ESSENTIAL
FASHION
ILLUSTRATION
COLOR + MEDIUM

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Introduction

Fashion illustration is a fundamental tool for presenting a designer's creations. Not only does it need to be an aesthetically pleasing image, but also it likely has to provide certain information and show certain qualities of the clothing. When sketching a new creation a fashion designer will most likely not draw a hyper-realistic illustration, but instead is more likely to produce an image with exaggerated proportions, an idealized silhouette which shows off the garment's main characteristics. However, to be able to do this first and foremost it is necessary to know how to illustrate. This is why it is important to know how to use the different techniques that exist for transferring the properties and characteristics of a given item of clothing onto paper. Since the aim of fashion illustration is to represent the design in the best way possible, it is fundamental to take into account what material the garment is made of when deciding which techniques to employ. Each material has a different texture, some materials are shiny, like satin, others opaque, like linen, some are semi-transparent, like tulle, and others are thicker, like felt. These different textures affect the perception of the color. White satin, for example, does not have the same appearance as white wool, and black leather is not the same as black cotton. Each of these examples will be better represented, according to their texture and perception of color, by way of a different technique.

As a guide to setting out in the field of fashion illustration, this book teaches readers how to use five of the most classic techniques: pencils, watercolors, pastels, gouache, and markers. Each of these is developed by a different illustrator, all of whom are professionals with close links to the world of fashion. Step-by-step, didactic exercises show how to apply the technique in question, each of their different qualities, and the different methods that exist to attain different and varied results. The illustration of a figure dressed in an outfit constitutes a final exercise for each of the techniques. Consequently, as well as seeing how an illustration can vary from one technique to another, an array of different illustration styles can also be appreciated: the same task given to five different illustrators may result in five totally different illustrations. As an accessory to these techniques, the final chapter of this book visually explores other forms of illustration, both digital and hand produced.

Pencil

Pencil is is the most basic and traditional of drawing mediums, and has become universal thanks to its versatility and accessibility. Its use can help achieve illustrations with a high level of detail and it is ideal for representing volumes, shadows, lights, and highlights in a picture. It is easy to erase, allowing it to be used as a base for drawing, regardless of the technique used afterwards for applying color. There are two types of leads, soft and hard. Soft pencils— identified with the letter B (B for black)—produce a very dark line, making them fundamental for creating black areas, and provide a higher degree of flexibility and expression. The hard leads—known as H from hard—are dryer and grayish in tone; they produce a finer, lighter line, so they are often used for sketches and for detail work. There are also pencils with lots of different color leads, although to learn to use them and master the technique, for example combining them and controlling the intensity of the line, it is best to start with just the basic colors— cyan, yellow, and magenta.

Tamara Villoslada

Tamara was born in 1977 in the town of Esquel, in Argentinean Patagonia. After several moves she eventually arrived in Cordoba, where she studied art and communication science and formed part of the Bistró Casares multi-disciplinary group. In 2002 she decided to move to Barcelona, where she directed her career in art toward illustration, after having completed a post-graduate course in the Escuela Eina. Her illustrations have been published in magazines all over the world. She has designed T-shirts for the Japanese brand Graniph and illustrated objects for Poketo (Los Angeles and Japan)–work that was exhibited in Barcelona's Duduá store. In the publishing sector, her most recent project was to illustrate *El templo de la ciencia* for the publishing house Editorial Planeta.
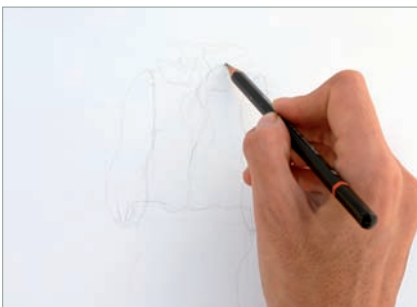
Sketches are made of the possible ways to express the qualities of this blouse with a pleated collar. Since the blouse in this case displays transparencies and is made from particularly fine fabric, showing it loose—on a hanger for example— accentuates its lightweight, delicate appearance.

The lines that are not going to be used are cleaned, and a pencil of medium hardness is used to draw the details of the blouse. The folds of the collar are outlined, taking into account the way in which the neck falls in order to strengthen its real volume and perspective.
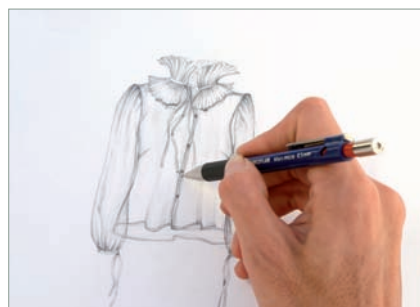
Finally, the light and shadow are defined. Special care must be taken for the areas of transparency, where the different overlapping layers and textures must be perceived. These areas can be darker, thereby simulating a greater concentration of material.
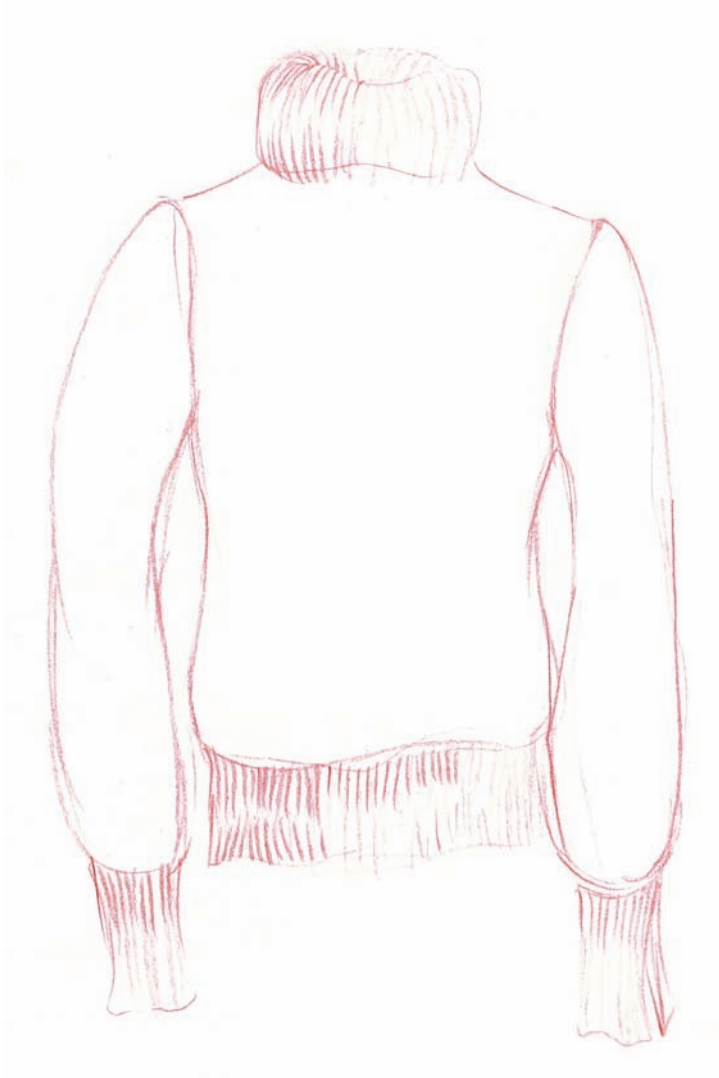
Since color will be the most prominent feature of this illustration, a graphite pencil is not used to sketch the garment. It is done directly with color—with a special color pencil, which is easily erased—so that afterward these lines integrate easily with the final drawing.
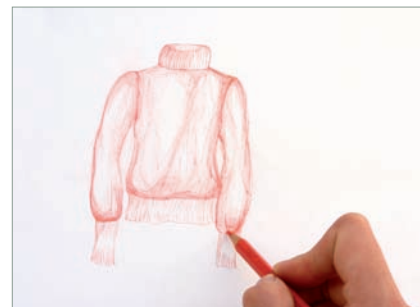
With the same color pencil the pattern for the rest of the jersey is drawn. The volume of the garment must be taken into account and how this affects the design; the pattern becomes narrower at the sides and wider in the middle.
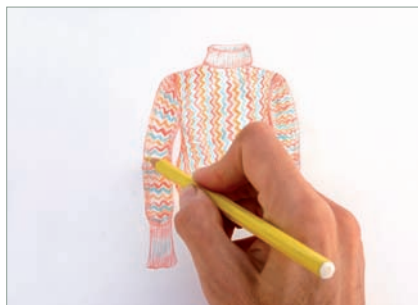
Once all the colors have been applied, the lines are strengthened by applying more pressure where the pattern requires more presence, like in the middle section or the parts with shading. Gently applying color creates volume, while also respecting the pattern.

A figure is sketched in a pose that shows off the skirt. Given the volume and the fall of the garment, a three-quarters position is chosen. The general lines of the skirt and the main folds formed by the volume are sketched with a hard pencil (2H).
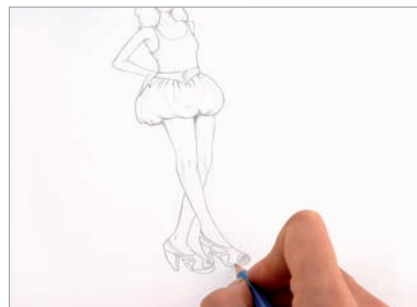
The figure is outlined and the details of the skirt start to take shape. The rest of the clothing must be simple to avoid visually competing with the item being shown. The line that outlines the figure should be left as clean and defined as possible.

The shadows are drawn, first through areas sketched with a medium pencil (HB), which allows us to test the effects of the chiaroscuro and the volumes. The finish is done with a propelling pencil, which, thanks to its sharp end, offers greater precision.

A sketch is done of the trousers in movement, to represent the pattern in a more realistic way. Details such as the waistline, buttons, pockets, and belt loops are drawn, and the texture of the trouser cuffs is also represented.

The checks are drawn with a delicate line, which is easy to erase (2H pencil). It is important to take special care to respect the folds in the fabric. The lines of the pattern appear, disappear, and fold in these areas.
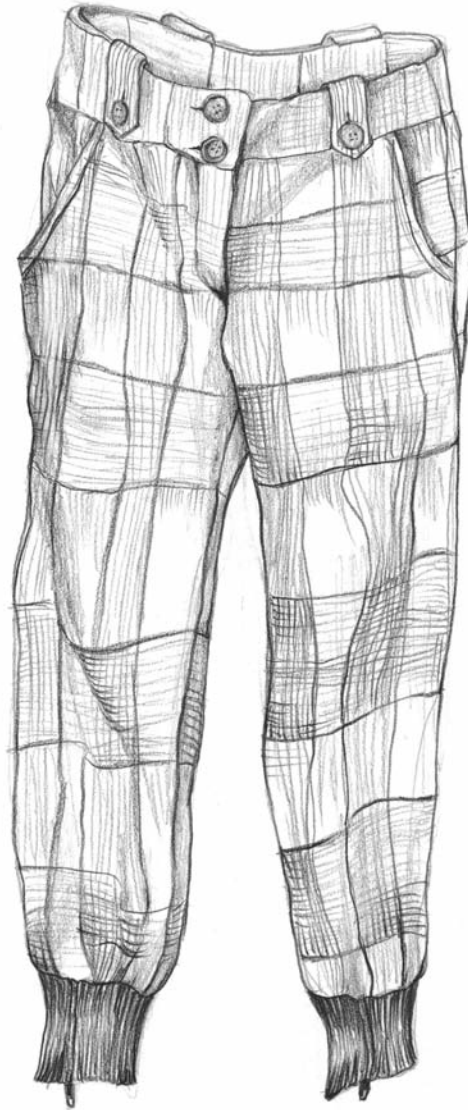
The lines in areas where there is more shade are strengthened and the details are finished with greater accuracy. With a soft lead propelling pencil (B type) high definition can be achieved even in dark areas where the line seems to overlap with what's behind.
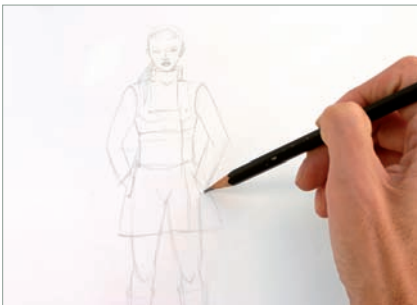
The figure is drawn in an appropriate posture for showing the coat. A frontal pose allows the viewer to appreciate the details. The volume of the coat and the main lines are sketched and the figure is given boots, which do not interfere with the ensemble.

The figure, which has taken shape from the previous sketches, is outlined. The details of the coat, the main creases, and faint shading are drawn. Representing the highlights will be fundamental in demonstrating the quality of the polished material.
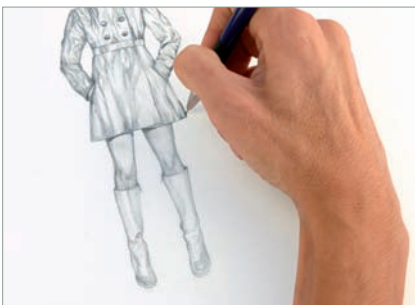
Different quality pencils are used and areas are left white. With soft pencils (3 or 4B) bold strokes are used to achieve almost completely black areas, which contrast with the areas left white, which represent the shine of the leather.

This coat can also be done in color, since in this case it is the strong contrast in shades that gives the garment its character. Creating bright reds and still leaving other areas white, will achieve the same shiny effect.
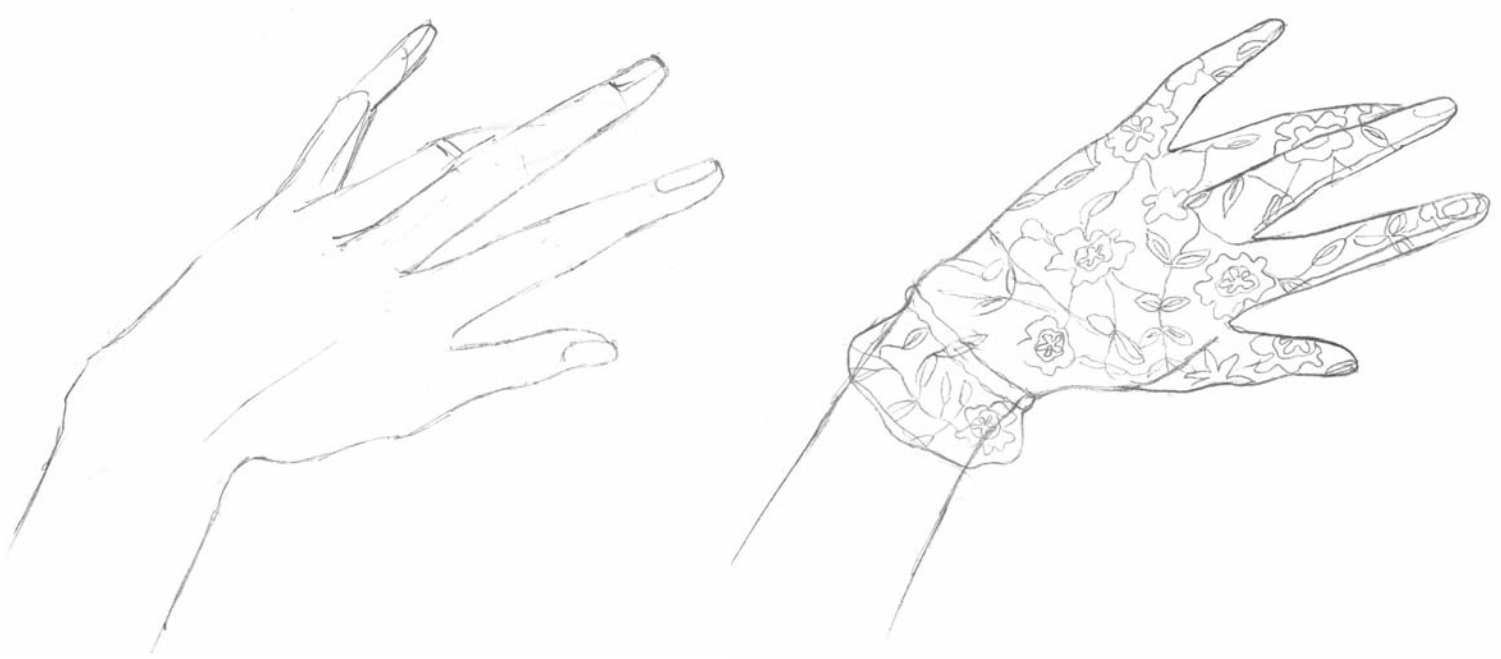
Different sketches of the hand are drawn to find a position that is visually attractive. Since the fabric has a lot of texture and details, when the hand is more outstretched these characteristics of the glove can be better appreciated.

A hard pencil (2H) is used to draw the first details of the lace, since this is the initial sketch. The pattern is added to, taking into account the hand's morphology, the indents, and folds. Once the outline has been defined, the lines are strengthened with an HB pencil.
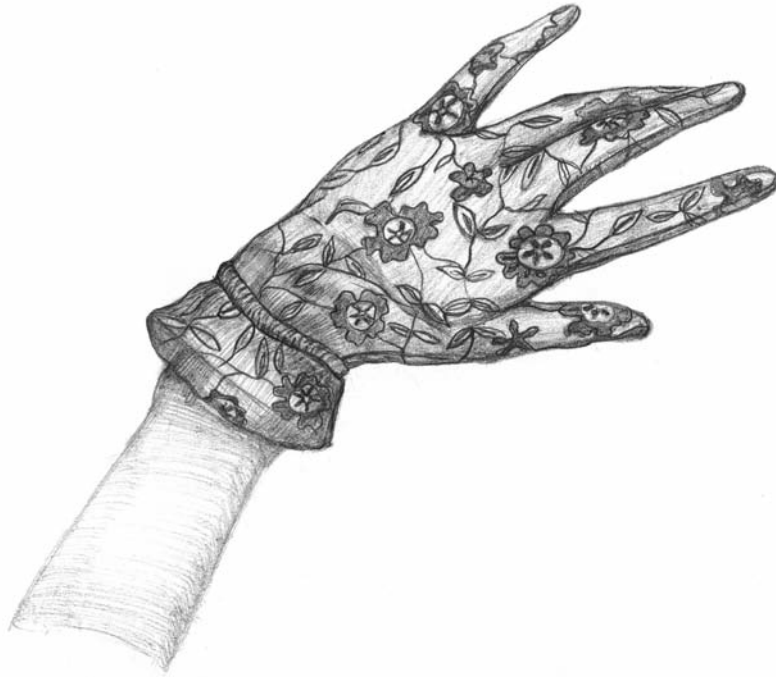
Volume is given to the glove by coloring with different pencils, from HB for the more transparent areas up to 3 or 4B to achieve the darker sections. Keep in mind, the level of darkness of the different pencils also depends on the pressure applied.