

Chapter 13

Faculty Guide to Working With Models

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The instructor is in charge of the class, and has a primary responsibility of teaching the students. However, when models are used, the instructor has the added responsibility to understand and comply with standard practices. This applies to leaders of uninstructed workshops as well.

Brief the model at the beginning of the class. Explain what you are covering in the lesson. Models are usually expected to choose their own poses. If they understand your teaching goals, they will be better informed in their choice of poses. If you are teaching how to draw feet, the poses will prominently feature the feet. If you are teaching about tone, the model will be more aware of shadows. If your model is experienced—or has read this book—he or she will understand common art terms like foreshortening and negative space. If not, be patient and explain what you need.

The instructor specifies the duration of poses. In a figure drawing class, it is common to open with very short gestures, gradually working up to longer, more relaxed poses.

Standard practice allows the model a five-minute break after 20 to 25 minutes of posing. Do not expect a model to pose for more than 25 minutes unless the model agreed before the pose began. Reclining poses tend to be the easiest to hold, and the model may be willing to hold such a pose for longer than the standard limit.

Be aware that some poses are more strenuous than others. The more dynamic poses can be held only a short time. Asking a model to repeat a gesture pose for 25 minutes is probably unrealistic. However, some compromise may be possible. If the pose can be modified to provide more support and balance, it may be close enough for your objectives. Also, it might be possible to hold the pose in a series of shorter increments. Be reasonable in the trade off between duration and difficulty.

Even relatively relaxed poses can cause physical strain. Models frequently experience a hand or foot falling asleep, a temporary peripheral nerve disorder known in medical terms as mononeuropathy. Prolonged pressure on a nerve can damage it.^{13.1} Breaks are necessary to allow the model to rest and recover.

The following must be cleared with the models in advance:

- Figure models working together on the same stand.
- Male and female models posing nude in same studio.

No cameras are allowed in the studio. Photos and videos are prohibited, unless specific permission has been given and releases have been signed. If photos are necessary, such as to aid in repositioning the model for a multiple-day pose, make sure to state this requirement prior to booking the model. This can be a condition of accepting the job. Some models will be comfortable with this, while others may choose to turn down a job with such a condition.

Do not touch the model without permission. To point out lighting or anatomy features, a laser pointer is advised— except near the eyes. If the model will be resuming a pose after a break, it may be necessary to mark the pose with masking tape. Ask the model if he or she would like help taping pose. Some may appreciate the assistance while it may make others uncomfortable.

No visitors or tours are allowed to enter the studio when a model is posing nude or semi-nude without permission from both the instructor and the model. The model must be given the option to put on a robe and take a break while visitors go through. See also Chapter 12, Security Concerns.

Model stands are for the use of models and for set-ups designated by faculty, not for student use as an easel substitute, picnic table, etc.

Models should be supplied with fans or space heaters as necessary and given a clean environment in which to work.

Safety has priority before aesthetics. A model should not be expected to pose in an uncomfortable or potentially dangerous situation, such as an unstable support or on top of a ladder. Be sure that lights and any props are stable and balanced.

If you would like something out of the ordinary, it should be cleared with the model when the booking is made. Nancy Lilly says it best: “Some models can handle a difficult standing pose for three hours; some cannot. Some models are not afraid of heights; some are. Some models are comfortable working closely with other models; some are not. The needs of your classes are the priority, and planning ahead will enable you to have what you need.”

Problems with models should be dealt with privately, not in front of the class. Sometimes a model's abilities and personality fit well in one class, but not in another. If a model does not hold poses well, is careless about break times, or is unprofessional in any way, please either point out the problem to the model or notify the model coordinator.