

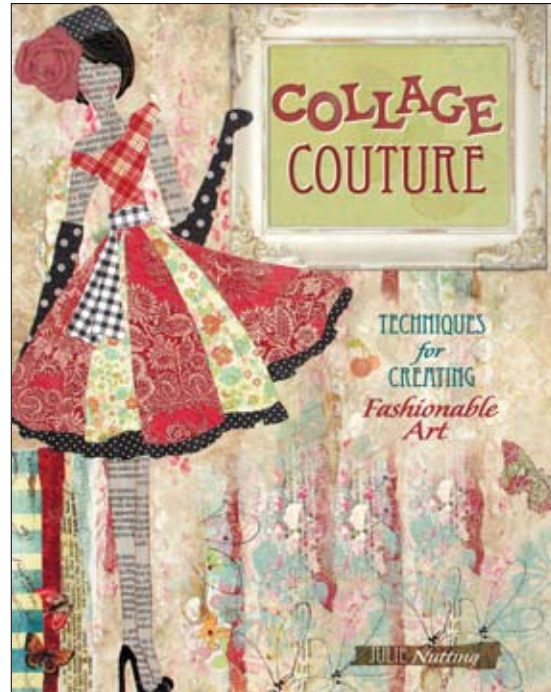
Fashion Sketching

Do you dream of being a fashion designer but think to yourself that you have no idea where to start? Well, here comes Julie Nutting, author of *Collage Couture*, to the rescue!

Julie says that all fashion drawing and sketching should begin with a croquis—a sketch of an undressed figure. Tracing paper is then placed over the croquis to sketch the figure's outfit. After working through this tutorial, you should have the knowledge to sketch your own set of croquis! We up the ante by including a primer on sketching a variety of dresses, tops and skirts.

To learn more about or purchase *Collage Couture* by Julie Nutting, [click here](#).

www.CreateMixedMedia.com



Collage Couture is published by North Light Books, an imprint of F+W Media, Inc.

SKETCHING A FASHION FIGURE

It Takes Lots of Practice!

Fashion sketching took me years of practice to master. I'm not a "natural," so I didn't just sit down and start sketching recognizable poses of the human body. It also took a lot of practice to develop my own style. I'm happy to say that I can now sit, have a pose in my mind and sketch it in a fairly quick manner. Anyone who looks at it will know the style is unmistakably mine.

Recently, I was asked to draw a reindeer. A reindeer?! I had no idea what a reindeer looked like, and I wasn't able to draw one out of the blue. I referred to the Internet to find an image of a reindeer, and I felt uncomfortable as I started to draw him. I tweaked, erased and tweaked some more before he resembled a reindeer. I share this with you because I don't want you to be intimidated by drawing. It takes practice—lots of practice! As you learn, remember to be patient with yourself.

There's the Right Way, and There's the Quick Way

First, we will learn the right way. I took a basic drawing class in college, but I didn't have the time or patience to learn to draw the correct way. Design classes hit hard and heavy, and I learned to draw as most design students learn: quickly, using croquis. A croquis is simply a sketch of an undressed figure. Tracing paper is placed over the croquis to sketch the figure's outfit. After completing this chapter, you should have the knowledge to sketch your own set of croquis to complete the projects in this book. We will learn a very condensed version of drawing a figure the correct way. We will dissect what we're doing so we can understand the process.

Use these guidelines as a starting point for developing your own style. As artists, we don't always like doing things the right way. Once you learn the proportions I've provided, you can go crazy creating your very own signature

approach. This is when legs and necks can become longer, heads can become smaller, and elbows and ankles can be exaggerated points. Lips can emerge into hearts, and eyelashes may extend to the middle of the cheek with swirls at the ends! You may want to draw primitive, chubby or stick-like figures. This is where the fun begins!

Drawing the Grid

Begin by drawing and numbering thirteen horizontal lines across your paper in 1" (2.5cm) intervals, starting with zero. The head is 1" (2.5cm) long, and the figure will be the equivalent of twelve heads. Realistically, the human figure would be seven heads tall. In fashion sketching, the body is always elongated to show off the clothing. Why? Because it's all about the clothes! It's important to note here that another artist might use fifteen lines and draw very long legs. I happen to like the twelve-head rule, although I've been known to change it up sometimes. Label your horizontal lines according to Figure A. Sketch in your figure, again referring to Figure A. This is a front-view figure, meaning both sides are symmetrical. Figure B shows how a figure will look with clothes. You now have your first figure!



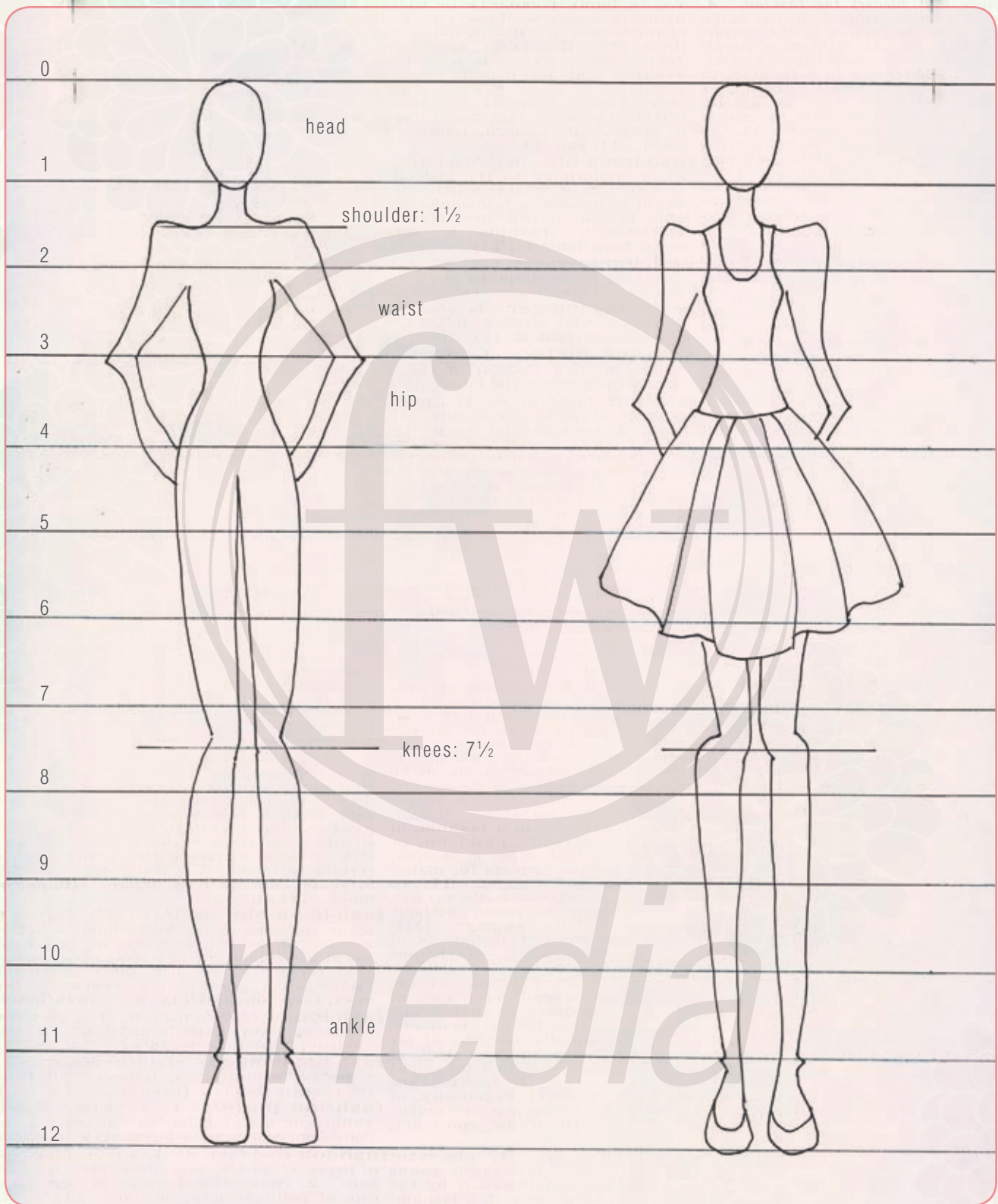


FIGURE A

FIGURE B

Three-Quarter-View Figure

In this sketch, the body turns slightly, with the center front rotated to the side. One side of the body shows more than the other. Once again, draw and label thirteen horizontal lines. Refer to Figure C as you sketch in your figure. Note that these first poses are just that: poses. Next, we will add a little movement to our girls.

Movement and Attitude

In the previous figures, the shoulder, bust, waist and hip lines were straight across, parallel to the floor. This creates a figure that appears to be still. Angling these lines creates movement and attitude. Notice in Figure D how the figure's shoulders go up and her left hip goes down. These opposite lines give her a bit of attitude, don't you think? When you practice drawing this one, try angling your lines even more drastically and see what you come up with.

The Balancing Act: Don't Tip Over!

The red vertical lines in Figures D and E indicate the balance line. This line helps the figure stand upright. This line usually falls close to the supporting leg and ends up somewhere near the ankle. The other leg does not appear to hold her weight at all. It is so important to note this line; otherwise your girl will appear a bit tipsy, and we don't want anyone to think bad thoughts about her!

The dotted lines in Figures D and E represent the center front. This line has nothing to do with balance or leg positions. It's solely used to help you move her torso into a pose. It's also necessary to know where the center front is when designing her clothes.

The Quick Way!

Now that you understand proportions and movement, there is an easier way to do this. Fashion magazines and catalogs offer lots of poses to work from. Find a front figure pose that you would like to draw and place a sheet of tracing paper over it. Trace over the head, neck, arms, legs and anything that's not dressed. Draw the horizontal lines in where the shoulders, bust, waist and hips should go. Connect all the parts together until you're happy with your figure. *Voilà!* You have a fashion figure that's ready to dress within minutes!

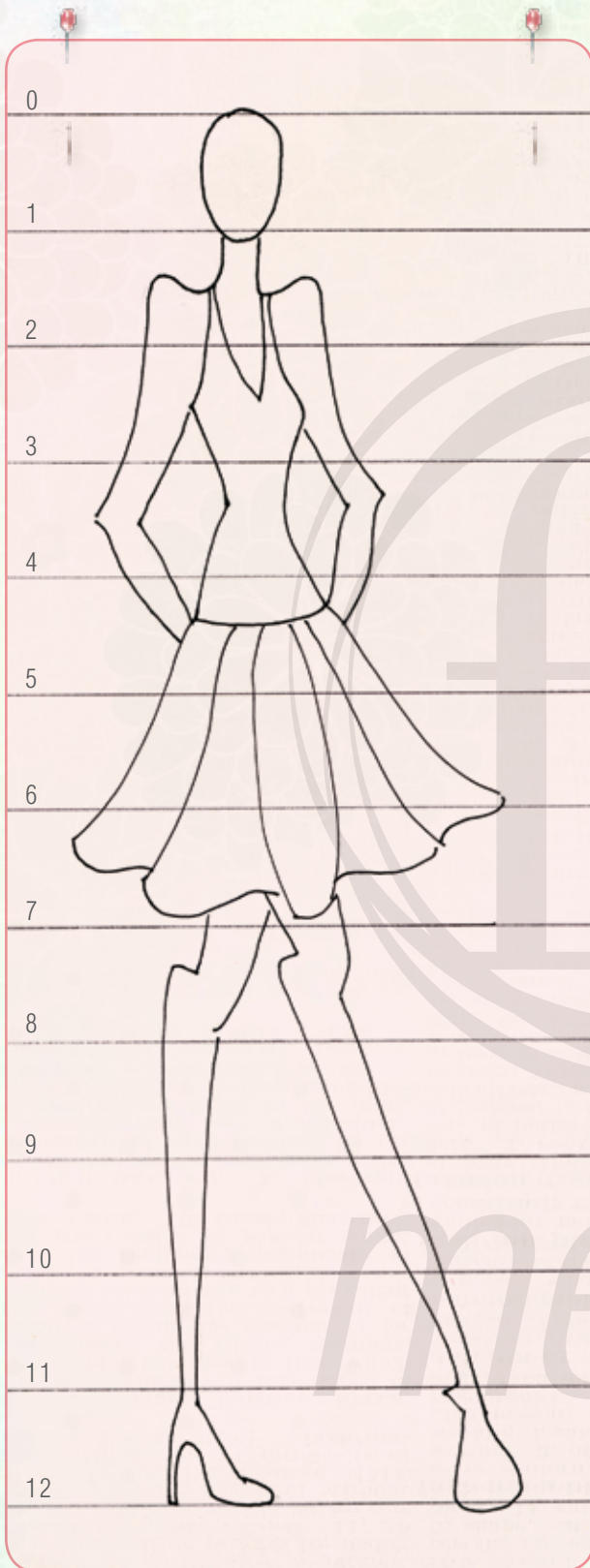


FIGURE C

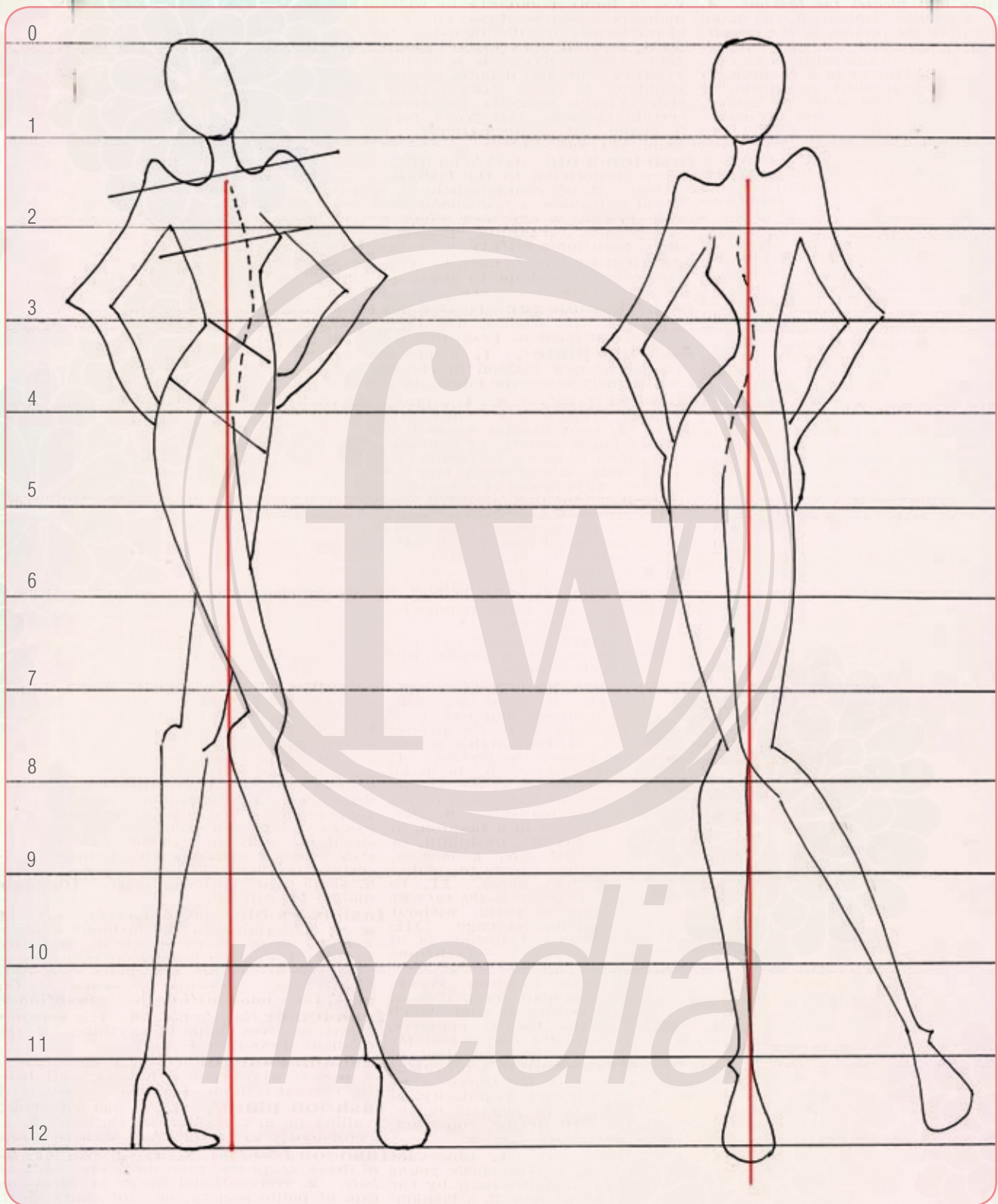


FIGURE D

FIGURE E

SKETCHING CLOTHING

In this section, we will learn some basics about sketching clothes. We will also talk a bit about style, just to keep your creative juices flowing. This is your opportunity to play fashion designer!

Once I have my figure drawn, it's time to dress her. Most of my clothes have lots of folds. The more folds there are, the more varied patterns of paper you will get to use. Figures K and L are the basic silhouettes and necklines that I use. Of course, there are far more, and

I'm sure you will think of others when you sit down to draw. You will see that the waistline hits in different locations on the body. The folds of the skirt will fall from the waistline whether it's high, low or normal. Notice the sheath and the tent silhouettes don't have a waist. I added these to feed your imagination. The tent could be a cute retro look with contrasting giant pockets, and the sheath could be done in sections, which could be quite retro-chic.

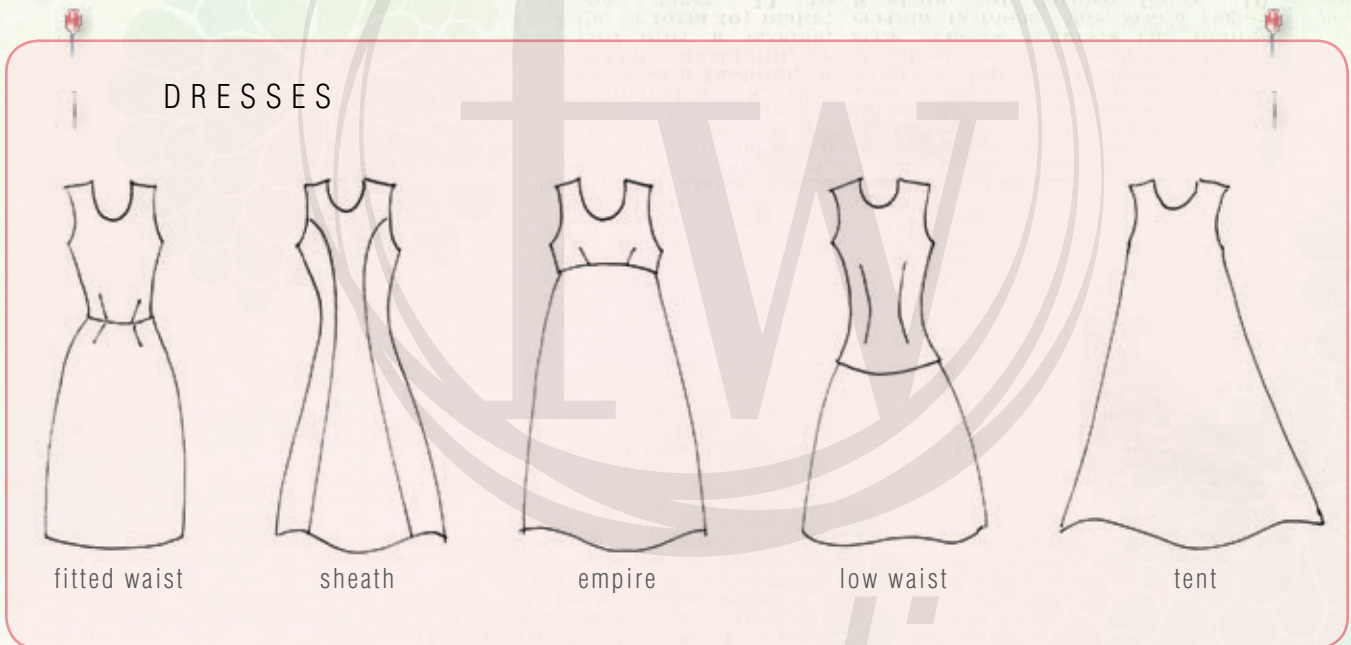


FIGURE K

NECKLINES



scoop



v-neck



halter



surplice



boat

SKIRTS



FIGURE L

media



Decide on Style

Before starting any project, you must decide on style. It's just like when you start your day. Will you dress casual, retro, or maybe with a touch of glam? There are as many styles to choose from as there are ice-cream flavors. Sometimes a certain paper will inspire me; other times it might be a color palette. I will highlight a few of my favorite

styles that I use day in and day out in my art. Within each of these is a haven of inspiration to get your creativity going in high gear.

Whatever your style . . . *have fun!*



GLAMOUR GIRL

Of course, glamour means lots of bling, more bling and perhaps a sprinkling of glitter thrown in. The gowns should be nothing short of spectacular. Small-waisted with full skirts, long and slinky, or short and sassy, it doesn't matter as long as there's plenty of drama! Leopard-print, zebra-print, tiaras, crowns or feathers can add the perfect finishing touch. Try stamping a chandelier in the background for some added glam. The Eiffel Tower and some French script would be right at home here.



A BIT OF ROMANCE

Collage wouldn't be collage without the romantic vintage look, would it? Shabby vintage florals are the key to this look. Cabbage roses paired with stripes are the perfect match here. Think soft pastels and worn, torn edges. The skirts should be full with maybe a few ruffles peeking out. Personally, I like lots of ruffles. Just when I think I can't add another ruffle, I add it! A damask stamped pattern using Distress Ink would make a nice background. Butterfly die cuts or old perfume labels could be added for the perfect shabby-chic look.



EVERYTHING'S GROOVY

Groovy it is! Bold geometrics, mod flowers, zigzags and checkerboards will dominate the retro look. Think miniskirts, fishnets and crazy hot colors. The brighter, the funkier, the better. Short hair, long lashes and pouty lips are so much fun. Stamp some daisies into your background with peace signs in the centers! Wouldn't a street map of London look great mixed into the background?

Let's Start Drawing

You should now have at least two croquis to dress: the full view and the three-quarter view. Outline them with a black marker. Place a piece of tracing paper over one of the croquis and draw your dress. I always start at the neckline and work my way down. Practice drawing the folds of the skirt. You may sketch as many as you like, but I usually have two folds on either side of the center front fold. These can be tight or big and flowing. Just keep practicing different sizes and lengths. Once you're

happy with the dress, sketch in the rest of the body. Remember, you're just drawing an outline, nothing fancy. You may have noticed I did not give instructions for sleeves or collars. You certainly may use these elements in your design; however, the paper cutting can get very tiny, so I tend to keep the lines as simple as possible.

You now have your first design.



Setting the Mood

There's nothing more inspiring than a movie with great costumes! Rent *Marie Antoinette* or *Coco Chanel* and focus on the costumes as you watch. Keep a pretty sketchbook nearby to jot down ideas.