
GOD
Save
THE QUEEN

'To create something exceptional, your mindset must be relentlessly focused on the smallest detail.'

Giorgio Armani

In this chapter the important differences and distinctions that coexist between fashion presentation formats are considered. Building on an understanding of the fashion figure and the role of technical drawings for fashion, this chapter explores how they may be grouped together as part of a coherent presentation. The particular perspective of fashion illustration is considered in relation to other artwork formats, while a range of artwork boards, sometimes ambiguous in nature, are visually presented and explained. We look at the growing influence of digital presentation platforms, including websites and blogs. The chapter is richly supplemented by interviews with three inspirational illustrators who each apply their different styles and talents to contemporary fashion illustration. Their distinctive media choices and eclectic styles are testimony to the diverse language used by fashion drawing today.

1 Illustration by Luis Tinoco.



Fashion illustration

1–3 Fashion illustrations by Timothy Lee (1) and Tahsin Osman (2–3).

Fashion illustration describes a particular approach to fashion drawing that exemplifies artistic expression and stylisation of the human form. On the whole it is concerned not so much with an accurate representation of the garment or outfit, but with communicating the allure or attitude of the design. In this regard fashion illustration may be considered as being distinct from fashion sketching. We may also refer to fashion illustrators as distinct from fashion designers, although both work in complementary ways and the production of fashion artwork is common to both practices.

Some of the most successful fashion illustrators have had little or no design training and therefore do not involve themselves in the complexities of pattern cutting or the manufacture of a garment. This is not their function and it does not restrict an illustrator; they have no need to add every seam, dart and tuck to their final illustrations. In fact, such detailed information can sometimes make a fashion illustration appear static or overworked, especially if the details are already clarified in a designer's flat drawing.

Fashion illustration is about capturing the mood, the spirit and the essence of a design. Some of the most effective fashion illustrations can appear almost effortless, inviting the viewer to imagine what lies beneath the surface or to form personal interpretations. Of course, illustrations are not effortless and developing an illustration is a process in itself, one that requires practice, visualisation and experimentation. Personal illustration styles evolve over time.



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Composition and layout

Composition in fashion illustration refers to the arrangement of the visual elements within its defined dimensions, and the relationship between these elements. As there is such variety in fashion illustration, applying fixed rules to composition is not really appropriate. However, there are some underlying principles that should be considered by fashion students – these may also be regarded as intuitive.

The relationship between the elements can be classified by what is referred to as the 'positive image' and the 'negative space'. The positive image refers directly to the subject, usually the human figure in a fashion illustration, while negative space refers to the space around and between the subjects. The positive image and negative space are equally important in determining a visually engaging composition.





The layout of a successful fashion illustration has considered placement in order to achieve the desired effect or visual impact. This is usually aimed at capturing the viewer's attention and directing their eye over the illustration. Before the arrival of digital media this was achieved through a manual process of rough draft planning and gradually layering up the composed illustration. Today, the ability to work with separate layers for digital images has facilitated the process and made it much more versatile. Once in digital form, illustrations may be edited and formatted to fit a particular presentation or printing requirement. Whichever route you take, whether it is hand-rendered or digital, planning and composing your illustration is always important and you should consider the illustration's purpose – for presentation or inclusion within a portfolio.

1 Fashion illustrations by Anna Walker.



Presentation boards

Most fashion students will be familiar with the term presentation boards as they are frequently used when working on projects and preparing a portfolio. The term is also used in the fashion industry to refer to a variety of boards that communicate and sell ideas or designs for commercial objectives.

Presentation boards are primarily concerned with presenting ideas and designs to a defined audience with an appropriate level of clarity, visual flair and professionalism. They serve different complementary functions and, when considered within a project or specific presentation, they should be visually linked. This might include, for example, working across a template and colour code style and using the same board dimensions within a presentation.

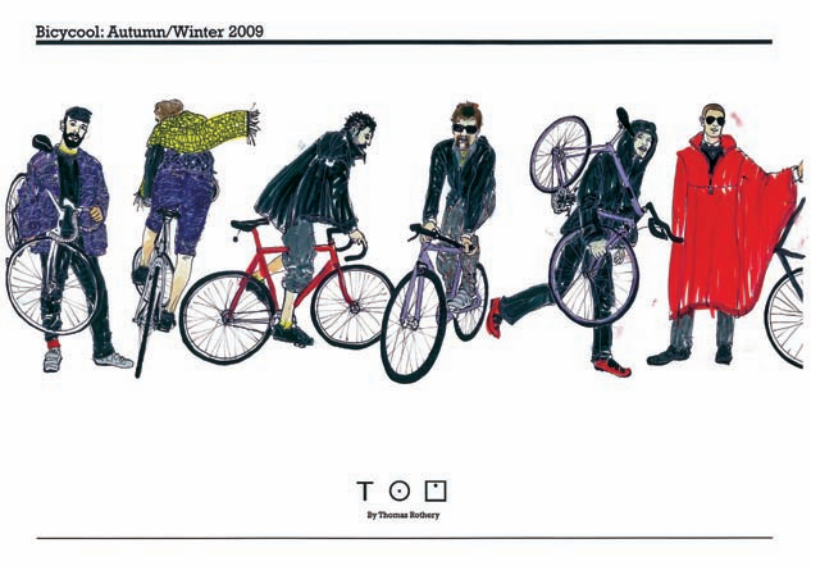
Strong compositional skills, and the ability to clearly communicate information, are a distinct advantage when preparing a presentation board. Presentation boards that are executed with clarity also convey a student or designer's organisational skills (and this is important for working in fashion). Presentation boards should not blur into each other or repeat the same information as the viewer or audience will quickly lose interest or become confused.

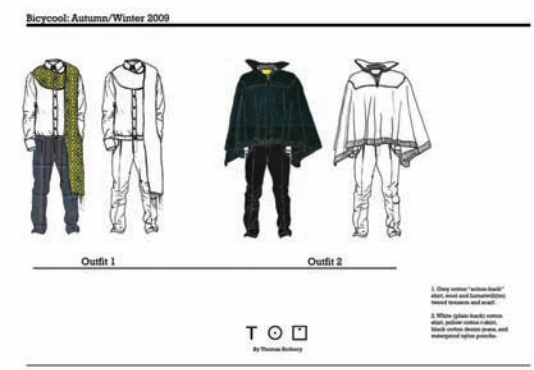
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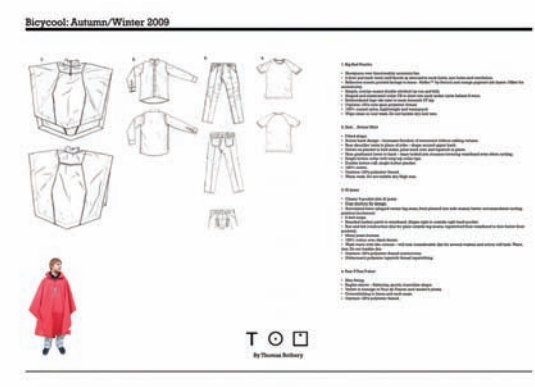












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1 Illustration boards by Chi Hu.

2 Illustration board (top), design board (middle) and flats presentation board (bottom) by Thomas Rothery.

Mood board

One of the most frequently used boards, and one that most fashion students are introduced to first, is a mood board. As its name suggests, the purpose of this board is to set the mood or tone for the design boards or project work that follows. The process of preparing a mood board also enables a designer to collect visual information from a variety of sources and to organise their inspirations and ideas into a composed visual display. These boards can vary considerably from intense photomontages or composite collages to rather spare visual compositions that convey an ethereal quality. Some mood boards are tactile, others may be digitally formatted. Depending on the guidance provided by tutors or professors, either type may be acceptable but it is still important that the board is planned, arranged and edited into a coherent visual composition.



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Concept board

Concept boards can take the place of a mood board when a context is set for a project or collection. A concept board might also include references to colour palettes with accompanying inspiration or direction images. Concept boards may be used for industry-linked projects, known as 'live' projects, to introduce the design boards that will follow. They sometimes combine the purposes of both a mood board and a colour board, with the additional focus of a context, and should be visually engaging and well-composed.

Title board

This board can sometimes take the place of a mood board if a context is already set and the student wants the focus of their work to be linked to a collection title or theme. Typically, more advanced fashion design students will use a title board to introduce their work in conjunction with other boards such as colour boards, development boards and subsequent artwork or design boards. Title boards can be used to good effect for introducing a project within a portfolio.

1–4 Flats board (1), mood or concept board (2) and illustration boards (3–4) by Lucy Chiu.

Flats board

Although some designers include flats with their illustrations, it is often appropriate to prepare a separate presentation board for flats and thematically link them to your other boards. In some sections of the fashion industry this is common practice, such as for active sportswear and product categories of menswear. Presenting flats on a separate board can enable a designer to give more artistic expression to an illustration without competing with a flat as part of the same composition. Increasingly, presentation flats are being drawn and coloured with the aid of digital graphics software. If you pursue this approach you should consider how it will work alongside your other boards.

Range plan board

Prepared by design teams in the fashion industry to 'break down' a collection into its constituent parts across product categories or consignment deliveries, range plan boards (or line sheets as they are known in the US), are used to clarify final collections for presentation to sales teams and buyers. These boards utilise presentation flats to clearly show each product style against exact fabric swatches. They might include a style number, season, price and delivery date. Range plan boards may be less familiar to students, who will usually produce smaller line-up sheets drawn on the figure.

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1–4 Illustration boards (1 and 3), flats board (2) and colour board (4) by Lucy Chiu.



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Line-up sheet

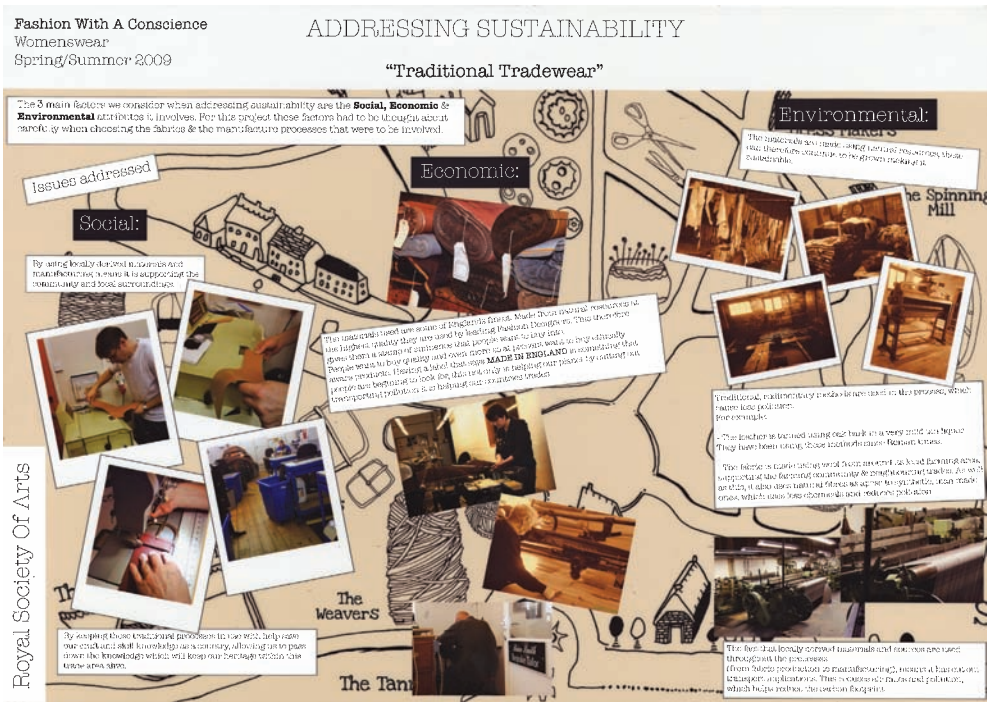
Used by more advanced fashion students, the purpose of line-up sheets is to present and edit final collections in a line-up format that allows the outfits to be evaluated for their overall look, including their catwalk/runway appeal. The designs are drawn on the figure and not as flats, with attention to styling, fit and proportion. It is important, therefore, that they are drawn to a consistent scale and that the poses are not overly dramatic as the purpose of the line-up sheet is to enable critical evaluation of the capsule collection. They may be included in a final portfolio but should not detract from or duplicate final illustration work.



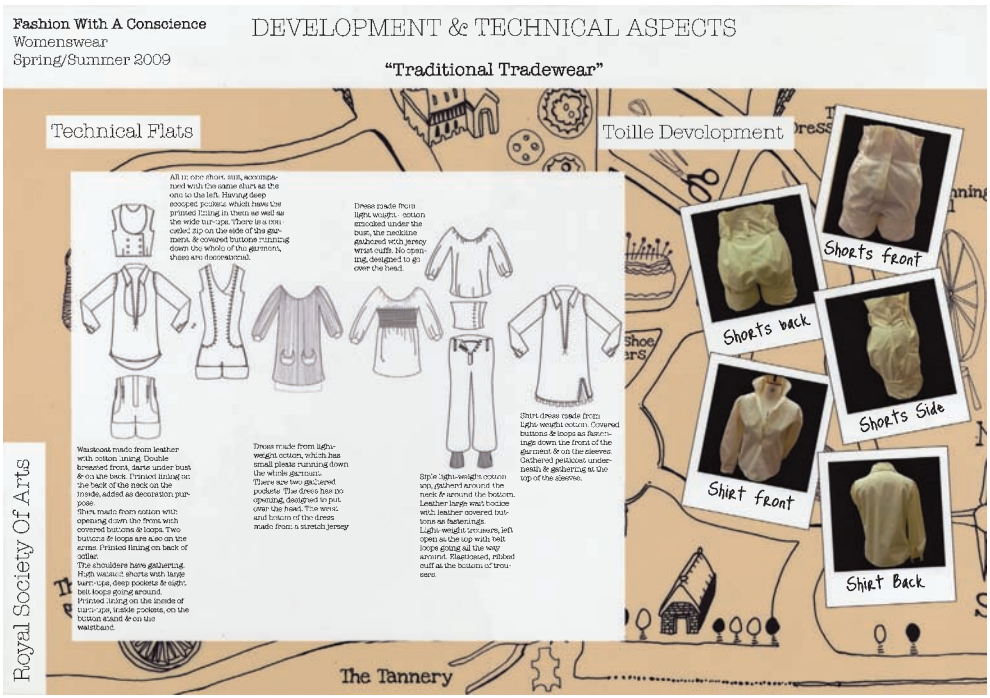
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Colour board

Although colour stories can be conveyed as part of a mood board, theme board or range plan, a separate colour board is sometimes useful. Colour boards are used in industry to clarify exact colours and combinations within a product category or merchandise theme. Colour inspiration is important for students of fashion and fashion knitwear, who often include them within their portfolios and provide additional fabric or yarn samples. It is important, however, to consider colour consistency when producing a colour board as your artwork should be colour matched and the colours accurately represented in your design boards.


Fashion With A Conscience
Womenswear
Spring/Summer 2009
ADDRESSING SUSTAINABILITY
"Traditional Tradewear"
The 3 main factors we consider when addressing sustainability are the Social, Economic & Environmental attributes it involves. For the project these factors had to be thought about carefully when choosing the fabrics & the manufacturing processes that were to be involved.
Issues addressed
Social:
Economic:
Environmental:
Royal Society Of Arts
The Weavers
The Tannery
The Spinning Mill

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Fashion With A Conscience
Womenswear
Spring/Summer 2009
DEVELOPMENT & TECHNICAL ASPECTS
"Traditional Tradewear"
Technical Flats
Toille Development
Shorts front
Shorts back
Shorts Side
Shirt front
Shirt Back
Royal Society Of Arts
The Tannery

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Development board

Some tutors and college professors ask their students to prepare a development board, which visually presents key stages of their development in the studio. This enables students to extract some of their best sketchbook work and combine it with photographic images of toiles/muslins as evidence of their work in progress. Development boards are useful; they can link a mood board to the artwork or final design boards. Although there is no rule on how formally they should be presented, some students include them in their final portfolios.

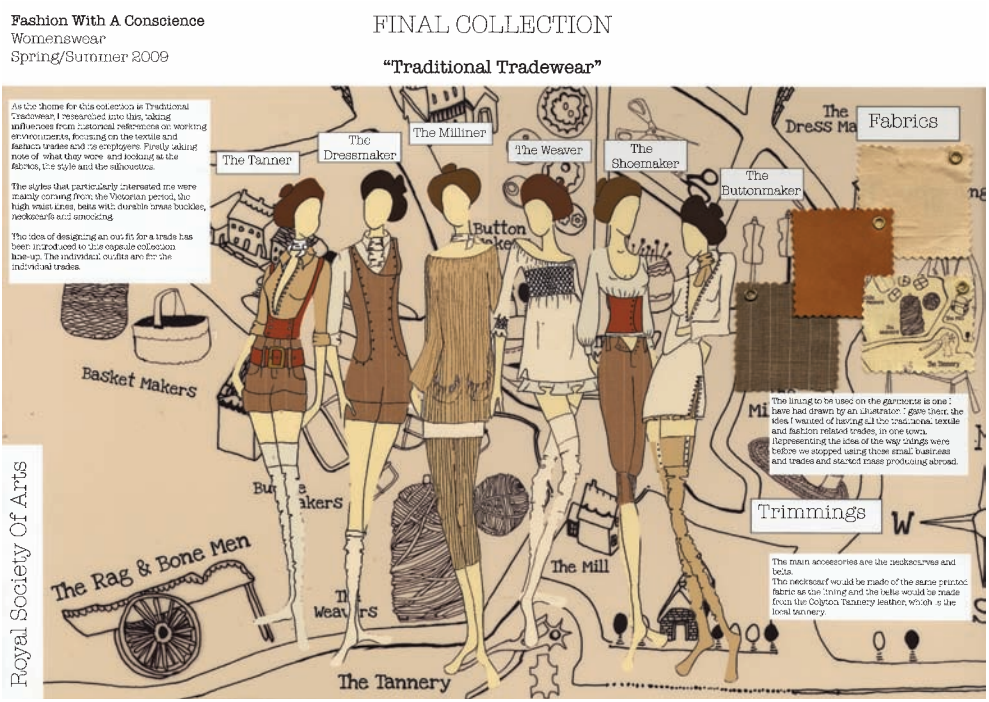
Illustration board or design board

Fashion illustration boards are an important part of any fashion student or designer's portfolio and are usually among the last to be viewed in the sequence of a portfolio presentation. In one sense they may even be considered to be the finale of a designer's presentation since they serve a more artistic role than the other boards and can add a wow factor to a portfolio. Some designers may include flats with their figurative drawings, while others may adopt a more illustrative format. Determining the format for a fashion illustration is important and should be planned. This includes whether the illustration will be arranged in landscape or portrait format as well as whether to draw more than one figure on the board. Arranging multiple figures can be visually enhancing but should be considered in relation to individual model poses, gender and target market or occasion. For example, illustration boards for bridal wear and high evening wear should emphasise the uniqueness of the design and the occasion, so individual illustrations are more appropriate. Fashion figures can be cropped and framed on illustration boards depending on the desired effect. Composing your illustration is important and, given the variety of approaches to fashion illustration today, you should play to your strengths and emphasise what you can do best.

1–3 Concept board (1), flats/development board (2) and illustration/design board (3) by Miranda Folett-Millard.

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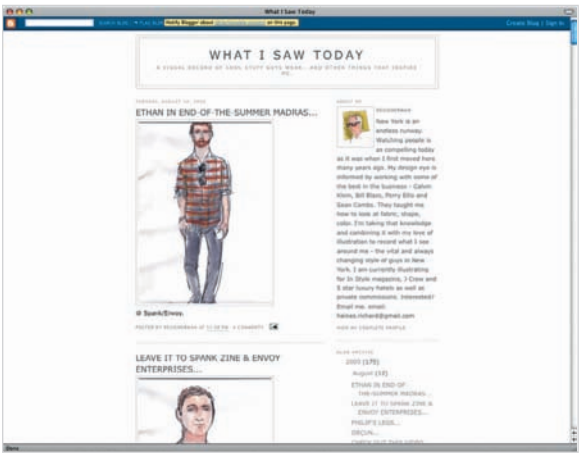
Fashion With A Conscience
Womenswear
Spring/Summer 2009



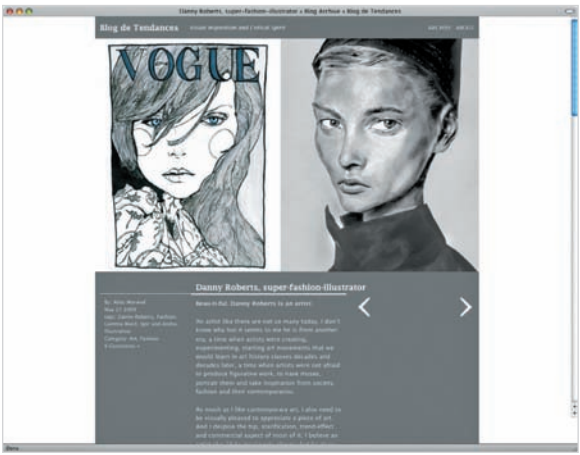
Digital presentations

It is interesting to note the increasing popularity of websites and blogs in which fashion drawings and illustrations are shared and displayed alongside fashion photography and other associated fashion imagery. These digital formats have extended the reach of fashion drawing and presentation styles to a global audience, as well as assimilating them into a digital cultural mix that appears open and receptive to the variety of fashion drawing styles that exist today.

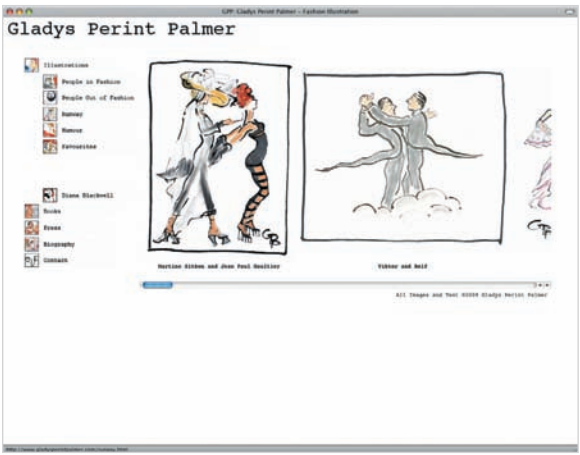
Blogs are also being taken up by fashion students who are actively using them to network and promote their work through online forums and digital gallery spaces. These developments are consistent with the advances in digital graphics software, meaning that fashion drawings are increasingly being viewed through screen-based platforms as well as through a range of print media formats. The continuing influence of digital media for fashion drawings and presentations is likely to remain strong in the foreseeable future. Graphics software, scanners and digital cameras are becoming more sophisticated and a growing number of successful illustrators and designers are using digital media either exclusively or in combination with hand-rendering techniques. If fashion is about creating an ideal and capturing the current mood and spirit of its age, then the digital presentation of fashion artworks will continue to exert a powerful influence over popular culture.



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1 Fashion designer and illustrator Richard Haines's blog <www.designermanwhatisawtoday.blogspot.com>

2 The work of fashion illustrator Danny Roberts is frequently featured on blogs and websites.

3 Fashion illustrator Gladys Perint Palmer showcases her work on her website <www.gladysperintpalmer.com>

Cecilia Carlstedt, fashion illustrator

Please describe your current job
I work as a freelance illustrator.

What artistic training have you had?
I have always drawn since I was a young girl, but I began my formal studies in art at a school called Södra Latins Gymnasium in Stockholm. I continued with more theoretical education, studying art history for a year at Stockholm University. In 1998 I was accepted on to the Graphic Design Foundation course at the London College of Printing. This led to a BA in the same subject specialising in experimental image-making. The course also offered a five-month exchange programme at The Fashion Institute of Technology in New York.

How would you describe your fashion illustration style?
Experimental, eclectic and with a love for contrasts.

What type of media do you like to use?
I mix traditional media like pencil and ink in combination with modern techniques including Illustrator, Photoshop and photography.

How important are computer graphics in your work?
It has become increasingly important over time. I still prefer a handmade look, but I have to admit to being quite reliant on the computer in the process.

What advice do you have for a student who wants to work as a fashion illustrator?
Experiment a lot with different media to create your personal style. Always keep updated on what's going on in the field.

What makes a great fashion illustration?
For me it's when you can see that the creator has captured the essence of the piece in a unique, confident way.

What or who inspires you?
When I see something that triggers the nerve to create; that could be anything really, an unusual colour combination, an interesting face, and so on.

Artists who inspire me are many, but to name a few: Elizabeth Peyton, Luc Tuymans, Aubrey Beardsley, Hokusai and Gustav Klimt.



1–2 Illustrations by Cecilia Carlstedt.



Cecilia Carlstedt, fashion illustrator



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1–2 Illustrations by Cecilia Carlstedt.



Luis Tinoco, fashion illustrator

Please describe your current job as an illustrator
I am currently working on different media projects based in different countries. I usually work with fashion magazines, newspapers and textbooks. Basically I try to get as close as I can to each target audience; not only do I adapt my style to each one of them, but I also preserve the same essence according to my own style and technique.

What artistic training have you had?
Illustration has always been a hobby for me. I remember loving to draw when I was younger and ever since I have been furthering my interest in it. This was by learning several techniques such as painting, watercolouring, charcoal drawing and so on. However, I believe that my degree in graphic design perhaps has helped me the most in the creation of images, not only to compose and colour them but also to interpret and reflect them in images, ideas or concepts.

How would you describe your fashion illustration style?
I would not define it as just one pure style. To my understanding, fashion is in constant progress, always changeable, and my work acclimatises to it. The same would apply to the designers – transformation and evolution is unstoppable. I would say that the real challenge is to reproduce that evolution on a piece of paper.



1–2 Illustrations by Luis Tinoco for *Glamour* Germany.



Cecilia Carlstedt > **Luis Tinoco** > Sandra Suy

Luis Tinoco, fashion illustrator

What type of media do you like to use?
I like using any possible method when illustrating. To achieve that, I explore new ways of expression. The mixture (or collage) of different plastic techniques is my main instrument. The results are more rewarding and innovative if I show certain versatility.

How important are computer graphics in your work?
I use the computer together with other methods. I do use it but not primarily. In order to get hold of realistic results and postures with personality and individuality the use of drawing is needed.

What advice do you have for a student who wants to work as a fashion illustrator?
Try to find a unique style that you feel comfortable with and stick to it. It will become your trademark and it is what will make you different from the rest. Also try to build a type of work that would suggest your personality and your life's vision.

What makes a great fashion illustration?
Elegance and strength are two essential elements that need to be considered when working on fashion-related illustrations. Moreover, they are key to making someone stop, pay attention to it and hopefully, keep it in the mind. At the end of the day, it is all about the transmission of feelings beyond what is merely visual.

Who or what inspires you?
I always try to be aware of absolutely everything that takes place around me. Anything could be an inspiration to me: people I see in the street, music, TV, photo sessions...

I also love to pay attention to artists who have lived in a different period. I think that if we still remember them it must be because they have done something good with their lives and the job they did. Perhaps this is why my illustrations have been defined sometimes as being a bit 'retro', which is a real compliment to me.





1–2 Illustrations by Luis Tinoco for *Glamour* Spain.

Sandra Suy, fashion illustrator

Please describe your current job as an illustrator
I work with different types of clients, basically related to fashion, and usually with very tight deadlines so I have to work quickly.

What artistic training have you had?
I studied art and fashion design for five years. The rest of my training has been on my own.

How would you describe your fashion illustration style?
It's influenced by classic fashion illustration and I like thinking it's elegant and reflects beauty in a good way.

What type of media do you like to use?
In the beginning I used all kind of artistic media, but now I've achieved the same effects with my computer, and it's more comfortable.



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1–2 Illustrations by Sandra Suy.



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Sandra Suy, fashion illustrator



How important are computer graphics in your work?
Very important, I use a computer in all my work processes.

What advice do you have for a student who wants to work as a fashion illustrator?
The most important thing is to find your own style and promote your work a lot so people can see it. The internet is a good tool for this.

What makes a great fashion illustration?
Something I can't describe that makes you feel like you're in front of something special.

Who or what inspires you?
My inspiration depends on the moment; it could be an idea or a person who is different from the rest. I try to impregnate my illustrations with the attitude of the moment.



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1–2 Illustrations by Sandra Suy.



'You are only as good as the people you dress.'

Halston

The final chapter considers the assembly and organisation of fashion drawing and associated artwork boards as part of a visual portfolio. Practical considerations, such as the selection and size of a portfolio case, are discussed along with approaches to the selection and organisation of work within a portfolio. The evolving nature of what may be considered as a fashion portfolio in today's rapidly changing digital media age is also considered, with a speculative eye on the future of fashion. The chapter concludes with an informative interview with the owner and director of a UK-based fashion careers company that offers support and advice on fashion portfolios to students, recent graduates and industry professionals.

1 Illustration by Sandra Suy.

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