



ON THE EDGE

indie fashion by a former supermodel



posing for them. In her late teens, struck with wanderlust, she traveled the world with a boyfriend (also a photographer) and, as she admits, "took pictures of everything." Her hobby became a passion. Her contributions to *Nylon* so far include interviews and photo shoots with actresses Liv Tyler and Michelle Hicks, a pictorial diary of her own travels in India, and articles on nightlife spots around the world. "I thought Helena had a really cool aesthetic of flea-market-meets-couture," says Jarrett, who in the early 1990s launched the indie music magazine *Ray Gun*. "She has this amazing style, and I think people really respect her. She is one of the most intelligent women I have ever met. And because she's been inside the fashion business, she has a totally different perspective on it."

That perspective puts substance before style. Describing *Nylon's* fashion aesthetic, Christensen says, "It's about more than just dictating style; it's about freeing your mind. Dressing yourself up has more to do with what's on the inside. The fashion photography I do leans towards discovering the person behind the clothes." ■

- 1 A moody portrait of Kate Moss, shot by Helena Christensen.
- 2 Two different views of Liv Tyler.
- 3 Recent *Nylon* cover images give attitude an edge.
- 4 Editor Marvin Scott Jarrett with Christensen at *Nylon's* launch party at B Bar in New York City.

When Helena Christensen decided to get out of the supermodeling business, she looked forward, she says, to leaving the world of make-believe glamour behind. But in 1998, Editor in Chief Marvin Scott Jarrett asked her to get right back in—not as a model, but as the creative director and photographer for the indie fashion magazine that he was starting, *Nylon*.

"When Marvin first came to me to do *Nylon*, I was like, 'You've got to be kidding me.' That's just what I wanted to get away from, the whole fashion thing, but then he agreed to let me do my own thing," says Christensen.

Creative freedom is the byword at magazines like *Nylon*: small circulations, independently owned, and decidedly edgy arbiters of style. Despite their relatively tiny readerships, these magazines—others in the genre include *Flaunt*, *V*, *Surface*, and *Dutch*—have become increasingly influential in the image-conscious fashion world, where hip is the holy grail. Celebrities hoping to establish their credentials as edgy artists love appearing in the indies, as do many high-priced photographers, like David LaChapelle and Greg Gorman. The magazines are also fertile ground for young, unknown photographers.

As one of the world's most famous faces, Christensen certainly wouldn't be termed an unknown, but she's working hard to forge a new identity as a photographer. Christensen began shooting pictures before she was

