

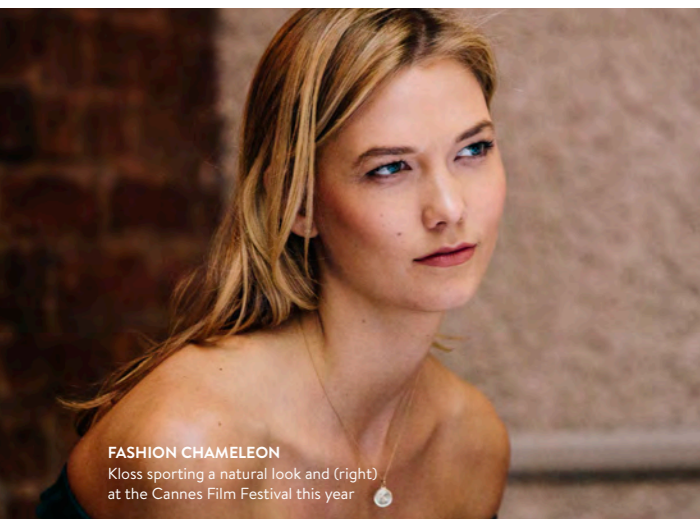
Words Harriet Quick

From tech boot camps to the runway, the invincible Karlie Kloss is set to take on the world. As the new face of Swarovski, we catch up with her at home in New York and find out how she has redefined the role of supermodel for today

SWAROVSKI WOMAN

AMERICAN BEAUTY
Karlie Kloss wearing
Ralph Lauren, FW16

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FASHION CHAMELEON
Kloss sporting a natural look and (right) at the Cannes Film Festival this year



GIRL POWER
At the 2016 *Manus x Machina*-themed Met Gala, wearing her cut-out 'exo-skeleton' dress by designer Brandon Maxwell

Whether it's staring out over the Aegean from the deck of a Sunseeker yacht, or hiking along a trail at Lake Tahoe, or visiting the temples of Bagan in Burma, holidays mean different things to different people. For the record, supermodel Karlie Kloss spent the best part of her summer vacation this year hosting Kode with Klossy boot camps in New York, Los Angeles and her hometown of St Louis, Missouri. For a young supermodel who has already racked up more air miles to more exotic places than most of us will do in a lifetime, a coding camp is her own form of getaway.

Seventy-five girls were awarded scholarships at these two week-long day camps to learn about back-end software and how to write code. Kloss set up the not-for-profit venture and attracted corporate sponsors. "For me, the coding is about understanding the technology that already exists and that transforms the way we live. Technology has impacted so many aspects of our lives, and understanding and learning about how that is built is empowering on many levels," says Kloss. "To master coding takes creativity and grit, and it's great to create something out of nothing."

Unlike the seemingly one-dimensional supermodels driven by sex, power and glamour who took center stage in the early 1990s, Kloss, now 24, is proving that she has real depth. Her chameleon-like modeling abilities might be the source of her fame and fortune, but over the past four years her career has blossomed and shows just how multi-talented she really is. Unlike her silent predecessors, she now owns a voice through the Klossy vlogging channel on YouTube; she studies part-time at New York University; she undertakes philanthropic work through her coding camps; and she even has a line of vegan cookies made by Momofuku Milkbar, with a portion of the profits benefitting the charity FEED. So, between fashion, tech, baking skills and that impossibly lithe, ballet-trained 1.87m body, Kloss shines in many and varied ways.

Today, she's enjoying some rare time off, catching up with plans. She ambles from room to room through her New York apartment, occasionally stretching her limbs like a sleepy cat.

"I think that the opportunity to be whoever you want to be and do whatever you love is there," she says in her soft, melodic tones. "Partially, technology has enabled those opportunities, because anyone with a good idea or perspective can create and share it with the world, whether it's through a product or a voice or a vlog – the opportunity to be whoever you want to be is exciting."

It's her good grace, numerous skills, vast influence and beauty that attracted Swarovski to engage Kloss as the face of the brand's new campaign, a position previously held by Australian model Miranda Kerr. Kloss appears both in the first Swarovski Professional campaign shot by Tim Walker and in the consumer campaign shot by Craig McDean.

"It's a wonderful partnership, because more than anything the brand has such a legacy and such craftsmanship at the core of what it does. Swarovski also values the creative arts and nurtures young talent," says Kloss.

When it comes to creating moments where she truly shines, she is the consummate professional. She glides onto the red carpet and instinctively knows how to angle every joint of her body and find the most flattering light. Yet her sweet smile and cartoon-like, angled eyebrows lend her a puckish, playful air that neatly offsets the out-and-out glamour. "They are like exclamation marks," Kloss says.

Noting the countless glamorous Versace gowns she has worn, Kloss describes one of her favourite fashion moments, in which she wore a Swarovski crystal-encrusted outfit on the Victoria's Secret runway. "I wore a bodysuit which consisted of a very thin layer of flesh-colored tulle covered entirely in crystals and not much more. It was the most amazing creation. When a designer is making this kind of dream outfit, there's only one option – in crystal."

At the Met Gala this year, she sported a cutaway ivory gown by American designer Brandon Maxwell that revealed her super-sculpted shoulders and torso. The sci-fi 'exo-skeleton' played to the Manus X Machina theme perfectly. And at the CFDA awards held in New York in June, she donned a white cotton ruffled dress by upcoming Brooklyn-based designer Rosie Assoulin. Decorated with tiny, colored crystal charms, she wore it to present the Swarovski Awards for emerging talents in womenswear, menswear and accessories. She can traverse every look with aplomb, from provocatrice to siren, and from leading lady to ingénue. On stage as an ambassador and presenter she speaks fluently and generously.

"I have to constantly remind myself that Karlie is as young as she is, because there's nothing adolescent about her," says writer and editor Derek Blasberg, who first met Kloss in their hometown of St Louis. "And that's rare, because in industries like fashion, models can stay coddled and remain infantilized into adulthood. But Karlie never had that. Even when she was a teenager, she was driven and hardworking and determined. In the past few years, the only thing that has changed has been her reach."

Blasberg is referring to her coding scholarships for young girls and her growing mastery of social media. "She's growing into a young woman who is much more than a model and that's inspiring. I couldn't be more proud if she was actually my little sister," continues Blasberg, who hosts CNN's style show and contributes to *Vanity Fair*. But what's driving her? "What drives anyone?" asks Blasberg. "Her father is an emergency room doctor, so I know that she knows the importance of hard work and fast paces. She jokes that she wants to take over the world, and I believe her."

Kloss is among a generation of models – Jourdan Dunn, Kendall Jenner and Cara Delevingne (all friends) – who are wisely spreading their wings and securing a future for themselves beyond the inevitable end of their modeling shelf life. With astute agents to help them, they are building their brands on, and also beyond, fashion.

Yet for a supermodel to be super, she must be able to handle the pressures of the red carpet, the eight-minute extravaganza of the runway show, as well as the image-making that happens on set.

"Working on editorial in the studio and on location is about working with the team and it involves everyone," says Kloss. "It's a process that takes patience and collaboration and I love being a part of that – it's challenging."

Memorable editorials include Kloss dressed up as Marvel superhero Black Widow for art-house publication *Garage*, numerous *Vogue* covers, and as a shiny intergalactic traveler for *WSJ* magazine, which was shot on location at a rocket factory (her father, Kurt, a self-proclaimed space nerd, accompanied her).

"I love runway, too, as you get to take on a different character – it's a bit of performance and it relates to the foundation I have in ballet. I still get butterflies before I go on stage," says the model, who was too tall to pursue a professional ballet career. "In this age of digital everything, there is significance and something especially powerful about those fantasies."



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Dina Litovskiy, Christopher Gregory/Title New York Times/Redux/Eyevine; Loïc Venance/AFP/Getty Images



SCREEN SIREN
Kloss at the Cinema Against AIDS gala at Cap d'Antibes and (right) leaving the Martinez hotel, Cannes

There are many opportunities that Kloss 'the brand' seizes and she clearly has a taste for the humorous and offbeat. Earlier this year, she appeared on *The Tonight Show* with Jimmy Fallon and taught the host how to jump from a trampoline and strike a mid-air pose, as if dunking a basketball. Kloss launched herself upwards wearing a scooped David Koma dress and black bandeau that magically stayed in place. Fallon fared less well, with his so-called 'Boing!' "It's not boing, it's vogue!" retorted Kloss.

Someone remarked on Twitter that her top looked like a bicycle inner tube. The description makes her giggle. "I've been working with stylist Karla Welch – she's helped me be more daring on the red carpet and a little more fun in my approach to street style. My own taste is pretty simple – chic and comfortable," says Kloss.

On her vlogging channel, Klossy, she presents mini travelogues revealing her wonderful world to a global audience of half a million followers. In one vlog, she might be chatting with her favored make-up artist Sir John about how to create the new smoky eye (for the record: taupe base and five to seven lines of eyeliner); and in another, she skips through the streets of Shanghai in jeans and sneakers sampling street food. She reveals rumpled hotel beds, high-tech toilet seats, in-flight facemasks and the contents of her handbag.

"I wanted to show and tell the things I was experiencing with more than just a single picture, so I started to take a camera everywhere. I live a fairy tale some days – and wanted to share that through my eyes and the crazy access that I have," says Kloss, who works with an editor and producer on her vlogs. "It's fun and also empowering to create my own content, control my own voice and distribution, and have direct contact with an audience."

Kloss naturally prefers to keep a low profile, as she does with her life with her tech entrepreneur boyfriend Joshua Kushner, and her studies at university, where she is taking a whole range of classes in science, arts and business. She was swept up into the fashion world having been discovered at a local modeling competition aged 15. She started working professionally at the age of 16, with Calvin Klein booking her exclusively for the 2007 collection. Since then, there has been little time for studying.

"It's a real challenge balancing course work with real work, and I learn best by listening and sitting in on discussions. NYC is such a melting pot, and there are so many people around campus in Washington Square Park that I can blend in with ease," says Kloss, who is proudly frugal in her style of living. Her parents (her mother Tracy is a freelance art director and both she and Kloss's father have German ancestry), three sisters and even best friend Taylor Swift help keep reality in check.

Four years ago, I interviewed Kloss for British *Vogue* during a night-long shoot for the haute couture collections at the Hôtel de Crillon in Paris. The belongings in her hotel room amounted to a couple of t-shirts, a sports jacket, rucksack and a few pieces of personal jewelry. Kloss is not someone who seems to amass too much stuff, nor does she race after the latest and biggest.

"I remember after a ballet recital, my grandmother gave me a little necklace with a miniature Swarovski ballet slipper attached. Those kinds of memories and the emotions they recall are what make something valuable," she says.

Whatever Kloss's next steps in her career will be, her determination to combine entrepreneurship with philanthropy, with just that right amount of fun, makes her a woman of substance – and what could be more inspirational as a role model for today? ♦

Gareth Cattermole, Pascal Le Segretain/WireImage/Getty Images



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