

## DRAFT Modeling Guidelines

### The Profession of Fine-Art Modeling

To most artists, there is probably nothing as fascinating as the human form. While no one knows when an artist first used a model to create art, it was certainly thousands of years ago. The creators of the statues of Greek antiquity obviously used a real human body as a guide, even though the result was often an idealized figure.

The nude human body is an expression of energy as well as form, a powerful statement of what it means to be human. In seeking to render the undraped human figure, the artist hopes to capture the essential qualities of the human being: gesture, proportion, expression, and relationship with the eternal, and to elevate the nude figure as a metaphor for what it means to truly be alive at a certain time, in a certain place.

Such creations are only possible with the participation of a professional fine-art model. Modeling is an artistic profession as well as a respectable one. A model serves as both a living example of a human body and an inspiration for the creation of fine art.

The model is a participant in the artistic process, and infuses energy and personality, as well as a physical body, into that process. While the physical human form is certainly a significant part of the model's contribution to a work of art, a model is not just another physical prop; he or she is, rather, a total human being — most likely the only living being, and hence the main character, in the scene. Ideally, a model brings his or her total self to the artistic process, inviting the artist to capture his or her unique energy and character. Modeling is an active, not a passive, activity.

A model should conduct him/herself in a professional manner, and be treated as a professional by those they work with. A freelance model is **not** an employee, but a consultant who provides modeling services and works as a partner with the artist or art instructor.

Modeling can be a physically and emotionally stressful activity. To perform at their best, models need a safe and respectful environment in which to work.

Individual capabilities and comfort levels can vary a great deal from one model to another; human bodies are not interchangeable. While a particular pose can be requested of a model, it is the model's choice whether to accept the pose or to modify it to one that is acceptable for them. A pose could be emotionally, as well as physically, stressful to a model. If a model declines to do a particular pose, that request needs to be honored. It is therefore never appropriate to demand that a model do a specific pose, with no option to modify it.

Moreover, artists will do their best work from a model whose pose is not only comfortable for them but also expresses that model's energy and character. Negative energy from a model, such as pain, stress or resentment, will detract from the artistic character of the pose.

If, however, a model has such extreme limitations that they cannot perform a particular type or class of poses, such as standing or reclining, they need to make that limitation clear to any artist or institution they approach for modeling work.

In addition, the studio environment needs to be both physically and emotionally comfortable for the model. Models, like artists, will do their best work when they can feel free to be expressive without being judged or subjected to undue stress.

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### Qualifications for being an art model

The main qualification for being an art model is to be comfortable in, and able to be expressive with, the body. And of course, a model needs to be able to hold reasonably still for long periods of time.

Having a sense of what constitutes an artistically interesting pose is also very helpful; this is a skill that a good model develops over time, if they don't come into the modeling profession with it.

It also helps to look interesting in some way; blandly good-looking people, while they are in great demand in fashion and commercial modeling, are **not** good candidates for art modeling. They are boring. It is better, however, not to be extremely over-weight, or even worse, under-weight. A body with a lot of contrasts in it will be most interesting to draw, paint or sculpt.

It is **not** necessary to have a "great" physique (however that is culturally defined at the moment) to be an art model. Neither is it necessary to be a contortionist or to be able to hold "difficult" poses for long periods of time. That type of modeling is a specialty, and many models pride themselves on such capabilities. But it is not a requirement for modeling in general.

While there is a lower age limit of 18 to be a nude model, there is no upper age limit for any type of modeling. Young, middle-aged and older human bodies are all interesting in different ways. Whatever their age, nude modeling will be most enjoyable to persons who are able to get in touch with their "inner toddler" — the one who loves to be the center of attention, show off and be expressive, and hates to wear clothes. (This does not mean being irresponsible, however.)

### Posing is a stressful activity

The human body, like all animal bodies, is designed to move, not to remain still for long periods of time. Immobility puts a tremendous strain on the human body, that it is not designed for. Models are not super-humans who can perform extraordinary acts of contortion or endure more physical stress than the average person. Neither are they objects to be manipulated into whatever positions the artists desire.

Standing poses put particular strain, not just on the feet, but also on the back. To maintain balance while standing still for any length of time requires continual adjustments — adjustments performed, for the most part, by the muscles of the lower back. While these adjustments may not be visible to an outside observer, the model is well aware of them. Moreover, such adjustments are not what the back muscles are designed to perform. Back muscles are designed to help the human body remain upright while moving, not while standing still.

Sitting poses (except for sitting "Japanese-style" on the haunches) also put strain on the back, because they disrupt the natural curvature of the spine that normally holds up the back and head. (And even sitting on the haunches creates the same problems as standing poses.) This lack must be compensated for in long sitting poses, by providing direct support for the back. Most chairs are not designed to provide such support; additional cushions behind the back may be needed.

In addition, short-legged models often need an elevated surface to rest their feet on. Most chairs are designed for people with "standard" adult-sized legs, AND wearing shoes. If the model's legs are dangling, or only their toes are touching the surface beneath the chair, they need a footrest. Sometimes a block of wood is available. A thick book (or several thinner ones) can also work. Providing insufficient support for the feet will put additional strain on the back.

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Sitting poses can also sometimes cut off circulation to the legs, or even, in certain positions, to the arms.

Reclining poses, while relatively comfortable, can cut off circulation to the arms, legs or buttocks, and can also put strain on the neck, if the head is not properly supported. (See *A word about the head in poses* below.)

### A word about the head in poses

When we sit or stand in a normal upright posture, the head is supported by the spinal column. When the head is moved off the top of the spinal column by tilting either the head or the body, this support disappears, and the head must then be held up by the neck muscles. Even turning the head, without tilting it, puts some stress on the neck muscles.

The human head is heavy! (partly because the skull is the densest bone in the body). Neck muscles will tire easily when they are given the job of holding up the head. Any pose that requires moving the head off the center of the spinal column will, therefore, be stressful on the neck. Reclining poses can be particularly deceptive in this way. While they may appear to be relaxing, they can be stressful if the neck and head are not properly supported. If the model is not experienced enough to realize this potential problem, it is helpful if the artist or instructor is aware of it and takes steps to mitigate the stress by providing proper support for the head and neck.

### Some observations about nude modeling

Nude models deserve special respect. Working with a nude model is a privilege, not an entitlement. Just because someone removes their clothes does not mean they are removing their boundaries, or giving up their rights. The converse, in fact, is true: they need stronger boundaries, and acquire more rights.

In mainstream American culture, nudity is generally associated (incorrectly, to those of us who value the human figure in fine art) only with sexuality and vulnerability. In addition, a model, while posing, is immobilized — almost as if they were physically restrained. Finally, in a culture where nudity is not the norm, a nude person in a room full of clothed people becomes a powerful magnet for attention.

For someone to take a position where they are exposed, restrained, and at the center of attention, is to put themselves in an extremely vulnerable position. Please appreciate the risk a nude model is taking, to perform the valuable service of posing for fine art work.

Remember that the model is posing for the artists, who are (or at least should be) focused on their art. Non-artist visitors, including children, are inappropriate in a studio where a nude model is posing. Since such persons' focus will **not** be on art, it will by default be on the nude body of the model, because that is such a powerful presence in the room. The model is not there to be on display for curious onlookers. He or she is there to provide material and inspiration for the artists.

### Rights of Models

The following guidelines should be followed in conducting the modeling session:

- Personal Respect: The modeling session should be conducted with dignity, and the model should be treated with respect.

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- Frequent communication with the model is helpful. Information such as the structure of the session time, the type and length of poses desired, etc., can help the model plan ahead during the session and do a better job.
- Crude remarks, gestures or facial expressions directed towards the model should not be tolerated. If a model feels uncomfortable with a remark or action by an artist participant in the session, that evaluation should be honored. Instructors or session organizers are responsible for the conduct of their students or participants, and for enforcing this guideline. Any individual who violates this guideline should be given a warning; a second offense by the same individual should be grounds for barring the offending individual from the rest of the session.
- Sexual harassment or any inappropriate physical conduct on the part of artist participants is not tolerable and should result in the immediate expulsion of the offending individual from the modeling session.
- Only artists whose focus is on their artwork should be present in the studio while a model is posing nude. Extraneous visitors, including children, are not appropriate and should not be allowed in the studio without the model's consent.
- Working Conditions: The studio environment needs to be safe and reasonably clean and comfortable.
  - The model stand should be reasonably clean and free of toxic substances. Charcoal or clay dust should be cleaned off the stand, or a covering provided. Art materials, books, debris, food or food containers, or any other extraneous material, must be removed from the model stand before the session starts. This task is the responsibility of the instructor or session organizer, not of the model.
  - The studio should be as clear as possible of toxic substances that could cause serious health risks to the model. This standard is higher for a nude model than for other occupants of the room, since their direct skin exposure is greater.
  - A functional space heater needs to be provided if the studio is too cold for the model's comfort. Conversely, a fan should be provided if the temperature is too high.
  - If possible, adequate equipment should be provided for poses, such as cushions for sitting or reclining poses, poles or podiums for standing poses, if the model requests them.
  - Sufficient privacy will be provided to the model during the posing session. It is up to the model to determine what is sufficient for them.
  - The only appropriate place for a nude model to be nude is on the modeling stand (or in the designated area, if there is no stand). A nude model on the stand is an object of art; a nude model outside of the designated modeling area is a naked person in a room full of clothed people.
- Posing Standards: Poses must be acceptable to the model. While a specific pose can be requested of a model, it is the model's choice whether to accept the pose or to modify it to one that is acceptable for them. Under no circumstances is a specific pose ever to be arbitrarily dictated to a model.
- Length of sessions shall be reasonable, and sufficient breaks provided. It is up to the model to

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determine what is reasonable and sufficient for him/her. At least one fifteen-minute break should be provided after no longer than two hours of modeling, but a model can, within reason, request more frequent breaks.

Sessions, and individual poses, will not be extended beyond the time agreed upon in advance, unless the model consents and is provided with additional remuneration for extended session time. An exception can be made if the model arrived late at the session and agrees to make up the lost time. Delays in starting a session caused by persons or circumstances other than the model, however, do not warrant extension of the session without agreement of, and additional remuneration to, the model.

- Consent of photography: No photograph will be taken of the model without prior notice to and agreement of the model.
- Consent for exhibition: No photograph or representative work of the model in which the model is recognizable, will be exhibited or submitted for publication without the model's written and witnessed consent.
- Remuneration: Payment is due at the end of the modeling session, or by a previously agreed-upon schedule, and is expected for cancellations of the session with less than 24 hours' notice.

### Responsibilities of Models

- Promptness: Models should arrive at the studio in sufficient time to be prepared to start modeling at the scheduled beginning of the session.
- Reliability: Models should provide at least 24 hours notice of cancellation, and suggest an alternate. Models will not leave before the end of the modeling session unless given permission to do so by the instructor or session organizer. Exceptions can be made for emergencies.
- Posing: Model shall hold poses, with minimal movement, for the agreed-upon length of the pose (subject to cancellation if the pose proves too physically difficult to hold). Model will not engage in excessive disruptive movements such as turning the body or gesturing, during the pose.
- Artists' privacy: Artists' work and ideas are private and need not be shared. Models will respect artists' requests for confidentiality.

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### Guidelines for Instructors' or Session Organizers' Interactions with Art Models

*{to be printed as a separate pamphlet}*

Models are ordinary people performing a service which is greatly misunderstood outside, and sometimes even within, the art community. Models are not super-humans who can perform extraordinary acts of contortion or endure more physical stress than the average person. Neither are they objects to be manipulated into whatever positions the artists desire.

A model deserves to be treated with respect, to be provided sufficient physical accommodations to do their job without undue stress, and the ability to set their own limits on what they are comfortable doing, both physically and emotionally.

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- Communicate with the model, before and during the modeling session. Better to over-communicate than under-communicate.
  - When scheduling the model for work, let them know whether the session is to be portrait, nude, costumed or photographic, and whether it will include any anatomy demonstration. Find out if the model has any limitations that might affect the work you want to do in this session. If you want the model to dress in any particular way or bring costumes or other equipment to the session, let them know at this time.
  - When the model arrives (hopefully well before the session starts), let them know the basic format for the session. For example: “We’re going to spend the first 10 or 15 minutes going over their homework. Then we’ll start with some gestures poses, then move to 10- or 15- minutes poses, then some long poses. We’ll take a 10-minute break after the first hour.” This gives the model a chance to think about what poses they might do, that would meet the needs of the class, and also gives them a chance to communicate any limitations or preferences.
  - Negotiate with the model **FIRST**, about poses, **BEFORE** announcing to the class what the poses will be. To announce to the class what poses the model is going to do, before asking the model, is to treat the model like a prop rather than a human being and is extremely demeaning to the model.
  - If you have any out-of-the-ordinary requirements for a particular session, be sure to let the model (or the model scheduler, if you’re not doing your own scheduling) know ahead of time. For example, if you want to do a whole session on standing poses, be sure you schedule a model who is willing and able to do that. Standing poses of greater than 20 minutes are an exceptional requirement; although some models can do them, most cannot.
  - If you have any special needs or requests, ask the model courteously, e.g.: “Can you do a pose that has some twist in it?” Be willing to compromise (as the model should be also). Micro-managing a model is not appropriate unless they are totally inexperienced.
- Make sure the modeling stand or area is adequate for modeling:
  - See that the modeling stand or area is safe: free of toxic substances or objects that could fall onto the stand and injure the model, and that lights or heaters are not hot enough to burn the model.
  - See that the modeling stand or area is reasonably clean — free of debris, dust, or art materials. Provide a cover (padding or sheet) for the modeling stand if possible.
  - If the temperature requires it, provide a heater in good working condition, adequate for heating the modeling area to the model’s comfort. A strong lamp directed at the model stand can supplement a heater, but is usually no substitute for it unless the temperature is moderate.
  - Provide sufficient furniture and equipment, such as a sturdy chair or stool for sitting poses, cushions or pillows for reclining poses, a pole or suspended rope for standing poses, etc. If these items are not available, modify your needs to suit what is available, or ask the model if they are willing to proceed anyway. Some models have more tolerance than others for stressful conditions.

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- Use common courtesy in communicating with the model. Use words like “please,” “thank you,” “I’m sorry.” Greet the model as soon as possible after their arrival at the studio. Thank the model after each pose or series of short poses, and at the end of the session.
- Respect the model’s limits.
  - The model is the person who should determine, within reason, when there are to be breaks during the session. The model is under more physical stress than anyone else in the studio.
  - If you have a pose from an art book or some other source that you would like the model to do, ask the model respectfully, and be willing to compromise, if the model declines to do the pose exactly as depicted. Being able to do any conceivable pose is **NOT** one of the qualifications for being a model. (Being courteous and willing to work with the artist is, though.)
  - If the session is to include an anatomy lecture, find out if the model is comfortable posing as a demonstration. If not, proceed using other tools, such as plastic models, diagrams, slides, etc. Most models should be comfortable posing for short anatomy demonstrations if the demonstrations are done respectfully.
  - Communicate with the model through words and gestures, not touch. If you feel that you need to make physical contact with a model in order to get them into the correct position for a pose, or to point out an anatomical feature, ask their permission to touch them.
- Take charge of the studio.
  - Be sure the model is provided sufficient privacy when he/she is posing or disrobing. Non-artist visitors, for example, are not appropriate in a studio where a model is posing nude.
  - Monitor the behavior of students under your control in the studio, during modeling sessions. It is your responsibility, not the model’s, to enforce behavior standards.

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### **Guidelines for Art Students’ / Participants’ Interactions with Art Models**

*{to be printed as a separate pamphlet}*

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Always treat the model with the utmost courtesy and respect. Crude remarks, gestures or facial expressions directed towards the model are totally inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

Remember that the model is posing for the artists, who are (or at least should be) focused on their art. Do not bring visitors, including children, into the studio where a nude model is posing. Since such persons' focus will **not** be on art, it will by default be on the nude body of the model, because that is such a powerful presence in the room. The model is not there to be on display for curious onlookers. He or she is there to provide material and inspiration for the artists.

During the modeling session, the modeling stand or area is the territory of the model; it is their space in which to feel comfortable and safe. Please do not use the model stand, even during breaks, for seating, storing your work or materials, holding food or beverages, or any other purpose, without permission from the model.

If you want to photograph a model so that you can work on your piece later, you need to ask the model's permission. Do not assume that anyone who is willing to model for drawing, painting or sculpture is also willing to be photographed, or that the model is an object, rather than a human being with the right to set boundaries for themselves.

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### Guidelines for Art Models

*{to be printed as a separate pamphlet}*

As a model, you are providing a valuable service to artists and art students. Without models, there would be virtually no human figures in art. This important job carries with it both rights and responsibilities.

You deserve to be treated with respect, to be provided sufficient physical accommodations to do your job without undue stress, and the ability to set your own limits on what you are comfortable doing, both physically and emotionally.

You also need to respect the artists and their work, and most of all, their time. Do not delay a modeling session by being late due to carelessness or lack of planning.

Arrive at the studio in sufficient time to be prepared to start modeling at the scheduled beginning of the session. This generally requires arriving at the studio at least 10 or 15 minutes before the start time, but allow more time if you feel you need it.

Hold all poses, with minimal movement, for the agreed-upon length of the pose. Do not engage in excessive disruptive movements such as turning the body or gesturing, during the pose. (If the pose proves too physically difficult for you to continue, however, inform the instructor or session organizer.)

Drink your coffee and eat your snacks during your break time, not during the pose.

If you have any limitations or special needs, let the instructor or session organizer know as soon as possible, so that they can adapt the session requirements if necessary.

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Make every reasonable effort to accommodate the requests of the instructor or session organizer, in regard to poses, but do not allow yourself to be subjected to mistreatment. If you have any physical limitations, either temporary or permanent, inform the instructor or session organizer at the beginning of the session, or even at the time you schedule the session.

If you need props or equipment, look around to see if they are available; if not, ask the instructor or session organizer for help.

Unless you are modeling for erotic art, it is not appropriate to take a sexually explicit or suggestive pose. To do so would be an act of disrespect to anyone in the room who is sexually attracted to your gender.

If you are troubled by any action or verbalization on the part of a student, try to communicate that to the instructor, and let them handle the situation, rather than dealing with the problem directly yourself. It's the instructor's job to protect you, and they have the authority to do so. If they fail in that responsibility, you can step in, but be sure to report the problem later, to the school administration.

Do not make negative comments on the artists' work.

If you need to cancel a scheduled session, provide at least 24 hours notice, and suggest an alternate if possible. Do not leave a modeling session before the scheduled ending time unless given permission to do so by the instructor or session organizer. If you have an emergency and have to leave, notify the instructor or session organizer.

### A word to models about dependability and punctuality

Art modeling is not just another job. Without a model, there is no life drawing (painting, sculpture, etc.). You are not just another participant in the process, or just another employee in a group. You are the main event.

When you go to a live theatre performance, you don't expect the lead actress to show up 20 minutes late for her entrance. But when you show up 20 minutes late to a modeling session, that's exactly what you're doing.

If you have any concern about the possibility of traffic congestion or unreliable transportation to a modeling session, don't just allow extra time to get to there; allow **EXTRA** extra time, especially if you have some distance to travel. You may get there half an hour early, if all goes well, but that's better than getting there half an hour late, if everything goes wrong. If you don't have that much time available for travel, don't accept the assignment.

Furthermore, showing up at the door right at the start time of the session is **NOT** equivalent to being on time. Being on time means **being ready to start modeling** at the beginning of the session. Unless you're modeling for a portrait session and don't have to disrobe or change into a costume, you need to arrive **BEFORE** the start time, to get yourself ready to model.

You're the star of the show (even if you're not getting star wages); be there for your entrance.