

JOURDAN DUNN

SUPERMODEL 2.0

Jourdan Dunn, Maybelline New York spokesmodel, is blazing a trail for modern models. She tells *Stylist* her thoughts on beauty, diversity and how social media is transforming the industry

AS TOLD TO: SAMANTHA FLOWERS PHOTOGRAPHY: ALASDAIR MCLELLAN

“ I was backstage at Anna Sui when [make-up artist] Pat McGrath got her credit card out. I remember thinking, ‘what the hell is she doing?’ then I realised it was this amazing trick: you put the card behind your lash line and wiggle the mascara wand right to the base of the lashes pulling it backwards. You don’t get mascara smudging onto your lids and your lashes look ridiculously long. That was the first time that I witnessed how transformative make-up can be. I look at school kids now and they’re fully done up, I was never like that. I carried a tin of Vaseline in my pocket, that’s all. Now, I’ve got all the pro-tricks! All the free make-up that comes as part of my role as a Maybelline spokesmodel means that when the girls come round to mine to get ready for a night out, I’m like, “Boom! I got you. Try this”. But it hasn’t always been this way.

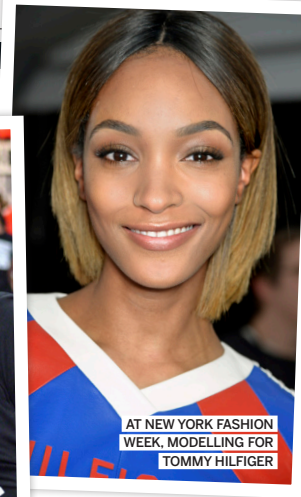
Despite the fact that it’s 2015, there have been times where I’ve walked backstage at a catwalk show and hair stylists who are available [to prepare models for the show] turn their heads and act like they’re busy. It feels s**t to be the girl that they avoid but it’s because they aren’t used to working with Afro hair so they either don’t understand it or are afraid of dealing with it. I’ve experienced the same thing when it comes to cosmetics; I’ve been booked for a job and the make-up artists didn’t have any shades to match my skintone. I mean, come on! It’s ridiculous. Black girls come in all sorts of different shades but the make-up artists would either have really dark or really light foundation, nothing in between. It would frustrate me so much but I can’t even imagine how it was back in the day when Naomi [Campbell] was starting out. I realised pretty soon that I had to be prepared and take my own products with me on jobs; at one catwalk show the make-up artist actually walked in on me re-doing my face in the bathroom. It could have been really awkward but he understood.

Those experiences are really disappointing; Naomi was the



one I turned to for advice, she understood, she’s been there. She’s my mentor in this industry, having that kind of support is invaluable. I’m 24 but it’s such a ‘young’ industry that I feel like one of the ‘older’ girls and I have

enough experience under my belt to give other girls advice. [British model] Malaika [Firth, age 20], hit me up; she was worried about Milan because that can be a hard place to work in terms of ethnic girls. It’s tricky getting booked out there. When I started I’d see some girls not even bother going,



they’d just bypass it and go straight to Paris. I’m lucky because I have my supporters there but I remember in the past crying because I didn’t get booked for a show that the other girls did. It can be a total mind-f**k but you can’t take it personally. I think it’s kind of ridiculous though that in 2015

it’s still a big deal if a model of colour lands a magazine cover. Don’t make it a big thing. I just want it to be the norm; I want to see everyone represented. We’re seeing a lot more ethnic girls on the runway and it’s amazing but when you read something and they’re like, “Oh wow, and they

had five black models there,” I’m like okaaay, but that’s five out of how many?

There’s no denying that things are changing though; the choice of make-up shades are getting a lot better. The fact that I can be in a Maybelline campaign these days speaks volumes. Being in an ad campaign for a brand that’s 100 years old brings a certain amount of pressure – I want to be a good role model for girls growing up with these images. Social media has changed the industry big time; brands look at your followers before they book you. It’s crazy. It gets to the point where you become obsessed with how many ‘likes’ you have, you start questioning how popular a picture will be and when to post because you need to think about time zones. It can get a little too much. Back in the supermodel era the girls were shrouded in mystery but now everyone feels like they know you. With my cooking channel [Well Dunn With Jourdan Dunn produced by Jay-Z], people can see a different side of me. It’s not scripted; it’s just me in the kitchen cooking with friends. Man, I’ve come a long way with my eating habits. I remember going to Paris and making sure I stayed in the Holiday Inn because it was right across the road from McDonald’s. Everyone was like, ‘Jourdan you’re in Paris!’ But I didn’t know French food. I needed my security blanket. Now I know that if you put goodness inside your body, you’re going to feel the difference. I hate it in restaurants when they have a separate kids menu, if it’s good enough for you it’s good enough for your child.

Social media has helped show the real me and brand myself for the future and that’s the way you have to look at this job these days. You can have a very long and successful career but then what? I have a son (Riley, 5) and a family so I want to get them set for life. I want my own jeans line and I’m also designing a kids clothing range. I’m caught in the cross-over between fashion, music, food... I feel like I can do anything.”

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JOURDAN’S BEAUTY ESSENTIALS

The products Ms Dunn wouldn't be without

- NUDE EYESHADOW PALETTE, £9.99, MAYBELLINE NEW YORK (OUT APRIL)
- THE EYE CONCENTRATE, £135, CRÈME DE LA MER
- TRUTH SERUM COLLAGEN BOOSTER, £47, OLE HENRIKSEN
- COLOR SENSATIONAL LIPSTICK IN RAVISHING ROSE, £6.99, MAYBELLINE NEW YORK