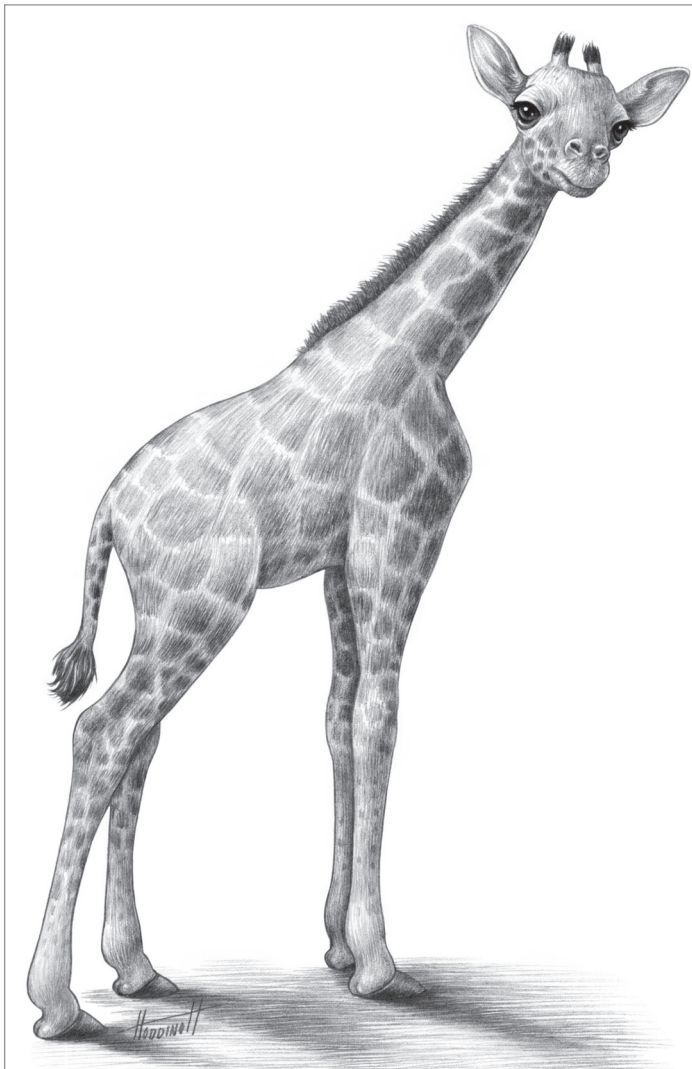


Illustrative and Traditional Realism



Examine drawings to compare the techniques used for rendering two substyles of realism

Figure 1



This article has two sections:

- Illustrative Realism
- Traditional Realism

Illustrative Realism

Illustrative realism is a style of art often used by commercial artists such as illustrators, designers, and graphic artists. Subjects are often rendered with techniques to help the images stand out strongly in digital and printed documents.

Using contour lines to outline artworks is a popular technique amongst illustrative realists.

The resulting images appear bold and powerful when used for various commercial applications such as websites, icons, logos, magazines, advertisements, and/or books.

A drawing of a giraffe in the style of illustrative realism is outlined with thin contour lines (Figure 1).

In a close-up view, the contour lines stand out even stronger (Figure 2).

As the name suggests, illustrative realism is ideal for illustrating text in many commercial arts.

Check out two examples of book illustrations that are outlined with lines in the style of illustrative realism (Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 2

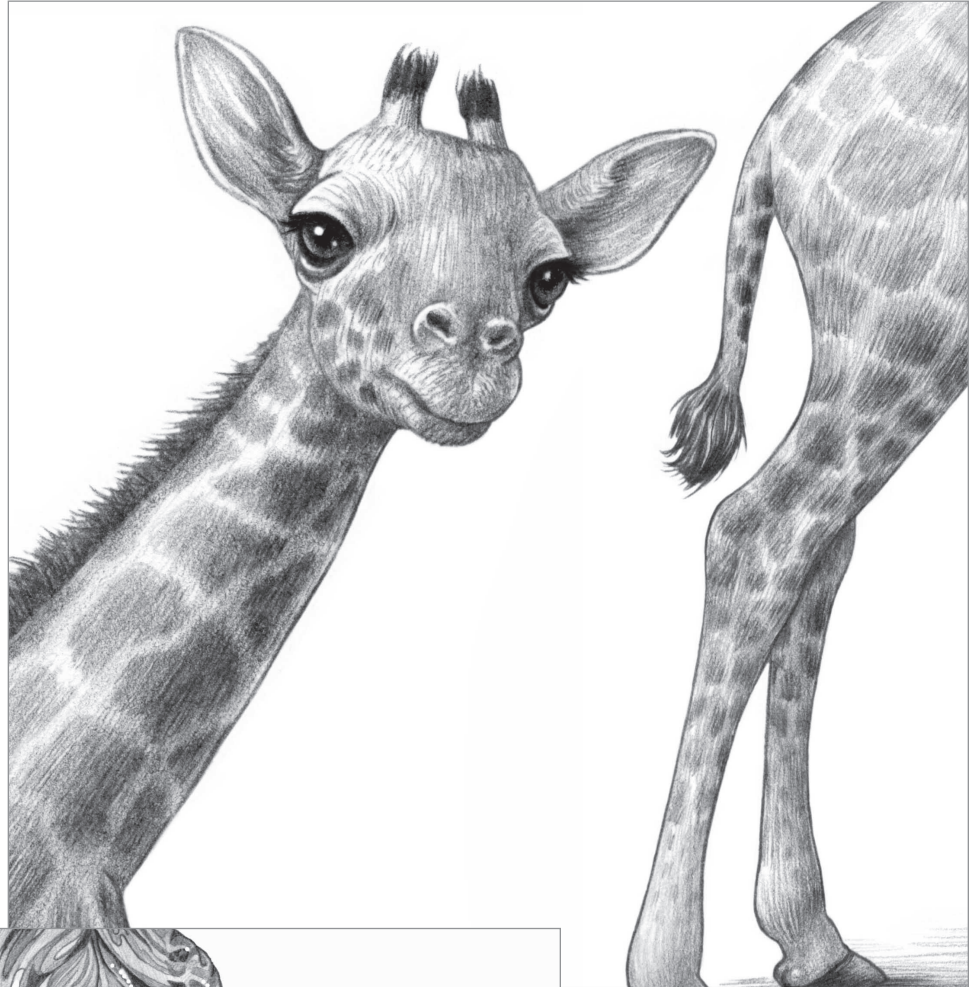


Figure 3



Traditional Realism

Traditional realism employs a variety of different drawing techniques, most of which attempt to represent living beings and objects as they appear in real life without stylization or distortion.

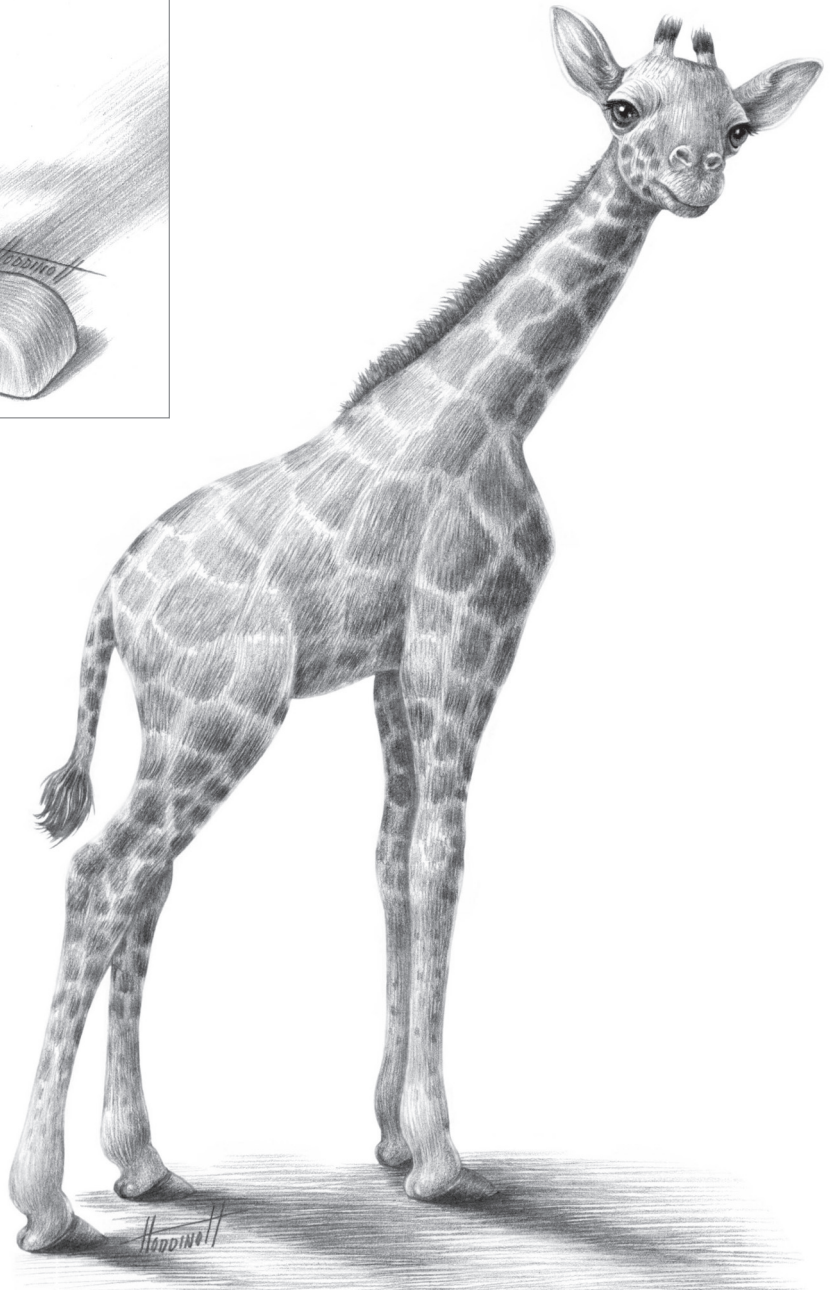
Figure 4



Traditional realists are more likely to “suggest” contours through shading rather than render actual contour lines. After all, you can’t see lines around objects in the real world (as you do in a coloring book).

To create highly-realistic artworks, artists have a couple of different techniques in their bag of tricks.

Figure 5



Subjects can be sketched with faint contour lines that can’t be seen after shading is added.

Or, alternatively, the process of shading can begin without drawing preliminary outlines (more challenging).

Contour lines cannot be seen in a drawing of a giraffe in the style of traditional realism (Figure 5).

Yet the outline of the body is clearly defined, as are each of the giraffe’s spots.

When you look more closely, you can see that the contours of the spots are created with different values (Figure 6).

A viewer's subconscious mind automatically fills in contour lines where the white background meets light sections of fur.

Nine grades of pencils sharpened to chisel points helped create the flower in Figure 7.

Figure 6



Figure 7

The soft velvety texture of the petals appears so realistic that you get a sense of how it would feel to touch.

In this drawing, visible outlines would shatter the illusion of realism.

Also, note how the shading creates a believable sense of light and shadow.



Figure 8



Contour hatching graduations and blending were used to draw the realistic drawing of dewdrops glistening on the gently-textured surface of a tulip (Figure 8).

The process of rendering dewdrops in a drawing is often considered elusive and difficult.

Surprisingly, droplets of water are very easy to draw – the key is to not use outlines.

The lines between the diverse applications of illustrative and traditional realism are often blurred.

Contour lines aren't added to a drawing of a realistic apple (Figure 9). Yet, this shiny Macintosh apple is obviously being used as an illustration.

The photorealistic effect is achieved by using blending to smooth out contour hatching graduations. Erasers help strengthen highlights and create a pattern of spots.

Figure 9



A drawing of a young man demonstrates a more noticeable technique used by traditional realists to create the illusion of outlines without actually drawing lines (Figure 10).

Figure 10



Precisely rendered shading added to the background allows viewers to clearly see the edges of an arm and face (Figures 11 and 12).

Figure 11



Figure 12

