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## Instagram Suppresses Its #FineArtModel Hashtag, Penalizing Working Models and Erotic Content in One Fell Swoop

This is the latest snafu for the service as it treads the line between art and explicit content.

**Caroline Goldstein**, May 2, 2019

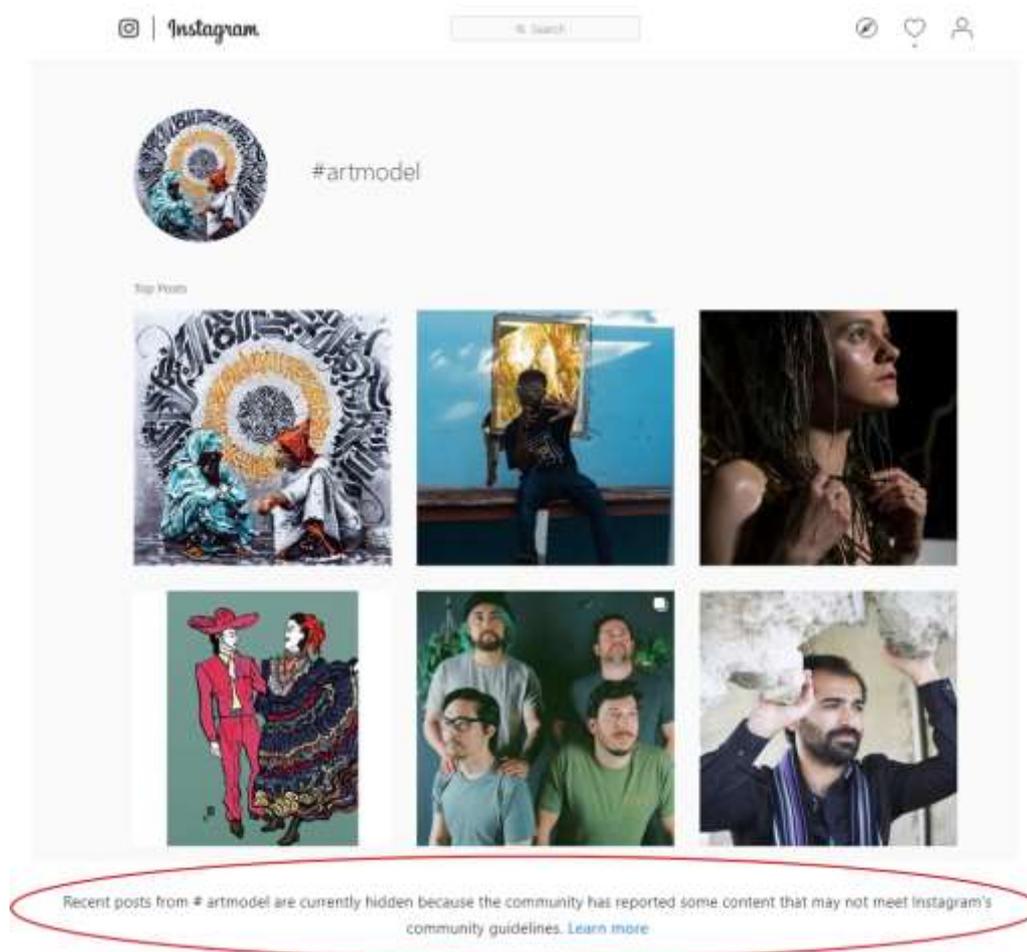


Will Cotton draws a model at his drawing party for the New York Academy of Art's "Take Home a Nude" auction. Courtesy New York Academy of Art.

This morning, Instagram curtailed the use of both the hashtags [#artmodel](#) and [#fineartmodel](#). Content posted using the two hashtags, often used by live figure drawing models to attract work via the social media platform, was hidden because “some content,” according to a message, did not “meet Instagram’s community guidelines.”

artnet News was alerted to the ban after visitors at Frieze tried to use the hashtag to accompany their friends and colleagues posing with the large-scale artworks on display—only to find their images removed from the regularly-updated feed of recent posts. One professional model posted to Instagram, calling the ban “fucking ridiculous.”

As of 3:30 pm EST, [#artmodel](#) had returned to normal, but [#fineartmodel](#) remained blocked. Currently, if you search for [#fineartmodel](#), you still get a sanitized block of images that are really just portraits, and have a slew of other hashtags attached to them. Only “Top Posts” are shown, while the chronological feed of “Recent Posts” is suppressed.



Screenshot of the ‘[#artmodel](#)’ search results, courtesy of Instagram.

Instagram did not immediately respond to a press request asking for information about the ban.

“We know that there are times when people might want to share nude images that are artistic or creative in nature, but for a variety of reasons, we don’t allow nudity on Instagram,” the app’s Community Guidelines state. It lists “photos, videos, and some digitally-created content that show sexual intercourse, genitals, and close-ups of fully-nude buttocks” as taboo, as well as any post that offers “sexual services” or “sexual content involving minors.”

The dust-up points to a larger issue of how much power Instagram has to determine what is, and isn’t, permissible expression. (After advocates campaigned for months, Instagram and Facebook also banned far-right extremists Alex Jones, Laura Loomer, and others from the platforms today as part of its ongoing effort to remove disinformation.)

For all the good it does emerging artists and galleries looking to get noticed on the internet, Instagram doesn’t have the best track record when it comes to policing sensitive content, or dealing with images that could be taken out of context.

Earlier this week, ARTnews reported that artist Betty Tompkins was booted from the platform for posting an image of an exhibition catalogue opened to the page that shows her 1969 painting *Fuck Painting #1*, a photo-realist work that depicts the moment of penetration. According to Tompkins, after she posted the photo, Instagram removed it, and so she later posted the catalogue essay accompanying the painting, which prompted the website to deactivate her account, @bettytompkinsart.

The artist petitioned to have her account reinstated, and many supporters within the art community followed suit, including her gallerist Rodolphe Janssen, who encouraged everyone to contact Instagram on Tompkins’s behalf. Now, the artist is back on the ‘gram, but her experience serves as a reminder that there are limits to the creative license that Facebook and its subsidiaries allow.

