Use of Pencil

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The costume designer should have a fairly good training in the proper use of pencil and color. Practical application is really the only method by which one can acquire skill. The old adage, "Practice makes perfect," may well be applied in this instance, for it is only by constant practice that you will become adept in the art of using pencil and brush.

The very first thing you should know is how to manipulate your tools properly. Do not grasp your pencil tightly, but rather hold it loosely, so as to afford freedom of motion. Your lines will be more definite if you have a loose hold on your pencil. Then, too, your strokes will be light and this will make it much easier for you to do away with undesirable or unnecessary lines.

If you find it simpler to hold your pencil flat against the paper instead of perpendicular, you are at liberty to work in that way. Here is a hint to help you: If you will follow with your finger the direction that you wish a certain line to take, you will find that you can more readily put your pencil to the paper and draw the desired line.

However, the best of us cannot secure a perfect line the very first time we try. We draw what are known as "feeling-out" lines before actually getting what we want. When you find that you have secured the cor-
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rect line, erase all the other lines and draw in more heavily the one you wish to retain.

You know that everything you draw has a certain shape. Think of the outline of the object you wish to draw and use it as a starting point. For example, if you wish to represent a face, you should begin by drawing a circle. Then you are ready to fill in the details and smooth out the drawing. You first block in, as it were, the features of the face. This blocking-in process is characteristic of all drawings and is done by the most expert draftsmen. For the beginner, it is most essential to first block in the work before attempting to draw the details.

The fashion layout consists of about eight heads. Turn to figure 19. Looking at the fashion layout, you notice that the nipples are just below the line marking the second head at the top of the figure; that the wedge is just a little above the fourth, and the knees are slightly above the sixth. When the arms are in a resting position, the tips of the fingers fall just half-way between the fourth and fifth horizontal lines. Also note that the shoulders slope to points about half-way between the first and second lines, and that the elbows are at the waistline. These proportions should be carefully stored away in your mind, for you will have to refer to them constantly.

Now to draw the fashion layout: First you must draw a vertical line down your board; on this line measure eight equal distances, to make your figure eight heads high. Then using figure 19 for reference, draw your feeling-out lines, guiding yourself as to lengths and direction by the vertical and the dotted horizontal lines.
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If you observe carefully, you will see that the base of the chin is at the first dotted horizontal line, that the line of the shoulder starts from about half-way between the first and second horizontal lines and slants upward at an angle to a point just below the first horizontal line. You will also note that the line of the arm runs down to the fourth horizontal line, and that the hand takes up another half of a head. Following this plan you can easily sketch in the other lines of the figure, depending for guidance upon the vertical and horizontal lines.

You have now done the real work of drawing a fashion layout. The rest is merely a matter of putting in details, which is comparatively simple. If you will look at the figure, you will quickly discern how the eyes, nose, and mouth have been made evident by a few strokes of the pen. With this as a basis you can go ahead and build up your designs.

It is well to give attention to the parts of the anatomy which are likely to give the average beginner some concern. Notice figure 17 which indicates the head resting upon the shoulders. Observe the manner in which the various muscles are pictured.

In figure 72 you have illustrated how the foot actually rests in the shoe as shown in the layout. Notice also how the hand is drawn.

The back view of the layout is drawn in the same manner. First block in the outline roughly, then work out your details. Figures 74 and 75 will be helpful as a guide. It is also interesting to study the face in profile as illustrated in figure 72.

The same procedure is followed in drawing a child's layout as in sketching that of an adult. It is well for
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the beginner to confine herself solely to drawing the front and back views. For a hasty sketch it is permissible to omit the carefully worked-out details. The outline and a few strokes are sufficient to indicate the features.

Before we proceed to actually design clothes for our figures, let us sum up briefly the manner of drawing a fashion layout: First draw a vertical line; on it measure eight heads, using a specific unit of measurement; then block-in your figure; and finally round off the corners and fill in the details.