

## **From plan A to B and back**

### **Or – why I never made it to Japan**

I am often asked how everything began... how I got into modeling, whether I applied or whether I was approached... When and where and in general... Well, here I'll give you a little insight into my past and present as a model...

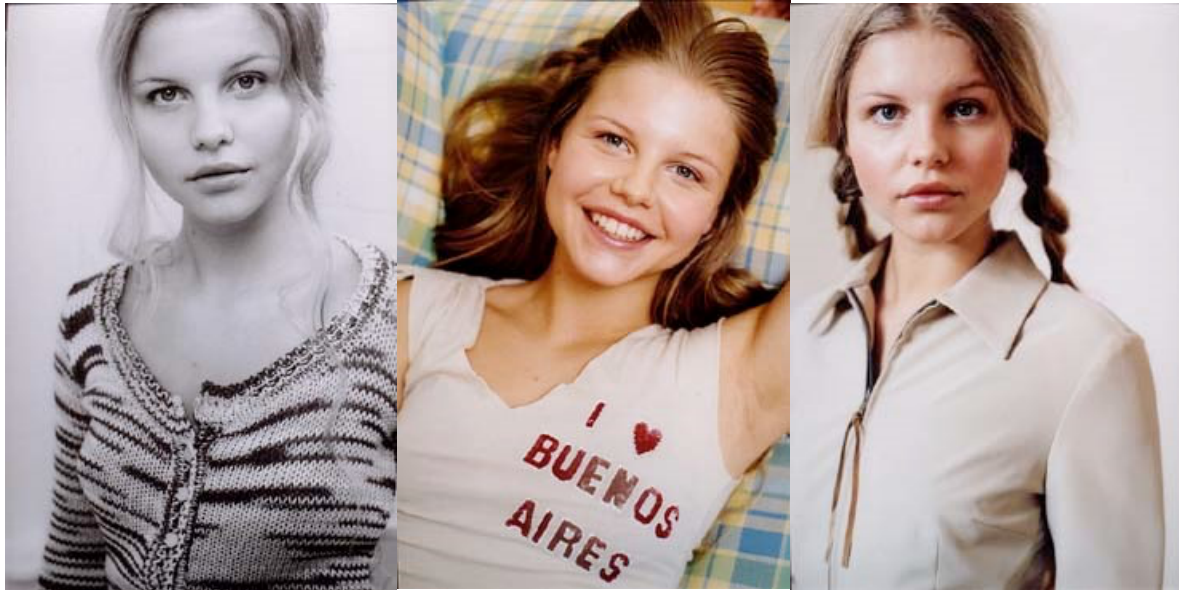
I originally come from a very small village in the middle of beautiful Thuringia/ Germany - an area that has nothing to do with the fashion industry, where you can't find any photo studios, models or model agencies. It used to be part of the former GDR, governed by Russia. As you can see - I had no idea what was soon to come...

When I was 12 years old, I was playing outside my parents' house with some friends. Suddenly, a car drove by and a young lady got out and walked towards us. We thought she wanted to ask for directions, but we were mistaken. She pulled out a card with "Most Wanted Models" written on it. She said she owned a modeling agency and was currently looking for young girls for the FC Bayern fan catalogue. She suggested I consider earning some pocket money and standing in front of the camera. She was happy to discuss everything further with my parents.

My family was skeptical. We took our time to approach the offer. After a few phone calls and correspondence, which my parents took care of, I had my first casting – back then in Nuremberg. I was supposed to cheer like a fan, scream and to be ecstatic. It made me feel very uncomfortable. I felt embarrassed, shy, and just wanted to be in my mom's arms who of course accompanied me. But something seemed to have pleased the photographer and I ended up being booked for my first job!

It was 1997 when I went off to Munich to meet Lothar Matthäus, Carsten Janker, Mehmet Scholl and all the big stars from that time. We were quite a bunch of cool kids wearing nice t-shirts and caps and ended up having a lot of fun with the players. My buddies from school were darn jealous, especially the boys. I quickly wondered if all modeling jobs would be so much fun and if I could do more of them. But since I didn't live in a metropolitan city it was very difficult to combine modeling with school. Extremely long travels of at least 4 hours to Munich, Hamburg, Berlin or Stuttgart, combined with the strict child labor laws in Germany, quickly put an end to it. For the first time I was confronted to choose A: modeling or B: school. The agency encouraged me and suggested we shall wait until I was a little older. I kept their card safe and sent some pictures and snapshots a few years later via post, of course no digital ones.

To present myself well to clients, I quickly needed professional pictures, which got taken in Milan around 2001.



Despite my baby face and lack of experience, I quickly booked big campaigns for several fashion brands, BRAVO or GIRL magazine and many others. This has caused a lot of gossip at school. Classmates put huge effort in embarrassing me in front of teachers and pupils. At one event they made me sing karaoke on stage to a Shakira song because I once had a look alike shooting about her. Of course, I had no idea about it and only got asked to walk up the stairs. Times weren't easy and I was forced again. Juliane, choose. Shall I go for A: modeling or B: school? It was challenging to take days off school. Teachers didn't know much about this job, laws were strict and classmates were constantly bullying me. We decided to wait (again), to give the career its time and space.

As soon as I got my high school diploma, I wanted to finally give the modeling a proper Go. But all my friends went to university and I got confronted with the arguments that modeling wouldn't be a good job and I got asked to pursue a "normal career" in order to get a normal job which was more secure and safe.

Since I've never been really good at taking decisions on my own, I simply started to follow both plans - A and B.

At the age of 19, I enrolled at the University of Jena for a degree in Business Administration/Intercultural Management. I enjoyed the freedom of being a student, traveling to modeling jobs whenever I got booked or to go to classes when I needed to. My self-confidence grew and I didn't care about what people said anymore. Modeling started to finance my studies and rent. During the first semester break, I went abroad for the first time – to Athens/ Greece! New Faces, as young new models are called, are often sent to Athens or Istanbul to collect material for their books, to be ready for the larger markets such as Germany, Milan, Paris, London, and after some experience, even New York and Miami.



Canon worldwide

George Katzanakis, Athens

Living in a classic model apartment with many male and female models from all over the world, I gained my first real experiences – I was working at great beaches, in huge photo studios, worked with amazing photographers, posed for magazines and catalogues. On some days I did 2 jobs, one in the morning, one in the afternoon until midnight. I worked my a\*\* off, but didn't earn anything. The money I got was just enough for the flights. But within 3 weeks I had a fully packed book including an editorial for ELLE and some cover shoots.

I had a good run. My mother agency wanted to send me on more trips – they came up with a massive contract from Japan. A great contract with a great agency was waiting for me there, 2-3 months in Tokyo and many already guaranteed clients, thus jobs and money. Soooo tempting! But then there was my studies and some exams I didn't pass waiting for me. I had to make a difficult decision again – do I continue university when I'm older or shall I go back to Germany to finish what I had started?

Well, those of you who know me personally know that I still haven't been to Japan. I chose my studies and hoped that modeling would somehow run alongside to it in Germany and that I would be able to travel only during the semester breaks. How would my life have turned out if I had accepted the offer to go to Japan? I don't know, but it was surely tempting to cancel university.

After Athens and some exams, I went to Milan in my second break. Naive as I used to be, I thought I had already seen it all. Wrong I was. For the first time, I was confronted whether my body was okay enough or not. My Italian landlady reported to my Milanese agency (without my knowledge) what I had eaten in the apartment. She checked the kitchen shelves and drawers. Some flat mates only had an apple or an egg per day. But I always enjoyed pasta and some Nutella which she obviously found and told my agency about. All of a sudden, my measurements, which had always been fine, became an issue.





Milan

Shortly after, I travelled to Paris and it was similar. I met incredibly skinny unhealthy girls for whom the profession was so essential that they did everything to meet the agency's' demands.

For the first time, I was glad to have my Plan B in my pocket – my studies. I know that not everybody out there has the chance to drive on two tracks and that I can count myself as extremely lucky wish I am beyond grateful for. This story is my path and a lot would have taken different decisions or are not even able to decide.

These been said, I want to let you know that I also moved into terrible model apartments, met many snooty colleagues, received strange shooting requests and untrustworthy offers from photographers, had little sleep, and got sore feet from casting marathons in unfamiliar cities. My mental and physical health got challenged and I finally found a balance.





Germany/Alessandro cosmetics



Germany/ Frieda & Freddie's

Thanks to my strong family roots, my studies, as well as my friends, but above all my mother agent who always supported me and accepted every decision I had to take was with me. They contacted the foreign agencies immediately in case of problems and were even available on holidays or in the middle of the night (if I had ever needed it).

But you know what? Getting to know the most creative people of the world who have the strongest impact in the fashion industry as well as working with them closely, understanding their mind, passion and creativity, their marketing ideas was a huge blessing for me. They chose me to implement their mind into action and therefore pictures or commercials. Besides some negative experiences, I am beyond grateful for everything I could experience and still experience. Cultural depth, diverse traditions, different languages, getting lost in cities with maps in my hand, challenging roommates and much more made me become the person I am today. An open minded, non non-judging, grateful woman.

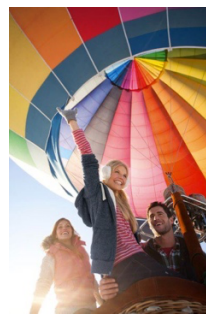
Alongside Paris & Milan, I worked 2003 for a big German TV channel and got in touch with the marketing department of ProSieben Sat1. Media AG. I took that chance to secure my internship at a reputable company I needed to finalize university. In the end I stayed in Munich for a while to even write my masters dissertation with them many years after.

So what happened after France and Italy? In 2006, once more I could combine plan A and B when my international studies requested a term abroad in Spain. I had no idea which university or city to go to and it really didn't matter to me. I asked my mother agency who are internationally well connected, where I should go to in order to finance my rent on-site with a few modeling jobs. And so it happened – I went to Barcelona and explored the Spanish model market alongside to my studies in Business Economy.

6 months later and with a strong book including publications from Germany, Greece, Milan, Paris and Barcelona I was ready to go to London, a market which I enjoyed the most. I ended up living there for a couple of years, travelled only for exams or direct bookings to Germany. My international agencies such as NEVS or ICE Models booked me jobs in hot air balloons in New Zealand, jetski shootings in Australia, desert jobs in

South Africa for the biggest clients I could ever dream of. TV Commercials became my new favorite thing which made me book jobs clients flew me all around the globe for.

I remember a casting for Axe (UK: Lynx) the same day I had a flight to New York to meet agencies over there. I quickly did the audience and went straight to the airport. After a stopover in Island I checked my phone and found tons of messages on it from my London agency asking me to come back immediately as I was booked for the job. In order to not lose my suitcases which I couldn't get hold of in Island I decided to go to New York for a few days at least. They postponed the job, I came back to London 3 days later to find myself on 3 continents within 2 weeks as another booking came in to Australia in the same month.



Fat Face, New Zealand/ photo:

Lübzer, South Africa



Lynx/ Axe UK

Elle South Africa

After graduating, I fully moved abroad, lived and worked exclusively as a model in Cape Town and London for a long time, was able to take on jobs all over the world.

More bookings for Axe, vivident, Fat Face, Fitness First, Nikon, NIVEA hair, Schwarzkopf, diverse brands in Scandinavia, Philip Kingsley, Triumph or Debenhams and further cover shoots for SHAPE, woman's fitness, etc. definitely took away my childhood shyness and shaped me to the point at which I now enjoy commercials and acting a lot.





Sence/ Denmark

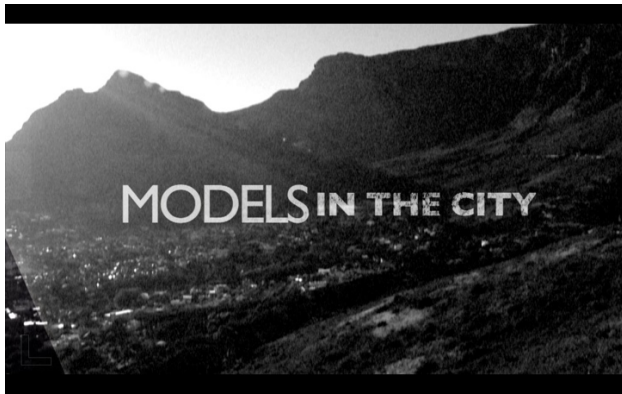
Röhnisch/ Sweden

Around 2013, some friends and I ended up on a German TV Show which accompanied us on our models Life in Cape Town called "Models in the city". Family and friends from back home were able to see what models do all day. We ended up having lots of fun producing these series. Cape Town has seen me for many years as I kept on flying to this wonderful city and country again and again.



Cape Town/ photographer: Bryce Thompson





German TV Show/ ProSieben



Women's Fitness/ UK



Women's running/ UK



German Shape/ shot in Cape Town



Germany, campaign Salamander



Sport Schuster



Campaign Ladival



Austria: Jaques Lemans

Up until today, I have been working as a model since 1997. I was lucky to combine it finally with university, my travels, my pregnancies, my marriage and even now, together with my children. I have always enjoyed sharing my experience from the industry and loved being a mentor and advisor for young girls and boys who also want(ed) to become models. That's why I've been working as a scout for agencies I trust and I'm excited about every new face that introduces themselves to me. A few years ago, we founded The Modelinstitute ([www.themodelinstitute](http://www.themodelinstitute)), a safe space for aspiring models to get coached in topics such as walking the runway, posing, healthy nutrition, fitness, mental health, acting, social media and much more. We connect former models, photographers, industry specialists, agents and scouts with each other and have the same big goal, which is mutual support. Feel free to get in touch at any time in any language.



2024: Juliane with her 2 daughters Kate & Rose, now living between Munich & Miami