

WORK

LIFE

A ONE-DAY DIARY FROM FLAT
WHITE TO LIGHTS OUTMeg Foster,
Life Model*Meg, 26, is a life drawing model who poses nude at art classes in London and beyond. She lives in Harringay with her partner***I'M AWAKE MOST MORNINGS BY 9AM.**

I'll shower, then make breakfast – usually a fried egg sandwich. My modelling work is typically in the evenings, so I'll take the morning slow, replying to emails and organising tickets for the classes I put on myself. In the afternoon, I'll practise poses – sometimes I search for ideas online, other times I'll just look in the mirror to test out how a pose looks and how long I can hold it for. The best ones are interesting to draw from lots of different angles.

I STARTED LIFE MODELLING BY CHANCE.

My friend asked me to model for a virtual class they were organising during lockdown, so I gave it a whirl and started doing more digital events from there. When it was all virtual, the most alien part was sitting in silence for so long, but my first in-person class two years ago was scary. It was mostly uncomfortable in a very physical way. I was worrying: do my armpits smell? Am I going to fart? At the same time, it was exhilarating – I fell in love with the freeing feeling it gave me. Now, life modelling is my full-time job. I do three to four classes per week at universities, schools and social classes.

PEOPLE TELL ME I'M THE FIRST FAT PERSON THEY'VE EVER DRAWN.

Even though, historically, fat women have always been present in art, there aren't many people like me in art spaces right now. I think that's because life drawing has all the same systemic problems as the wider world. But the thing is, all kinds of people exist, so all kinds of people should be reflected in art. It's as simple as that.

BEFORE MODELLING, I WOULD NEVER HAVE GONE TO A NUDIST BEACH.

It's completely changed my attitude to nudity. I wasn't a naked person before, but now I find it liberating. It's normal to be nude: what's weird is the fact that we only ever see women's nudity in a sexual context. Life modelling helps remove the idea that the fewer clothes I'm wearing, the more provocative I'm being.

I'LL CHANGE INTO A ROBE BEFORE THE CLASS STARTS.

Sessions usually begin at 7pm, with up to 30 people arranged in a circle or U-shape around me. After I walk in and take my robe

STYLIST
LOVE
WOMENDESPITE INITIAL FEARS,
MEG FINDS IT LIBERATING
TO POSE NUDE

off, I'm told how long a pose should be – between two minutes and one and a half hours, depending on the class. The longest pose was three hours for a sculpture class, resting on my wrist. It was the hardest thing I've ever done. I got through it with determination and Deep Heat. You can never be completely still, but I try to limit my movements (aside from the odd stretch break) to make it easier to draw me.

IT'S FUN TO SEE HOW OTHER PEOPLE INTERPRET ME.

Lots of people get into life modelling because they don't

have a good relationship with their body, and I can understand how seeing yourself reflected in these beautiful artworks could help heal that. I've got a little shrine to myself in my house – sketches, sculptures and embroideries that people have given to me after classes. I do have a good relationship with my body, but it's still so nice to see myself through other people's eyes.

AFTER WORK, I'LL GET THE TRAIN HOME.

Then I'll make dinner – I love pasta – and check Instagram. My account (@fatmeglifemodel) usually gets tagged in lots of posts after a class, so I'll make sure I reshare anything I need to. Before bed, I'll watch TV (right now, my partner and I are loving *The Last Of Us*) and will be asleep by 11pm.

To book life drawing classes hosted by Meg, head to Instagram @crouchendlifedrawing

**My Plan B:
Gallery
assistant**

At an art centre I model at, there's a lady who works three days, quietly paying invoices and answering emails. I want that life.