

# FASHION

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**DOUTZEN  
KROES**

"I'M VERY LUCKY  
I WAS BORN A  
CERTAIN WAY"

**LESS IS MORE**

**ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY**

**REIMAGINED BEAUTY STAPLES**

**POWERFUL PASTELS**

**MYSTICAL BODY TREATMENTS**

**+ MODERN MOTHERHOOD TALES**





Holt Renfrew and H Project partnered with Kotn and #knotonmyplanet to create a limited-edition T-shirt with an elephant illustration by Melody Hansen. The shirt (long sleeves \$55, short sleeves \$50) is sold exclusively at Holt Renfrew, and 100 per cent of the profits will be donated to the Elephant Crisis Fund.

# TRUNK SHOW

*Doutzen Kroes is using her supermodel influence to bring attention to the Elephant Crisis Fund.*

*By Isabel B. Slone  
Photography by Chris Colls*

When Doutzen Kroes picks up the phone, her voice is breathy and has a faint Dutch accent that makes the letter “v” tumble out of her mouth as a pillowy “f.” It’s the kind of posh international accent you’d expect from one of the top supermodels of her generation. What’s equally charming is the casual way she explains away her supernova success. “I’m very lucky I was born a certain way,” she says simply. It’s a humble outlook that may have come from growing up in Eastermar, a rural village located 160 kilometres from Amsterdam.

Kroes launched her career after reading a glossy magazine when she was 18. She says she remembers being overcome with a desire to look as glamorous and beautiful as the models she saw. She decided to send photos of herself to an Amsterdam-based modelling agency listed in the magazine. The photos were lost

in the mail, but after she sent them a second time, the company eventually received them and called her right away to request a meeting. Kroes had never travelled to the capital before. She was signed almost immediately, booked a few shoots in the city and was soon living and modelling in New York.

“When I started out, the industry was more playful and not as calculated,” says Kroes. “Now, because of social media, everyone knows everything—there are all these 15-year-old girls who know all the big photographers and fashion designers. I had no idea; I was a naive girl who barely spoke English. Being shy didn’t help, so I basically said nothing all day. I was homesick a lot, but, step by step, I grew into it.”

Kroes went from being a small-town girl to scoring a fairly regular spot on *Forbes*’s list of highest-paid models for more than a decade. That alone is an amazing feat, but what’s even more inspiring is that she still has a refreshingly grateful perspective. “Doutzen is a very »





grounded person,” says Trish Goff, a former model who is now a real estate agent. “She’s not a diva at all. She’s very real and kind, and she’s got her feet on the ground. She’s honest. Other models don’t feel competitive with her.”

That’s impressive in any industry but particularly in modelling, where good genes, connections and luck can change a young woman’s life or, minus the connections and luck, leave her enviously watching from the sidelines. Kroes’s career flourished like a succulent on a millennial’s windowsill. She dominated the runways in the aughts, landed campaigns for L’Oréal, Calvin Klein and Tiffany & Co. and earned a coveted spot as a Victoria’s Secret Angel, which she held until her retirement from the brand in 2015.

But the entire time she was cavorting in swimsuits on Miami Beach and wearing glittery Angel wings, Kroes felt that her work wasn’t having enough of a positive impact on the world. Goff says she understands how this feeling of “having something that is your own—that you’re part of and that you control” is crucial to a model’s sense of self-worth.

Kroes has always thought that it’s important to use the public platform she has wisely. Right now, that means lending her voice to the Elephant Crisis Fund for its “Knot on My Planet” campaign. The “knot” has a double meaning: It’s a reference to the tradition of tying a knot around one’s finger to remember something important as well as a nod to the elephant’s uncanny memory.

For the campaign, Holt Renfrew collaborated with ethical basics brand Kotn and illustrator Melody Hansen to create a limited-edition T-shirt featuring a minimalist line drawing of an elephant. The shirt is currently

available, and Holts will donate 100 per cent of the profits, as well as 10 per cent of the proceeds up to \$200,000 from a charity shopping weekend on April 13 and 14, to the Elephant Crisis Fund.

“I love all animals, of course, but it was devastating to hear about the crisis,” says Kroes, explaining that 30,000 elephants are killed every year (or the equivalent of one elephant every 15 minutes) for their ivory. The Elephant Crisis Fund, which Kroes has been working with for two years, has raised \$17 million toward 152 projects in 31 countries to address the poaching of elephants and the trafficking of ivory. Kroes has persuaded many of her high-wattage friends to participate, including Linda Evangelista, Christy Turlington and Naomi Campbell. The three of them were even photographed together for the campaign, a rare occurrence since the ’90s. “I’m so grateful that so many people in the fashion world participated in our campaign and were so enthusiastic,” says Kroes. “I thought, ‘That’s why I went to all the fashion parties over the years!’”

Kroes booked her first trip to The Samburu National Reserve in 2016 on the recommendation of David Bonnouvrier, her agent, and Goff, his fiancée. “They probably knew that if they sent me, I could become their global ambassador,” she says. “That’s exactly how it was,” confirms Goff. “We had an idea and told her to go and meet the elephants.” Of all the world’s top models they have at their disposal, why did Bonnouvrier and Goff pick Kroes as the face of an international campaign? “Everyone likes Doutzen,” says Goff.

For Kroes, it was the elephants’ emotional nature that struck her most. “They are so emotionally similar to human beings,” says Kroes, noting the way her antsy son calmed down in their presence. Her children, Phyllon Joy, 7, and Myllena Mae, 3, also motivate her to get involved. “I’ve always felt like it’s my duty to give back,” she says.

Kroes and her husband, Sunnery James, have chosen to raise their children in Holland in a quiet, wholesome setting away from the hustle of New York City. “We’re both Dutch, so it’s nice to have the kids grow up with family around them,” she says. “They’re our link to the future, and I want them to live in a great world.”

Kroes and the elephants she’s trying to protect share a few notable traits: Their emotional lives are rich, and family life is important. And when they want something, it’s probably best to get out of their way. □

PHOTOGRAPHY: ELEPHANTS BY FRANK AF PETERSENS



*Extra-large Tiffany Save the Wild Elephant brooch in 18-karat rose gold with diamond, \$2,450, Tiffany & Co. The Tiffany Save the Wild collection supports anti-poaching, anti-trafficking and ivory-demand-reduction projects worldwide. One hundred per cent of the profits from the collection will be donated to the Elephant Crisis Fund. The Tiffany Save the Wild Elephant brooch is available in sterling silver and rose gold (\$270–\$2,450) at Ogilvy (Montreal) and Holt Renfrew (Calgary, Vancouver, Mississauga). Styling, Joseph Tang. Hair, Panos Papandrianos. Makeup, Sil Bruna.*