

# TOMORROW



# IS ANOTHER DAY

TEXT CELINA PLAG

Her chase occurs between the Rhine and Wupper rivers: Eva Gödel is constantly on a manhunt. She doesn't care about current beauty ideals, it's all about having an expressive character. Which is precisely why the faces of her boys on many catwalks are causing a sensation — on an international level. It is fitting, then, that the Düsseldorf resident chose a common English saying for the name of her model agency in Cologne: Tomorrow Is Another Day.

**Y**ou can learn a thing or two from young people's rooms. As individually curated presentation surfaces, the walls reflect the reality of life and dream worlds of a whole generation. Here there's a poster from a teen magazine, there a photo of a best friend, or a souvenir from last year's summer camp. Just like the salon-style hang, maturing characters make collages of space and spatiality to reflect their adolescent self-positioning. The pale boy band member or sweet pop singer becomes a role model for attitude, style, and beauty ideals. Usually, that is.

Those who think outside the box early on have the ability to put people who are somehow different into perspective. Eva Gödel, for example, flicked past the glossy posters. The Cologne native tore pages showing completely different faces out her magazines. Bravo teen magazine didn't feature in her world. As a child of the late 1970s, Eva instead preferred to devour the London subculture bibles *i-D* and *Dazed* from their very first issues. Strong stuff for a young girl. But it was precisely the radical photography that impressed Eva from an early age: fashion images intended to represent evidence of a counter culture instead of the mainstream. She still had some ads on her walls — such as Steven Meisel's images for *CK One* and the Austrian designer Helmut Lang's campaigns. In her eyes, the skinny look was preferable to Davidoff's Cool Water body-building physique.

And that's where it all started — with Eva's own poster-splattered walls. Just like so many careers, hers was influenced by her teenage bedroom. But at that time she was thinking about everything but the future. Eva lived for the present. In the early years of hip-hop and techno, she learned to skateboard at 15 and went out all night. At 16 she got a part-time job at *Made In* — which she describes as the "coolest clothes shop in town" at the time. It was the port of call for traveling DJs and everyone who wanted to keep up with fashion in the Rhineland. "Luckily I was good at school, so I was able to work a lot from an early age. I also traveled a lot," Eva says today. "My boss at the time liked my style and sent me to New York to bring back samples of brands for him that he wanted to buy, then later I was sent to London." Back then she'd never have guessed that one day she would run her own modeling agency.

Until it happened almost by chance, in 2001. Eva founded her first agency, *Nine Daughters* and *Stereo*, together with photographer Kira Bunse. Eva actually studied communication design in Wuppertal under well-known lecturers, such as the art theoretician Bazon Brock. During her studies Eva had often approached quasi models for artists and photographers she was friends with and arranged projects. *Nine Daughters* and *Stereo* was the manifestation of her university thesis: "I thought that if I simply combined everything I had done for my degree, then that would create the ideal modeling agency in my view." Actually, it could just as easily have been about corporate design and the style of photography, about the staging of interesting people on a website. "I put it online and thought to myself: It's worth a go." And so Eva sent off a few emails to different brands, including the designer Stephan Schneider. "He booked straight away," says Eva, who also runs the creative agency *Cheving the Sun* in Wuppertal with two former university friends. "I simply put the models on a bus and drove to Paris with them. It all went well." And suddenly there was one customer after another. Since then the whole thing has been run on a completely different level. "I've just been to the Paris Men's Fashion Week with over 80 of my lads. It's a bit like a school trip." You can picture it exactly.

Eva has carried out castings for hundreds of fashion shows in the 17 years that she has worked as a modeling agent — including for the best international fashion houses. She regularly works with photographers such as Willy Vanderperre and stylists like Alistair Mackie, and she supplies models for campaigns and editorials. The books for *Tomorrow Is Another Day* are in keeping with this: around 250 men and only a few women, all of them individual, thin, hollow-backed, sometimes a bit lopsided and crooked — faces with character. In this way Eva is helping to broaden the definition of the male beauty ideal. Take Artur for example. He has long thin arms that hang down from sloping shoulders and his ears are big. He's a hit: Artur can be seen in the autumn campaigns by Prada, Dior Homme, and MSGM. Then there's Milos, whose look evokes smoky clubs, scratchy guitars, and indie bands. The tattooed Milos always looks as if he's just spent the last three nights partying. Perhaps he has been. Leon, however, has the face of a choir

boy. His pale almond skin and blond curls are equally sought-after at the moment. Eva looks beyond social backgrounds and cultures when casting her models. And you can tell. So much variety is hard to find in one place. That's why Eva scouts everywhere — at rock concerts, in the supermarket, on the streets. The 41 year old is permanently on the lookout for new faces but doesn't stick to a particular mold. What does she like? "It can be anything. Special ears, a certain nose, interesting hair." There's just one thing all her boys seem to have in common: none of them are completely perfect. It wasn't just flicking through the pages of magazines like *i-D* or *Dazed* that honed Eva's feel for it: "I was originally inspired by the Larry Clark exhibition at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne in 1992. I was totally blown away by his black-and-white photographs from the 60s and 70s," she explains. Clark's images are spontaneous snapshots of flawed bodies having sex and shots of drug houses. Taking heroin as a fashionable hobby with the comedown an aesthetic premise — that's how things used to be. Now, of course, they stick to its pure fashion translation.

When Eva started in 2001, her type of individual model didn't really exist. That played into her hands. She still finds most of her models in Cologne and Düsseldorf, where she now lives in the Oberkassel district. Eva, who likes wearing Céline, Prada, and Jil Sander, has never thought about moving. "I travel a lot, but I'm always glad to be back here where I don't have to spend every evening meeting my clients in restaurants," she says. And the infrastructure in Düsseldorf is outstanding: "Thanks to the airport there are excellent connections, whether to Paris, London, or New York."

It would appear there's a disproportionate number of genetically gifted young men in the Rhineland. Well, lots of boys with small flaws, in any case. "Perhaps it's just that the cities here are the right size. There's a good art uni, lots of people the right age," Eva says. Actually, it was the same during her time at school: "There was a certain type in every class who would have been a wonderful fit with my agency." It's a pity that Eva wasn't on the look out for models back then. In fact many of her models today are still at school. "But things don't really start in earnest for us until they are 16," she says. The bean poles with wonky noses and pouting lips still need a bit of maturity. They need to get up early, be

reliable at turning up for castings, and cope on their own in unfamiliar places. There's a lot of things that younger boys don't usually enjoy. Eva is therefore often more than just a booker and a scout; she has to act as a minder for her boys. You don't know in advance who is already capable of taking responsibility for themselves and others.

When she looks back at all the faces she has discovered over the years, one factor has always been decisive: "Their look is exactly right for a particular moment — that's what beauty is to me." And mostly this moment occurs during adolescence. And yet, even some of Eva's old — or rather, older — models are currently doing well in business again — thanks to Miuccia Prada, apparently. A few seasons ago the designer started booking adults again, and actors. And whatever Miuccia does, others do too. "At the moment the most diverse characters are doing well," says Eva.

But at some point it has to come to an end, even for boys with beautiful flaws: "When they are younger, the great thing is that they don't need to worry about their body," Eva says. "They can eat at McDonald's every day and drink a six pack of beer every evening without affecting their appearance. But when they lose their hair or their waistline expands, then it's all over for most male models," she laughs. That's why she advises her models not to do the job full-time in the long term. Most of them listen to her and do something else as well. Ivo, for example, works as an engineer for a car dealership. The family man has modeled for Prada. "For most of them modeling is just a hobby or a very well-paid second job," Eva says.

How well paid, exactly? Eva doesn't want to say. But if a model is constantly booked for important shows and large campaigns, he can certainly afford to buy something nice, a first car or even his first house, perhaps. And Eva? "I want to be successful for me and my lads. And if I weren't, I'd look for another job," she says. "I enjoy what I do, but I'm not 20 anymore." Still young enough to enjoy the school trips with her models, however.