

Meet the woman transforming male modelling

Eva Gödel's agency Tomorrow Is Another Day has redefined what it means to be a male model – she discusses the changing landscape of casting

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Paul at Tomorrow Is Another Day in Multi-Drop My Melons, editorial taken from the Spring 2016 issue of Dazed
Photography Casper Sejersen, fashion Elizabeth Fraser-Bell

Tomorrow Is Another Day



It's a stifling hot day in June, and the roof of a private Catholic high school in Paris's 16th arrondissement has just become the unlikely setting for one of the menswear season's most talked-about moments – the first Balenciaga men's show under creative director Demna Gvasalia. Stepping out onto a black carpeted runway, an army of models stomped down the catwalk dressed in tailoring that veered between oversized and skin tight, in a collection that the Vetements designer said was a menswear proposition for haute couture, paying homage to Balenciaga's own archive. Now, however, the show is over, the champagne is flowing, and the gang of boys have ditched their looks to hang out in a patch of sun on the roof, posing for pictures and smoking cigarettes. In what's a rarity for fashion week, every single one of the models walking the show was from the same agency – Düsseldorf's Tomorrow Is Another Day, officially founded in 2010. In an even more unprecedented move, almost all of them were making their runway debuts.

With a couple of exceptions – such as show stylist Lotta Volkova's long-term friend and muse Paul Hameline – the cast were total newcomers, many of whom were gathered from around the world by agency founder Eva Gödel. “I travelled for one month to find them,” she explained backstage, as excited first-timers bounded up to her to offer their thanks. “We have a real mix of cultures, most boys are mixed – Italian, half-Italian, Pakistani, half-Pakistani, half-French, half-Tunisian...” After the controversy that arose from the homogeneity of Balenciaga's womenswear casting, there seemed to be an effort to shift the focus to a more varied dynamic – some models were old, some young, some Slavic looking, others Mediterranean. The brief from Gvasalia was that each boy should be unique, but that they must fit together like a gang – the perfect descriptor for the kind of models you'll find on the agency's board, the men were beautiful but not classically so, striking rather than handsome.

Seeing such faces on the runway wasn't always common – a couple of decades ago, male modelling was the domain of underwear-clad hunks rather than rakish, unconventional youths. With their focus on the outsider and influences drawn from music and underground culture, the rise of designers like Raf Simons, Hedi Slimane and Rick Owens changed this landscape, proffering an alternative vision for both menswear and masculinity. At the same time, Gödel's agency (originally established under the name Nine Daughters and a Stereo back in 2001) helped to redefine the idea of how a male model could look. Now, her street-scouted signees can be seen on the runways of shows as diverse as Gosha Rubchinskiy and Dior Homme, Prada and Comme des Garçons. Below, she discusses the agency's humble beginnings, making an conscious push for diversity and why she'll stop her car in the middle of the street to approach a

potential face.



Kieron at Tomorrow Is Another Day in Multi-Drop My Melons, editorial taken from the Spring 2016 issue of Dazed
Photography Casper Sejersen, fashion Elizabeth Fraser-Bell

How did you first get into casting?

Eva Gödel: When I was studying graphic design, I always found interesting people to shoot for myself, or for friends of mine who were artists. When they did some project, like photography or a film, I was the one who brought all the people together. So I just thought, I'm going to do this as my final thesis – it wasn't meant to be a business, I just did it how I liked it. I made a website, then when it was finished I emailed it to a few fashion designers that I really liked, like Raf Simons and Stephan Schneider.

The project then became an agency called Nine Daughters and a Stereo, which was the precursor to Tomorrow Is Another Day... How quickly did it take off?

Eva Gödel: It grew slowly. At first, I was going to fashion week on the bus with five boys and we stayed at a friend's apartment for free. Then the next season I brought ten, and then 20, so it was always step by step, just German boys, and people just started contacting us. First one designer and the next one. Now we have loads of boys, somewhere around 200. For Paris AW16, there were 94 at the shows – which means lots of organisation but also lots of fun!

“At first, I was going to fashion week on the bus with five boys and we stayed at a friend’s apartment for free. Then the next season I brought ten, and then 20...” – Eva Gödel

And designers like Raf got back to you when you reached out.

Eva Gödel: Yes, I think he just liked some of the boys. The first season I brought them and he saw them in Paris, and then he came to Cologne to look at models in the agencies. That was a really long time ago. I think it was 14 years ago!

How did things progress?

Eva Gödel: I got some contacts through some artist friends of mine. They gave me the contact of one casting director from Paris – Maida, actually – so I phoned her and she was booking for a Jil Sander campaign with David Sims and Joe McKenna. Then Nicola Formichetti and Alister Mackie started contacting me, and Rick Owens – he was booking loads of my boys at that time. And then Hedi Slimane started at Dior. So one thing led to another. We managed client by client and we managed boy by boy – I think it really helps you grow when you don’t have the idea in mind that, ‘Oh I need to make money with it’. At that time, I was still running my graphic design practice so it was no pressure, you know. I just did it how I felt was good.



Raad at Tomorrow Is Another Day in Multi-Drop My Melons, editorial taken from the Spring 2016 issue of *Dazed*
Photography Casper Sejersen, fashion Elizabeth Fraser-Bell

And you would just approach people on the street?

Eva Gödel: Yeah, that's what I do. I find out where a lot of young people go, or I go to shopping streets, anywhere where it's crowded. Once, someone passed by me while I was in the car and I just stopped – they still joke about it, how I stopped in the middle of the traffic. I can really tell in one second when someone's good. Some, I follow and I look a bit longer if I have the time. They think I'm really weird because I walk past them and I want to see them walking towards me. They think, 'Who is this strange girl? What's she doing?' But then I always explain myself and they give it a try most of the time. I think because I look so unsuspecting, as someone once told me. And of course they have doubts – they say 'Me? A model? I can't believe it.'

What are you looking for, essentially?

Eva Gödel: It's not so easy to say. I look for this nonchalance about boys, when they don't think they're the best looking. I also like if they're shy and not too pushy, it's an atmosphere they have. It's not just that they should be beautiful, they also should have some other qualities – that you want to spend time with them, or that they're interesting to look at or to talk with. It's something gentle...

Have you ever tried to find people on Instagram?

Eva Gödel: I'm so often on the computer, on my phone, that I prefer to be on the street. I really enjoy being outside and watching people and seeing what they do – for me it's much more efficient because I'm good at doing it this way. I think I'll keep it like that – because you see the complete person, how they move is important, how they walk.

With your models, you always get the sense that there's a depth to them. And you want to sit down and have a conversation with them.

Eva Gödel: Yeah and it's of course not just about how you look, it's not about your background or where you're from or what possibilities you have in your life. It's a lot about how you are, how you behave at the casting, on the job. It's not just that you have to look good, you also have to make people feel good when they're working with you – I try not to teach the boys too much, but I do tell them how it's good to behave, and I think that's something they take with them later. Of course, you might have the look of the moment but it won't go on too long, it can be a really be a short-term thing, so it's also a lot about how you are and how it is to work you.

Is confidence something that you have to teach them? If they don't see themselves as looking like a typical model.

Eva Gödel: You have to teach them so they know how they look when they walk. Sometimes the walk can be really difficult. It should be the easiest thing – you walk on the street every day. But in that moment, if you're in a studio with everyone watching you, you do it differently than you should. Of course, we teach them to put some energy in it, some intention. It's something that takes time. There are some really beautiful boys, and then when they walk... it's really disappointing because you can teach them, and teach them, and teach them, and some will never learn. Some things look so easy but it's tricky in the end!



Jake L at Tomorrow Is Another Day in Multi-Drop My Melons, editorial taken from the Spring 2016 issue of *Dazed*
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Do you prepare the models for disappointments? Because obviously they're not going to get every single job.

Eva Gödel: Of course, it's like everything in life – that you can be the lucky one who gets the most, especially at the shows. Sometimes I'm really sad when one boy has a lot of expectations and it doesn't work out. I try to go out with them, take them to a party or to a restaurant, and tell them it's really not about them. I always tell them about stories where one boy didn't get the shows but then he got the campaign. But in the end we tell them, you travel, you make friends with models from the agency from different countries. And then later when you want to visit London you have some British friends when you're from Germany. The same if you go to Berlin as an English boy.

How do you think that attitudes towards male models and to casting have changed in your time in the industry?

Eva Gödel: When I started, there were no boys like the ones I found, just these really classic models. Fortunately, that's years ago now. We started at that time with the ones who look different. Now everyone is street casting, so I don't know – street casting is a bit 'over' again. And clients want different things, you know. There's a lot of discussion about diversity but I think it's already quite diverse – if you look at the catwalk, you can find everything. There are so many boys who have the body to fit in the clothes in a certain period of their life. It's often a very short

time but at that moment, they just fit the clothes, so you can imagine loads of boys walking the runway. For girls, to have the body and the height, it's much more rare, of course.

“I think it really helps you grow when you don't have the idea in mind that, ‘Oh I need to make money with it’. I just did it how I felt was good” – Eva Gödel

Is diversity something you think of consciously while scouting or is it more that models come as you find them?

Eva Gödel: Often they come as I find them because sometimes I see someone and I think, wow he looks so different. I look at what's happening on the street and then I take it to the agency. But sometimes I see that I need some more Indian boys, or more Pakistani boys. So I go to these areas where I might find them – they are not in Germany, so I look in London. Of course, I have clients asking for a certain idea sometimes.

Have you noticed any changes in what clients ask for now?

Eva Gödel: Yes, I think everyone asks for all ethnicities now: black, mixed, Indian, Arabic, everything. At the moment everyone's looking for Asian models, and that's not just this year, it was a strong request last year. The clients are from all over the world I guess, that's why. But models can be from totally different backgrounds but still have the same vibe. It's more interesting – if it was only German-looking boys, it would be quite boring.

When you first started the agency, you never really looked long term – why do you think it worked out?

Eva Gödel: I think I'm a person who is super organised, I'm really in control, a control freak. I really like to see what's going on and what the designers are doing and react to that, and also what the people on the streets are doing, the musicians, artists – I like to watch and then go from there. Ultimately, I really like people, I'm really interested in people, young people, older people. And I think I'm really good at watching all this, and just taking it in. So it's a really a mirror of what's going on in the world, or in people's lives, how people develop, how should I say – it's a reflection of political things, in a little way. I'm a big collector – I collect looks.



Artur C at Tomorrow Is Another Day in Multi-Drop My Melons, editorial taken from the Spring 2016 issue of Dazed
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