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Fashion drawing is all about attitude, exaggeration, and style. As you develop your fashion illustration skills, infuse your work with personal flair — your signature — to create a look unlike any other. Start by observing the golden rules of fashion drawing, mastering the S curve and other figure drawing techniques, and putting a creative spin on the fashion drawings you create. Fashion drawing isn't known for having a lot of rules, but it does have a few pointers. When drawing fashion models, remember the following guidelines: Know the difference between figure drawing and fashion drawing. In fashion drawing, go for a stylized look over realism. Show just a few key folds or shadows instead of every detail, and leave some white space. Exaggerate! Render proportions appropriate to the model's gender and age. For adult figures, keep heads small for a graceful look. Start with a stick figure to set your pose and proportions and make sure the model looks balanced before you get too far into a drawing. Diversify your fashion poses and views (front, side, back, and three-quarter) to draw audience interest. Tilt the shoulders and hips to create active poses. To avoid a flat look, curve lines with the figure's body. Have necklines and hemlines wrap around to the back of the figure. Let fabric prints cut off at the seams or disappear over the edges. Experiment to keep your art fresh. Know when to fix a drawing, stop it, or scrap it. Practice, practice, practice. Fashion figures need attitude as well as style. Here's how to draw a basic fashion figure with a look that reads the runway. Start by creating a fashion croquis, or rough sketch of the body: Lay tracing paper over a full-body picture of a model from a magazine and use a pencil to trace around the perimeter of her body. Draw lines to show the angles of her shoulders and hips. Trace a center line down the front of her body and draw an oval for the head. Break your figure down into basic shapes, using two trapezoids for the torso and cylinders for the arms and legs, as in "a" in the figure. Include circles for the elbows and knees. Remove the tracing paper from your model. On a piece of sketch paper, redraw your fashion model's head, but lengthen the torso, arms, and legs. 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. Use a black pen to draw over the areas of the body that you want to show. Erase the pencil lines. See the "b" figure. Drawing a fashion model freehand with basic lines and shapes. When you first start drawing fashion illustrations, it's easiest to imitate someone else's style. But eventually, you need to develop your own signature look. Try these methods on for drawing style: Experiment with exaggeration and play with proportions. Draw attention with outrageous hair or go for a minimalist look. Specialize in the clothing types you like best. Study other artists' work. Borrow design elements from them but don't copy their style. Keep up on the latest fashion trends. Read magazines, visit websites, and scope out styles at department stores, boutiques, and vintage shops. Perfect the art of people-watching. Watch old movies and find inspiration in costumes from film and stage. Download Article Learn how to draw an outfit like a fashion designer Download Article In the fashion world, new designs are presented in the form of hand-drawn sketches before they're cut and sewn. First, you draw a croquis, the model-shaped figure that serves as the base of the sketch. The point is not to draw a realistic-looking figure, but a blank canvas of sorts on which to display fashion illustrations of dresses, skirts, blouses, accessories, and the rest of your creations. Keep reading for simple steps to draw a croquis and sketch clothing designs. Start by sketching a croquis, an exaggerated model figure, on thick paper with a soft lead pencil. Draw a vertical balance line, then the pelvic area, torso, shoulders, neck, head, and legs. Next, draw your clothes design, taking into account how different fabrics lie on the body. Color it in when you're done. 1 Gather materials. Choose a soft lead pencil (4b to 6b pencils are best) that makes light, thin marks that are easy to erase. Marks made by these pencils also don't indent the paper, which is helpful when you want to add color to the image. A good quality eraser and thick sketchbook paper are also important materials to have if you want your sketch to look professional.[1] If you don't have the right type of pencil, you can sketch with an ordinary number 2 pencil. Remember to make very light marks, rather than pressing hard on the page. Drawing in pen is not advisable since you won't be able to erase it. You will also need colored markers, inks, or paints to illustrate your clothing designs. 2 Trace or print a croquis if you don't want to draw one. It's nice to be able to draw your croquis (figure) since it allows you to create a model to the exact proportions you want. However, if you want to jump straight to drawing your clothing designs, there are a few shortcuts you can take: Download a croquis online, where you'll find them in a range of shapes and sizes. For instance, you can download a croquis in the shape of a child, a man, a petite woman, and so on. Print it out and draw your design over the model. Make a croquis by tracing the outline of a model from a magazine ad or another picture. Just place a piece of tracing paper over the picture of the model you like. Lightly create an outline of their silhouette, ignoring facial features and the outfit they're wearing. If you plan to make many fashion sketches, consider buying a fashion illustration sketchbook that comes with figure templates already printed on each page—so you can focus on sketching your designs. Advertisement 3 Decide on a pose for your croquis. Draw the croquis (model) in a pose that shows off the outfit best. For example, choose a walking pose to show the movement of a long skirt or dress, and a wide-legged stance for flared pants. You can show the model walking, sitting, leaning, or in any other position. Look at pictures in magazines and sites like Pinterest to view example poses and get inspiration.[2] As a beginner, you may want to start with the most common pose: a runway sketch that shows a model standing or striding on a runway. This is the easiest to draw and it will allow you to illustrate all of your designs in full view. Many fashion illustrators practice drawing hundreds of croquis to perfect their ability to create a variety of poses. EXPERT TIP David Reeves Bespoke Tailor David Reeves is a Bespoke Tailor and the Founder of Reeves: Modern English Tailoring, based in New York City. David has been in the bespoke tailoring business for over 25 years and specializes in designing and creating custom, high-end suits. David has worked with influential names in the United Kingdom and the United States such as Richard James of Savile Row, Prada, Commes Des Garçons, and Timothy Everest. Fashion sketches should communicate effectively to the intended audience. Fashion sketches are all about communication — they need to clearly convey the design idea to the intended audience. Whether it's a personal sketch for visualization or a professional presentation, focus on making it easy to understand rather than making it visually artistic. Clarity is key. Advertisement 1 Draw the balance line and a head. The balance line is the first line of your sketch, and it represents your model's center of gravity. Draw it from the top of the head to the tip of the toes, along the backbone of your croquis. Near the top of the balance line, draw an oval to represent the head. From this, a proportional drawing can be made. The balance line should be a straight vertical line, even if you want the model to pose in a leaning position. This helps you visualize proportions and angles properly.[3] The clothing is what is being showcased, not your figure-drawing skills. Don't worry too much about creating a realistic-looking model or adding features to the face unless you have specific make-up in mind to go along with your outfit. It's often easier to leave the facial features off altogether and just sketch a few lines for the hair. 2 Start drawing the pelvic area first. Draw a square with equal side lengths on the balance line just below the middle, where the pelvis is naturally positioned on the body.[4] Size the square according to how wide you want your model to be. A thinner model would have a smaller square width than a plus-sized model. Keeping your desired pose in mind, tilt this pelvic square either left or right. For example, if you want your model's hips slanted to the left, tilt the square slightly to the left. If you want a normal standing model, just draw the square upright without any angles left or right. 3 Draw the torso and shoulders. Extend the torso lines upward from the two corners of the pelvic square. The torso should extend upwards, bending in the midway at the waist and extending out again at the shoulder.[5] As with a real human body, the shoulders should be the same width as the hips, or the top of the pelvic box. Refer to pictures of models in magazines or advertisements for reference. Notice how the waist is smaller than the lower portion of the body and hips. The torso should measure about two heads in length. It's common to sketch the shoulders and hips tilted in opposite directions, in a position called contrapposto, or counterpose.[6] This gives the impression of movement. Draw the waist as a horizontal line that's shorter than the shoulder and hip lines. Pay attention to bend lines (the curve of the rib cage, etc.) as those are crucial to creating a figure that doesn't look like it has dissociated body parts. 4 Sketch the neck and head. The model's neck should be a third the width of the shoulders and half the length of the head. After drawing this, refine the oval you sketched for the head so it's in proportion to the body.[7] The bigger the head, the more juvenile or younger the model looks. You can erase the initial oval you drew to represent the head and start over if the body feels out of proportion to it. Draw the head so that it looks natural with the pose you have selected. You can tilt it slightly up or down, or to the right or left. 5 Fill in the legs. The legs should be the longest part of the body, the length of about four heads.[8] The legs are also portioned into two pieces: the thighs (from the bottom of the pelvic box to the top of the knees) and calves (from the bottom of the knees to the beginning of the ankles). Keep in mind that fashion illustrators usually exaggerate the model's height by making her legs longer than her torso. The top of each thigh should be approximately the same width as the head. Taper the width of each leg from the thigh to the knee. By the time you reach the knee, the leg should be one-third the width of the bigger portion of the thigh. To draw the calves, taper down to the ankles. Each ankle should be about one-fourth the width of the head. 6 Finish with the feet and arms. The feet on a croquis are relatively narrow. Draw them like elongated triangles that are about the same length as the head. Construct the arms like the legs, tapered toward the wrists. Make them longer in proportion to the torso than a real person's arms are, since this gives a more stylized impression.[9] Add the hands and fingers last, sketching them faintly. Have the croquis's wrists fall just below the bottom of the pelvic box, with hands hanging down from there. While optional, some fashion illustrators sketch short curved lines below the shoulders to represent the bust on female croquis. Advertisement 1 Sketch the clothes over the croquis. Showcase your original design ideas by drawing clothes over the croquis like a fashion designer does. Sketch the clothes realistically. Think about how the clothing hangs on a person and replicate that on your model. Add creases around the elbows and at the waist, as well as near the shoulders, ankles, and wrists. Practice makes perfect! Don't give up if you're not happy with your first few designs. Keep practicing until you come up with something you're really proud of. Remember, different fabrics and structures lie on the body in different ways. If the fabric is thin and silky, it will rest on the body and drape down, almost billowing. If the fabric is thick like denim or wool, it will be boxier and will show less shape of the body (think denim jackets). Try to illustrate the texture of the fabric you're drawing, whether it's smooth, coarse, stiff, or soft. Add details like sequins and buttons to make the drawing look more realistic. 2 Learn how to draw folds, wrinkles, and pleats. Use different types of lines to create different creases in the fabric you're drawing, as detailed below.[10] Knowing how to draw folds, wrinkles and pleats will help you illustrate the structure of the garment. Folds can be drawn using loose, wavy lines. Use thin curved lines to show wrinkles. Take out a straight-edge ruler to draw exact pleats. 3 Illustrate patterns and prints. If your design includes a patterned or printed fabric, it's important to accurately illustrate how it will look on a model. Start by outlining the patterned garment, such as a skirt or blouse. Divide it into a grid with different sections so your pattern appears more uniform. Fill in the sections one at a time with the pattern. Pay attention to how folds, pleats, and wrinkles change the appearance of a pattern. It may need to bend or be cut off at certain points to look realistic. Take the time to draw the pattern in detail so your design is accurate to your vision. 4 Finalize the drawing with shading, ink, and color. Use a black fine-tip marker or paint on the lines that you want to keep, such as parts of the arms and legs that aren't covered by the clothes. Erase the body shaping lines and any stray pencil marks. Finally, color in the clothing according to your design. You can color the clothing with markers, colored pencils, or paint. Use a variety of shades to illustrate your designs. Deeper folds in the fabric will result in darker shades of the color you're using. Where fabric is hit by the light, the colors should appear lighter. Adding features like hair and sunglasses, and making it a nice final touch that will make your fashion sketch come to life. However, these details are optional. 5 Consider making flats. In addition to making a fashion illustration, you may want to create a flat schematic. 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