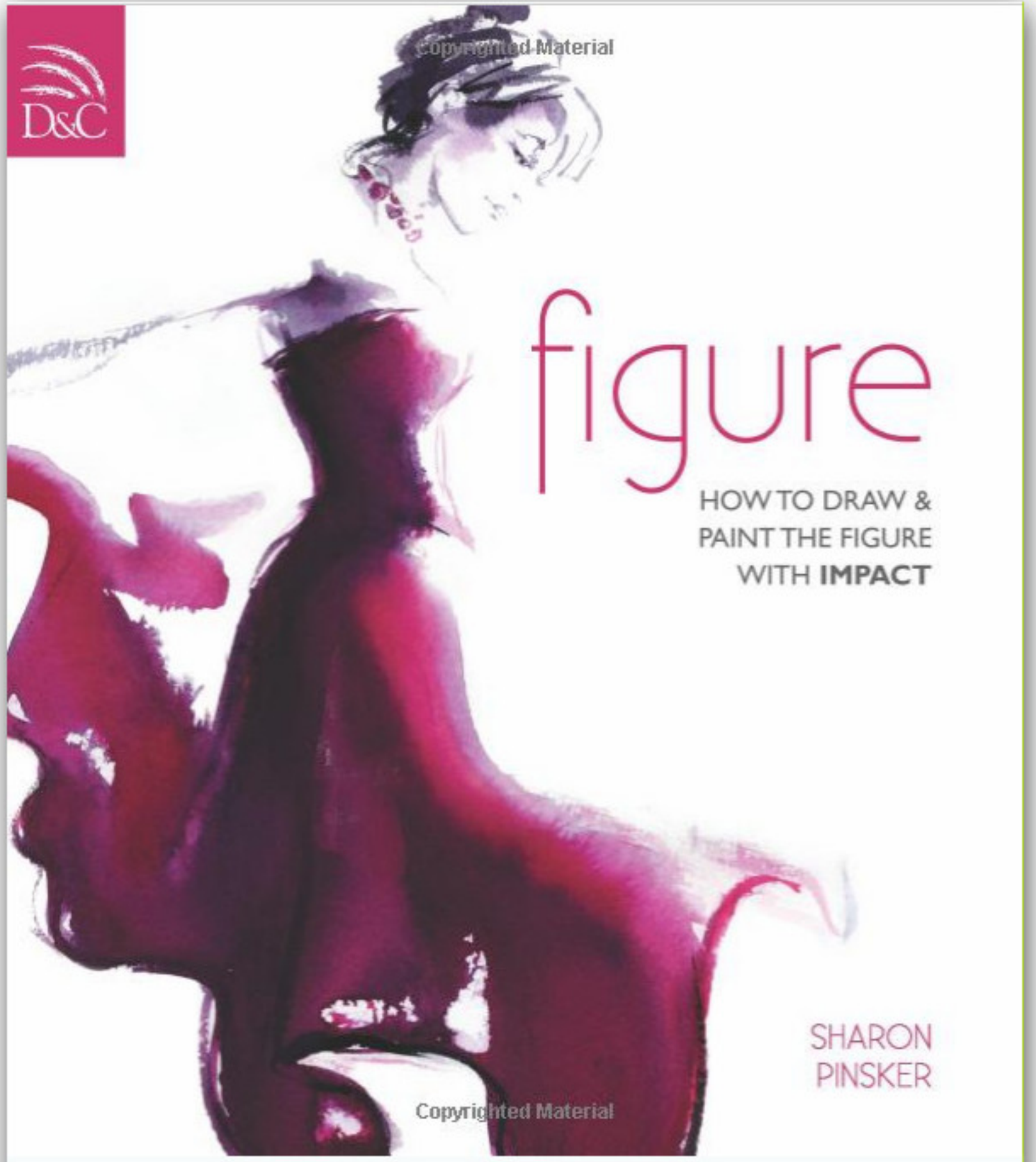
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HOW TO DRAW & PAINT THE FIGURE WITH **IMPACT**

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HOW TO DRAW & PAINT THE FIGURE WITH **IMPACT**

SHARON PINSKER

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To my mother and father,
Ana and Harry Pinsker

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figure in motion, its beauty and elegance; learning to design the figure on the page; the importance of white space – these things all led from figure drawing to fashion, portrait painting and into film storyboard, commercials animation design and art direction. It seemed like a natural progression of events. Thinking about the requirements for drawing the figure in one situation gradually led to the next but it was always completely accidental and unplanned.

The vast majority of the work I have done is rolled up in tubes or in big black portfolios gathering dust in a cupboard under my stairs. If a few images manage to end up on a book cover or displayed on the sides of buses or on hoardings over a motorway, or occasionally make an appearance on TV in the form of an animated commercial or music promo; then again this has been largely due to luck rather than judgement! One thing is certain though – almost every image I can remember being employed to do has required me, in one way or another, to draw on the thought processes and exercises I have laid out here in this book. Things that have occurred to me over the years that are useful cross references between the different experiences I have had working in these particular fields.

The book is divided into three main sections, each broken down into subject areas that deal with the challenges of drawing and painting the figure with impact. I have included thought processes and ideas, exercises and incidental experiences that have proven helpful to me; accompanying these are examples of my work to illustrate the hows and whys. No matter who you are, whether you have some experience of figure drawing and are thinking about taking it further or in another direction, or even if you are just curious about approaching the same problems associated with painting and drawing the figure from another perspective, then I hope this book will prove useful to you.

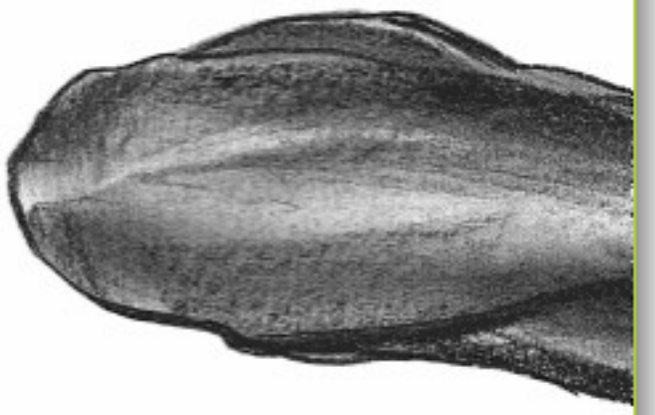
LULU AND LYDIA
Lulu opposite and Lydia on the previous page are examples of images combining the abstract with the literal in order to illustrate a fictional character.

Rather than being a list of technical hints and formulae, this book is intended to be, I hope, like having a discussion about your work with someone who shares a fascination with the endless challenge in drawing and painting the figure; the attempt to continuously study something and yet to always try to see it as if for the very first time . . .

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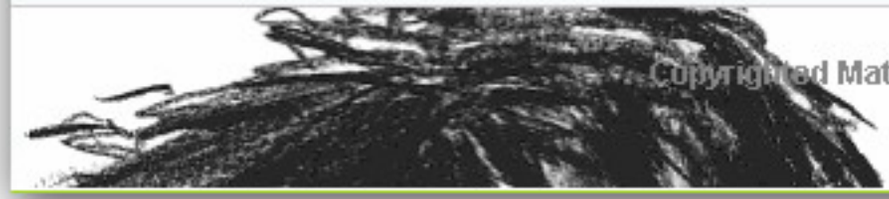
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THE BODY

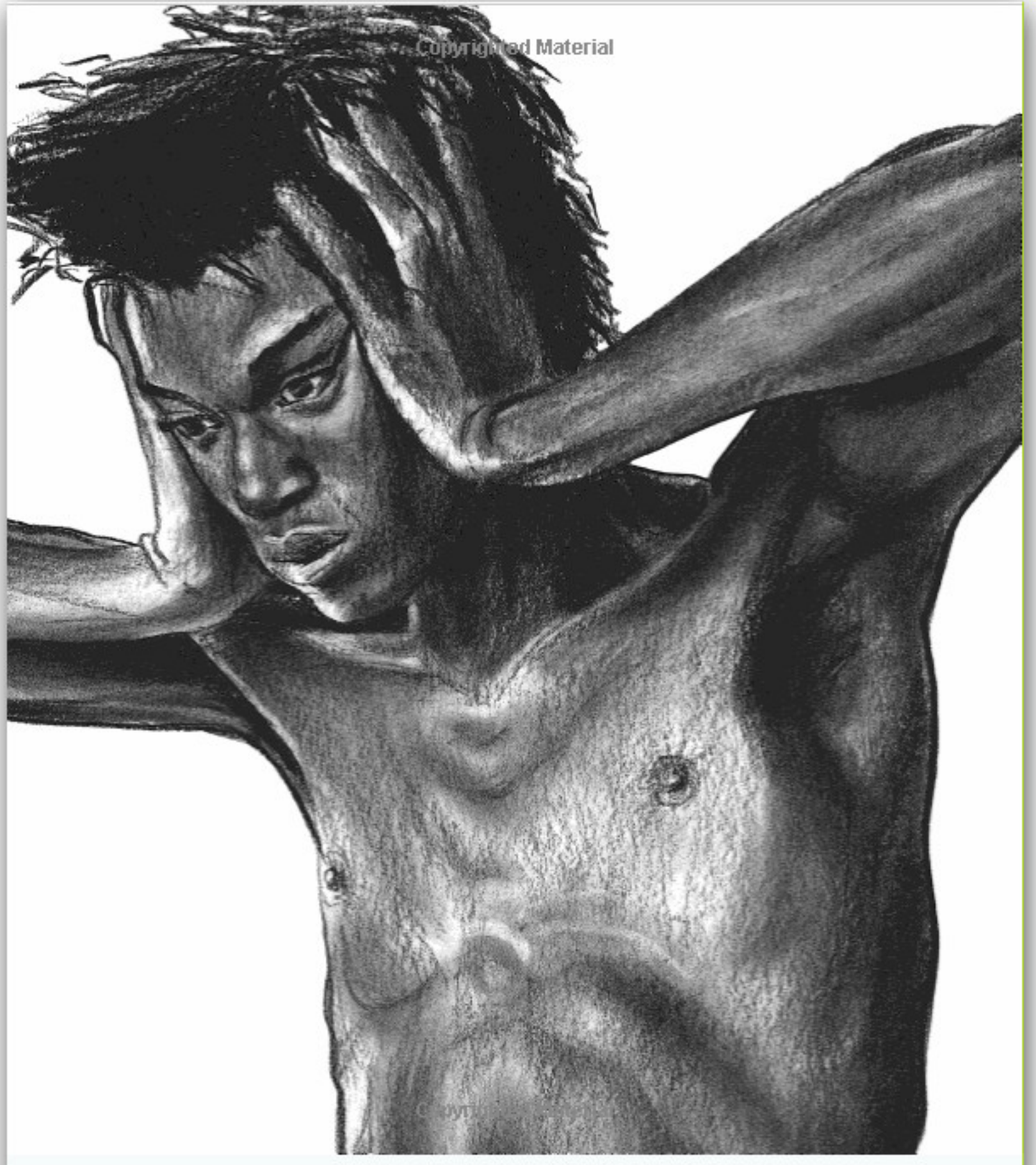
It would be impossible to describe a figure in words – how it works, its complex components and the way they work together – without first truly understanding it. In the same way, it would be futile to attempt to create a convincing image of a figure without having a good understanding of it. Modigliani and Matisse, for instance, knew the body so well they could draw it with only a few perfectly shaped and placed marks.

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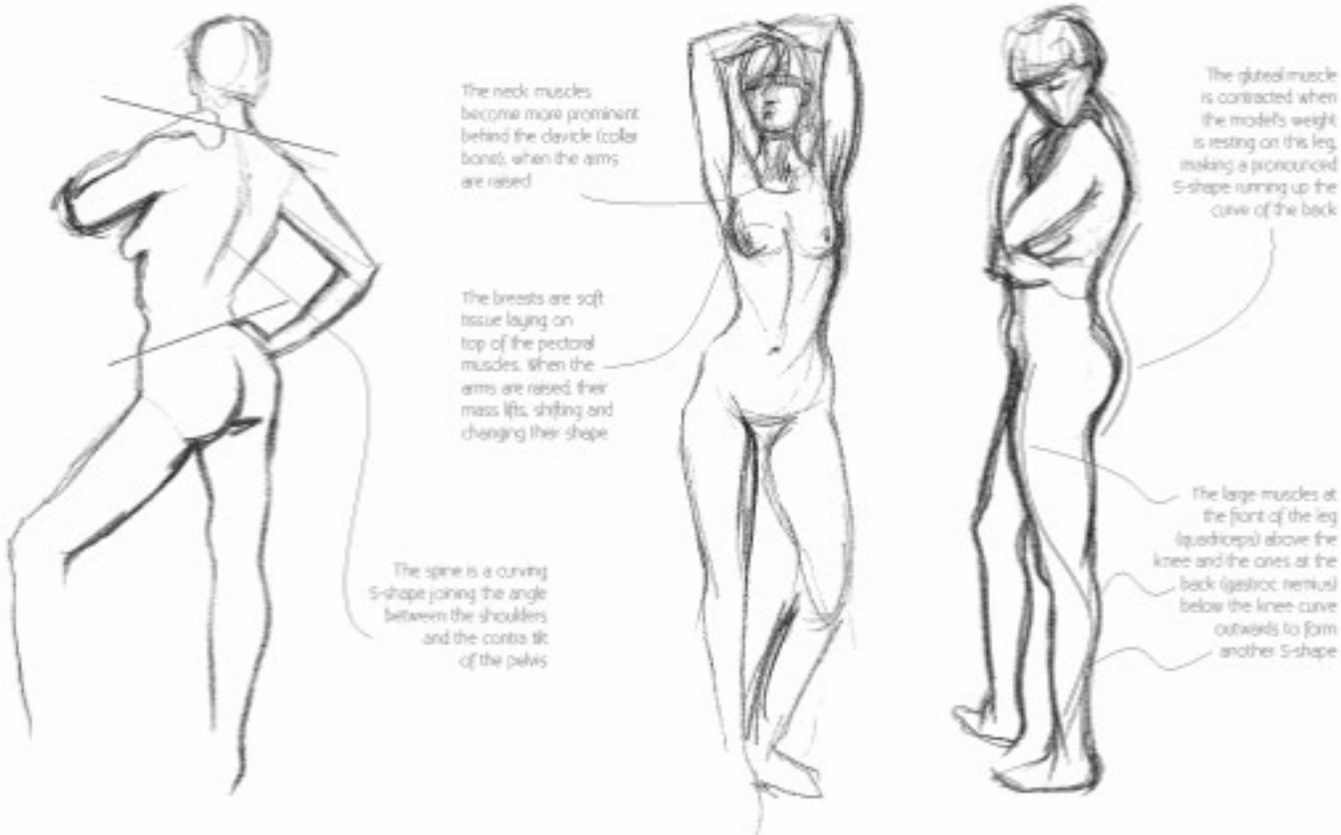
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core

Study the skeleton and muscle formation and how the balance and weight of bones, joints and muscles work when the figure is static and in motion – a good aid to this is looking at a skeleton – but remember when you approach a drawing that the model is made of living flesh and blood, or 'meat and electricity' as Sigmund Freud put it. It is not an anatomical or technical drawing you are creating.



Finding the centre of balance in a pose and where the tension is held will help you create movement in what may be a physically static pose. Life drawing will help you to practice observational skills and to understand the basic structure and mechanical workings of the human body, and how it moves. My sister, who is an osteopath, has a skeleton in her surgery, and studying it, as well as some of her anatomy books, has been a great way for me to learn about the mechanics of the figure.

SHAPES FROM MUSCLES
Look for shapes and curves made by contracted and relaxed muscles as these help to give the figure rhythm and movement as well as defining its form.

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TENSION
There is a tension in the arm here as the model leans on the back of a chair. Even though the chair is not shown in the drawing, the contrast between the relaxed arm and the one bearing weight is clearly visible.

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MUSCLES AND TENSION

Men tend to have proportionately less body fat and more muscle than women. Even a slim woman may have more fat resting on her hips than a man. His shoulders and neck are generally broader, which also gives his hips the appearance of being narrower, so his waist will not appear to be so pronounced. Muscles will tense and contract while working on the skeleton in order to move or hold a position. Look for this tension and relaxation in the muscles and the displacement of the flesh and fat that results from it. It is these shapes that will help you to understand and draw the undulating contours of the figure.



HANDS AND HIPS
Where you do not see the feet in a standing pose, describing where the weight, balance and tension are can be a challenge. Resting the hand on the hip is deceptively difficult – making it look simple is the goal.

FINDING A THEME
Before starting a drawing, decide what you want to say in it. What was striking about this pose was the similarity between the shape and contours of the model's plaited hair and the vertebrae and bones visible in her back.



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TRY THE POSE
Just as an actor playing a role explores the feelings of his character, so it is useful to get into the position of the model, especially if it is a pose that is difficult to hold. In this way you can feel where the strength, stretch, tension and balance are held.

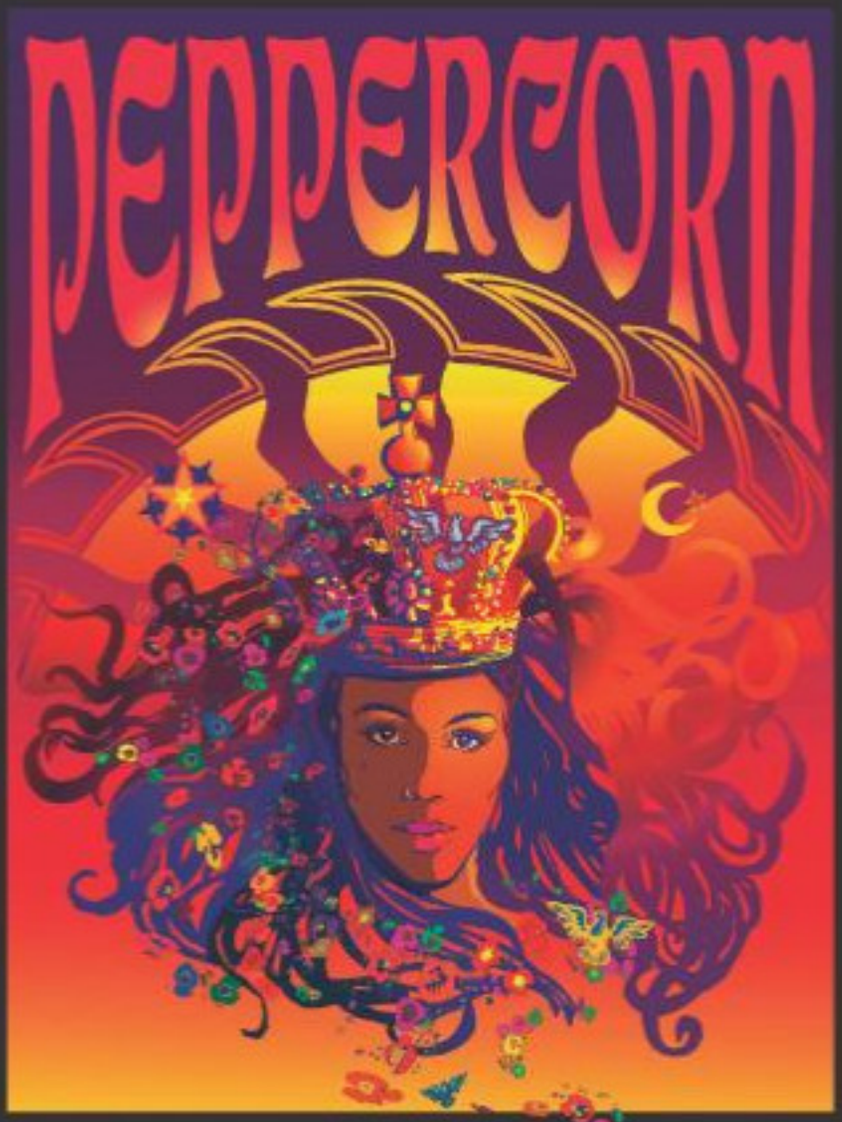
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PEPPERCORN
This poster for singer-songwriter Rosie Jones includes spiritual motifs related to her, such as the crown and moon, that are inseparable from her music. I made several pencil sketches, and then pen and ink drawings in each colour, bringing them together in Photoshop.

PORTFOLIO

These images were mostly commercial assignments and commissioned work, but whatever the purpose, I try to see the figure in a unique situation and understand the story behind it. I start by making sketches, sometimes using a model or reference photos, tearing bits off one drawing and sticking them to another. Whether I work with watercolour, charcoal or Photoshop, the original drawing remains a key element.

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CIRCUS BOYS
This image for the video sleeve of the film "Circus Boys" had to have drama and a sense of poignant foreboding. I chose to use charcoal and to pick out only the detail of the figures, the light catching the curtains and the circus tent in the distance. The colour of the tattoo on the boy's back was painted in gouache.

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artistpartners

2007

ARTIST PARTNERS
This image was created for the cover of an artists' agency brochure to illustrate that 'every picture tells a story' and 'you can't tell a book by its cover'. The story is about a crime of passion in which the man stabs his unfaithful wife during the tango. The image conveys the moment he lets her fall back into his arms, the knife in her back . . . But to the rest of the world, they seem only to be dancing.

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BARBARA
As this illustration was a commission for a fashion publication, the dress is the central point of interest. The image was created from a combination of scanned images – the drawn head, flesh tones and the billowing dress – laid on top of each other in Photoshop to create an imagined, rather than literal, representation.

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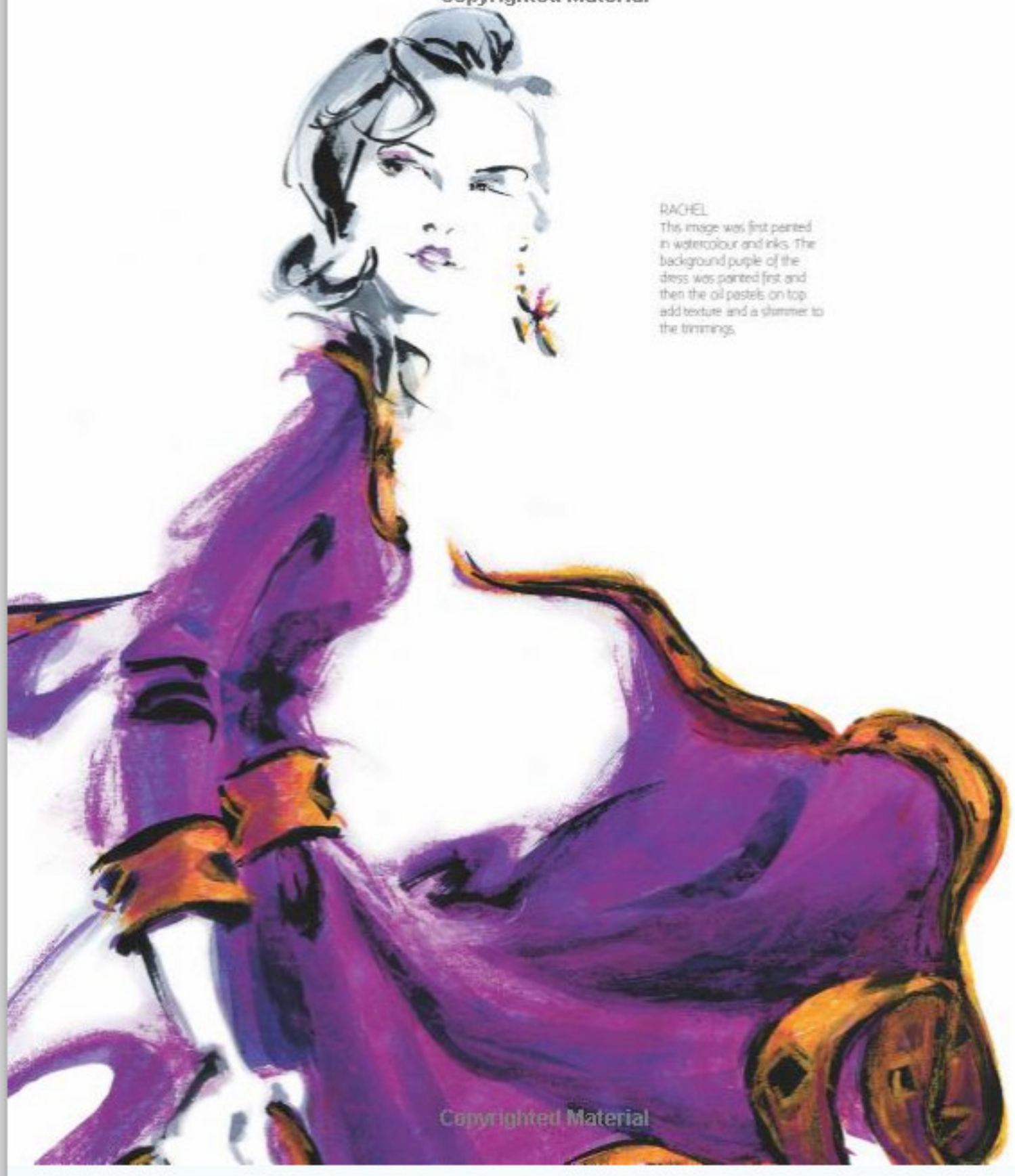
SUZANNE
For this pencil drawing, one of a series of images commissioned for a gallery exhibition, I selected various patterns and shapes and made them into decorative elements by using an almost unbroken graphic contour line.



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RACHEL
This image was first painted in watercolour and inks. The background purple of the dress was painted first and then the oil pastels on top add texture and a shimmer to the trimmings.

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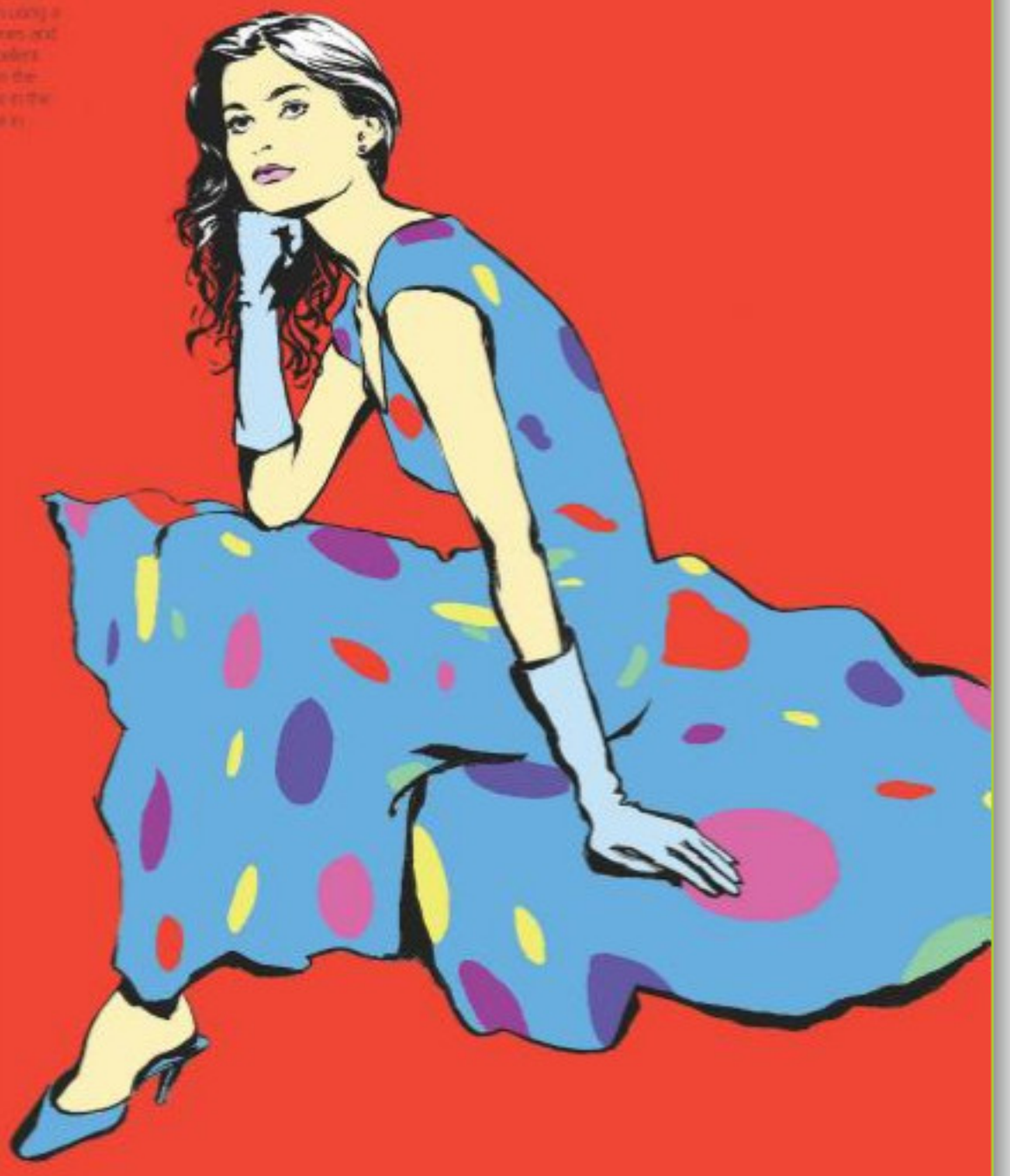
AMY
This is my rather idealized and romantic version of performing artist Amy Winehouse. It is the original style frame used to show the character design which is then to be animated and combined with live action footage of her.

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CAMELLIA
Computers undoubtedly make life easier and save time in an infinite number of ways. This image was created by scanning it into Photoshop and then separating the colours out so that I could select and fill them using a variety of combinations of various tones and colours. The only trouble with this excellent freedom to experiment is that, even in the simplest of images, the time you save in the labour of painting you may well loose in endless indecision.



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ABIGAIL
This was originally one of a few working sketches made while accumulating reference material for a different illustration. But as often happens the spontaneity and freedom of working drawings and thumbnails gives them a quality that can be lost in the refining of the final image.

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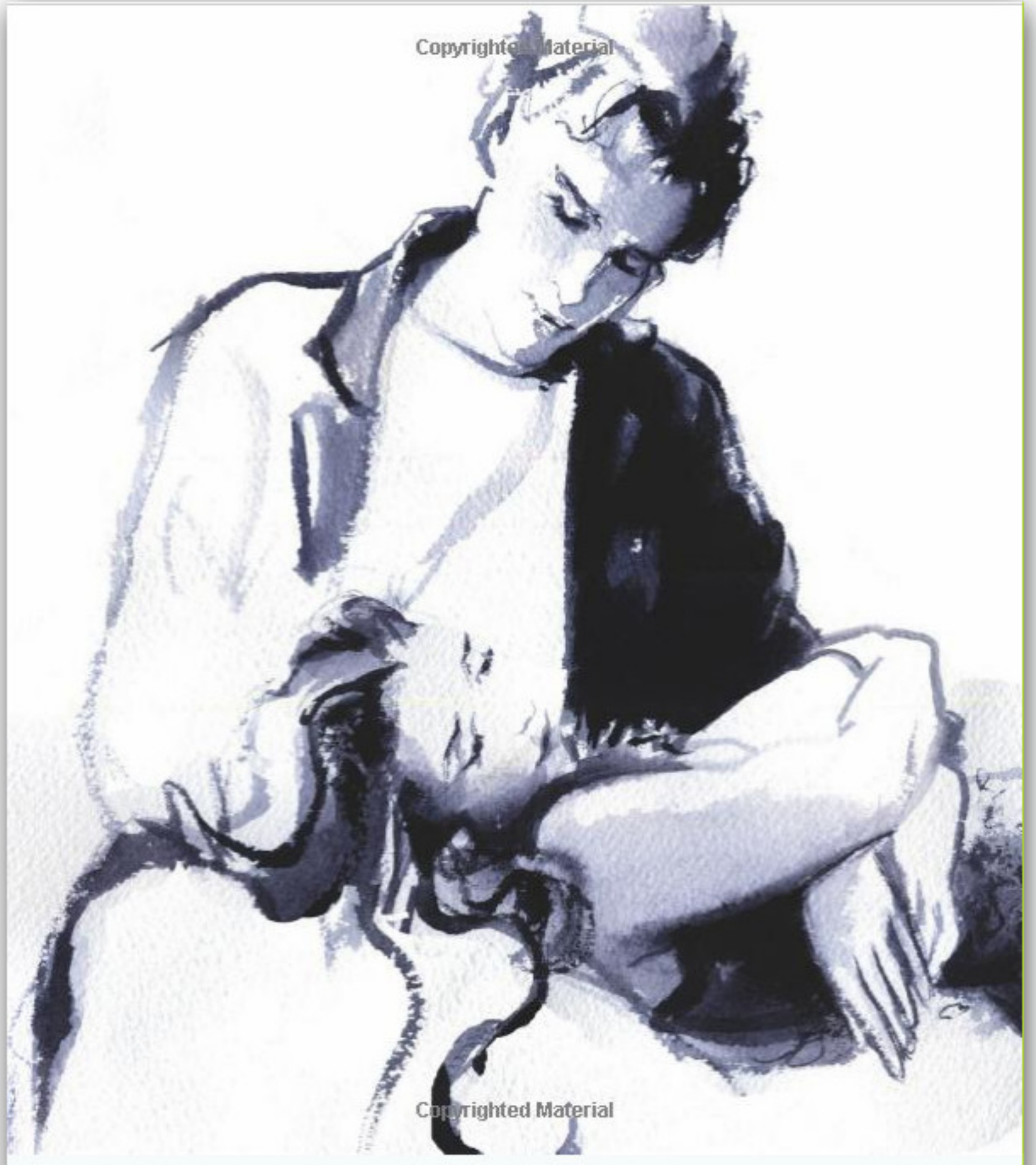


MALL OF AMERICA
This is a detail from an image commissioned as one of a series of posters to promote a shopping mall in the US (left). The figures were painted on watercolour paper and then the colour and decorative elements were multiplied on to the image in Photoshop. The flat colour of the hair, flesh tones and jacket were painted on the computer using the brush tool.

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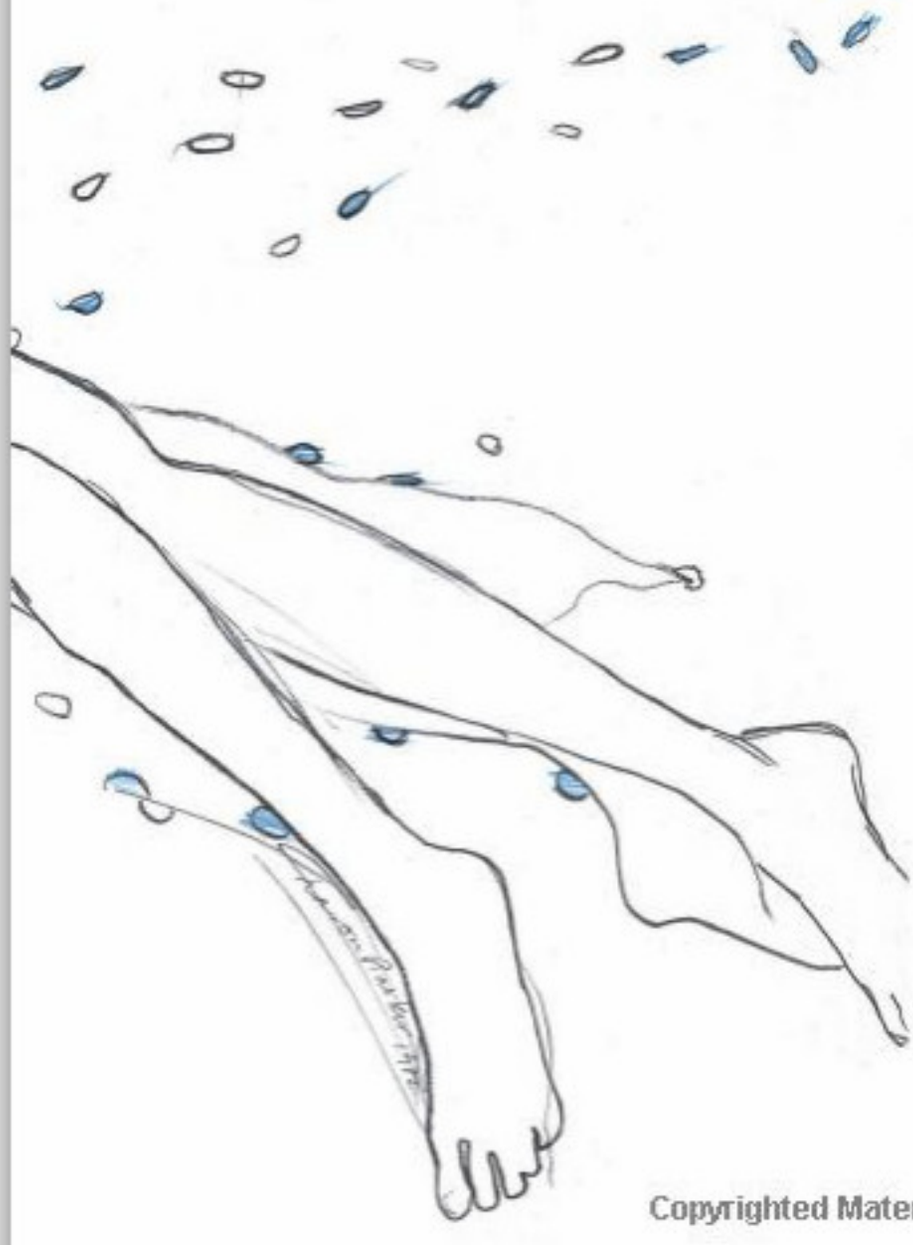
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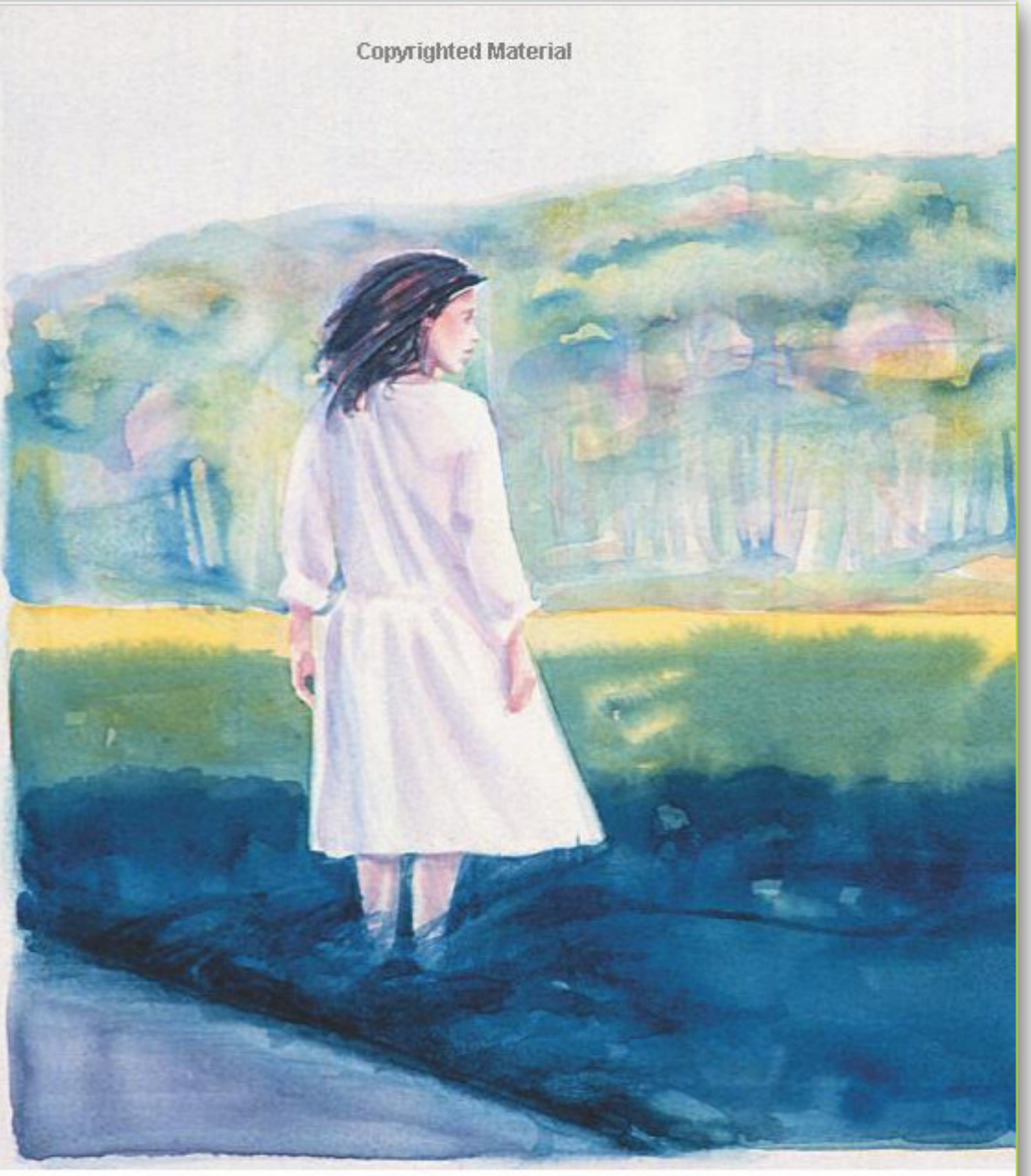


SUZANNE
This drawing of my patient and long-suffering sister was made at the end of an afternoon of modelling for me. She was fed up and tired because I kept asking her for 'one last pose' when she fell asleep this turned out to be the most successful image of all, possibly because her mood has permeated the image. This is something I would love to be able to make happen at will.

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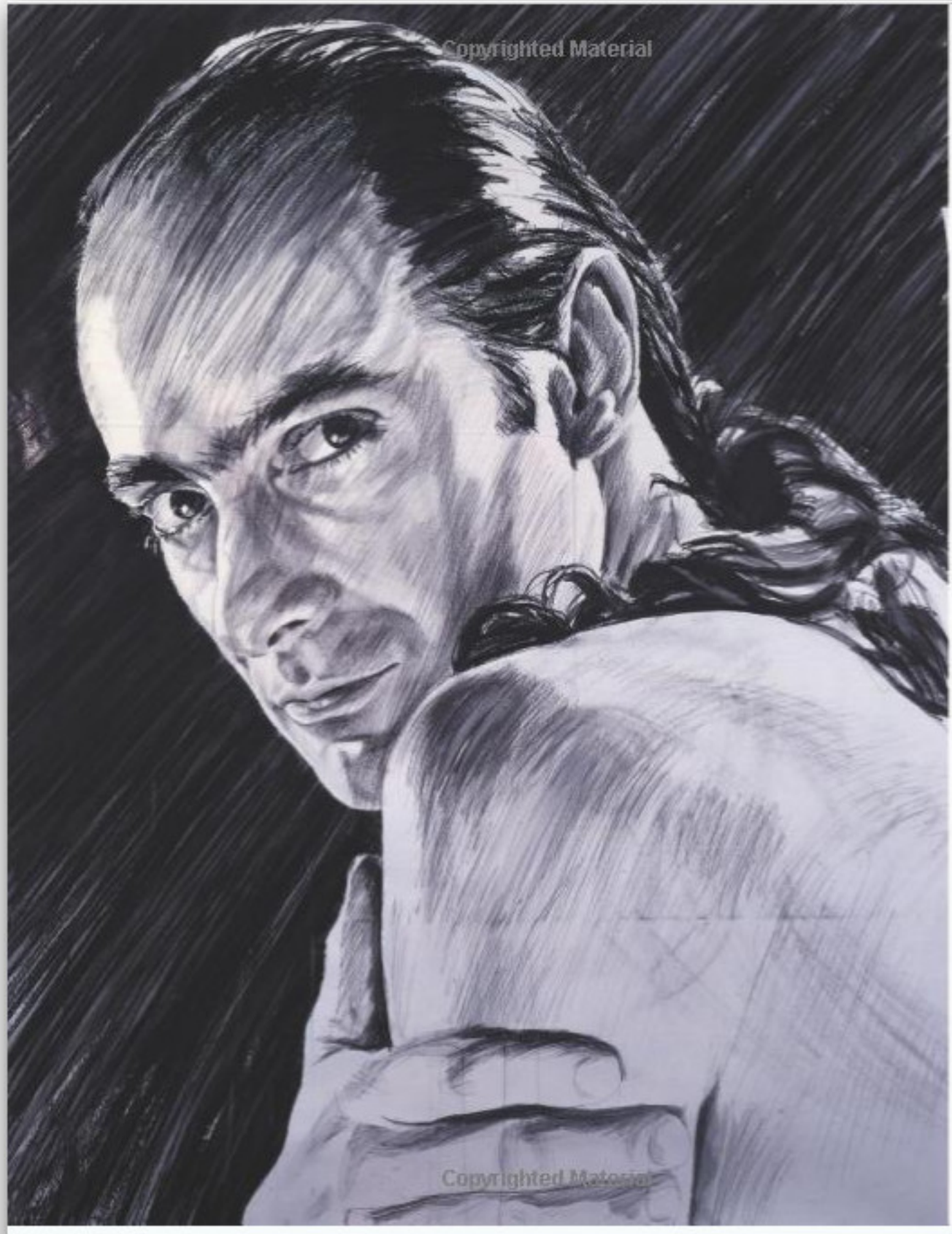
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HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS
This watercolour impression of the Robbins-Zust family home is the view of it from East Road through the trees. I made the painting when I knew I was having to return to London after many happy months spent in the Berkshires, New England. This image is about me reflecting on how much I would miss that wild and magical place where it seemed time stood still, although sadly it didn't.

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JOEY
This image of Joey was done with oil pastels on coloured Ingres paper. I built up impasto layers of the pastel in some darker areas to create the shine on the velvet jacket and on his hair. I left the face of the guitar open to allow the grain of the paper to come through the thinner layer of pastel to create a wood-like texture.

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ANNUSKA
The rims on the sunglasses of this brush and ink painting on cartridge paper are picked out in gouache. The feather boa is made from a combination of ink and oil pastel strokes of varying pressure.

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ONE
This was one sketch in many attempts to convey the natural ease in the pose of the model while also trying to achieve the elegance and drama of the clothes she is wearing. I used brush and ink on rough watercolour paper.

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JENNY FOX-PROVERBS
This portrait had to be done using only photographic reference of Jenny who I have never met... but during the course of her project-editing this book we talked many times over the phone so I hope, if not a faithful physical likeness, something of her personality has managed to get through!

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Bruno Tilley
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Christine Isteed at Artist Partners
Barbara and Steven Brunswick
Ann and John Pick
And most especially of all my guiding light Martyn Pick

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Sharon Pinsker *is one of the UK's foremost figurative artists, having studied Fashion Design in London and Fashion Illustration in New York. With an*

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ART TECHNIQUES

Learn to draw and paint figures that have effortless style for beauty with impact

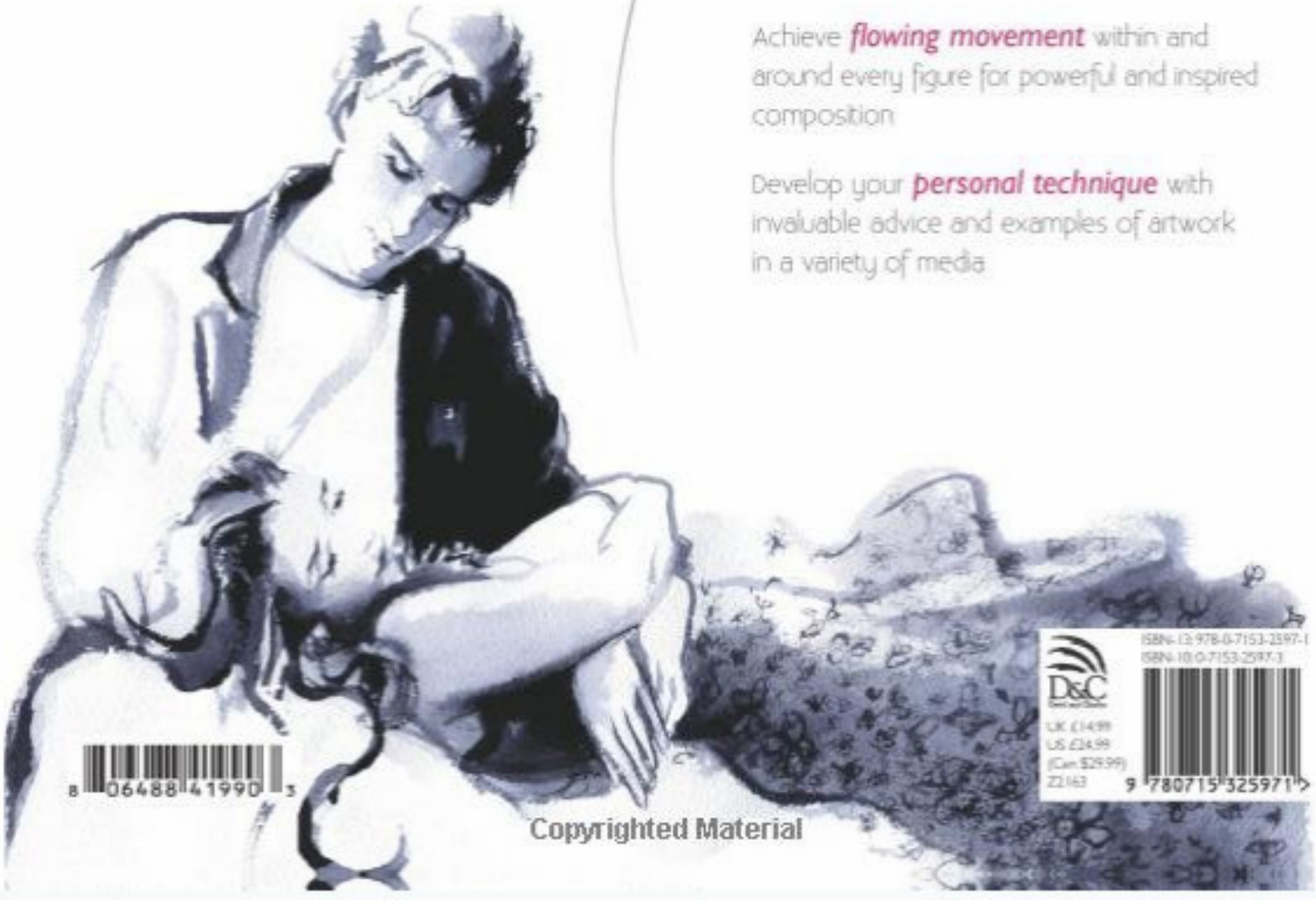


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