

# Statuesque Stunner, Runway Recruiter, Judge and Jury

Iman is one of most successful and perennially beautiful supermodels of all-time. We tracked her down recently on the set of *Project Runway Canada*.

Who better to host a TV show about fashion than someone who has been living and breathing it for more than three decades? The ever elegant Iman hosts the Canadian version of *Project Runway*, a series about aspiring designers competing for a chance to break into the industry. "I always thought of *Project Runway* as one of the better reality shows when it comes to talent," Iman recently told *Inside E*.

One might think the almost imperial Iman an odd fit for reality television, considering this supermodel has studied political science, is fluent in five languages and is founder and CEO of her own cosmetic empire. Though the brains behind the beauty sets her apart from the majority of vapid reality show hosts, she's extremely qualified for this particular job. *Project Runway* has more talent and integrity (yes, that's right, "reality TV" and "integrity" in the same sentence!) than most of the schlock on the tube.

"As a model, if I may toot my own horn, I was one of the top runway models in the world. So, to be that, you really need to know about clothes," Iman says, without sounding the least bit pretentious. "When it comes to fashion, I've done more runways than most models and worked with designers hand in hand. I was a muse for Yves Saint Laurent for several of his couture collections, so I've been with him when he was creating couture ensembles on my body. I know how it works, how designers cut clothes, where inspiration comes from, I know the intricacies."

Despite Iman's submersion in an industry some find superficial, she approaches fashion from a business angle, thereby remaining grounded. "I'm not just the host," she says of her television role. "I'm the judge and jury of this. I am the consumer who is going to buy that dress and the woman who is going to wear that dress. I have to think of it in terms of: Is it wearable? Is it sellable? It's nice to create something that's purely artistic, but would it sell? Will real women be able to wear it?"

So what exactly was Iman looking for from the aspiring designers on *Project Runway*? "I was really hoping that there would be some true visionaries; young people who really, really, really wanted to break into this business and had passion for it and wanted to do the hard work that comes with it." More to the point, she says: "We have great designers from John Galiano to Marc Jacobs. The world doesn't need more fashion. The world clearly needs more inspirational clothes — things that will uplift us and inspire us in our daily lives."



Her admiration for rousing style even includes one or two celebs (though she was hard-pressed to name any more than three). "Celebrities, oy!" she exclaims with exasperation. "Jennifer Lopez I like because she truly wears what she feels comfortable in. I like Chloé Sevigny because she has totally her own original point of view. Um... that's about it..." Iman says, before quickly adding fellow fashion icon Kate Moss. "You can't mess with her," she says. As for her own style, Iman likes clothes that are classic and simple, yet sexy: "I'm very eclectic in what I like and what I wear," she says. "I always thought that as long as it looks good on me, I don't care if anybody else likes it or not."

Beginning October 8 at 10pm, tune in to *Slice* to see Iman in her element as she and her panel of experts whittle the 12 competing designers down to one, who'll win \$100,000 to begin his or her own line, a retail mentorship with Winners, a cover and feature spread in *Elle Canada*, and a professional portfolio photo shoot courtesy of L'Oréal Paris.

## DRESS FOR SUCCESS

This is where style and philanthropy merge. "Dress for Success is an organization that helps disadvantaged women, or those from abused homes, get back into the workforce," Iman explains.

"As we all know, when you're going for interviews for work, first impressions are the most important ones. Dress for Success has a lot of fashion companies that give them clothes, but what they didn't have was beauty companies affiliated. So I created a kit that's called Beauty for Success, and a percentage of the sales go to Dress for Success... Makeup can be daunting even when it's simple... So we help them with that."

There are several locations across Canada. For details, or to find out how to help, visit [dressforsuccess.org](http://dressforsuccess.org).