

big girls don't cry

This fall, the original supermodels are fashion's hottest stars. Nearly two decades into their careers, how do they face the camera with such aplomb? Sarah Mower learns their secrets for growing older glamorously.

Linda Evangelista is on the phone. "It's really important for me to be honest," she says. "I don't look like I do in the pages of *Vogue*. I think it's OK to say I'm 41 and it's work being me. It's a lot of upkeep!" She means it, and she's ready to go into detail. "I'm pro-cosmetic procedure. I use Botox, and I'm not afraid to say it, though I do like to keep some movement in my face. I see David Orentreich in New York and Karyn Grossman in Los Angeles. And I do Thermage, a treatment to stimulate your collagen. I admit to that. For me, it's just for enhancement, like hair color or makeup or any other tricks you can do to make yourself feel better."

She's keen to underscore something important, however: There is no Botox in her face at the moment. "I have refrained for over six months. Because I am pregnant." The baby is due mid-October. "I've just finished up work, and now I'm nesting," she says blissfully.

If you think Evangelista is surprisingly open about what it takes to sustain a long and exalted run in modeling, now hear Naomi Campbell, who has just celebrated her thirty-sixth birthday—and 20 years in the public eye. "I want to talk about this," she says. Two years ago, she went to get a laser facial treatment. "When I got up, I had burns on my face and neck. I couldn't work.



My face is what I work with. I was in shock." She says that her skin has fully recovered only in the past three months, and that she's been terrified of any form of treatment ever since. "I can't do dermabrasion, anything. . . . I'm afraid of facials now. I'm not against plastic surgery. But I am afraid now. Even if I sit in a dentist's chair, this fear comes back."

And now listen to Christy Turlington, at 37, talking of the asset that turned her into a superstar: "I really don't see much difference in my face now. In a way, I feel I've grown into it. I'm not afraid of aging. I would absolutely not do Botox. It actually makes me feel happier about my face when I look at people my age—which is too young—who've had it done. It's just not healthy, and it's not pretty."



Thus speak the models who, 20 years ago, symbolized everything that made fashion thrilling. The reason we're having these frank and wide-ranging talks on beauty, fashion, and being the age you are is that, this fall, their generation of professional superwomen is front and center again: in fashion editorial and a deluge of advertising from Lanvin, Versace, Louis Vuitton, YSL, Hermès, and Givenchy. These campaigns include, as well, the models who followed in the

trio's footsteps: Stella Tennant, Shalom Harlow, Kate Moss, Angela Lindvall, Carolyn Murphy, Carmen Kass. It's hard not to see their reappearance in fashion as a

ORIGINAL SLIM, IN VOGUE

Clockwise from top: Linda Evangelista (December 1988), Naomi Campbell (May 1992), and Christy Turlington (May 1991).

backlash against the raft of pale, anonymous teenagers who have stared blankly from photographs and runways these past couple



THE HARD TRUTH

"I'm 41, and it's work being me," says Linda Evangelista. "It's a lot of upkeep. I'm pro-cosmetic procedure. I use Botox, and I'm not afraid to say it."

Prada brown leopard-print shirt dress, \$1,035; Saks Fifth Avenue. Subversive Jewelry necklace. Haircut and styling, Julien d'Ys; makeup, Stéphane Marais; set design, Mary Howard. Produced on location by Larry McCrudden and Jessica Brown for JBP. Details, see in This Issue.

Fashion Editor:
Tonne Goodman.

Photographed by Steven Klein

of years. As Naomi Campbell succinctly observes of recent catwalk shows: "Ghost town! No one home!" And almost nowhere on the fall runways, she adds, was a black face to be seen. "I remember a time when there were at least eight black girls working. And now, in 2006... it's shocking!"

They're candid about the professional artifice that goes into their work—as well as its flip side. Consider Carolyn Murphy, whose enviable white-bikini'd, gold-dusted hipbones are ranged provocatively across the Tom Ford for Estée Lauder campaign. "What do I think when I see myself like that? Great actress!" she says, laughing. "It's so funny. I want to look like that woman—but you should know that I, too, have pimples, frizzy hair, and bags under my eyes sometimes. I'm 33. I've never lied about it." Murphy has been modeling since 1991, when, she points out, she was constantly rejected for being "too short" (at five feet eight) or "too pretty." There's more. "When I was pregnant, I gained 60 pounds," she relates. "I went from flat-chested to a D-cup. I was like Princess Fiona from *Shrek*, but I was contentedly overweight. I'd just had Dylan when my first test shots for Estée Lauder came up. I had leaky breasts and saggy skin. But Aerin Lauder was already a mother—thank God!—and understood. She waited, and it was all worth it. But we sometimes look back at those pictures and laugh."

And here is Angela Lindvall, at 27, describing "running up mountains" to get herself back into sample sizes after having her second son a year ago. "Thinking about working was definitely an incentive to get into shape," she says. "I'm more womanly now. Clothes are made for seventeen-year-olds, but instead of saying, 'That's so terrible,' I have to take a perspective and think, 'If I were a boxer, I'd have to train that five pounds off or I couldn't get in the ring.'"

Stella Tennant, that unique embodiment of haute-but-edgy grown-up elegance, has recently been doing her sophisticated slouch for Burberry, Lanvin, Louis Vuitton, Givenchy, and Hermès. Since she once thought her career would last only a season, the following fifteen years have come as a bit of a bonus. "It never occurred to me I'd be modeling at

35. I thought I was shooting myself in the foot when I had my first child." Tennant is the holder of the record for number of children (four) produced while being a supermodel. "Actually, I feel much more comfortable with myself than I ever have. My

body has been very kind to me. I've had four healthy babies, so I'm not about to criticize it! As a matter of fact, I didn't notice any change in me, although my ribs are bigger since I had my last one. Karl Lagerfeld, who can detect a pregnancy before any gynecologist, told me that! At Chanel, they know my body better than I do."

Kate Moss chimes in, too, about what happens when you're

a mother at 32 as opposed to an eighteen-year-old überwaif. "The other day, I pulled out a gray check Vivienne Westwood crotch-mini I wore when I was seventeen and thought, No way!" The public fascination with Moss, her rock-chick lifestyle, and her individualist look means the demand for her to appear in advertising is unquenched, regardless of waist measurements. "I did a lot this season. Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Versace, Stella McCartney, Longchamp, Calvin Klein Jeans," she says. Which, of course,

makes her happy: "Being able to pick and choose what you do. That's the glamorous part."

Christy Turlington's mystique has only grown in the long absence she took from modeling while she graduated from university, set up her Nuala yoga-lifestyle brand with Puma, wrote a yoga journal-cum-memoir, and married Ed Burns and had her two children (the younger, Finn, is five months). She's recently signed a contract with Maybelline and says she was surprised to get called back to the camera this season by Donatella Versace. "I said"—she laughs—"Are you sure?"

Yes, the designers are sure. Part of the turn toward recognizable faces is attributable to fall's stronger, fiercer, more elegant clothes, clean lines rather than frills and prints, that require a grown-up attitude. Nadja Auermann, the ultimate nineties power-vixen, weighs in on this change in climate from Berlin, where she lives with her two small children. "One photographer said to me recently, 'It's so nice to work with someone who gives the impression she loves what she's doing.' When you're thirteen or fourteen, it's difficult to enjoy it. And to make strong pictures, you have to know a bit about being a woman."

Alber Elbaz brought together Tennant, Missy Rayder, and Malgosia Bela for Lanvin. "For me," he says, "it is not the return of supermodels. It is the return of personality. Something may be changing in the way we are thinking. Maybe 'fashion' is no longer enough. Maybe what is interesting is what a woman is doing to a dress. Or what two different women are doing to the same dress. And," he adds gleefully, "I was watching them all sitting in the back having their makeup done, laughing and chatting and showing each other photos of their children. And I realized it's also about having fun again. That's what's been missing for such a long time."



FOREVER IN FASHION

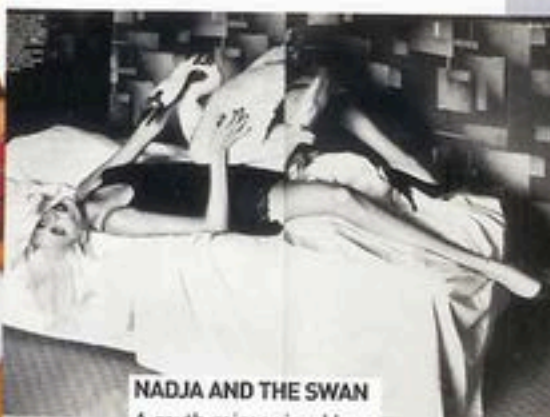
The supermodel and the little black dress. Steven Meisel photographed Stephanie Seymour, Linda Evangelista, Claudia Schiffer, and Christy Turlington in Versace, September 1993.



RARE BIRD
Shalom Harlow enhances the drama of a Christian Lacroix dress, April 1995.

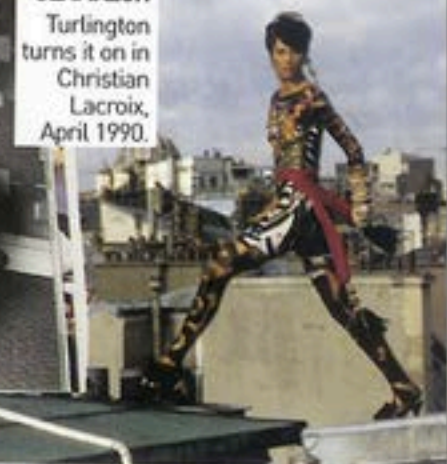


PARTY OF FIVE
Helena, Claudia, Naomi, Christy, and Stephanie, April 1993.



NADJA AND THE SWAN
A myth reimagined by Auermann and Helmut Newton, June 1994.

GLAMAZON
Turlington turns it on in Christian Lacroix, April 1990.



FACE OFF
Cindy Crawford, shot by Irving Penn in September 1991 (right) and by Helmut Newton in December 1991 (left).



KARL'S GIRLS
The best in a brigade of superbright Chanel minisuits, March 1994.



COMIC RELIEF
LEFT: Harlow, in a Chanel suit, hams it up for Bruce Weber's camera, March 1995. RIGHT: Nadja Auermann in earthy tweed, September 1993.



COPPERTONE BABY
A glowing, sun-kissed Kate Moss goes to great lengths, June 1996.

A PRETTY PAIR
Friends on the runway and off, Harlow and Amber Valletta appeared together on the cover in March 1997.



FOREVER PLAID
Evangelista breathes life into a Ralph Lauren tartan jacket, September 1991.



SHIMMY AND SHAKE
Campbell was nineteen years old when she sparkled for Herb Ritts in August 1989.

a

t Yves Saint Laurent, Stefano Pilati worked with Evangelista last season and Shalom Harlow—among others—for fall. He related the thrill of watching Harlow stand on the roof of the Paris Opéra to dramatize one of his fall tunics and skirts. “She’s a powerful Frenchwoman in that picture. She really knew how to interpret it. To me, what those women represent is fashion. They know how to move, pose, give their best—and they are just so beautiful. And on top of that, it’s a bit of a dream to work with the models I looked up to when we all were young.”

For Louis Vuitton, Marc Jacobs says he “wanted something arch and static and tough and cool. Defiant poses and a great face with a lot of makeup.” To carry it off, he called in Moss, Campbell, Tennant, Rayder, and Christina Kruse. “There is a star quality. I can remember working with so many of them, and these women had a spirit; they had the personality, strong, difficult, sweet, whatever it was; they had individual character. Linda, Christy, Naomi, Kate really love modeling. Today,” he adds, “there are a lot of great-looking girls, but when they turn up to work, they look like they’d rather be somewhere else.”

Angela Lindvall, who began modeling at fifteen from her hometown of Kansas City, Missouri, remembers having just this scared, disengaged look in the early days of her career. “I was lucky that it was the grunge era because I was so camera-shy and I could just sit there,” she says. “As a young person, you can’t look at modeling as a profession. You don’t know how great you have it, and you’re on planes constantly and people are touching you all the time.” Confidence and range take time to develop—a grace period fledgling models are rarely accorded these days, she observes. “I’m hugely grateful to be working after eleven years; grateful as a mother to be able to work in a flexible way. And I enjoy the pampering a lot more than I did,” she laughs, “which you would when you’ve been changing Pampers all day.”

Shalom Harlow, who often dips back into modeling from life as an actress, says growing older has brought a happier psychological balance, which informs the way she works and appears on camera. “I feel my beauty now, whereas before I couldn’t recognize it,” she confesses. “For some reason, it wasn’t apparent to me.” At 32, she also believes she’s much healthier than when she was tripping her dainty balletic form along runways with her friend Amber Valletta: “I was too thin. I was working all the time, not eating at home. Spaghetti bolognese on planes. Ugh. Now most of my meals I cook for myself with organic ingredients.” She is adamant on the subject of cosmetic procedures; they are not on her agenda, even though she’s stepped into an industry where “you see your face magnified thousands of times, which is what it is on a movie screen. For actresses, I can see that is not an easy way to pass through your 30s and 40s,” she admits.

“But I admire the ones who have not had things done.”

As Elbaz explains it, the way their faces look, and ours as well for that matter, is really beside the point. “Age is not an issue,” he says with characteristic generosity. “Women have to look ageless now. What you see in fashion is reflected in life. It always tells a story about where we are. What I see on the street are 40-year-old women who look 20, 80-year-old women who look 40. I can’t tell anymore.” Even more so for models, whether or not they elect to have cosmetic procedures. As Tennant briskly points out, “Age doesn’t matter anymore. With digital photography and lighting, anything can be done, whatever they need afterward.” (Though, as Kate Moss puts it, “The retouching’s amazing now—but you do have to have the base to start with.”)

The one place where reservations about age do have an impact is on the runway: “Big” girls mostly stay away now. What this means is that fashion shows are far less wild and exciting than in the nineties, when they often amounted to glorious performance-art pieces (robotic paint guns at McQueen; lip-synching at Versace; the vampy posturings of the Galliano Pin-Up collection). That era has come to an end. “Last season, I did a day of shows in Paris, but I’m in two minds about it,” says Tennant. “I like seeing the designers and their clothes, but I don’t know whether it’s appropriate for me to be up there with all those young girls. I

don’t want to be compared. It’s a different generation.” Her concern is shared by others, which has in turn led to an even faster and faster turnover of extremely young, inexperienced faces on the runway. Even 23-year-old Natalia Vodianova says, “Backstage, I feel like an old bag!” And Karolina Kurkova, all of 23, opines, “I think the runway is not important anymore. Leave it to the new girls!” It’s not that exceptional, characterful model stars haven’t risen

“Ach, the supermodel time! It’s a blur to me,” claims Evangelista as she gets ready for her much-longed-for baby: “I have one copy of everything I did stored in Canada, but I never revisit it”

out of this changed system in the past five years—just that these days, the internationally significant ones, like Gisele Bündchen with Victoria’s Secret or Liya Kebede with Estée Lauder, often become superstars at a tangent to high fashion.

It’s an odd situation when models old enough to be the moms of their colleagues on the runway are still working at full throttle in fashion photography. Linda, Christy, and Naomi might observe this with some amusement, since in some ways, that class division of modeling is exactly the situation they entered and overturned 20 years ago. “Before Gianni Versace started casting us as print models,” Turlington remembers, “fashion shows were boring and undramatic.” But, like her compadres, she is far more interested in what she’s doing now than in poring over the past. “Ach, the supermodel time! It’s all a blur to me now,” claims Evangelista as she busies herself in New York getting ready for her much-longed-for baby: “I have one copy of everything I did stored in Canada, but I never go back and revisit it. All I know is, when I’m working, I’m never unhappy. All I ever wanted to do was model. It’s just a very creative process.” She bursts out laughing: “Even in Happy-Snaps, I’m a poser.” And is she prepared to work after the baby? Did we really have to ask? “Ohhh,” she says, “sure!” □