

Model Citizens

By Olivia Belluck



We begin at the end of the High Renaissance. Most of the great Italian masters have passed on and artistic styles are changing, leaving a community of Venetian artists and their models suddenly faced with changing standards of beauty and artistic tastes. Struggling artist Vito wants to be acknowledged for the master he is, long-time model Fil wonders if there's still a place in art for women who look like her, frustrated Stella struggles to pave the way for female artists, and new girl Alma looks for the community she's always wanted.

Model Citizens is an hour-long period dramedy. The satire of *The Great* and the messaging of *Shrill*, *Medici* but what if they were as dysfunctional as the ladies of *GLOW*.





You are about to enter an artist's workshop in 1520 Venice. Busy and bustling with the sole purpose of pumping out paintings for Europe's rich and famous. Too preoccupied with being considered the center of Renaissance art, Venetians have lost sight of real art is and whose beauty can be part of that.

You are about to notice that the people in these paintings are changing. Old yet inexplicably muscular men becoming young Adonises, women with back fat and cellulite turning into boney, eerily smooth girls. But nothing about Venetians is actually changing, just the people they choose to memorialize.



Times are changing. What does that mean for the men and women who have been in the spotlight for decades? Are they any less beautiful? Do they not deserve to be loved and to be looked at?

Vito's Workshop



The Show

Structure

Model Citizens takes place primarily in 1520 however each episode will also tell a different character's story through flashbacks and memories à la *Orange Is The New Black*.

Style

The visual style will feel like that of a painting – vibrant colors and highly detailed set design.

Like *The Great*, our characters will speak in English with slightly stylized language so it feels old but still understandable.

Themes

- Family
- Love
- Body Positivity
- Female Friendships
- Identity
- Ambition



Characters



Vittorino di Vitaliano di Ser Valerio "Vito" (M/45)

The oldest son of a wealthy merchant, Vito has known what he wanted to do since he was 10 – become the greatest painter the world has ever known. But a lifetime of being upstaged by rival Titian and being seen as an ambitious fool by Venice's artistic community has made him bitter, bratty, but just as ambitious. He knows there is greatness within him, he just needs to find a way to show the world.

Filomena "Fil" (F/22)

Born into a poor Venetian family, Fil has always been a survivor. As a child, she would scavenge around the city for food, which is how she wound up in an artists' workshop and got her first modeling job. Now a seasoned model, she is very aware that times are changing and so are people's tastes. She's not quite sure how much longer her body will be "in fashion," and must face a new reality where she is no longer the ideal.

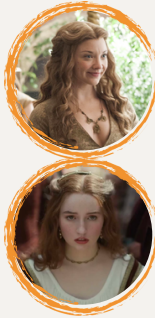


Titian (M/30)

Titian started out as one of Giovanni Bellini's apprentices but his natural talent quickly established him as one of the greatest painters of the Renaissance. He's egotistical and condescending, yet has always had the talent to back himself up. But a lifetime of esteem has also put a great deal of pressure on him to be the best painter in history, with anything less being considered a failure.



Characters

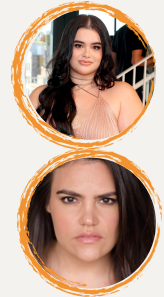
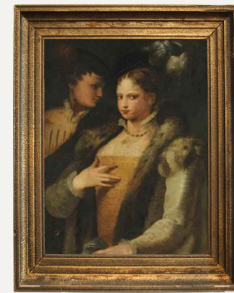


Alma (F/18)

Alma is the daughter of a wealthy noble family, but unlike Vito, she has never had the chance to plan out her own destiny. After her father arranged for her to marry a prince, she took that as a sign to find a higher purpose in life than being a wife and mother. So she hopped on a ship, looking for a life for herself. Maybe she'll find it in Vito's workshop.

Stella (F/20)

Fil's best friend, Stella has big dreams to break into the Venetian art world as a female painter. Stella's father and brothers are all artists themselves, and she has always dreamed of having her own workshop where she can train other female artists. Stella followed Fil to Vito's workshop to work as a model, but she has her own agenda – to convince Vito to take her on as an apprentice.

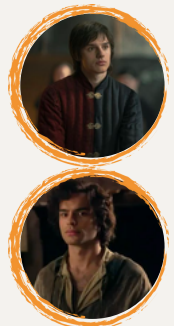


Giulia (F/20)

Born on a small farm in the countryside, Giulia followed a seemingly wealthy merchant to Venice. He ended up being a con artist who stole her savings, but she eventually landed on her feet in Vito's workshop. A bit of a dunce and naively optimistic, Giulia has a tendency to fall in love with every man she sees which is a great source of stress for her brother, Emilio.

Emilio (M/19)

When Giulia left the farm, Emilio followed her. Not because he cared or was worried, but to say 'I told you so' when her plans inevitably blew up in her face. He didn't expect to meet Vito or become the token male model in his workshop or fall madly in love with him. While Giulia is a ray of sunshine and a friendly face, Emilio takes himself too seriously and loves to prove that he's the smartest one in the room.



Characters

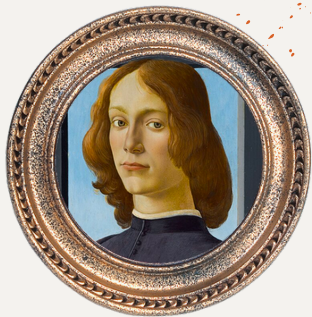


Hadi (M/25)

Next door to Vito's workshop is a small hot shop, run by the stoic and perpetually grumpy Hadi. Half Turkish and half Italian, Hadi's father left mysteriously for Turkey and never returned, leaving him to be raised in poverty by his mother. Now Hadi lives alone, producing metal and glass decorations for Venice's wealthy while pining desperately after Fil.

Lord Marcantonio Michiel (M/30)

Marcantonio Michiel was a Venetian noble and one of the greatest art historians of the time. Much of what we know about Renaissance art is from his journals and personal notes, and in this story, he is also the last hope for Vito and his workshop. A timid hopeless romantic, all Marcantonio wants is to restore his family's reputation and to impress his wife Maffea.



Silvio di Vitaliano di Ser Valerio (M/42)

Silvio is Vito's stern and bitter younger brother. While Vito received their father's full emotional and financial support in his art career, it left Silvio to become the heir to their father's printing empire. Silvio loves having that chance to prove himself, but part of him wishes he could have had the same preferential treatment as his brother. Silvio has an obvious distaste for Vito's excessive spending of their father's hard-earned money, but deep down he loves his brother deeply and longs for a day when they can be close.

Maffea Michiel (née Soranzo) (F/25)

Marcantonio's wife and a member of the great Soranzo family of Venice. Their father's arranged for their marriage when they were children, and while she always saw him as a sweet and shy boy, she was taught that noble matches are out of duty not love. She has been training for wifehood her whole life, finding small respites in art and books, convinced that she is destined for a loveless marriage like her ancestors.



Season 1

1. Women Can't Look Through Windows

After his rival is named the undisputed master of art in Venice, a struggling painter must find a commission that will earn him the respect he deserves. Meanwhile, a band of misfit models try to welcome a new addition to their workshop and a new lord must find a way to win over his betrothed.

2. Mercury, Mollusks, Mummies

After being hired by Marcantonio to renovate his palazzo, Vito must acquire art supplies worthy of a Venetian lord. He shows Stella the not-so-glamorous world of Renaissance paint mixing but hits a snag when Stella insists that they can't use paints from questionable materials like mummies (that's real, Google it). Meanwhile, Fil teaches Alma the art of modeling.

3. Rompicoglioni

Vito gets into a feud with the construction workers Marcantonio hired after they damaged some canvases. Giulia gets overwhelmed when the workers start flirting with her and Fil finds herself competing with Alma for space in the paintings.

4. Hephaestus and Aglaea

Marcantonio decides to take Maffea away to the Alps for their anniversary, but things go awry when they are stranded in a cottage. Alma drags the other models to a festival but tensions rise when she is recognized by someone from home. Stella starts a new series of paintings based on Fil and Hadi.

5. Venus Erycina

Emilio discovers that the Doge of Venice is part of an underground sex society, but becomes wrapped up in its world of corruption and debauchery. Stella and Vito continue to clash over technique while Fil and Alma band together to save Giulia from a polygamy colony.

6. Narcissus Blooms

Alma's family and fiancé finally locate her in Venice and try to tempt her home with a lavish ball. Vito and the models prepare for their first formal run-in with Italy's elite while trying to ruin Alma's engagement.

7. So That You Might Hear Me

Hadi admits to Fil that he is in love with her. Though she feels the same, she worries that being with him would mark the end of her career and rejects him. Emilio's relationship with the Doge escalates but he is still holding out for Vito's affection. Stella becomes furious when Vito paints over her work.

8. The Desolation That You Have Made

With the palazzo nearly complete and already attracting the attention of Venice's nobles, Titian tries to tempt Stella to his workshop in order to compete. After numerous failed attempts to win over Maffea, Marcantonio asks Fil to help make her jealous, eliciting mixed responses from Maffea and Hadi.

9. His Giant Wings

Behind schedule, Vito must find a way to finish the palazzo without Stella. Alma tries to get passage out of Venice to escape her marriage and Fil contemplates her future after the palazzo. Marcantonio successfully repairs his marriage with Maffea just as Titian, under pressure to preserve his legacy, sets fire to the palazzo. Silvio charges into the flames, attempting to save his brother's greatest work but perishes in the fire.

10. Objet Petit A

With the palazzo destroyed and Silvio dead, Vito must decide to keep the workshop open or join his father's business. Fil realizes that a relationship with Hadi is worth more than anything else, but discovers that he has set sail for Turkey. Alma's family forces her to return for her wedding.

Seasons 2

Season 2 picks up after the fire. With Silvio dead, Vito's father pressures him to leave the workshop and take over the family printing business. Titian reluctantly asks Vito to assist in printing his own work in order to compete with hot new artist Albrecht Dürer. Vito agrees if only to prove that art is still a viable career for himself, but doesn't expect him and Titian to get along so well. Stella gets Marcantonio to fund her own studio but faces pushback from Venice's old-fashioned, sexist art community. Fil, feeling abandoned by Hadi and that her time as a model has come to an end, agrees to leave Venice with Alma and join her court. Their friendship grows as Alma prepares to marry a practical stranger, while Hadi returns with the half-brother he never knew he had, only to find out that Fil has left Venice forever. Season 2 ends after Fil and Hadi help Alma escape back to Venice. Meanwhile, Titian and Vito's budding romance is ruined when Vito learns the truth about the fire.



Seasons 3

Vito restarts his war against Titian for killing his brother, but can't help the feelings that he still has for him. Fil and Hadi settle into pseudo-parenthood with his half-brother, but conservative society frowns upon their budding relationship and Fil's unmarried status. Stella and Emilio's workshop is thriving but with the influx of commissions, Stella must look for an apprentice. Alma capitalizes on her newfound freedom by exploring her own sexuality but finds herself caught in a love triangle.

Future Seasons

- Vito and Titian must decide the future of their enterprise and their relationship, but is there just too much bad blood between them?
- After establishing their workshop in Venice, Stella and Emilio set their sights on a bigger prize: earning a commission in Rome.
- Fil and Hadi's relationship, and their unborn child, are jeopardized as the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire approach a war of their own.
- Giulia falls in love with Marcantonio's assistant but feels pressure to change herself to fit in with Venetian high society.
- After deciding to abandon love, Alma searches for a job but finds her options as a woman wildly restrictive.