

STRIKE A POSE

App lets artists pose and light virtual models for reference

You've watched way more television than you ever wanted. You've walked around the neighborhood so many times the neighbors think you're casing their houses. You've had enough of social media, cleaning your house, board games and all the other activities you've been filling your time with during the great pandemic. What's left to do?

A good way to fill time that will make you feel good about yourself is to start creating things. Writing, sewing and crafting are all good pursuits. Being a visual artist, I'm hoping to increase my output of drawing, painting and sculpting.



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InSites

The website I'm featuring this week, **webapp.magicposer.com**, is a terrific resource for artists who want to draw the human figure. The site is free to use and also there's a free app available for Apple and Android devices.

Anyone who has ever attempted to draw people knows that they are one of the most challenging subjects. Besides the difficulty in rendering the figure well is the challenge of getting good reference material to work with. Live models are the best choice, but the time, logistics and expense involved don't always make them practical. Photo references can be useful, but there are drawbacks to using them exclusively. Cameras distort reality, it can be hard to find the pose you want, lighting is often an issue, and two-

dimensions don't give you as much information as three. Of course there's always the mirror, but that limits your choice of models and point of view.

Magic Poser is helpful because it allows you to control many aspects of posing and lighting. You can position one or more models in a scene in any poses you like. You can select any of the joints on a model and bend it into the position you want. The figures can be moved or rotated in three dimensions. And you can rotate the entire scene so that it can be viewed from any angle, including above and below.

In addition to figures you can add geometries, which are simple shapes such as spheres, cubes, cylinders, etc. You can combine multiple simple shapes to create more complex structures.

The lighting controls are limited but still very useful. You can control the direction and intensity of a single light source. The app also displays the cast shadows which can be very helpful.

The app has some features the site lacks. It has more props and you can purchase additional figures, more complex props, clothing and other assets to make your scenes more complete. Neither allows you to change facial expressions or study textures and folds in clothing. Also, you can't add more lights for complex lighting.

Magic Poser is a great tool for artists. It won't solve all your problems, but it's definitely worth using, especially since it's free.

KEVIN O'NEILL is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite websites and apps with him at koneill@timeshamrock.com.

