LDSOA Live Model Policy

All faculty members and graduate teaching assistants who utilize live models, given the inherent sensitive aspects of such activity in the context of the NDAH Policy, must be scrupulous in maintaining an appropriate professional atmosphere. Instructors should avoid any conduct, whether physical or verbal, that could be misinterpreted by a reasonable person, participant or witness, or that could otherwise cause discomfort on the part of the model or other participants in the activity.

The following excerpt is taken from Drawing Essentials: A Guide to Drawing from Observation (2009 Oxford University Press, New York) with permission of the author, Deborah Rockman, Kendall College of Art and Design.

Classroom Etiquette When Drawing from a Model

Modeling is hard work. Unless you have done it before, it is difficult to realize the challenges involved in modeling well. Everyone in the classroom deserves to be treated with respect, and this is especially true for the models who find themselves in an especially vulnerable position because they are nude and because all eyes are upon them. For those of you who lack experience with drawing from the figure, it is advisable to take a few minutes prior to your first session with the model to acquaint yourself with some of the rules of “etiquette,” and your instructor will hopefully review some of this information with you.

The model’s personal space is to be respected, and you should never touch the model while he or she is at work. There are some instances, with the model’s permission, when it is appropriate for the instructor to make contact with the model in order to point something out, when teaching anatomy, when helping the model to get back to a particular pose, and so on. But the generally accepted notion is that under no circumstances should you, as a student, make contact with a model.

You should also be aware that it is inappropriate to make audible comments concerning the model’s body or appearance or to laugh out loud in a way that may lead the model to think that you are laughing at her or him. Again, because of the model’s vulnerability, it is courteous and professional to be particularly attentive to their well-being. Although it may seem unnecessary to discuss here what seems like common courtesy, drawing an unclothed model in a classroom with a group of fellow students is not exactly a “common” experience unless you are in an art school.

The models, too, should be made aware of guidelines for their behavior. During a break, you can expect that the model will wear a robe or otherwise cover himself or herself until it is time to resume modeling. Models are generally advised not to offer comments on student work since they may unwittingly reinforce something your instructor is trying to discourage or discourage something your instructor is trying to reinforce. If you encounter an uncomfortable situation with a model, your best course of action would be to discuss the issue with your instructor and he or she can address the issue with the model. In general, common sense and courtesy provide the best guidelines.