

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

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.

- 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 de-meaning 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, many 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 so hot that they could burn the model.

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- 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.
- 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. The model stand should not be visible from outside the room or building; make sure a screen or curtain blocks the door opening if necessary. In addition, non-artist visitors 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.