

= Jerry 's Painting =

" Jerry 's Painting " is the eleventh episode of the American comedy television series Parks and Recreation 's third season , and the 41st overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on April 28 , 2011 . In the episode , Jerry creates a painting of a topless Greek goddess that resembles Leslie , and Leslie tries to protect it from a conservative activist who wants it banned . Meanwhile , Ben moves in with Andy and April , then tries to teach them how to live like adults .

The episode was written by Norm Hiscock and directed by Dean Holland . The original broadcast ran 10 minutes longer than usual because it followed an extended episode of The Office , which featured the last appearance by lead actor Steve Carell . " Jerry 's Painting " featured appearances by recurring guest stars Darlene Hunt as activist Marcia Langman , and Jay Jackson as reporter Perd Hapley . Mara Marini also portrayed Brandi Maxxxx , a porn star who publicly defends the painting .

Nielsen ratings were expected to be high for " Jerry 's Painting " due to the lead @-@ in from The Office . However , it was only seen by an estimated 4 @.@ 71 million household viewers , a drop from the previous episode , " Soulmates " . The episode received generally positive reviews .

= = Plot = =

Leslie (Amy Poehler) feels powerless at work because a policy by Chris (Rob Lowe) forbidding workplace romances is preventing her from dating Ben (Adam Scott) . Meanwhile , now that he is staying in Pawnee permanently , Ben decides to move out of the motel where he has been living . Andy (Chris Pratt) and April (Aubrey Plaza) offer him a spare room in their house , since their previous roommate moved out and left the house to them . Although the two have been living by themselves for only a week , the house is a complete mess with no everyday items like plates or utensils available . Ben decides to teach a reluctant Andy and April how to properly live like adults .

Meanwhile , the parks employees attend an art show exhibiting paintings that will later be hung in government buildings . Jerry (Jim O 'Heir) displays his painting of the fictional topless centaur Greek goddess Diaphena , which looks exactly like Leslie . Jerry explains he subconsciously painted Leslie while thinking about powerful women . Instead of being embarrassed , Leslie feels empowered by the painting . Tom , however , is humiliated because a pot @-@ bellied cherub in the painting shares his likeness . The next day , local conservative activist Marcia Langman (Darlene Hunt) compares the painting to bestiality , deems it unsuitable for a government setting and demands it be destroyed .

Leslie goes on the news program " Ya ' Heard ? with Perd " to rouse public support for the painting by portraying it as a depiction of a powerful woman . However , she is undermined when reporter Perd Hapley (Jay Jackson) also has on pornographic film actress Brandi Maxxxx (Mara Marini) , who defends the painting by comparing it to pornography . Chris convenes a meeting of the Pawnee Public Arts Commission to rule on whether the painting is acceptable . Despite Leslie 's eloquent defense , the commission fears the nudity is offensive and decides to destroy it instead of risking public backlash . Leslie instead steals the painting and runs away . Meanwhile , after cleaning up around the house , Ben gives Andy and April money to buy common household items . Although they almost waste their money on frivolous items , Andy insists they need to take Ben 's advice . April admits she is afraid of growing up because she does not want them to lose their unique personalities , but Andy assures her they will not change .

Chris angrily demands Leslie bring the painting to city hall the next day to be destroyed . When Leslie reluctantly agrees to do so , Jerry expresses disappointment that she would give up so easily . Feeling empowered again , Leslie asks Jerry to quickly paint another , similar painting , only this time with Tom as the centaur . Leslie tells Marcia the new painting is the original one but painted over . With no more nudity in the painting , a frustrated Marcia gives up her quest to have the painting destroyed . Tom is delighted with the painting until he realizes that Jerry forgot to draw a penis on the centaur . Ben later confides to Andy he likes Leslie but is unable to ask her out

because of Chris , but Andy tells him if they truly care about each other , then it will eventually happen .

= = Production = =

" Jerry 's Painting " was written by Norm Hiscock and directed by Dean Holland . During its original broadcast , the episode ran for an extended 40 minutes rather than the usual 30 minutes . The extra time was due to an extended episode of The Office that ran before Parks and Recreation : " Goodbye , Michael " , which featured the final appearance of Steve Carell as a regular cast member playing Michael Scott . " Jerry 's Painting " featured a guest appearance by Darlene Hunt as Marcia Langman , a member of the conservative group the Society for Family Stability Foundation . Hunt 's character has previously appeared in past Parks and Recreation episodes to object to Leslie 's actions : in the second season premiere " Pawnee Zoo " she condemned Leslie 's same @-@ sex wedding ceremony of two male penguins , and in the third season episode " Time Capsule " she argued against Leslie including the novel Twilight in a Pawnee time capsule because she felt it was anti @-@ Christian . " Jerry 's Painting " also featured Jay Jackson in his recurring role as Pawnee journalist Perd Hapley , and Mara Marini as Hapley 's guest , porn star Brandi Maxxxx .

= = Cultural references = =

During one scene at the art show , a character named Orin stands in front of a blank canvas and stares straight ahead without moving . This style of art exhibition is similar to that of Marina Abramovi? , a Yugoslavian performance artist who sits or stands silently and immobile at some of her art exhibits . After seeing herself as a goddess in Jerry 's painting , Leslie starts responding when people nickname her Aphrodite , the Greek goddess of love , beauty and sexuality . While speaking to Ben , Tom describes his seduction ritual with women as turning the lights off with the Clapper , a sound @-@ activated electrical light switch , and then putting on music by Boyz II Men , an R & B vocal group . This was previously demonstrated in the second @-@ season finale " Freddy Spaghetti " , when the group 's song " On Bended Knee " was playing while Tom has his girlfriend at his apartment .

While stressing over Chris ' policy of not dating co @-@ workers , Ann offers to help Leslie relax by getting her a prescription for Paxil , an antidepressant drug . Ben gives Andy and April cash and instructs them to buy home products at Bed Bath & Beyond , a chain of domestic merchandise retail stores . While there , Andy and April instead start to purchase several " as seen on TV " items , including Shake Weight dumbbells , Slap Chop kitchen gadgets and a Marshmallow Shooter . During the arts commission meeting , Tom describes himself as a " small , slender man " similar to actor Taye Diggs . In a different scene , Tom expresses anger that Jerry 's painting is " killing the Jay @-@ Z vibe " he has long been cultivating , a reference to the hip hop artist .

= = Reception = =

= = Ratings = = =

Nielsen ratings were expected to be high for " Jerry 's Painting " due to a lead @-@ in from Steve Carell 's final episode as a regular cast member on The Office . However , in its original American broadcast , the Parks and Recreation episode was seen by an estimated 4 @.@ 71 million household viewers . This constituted a drop from the previous episode , " Soulmates " , which was seen by 4 @.@ 88 million households . " Jerry 's Painting " received a 2 @.@ 8 rating / 4 share among all viewers and a 2 @.@ 3 rating / 6 share among viewers between ages 18 and 49 . A rating point represents one percent of the total number of television sets in American households , and a share means the percentage of television sets in use tuned to the program . In its 10 p.m. timeslot , " Jerry 's Painting " was outperformed by the CBS police procedural drama The Mentalist ,

which was seen by 13 @.@ 1 million household viewers , and the ABC medical drama Private Practice , which was seen by 6 @.@ 33 million household viewers .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Jerry 's Painting " received generally positive reviews . Entertainment Weekly writer Hillary Busis called the episode " one that may just have been the season 's best ? and that ? s saying something when a show is as consistent as this one " . She called the main plotline about the painting " brilliant " and said the subplot with Ben , April and Andy was so funny she hoped they had more pairings in the future . Nick McHatton of TV Fanatic called " Jerry 's Painting " one of the strongest episodes of the season , and said he enjoyed seeing Leslie 's character so empowered . McHatton also praised seeing April and Andy facing adulthood , writing , " It 's something many of us young adults go through and it was nice to see it reflected " in the characters . Scott Meslow of The Atlantic said the show demonstrated how Leslie Knope has developed into a strong and confident character since the " daffy , wide @-@ eyed dreamer " she was in the first season . He also praised the show 's " new funniest pairing " of Ben , April and Andy , and said the episode demonstrated that " even this late in the season , the show can still feel surprising and fresh " .

New York magazine writer Steve Kendell said " Jerry 's Painting " was an excellent episode , and that he appreciated seeing Leslie portrayed in a sexier and more confident way than previous episodes had . Joel Keller of TV Squad said the main story with Leslie was funny , but the subplot was even better . He said it showcased the deadpan comedic talents of Adam Scott , and that April and Andy continue to be an excellent pairing . The A.V. Club writer Claire Zulkey called the episode " a pretty simple episode that got funnier and more quotable as the episode rolled on " . She particularly praised Adam Scott 's performance , but said she did not look forward to the romantic pairing of Scott and Amy Poehler because she feels they lack chemistry . Alan Sepinwall of HitFix said the episode featured great scenes about government inaction and the way small @-@ time media can make a frenzy out of any minor thing . He also praised the subplot with April and Andy , which he said demonstrated how the two characters getting married hasn 't at all changed who they are .

Eric Sundermann of Hollywood.com complimented the writers , who he said are able to make consistently strong episodes because they seem to have a perfect understanding of their characters . He also said " Jerry 's Painting " proved Ben 's character has comedic potential beyond being Leslie 's romantic interest . Zap2it writer Rick Porter said it was not the best of the season , but still " a very solid half @-@ hour of comedy " and that " the show 's batting average this season is remarkably high " . While Porter praised the main story , he said he found the subplot less entertaining , and did not believe April 's character would have acted the way she did or lived in such filthy conditions . Not all reviews were positive . Matt Fowler of IGN said the idea of Jerry subconsciously painting Leslie and Tom was " a bit too absurd " , and that the episode did not feature enough of Ron Swanson . Fowler also said he did not enjoy seeing the normally positive Chris taking on an authoritarian role .