“shape, appearance.” Literally, this idiom is “pretend mold affect appearance.”

When you say someone “裝模作樣” (zhuang1 mo2 zuo4 yang4), you are accusing the person of “putting on airs,” “assuming airs” or “putting on a show.” “Feign” and “fake” are words that carry similar meaning as the characters “裝” (zhuang1) and “作” (zuo4) in the idiom. The term “模樣” (mo2 yang4) means appearance. “裝模作樣,” therefore, also means to give a false appearance.

“Crocodile tears” (鱷魚眼淚) are insincere tears. Shedding crocodile tears means a hypocritical show of sorrow (假慈悲). People who act like that can definitely be said to be “裝模作樣” (zhuang1 mo2 zuo4 yang4).

Terms containing the character “裝” (zhuang1) include:

- 假裝 (jia3 zhuang1) - disguise, simulate
- 包裝 (bao1 zhuang1) - packaging, to pack
- 服裝 (fu2 zhuang1) - clothing, attire
- 裝扮 (zhuang1 ban4) - to dress up