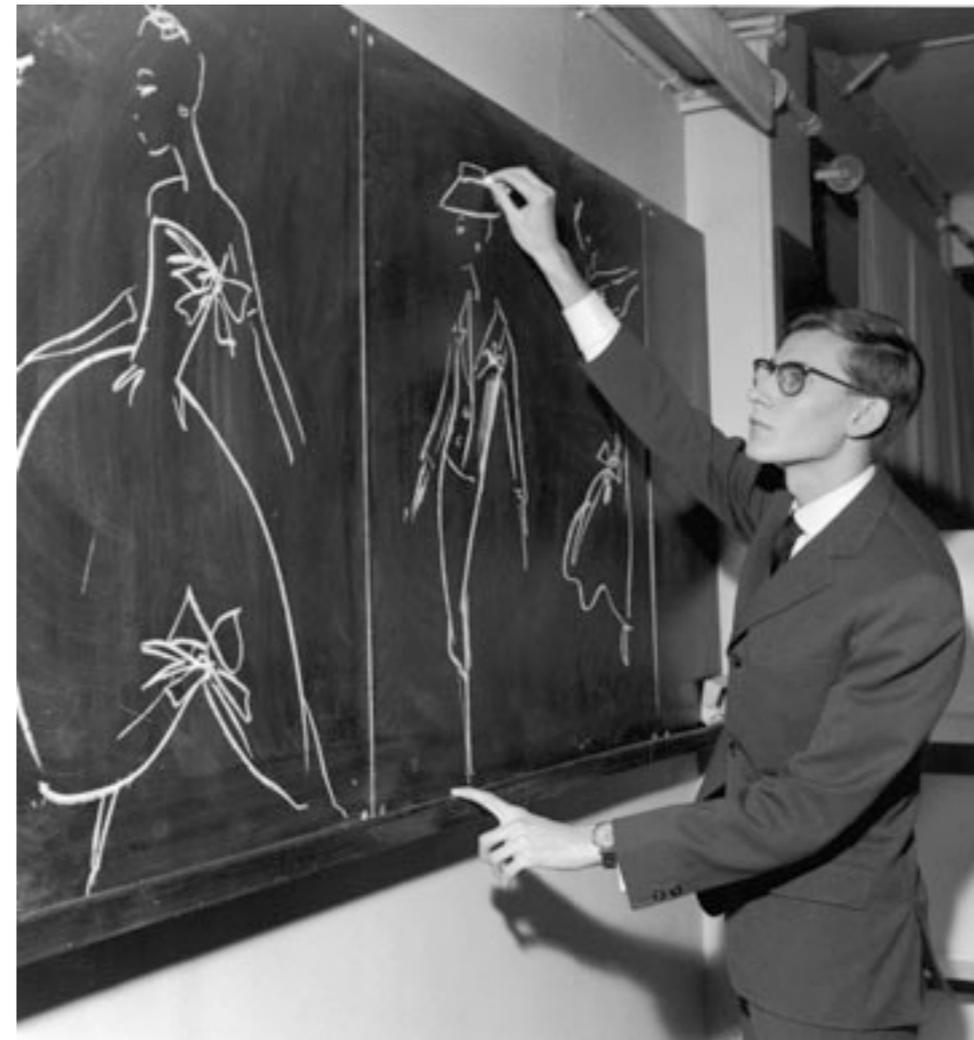


Redefining the High Art of Couture: Fashion Illustration Goes Modern

exhibition curated by Decue Wu

Fashion illustration has a long history and has played a critical role in the fashion industry. In the past, fashion illustrations were the main avenue for presenting the glamorous fashion concepts of designers. The illustrators added their own elements into their illustrations while showing the designer's vision. Meanwhile, fashion illustrators also documented the fashion show as editorial illustrations for magazines, newspapers and other publications.



Yves Saint Laurent drawing designs. 1957



Cover illustration by Benito, 1921, for *Vogue*, February 15, 1921.



Cover illustration by Benito, 1929, for *Vogue*, August 1929.

Exhibition Précis:

Redefining the High Art of Couture: Fashion Illustration Goes Modern is an exhibition that asserts that fashion illustration is a fine art. The focus is on the fashion illustrations of notable contemporary fashion illustrators, including David Downton (1959), Gladys Perint Palmer, Tanya Ling (1966), Francois Berthoud (1961), Mats Gustafson (1951), Zoë Taylor (1982), Jean-Philippe Delhomme (1959) and Howard Tangye (1979). Approximately two to four illustrations showcase the remarkable artistic talents of each artist. This exhibition is meaningful because it dispels the idea that fashion illustration is merely a functional tool for a fashion house—one used either to instruct tailors or to be manipulated as a marketing-and-sales device in fashion magazines or blogs. Instead, these exquisite drawings lift fashion illustration to its rightful place—as a high-art form worthy of acquisition by a museum or a private collector. After viewing the exhibition, visitors will experience a deep appreciation for the expansive and technical skills, the extraordinary attention to line and color, and the inspired genius that give rise to a designer's entire fashion collection.

Exhibition Themes

1. Different media and materials used in creating innovative modern artwork by the illustrators are uncovered.
2. Fashion illustration has entered the modern age as noted by its contemporary artistic style.
3. The relationship between actual pieces and the illustrations are important considerations for illustrators.

1. Different media and materials used in creating innovative modern artwork by the illustrators are uncovered.

Designers know that photographs can never capture the fantastic details depicted in a good illustration. However, in order to adapt to the accelerated technology, modern fashion illustrations are increasingly using digital tools while they seek new media, such as collages of mixed media and materials, paper-cut and hand-drawn digital editing. These innovations reveal how fashion illustrations evolve with the times.



Fashion illustration by Josh Bristow, October 2012, Collage.

2. Fashion illustration as well has entered the modern age as noted by its contemporary artistic style.

For example, a growing trend in fashion illustration is to add elements of graphic design, abstractions, figurative images, cubism, surrealism and minimalism into the drawings. 'Lifestyle' fashion illustrations also have become popular in periodicals, advertising campaigns and fashion houses. Such a vital change has brought fresh air to the industry. Compared to the old-fashioned, traditional fashion illustrations, which emphasized silhouettes, modern illustrations evoke the postmodern obsession with abstraction, mystery, and a dearth of defined details.



Cubism and Fashion by Richard Martin, published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in conjunction with the "Cubism and Fashion" Exhibition, December 10, 1998 through March 14, 1999.

3. The relationship between actual pieces and the illustrations are important considerations for illustrators.

The new techniques coupled with the different artistic styles of modern illustrations reflect important changes in fashion illustration. In addition, the changes demand more from the viewer, since today's pieces are more imaginative and suggestive. Today, fashion illustrators must increasingly consider the commingling of function and innovative story telling. It's a tall order, but it reveals the talents, beauty and importance of fashion illustrations.



*Homage to Braque by Yves Saint Laurent,
Spring/Summer 1988*



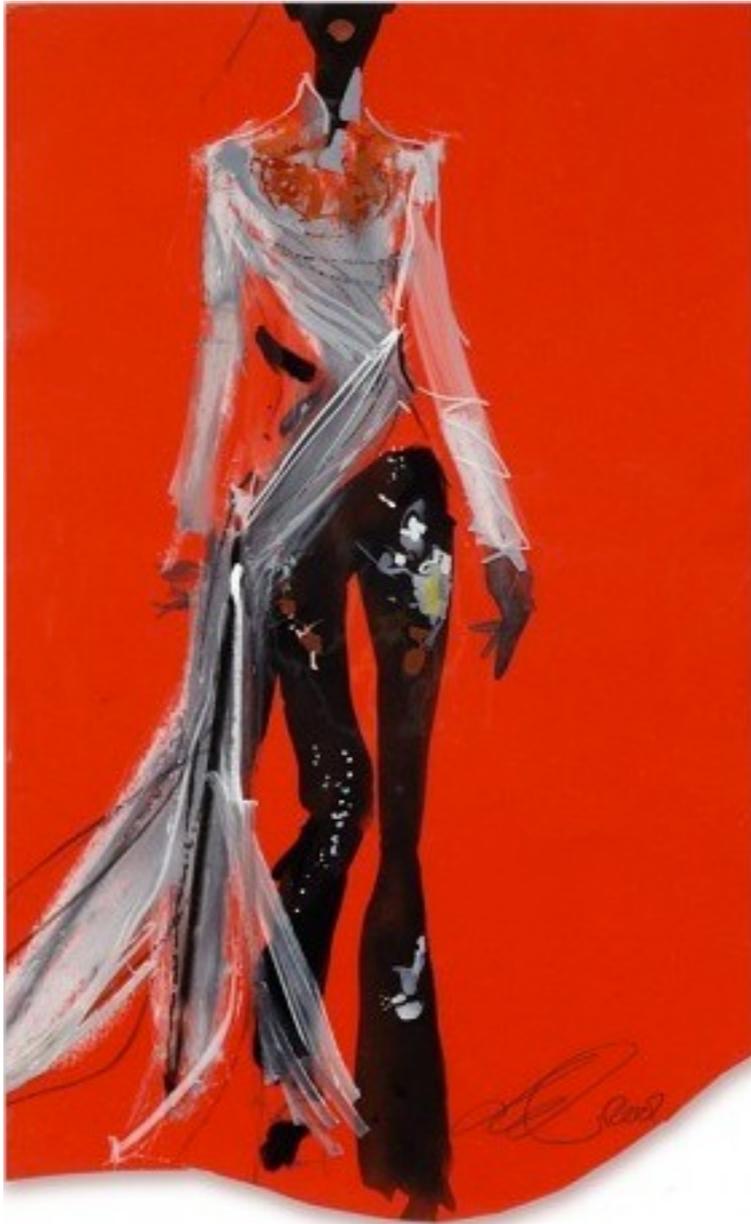
*Picasso-inspired long dress by Yves Saint Laurent,
January 22, 2002, Paris.*

David Downton (1959)

English artist David Downton is a renowned fashion illustrator. In 1984, he worked on a wide variety of projects ranging from advertising and packaging to illustrating fiction, cook books and, occasionally, fashion.

In 1996, he was asked by the *Financial Times* to draw his impressions of the fashions at the Paris couture shows; since then, David has become chiefly known as a fashion illustrator. Over the last decade, David Downton has established a reputation as one of the world's leading fashion artists. His fashion illustration career has charted the runway and captured the backstage glamour of couture. His drawings have graced the covers of fashion publications as well.





David Downton

Gaultier, Paris Couture, 2002

Ink and watercolor on colored paper with acetate overlay

David Downton has been an influential master of fashion illustration since his first commission to illustrate Paris couture in July 1996. His glamour portraits of fashion capture the essence of classically elegant and beautifully crafted couture. In this image, Downton uses a bold, blood-red backdrop and loose brush strokes to express the signature glam-rock style of Jean Paul Gaultier's collection.



David Downton

Erin O'Connor at Mulberry, 2011

Ink and watercolor on colored paper with acetate overlay

David Downton again proves his exceptional design sensibility in this interesting composition, which juxtaposes an angular and elegant female with the rounded figure of a zebra-patterned background. The modern, artistic style is suggested in the monochromatic palette and the shapes, which lack specific outlines, yet suggest something tangible. The result is sensual, decadent, and provocative—all hallmarks of high-end fashion.

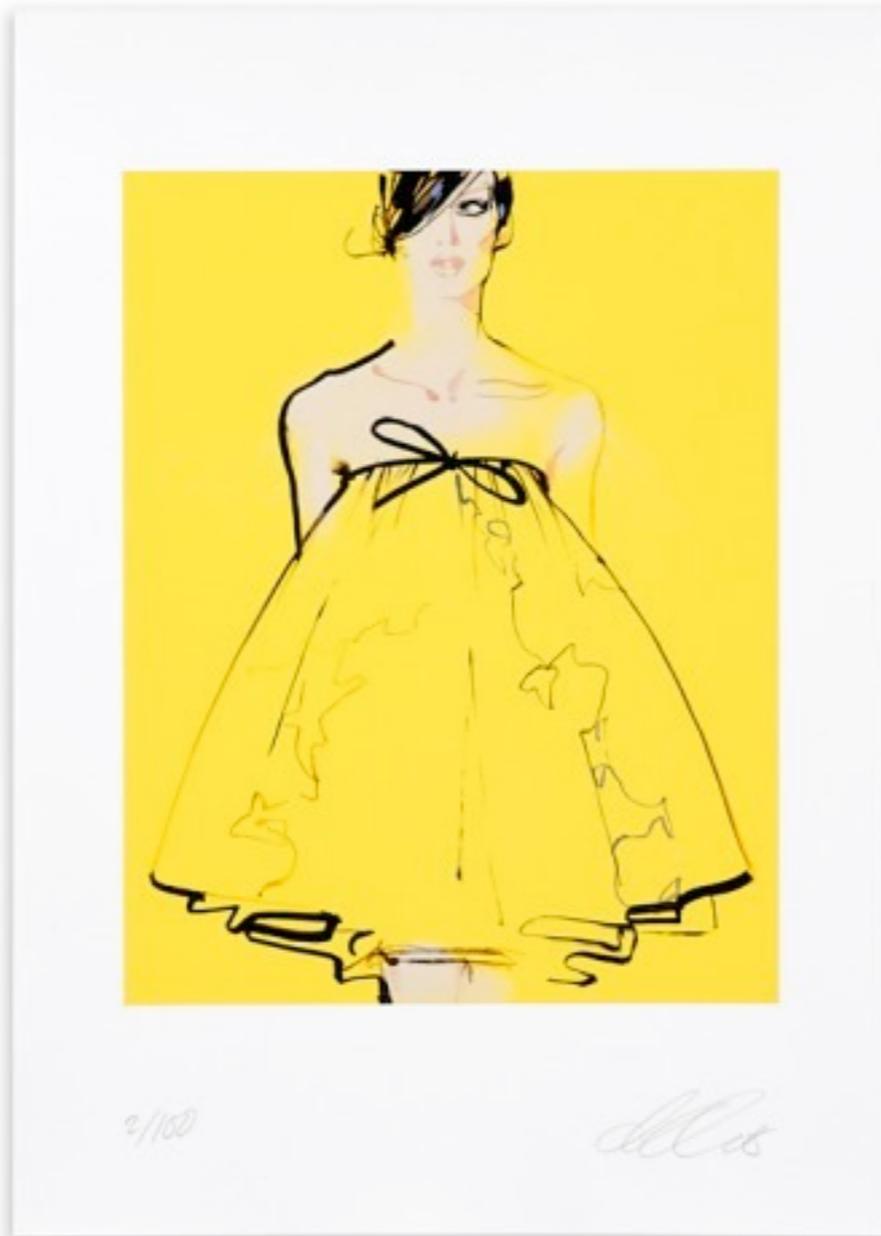


David Downton

Versace, 2008

Ink and watercolor on colored paper with acetate overlay

In this drawing, David Downton's loose, visionary style radiates effortless elegance. As David Downton says: "Successful fashion illustration is fluidity, mastery of the medium - capturing a sense of the moment, layout and use of space and most important of all, strong drawing. You cannot be too good at drawing."



David Downton

Valli, 2008

Ink and water color on colored paper and acetate overlay

David Downton's fashion illustrations often depict the backstage area, where the models are dressed and made up, and in the breaks before they return to the runway. Later, in the quiet and peace of his studio, he finishes the rough and quick sketches with black ink, gouache, and acrylic paint. Thus he successfully translates the impressions into painting and illustration by capturing the magic of a particular moment. In this drawing, Downton's *Valli* celebrates the elegance of the female body in stunningly lavish clothes. He particularly emphasizes the elegant and proper gesture of the model yet leaves ample space in his illustrations.

Gladys Perint Palmer

Palmer was born in Budapest, Hungary. She keeps her age a secret. She studied fashion design at Central Saint Martin's School of Art in London. She continued on at the Parsons School of Design in New York, where she focused on fashion illustration, and, in the early Eighties, was appointed Fashion Editor of the *San Francisco Examiner*. She is an esteemed illustrator, writer, and tutor, and she is the Executive Director of Fashion at San Francisco's Academy of Art.





Christian Lacroix Lacroix's bridal haute couture, 2009



Gladys Perint Palmer

Christian Lacroix July 7 2009 Les Arts Décoratifs , 2009

Watercolor on paper

The garment depicted in this Christian Lacroix 2009 collection required 200 hours to tailor and embellish. The finished gown and headpiece were constructed of fine tweed and fleece fabrics. Gladys Perint Palmer is known for creating loose, moveable, extremely simple outlines that capture the imaginary movement of the dress. Her famous sweeps of color highlight the delicacy and exquisite drama of Lacroix. She deliberately emphasizes the extraordinary fantasy elements of the dress, including the decorative accessories, pouffy lace sleeve, and oversized headwear. The white spaces provide a stark contrast to the colorful accents, making them seem to pop off the paper.



Gladys Perint Palmer

Apologies to Matisse, 2011

Watercolor on paper

In this illustration, Henri Matisse's famous painting *Dance* inspires Gladys Perint Palmer. She cleverly portrays five different runway pieces from different designers from 1910 to 2012 by putting clothes on each character in Matisse's masterpiece. The pieces from left to right are Jean-Louis Scherrer, Christian Lacroix, Dolce & Gabbana, Karl Lagerfeld, Christian Dior. Gladys Perint Palmer explains the reason for her inspiration: "In *La Ronde* from 1910 to 1990 to 2012, fashion is still going round in circles. Jean-Louis Scherrer sold his name; and Christian Lacroix lost his house and designs for opera and now creates furniture; (Domenico) Dolce e (Stefano) Gabbana are closing their secondary line, D & G, next season; Karl Lagerfeld goes from strength to strength, and Christian Dior fired John Galliano. With apologies to Henri Matisse (1869 - 1954)."

Tanya Ling (1966)

Tanya Ling is an artist who creates paintings and also works as a designer and illustrator. Her first contemporary art exhibition *Bipasha Ghosh* led to her first commission from *British Vogue*; since then, Ling has engaged in a fashion-as-art career throughout the world. Her commissions include *Harper's Bazaar* and *US Elle*, among other authoritative fashion journals. In 2011, over 50 of her paintings were acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Tanya Ling studied fashion design and textiles at Central Saint Martins before moving to Paris and working as a designer for Dorothee Bis and then Christian Lacroix. In 2009, she was appointed as the Creative Director of Veryta, a new Ready-to-Wear collection founded by Filippo Binaghi and Stefano Pilati to support the Veryta Foundation. Meanwhile, she continues to create fashion illustrations for fashion publications.





Nina Ricci Spring/Summer 2012



Tanya Ling

Nina Ricci Spring/Summer 2012, 2011

Mixed media on paper

42 x 29.7 cm

For Vogue.COM

In this piece, the shape and outline of the model's face resembles the artists Matisse and Modigliani in their mask-like faces, which depict modern figurative and cubist paintings. The brush strokes and textures of the top seem to be painted heavily by oil, so that the drawing evokes a sense of fashion-as-fine-art. Ling once said her drawings are inspired by everything from her daughter Evangeline's birthmark to Andy Warhol's lesser-known Egg painting. The details at the top not only show the mixed material of the actual clothes, but also access the elegance of the 1960s as well as the modernity of Nina Ricci.



Anna Sui Spring/Summer 2012



Tanya Ling

Anna Sui Spring/Summer 2012, 2011

Acrylic paint and ink on paper

42 x 29.7 cm

For Vogue.COM

The piece *Anna Sui Spring/Summer 2012* is very spontaneous and free. Ling uses mixed media of acrylic and ink to depict the flowing yet fitted 1940s-style dress, curly hair, and lips lacquered like a Chinese cabinet. The look depicts the playful, optimistic girl in Anna Sui. The runway of Anna Sui S/S12 shows whimsy without lacking composure. Ling adds a light pink background to convey an active and vivacious feeling.

Howard Tangye (1979)

Australian artist Howard Tangye graduated from Central Saint Martins School of Art in London in 1974, majoring in womenswear fashion design; he later earned his post-graduate degree at Parsons School of Design in New York, where he specialized in drawing. Tangye is now Senior Lecturer and Head of Womenswear in the BA Fashion Program at Central Saint Martins. Tangye has worked with some of the most renowned designers in the fashion world, drawing collections for Christian Dior and John Galliano.





Comme des Garçons Spring/Summer 2012



Howard Tangye

Comme des Garçons Women's Spring 2012 Look 29, 2012

Mixed-Media

Features A Magazine Curated By Stephen Jones, Issue Number 12.

Tangye creates striking portraits that suggests movement and depth. In his drawings he emphasizes the body's movement with his use of twisted lines; these exaggerated lines are comparable to Austrian expressionist painter Egon Schiele (1890-1918). In this illustration, Tangye depicts the rose detail of the dress for Comme des Garçons Women's Spring 2012 in an intriguing and precise way.



Howard Tangye

Emma in Chloé 2001, 2001

Vogue highlighted the influence of Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) 's work by featuring the Chloé original printed with Beardsleyesque motifs in 1967. The Victoria and Albert Museum held an exhibition of Beardsley's work in 1966.

In this drawing, Tangye depicts a vintage Chloé dress, which shows that he is a passionate believer in the importance of life drawing supported by continuous practice. His illustrations are infused with a lyrical sensitivity. The position of the model suggests a shy romanticism beyond what the viewer is allowed to see. As Tangye said:” Drawing is a bit like falling in love, but unrequited.”

François Berthoud (1961)

François Berthoud was born in Switzerland and graduated with a degree in graphic design in Lausanne. He is an internationally known fashion illustrator, who works for the publishing company *Condé Nast Italy* in Milan that edits, among others, the fashion magazines *Vogue Italia*, *L'Uoo Vogue*, *Vogue Pelle*, *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Bazaar*. Berthoud cultivates a memorable and expressive style that blends Pop Art and German Expressionism.





François Berthoud

Frenche Woman, 1997

Oil based ink on paper

50 x 35 cm

Berthoud draws sophisticated figures with transparent forms using a combination of graphics-arts and painterly techniques. He famously incorporates his signature logo to sign his work a mirror-inverted "F". In this illustration, Berthoud uses blue and red to express the high-end fashionable sensitivity of a French woman.



François Berthoud

Skeleton Legs, 1998

Oil based ink on Paper, Monotype

70 x 50 cm

Berthoud's illustrations unite Pop Art and graphical styles. In this drawing, he conveys the shape of the model's skinny legs with inky lines, emphasizing the high heels. The image is presented in X-ray from using a monochromatic color scheme. The result is startling, since he portrays only one part of the body instead of the whole female figure. Images such as this one captured in linocuts, drip paintings and computer graphics accompany countless fashion and campaigns by different designers.



François Berthoud

Panties, fashion by Dior, 2004

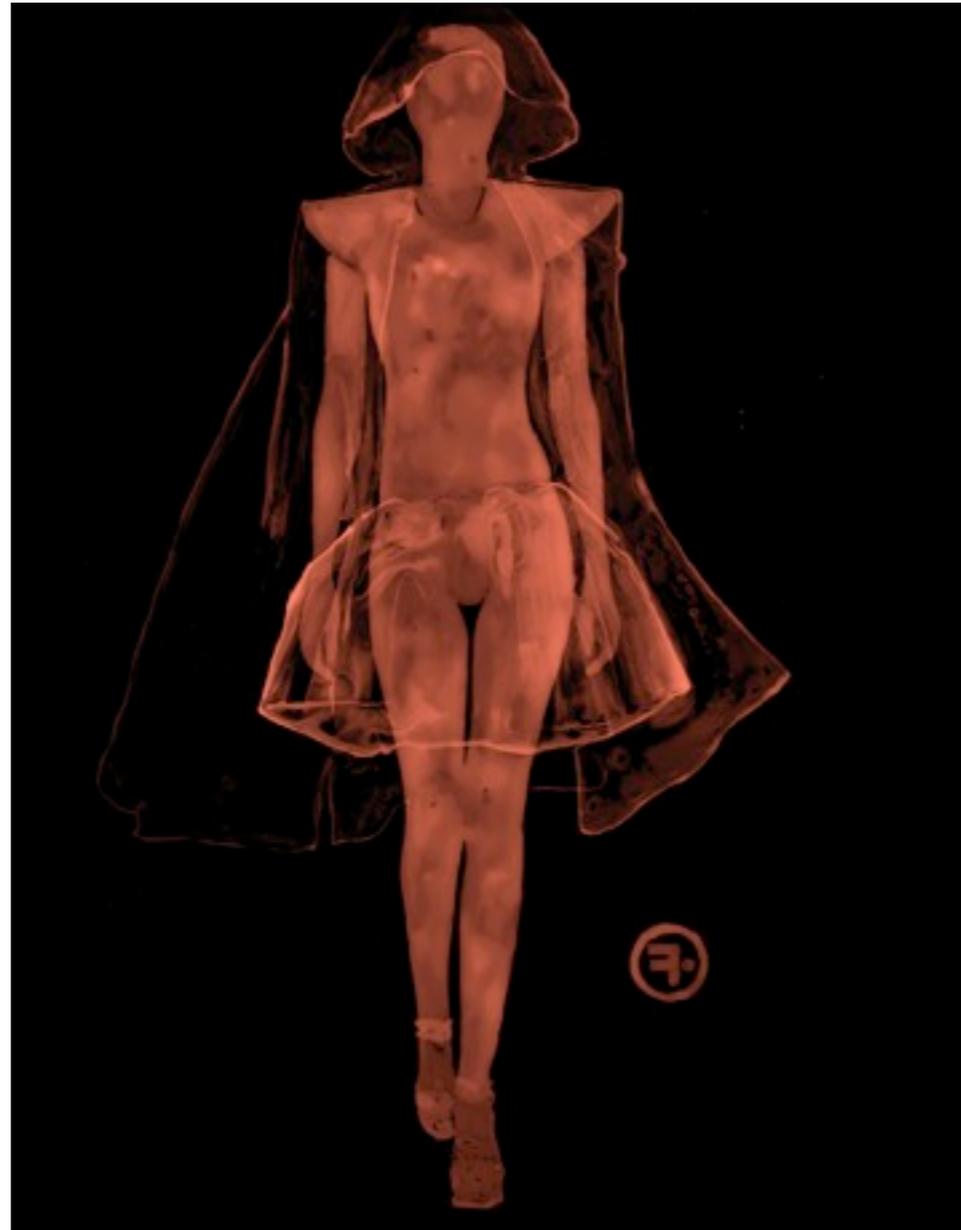
Monotype and Oil on Paper

Published in Numero (France), 2004

Some of Berthoud's work exist in a field of tension between fashion, accessories and a subtle eroticism. Here he uses the unusual technique of wood-cutting, an unusual choice for fashion illustration: "I like engraving fashion plates because it is terribly paradoxical, using such hard instrument, giving weight to each gesture, to render something as light, as evanescent as an article of clothing". Berthoud's work conveys facets of visual seduction either explicit or implicit in a precise and pleasing way. The erotic component plays a leading role in this drawing, as Berthoud explains: "Eroticism is a constant theme, also in advertising. But in comparison to photography: illustrations can offer more room for imagination and interpretation."



Martin Margiela, Fall/Winter 2009



François Berthoud

Dress by Martin Margiela, 2009

Mixed Technique

Published in Madrid (Spain)

Berthoud has a very unique style when it comes to the visual presentation of fashion, shoes, bags, perfumes and accessories. He also is known to depict his images in a variety of media to capture different perspectives. In this illustration, he experiments with the post-surreal sense of Belgium avant-garde designer Martin Margiela. Berthoud reduces the photograph to its visual essence in order to capture a fresh vantage via a hand-drawn lines that serve as base for cutting the lino plates.

Mats Gustafson (1951)

Swedish Fashion artist Mats Gustafson began his career as an illustrator in the late 1970s, a time when editorial illustration earned less attention as compared to photography; in addition, he worked in watercolor, a conceptual medium that had barely been explored. After Gustafson graduated from Dramatiska Institutet in Stockholm, he applied his graphic sensibility to the art of stage design. This experience translated into illustration when he began publishing his work in international fashion publications. Gustafson's fashion and portrait illustrations have been included in editorial publications such as *French and Italian Vogue*, *The New Yorker*, and *Visionaire*. His work has been exhibited internationally in solo and group shows.





Mats Gustafson

Yohji Yamamoto Red, 2001

Watercolor on paper

38 x 28 cm

Published for German *Vogue* 2001/02

Gustafson, who mostly uses watercolor, pastel and cut-out paperworks, expanded the possibilities of fashion illustration and nearly single-handedly reinvigorated the genre. In this drawing, Gustafson uses watercolor to depict the elegant and subtly expressive look of Yohji Yamamoto's design.



Mats Gustafson

Yohji Yamamoto, 1997

Watercolor on paper

Published for *Vogue Italia* 1997

Gustafson's work is so vibrant and emotional that most forget they are simple fashion illustrations. In this drawing, he captures the basic shapes of Yohji Yamamoto and reduces a modeled garment down to its basic shape to frame its pure elegance. Gustafson expressed the sense of simplicity as high-fashion designer Yohji Yamamoto. The image looks as if it is seen on a foggy day, which imparts serenity.

Jean-Philippe Delhomme (1959)

French painter and illustrator Jean-Philippe Delhomme has been working as an illustrator since the mid-80s. One of his most celebrated works is the series *Polaroids de jeunes Filles*, created for *French Glamour* in 1987. His first fashion illustrations were published in *British Vogue*; soon after, his work appeared in a collection of publications, including *Vogue Nippon*, *Vogue Paris* and *House & Garden*.





Jean-Philippe Delhomme

Campaign for Barneys, New York, 1994

Artist's Collection

In the early 90's, New York department store Barney's launched an advertising campaign which highlighted Delhomme's gouache illustrations. The campaign was a huge success, extending to billboards and animated television advertisements across America. Although his fashion artwork seems untraditional, he described fashion as glaringly status-based, while elegance was understated, refined and discreet. This approach suggests that fashion should cater to real women and not to a bunch of effete intellectuals.



Jean-Philippe Delhomme

Ungaro (Spring 2003) for Madame Figaro, January
2003

Gouache on paper

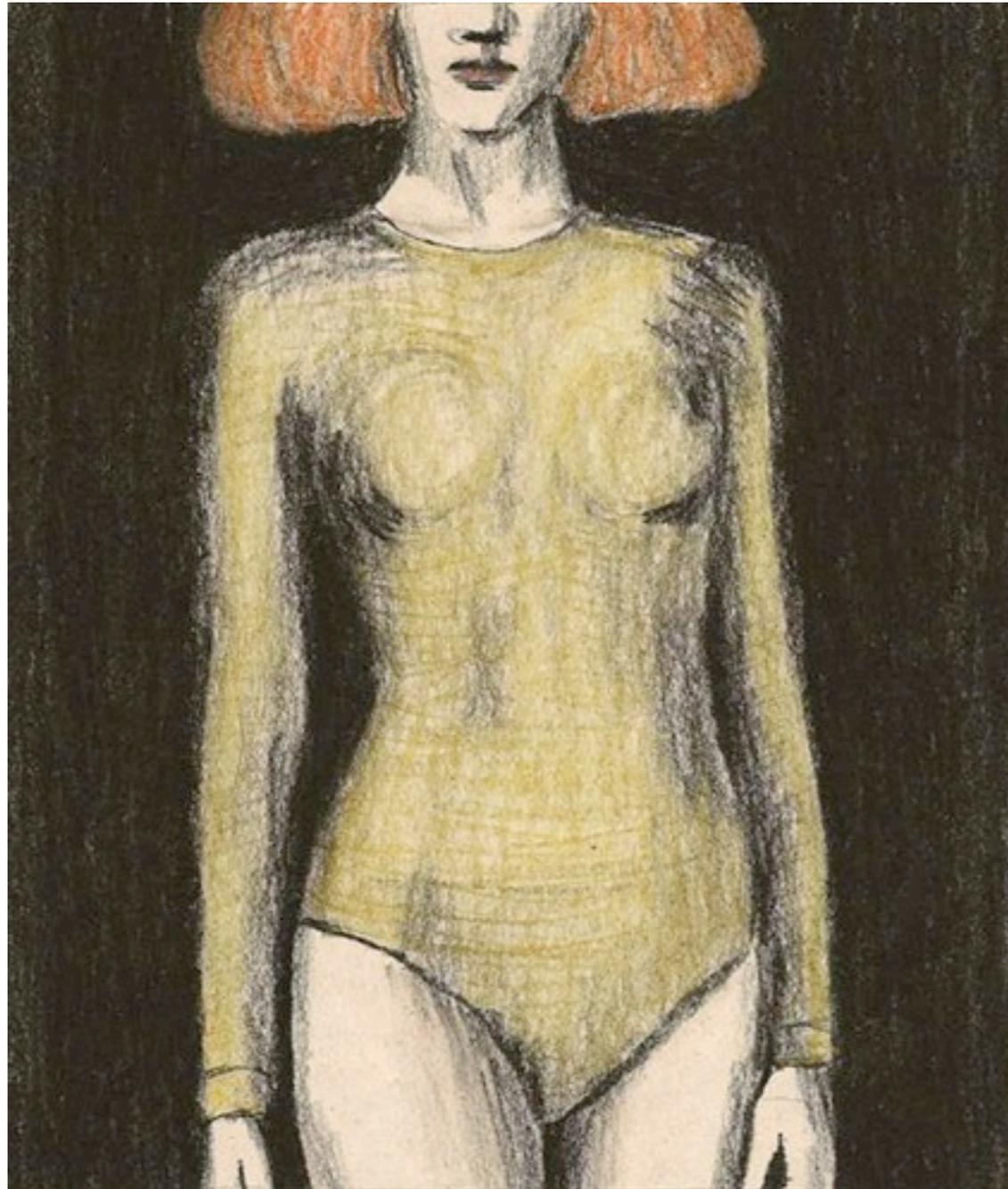
40 x 30 cm

Delhomme's fashion illustrations are drawn by gouache, captioned with comical text, to replace fashion photography. His work has been internationally exhibited. In this drawing, Delhomme captures the moment of fashion runway show.

Zoë Taylor(1982)

Zoë Taylor is an artist/illustrator based in London. After graduating from the Royal College of Art in 2009, she was commissioned by Luella Bartley for whom she created T-shirt graphics and illustrations for the recent book *Luella's Guide to English Style*. Zoe's illustrations are featured in publications like *AnOther Magazine*, *Dazed&Confused*, *Le Gun* or *Naked Punch* among others. Taylor regularly submits fashion illustrations for *AnOther Magazine* but has also worked with the likes of *The Guardian* and *London Fashion Week*.





Zoë Taylor

Celine and The Bodysuit S/S10, February, 2010

Chalk Pastels on newsprint paper

Taylor's artwork combines austerity with the femininity of 1950s Hollywood. As she explains: "There's an element of melodrama in my drawings, but they are also ambiguous. I try and give them a dreamlike intensity".



Givenchy SS2010, January, 2010



Zoë Taylor

Givenchy SS2010, January, 2010

Chalk Pastels on newsprint paper

Taylor's textured drawings evoke the dark glamour of *film noir*, featuring perplexed woman smoking cigarettes by Givenchy. The composition of this drawing shows three angles of the character as seen in the mirrors. Taylor describes about her artwork: "I draw atmospheric narrative-based scenes that tend to have an ambiguous tension. I also draw faces and I've been doing a lot of fashion illustrations lately. Some people have also described my work as film noir-like."