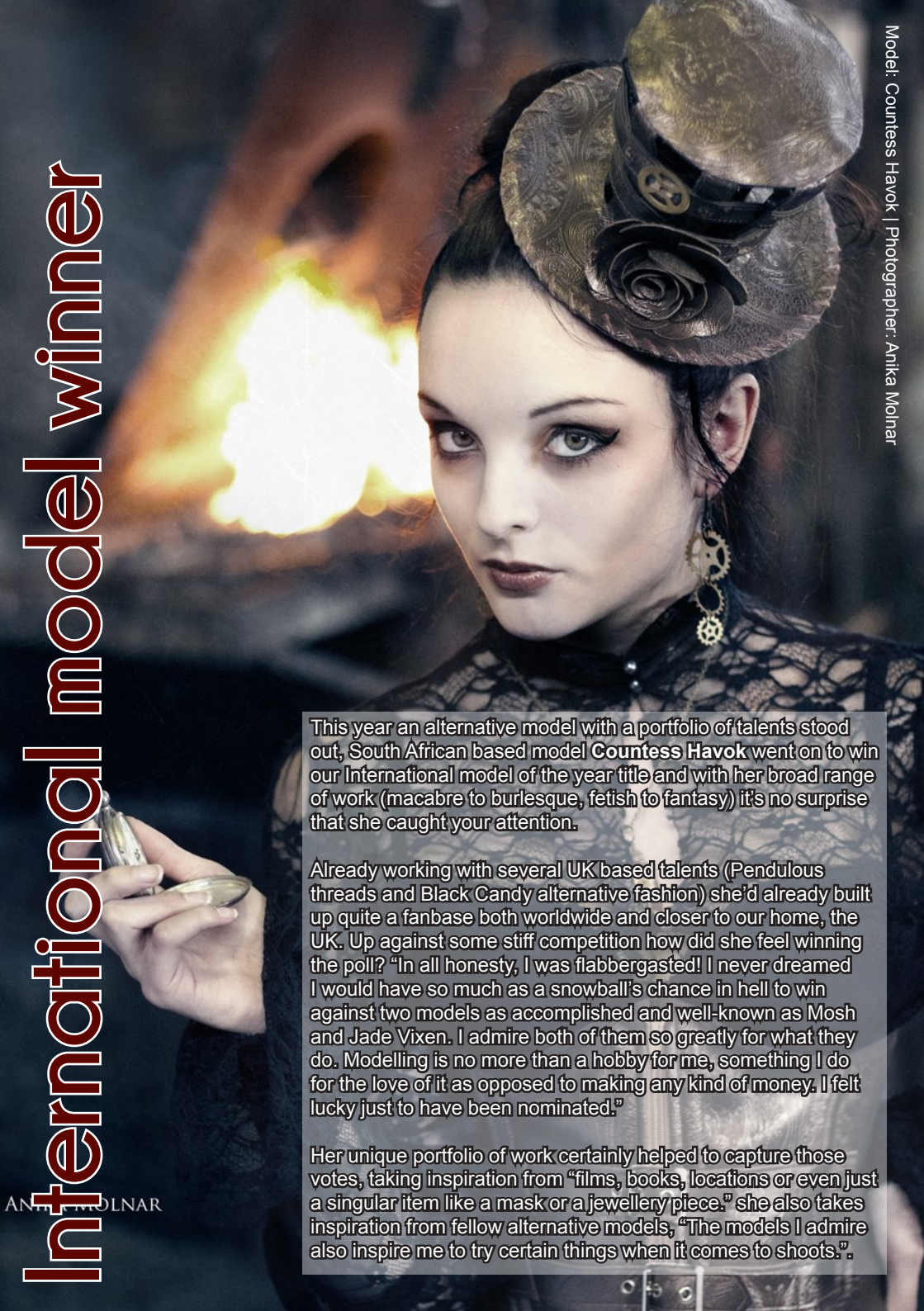


Alt  
fashion

Model: Druidess Of Midian | Photographer: Lunaesque

# End of year poll winners special part two





# International model winner


ANIKA MOLNAR

This year an alternative model with a portfolio of talents stood out, South African based model **Countess Havok** went on to win our International model of the year title and with her broad range of work (macabre to burlesque, fetish to fantasy) it's no surprise that she caught your attention.

Already working with several UK based talents (Pendulous threads and Black Candy alternative fashion) she'd already built up quite a fanbase both worldwide and closer to our home, the UK. Up against some stiff competition how did she feel winning the poll? "In all honesty, I was flabbergasted! I never dreamed I would have so much as a snowball's chance in hell to win against two models as accomplished and well-known as Mosh and Jade Vixen. I admire both of them so greatly for what they do. Modelling is no more than a hobby for me, something I do for the love of it as opposed to making any kind of money. I felt lucky just to have been nominated."

Her unique portfolio of work certainly helped to capture those votes, taking inspiration from "films, books, locations or even just a singular item like a mask or a jewellery piece." she also takes inspiration from fellow alternative models, "The models I admire also inspire me to try certain things when it comes to shoots."





Her collaborations have helped to create some truly imaginative and unique images, how does she find such wonderful talent to work with? "I tend to collaborate a lot with international designers as there are very few of them here in South Africa. Generally, if I like a designer's work and feel that a collaboration would be beneficial to all involved, I will message them a proposal. There have also been many designers that have contacted me, after which great business relationships were formed. When it comes to photographers, I generally work with those who I have known for a while as contacts or even friends, as photographers willing to do alternative work in this country are very scarce as well. I am fortunate enough to have some very talented make-up artists and photographers as friends."

We're certainly looking forward to seeing what shoots the rest of the year will bring! Just what has she got planned so far? "I plan to try and do a lot more cosplay work this year. It's something that I am very passionate about and have a lot of ideas for. I also have plans to delve into the world of needle play for a shoot or two, along with concentrating on some more darker themed shoots to balance out the fun element of the cosplay shoots."

# UK Photographer winner




A pinch of whimsical, fairytale delight captivated our readers and we're not surprised, Lunaesque's images tell a story from start to finish and draw you in, mesmerizing the viewer. These dreamlike images more than caught your attention and led to **Lunaesque** winning our new UK Photographer of the year category, a fitting accolade for their delightful work.

As the first winner of our new category we were intrigued to find out more about their work, were they initially surprised to be cast forward for the vote? "We certainly were, and we were absolutely thrilled! Although we have been featured extensively in the media this past year, we all have our roots firmly in the alternative scene so it was extra special for us to be nominated by Alt Fashion readers. A huge 'Thank you' to everybody that voted for us, and to Alt Fashion for supporting and encouraging alternative artists."

With images as striking and dazzling as theirs they've managed to reach a vast audience of fans and an even wider new audience with their end of year poll win. One of the things that's wonderful about Lunaesque is that they're a team of creatives, not just one photographer behind the scenes but the result of an entire team of artists. "It is the same team that creates all of the costume, props, make up and hair that is used for the photography, so there is a consistent vision and a style to our work. Models of course do change with each project. We do have some regular team members who feature in different roles but we are always on the look out for new faces and talent."





Because what we do is more about telling a story, rather than just taking pictures of pretty people, it is really helpful if the models that we work with have some acting ability. Role playing is probably more of an appropriate term, as our models really do have to get into character! Because of that we tend to avoid using traditional model agencies and websites, we prefer to just approach people who we feel have a distinctive look and would bring something unique to the set."

We couldn't help but wonder what inspires their work, is it a spark of creativity or a pinch of dreamlike delight? "Inspiration really does come from many diverse sources: Art, Literature, Nature, Folklore, Fantasy, Film, Theatre, History – the list is truly endless. One of the things that I think is quite unique about 'Lunaesque' is that we find inspiration in each other. We are all professional creatives in 'real life' and when we get together for a 'Lunaesque' project it can be quite electric. We all have a mutual respect for each other as artists individually and I think that is why we gel so well as a team. It can be very, very difficult working so closely with other artists on a shared project, as egos can often get in the way and the creative process suffers as a result. I think that the respect that we have for each other as artists individually keeps that in check and allows us to focus on the project in hand rather than our personal contribution to it."

Following their end of year poll win we can't help but think what their plans are for the rest of the year? "I can't really say too much about this at the moment... We appear to have been very quiet so far this year but we are working on a huge project that is taking considerable planning. We have eight different shoots scheduled over the course of the year, each one will be a separate story but they form part of the same theme. We are keeping it very quiet until we are able to release the finished project. So I am afraid that you will all have to wait and see :)"

[www.lunaesque.com](http://www.lunaesque.com)



# UK model winner

With our UK model category it's always a close call, this year was no different with 3 established alternative models up for the public vote. Winner **Druidess Of Midian** certainly caught your attention, her work takes on a pinch of fairytale, dreamlike and fantasy imagery which won your vote.

Having been nominated in previous years was she surprised to win the vote? "Extremely! I was certainly up against some stiff competition, both the other nominees are friends of mine, so I was pleasantly surprised to see that we were all competing with each other. It made for a great bit of banter between us too, which I think our fans seemed to enjoy. I still can't believe it though, I felt lucky enough just being nominated, so when I learnt that I'd won, it blew me away, I can't thank my supporters enough!"

Her work is certainly imaginative, what sparks the inspiration for such captivating imagery? "I've always been inspired by nature, ancient folklore, fairytales, history, art, fashion, weapons, archaeology, Pre Raphaelite movement, literature, period dramas, sci-fi's, horror, films and music," says winner Druidess Of Midian. "Kate Bush played a massive part in shaping my imagination from a very young age, as did many other awesome artists of the time. I've always looked for the hidden messages inside these stories and would imagine acting them out on stage, in film, or an image. It's through experiencing how these artists expressed their emotions I learnt how to do the same, it gave me the confidence to get into singing and acting which gave me a sense of freedom, then quite naturally I got into modelling."





I've always wanted to entertain others by telling interesting stories, and I enjoy putting myself in someone else's shoes, to feel the situation for myself and express it, I felt as if by performing I not only had an escape from my own life, that I also got a taste of other peoples. I've never been drawn to the 'normal lifestyle' that most people do, the "getting married and having a family" thing, never held any interest for me, so when the opportunity presented itself to do what I'd always dreamed of, I jumped at the chance and haven't looked back!"

That creative imagery is helped along by some talented creatives that she's worked alongside, including fellow poll winners Lunaesque photography, how does she find some astounding talent to work alongside? "I'm incredibly lucky on that front, most of the people I work with, I've met through chatting online, then meeting up to exchange ideas and get creating, or through attending group shoots around the country and through working with them I was introduced to more like minded people. I met Ange Harper at a group shoot in 2007 and we instantly clicked, we've been working together regularly ever since then, involving other friends in our shoots too. It's also through Ange that I met Carri Angel (Owner of The Dark Angel Design Co) as she'd asked to borrow some of Carri's designs for a photoshoot we were doing, through that a friendship was built and other members of our team were pooled in. We all know each other through one walk of life or another and we all have similar personalities, so it's easy for us to all get on well, I think of Lunaesque as our artistic family."

With such marvellous creatives to hand we can't wait to see what images are unveiled this year, just what does she have planned for the rest of 2014? "We've got some massive plans on the go within Lunaesque, but that's all under wraps for now. Personally I'm aiming to improve my skills and gain qualifications as a professional Make Up Artist, I've been steadily heading that way over the last few years and I believe I've got what it takes to cut a strong career in that side of the industry, besides, I can't model forever and I'm not 22 anymore, so I'm hoping to have a career I love that'll last my lifetime. I'm still taking the occasional post as an actress and have a few things in the pipeline, there's also a film due for release later this year that I performed in, so I'm looking forward to the premier screening when it comes around. The film is called Se-Rurta, it's set in bronze age Britain depicting early Celtic life and social struggles. (more info via [www.wyldewoodproductions.co.uk](http://www.wyldewoodproductions.co.uk)) Other than that I'm just hoping for a good year ahead, that for everything I put myself into, I get a positive outcome."

[www.facebook.com/Druidess.Of.Midian.ProfessionalCreativeModel](http://www.facebook.com/Druidess.Of.Midian.ProfessionalCreativeModel)

