

Shmanners 252: Art Modeling

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Travis: Did you hear they gave an award to that guy who stood in front of the art class?

Teresa: No?

Travis: They appreciated his model behavior.

Teresa: It's *Shmanners*!

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet. I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: ... for ordinary occasions. Hello, my love. I almost said behavior.

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: Because I was still thinking about how good my joke was.

Teresa: Oh, okay. Hello, dear.

Travis: I was thinking about how good my joke was, and then "behavior" got stuck in my head and I couldn't think of the word "occasions."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: I'm doing okay.

Travis: Oh, yeah?

Teresa: Yeah. You know.

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: Oh, are you rubbing my shoulder?

Travis: Rubbing your shoulders, drop those down about six inches.

Teresa: Ah, drop those down.

Travis: I'm amazed you can hear me with those shoulders up around your ears. Hey! Let's talk about modeling. Art modeling.

Teresa: Uh, have you ever taken a live model class or been a live art model?

Travis: No, to the first one. I've taken—I've taken, like, art classes. Okay, so in college, we had to do, like, art stuff as part of the, like, theater design courses I took, specifically the scenic design. I remember there being, like, painting and drawing elements to it, but because it was like, scenic design...

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: ... it was never, like, the human form or anything like that. Uh, and if we did, it was like replicating existing drawings, and not like, doing our own.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: We did a lot of architectural stuff, but I don't think that counts, because buildings, by and large, are not humans.

Teresa: Yes. [laughs]

Travis: Okay? And I don't know that I've ever posed. I mean, people have, of course, drawn me.

Teresa: Well, yes, we have—we have many a likeness of Travis here that people have sent.

Travis: That I put up in my own room! I don't know what's wrong with that.

Teresa: [laughs] There's nothing... *wrong* with that. It's not how I would decorate an office.

Travis: I like—I like my visage.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I think I have a powerful visage. Uh, no, I've never modeled. I don't know... You know, I think that there is—okay, let me put it this way. I don't know that I would, not because I am uncomfortable with the displaying of my body before the class part, but I fidget a lot.

Teresa: Yeah, you cannot sit still. [laughs]

Travis: I don't think I could sit still, and I also think, like, with how overactive my imagination and my brain is, I think I'd be sitting there, like, "What's that? Like, what? What's going on? What are they doing? I want to see their picture now. Can I look? What are you guys doing?"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, I don't think I'd be able to quiet my mind long enough to just like, sit there and zone out, you know? Have you?

Teresa: No, I have not. Um, the only modeling type stuff I've ever done has been, like, just for fun, pin-up pictures, and stuff like that.

Travis: You're good at those, though.

Teresa: Aw, thanks.

Travis: You did some, uh, maternity when it was pre-baby. There's probably a good word for that. Prenatal? No.

Teresa: No, just maternity.

Travis: Sure. Pin-up photos that were very cute.

Teresa: Aw, thanks.

Travis: Very cute.

Teresa: Well, first of all, I want to thank Carson L., she/her, who suggested this topic, thank you.

Travis: Thank you, Carson.

Teresa: Remember, Alex does read all the emails and saves the topics, even if it takes a while for us to get around to them.

Travis: Yeah, we're trying to do some advanced scheduling now.

Teresa: Ooh!

Travis: Ooh!

Teresa: And Alex would like to mention that she got a lot of this information from Larissa Pham's article for the Paris Review called *A Figure*

Model's (Brief) Guide to Poses Through Art History. So, if you want more information, uh, feel free to peruse that article.

Travis: This is a very interesting topic to me, that I would not have considered had Carson not suggested it, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But what is very interesting to me about this is, on paper, right? If you remove any kind of stigma or mores issues or anything like that, on paper, it seems a very straightforward, uh, exchange, you know?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: You pose. I draw. Badda bing, badda boom. Exchange done.

Teresa: I mean, what it seems to me is kind of like the next step after still-life, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: If you look at fruit in a bowl and you draw the fruit in the bowl, the next thing is probably a person, right?

Travis: That's a big jump. No, I understand what you're saying, but also it wouldn't be like, "Well, I've been taking care of this fruit in a bowl for a week. I think I'm ready to be a parent."

Teresa: [laughs] Nooo, that's not what I mean.

Travis: I know!

Teresa: Like, drawing a person, obvs.

Travis: I know, but the thing is like, then, this seems like one of those circumstances where you cannot remove the mores, the stigmas, and just

normal human, uh, neuroses that make this such a nuanced and complicated exchange, you know what I mean?

Teresa: Yes. So, let's talk a little bit about art history.

Travis: Oh, boy.

Teresa: Um, ancient Egypt...

Travis: I've heard of it, yeah.

Teresa: ... is actually one of the examples of early art modeling. Um, obviously pharaohs, queens, various nobles would sit for the subject—

Travis: The Sphinx!

Teresa: Um, no.

Travis: The Sphinx didn't sit?

Teresa: No.

Travis: I guess it kind of reclined, you're right.

Teresa: It was laying down.

Travis: Uh, prostate—no, prostrate. That's a very—well, okay. This is a very unfortunate, but like, I get confused by it all the time. Prostrated is when you're like, kind of bowing before someone.

Teresa: Yeah, with your face on the ground.

Travis: Prostate is a completely different thing.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And I get confused between those two words all the time.

Teresa: Okay. Anyway—

Travis: Is that what we're talking about today?

Teresa: No!

Travis: Oh, I got lost. Okay, go on.

Teresa: [sighs] Got to recenter myself for a second.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay. These are art sessions were not just, like, for fun, right? They were meant to act as vessels for the body to return to in the afterlife.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Everything I've encountered about Egyptian religion is like, worked into every aspect of their lives, right?

Travis: Yes, they did not, uh, necessarily ascribe to the theory that you can't take it with you.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: They very much were like the, "But what if I can?"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And so they kind of built around that.

Teresa: Um, and so, these subjects were posed in a way that would ensure the statues would live forever, would, like, be there. And so they were

always seated with straight spines, their shoulders and hips in alignment so that the statue was super sturdy.

Travis: That makes a lot of sense and also, like, if you connect that to so many of them are like, looking out over their kingdoms, right? Like, they were always placed in such a way that they were very prominent, that they were very, like, sentry over their domain.

It makes a lot of sense of like, yeah, you're expected, like—you're gonna be in there and we want you to be able to see your lands and do all that stuff. It makes sense.

Teresa: Right. And obviously this is why so many of them still exist, because they're made very well.

Travis: Sometimes out of like, solid rock face.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Totally. Um, but then once we get into Greek and Roman sculpture, what I usually think of is kind of like, lounging people, right? With beautiful, like, curly hair, and like... it's a totally different style, and that's because of math.

Travis: Oh. Wait. Wait. Go on. Wait, can I guess?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Is it about, like, the uh—what's the word I'm looking for? The, like, body measurements compared to each other, the ratios, you know, of the length of this versus the length of that and that kind of thing?

Teresa: Mm-hmm. So, it had to do about the geometry...

Travis: That's the word I was—yes, that's the word I was looking for.

Teresa: ... of the human body. That's the word you're looking for. And so, even though the body weight was distributed kind of unevenly and, you know, they had curves and they appeared more natural, um, they were able to make it look realistic, even though they still aren't, like, real human figures, obviously. Because again, a lot of these statues have—they want to last the test of time.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And humans, um, especially like, standing humans? Very precarious.

Travis: Yeah! Yeah, it's—

Teresa: It's a wonder we don't all fall down, all day, every day.

Travis: This is something now, having had two kids, right, and watching them learn to walk? It is, in many ways to me, and this is something people often say when they just don't understand how something works, but a miracle that we as human beings are—if you think about all the tiny, just corrections we are doing constantly, as a human just standing up and walking around.

Watching a child—[laughs] If you ever wanna get real spooked, turn around and see like a one-year-old standing somewhere where you weren't expecting them to, 'cause they are standing so awkwardly that it looks like, uh, how one might draw, like, a little gremlin in—you know, a CGI gremlin, scaring somebody. Anyways, I love my kids very much.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay, so from here, we move to, like, the Hellenistic period. Um, again, Greek. You looked at me. Hello.

Travis: Oh, no, I was putting it together.

Teresa: Oh, okay!

Travis: Like Helen of Troy?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, these statues kind of, like, moved past realism, and because they were more concerned with the beauty of the way something looks...

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: ... um, and so, these people posed in like, you know, the—oh, what's the one with the curve, the discus guy?

Travis: Oh, I know exactly the one you're talking about. I don't know what it's called, but yeah. I know the one you're talking about.

Teresa: Yeah, um...

Travis: I believe it's Frisbee Man.

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: If I'm not mis—yeah, Frisbee Man.

Teresa: Oh, is that it? Frisbee Man?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Got it.

Travis: That's where we actually got the term "frisbee" from. His name was Frisbee.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: And everybody was like, "You know, the frisbee thing." And then, that's where we got—that's where it came from.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, and so, like, things like definition of muscle were obviously a lot more highlighted than they would have been if the artist was simply just, like, copying what the person looked like, right?

Travis: Right. Well, 'cause I think that at that—I mean, this is just my assumption, but they were more focused on like, as you have said, the aesthetic, right? The beauty, than realism, right? So, they were heightening aspects to be like, [almost-French accent] "Look at this curve. Look at this. Look how beautiful." I don't know what that voice is, but I guess that's Roman? I don't know.

Teresa: I don't know.

Teresa: Um, so then, once Rome fell...

Travis: What!?

Teresa: I know. Sorry.

Travis: Aw, man, spoilers!

Teresa: Christianity took over and they were like, "Mm, these are, quote, 'graven images.'"

Travis: Too decadent.

Teresa: And so we see the pendulum swing all the way to the other side where things become very regular, very, uh, geometric...

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: ... um, very symbolic, even. So, Christian iconography was popular through drawings and tapestry and sculpture, mosaic, and, you know, images of the Christ child and Madonna were everywhere.

Um, specifically, there were a couple of really weird things about, um, depicting Jesus, if you look at it. If you look at paintings of Jesus from this era—

Travis: I'd rather not, but go on.

Teresa: He's depicted as a child-sized, fully grown man.

Travis: Yes. Yes. I have noticed that, yes.

Teresa: That not only has to do with, kind of like, the mystery, right, of the whole thing...

Travis: Yeah, 'cause this—that was a mystery.

Teresa: Um, but also, it has to do with like, "What if Jesus sees us?"

Travis: What if God was one of us?

Teresa: The painting, again, being kind of like a vessel, what if they see you painting it?

Travis: And Jesus is like, "I am not a baby, sir."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, this is interesting, too, because I hadn't really thought about it until now, but if you look—you know, we talk about the Greek and Roman kind of like, statues and art and it was very flowing.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But if you look at these, like, medieval paintings, they're very sharp.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And they're very, like, geometric shapes and like, sharp angles and very like 2D, kind of flattened, like, perspectives. So sometimes, you can see like, both eyes, even though someone was like, looking to the right. And you see like the sharp angles, but they also used a lot of really nice gilding, which I appreciated.

Teresa: Yeah, they did. Yeah, that's—that's nice. Um, and so, these kinds of, like, geometric abstractions were often paintings of paintings of paintings, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: You weren't—people weren't really like, posing at this time because, again, what if Jesus sees you?

Travis: Yeah. And this also too, it's like, it wasn't so much about the art, so much as it was like, sharing religious iconography...

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: ... and just sharing the religion, right? 'Cause when I think about these, I think about them mostly as like prints in books, you know? Where we were now having, uh, like monks and religious figures copying text over and over again, so you wanted like, sharp lines, easily repeatable art instead of very stylistic, you know, specific art.

Teresa: Um, so, renaissance comes in, like a wave, and they're like, "you can't define what my painting is, Christianity."

Travis: Indeed.

Teresa: "I get to do what I want."

Travis: This is what I think about when I think about like, figure modeling, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I'm picturing, you know, like—

Teresa: Donatello's *David*.

Travis: Yeah. And I'm picturing the *Mona Lisa* and I'm picturing these, like, more about accurately capturing the human body in the sculpture, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Of, like, you could picture the sculpture stepping down, off the pedestal, like *Pygmalion*, right? Like, like now it is just— We have captured this moment in time. And I think to this day, there's a reason that we still, you know, for lack of a better word, idolize these sculptures because they're so realistic.

Teresa: Right. And I said Donatello's, but also Michaelangelo's *David* is...

Travis: Everybody was doing *David* back then.

Teresa: Everybody.

Travis: There was Steve's *David*, and Susan's *David*, and David's *David*, that was a weird one.

Teresa: That sounds weird.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, but it's lauded as like, the first atomically—wait a minute. Atomic?

Travis: Anatomically.

Teresa: Anatomically, there it is. Anatomically correct statue.

Travis: If it was atomically correct, that'd be amazing.

Teresa: [laughing] Oh, boy. Who needs more coffee? It's me! So, the final product of Michaelangelo's *David* is 17 feet tall.

Travis: Yeah. Can I tell you? I was like, two years ago old when I found that out.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: I just always pictured, like, a nice 6 foot tall David...

Teresa: Nope.

Travis: ... hanging out. And it wasn't until very recently, I was like, "Wait, it's what?"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "It's-a how big?" [laughs]

Teresa: But the proportions are right.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, so then, the depiction of the human form continued to be very influential within the baroque style—

Travis: And I can't wait to hear more about that, but you know what? Time for a thank you note.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Listen! Sometimes, I feel like cooking. But sometimes, you know, it's been a whole day, or I want to treat myself, or I just want to try something different that we haven't tried before, or I want to try one of my favorites, and that's where DoorDash comes into play.

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Janet: Hey! I'm Janet Varney, host of the JV Club podcast!

[school bell rings]

Janet: Ah, high school. Was it a time of adventure, romance, and discovery?

Student 1: Class of '95! We did it!

Janet: Or a time of angst, disappointment, and confusion?

Student 2: We're all tied together by four years of trauma at this place, but enjoy adulthood, I guess.

[students booing]

Janet: The truth is, it was both. So, join me on the JV Club podcast where I invite some great friends like Kristen Bell, Angela Kinsey, Oscar Nunez, Neil Patrick Harris, and Keegan-Michael Key, to talk about high school – the good, the bad, and everything in between.

Student 1: My teenage mood swings are getting harder to manage!

Janet: The JV Club. Find it on Maximum Fun!

[jingle plays]

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Travis: Okay, now. If it's not baroque—

Teresa: Then don't...?

Travis: Then I don't want to hear about it, so put—

Teresa: Don't fix it.

Travis: Oh, what? Oh, I get it.

Teresa: That's the joke.

Travis: 'Cause it sounds like "broke!" Oh, no, I was just gonna say we're talking about baroque stuff, but I like the way you said it.

Teresa: Aw, thanks.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, the baroque style swept through European art in the 17th century, and it was all about drama.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Okay? So, emotion, movement, colors, detail, and this is where people point to, as to be like, "Ah, realism." But I mean, not really. But you do see a lot of paintings of bowls of fruit at this time.

Travis: Okay. I don't know, don't knock it. There's some really beautiful bowls of fruit out there.

Teresa: Oh, yeah.

Travis: I think, I think it is a lot like—I mean, it's every art, right? "It's every art." Very, very smart way to say that, Travis. "It's art!"

Teresa: [imitating Travis] "It's art!"

Travis: Um, but it's that way of saying, like, it seems simple, until someone does it bad.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And then you're like, "Well, that's not it." [laughs] No, no, no, but like, that's the thing is like, I do think that there is something to be said about when a master paints a bowl of fruit, and you're like "Dang! I would eat them grapes right now!" You know what I mean?

Like, there's something about that and throughout art, throughout design of all forms, whether it's architecture or fashion or whatever, right? It's all about the pendulum swing. As you said, right?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: We go realism, we go surrealism, we go, you know, representative, we go all these things.

Teresa: Hyperrealism.

Travis: Right. And you have to have that kind of like, here's a bowl of fruit, before someone's like, "Yes, but I would like to not draw bowls of fruit anymore. I would like to draw people again, please." It's all about tastes and culture and the growth of the art.

Teresa: Right. And it keeps going in this way, um, and so what I wanted to talk about was the actual, like, modeling now.

Travis: Yes, please.

Teresa: Um, so Camille Claudel worked as Rodin's assistant and muse and art model.

Travis: Rodin who did *The Thinker*?

Teresa: Uh, yes.

Travis: I don't know why I said that like a question mark.

Teresa: Oh, okay. Okay. [laughs] And um—

Travis: Perhaps I might argue one of the most, if not famous, recognizable sculptures of all time, maybe right up there with *David*, where if you see somebody sitting and like, putting kind of their forehead to their fist, you're like "Ah! That one!"

Teresa: Um, and so, she was responsible for much of the detailing on Rodin's sculptures. Um, and her own works show a real eye for the portrayal of the human form. So, you can talk about how, you know, masculine and aggressive Rodin's sculptures seem to be, while Claudel's have a kind of, like, lightness and tenderness to them.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And got her own museum in 2017 in France, which is great.

Travis: Ooh! I'd like to have a museum.

Teresa: You would?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Would you put your own works or works of you in the museum?

Travis: No, I think I'd just put stuff I like in there. Mostly, there would probably be a room where it's just cartoons. And I don't just mean like, cells and stuff from cartoons; you'd just watch cartoons.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Maybe a room that's all me.

Teresa: With the advent photography...

Travis: Ooh, I've heard of that.

Teresa: A lot of like, the classical style sculpture that you see, either in, you know, bronze or in stone or things like that, start to wane a little bit because, you know. You can just take a picture, it'll last longer.

Travis: Not really, though. It won't last, I mean, it won't last longer than stone, really. I understand what you're saying, it'll last longer than looking, but if I made a statue out of metal or I took a picture, one of them, you're probably gonna have a hard time losing.

Teresa: Okay. So—

Travis: But I will say, real quick, I was gonna—I almost thought you were gonna say the opposite, right? Because one of the things that has always kind of impressed me before photography is the process that they must have had to go through of like, number of sketches and designs and everything of like, "Okay, sit there."

Because you couldn't have somebody pose for, you know, months, as you chipped away a 17 foot statue. You had to go through, uh, you know, preliminary designs, and then do miniatures, and then do, you know, whatever process you went through.

A wax version and then a larger version, right? And you would think that with the advent of photography, you'd be like, "Okay, stand still for one second. [imitates camera] Okay, great. You're done. You can go. I've got it from here.

Teresa: Well, okay. So we're gonna go through that a little bit. Um, if you happen to be taking a figure class, a live drawing class, um, make sure that

you have clearly communicated with the model about what their boundaries are and what you need for the class, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Some are comfortable nude, some would rather be in maybe like a leotard or something, right? Don't ask them if you can take a picture of them, because that's not what—okay. So, if you are working with someone to create a sculpture of them...

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: ... I can see why you would want to take a picture, but that's not the way that these life drawing classes work.

Travis: I guess that makes sense.

Teresa: Because it's more about honing the skills of looking at an object, drawing the object that you see.

Travis: I guess that's true. You know, now that I think about it, like I said, I—really, the closest approximation I have is architecture, but there is something about the 3D perspective, right?

About where you're sitting, and like, your exact perspective of this line versus this line and—okay. That makes a lot of sense. I just thought it'd be easier for the model, right? If you want to sit down, go to the bathroom.

Teresa: Uh, I mean. Yeah. And definitely there should be breaks and if you want to have a reference photo taken of your pose so you can remember, like, "Oh, one hand was one my hip but the other one wasn't and I was bending a little bit this way and tilting my head like this." That's—for your own, to help your own self—what am I saying?

Travis: Reference?

Teresa: Reference! Yeah.

Travis: It's too early. I miss doing *Shmanners* at night.

Teresa: [laugh]

Travis: That might be sillier, but at least I remember all the words. I couldn't remember "geometry" earlier!

Teresa: I know, man.

Travis: "Geometry!" It's my favorite -ometry!

Teresa: There are more -ometries?

Travis: There's a lot. Thermometry, um...

Teresa: What? [giggles] Okay. Uh, make sure that your model is paid.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Otherwise, that's, uh...

Travis: It's weird!

Teresa: Kind of weird.

Travis: It's ookie, as I think the kids would say in 1972. I would also make sure, and I think this is just maybe obvious, but I still think it needs said. Make sure the expectations of exactly what the process is going to be—

Teresa: Right, yeah, totally.

Travis: 'Cause I know, just me, if I'm going to do something new, uh, let alone nude, but something new, and I don't know what the process is? That is what anxiety is for me.

And also, just expectation setting, you know what I mean? I would hate to think, like, yes, it's a class of like, ten, probably, and I show up and there's like, a thousand students in there or something.

Teresa: Oh, yeah. Um, try not to talk to the model while they're working, obviously. Uh, it's very frustrating for everyone in the class, should a model break their concentration and move a lot. There is, obviously, going to be some movement.

People need to breathe and like, not build up lactic acid in their muscles. But, I mean, talking to someone is a surefire way to get them to move.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: So, when you set it up, the model will probably stand or sit in, like, the center of the room with people surrounding, so everyone gets a good view, an unobstructed view, I should say.

Travis: There you go.

Teresa: And there should probably be a moderator.

Travis: Yeah, that's what—a point person, yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, someone who keeps a timer so they can have stretch breaks and bathroom breaks, and it might also require them to help hold a pose. Like, if you want the model to pose with their arm up in the air, they might need someone to hold their arm up in the air.

Travis: Well, and I also think that having—we've talked about this before, right? Having an authority figure of some sort present for both parties, uh, as you said a moderator, that is also so the model is comfortable, but also the artists, you know what I mean?

Like, there's no assumption that the person that you hire is gonna, you know, make everybody comfortable and have that be a worry. There's always a worry that they, uh, I don't know, will do some things that aren't

great. Um, and having a moderator that the artists can go to, too, and say like, "Hey, this is not okay. This thing that they are currently doing right now..."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "... will also make everyone—" I think the more you could make people comfortable, every party involved, the more the art then moves to the forefront of it, right? And the less, the like anxieties and concerns and just general human thought processes can move to the back. And I think, in general, I've never done it, but either party.

But I think that the thing I would try really hard to do, is... [laughs] I mean, is a thing that we as a society should not do to people, but that is to objectify them, right?

Teresa: Absolutely, and please, draw what you see, draw in your style, but don't make comments on somebody else's body.

Travis: No, no, no. No caricatures, please. But, uh, I mean I guess some was—I don't know.

Teresa: That might be your style and that's okay, but like, no, like, giggling and stuff.

Travis: Yeah and let's be clear, when I say objectify, I don't mean in the broader sense of sexualizing or wolf-whistling, I mean literally, like, think of them in that moment as an object, right, that you are, uh—

You know, they still have feelings and don't get me wrong, but when you're looking at the lines, right, you're looking at the lines, you're looking at the shadows, you're looking at the contours, those kinds of things, and you're not looking at body parts, you're not thinking about those individual things, right?

You're thinking about the geometry of the body. You're thinking about the relation of light and shadow and that kind of thing. I don't know, I think that the more that you can separate...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: ... that, the more comfortable everyone will be.

Teresa: Yeah. And here's a very practical piece of advice for the model – bring a robe.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Do you think Airpods are okay? You know, little earbuds you can listen to, I don't know, a good *Shmanners* podcast while you're doing it?

Teresa: [laughs] I'm gonna say that's great. That sounds like a great idea.

Travis: I would say if you're the model, ask about that, man.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Because I—that's something I would totally do. Although, you have to be careful not to chuckle. Maybe listen to a good, quiet audiobook. Hey, we have some questions! Do you want to do some questions?

Teresa: I would love to!

Travis: Then let's do it! Why wait? It's the perfect moment for questions, everyone agrees. And, you know, it's not that I don't have the page pulled up.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's—no, I'm just saying that everybody loves questions and I'm ready to do them now. I mean, why hesitate any longer? Uh, Coral Jade asks, "How can I kindly ask my friend if I can draw the back of their head for reference without sounding nuts?"

Teresa: "Hey, friend! Can I draw the back of your head for reference?"

Travis: You should probably tell them what you're doing the reference for.

Teresa: Right, yeah. I think that was—

Travis: Not just like, "So if I ever see you in the crowd, I know it's you."

Teresa: So if I need the back of a head. I think that you can—the more that you explain the expectation, the better off you're gonna be, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, you talk about, "I'm doing an art class," or "I'm modeling some figurines, I need to see the back of someone's head." Because the front of people's heads, the faces, are usually what you can see.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right? Um, and hey, they're your friends, right?

Travis: Yeah, I think this—

Teresa: I don't—I think this is more about you feeling awkward asking than the ask being awkward.

Travis: Right and I think that this is something we've run into a lot before, too, right? In trying to couch it too much to try to make them comfortable, you might skew into sounding...

"Hey, I know this is gonna sound weird," like doing that kind of thing, instead of just saying, "hey, I need a reference point for, like, a back of the head drawing I'm doing for this thing, would you be willing to like, sit for me for a minute?" That makes them—now, they might say no, maybe they have some self-conscious things about the back of their head, who knows? And they might say no, but—

Teresa: And so, it's your— it's their prerogative to say no and try not to be upset or offended when they say no.

Travis: Uh, Fox Franklin asks, "The only time I've ever felt uncomfortable at work..."— they've modeled before— "... was this one student who would over-compliment me after time. How do I deal with that? I felt like if I complained, people would tell me he's just being nice and not care that I was upset about it."

Okay, here's what I will say as to the second point. That might happen, that does not mean they are right.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Um, they might be like, "Bah, it's just this." But you deserve to feel the way that you feel, especially when you are in the position of, like, being the model and you know, literally putting yourself out there to do this thing. The people in charge should be concerned about your comfort level.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So if there's something that makes you uncomfortable, they might say, like, "Well, he's just being nice." And then you say, like, "Well, that doesn't matter. When they say those things to me, here's how I feel and I would like it dealt with." You are totally justified asking that.

Teresa: Absolutely. And I think that this goes back to, um... we talked about having like, a moderator, right? And the way that the compliments make you feel is the important part.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: And you should state that to whoever is in charge, so that they can, um, protect you in a way. And it's not just about, like, telling the person, "Stop talking to this model," right? But also like, maybe ushering you away before class is over.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Or, you know, there are lots of different ways to take care of this, but you can take care of this.

Travis: And a nice general statement is always, "Hey, everybody, let's make sure we are not, you know, doing this." Instead of, like, "Jim. You gotta cut it out."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Because that's the thing, is like, it also—I mean, you can be specific about, I mean, you don't have to. Listen, this is— You don't have to do this, but if you want to be specific about, like, the nature of the compliment, like is there a difference between, "Hey, great job today!" and, like, "I thought you looked really great out there."

You know what I mean? Like, that kind of thing where I think that the trick—I mentioned the objectification thing earlier, and I think the trick is then shifting gears back into, "And now this is a person again."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right? And I think that, you know, you can't assume that everybody knows how to talk to people, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So, uh, talk to the moderator, talk to who's in charge, don't be afraid if somebody says, "Well, they're just being—" and then stand your

ground, and say, "I understand that they think that, but it is making me feel this way."

Uh, Cottage Gnome asks, "What are some red flags when it comes to nude modeling, and how can you make sure, as a model, that you're in a safe environment?"

Teresa: Um, I think that... a couple of things. Well, we talked about moderator. Um, also about proximity, right? Never go to a place where there are, like, no people around.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: It needs to be—you need to be far enough away from the person that you feel comfortable and if, you know, talk about all of the parameters beforehand.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Who's going to be there? How long is it gonna be? I don't want any photography and, you know, I need someone to be my advocate. Talk it, talk it, talk it, talk it through.

Travis: Yeah, expectation setting. And you know, I will also say, this is what I would tell any friend of mine, right, who was gonna do this. If you get a whiff of, "I'm not sure about this," don't do it.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: It's unfortunate that that is the world in which we live, but if you— not just like, I'm nervous to do this thing, right? That's understandable. But, I don't know, something feels unsafe about this? Don't do it.

I also think, like, I don't know, this could be an option if this is something. If you have like, a partner or like a friend that you trust and you don't mind being there, ask if somebody can come with you. Say like, "Okay, can I come see the space before, you know, we do it?" Like that kind of thing.

Like, anything to put you at ease. Ask if they've worked with models before that you can talk to about the experience and say like, "Hey, you know, I just want to get a feel for like, what I'm, you know, what kind of process it is. Would it be okay if I contacted some models who you've worked with before?" Right?

Teresa: Sounds great. Yeah, that's a great idea.

Travis: References for everybody is a great way to go. Uh, let's see. One last one from Torque Dad. "If a friend approached me and asked if I would model for them, and I found the picture to be very unflattering, but objectively of good quality, is there a way to ask for it not to be displayed?"

Teresa: Oh. [sigh] Hm. This is interesting. Because... obviously, you have a perception of yourself.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And you have the things maybe that you would like to change or don't feel good about and if you can, like, see this in your picture? That's something that is very, um... [sighs]

I mean, it's— it's about you, right? It's not about the picture. It's not about what the artist sees, it's about what you see. And I think that you would really have to, like—this is a toughy.

Travis: Well, here's—

Teresa: Search yourself.

Travis: Search yourself. Here's—

Teresa: And figure out if this unflatteringness is more important to you than the art, I guess?

Travis: Well, here's what I would say. If this is a concern... Here's what I understand, right? If it was a friend of mine, right, and we overlap a lot of social groups, I think if you are worried about something being displayed because other people in your, like, social circles will see it? That's a discussion that needs to be happening before you model.

Like, "I'm happy to model for you for like, a reference or for practice, but I don't know that I'm comfortable for this being displayed for our friends."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: You know? "Or like, my family when they come over to your house or whatever." I think that's perfectly reasonable. But I think that there is an expectation when someone agrees. Like, I have some photographer friends, right?

And I think that there is, uh, an expectation setting thing of like, this is a decision you have to make, and it sucks that it's part of it, but there will be people when you model for someone. There will be people who, especially if it's nude modeling, like photography or something, who will not be appreciative of it as an art form, but will be a little voyeuristic that that exists.

And unfortunately, that's just a caveat that I think one must consider when going into it, is that there's a chance these things will be displayed if you don't discuss it beforehand, and there's a chance that people you know will see it.

And so I think that that is a very valid and legitimate concern for someone to have.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And I think that that is part of the expectation setting to have before you start the process. Does that make sense?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay. Sometimes, I ramble a little bit.

Teresa: This is—but, this line is so tricky, right? Because you want to; in this question, it's posed that it's a friend approached, and you want to help out your friend, but maybe you have some hang-ups about the picture that they took.

Travis: Well, yeah, but I—

Teresa: Even though it's a good picture.

Travis: I have a friend who did nude modeling for a photographer, right? And then she walked into work and one of the guys at her work was like, looking at the photographer's website with her pictures on it. Right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And like, that was a thing, of just like—it sucks that that is part of it and it's like, well... that's one, completely unprofessional.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? To be doing that at work, uh, let alone at where you work with the person. But it's also just like, man, in a perfect world we could appreciate art for art's sake and not connect sex and nudity constantly.

But that is unfortunately the stigma and the world in which we live currently, and it's one of those things we just have to think about, and I think the same can be said with the stigma of nudity and vulnerability.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? And that is I think a thing that will happen, but I would also argue because this is a hypothetical, there is also the possibility that you do this, and you find a beauty in your body that you had not seen before, right?

Teresa: That's right, yeah.

Travis: You know, so, I mean, it's a possibility. But I think a lot of it is having that discussion ahead of time, you know?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Uh, so that's gonna do it for us. That's gonna do it, you're all great, we appreciate you. Thank you for being here. Um, thank you for listening. Welcome to art talk with—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: This is Shmart with Travis and Teresa. Thank you to Carson one more time for suggesting this, thank you to the people who sent in questions. Thank you to Alex for all the wonderful research. Alex, we could not do it without you.

Thank you Maximum Fun, our podcast home. Uh, thank you to... the other McElroys, my family, my friends. You can find all their projects at mcelroy.family. I started a Twitch channel, if that's something you guys are into, [Twitch.tv/thetravismcelroy](https://www.twitch.tv/thetravismcelroy). What else, Teresa? Who else do we thank?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "Brental Floss" Black for writing our theme music which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also, we thank Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art that is [@shmatterscast](https://twitter.com/shmatterscast). That's where we got all of these questions.

Um, and then we thank Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group Shmatters Fanners. Join that group if you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans of Shmatters.

Um, please continue to send in those topics. We are working our way through them, we've got a schedule now. Alex is keeping us honest.
[laughs]

Travis: And that's gonna do it for us, join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required!

Travis: You've been listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners, get it?

[theme music plays]

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