

# BABY DOLL

Arthur Tam talks to enchanting siren Angelababy about style, fashion, acting and happiness.

Photography by Mikocokiki.

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**I**f there's one good thing to come out of Hong Kong's rather uncomfortable, voyeuristic lang mo phenomenon, it's Angelababy. In just a few short years, Angelababy, rarely known by her birth name Yeung Wing, has gone from teen pinup to become not only a model, entrepreneur, actress and singer, but a brand in her own right. ¶ As a model, she has been able to climb beyond the tacky lang mo ranks to grace the pages of Elle China, Harper's Bazaar HK and Vogue China, as well as feature in an Annie Leibovitz-shot international GAP campaign alongside Pharrell Williams. But it's perhaps her success beyond the modelling realm that has really underlined the phenomenon that is Angelababy.

After moving to Hong Kong from her native Shanghai at the age of 13, and beginning her career on blogs, a few Japanese modelling gigs and a small big screen debut in Pang Ho-cheung's 2007 comedy, *Trivia Matters*, the quarter-German Yeung's star really began to rise in 2009, with the release and subsequent selling out of her photo album, *Miss Angelababy*. Since then, the now-24-year-old AB has released her own fashion collection with local brand b+ab, opened up a chain of Japanese-French restaurants called Baby Café, opened a nail salon named Mini Nail, has become a regular figure at the Paris and London Fashion Weeks and amassed 18 movie roles – including a romantic comedy she is currently working on with A-lister co-stars Sammi Cheung and Nick Cheung. She commands a daunting 38 million Weibo followers, a further 1.4 million on Instagram, and is idolised by a large swathe of the selfie generation, many of whom aspire to be her.

Despite the inevitable nasty rumours of plastic surgery, Angelababy has become something of a Hong Kong style icon, finding a versatility that's rare in our fashion scene: one day, she's looking impeccable on the red carpet donning Christian Dior, Alexander McQueen or Balenciaga; the next, she's sporting a simple 'T-shirt and jeans' street look. And as she prepares for our photoshoot and interview in a Chai Wan studio – while insisting on doing her own eye makeup – she comes across as an incredibly self-aware person who knows exactly what she wants. It's with a moment of reflection that our interview starts...

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**I WANT THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY  
BEGGING TO WEAR  
CHINESE-DESIGNED  
CLOTHES**



Shirt Givenchy @ Joyce  
Shorts Givenchy @ Joyce  
Shoes Alexander Wang  
@ On Pedder  
Rings The9thmuse

**It's lovely meeting you, Angelababy. You have had quite the success in recent years. What has been your secret?**

It was really the result of perfect timing. I started when people were getting more and more online. Back then, I used to write a blog, which led me to notice that people were actually paying attention to me. It was the right generation to appeal to. Nowadays there are a lot of other models that are popular and well known, too.

**It's quite difficult to keep track of everything you're up to nowadays – modelling, acting, Baby Café, nail salons. Let's start with the acting – how do you feel your acting career has progressed recently?**

I've done around 10 or so films in the last four years, which is a lot. And right now I'm shooting a film with Nick Cheung and Sammi Cheung, which is a romantic comedy.

**Would you say you're a humorous person?**

I do a lot of cheesy jokes, which people don't really laugh at, but I like doing comedy.

**The Angelababy brand is actually quite a phenomenon. Tell us, how did you go from modelling and acting to opening cafés and nail salons?**

Whenever a friend approaches me with a venture that I think is fun, I'll get into it. I'm gradually learning more and more about business, but my main bread and butter is still modelling and acting. It would be nice to have my own brand though...

**So you wouldn't say you already have that brand, with your cafés and clothing line?**

No, not yet. I think there is still more to do.

**What areas would you like to expand into?**

It really just depends on the business plan and if I have a good partner going into it. Actually there has been someone that has approached me about starting a nightclub. Who knows, maybe I'll invest...

**So would you describe yourself as a business savvy person?**

I don't think so, but I am a person who's willing to take risks.

**With so many projects at the moment, do you have an idea on where you'd like to focus your career?**

I want to do some movies that really make an impact because I think incredible stories are about connecting with people that have a magnetic presence. I think that movies are a dream factory and give people a space to think of infinite possibilities. I want to bring people this type of positive energy.

**You started working with some big names. Is there anyone you particularly want to work with?**

I really appreciate the director Ang Lee. I think that he stands out among Asian [directors] and produces very thoughtful art. His attention to detail is impeccable and I really respect him because I think he gives pride to Chinese people, which I like.

**Has Hollywood been on your radar?**

If I was given the opportunity, I would like the chance to learn and observe how people work there. There must be a reason why the industry over there has been so successful.

**How do you feel at this point of your decade-long career?**

Now is a time to learn. There are still plenty of things to learn with each movie. I'm at my happiest when I have the opportunity to improve. I would be unhappy if I'd reached my peak and there was nowhere else to go but down. Right now I can still take my time and absorb everything that's going on. I'm going to move forward, but slowly – I don't want to peak too early.

**This is our style issue, so we want to ask you a few questions about your own preferences. How would you describe your style?**

Comfort is key, but with a funky twist that's full of personality. I don't like anything too mature. I usually like mixing and matching, with anything from luxury to cheaper pieces.

**We're coming up to spring – do you have any particular penchants for the season?**

I'm pretty into florals and you usually see that theme pop up in spring/summer collections. Fashion is a cycle. Several years ago, I loved

street fashion, like colourful zip hoodies matched with caps. Slowly, trends leaned toward a Japanese style, highlighted by deep tans and curly hair. When I was about 17 or so, I was super tanned. Then I went to a sexier look which led to a more mature style, where I was wearing evening gowns for a bit more of a grown-up look. But since last year, I've started enjoying street fashion all over again.

**What are your own fashion no-nos or things you wouldn't wear?**

I can't dress too sexy. I like watching other people dress sexy but I don't have the confidence to pull it off myself.

**Really? Okay. How about designers – name some that you are actively following at the moment...**

Right now, I really like Chinese designers and I feel like they are a growing force with lots of talent. I really hope that, as Chinese people, we can support our own designers. Paris' fashion industry has a much longer history and has been supported by its own people, which is why it has grown to become so influential. I want the same thing to happen for our designers, where the international community would be begging to wear and borrow our clothes for shoots. Recently, I've been particularly into Mainland designer Masha Ma and the Hong Kong local label Ground Zero. I really want to support our designers.

**It seems like you have a lot of Chinese and Asian pride...**

Yeah, you could say that. We live on this side of the globe, so we should give more support to people working here.

**What do you think defines a stylish man?**

I like men who are more masculine, with muscles. But in terms of style, I like them to wear something that I can potentially wear. I really like adapting menswear-influenced items into my own wardrobe.

**What are your essentials pieces? If, say, you had to run out of your house in a hurry because your flat was on fire, what would you take with you?**

I would take my photos, passport and money. If my house was on fire, I really wouldn't think about clothes. [Laughs] But if I had to, I guess I would take something very practical with me, like a raincoat, so I'd be able to stay warm and dodge the elements.

**Of all the cities that you've modelled in, where is your favourite place to work?**

For me, it's pretty much the same. I like working in every city. As long as there is good food and friends – I'm satisfied. In HK, I love Vietnamese food, barbecue pork, soup, Spanish tapas, French food and Teppanyaki. When I travel, the first thing I do is look for the best food in town.

**And finally, you've become a role model to a lot of young women. What's your message to a generation of young women struggling to define what's fashionable and beautiful?**

The ultimate goal of fashion is to increase your confidence level. Whatever outfit makes you feel empowered and confident, that should be your style.

For more updates on **Angelababy** check out [iloveangelababy.com](http://iloveangelababy.com).

Earrings Timbee Lo  
Necklace Kenneth Jay Lane @ On Pedder  
Dress Balenciaga



**I AM A PERSON WHO'S WILLING TO TAKE RISKS**