

# THE NEW SUPER ON THE BLOCK

With her highly successful style blog, more than 2.4 million Instagram followers and a new entry in the world's wealthiest people list, Kristina Bazan is a force to be reckoned with in the fashion world. And there's even more to come from this 23-year-old straight-talker, who's recently been made an ambassador for a top beauty brand and has just released her first make-up range. HFM met her in LA to hear about the lonely side of fame and why the style snobs are wrong

**WORDS** ELAINE LIPWORTH **PHOTOGRAPHS** CARLA GULER **STYLING** JENNIFER MICHALSKI-BRAY

Coat, POA,  
Dolce &  
Gabbana Dress,  
£565, No. 21  
at intermixonline.  
com Sandals  
£595, Jimmy  
Choo Gold  
Molten choker,  
£525, Gold  
Smooth ring,  
£192, both  
Jennifer Fisher  
Lips and Eye  
ring, £825,  
Erickson Beamon



WE ARE MEETING international super-blogger Kristina Bazan on a typical Californian afternoon in West Hollywood; the sunlight filtering through the palm trees as millennials linger over green juices

at outdoor cafes. But in defiance of the mild winter weather, the shops are full of bling and winter coats, and there’s a distinctly festive, party atmosphere at the ultra-hip Andaz hotel on Sunset Boulevard, where the Instagram star has arrived for our HFM interview and shoot. Dressed in flared black velvet leggings, a black GCDS sweatshirt and studded Alexander Wang platforms, her nails painted “alien green”, Kristina has pulled back her dyed dark hair (she’s a natural blonde) into a dramatic pony tail, a heavy fringe framing her large almond-shaped eyes, which are accentuated by thick eyeliner. “I always do eyeliner, it’s my signature look,” she says.

Born in Belarus and raised in Switzerland, Kristina, who lived in Paris before moving to LA last year, has a magnetic presence, causing a stir – even among the cool LA party crowd – as she saunters through the hotel lobby. It is the end of an extraordinary year for this powerful influencer. Establishing herself as one of the

leading style voices of her generation, she has 2.4 million Instagram followers and a lucrative (reportedly seven figure) contract with L’Oréal as a brand ambassador. Other famous ‘L’Oréalists’ include Naomi Watts, Eva Longoria, Karlie Kloss and Doutzen Kroes.

Kristina landed on *Forbes* magazine’s prestigious 30 Under 30 list earlier this year, her blog Kayture is wildly popular and with the release of her first – and well-reviewed – music video and single, Out, she’s also embarked on a promising music career. “To this day, I don’t know how it all happened,” exclaims the vivacious 23-year-old as she sinks into a green velvet sofa in a sleek, stark hotel suite and orders a cup of green tea. “Life is what you make out of it. I was not predestined to have the kind of life that I have today.”

While thrilled about her soaring career, Kristina isn’t afraid to speak her mind. She has strong views on the controversy currently raging in the fashion industry following the attack on bloggers at the end of Milan Fashion Week in September, when American *Vogue* journalists accused popular style aficionados (like Kristina, Susie Bubble and Chiara Ferragni) of being “embarrassing”,

“desperate” and “pathetic”, saying they are “heralding the death of style” because they are paid by brands to appear in their clothes and then promote them on social media.

“I think it’s very hypocritical and snobbish of *Vogue*,” says Kristina about the disparaging remarks levelled at the blogging community. “All magazines promote their content through social media, which is what they are attacking bloggers for doing. They are criticising us for getting paid by brands, but with their advertising, they are doing exactly the same thing. Honestly, it’s true that there’s something about social media that can seem negative and unhealthy, but this is the way the world has evolved and magazines should accept that. Also, they should be supporting the new generation of entrepreneurs [like bloggers]. It’s snobbish to say fashion should belong to an elite of fashion editors when bloggers have made fashion democratic and accessible. And it is hypocritical because they put bloggers on their covers [Kristina was on the cover of *Vogue* Portugal in January 2016]. I find it all very sad.”

Kristina goes on to accuse some high-end fashion magazines of being out of touch. She cites a piece in a recent issue of *Harper’s Bazaar* “about a super-exclusive workout class [British personal trainer Russell Bateman’s], ‘Skinny Bitch Collective’ [SBC]” that is beloved of celebrities such as Ellie Goulding and Suki Waterhouse and a host of supermodels. She muses about why, if it’s so selective, are these magazines writing about it? “I’ve grown up reading magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar*,” she says. “Sometimes their articles are very arrogant and snobbish, they’re assuming everybody can afford super-expensive designer clothes.”



Coat, £4,800, Christian Dior  
Turtleneck, £300, Alice & Olivia at bloomingdales.com  
Loop cuff, £305, Double Loop ring, £240, Abstract Line pinky ring, £175, all Jennifer Fisher  
Double spike ring, £52, Wild Hearts

says. When she was four years old, the family relocated to the States after her father won a scholarship to study at the University of Kentucky. “We were all living in a student dorm room, which was crazy,” she laughs. Two years later, they moved to Begnins, outside Geneva in Switzerland. “It’s a village with cows and sheep. It was the first time I had privacy, with my own room,” she recalls. The transition was challenging for the six-year-old. “I had to learn French really quickly and I didn’t make a lot of friends, so I started developing my own inner world. I would read a lot; I approached everything in my life like a video game. It was lonely, but at the same time it made me open-minded about different people and cultures. Now I can easily adapt to wherever I am. I describe myself as an international world citizen.”

Ambitious and self-assured, Kristina says she was inspired by her parents (now divorced) who were powerful role models: “They came from nothing and had to work their way up.” Her father works in IT, her mother in finance. “They’ve always killed it in their careers and they taught me how important it is to be independent and work hard and be passionate about whatever you decide to do.”

Aged 15, she started posting pictures of herself on Facebook. “I would take the curtains from the living room, set up backgrounds in my bedroom and dress up.” With her striking appearance, she immediately attracted attention from photographers and designers. Signing up to an agency, she began modelling “to get extra money for magazines and nail polishes. I’ve always been obsessed with make-up. It’s like an illness, I never have enough!”

Covers for Swiss magazines and a Dior mascara commercial followed and, encouraged by friends, Kristina entered the Miss Switzerland beauty contest and made it to the finals, winning the ‘Miss Photogenic’ category. She didn’t pursue a modelling career though, explaining that, “I don’t actually like modelling; I like art directing more. I love the process of creating the picture, not just being in it. And I love writing, too.”

Still in high school, aged 16, Kristina met an “artistic older boy”, aspiring photographer James Chardon, who told the stunning teenager she had “a cool sense of style”. They began dating – and embarked on a professional partnership as well, which was to transform both their lives. A photoshoot they posted on Facebook saw Kristina “walking through a vineyard in a short black skirt and top, with polka-dot tights and lace-up boots. I was in my Lady Gaga phase!” The next morning, the post “got so many likes, I thought, ‘That’s amazing’, and from that day on we started shooting stuff and posting every day after school, just for fun. I thought, ‘This gives my boring student life another turn!’”

In 2011, the entrepreneurial pair created Kayture, the name being a combination of Kristina’s nickname, K, and ‘couture’. “I definitely felt like there was something special about the blog and I’ve always been intuitive,” she says. Soon, James and Kristina, who ended their romance three years ago but remain business partners and “close friends”, were collaborating with some of the most respected names in fashion: Hugo Boss, Piaget ►



Jumpsuit, £142, House of Harlow at revolve.com  
Abstract Line choker, £1,205, Loop cuff, £305, Abstract Line ring, £175, all Jennifer Fisher





FROM TOP  
Kristina with her  
new L'Oréal  
make-up; wowing  
in Milan; bright  
at Paris Fashion  
Week; making  
music in the  
studio; lady in red  
at Cannes Film  
Festival 2016



and Cartier, also working on a digital campaign for Louis Vuitton.

Today, Kristina is outspoken about fashion and social media's continued obsession with the "perfect body". "People in my generation say, 'We're all about curves', but many of the girls who are popular on Instagram get injections and have plastic surgery, and they get a lot of attention," she says. "Boys like a big butt, a tiny waist, big boobs and skinny arms. How can you possibly have a body like that naturally? The standards for beauty are really crazy."

Would she consider surgery herself?

"It's tempting, as women we are all curious... I don't want to, but I would never say never. I don't think I'm stunningly pretty and I think that's what made me stay humble because I tend to focus on my flaws. I think all women find flaws, right?"

Does she think the blogging bubble is about to burst?

"No, I think it's here to last. It's another kind of journalism, a way for people to express themselves. Why would it die?" she asks. "But I don't like the word 'blogger' because I think it minimises our capabilities. When I say I'm a blogger, people are like, 'Oh, you sit in a cafe with a latte and your computer, writing about avocado on toast!'"

Style is Kristina's stock-in trade, but what sets Kayture apart is its reflective posts about her life. Exploring the angst and concerns of women her age, she has cultivated a unique connection with her followers. "Every time I write an article from my soul, it gets a ton of comments and shares. When I wrote about being an introvert, people were like, 'Thank you for putting words to how I feel'."

With the world at her feet and such a glamorous life, it's surprising to hear Kristina admits she often feels sad and isolated. "People see me as a happy person, which I am, but the sub-layers of my personality are extremely dark. I think loneliness is a beautiful thing," she says. "People associate it with negativity, but I actually pursue being lonely because creatively it's so inspiring to me."

Music is her other passion: "I never said that I wanted to be a blogger all my life. What I've done so far involves something narcissistic. I'll be proud of myself when I've achieved something that's not just about myself, and I feel like that's my chance with music," she says. "People get angry because I'm doing music now but please stop putting people in boxes! I'm 23

years old; I don't know what I will feel like in five years' time. I do what inspires me."

What does it feel like to be wealthy, with no financial concerns?

"I was born poor and then I suddenly started earning money; I have no idea how much money I have. I'm the most irresponsible person in the entire world with money," she laughs. "I love the opportunities that money gives you, but I hate money itself. I don't spend much and get stuff sponsored [such as free clothes]." She does admit to splashing out occasionally, though: "I have periods where I feel like I need to spoil myself a little so I go and buy something." For example? "I bought a Jonathan Adler chair for \$2,000 which is very expensive but it's the most beautiful chair... blue velvet with gold, like David Lynch's film," she says referencing the 1986 cult classic *Blue Velvet*.

Travelling between LA, New York and Paris there isn't much time for dating – Kristina confesses that her past relationships haven't

always been easy: "I had a very introspective period after breaking up with James. I take creative inspiration from my inner torment; that's what my single, Out, is about. I even like being sad because creatively it's so fulfilling."

It doesn't sound like much fun...

"Well you feel bad, but when you come out of it you're like 'Wow!'. I almost feel like I need to suffer a bit more

to have more songs to write," she smiles.

What kind of men is she attracted to?

"British boys, because of the accent, obviously, also because they are classy, elegant and usually they're smart. I love [actors] Henry Cavill and Tom Hiddleston, but only when he was dark, playing Loki [in *Thor* and the sequels]. I don't like him when he looks happy!"

For now Kristina is content being single and sharing a rented apartment in LA with a Swiss friend, Fiona. Do they cook together?

"No, I don't cook," she says. "We eat out."

What's in your fridge?

"Literally nothing."

Unusually in LA, where public transport is limited, Kristina doesn't own a car.

"I get Ubers everywhere. I'm the WORST," she hoots. "I don't cook, I don't drive, I don't know how much money I have... but I'm a really great person!" **HFM**

## 'I THINK BLOGGING IS HERE TO LAST. IT'S ANOTHER KIND OF JOURNALISM, A WAY FOR PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES'



WATCH OUR KRISTINA SHOOT  
VIDEO AT [HELLOFASHION.COM](http://HELLOFASHION.COM)

HAIR & MAKEUP: CINTA MILLER USING L'ORÉAL. FASHION ASSISTANTS: THEODORA CHYTOLDI AND TONYA LOMBARDO. PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: HERNAN RODRIGUEZ. RETOUCHING: MAGDALENA BARANKOLCZ. LOCATION COURTESY OF THE ANDAZ WEST HOLLYWOOD. ADDITIONAL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES. INSTAGRAM/KRISTINA BAZAN