Creating Fashion Storyboards
Creative people have overwhelming expectations placed on them. To find **fashion design inspirations** can be a daunting task. It can be intimidating to come up with new artistic works and find out how to begin your new masterpiece. The first step to putting pen to paper is observing the world around you. Applying this knowledge to your fashion designs is the next step. So where does one find fashion inspiration?

**Fashion inspiration** for creative work can be found in any place around you. Look in your garden, in your garage, in the office or at your colleagues. If you have to borrow the basic idea from another artist, then don’t feel too put off. There are very few completely unique ideas out there, but a fine line exists between copyright infringement and paying homage. The trick is to add your own personal touch and to provide a unique interpretation of that idea.
Any creative person needs to keep his/her finger on the pulse of what is new and trendy. Make sure to read the latest trendy magazines, watch the latest films and keep an eye out for interior decoration trends. An artist should always have either a camera or a sketch book handy to record these inspirational ideas. If you’re in a constantly changing environment such as travelling to other cities or countries, this could be a great source of fashion inspiration. When you’re travelling, try to observe the differences in culture, dress and cuisine. You constantly need to be up to date with world events, television and movie releases. Keep in touch with the big cities like London, Paris, Italy, New York, Tokyo and Copenhagen and try to apply the latest trends in your design work.

Visit museums and art galleries on a regular basis as fashion trends today have usually come full circle from the fashion designs in yesteryear. For instance, the 1920’s fashion flare is visible in the 2000’s wedding attire runway examples.

Even in your normal mundane daily tasks, you must attempt to draw designer inspiration. Seek out the shapes in the trees in the landscaping of gardens or
simply admire the architecture in your street. Some thoughts, smells, sounds or visuals can invoke a memory or an inspirational thought or design. Emotional music can assist in this regard.

Become a collector of inspirational items, although to some it may seem like junk. **Fashion inspiration** can come from even the most unlikely sources. Keep buttons, fabric scraps, books, magazine articles, retro postcards or bits and pieces of things that stimulate you visually. A collection of similar things can inspire a background or print for a garment. Collecting books is great although magazines are more ‘now’ and are great for up-to-the-moment information.

**Theme creation and mind-mapping:**

To take ideas out of thin air and make them into a representative masterpiece is always intimidating. However, the best way to achieve this is to continuously develop your knowledge base to cultivate fresh ideas. Imagination is vital, but knowledge is the base from which to work. The first step in any creation is to choose a few themes to research and pursue. It can be anything you are interested in, from Egyptian culture to flower arrangements - anything that brings about inspiration. Fashion Sketches can be started from any source! Try to stick to a few themes that you deem important and viable and let the rest fall by
the wayside when using this technique. Too many unfinished ideas will only serve to confuse you and surround you in chaos. If you are finding this organisation method difficult (as many artists and creative people do) then the use of a mind map can be helpful. If in doubt, call on a few friends to assist you in brainstorming ideas, and disregarding ideas that are not useful or commercially viable. Friends can also be a great source of fashion design inspiration.
A sketchbook can be kept in the same manner that you would keep a diary. This book can be a representation of the things that you see around you every day. A sketchbook can be kept in any format: keep scraps of fabric and pieces visual information that you come across. You should use the book to practice your drawing, record things you see that you want to remember and also to one day spark that inspiration. Sketching people and animals, as well as the flora, can be a great way to spend the afternoon in your local town centre. Any ideas or fashion inspirations are viable for inclusion in the sketchbook as you are always able to refer back to it in future when you may be stuck for an idea. The sketchbook can be as neat or as untidy as you wish.

Never throw your sketchbooks away; often you are required to provide it in conjunction with assignments or portfolio. If a storyboard is your destination, see the sketchbook as your journey. Your sketchbook should be very impulsive, messy and explorative. This should truly be used as a tool for experimentation and collecting your ideas for inspiration. Don’t lose spontaneity by attempting to keep it orderly and neat.
Start your sketchbook today by collecting photographs, collages, random objects and exhibition pamphlets, colour swatches for paints, fabric swatches or magazine cut-outs. Buy a small one for your bag and a large one for when you have the space. Keep the good quality hard cover ones, so that they’d last you a lifetime. Update it regularly and remember that fashion inspiration can come from anywhere!
A fashion storyboard will usually consist of a full colour illustration of a fashion figure/several figures (male or female) wearing the garments that are being showcased. This storyboard tutorial will show you how to correctly format and create a fashion storyboard for assignments or professionally. A clearly labelled, sizable swatch of your chosen fabric/s should also be included on the board. The storyboard should be thought of as a pictorial representation of your proposed clothing design in full colour, along with technical renderings of each garment individually.

"A fashion storyboard is a summary of your collection's inspiration and theme. It's a design tool that will help you remain focused and consistent as your line develops. It's also a great communication aid when explaining your vision to others (retailers, media etc.). Magazine tears, fabric swatches, old photos, buttons, ribbons; basically any visual reference you desire are mounted onto a
hard board. Be sure to give your story board a title, like a book or film" - fashionincubator.com

Just the sketches individually can look dull, lifeless and very uninteresting. You need a well-planned layout and a strong theme - your ideas must seem commercially successful. Designers need to learn how to use different presentation techniques in order to enhance their artwork.
Planning your presentation

The design brief will dictate the storyboard’s objective - trends forecasting, fashion design, a thematic board, and so on. Depending on the target market, the brief and the purpose of the presentation, your storyboard should include the following:

- A fashion figure, clothed in your designs on a flat working figure
- Swatches of your fabric (all the fabrics used)
- Colour palettes (all the colours that are used in your designs)
- Any trims used
- Photographs of the garments

Presentation Techniques:

The fashion storyboard must have a strong theme running throughout which captures the mood. Additionally, the presentation must have a title, even if it is a working title at that stage. The theme and title can be determined by the fabrics (Natural Linens), the season (Summer Blues), or the merchandise (Metamorphosis), for example.
Stance: Choose the correct and appropriate pose for your storyboard templates when you start drawing: classic, sophisticated, funky, moody or sporty are all appropriate moods for a board.

Positioning: Don’t allow your fashion figure to look like it’s floating on the page; use shadowing and shading to create the illusion of structure. If you feel competent enough, draw your character in a scene where the clothes enhance the situation.

Figures: When using more than one fashion figure on the fashion storyboard, you may vary the size of each figure. This creates perspective on the board and looks visually appealing. One large scale figure in the foreground and the rest in the background points
out the importance of the clothing as well as giving the viewer a visual treat.

**Fabrics:** Cutting the fabric with pinking shears (zigzag cut on edges) looks professional and will give the storyboard an interesting feature. Use double sided tape on the edges to keep the fabric from fraying. You can also crumple the fabrics into little rouged balls and stick them down with double sided tape to create a different texture and layering effect for the fashion storyboard. Sometimes the fabric swatches should be able to be felt with the fingers, so try to leave the storyboard open.

**Heading:** Unless you are competent at numeral or font drawing, use the computer to design the headings wherever possible. It will save you a lot of time and effort. Try to keep the font the same throughout the storyboard, so as to keep within the chosen theme.

**Labels:** Wherever necessary, print labels for any specific objects that you need to draw attention to (for example: "Extra Wide Jeans" or "Long Coat"). Again, unless you feel competent in drawing font, use a computer to design and print these.

**Collages:** Anything that you find in magazines, on your computer, in craft stores, fabric shops or your garage is fair game. Use anything that will add to the overall theme of your storyboard, but please remember to not go overboard. Too much additional material on a fashion storyboard can look messy and unprofessional.

**Borders:** To give your fashion storyboard a sense of finality and perspective, surround your storyboard with a contrasting cardboard frame, using different textures and colours. Cut neatly and use ruled lines, unless you wish to achieve a free-flowing mood. Borders can be hand-drawn, cut from cardboard, a collage or made from different fabrics. Whatever you choose, remember to make it neat.

**Backgrounds:** If necessary, use plain or mildly textured/printed board as a
background; don’t allow it to drown the focal point, which is of course YOUR CLOTHING.

Every fashion illustrator has their own style; these **storyboard templates** are examples from the relevant illustrator’s portfolios off the internet. PLEASE do not copy these ideas or try to make templates from their drawings, as you would be infringing copyright law. Try to eventually produce your own fashion templates from scratch.

**Fashion storyboards** are most often coupled with a mood board an inspiration board containing a collection of pictures or colours, card and fabric that evoke an emotional response. Designers can use mood boards to decide on the right colours that evoke these feelings, as the mood board enables you to see a theme that runs throughout your selection. You can make use of various media to create interest on the mood board: buttons, ribbon, wool, sand, corrugated board etc.

Be as creative as possible when developing your **storyboard template**, use your imagination to its full potential However please bear in mind the following:

- Always position your figure as the main focus
- Don't allow your board to become messy and unstructured in your endeavour to be creative – keep it simple and focused on the theme and figure
- Use the correct fashion template for your theme. For example, if the theme is classic Victorian don’t use an outlandish figure template. If your theme is contemporary, use the appropriate poses
- Remember to illustrate accessories, bags and jewellery along with your clothing as this creates a polished finish
- Figures should be presented symmetrically wherever possible as it keeps the eye focused (See the **fashion storyboard** below). Using a larger figure amongst two smaller ones on the left and right can also look good. It will seem like the two smaller figures are in the
background. Sometimes it's effective to use the same figure for all the different outfits, creating a repetitive tiled effect: (Reference Diptri Irla)

- Always remember to have a main heading such as "Trends for winter" or "Black and White". However, if you date your board, it will make it short lived as trends change quickly: (Reference Justin Gloston)

- Using swatches that are neatly cut out but irregular in shape will create a professional look to your storyboard. Using sticky tape on the back of the fabric prevents fraying and gives a good end result. You can also use pinking shears to create a zigzag edge: (Reference Theresia Fanda)

- Don't use too many unrelated colour varieties on one board, such as pastels with bright colours as well as neutrals; dirty and clean shades should be grouped together. There has to be a theme or collection of complementing colours. This is the general rule, unless you are specifically going for a multicoloured design: (Reference Annie Kim)

- Buy paint sample swatches from the paint store, use those as a colour pallet, but don’t have too many things hanging off your board; this seems untidy.

- Use as much detail as possible, draw in the texture, beading, trims,
fabric print, and weave in your design. Use as much visual ornamentation as you can. Use shading and highlights for the skin and hair to give a more realistic touch to your designs: (Reference Sarah Louise Petty)

- Your technical drawings can be pasted on the rear of the board, or neatly pasted on the front, although this can sometimes look cluttered.

- You may use computer printed headings and labels, but don’t forget to colour code these headings with your theme. Don’t just print out a black & white heading if it will clash with your board. Print the heading as large as possible without interfering with the overall look; a small floaty heading which is difficult to read will look unprofessional and possibly be overlooked. The paper should be as high quality as possible if you are printing your design onto this medium.
• Why not use foam with double sided mounting tape to stick your figures down? It creates a raised look for your figure. It looks very professional and gives your board a three dimensional look: (Reference Christine Dauguet)

• Find bits of material – feathers, edging, embellishment or beads to stick on the board – that go with your theme. Keep this addition tidy and within the borders of your storyboard. Material that flaps or hangs over the border looks messy, unprofessional, and gives the impression that you don’t care about your project.

• ALWAYS stick to the requirements of your brief: the due date, amount of outfits required, theme etc. Use the correct board size that is stipulated and try to buy rigid board which will not bend under the weight of your additions. 1200 micron is commonly used, but you can use slightly thinner. The rule should be that you can rest it up against a stand without it folding and warping – this is not impressive during presentations!

• Have all the information regarding your board to hand, or have it memorised. You might be asked about fabrication, target market segment (sportswear, evening wear, ready to wear, couture etc) and you should know all of this off hand. Fabrics are the most important aspects to remember, don't just say "cotton" if its viscose cotton, Lycra cotton or stretch cotton - be specific.

Bear in mind that everything you do from now on has to be showcased in your portfolio. Look after the fashion storyboards that you create – covering them in plastic wrap is usually the easiest and cheapest way to go about this.