

MODEL CROSSOVER



BY RACHEL GALPERIN

They're undoubtedly beautiful. Their faces are planted on every poster and advertisement nationwide. They travel around the world to walk down runways or shoot campaigns in the desert, just for our viewing pleasure. It seems like a lifestyle that you or I could only dream of having. But models have a short shelf life and when that life span ends, most find themselves scrambling to find some sort of meaning and new direction in their lives. Much like Hollywood, the modeling industry is full of illusions, smoke, and mirrors.

If we were to pay attention, we would find out that all models have diverse interests and passions. This series of articles shifts the focus on the perceptions we typically associate with models, bringing into view their true characters, lifestyles and career goals.

LINDA VOJTOVA

JEWELRY DESIGNER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICHOLAS ONG

In our first model crossover, we sat down with Prague-born Linda Vojtova at The GROUND Magazine office, and guess what? Linda loves all of the above-mentioned activities.

Walking runways and appearing on the cover of magazines before she was legally allowed to drink, her lifestyle did not allow much room to explore interests, take classes, or discover new ideas. Now, after almost 11 years of modeling, she's still searching for what brings her the most joy in life and discovering her true passions by focusing on new projects. She started a jewelry line aptly titled Love Linda Vojtova, has had a 10-year retrospective celebrating her career in the industry, and has continued to be involved with her biggest passion: charity work.

You've been modeling a long time now, about 10 years right?

Almost 11. I love it. I didn't at first. I think you have to grow into it. I feel like when I was much younger, nobody really cared about my opinion. And I was 16, why would they? But as you grow up, you realize that you have something to offer to people. You're in the world and everybody is like "you're beautiful" and you're this and that. But you're 17 years old, thinking "I don't get it. Why can't I just be home and just go out and get drunk and do crazy things that teenagers do?"

And you can't because you're in the public eye.

Yes, but you don't get this feeling as much when you're a little older and that you fully under-

stand what your role is in your job, and what you can actually do for others.

Tell me about your new jewelry line.

It's coming out in October; it's a new line from a company called Gitanjali, which made a line called Love Universe. All my life I've loved dogs and I've done a lot of charitable work for dog shelters, so I wanted to create a line for people who love their dogs and want to have their dog with them all the time [by using] pieces that don't scream "dog" when you look at somebody who's wearing it.

You had the launch party in Las Vegas this past June, right?

Yes, it was in June. We had Rosario Dawson host the event. She's part of the Love Pledge, which is part of a movement that Love Universe is doing. You donate 1 percent of your annual income and 1 percent of your annual time. You don't need to sign a contract. If you want to do it, you do it. According to numbers, by 2020 if half the world does it, it will be the largest charitable movement in the world ever.

Wow! What charities do you work with?

I work a lot with Sunflower Children, which is my best friend's charity. I know Helena [Houdova, former model and founder of Sunflower Children] from when she first started. I was looking up to her and thinking what an amazing person she is. We ended up meeting and then

lived together in New York. When I did my 10-year anniversary exhibition, the proceeds went to her charity. Her charity is one of the biggest that I support.

Going back to the jewelry line, are you very "hands on" with it?

Completely. I actually take jewelry classes and made this ring myself. I wanted to understand the process of how all the jewelry gets made and how stones look with each metal. I really believe that you have to try everything, because if you don't try you'll never know if you like it. Before, I was really afraid of trying things because I didn't know if I would be good at it. I had never done anything besides modeling. I started so young. And it's kind of nice to start new things, and you'll probably fail a few times but something great will come out of it.

You had a reception for celebrating your 10 years in fashion, "Love Linda". Can you tell me about that?

You know, when you say you're doing a show about one person, it's tough because it can end up being kind of boring, but this ended up being great because every picture was so different. It was really showing the talent of each photographer. We got some amazing names in the photography world! The interesting thing is that all twenty of them did something completely different. They just had me as subject, and some did super crazy things. Like Anthony Maule had me in this one dress looking super robotic, but then somebody else shot me with a super natural look.



Talking about love and projects, do you see yourself continuing with this charity work, continuing modeling, or both?

I'll definitely continue modeling until I don't enjoy it anymore. I want to find more passions and do as much as I can to make myself busy. I was always struggling with what I wanted to be. What do I want to do? Well, maybe I'll know when I'm 22 or something. So then I hit 22 and I said, maybe I'll know when I'm 24. And at 24 I still didn't know. And I think if you keep thinking like that you'll never get anywhere. So, do I know what I really want to do one day? No. And unless I try things, I won't know. I want to take different classes. It happens that you have lots of days off when you're a model and it's so easy to just turn on the TV on and watch it all day. But I would like to spend the time I have to just do and learn different things, like cooking or working on my poetry skills.

You seem to keep yourself quite busy! Do you get any vacations sometimes?

I love to travel. Actually, I'm leaving tomorrow! We're going to Turkey and we're going to be sailing to Greece. Then we'll be in Prague for my brother's wedding. And then we're going to Israel. Traveling is going to open whole new worlds to me. I am so excited about it. I wasn't so open about learning new things before, now, it's like I am getting addicted to it. ♦

*Makeup by Cyndle Strawhecker for NARS cosmetics.
Hair by Amy Farid at Kate Ryan for Bumble & Bumble.
Retouching : Petteri Lamula. Model: Linda Vojtova at
One Model Mgmt. All jewelry by Love Linda Vojtova.*



KYLEIGH KUHN

CHARITY ACTIVIST

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID SCHULZE

Can you name a model who is also a philanthropist? How about one who began her first philanthropic initiative at the age of 16 and puts aside half of her income to further her work in third world countries? Or, one who models simply to maintain a platform for her true calling? Inwardly lit and an all-American beauty, Kyleigh Kuhn is the Mother Teresa of the fashion world. Her charitable ambitions fuel her modeling career, which she uses as a podium for her humanitarian work.

Philanthropy has been a great influence in her life and has guided her career as a model. In fact, Mimi Yapor, the model scout who first discovered her, has labeled her “The Nonprofit Model.” And although she understands the industry’s inclination to use this title, she feels it sits awkwardly on her and condenses who she is. Perhaps she’s right, because as much as we try to see her as typical, Kuhn’s work proves to be nothing of the sort. She’s paving the way for the future of fashion, while using her power and status to bridge the gap between first world and war-torn countries.

Modeling

After graduating from UC Berkeley with a degree in peace and conflict studies, Kuhn signed with Next Model Management as a means to promote her nonprofit work, and she has since embraced her domain as a fashion industry spokeswoman, linking the world of nonprofit organizations with the garment industry. “I’ve never really seen myself as a model,” says Kuhn. “I kind of utilized modeling as a means to promote my nonprofit and allow myself another perspective on life in a way. I figured, why not give it a shot and have something to show my great grandkids when I’m all wrinkled up!”

Having worked with photographer Bruce Weber several times, she has observed his moments of

inspiration. She has watched him work in between shots and likens his authenticity to her own respect for and devotion to humanitarian work.

Both, she says, are avenues of expression and lead to a certain manner of engagement and truthfulness. “I have this theory,” she begins, “that the world kind of brings you what you need, in a way. I like to work organically in that fashion... allow whoever comes into my life to be a part of how I can see them fitting into this project. My inspirations for modeling and my humanitarian work often stem from the same source – the goal to create an authentic relationship,” says Kuhn. “There are things that we can do, small projects that can improve what’s going on.” These authentic relationships she aims for originate from her tightly knit home life.

Family Roots

Kyleigh Kuhn was raised in California with three brothers; Brooks, now 28, Tucker, 26, and Christian, the youngest, 16. Christian will be taking command of the Penny Campaign, an initiative Kuhn started at the age of 16 with her mother and news anchor Cheryl Jennings. Kuhn’s mother is the founder of Roots of Peace. When Kyleigh was a child the family moved from California to Alaska where Mrs. Kuhn worked fulltime, raised four children and started a company called News Link international on the side.

Kyleigh attributes her hard work and strength to her mother, family, and the generations of great grandmothers and grandfathers before her, who worked hard and provided solid and stable grounding to the family. “My mom raised me in a way that was very empowering to women,” she says. Her strong belief systems no doubt come from such female empowerment and a formidable home life. “I think it’s the entrepreneurial

spirit that my mom had that has really been engrained in me,” says Kuhn. “I believe in myself to a fault.”

Roots of Peace

At the age of 13, Kyleigh traveled to the Balkans for the first time, where she met children whose lives and homes were devastated by war, and on September 11, 2011, she was reminded of the way she felt while visiting. Wanting to do something to help children in war-torn areas, she began the Penny Campaign in 2003. The initiative with Roots of Peace allows her to work closely with her mother. “What we do,” says Kuhn, “is we come in and teach farmers agricultural techniques, and give them the tools to bring their mode of farming to a more modernized sustainable system.” The Penny Campaign is now \$30 million under contract in Afghanistan alone, not counting private donations.

The World Garden Program

The next project Kuhn is focusing on with Roots of Peace is called The World Garden Program. Its stated purpose is to provide women and children with food by creating small farms for them to develop independently. The inequality between men and woman in Afghanistan is vast; this initiative seeks to create work for women who will be able to cultivate the food themselves and sell any excess on the market. “My work now is complimentary to the work Roots of Peace does,” says Kuhn, “I’m always going to be connected [to it] in some way, yet I feel like I need to follow a different path.”

Twenty-Four Suns

Continuing her work in Afghanistan and bridging the gap between peace and commerce, Kuhn is taking a cue from established brands such as





Meeting with students at the school we built in Bam Saray, Afghanistan. Photography by Ruvan Wijesooriya.

Pamela Love and Tom's, which capitalize on the idea of products becoming a source of fundraising. Kuhn's newest project called Twenty-Four Suns "allows the consumer to become a philanthropist," she says. "It connects skilled artisans in Afghanistan with CFDA designers to create quality goods." Rules for Afghan women are strict. Many are widowed and forced to send their young children out to work. Twenty-Four Suns will be employing women to work from their homes, mitigating the chance of child labor. Lapis jewelry, vibrant embroidery, and rich carpets have been loves of Kuhn's since her first trip to the country at the age of 18. "In the process of creating beautiful pieces, we will be transforming the lives of these artisans by providing them with the tools and sustainable work to lift their families out of poverty," she says.

Micro Financing

In a land where women are repressed in many ways, Kuhn found the idea of micro financing (giving small loans to those who do not qualify for bank credit) in Afghanistan appealing. Females are responsible for the wellbeing of their entire family; therefore, 97% of the borrowers are women. "I guess this is more of the feminist coming out in me," says Kuhn. Advocates of this trend have been steadily growing and include U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Bill Clinton. Muhammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank, which gives loans to developing countries, is a huge source of inspiration for Kuhn. She says she admires anyone who takes a leap of faith outside from what they normally do.

Kyleigh's Path

"My great grandmother used to always say, 'Coincidence is a miracle in which God prefers to remain anonymous,' says Kuhn. "Now, I'm not particularly religious, but I do believe in some sort of power this world has, allowing you to create the life you envision for yourself - in it's own path, albeit." It's the path that can only reveal itself in time. Push too hard, and the doors to your pathway begin to shut. It is in allowing the unfolding to take place, where you begin to notice the miracles around you. This seems like a lesson Kuhn knows well. "Time gives us the gift of reflection, and from reflection we are granted insight that makes sense of our past and informs our future." In time, we will surely see that hard work and perseverance have been, and continue to be, kind friends to Kyleigh Kuhn. ♦

Makeup by Aki Maekubo. Hair by Wesley O'Meara at The Wall Group. Model: Kyleigh Kuhn at Next NY.

LYDIA HEARST

ACTRESS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN YOON

Despite her family ties to one of the wealthiest corporations in the world, this heiress is building her own career in the entertainment industry, doing her own stunts, and proving that her name won't be what defines her.

Lydia Hearst stands under a bright key light in a white backless dress. There's a large horizontal bruise close to the middle of her spine. Our editor in chief and photographer on this shoot, Ryan, asks her to take a running start for a shot. She does as instructed, strutting a few paces forward and remarks, "Both of my ankles are sprained, so I can't run very well." I later find out the probable cause behind her battered physique is an active work schedule, which includes her own stunt work on the set of her newest feature film, training with a circus school, and learning to ride a motorcycle.

To say that Lydia Hearst has an active lifestyle would be an understatement. In between modeling, acting, and swinging on the trapeze, Hearst is involved in charity work – she is focused on building a career outside the realm of her family's publishing business. Amid constant travel, she also practices meditation to remain grounded and balanced; it's the sort of practiced concentration needed as she steps away from her family's name and creates an empire of her own.

The Hearst Corporation was founded in 1887 by Lydia's great grandfather, William Randolph Hearst. The company currently owns 53 newspapers and 300 magazines world wide including Harper's Bazaar, Cosmopolitan, Esquire, Elle and The Oprah Magazine. It also owns A&E Television Networks and ESPN, reaching a combined 18 percent of all U.S. television viewers.

A Socialite Only by Definition

When speaking of socialites, the comparisons between Hearst and her contemporaries are plenty,

but the slender 5'7" blonde says that if she is to be considered a typical socialite, she is not a very good one. "I would say by typical definition and name I would be considered a socialite," she says. "But for what society considers a socialite I would be a terrible one, because I don't go anywhere and I'm not very social." She prefers cooking at home over going out, and hanging out with close friends over partying. She speaks to her parents twice a day and is thankful to them for a normal upbringing. Although Paul Dano, as well as a few other noted Hollywood insiders, models, and editors, graduated from her Connecticut high school, she shied away from the spotlight until she was of age. She says she is grateful for the grounding and normalcy her upbringing has given her.

A View of Politics

Lydia has stayed away from gossip columns and blogs and thinks they are an unhealthy use of time. Instead of focusing on current events and news, the United States has become obsessed with gossip and celebrities, she says. Hearst says that instead of being focused on the policies of our political candidates, everyone is focused on whom someone's wife is, whom they may be having an affair with or what shoes they were wearing when they stepped out for coffee. Would she ever consider a career in politics? "I think I've been photographed topless too many times," she says laughing. "But then again, I have nothing to hide."

The Family Business

As close as Hearst is to her family, she has no current plans of being involved in their business endeavors. What would she say if someone offered her the chance to be CEO of the company? Her answer is no doubt in line with the same ambitions that her great grandfather most likely built the business on: In perfect posture, she leans forward and says, "I would say that I hope

everyone would be prepared for me to be the next Anna Wintour. I would settle for no less than being someone as influential and inspiring as her." For now, however, she is in the middle of filming her third feature film and is keeping her focus on modeling and acting.

Print vs. Screen

Milla Jovovich and Heidi Klum, who have managed to pursue careers both in fashion and on screen, are sources of inspiration for Hearst. "I love modeling," she says. "I love acting. I want to continue doing both." The common thread between acting and modeling is the fact that both occupations involve time spent under hot lights and in front of cameras. "There are no secrets on screen," says Hearst, indicating this observation as one of the differences between the two media. Another difference is the continuous need to portray someone else while acting, because you're taking on another persona when the cameras go on, she points out. She's shooting a film called *Delirium*, a psychological thriller, directed by and starring LeRoy Kuni, in which she plays Kuni's girlfriend. "I'm a little banged up from doing my own stunts," she says. As the cameras start rolling again, more stunt work – including a scene shot entirely in a water tank – awaits.

Running Away With the Circus

What does a model/actress/non-socialite do while she's not filming? Work with the circus, of course! In her spare time, Lydia Hearst has been training with a circus school, learning hand balancing, trapeze, and the silks. She is one of the only students at the school who does not come from a circus-performing background. She's not only training for her current projects, but also to keep healthy and limber. "I've been getting very active," she says. "And I think that's important if you want to do more theatrics." Hearst is interest-



ed in doing her own stunt work on future projects as well, and in accordance with her future goals, is also getting her motorcycle license.

At The End of The Day

One may find it hard to believe that Lydia Hearst can sit still for long enough to meditate, but she credits meditation as a modality she uses at the end of each day to stay centered and focused. "Sometimes when I'm traveling, it gets a little tricky because I'm constantly on the go," she points out. "I think meditation can be very helpful; if you can just sit and breathe, it makes such a difference in your day."

Operation Smile

Lydia Hearst is quite kinetic, and part of her energy is used to work with Operation Smile, a non-profit focused on providing surgery to children suffering from cleft palates and lips and other facial deformities. Hearst went on her first mission with the organization in 2009 and found it to be a life-altering experience. "They may not remember your name, they may not remember your face, but they'll never forget the act of kindness you bestowed upon them," she says of the lives of the many children Operation Smile has affected. This year she will be honored at an event hosted by the organization for the work she's completed with them, and she will also be sponsoring her own mission to either Africa or Vietnam. "It's very easy for people to put their name on a committee list and put on a fancy dress and sip champagne for a photo op, but there is so much more that people can do," Hearst explained.

At this time, Hearst is focusing on staying in the present moment and building a name for herself. "There's that famous phrase 'time is of the essence,' but it's also quite fleeting," she says, "I think it's important to focus on the now, otherwise you'll miss out on it. If you're constantly thinking about what's going to happen in the future, you're going to miss out on the present." If the present adds up to make the future, Lydia Hearst is making sure everyone knows her name independent from being the billion-dollar heiress of the giant publishing corporation.

Styling by Aya Funakoshi. Makeup by Aki Maekubo. Hair by Shawn Mount. Model: Lydia Hearst at Wilhelmina. Dean Quinn; Dress: Zoe Chicco. Ring: Anndra Neen. Pants Les Aperizes; Pants: Zoe Chicco; Earrings: Anndra Neen; Necklace, Ring, Bracelets: Chrissie Morris; Shoes



DOROTHEA BARTH-JÖRGENSEN

ARTIST

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICHOLAS ONG

Born in Norway and moved to Sweden when she was 3 years old, Dorothea Barth-Jørgensen was raised on the outskirts of Stockholm. She won the Elite modeling competition at the age of 16, moved to New York City a year later, and first appeared on the fashion scene in the BCBG Max Azria show in February 2009. During the same season, she walked for Calvin Klein, Jonathan Saunders, Marc Jacobs and Proenza Schouler. Since then, she has worked for many fashion labels including Chanel, Prada, Valentino, Donna Karan and opened for Yohji Yamamoto at the New York Fashion Week last February. Dorothea is the epitome of the New York artist, fishing for her next line and reeling in the next roll of film while on a perpetual quest for inspiration. An effortlessly stylish photographer, blogger, artist and model, she opens up to The GROUND about her artistic talents, living in New York City, and her ambitions of becoming the next Cate Blanchett.

Did you expect to win the Elite Modeling Competition five years ago?

No, never. I don't see myself as a model. I was actually very surprised that I won. I'm very glad, and it was a cool experience. They scouted me at H&M in Stockholm, and I didn't know I was actually in the competition until they told me that they wanted me to participate. So I said, "ok, I'll do that." And then I won.

What was moving to New York like? Was it a difficult transition?

No. Something about New York just made me feel very at home right away. Of course family is important and I miss them, but the distance is also nice, you get to appreciate them even more. I need to grow up at some point, and moving away from home is a good start. I created a new family here — friends. It seems like New York is a place for people who want to achieve something, escape from home to fulfill their dreams. Everyone who's here has some sort of passion or goal in life.

What is your daily routine outside modeling? What do you do for fun?

When I have time off, I am practicing yoga, going to acting school, and trying to collect my thoughts through writing. Once in a while, I would gather some friends together for a cooking/movie evening, where delicious raw and vegan food is on the menu!

I love to go to the theater, or concerts. I appreciate live performances, because of the unique moments that make you experience intimacy and imperfection, which is way more interesting to me than a perfectly controlled digital piece.

Why did you decide to start a blog? Why did you name it the way you did?

A friend and I were sitting in my living room, joking around and making fun of the blog industry. We thought we should try it and see what

it's like; it was just a little joke at first, but then I found it to be really nice. It's a great place to reach out to people and share. It became a bigger project than I thought it would be.

My blog is called *Displaced Bones*; I like displaced things. Whatever you do comes from yourself, but you're always affected by what's around you, whether you are aware of it or not. I embrace things around me, and try not to take them for granted. I always try to observe in a new way, as if it was the first time I've ever experienced it, with a pure eye, and that is great to play around with. Blogging is one way of letting it all out.

You also started to dabble in photography; can you tell me how that came about?

Well, I wanted to photograph my mom, to see how it feels to photograph someone who has raised you. So, we went out to the forest in Sweden and I started shooting; she opened up in a different way from how I usually see her. I loved the pictures, and since then, understood the power of photography. It's a face to face meeting but with a third perspective.

As soon as you get a camera in a room, people start to be very self-aware — they suddenly imagine themselves in another person's eye. The power of the camera is incredible, it's like the human being wants to please it. They give their soul to it, or transform into a character as far away from themselves as possible, depending on





their personalities. It is a challenge, to really find the pure, the space for vulnerability, the trust and lust for sharing.

You can create and capture moments. I love how you can focus on something that you normally wouldn't appreciate or see, give it some space — you can choose how to see the moments.

Your photography reminds me of a mix between Sally Mann and Sarah Moon. Working with a myriad of photographers, who are the ones that inspire you most and why?

You are right. I might be influenced by Sally Mann. Her photographs were one of the first that really affected me. I found her very connected with nature and beauty, but it's more than that, her pictures are full of hidden conflicts. She's capturing atmospheres full of contrasts. I like it when you get affected but you can't really put your finger on why. It is touching something deeper than the intellect, the subconscious.

Are you working on any photographic series that you would like to share with us?

I am working on a series of backs. I find backs to be one of the most expressively, beautiful part of the body. It's our shelter that protects us from external stress.

Besides photography, you have a natural talent in traditional media such as drawing, painting and poetry as well. Does that run in the family?

My family is very spiritual; they approach life with a very artistic eye. But they never crafted it professionally. My step mom on the other hand, was an artist and always created art, mostly paintings. She has influenced me a lot.

Can you tell us a bit more on how you approach the topics and the source of inspiration in your artwork? Is there a focused subject or is it just purely abstract?

People subconsciously change themselves if they are too focused on the end result. For my creative process, I hardly know when I start out what it will turn out to be — It's often based on instinct. I like the spontaneity of letting your true self speak, without thinking too much about the intellect. Dreams affect me a lot. I get a lot of

ideas from them. I want my painting to be about the process and not the result. Whenever I get inspired, new thoughts grow and grow ... it's a very interesting and fun process.

You are indeed a Renaissance woman! How do you balance school, modeling, and your private life?

It's about choices; you really have to sit down, make choices, and prioritize. I haven't been the best with that lately, but I'm trying to be honest with myself and what I really want, not what everyone else wants me to do or be. It's scary because you really have to undertake all the responsibility, and not get lost in all the possibilities that the city brings.

How did you celebrate your 21st birthday recently?

I was actually very busy this year. I've been auditioning for a movie, and I got a call back, so I spent all my time getting into character and figuring out the details of my roles, trying to memorize and play around with them. During the evening, I got a couple of friends together and we had dinner, just a simple little gathering in Williamsburg.

I just started acting school this summer, and it's so much fun. It's something I get energy from and give energy to. It's kind of like understanding the physiology in life in a way, and the connection between people. You jump into this space where everything can happen, and everything is aloud, you are free. You can play and lose all your inhibitions.

Do you have a favorite actor or actress?

I really like Natalie Portman, Cate Blanchett, Al Pacino, and Ryan Gosling. They are such strong people, great personalities. There's also a great sense of truth in their work. They allow themselves to embody all different characters and that makes them so alive. It's all just fascinating to me. ♦

Styling by Kathryn Typaldos. Makeup by Cyndle Straubecker for NARS cosmetics. Hair by Thanos Samaras at L'Atelier. Retouching : silhouette. Model: Dorothea Barth-Jørgensen at Elite. Special thanks to Heather Hughes. Additional interview by Nicholas Ong. Minimarket: Orange and black striped silk jumpsuit. T by Alexander Wang: white cotton t-shirt, Grey Era Vintage: green metallic pleated maxi skirt. All jewelry by Lady Grey and Suzannah Wainhouse.