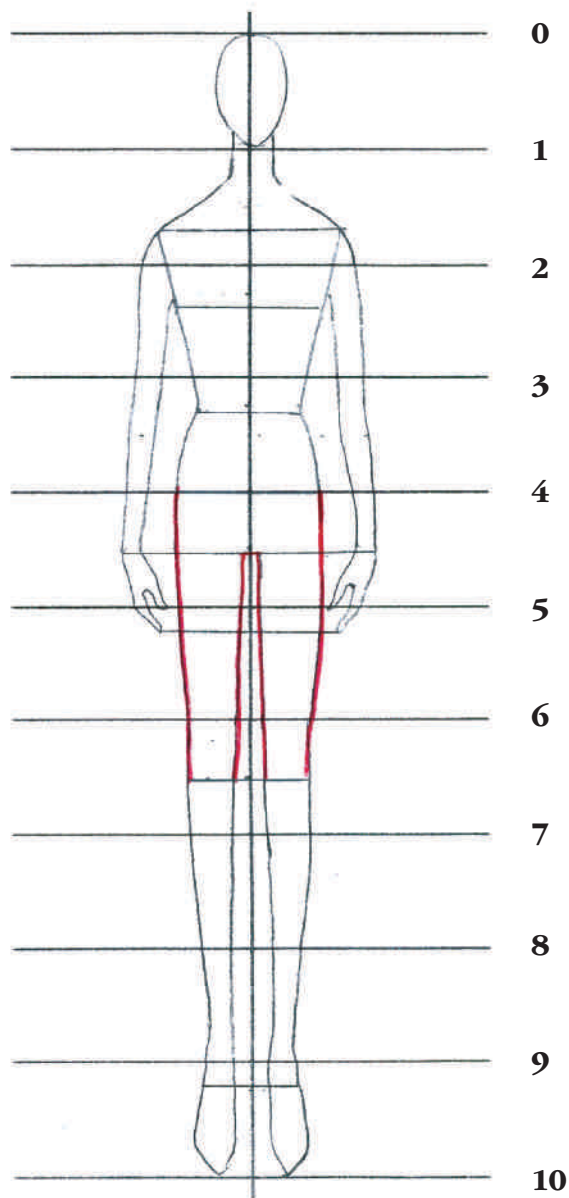
3 To indicate the upper leg, draw slightly tapering straight line from the hip (4") to knee (6½").
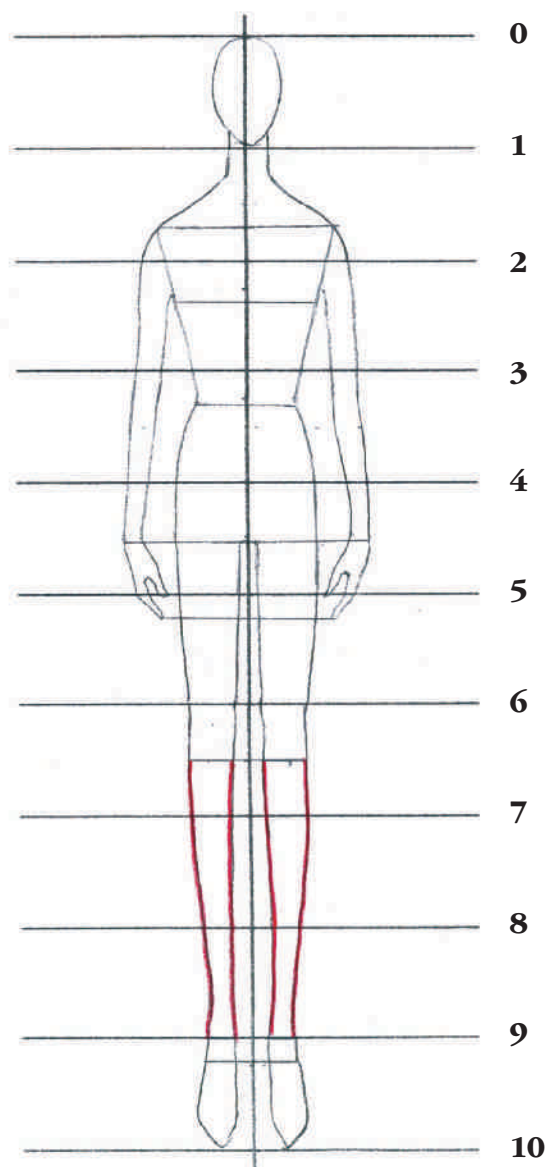
4 To indicate the lower leg (knee to top of ankle), draw a slightly tapering line from the knee (6½") to top of ankle (9").
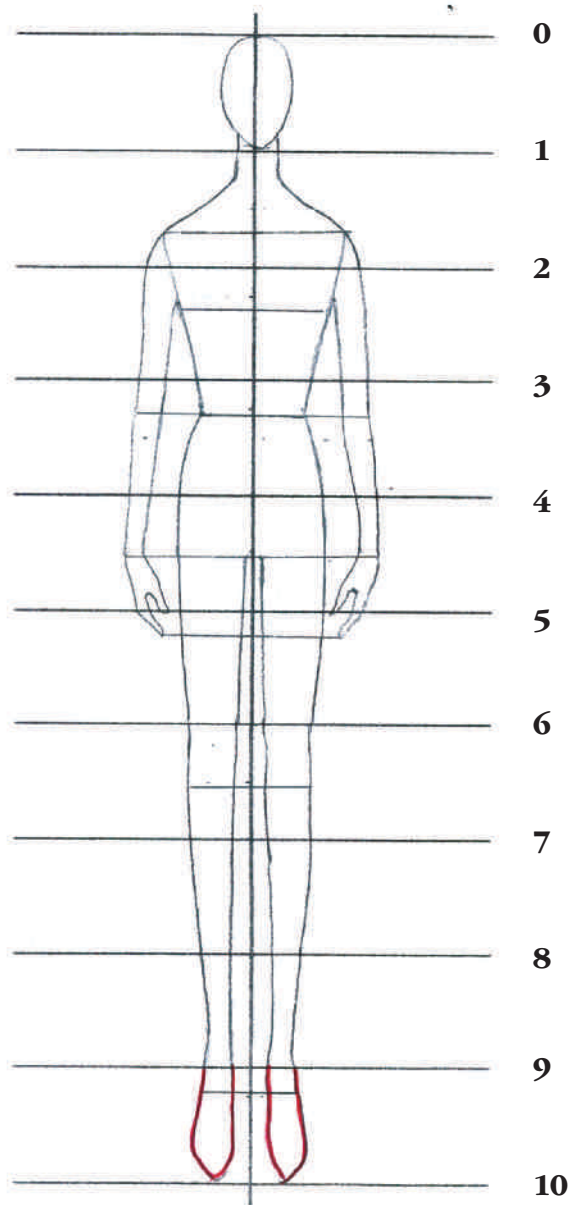
5 To indicate the foot draw a "U" shape from top of ankle (9") to line 10.
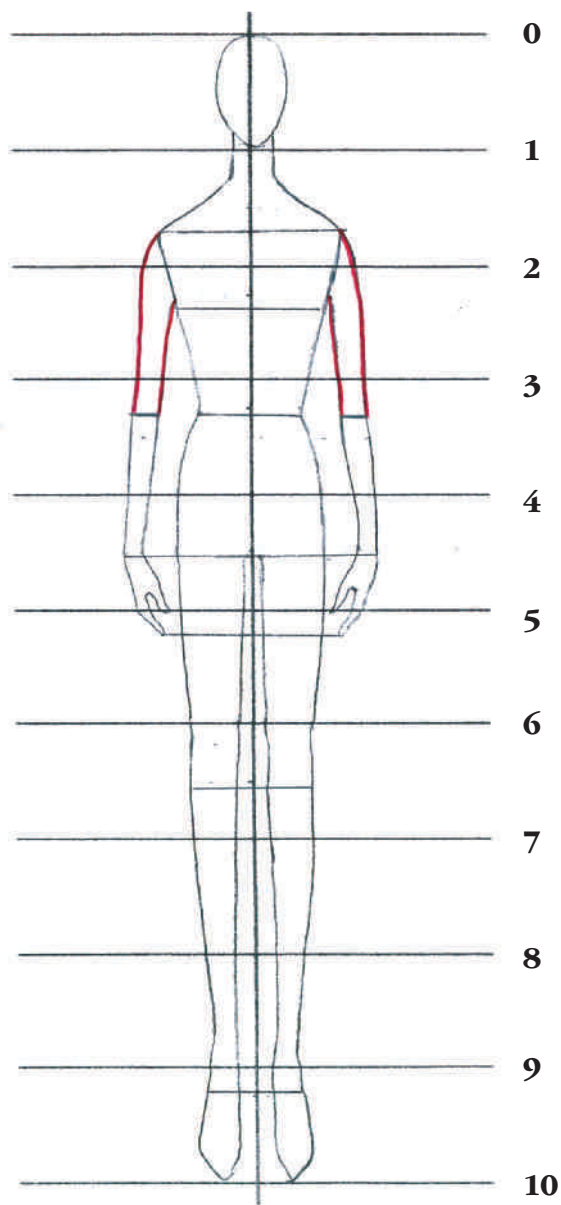
6 To indicate the upper arm, draw a rounded line at the shoulder (1½"), slightly tapering to the elbow at (3¼").
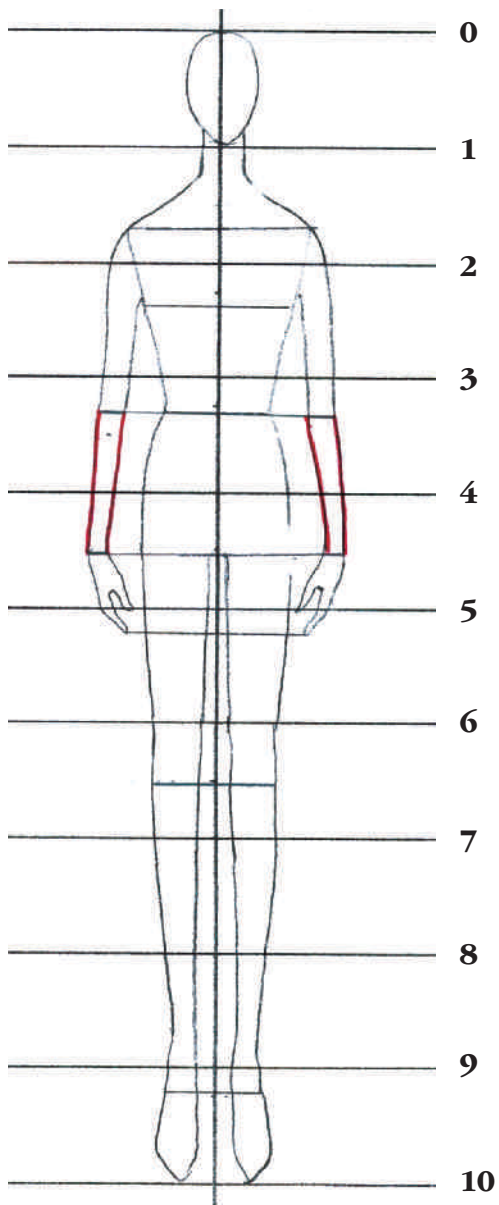
7 To indicate the lower arm from elbow to wrist draw a slightly tapered line from elbow (3¼") to wrist (4¾").
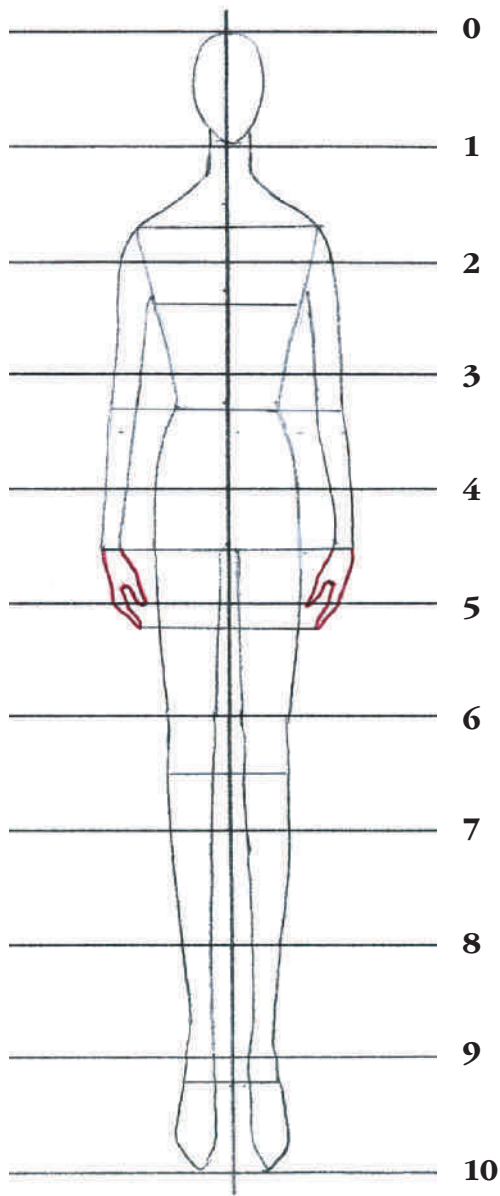
8 To indicate the hand duplicate shape from wrist (4¾") to top of thigh (5½").
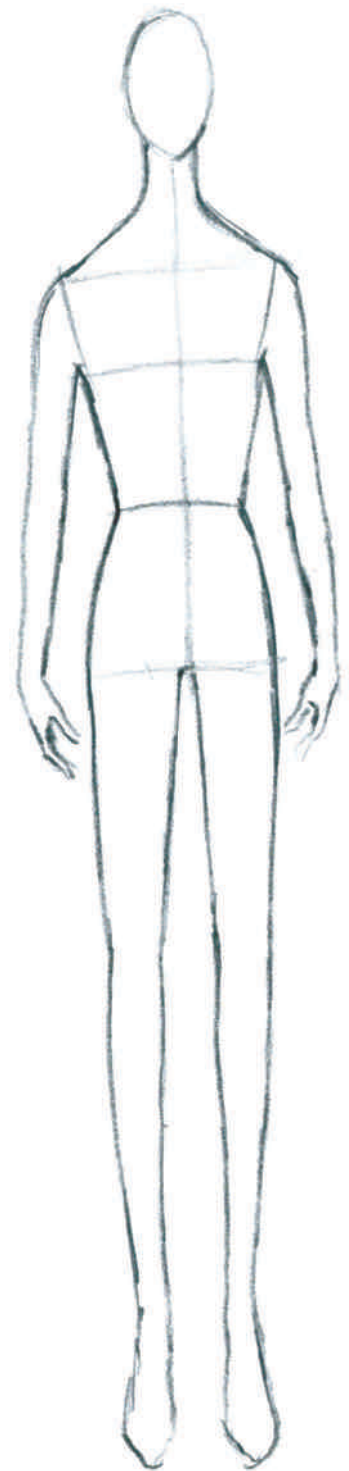
9 Completed figure

The Style Lines

Retrace the completed figure in order to add the style lines.

    The style lines on the croquis figure will correspond to the style lines on the dress form. They are extremely important in both drawing and designing clothes. To duplicate the style lines of a dress form:
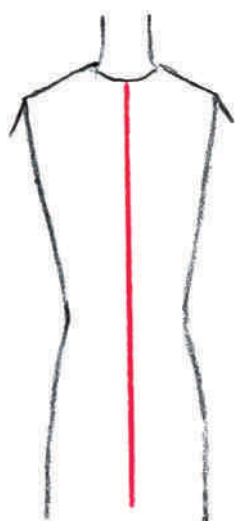
1 Draw a straight line from the base of the neck to the crotch.
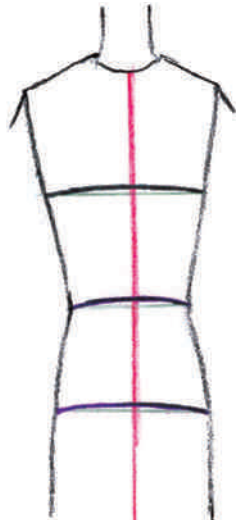
2 Draw slightly rounded lines to indicate breasts, waist and hips
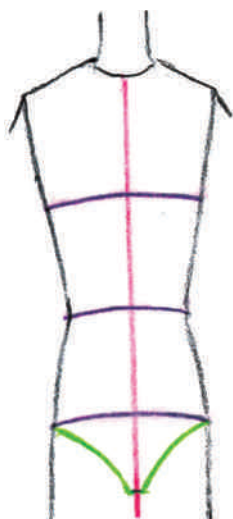
3 Draw in the panty line
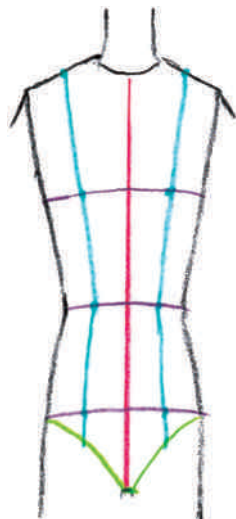
4 Dot the center of the shoulder, the apex, the waist, and the hipline. Connect these dots to form the princess seam lines.

    You now have a completed croquis figure which represents the proportions of the classic fashion figure.

    Remember that these proportions change slightly as fashion changes, based on the ideal look of the time.
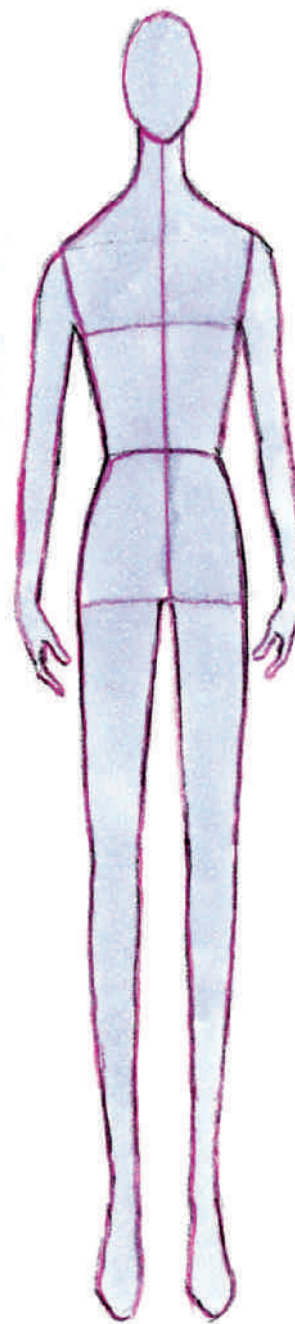
The figure drawn in the 1950s had a smaller waist due to the fact that women wore waist cinchers. The ideal figure drawn in the late 1960s emphasized the legs more because the mini skirt brought a new focus to them. Shoulders took more of an importance in the 1980's due to the exaggerated padded shoulder look of the period.

    A fashion model of the 1950s would be too short for today's standards just as a model of today would be too tall for the 1960s.

    Clothing alters the proportions of the body, and a fashion drawing should reflect these changes. Every few seasons fashion emphasizes certain parts of the body and diminishes others. Be open to these subtle changes.

Marker and Prismacolor
pencil

The Balance Line

To achieve a body that will be "standing"— and not falling over—you must understand the balance line. The balance line is the imaginary straight line that drops from the pit of the neck to the ground. It never bends or goes more to one side or another—it is always absolutely straight.

As an exercise, analyze the balance lines in photographs from fashion magazines or catalogs. Gather clear photos of models in simple poses and stay away from highly distorted or exaggerated poses. With a marker, indicate the balance lines in color. Indicate the high hips and supporting legs with another color. Then you will have completed the process. And you can do any amount of figures that you wish.
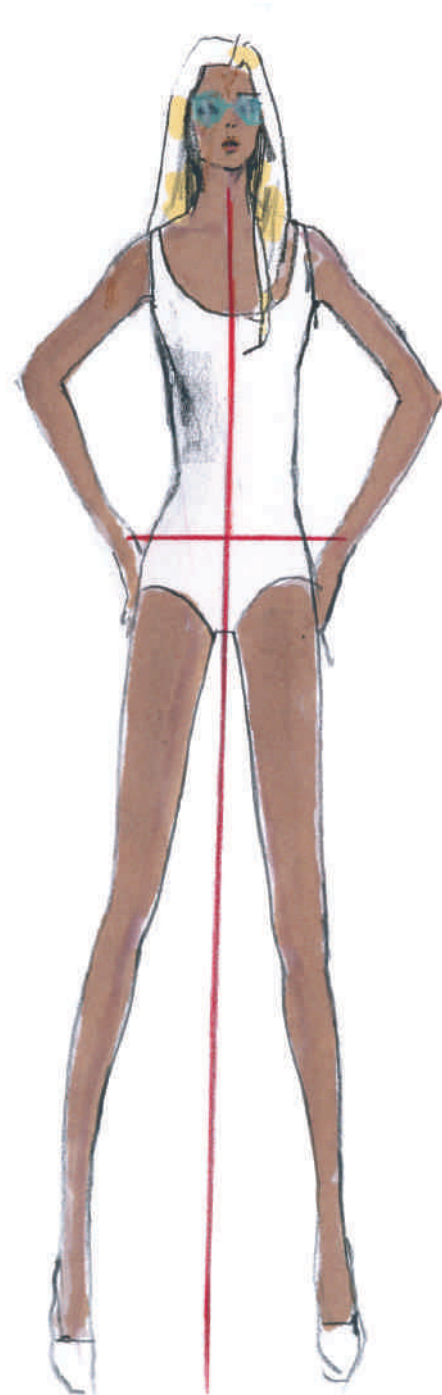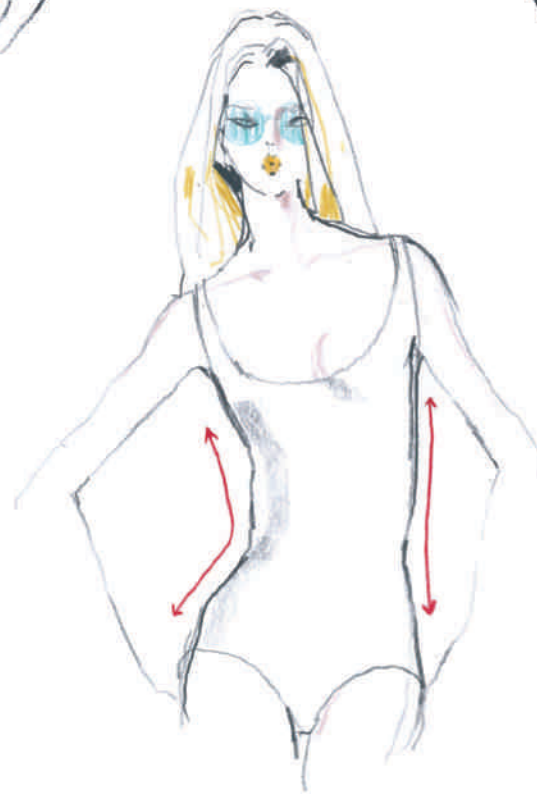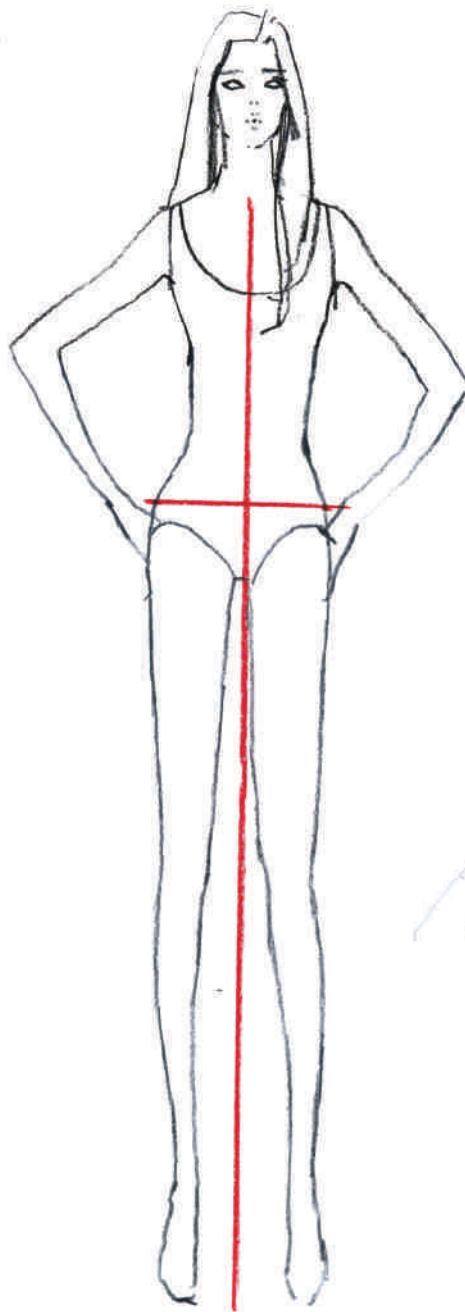
High hip of supporting leg crunches.
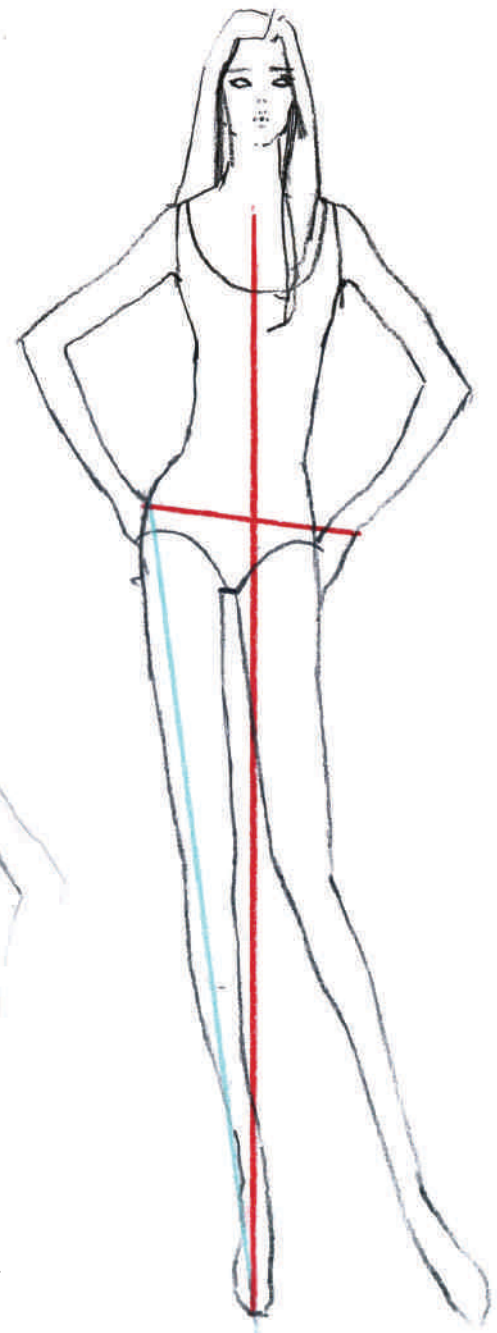
When the figure is standing with equal weight on both legs—either opened or closed—you will notice that the hips straighten out and the balance line falls between the legs.

When the figure puts more weight on one hip than the other, the high hip supports the leg that balances the figure. This supporting leg begins at the high hip and angles down to touch the balance line. The supporting leg is always at an angle—it is never straight. Also, some part of the foot should touch the balance line. The side of the supporting leg crunches at the waistline. The side of non-supporting leg stretches.
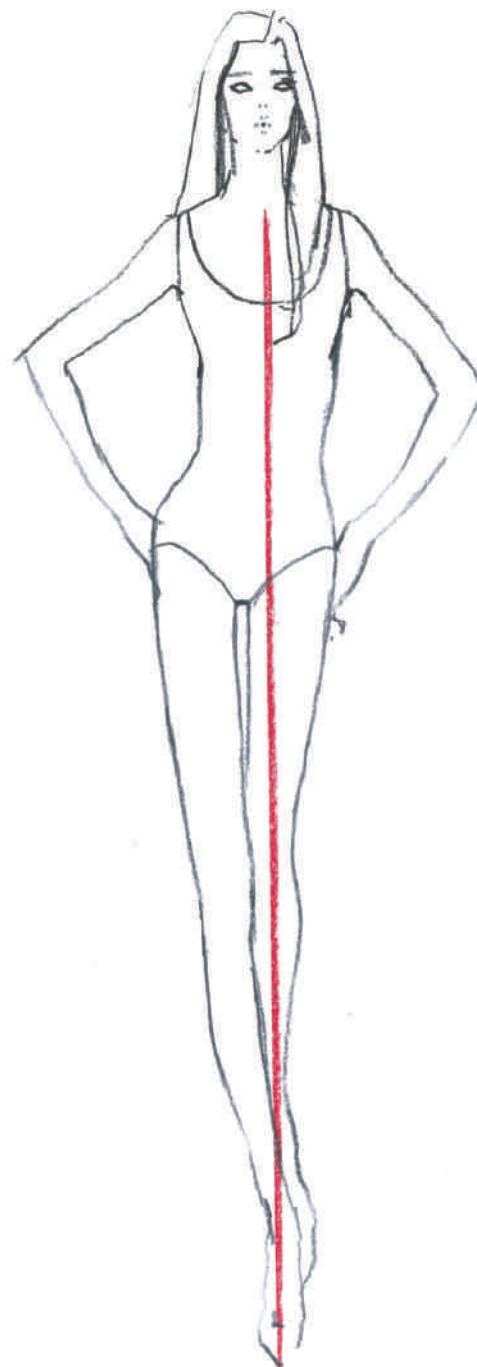
To review the above on yourself, stand up and put all your weight on one hip. This becomes your supporting leg.

When you place all your weight on this hip, you will notice that this leg is at an angle. You can, however, move the other, non-supporting leg in many different positions, and the balance will not be affected. The non-supporting leg is completely moveable and has nothing to do with the balance of the figure. It gives the pose an attitude.

In some photographs you will notice that the balance line is slightly off. Remember that when a model is posing in front of a camera, often she is in motion and might not have settled her weight when the photo was taken. Also, in some walking poses—especially runway shots—the supporting leg might come from the low hip. However, these are exceptions. Keep in mind that each individual pose may have its own special rule.

Prismacolor and pastel
pencil

Simple Blocking of the Figure

To learn how to draw a fashion figure, you begin by following established rules, which are guidelines for learning. Rules, however, are different than facts. Facts give you knowledge and accuracy, and while rules are helpful in the beginning, later on they can be unproductive. If too many rules control your art, your own reactions, points of view, and creativity are being repressed, which can lead you to produce rigid pieces of art. The 10-head figure is to help you along, but one day it is time to just draw.

When you baked your first cake, you were careful that each ingredient and measurement was exactly as the recipe dictates. As you became more familiar with the entire process, you began to alter the ingredients to your own taste, and after a while, the cake became more yours than the original recipe.

A beautiful piece of art must have your own personal qualities as well. It should look effortless—regardless of the amount of work. It should be joyous—not uptight. At first, it is frightening to put aside the rules, especially if you have used them for a long time. To make it easier, ease up on the rules gradually.

Blocking off the figure is a very natural way to draw, but there is always the problem of proportion errors.

I have developed an almost mistake-proof method to help solve this problem, and have found this technique to work very well.

We will start with the assumption that regardless of the height of a person, the hips are basically the middle of the body. Because a fashion figure needs extra length, we will add one head to the bottom half of the figure. This will produce a very nicely proportioned fashion figure to work with.
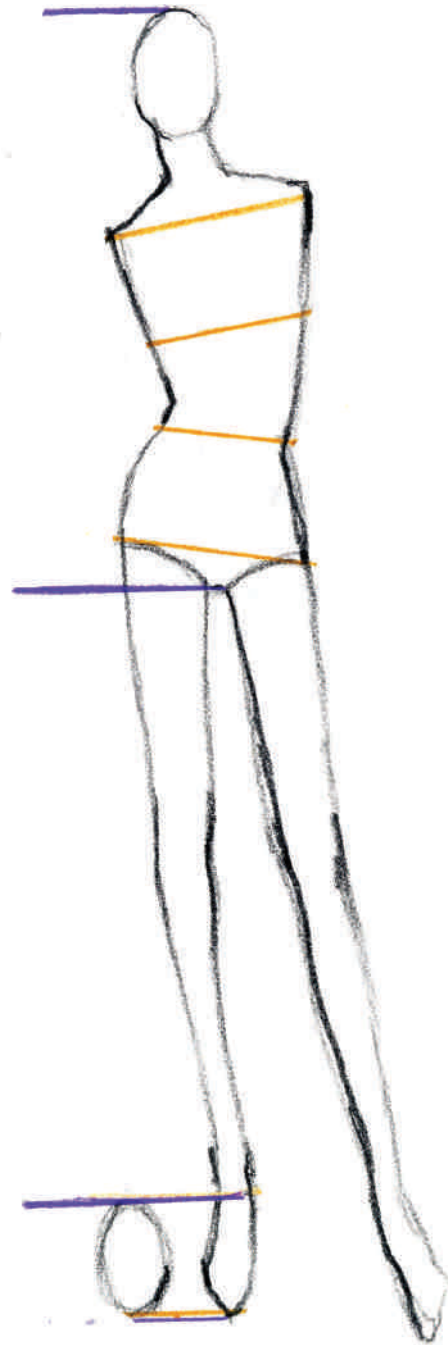
Add one head to the bottom half of the figure.

Simple Blocking of the Figure

Now that we are familiar with the proportions of the croquis figure, we will want to give the figure some movement.

The classic fashion figure has opposing movement between the shoulders and the hips. When the shoulders move in one direction, the hips move in the opposite one. This will form an "S" curve, which gives us an agile and flowing movement.

When we study the proportions of the fashion figure, we find that the bottom half is longer than the top half. If we take a photograph of a front-view action figure and fold it horizontally at the hip or panty line, we notice that the feet fall above the head.

Logically we can conclude that the figure will not be half and half, but half, half, and more head at the bottom.

If we add one head to the bottom half, our figure becomes half/half/ plus one head.

To block off the top half of the figure:

1   **2**   **3**
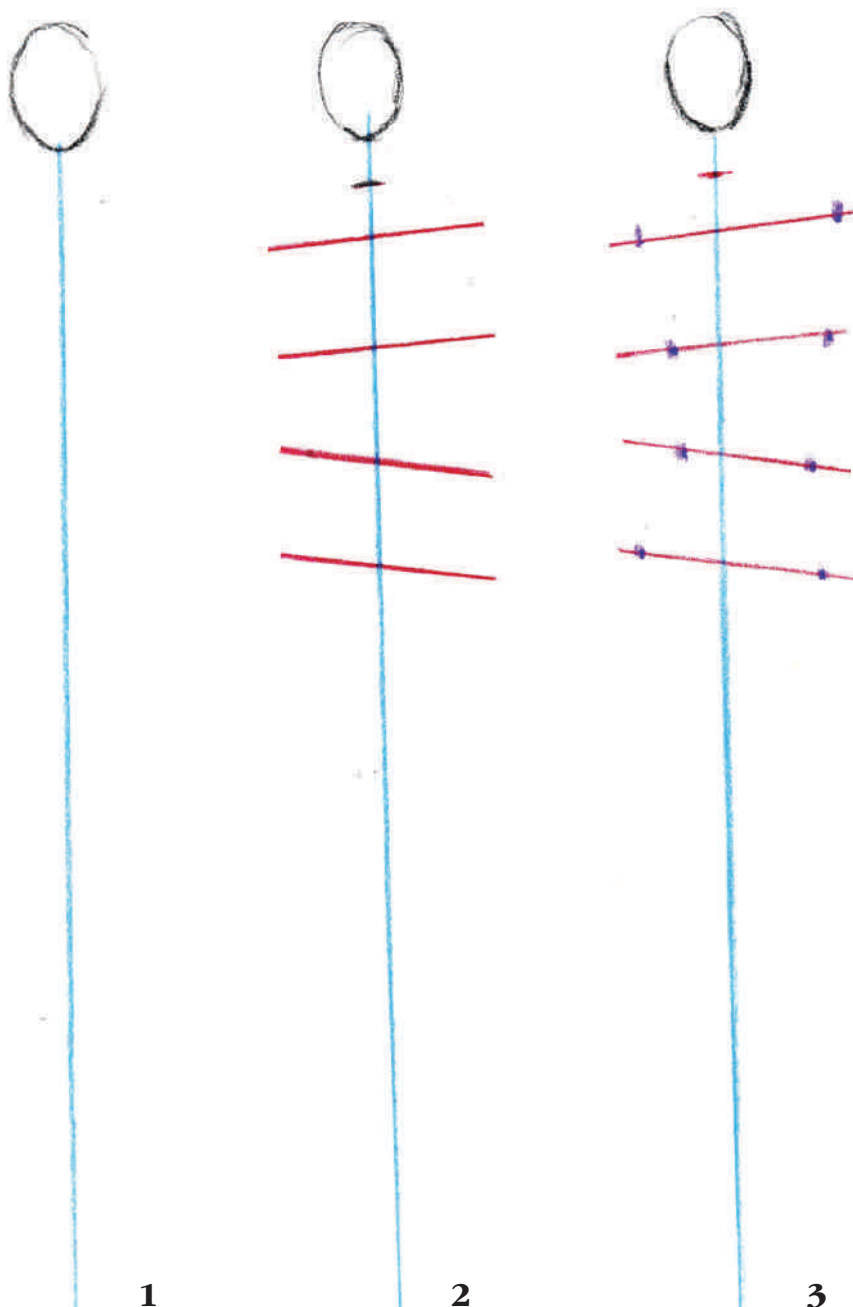
1 Draw in an oval for the head. It should be a bit smaller than one inch. Drop the balance line to the bottom of the page.

2 Indicate a small line half the length of the head for the neck. Block in the shoulder direction and the breast direction. The shoulders and breasts always go in the same direction.

Block in the waistline and hips in the opposite direction. The waistline and hips always go in the same direction.

Notice that the shoulders and breasts are about equal in size to the waistline and hip. Each of these sections are approximately one head.

The largest horizontal measurements are the shoulders, followed by the hips, the breasts and the waistline, which is the smallest. We will now block out the torso:

3 Dot the measurement of the head on each side of the balance line. This will give us the shoulder measurement.
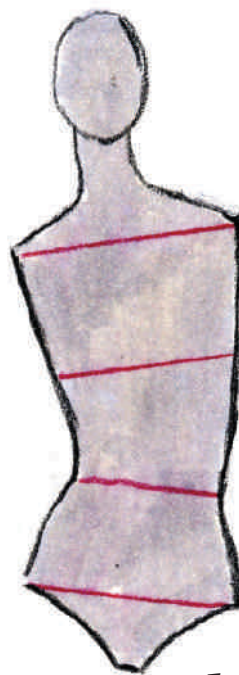
- Dot in a bit smaller than the shoulder measurement for the hips.
- Dot in a bit smaller than the hip measurement for the breasts.
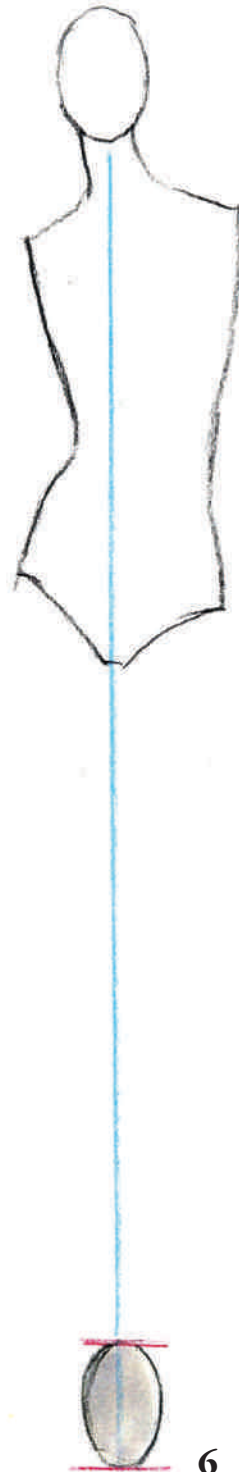- Dot in a bit smaller than the breast measurement for the waistline.
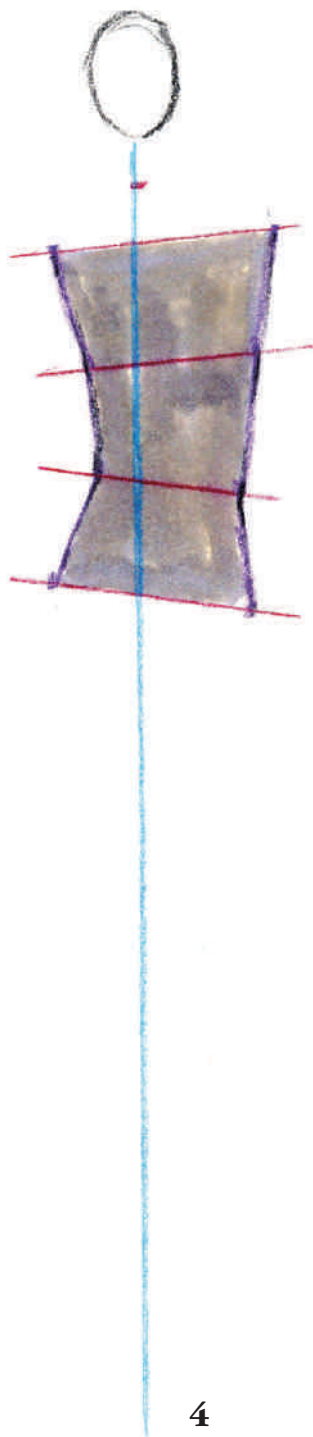
5a

Completed torso

4

5

6

4 Connect the lines. You will notice that there is a crunch on the side of the high hip and a stretch on the opposite side.

5–5a Now add a bikini bottom and neck.

This completes the top half.

6 Place one finger on the top of the head and the other at the bottom of the bikini. Repeat this measurement for the bottom half. Add the head measurement to the bottom to give us the measurement of half/half plus one head.

7

8

8a

9

10
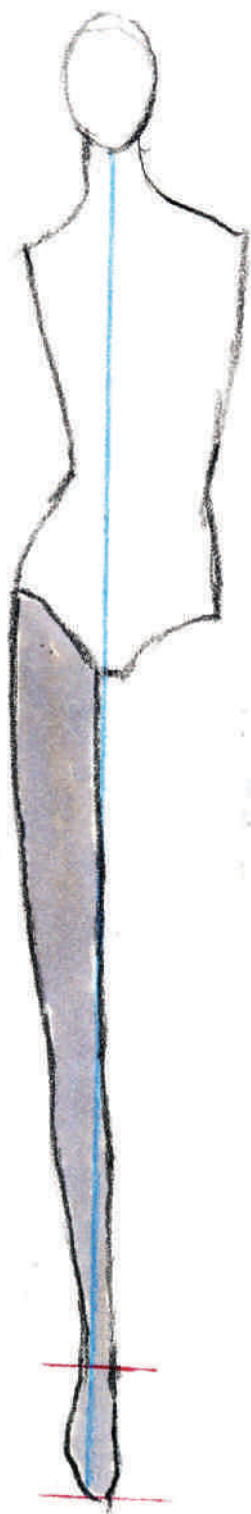
7 Join the high hip to the balance line. This becomes the supporting leg. The supporting leg will become the back leg and the non-supporting leg will become the front leg.

8–8a To lengthen the figure even more, draw diagonal lines at the knee, ankle, and bottom of the foot. Draw in the non-supporting leg between these lines. Your basic action figure should not be blocked off with the non-supporting leg or the arms. The garment and the attitude determine the non-supporting leg and the arms.
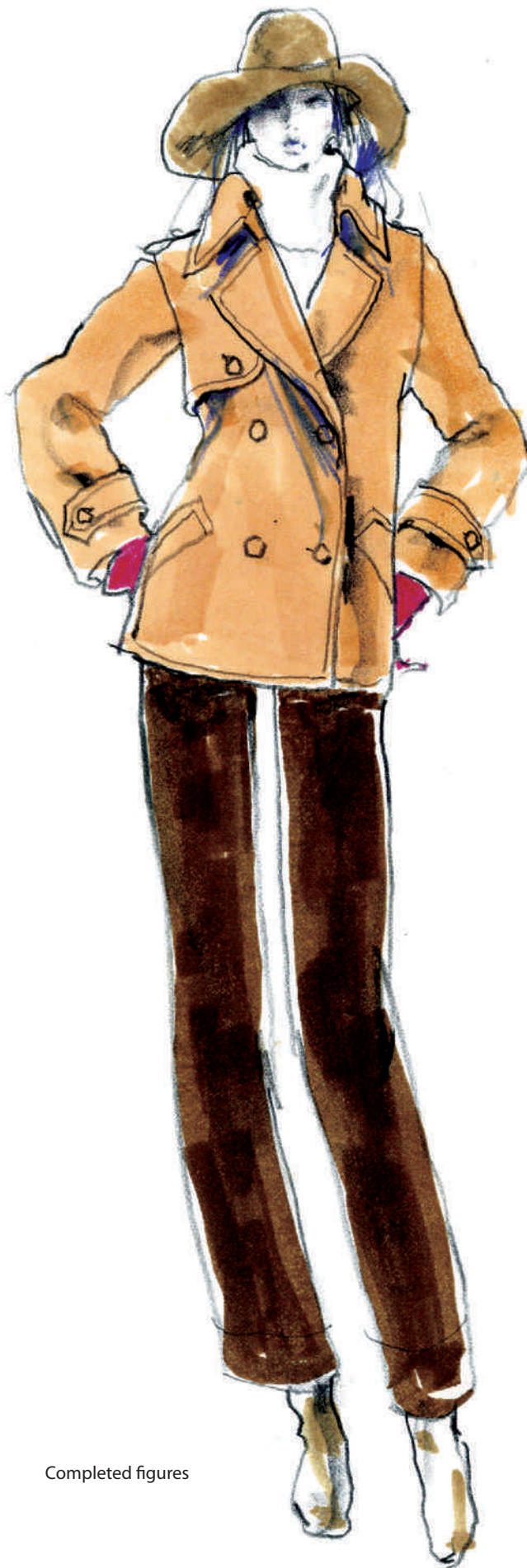
9–10 Notice how by changing the positions of the non-supporting leg we have possibilities for many different poses and attitudes.

For greater accuracy, always add the arms after the figure is blocked in. Garment and sleeve details often will tell you the positions they should be in.

Completed figures

Norell 1968
Pastel and Prismacolor pencil
on tinted paper

Center Front

Think about the way your nose relates to your face—it divides it in half. You can look in the mirror and see that your eyes are on either side of it. If you turn your head, you see that the nose is no longer dividing your face in half: more of your face is on one side and less is on the other. You know, however, that your nose is and will always be the center of your face. It is the "center front" of your face.

The body also has a center front. Clothing has a center front. It is so important, that even if it is just the slightest bit off, every detail of the garment will be drawn incorrectly. All clothing is balanced from the center front, as are all such details as pockets and buttons. It is the middle of every garment and the middle of every independent part of the garment, such as the sleeves, skirt, pant legs, and so forth. The center front of the body or garment moves as the body moves. It is a straight line from the neck down to the feet or the hem of the garment.