

ELLE

ALL EYES ON GIGI HADID

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By Nina Garcia

Gigi Hadid is currently on top of the world. Nina Garcia chats with the 23-year-old fashion star on the occasion of her first U.S. ELLE cover, shot in Rio de Janeiro by Chris Colls.

Nina Garcia: Gigi, you travel more than seems possible for one person. Where are you now?

Gigi Hadid: I'm at the [family] farm. In the past few years, I've discovered how important it is for me to find my balance. There is a week where I do all of my traveling for that month. Sometimes I'm in a different country every day, but it gets it out of the way.



Bodysuit, \$3,990, pumps, \$995, all, Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello.

I've heard about this farm from your mother, Yolanda. It sounds like it's really the family's haven.

It's where we can all come and feel like ourselves again. When I'm here, I just get in my truck and go to the store. Kids get excited at the market, but they don't take their phones out. They want us to feel normal, and that's very appreciated.

Top, price upon request, jeans, \$760, both, Balmain.

So much has happened in the five years since you made your New York Fashion Week debut. I remember Jeremy Scott was one of your first shows, and you opened for him.

I was so nervous I couldn't breathe. I was like, "Really, you want me to open?" I'd never gone to a runway class. Over the years, I've learned how to guide myself through it—how to stuff my shoes. A lot of people judged that I was a bad runway walker because they were literally watching me learn.

You've been modeling since you were a baby, though. At what point did you know it was going to be your career?

When I was a kid, modeling felt more like I was having a snow day [from school]—only you were running around the beach, being a kid with other kids. My mom took me out of modeling before it ever felt like work. In high school, I was a competitive horseback rider and volleyball player. But [college] was the deciding factor: The New School was my favorite school in New York, but I chose to go to New York not to play volleyball or to ride but to be a model.



Dress, Versace. Earring, Jacquemus, \$655 (for pair).

And to study criminal psychology....

Yeah, that was something I was interested in and could have done as a career, but I always kind of knew I would end up being a model.

I COME FROM PRIVILEGE, AND I RECOGNIZE MY PRIVILEGE. BUT BECAUSE MY MOM WAS ON A TV SHOW [BRAVO'S THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF BEVERLY HILLS], PEOPLE THINK THAT MY WHOLE CHILDHOOD WAS FAME....I WORK HARD TO HONOR MY PARENTS.



On left: Belt (worn as necklace), \$1,750, hat, \$1,200, both, Chanel. On right: Skirt, \$1,295, belt, \$815, earring, \$595 (for pair), bracelet, \$465, all, Chloé.

Just like your mom. I know she's really helped guide you, Bella, and Anwar in your careers. But you've expressed frustration when people credit your success to your family connections.

I mean, I understand it. I come from privilege, and I recognize my privilege. But because my mom was on a TV show [Bravo's *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*], people think that my whole childhood was fame. It absolutely was not. My mom was a model. She moved to the States when she was 16 to send money back to her family in Holland. My dad was a refugee and worked his way up in every way. I work hard to honor my parents.



Bodysuit, Prada.

I think that's a common trait in children of immigrants. I feel the same way. I was impressed that you and Bella were at the march against Trump's travel ban in 2017. What compelled you to take action?

Hearing my family's stories. My family was grateful to be given the chance to make a different life for themselves. Everyone could have stories like that if they were given the chance. Being from two different cultures, I see how both sides treat each other. It's important that there is more openness for people to mix and get to know different cultures.

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Dress, Gucci, \$1200. Belt, Isabel Marant, \$545.

Speaking of which, you've spent sometime traveling the world with UNICEF. How did that partnership come about?

I remember collecting money for UNICEF in elementary school. I always looked up to the ambassadors, so last year I met with UNICEF and said I wanted to focus on places that need coverage. I ended up going to Bangladesh, where the refugee crisis has been going on for a year now, but the news

doesn't pick it up anymore. The way I could be most helpful was using social media and reminding people that they are still there and still need help.



Blazer, Salvatore Ferragamo, \$3,200. Wetsuit, Cynthia Rowley, \$265.
Swarovski crystal earrings, Isabel Marant, \$500.

You're part of the first generation of models for whom social media is a key part of the job. When people look back at this moment in fashion, what do you hope your impact will have been?

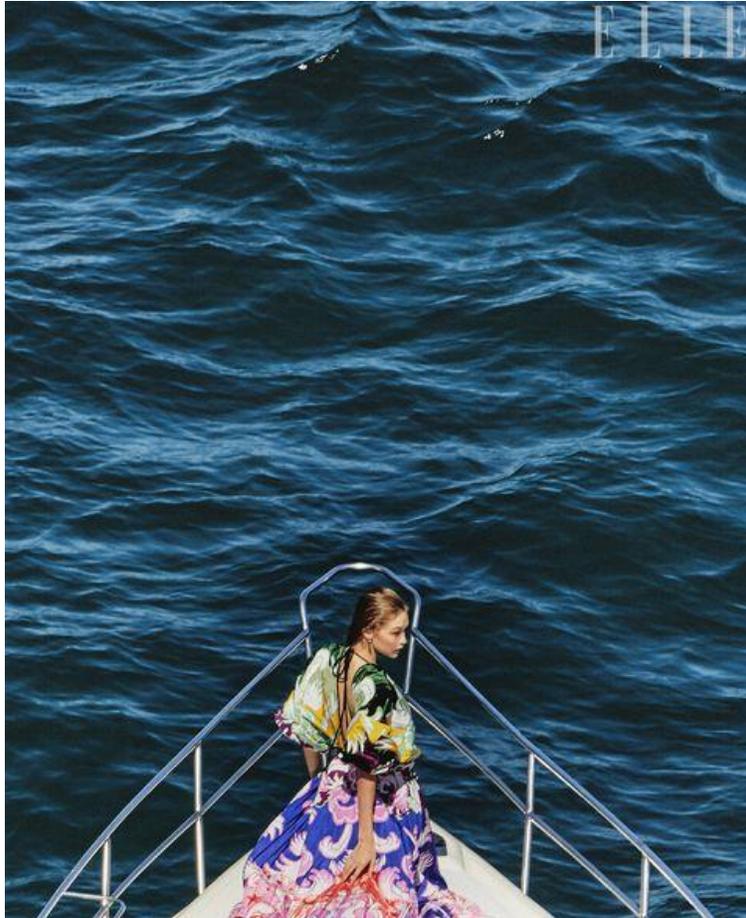
I think we will be seen as the generation that really supported each other. There is room for all of us to have just as many followers as the other ones. We want to talk about what we are passionate about, and we really do celebrate each other.

You and Bella are lucky to have each other in the industry. Are you at all competitive?

Bella and I have very different styles. A job that wants Bella is not a job that I'm the right look for, so I never took that personally. In a lot of ways, she inspires me. We learn from each other.

Your mom has written about her battle with chronic Lyme disease, which Bella also has.

Yes, both Bella and Anwar.



Gown, Valentino, \$25,000. Hoop earrings, Louise Olsen, \$280.

Health must be a huge preoccupation for you.

Growing up, having three of my family members sick made me very independent. My mom couldn't drive or get out of bed some days, so I took my brother to school with me, or I made lunch. But I also felt a lot of guilt for being the one person in the family who didn't understand what they were going through. It's hard when your whole family is in pain and you don't know what to do.

AS I'VE GOTTEN MORE SUCCESSFUL, PEOPLE LISTEN TO ME MORE. I HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE TO KNOW WHEN I THINK SOMETHING IS WRONG AND STAND UP FOR THAT.



Jumpsuit, Hermès, \$1,475. Bracelet, Aurélie Bidermann, \$290. Cuff, Ariana Boussard Reifel, \$285.

You were diagnosed with Hashimoto's disease after you moved to New York. What is that exactly?

It means you have an underactive thyroid. Most people get Hashimoto's when they are middle-aged. I got it very early. In high school, I had a lot of water retention. Even after extra workouts, I had bloat that wouldn't go away. And I was always tired. That was tough.

How do you manage the disease?

It's about learning about your body. As a 17- and 18-year-old, I was prescribed a medication that many people start taking when they are 50, and it can lead to bad things if you take it for too long. So my mom looked into some holistic treatments. Also, in California, I went to see a doctor for CBD treatments. You can make a life for yourself in ways that won't hurt your body.

You're not afraid of risks in your work, though. You've done some outrageous photo shoots—including this one. Has there been a time

where you felt like, “This is a little too dangerous for me”? Or that you were pressured to do something outside your comfort zone?

There are different levels of crazy—adventure excites me, and I’ve done a lot of adventurous things in my life. But I’m a daredevil, not an idiot. I know my limits. Outside my comfort zone is usually when I don’t connect with the creative team on something—things that might offend other people. That’s something that I have been misunderstood about in my career in the past. When I was young, and I knew in my heart that it wasn’t a creative thing I should be going for, I would try to reach out to people on set, but maybe they weren’t the right ones to talk to. As I’ve gotten more successful, people listen to me more. I have more confidence to know when I think something is wrong and stand up for that.

Hair by Ward at the Wall Group; makeup by Fulvia Farolfi and manicure by Julie Kandalec, both at Bryan Bantry Agency; styled by Ilona Hamer; produced by Björn F. Gerling at Production Berlin Group and Sophie Meister at Production LA; on-set production by Claudio Gomes and Gustavo Dantas. Travel generously provided by LATAM Airlines, Latin America’s leading airline group, offering service to 140 destinations in 25 countries worldwide. LATAM, a Oneworld member, offers the most comprehensive route network in South America, operating in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru; with flights departing to Latin America from New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Orlando, Las Vegas, and Boston. Special thanks to the Belmond Copacabana Palace and the Janeiro Hotel, Brazil, and Visit Brazil/Embratur.