The Study on the Exaggeration of the Human Body in Fashion Illustrations

Young-Mi Shon and Yoon-Ju Seo

Dept. of Fashion Design, Chosun University

I. Introduction

It is obvious and inevitable that the formative art does not express nature by simple reproduction, but expresses it through the process of exaggeration. Creative expression is hard to find without exaggeration.

In today's fashion illustrations, the human body is expressed in diversified ways through various transformation methods, like distortion, abnormality, simplification, etc., under the purposes to display creativity of fashion illustrators and maximize fashion illustrations' communication function. Fashion illustration is also getting more widely utilized according to the development in the fashion industry. This exaggeration of the human body is originated from the artist's formative will to transmit the image of the clothing more strongly and it then becomes the expression of the times

Therefore, as it analyzes the exaggeration of the human body in modern fashion illustrations, this study aims to find out the meaning and the problems in the exaggeration of the human body as well as recommended production attitudes and various production methods to produce fashion illustrations.

II. Study Methodology and Procedure

This study performed a theoretical study through literature studies and a case study of the works of many fashion illustrators that were published in artist's workbooks, various information books, fashion magazines, trend books and other books related to fashion illustrations.

The scope of the study was limited to the exaggeration of the human body depicted in modern fashion illustrations. In particular, this studyfocused on most frequently used exaggeration methods of semi-realistic expression, expansion or shrinkage of volume, stressing of muscles orsexiness, distortion, omission and change of visual angle, etc., and classified styles of expression by type.

III. Results and Conclusion

1 Fashion Illustration and the Exaggeration of the Human Body

Fashion illustration draws from popular trends, and generally, it is a form of visual expression to communicate fashion images. Its subjects include not only clothing, but also general consumer products, like general merchandise and living necessities, as well as human behaviors, like dietary attitudes, art appreciation, etc. It describes clothing or the concept behind clothing. Therefore, the fashion illustrator should focus on expressing fashion information and the society's social and cultural contents as images on the great assumption of communication.

The exaggeration of the human body in this fashion illustration involved the style in transforming artistic subjects on purposeto create special aesthetic effects, and expressing them in a distorted way intentionally, instead of reproducing them substantially as visual images. This became popular, especially when realism was denied in modern art.

2 Methods of Expression of the Exaggeration of the Human Body

The exaggerated expression of the human body in fashion illustrations meant that the method in expressing it involved proportional expansion or shrinkage of sizes, lengthening or shortening of the length or expansion of the side, etc. However, it keeps an indivisible relationship with the proportion of the human body. The transformed, exaggerated human body still has the same shape as the original, but with some differences from the original. It became to have a specific facial appearance or stressed motion and shape as it broke the original relations.

Exaggeration method has been utilized in 1930s fashion illustrations, declined years after, and then boomed again since the 1980s

The results of the analysis of the general exaggeration methods of the human body are as follows:

First, "semi-realistic expression of the human body."

In this example, theideally proportioned figure (1:8 or 1:9 ratio) was mainly used, clearly presenting most of the details of the face, legs, feet, etc., as well as the silhouette of the clothing. The semi-realistic form of expression was used because fashion illustration was mainly used for the transmission of the factors in the period's popular clothing, as shown in the clothing, including the silhouette, color, details, etc.

Second, "expansion and shrinkage of the volume of the human body" included the method that expressed a certain part of the human body exaggeratedly to emphasize its silhouette, or drew the human body or the silhouette as very large, very thin, or far too small compared to the general proportion.

Third, "emphasis of muscles in the human body or sexiness" was the method of exaggeration that especially focused on the muscular parts of the human body. The human body close to the ideal shape freed the human body from man's general body shape, causing catharsis and giving a strong visual effect as a non-realistic phenomenon.

Fourth, "distortion and transformation of the human body."

The human bodies presented in modern illustrations were torn into pieces, broken, or crushed The distortion and transformation of the human body was mainly made through omission or

repetition of a certain part, by changing the location or direction of a certain form, contradictorily combining parts, or changing the shape or the capacity of the human body by changing its attributes.

Fifth, "omission and simplification of human body."

The omission and simplification in the exaggeration of the human body was made in a certain part of the human body, easily integrating the intention of the artist as the human body found simplicity and clearness. Not everything in the human figure was necessary, and there were good figures to consider, but the human body must clearly communicate the intrinsic value of the artist, including the characteristics of the designs of the clothing and the image of the clothing.

Likewise, the methods of exaggeration of the human body in fashion illustrations were various from the "semi-realistic expression" to the "omission and simplification of the human body. "Those are generally used as a combination of several methods of expression rather than used individually.

Furthermore, as fashion illustrators select and use an appropriate method of expressing the human body to transmit the characteristics of the design or the image of the clothing, it will be possible to maximize visual communication effects.

References

Kim, Young Sook (1992). *Fashion Illustration.* Soohaksa

Andrew Chang (1996). *The World of Illustration.* Design House.

Lim, Beom Jae (1980). The theory of the proportion of the human body, Publication Department of Hoingik University.

Yoo, Young Sun (2000). "Study on Expression of Visual Image in Fashion Illustration." Kyunghee University. Doctoral Dissertation.