Sketching the Design

CHAPTER TWELVE

Now that you have drawn your figure, you are ready to sketch your costume.

Before you start the actual work of dressing your layout, draw a center line as a guide in placing the details of your costume, keeping in mind the fact that the center line is always the center of the figure; remember, however, as the body turns away from the center, the center line must turn accordingly.

Thus it will be seen that if the body is turned away from the observer, the width of the figure on the far side of the center line will appear narrower than the width of the figure on the near side.

The center line is used in all views; in the back view it follows the direction of the spine.

On plate D you will observe four drawings that represent the manner in which a costume is sketched on a layout. One may work either from the costume itself or from a sketch of it.

Figure 1 shows a costume that is to be illustrated. In figure 2 you see the layout upon which the costume is to be placed. You should draw figures 1, 2, and 3 in pencil roughly, and figure 4 should be the finished sketch. After you have drawn the figure, your next problem is to place the center line. As we have said before, the center line need not necessarily be in the center of the drawing; but it must, however, be
in the center of the figure. Figure 4 shows the center line in the center of the figure, which is turned slightly to one side. The next step will be to represent the natural waistline by a line drawn very lightly. The waistline of the costume, whether high or low, can then be adjusted accordingly. You should always sketch your costume so that it follows the position of the figure. The parts of the body from which the costume hangs are called, "points of suspension."

The pose of the figure determines the manner in which the drapery should fall and in which the costume should hang. In other words, the pose of the figure determines the points of suspension, which are, naturally, the shoulders, the elbows, the wrists, the hips, and the knees.

A dress would fall in straight lines were the figure standing upright; while with a change of position of either knee or hip, the folds of the skirt would change their location.

To know more intelligently just how to draw the various parts of the costume to conform to the position of the figure, you should study yourself and those about you. It is obvious that the neck, the belt, and the bottom of the skirt must be curved; and any trimming or embroidery placed on the waist or skirt would naturally follow the line of the garment it adorns, in accordance with the position in which it is placed. It is quite safe to say that near the bottom of the skirt, horizontal lines would follow the line of the skirt, while above the knee they follow the line of the waist.

When panels are used on a costume, they will fall on a straight line from their point of suspension, no matter how they are placed on the figure.

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For a moment we shall consider how light and shadow are influenced by the varying positions of the figure. We can lay down this general rule: Shadows fall wherever there are hollow places in the figure, or under the folds of the costume; and the deeper the hollow or fold, the heavier the shadow. The dimensions of the shadow will be determined by the direction of light, and the position of the body and the limbs. Light is usually supposed to come over one's left shoulder; therefore, the right side is the dark side of the drawing.

To summarize the matter of light and shadows, the outlines of the figure produce folds in garments, and shadows on them. As a result, the folds and shadows shown in a drawing should indicate the lines of the figure as the source of the shadows and folds.

You have now drawn in the longest lines of your costume. You are ready to put the finishing touches to it, by indicating minor lines and details.

Taking the waist first, you should represent the line of the neck. If the body is turned away from the observer, the neckline will tend to be sharper in its curves, and will appear shorter on the farther side. Show the fullness of the waist by folds.

The next logical point to consider will be the sleeves, indicating their length and shape. The costume shown in figure 1 has straps in place of sleeves. Notice just where the straps are indicated, and you will see that very little is seen on the right shoulder, which is turned away. Work out the fullness of the garment by lines indicating the shadow.

The details of the skirt should then be worked out. The bottom line is drawn in accordance with the folds
along the length, which conform to the outline of the figure. Frequently the unusual draping of a skirt may affect the direction of the folds.

It is interesting to note what an important part details play in the salability of a design. For that reason it is best to exaggerate their size a bit. When a costume has embroidery, or some other kind of trimming, you should always try to bring out the details vividly, by making them larger than they ordinarily would be in proportion to the garment itself.

The sketching of details demands a great deal of careful consideration. Let us give you an illustration to make the statement clear: In figure 4 you will observe two circular spots of embroidery; one is on the side of the waist to your right, and the other is on the side of the skirt to the left. If the figure were in a position facing us, we would naturally see both circles in their entirety; but as the figure tends to turn a little either to the right or left, part of one circle would be cut off from our range of vision, and this must be effectively represented in the drawing.

Now that the details have been shown, it is necessary to put an individual touch to the drawing, which will insure its finding favor in the eyes of prospective buyers. The drawing should be gone over carefully, the important lines made heavier, and the general finishing touches put on the design.

If you will look once more at the drawing on figure 4, you will observe small, heavy shadows. We call these “accents,” and they are put in to show that one layer of material is placed over another. You will generally find these accents on the bottom of a sleeve, or a skirt, and in other parts where the
upper layer of material is out far enough to cast a shadow.

*The Three-Quarter Front View and the Back View*

Most fashion illustrators use what is known as the three-quarter front view and back view of the fashion layout; first, because they represent the figure in an easier position than the straight front or back view; then they display more of the costume; and lastly, the illustrator can readily draw several figures without producing a monotonous effect.

Before you attempt to do this work, you should observe carefully how the various parts of the anatomy are affected by the changes in position. Look at the people about you, men and women, and take note of the poise of their heads when they are in various positions; watch their bodily movements. Study the human form as much as you can. It will help you to represent your figures in the most intelligent way.

In drawing the three-quarter view, block-in your outline, as you did in the straight front view. Then round off your corners. Indicate the roundness of the limbs and the body by developing curved lines from the straight lines; then fill in details.

Notice figure 73. Here you see the fashion figure with arm stretched out. If you wished to show a novel design on the sleeve, you would draw the figure in this pose.

It is always well to be guided by a center line running down the figure. This line serves to direct you in the drawing of the details of a costume as well as in the details of the figure. But in order to give the
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figure a pleasing and graceful contour, it is advisable to change the direction of the center line in certain parts of the figure. For example, if you draw the head tilted upward, your center line will be changed for that particular part. You can, in a similar way, break the continuity of the center line by having the body of the figure face one way, and the head another.

In figure 73 one of the feet is flat on the ground; and no part of the weight rests on the right foot. Note the position of the right knee and the toe of the right foot.

Figures 74 and 75 show the blocking-in of the back view. Note the draping of the costume over the figure drawn in this view—figure 76.

From observation of the figures, you should have deduced the fact that everything which is nearest to you is drawn the largest, and everything farthest away is drawn smallest. We say that a part of the body is foreshortened, or drawn in perspective, when it is drawn small in order to indicate its distance from the eye. Try to do as many of these figures as you can, for they will prove very beneficial.