



Lifestyle Feature

Moss Appeal

Lauren Sherman, 09.20.06, 3:55 PM ET

Kate Moss is everywhere. Is she also on the verge of overkill?

With 14 modeling contracts, including campaigns for **Burberry**, **Calvin Klein**, **Roberto Cavalli**, **Dior**, **Louis Vuitton**, **David Yurman** and **Versace**, you'd think **Kate Moss's** plate would be not just full but overflowing.

Add a couple of magazine covers, an exclusive "video diary" for British lingerie line **Agent Provocateur** and a just-announced contract to design a line of clothing for **Phillip Green's** British fashion chain **Topshop** to the pile, and the table might start creaking. Are we on the verge of Kate Moss overkill?

Only a year ago this September, her career looked every which way finished. After Britain's *Daily Mirror* published images of Moss allegedly snorting a line of cocaine, she was promptly dropped from several modeling contracts--most publicly, **H&M** and Burberry. While the latter remained fairly quiet about its decision (and eventually revoked it, re-signing Moss for an Autumn 2006 campaign), the former aggressively distanced itself from the model, stating, "After having evaluated the situation, H&M has decided that a campaign with Kate Moss is inconsistent with H&M's clear dissociation of drugs."

What a difference 12 months makes. Moss (currently ranked #77 on *Forbes's* [100 Most Powerful Celebrities](#) list) is reportedly together again with her rock-star beau **Pete Doherty** and back on the fashion scene with several major bookings. Besides the aforementioned companies, supporters of the quiet model include **Rimmel**, **Stella McCartney**, **Bulgari**, **Longchamp**, **Virgin Mobile** and **Nikon**. It's not a surprise that, if rumors are true, the petite model's earnings may reach beyond \$20 million by the end of 2006.

Yet could Moss' current media ubiquity be hurting rather than helping? We looked to Encino, Calif.-based **E-Poll Market Research**, which keeps a database of more than 2,800 celebrities, for some answers. E-Poll's E-Scores are celebrity appeal rankings, comprised of 46 separate personality attributes. Moss' "overexposed" score went from 21% in May to 24% on Aug. 27. The average for most celebrities is 3% to 5% at the height of their careers.

And it looks as though significantly fewer people find her appealing. In fact, 49% of the 1,100 Americans surveyed in the most recent poll have some level of dislike of Moss's looks, compared with 33% of those surveyed in May 2005. (Moss' publicist declined to comment for this story.)

Sandy Dumont, a Washington, D.C.-based image consultant and former model, believes Moss has taken her role as the comeback kid a step too far, particularly because she isn't, in fact, a kid.

"Everybody was so forgiving and felt like the poor little orphan girl was picked on [when the drug scandal broke]," Dumont says. But unlike her contemporaries, **Linda Evangelista** and **Helena Christensen**, Moss is showing signs of her age in recent campaigns, she says.

Dumont was shocked by the number of bookings Moss had acquired for Fall 2006. "It's nice when you're first starting out [in modeling], but at 32, it looks like she's trying to make up for something." Is she headed toward overexposure? "Absolutely."

However, E-Poll President and Chief Executive **Gerry Philpott** believes the massive amount of publicity might actually work in Moss' favor.

"You have to look at Kate Moss a little differently, because her initial splash on the scene was controversial," he says, referring to her infamous 1992 Calvin Klein campaign. "The initial exposure of Kate Moss was meant to be provocative, to alienate people and create kind of an edge. In a lot of people's minds, she almost started overexposed. ... [The advertisers] are going for that edge, that controversy."

Philpott says Moss should work as much as she can, while she can. "If she has some talent that we haven't yet seen, she's yet to exhibit it. She's got a shorter shelf life than some other supermodels that have a greater range in their careers," he says.

The new deal with Green, who is bringing Topshop's affordable fashion from the U.K. to the U.S. in 2007 (see: "[Fashion's New Fast Lane](#)"), may expose a hidden talent that will extend Moss' professional life. Although she's consistently viewed as a trendsetter, she has virtually no designing experience.

Yet Green's statement in the Sept. 19 edition of *Women's Wear Daily* makes it sound as though Moss will serve as more of a muse than a maker. "She will come in for a few hours every other day or so, set the inspiration for the line, and then our designers will interpret that. ... She will be in the engine room helping to steer the collection."

Patty Pao, chief executive of **Pao Principle**, a consulting firm in New York City, is enthusiastic about the partnership:

"Her deal with the Topshop makes great sense. She is a fashion icon, and the Topshop is the best at creating and selling affordable, cutting-edge, fashion-right/forward clothing," she says. "She is not going to be the 'face' of her brand. She is just going to give her design input, brand her name and make a lot of money."

But Philpott cautions that Moss should not deviate from her chosen path.

"As long as she continues to play this enigma role and let people think what they will, it will work for her," he says. "Whether or not it will ultimately work in the long run for the sponsors is yet to be seen."