

SEAN KELLY

Satran, Rory. "Givenchy and Marina Abramovic Take New York With A Stunning Spectacle," *I-D*, September 13, 2015.

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givenchy and marina abramovic take new york with a stunning spectacle



There's a lot to discuss from last night's Givenchy tour de force on the Hudson River, so why not begin at the end? Because nothing felt quite so enchanting as the procession of strange/sensual supermodels wearing embellished evening dresses and jewelled masks by Pat McGrath, set to a tremulous live performance of Ave Maria. Marina Abramovic's artists performed in delicate vignettes against the setting sun, holding branches, embracing, standing in a stream of water. It was a beauty-affirming moment that set a lot of fashion hearts aflutter, and felt above and beyond the chatter about Kim and Kanye and Instagrams and Ubers. As a declaration of artistry, it was on par with the best of McQueen, with the added significance of a sense of context. Riccardo Tisci did justice to the day and the place.

In the show's inspiration book, Abramovic speaks to her hesitancy in taking on the project, given the timing of 9/11. What place does fashion have in the memorial of one of the darkest days in our city's history? But her approach in collaboration with Tisci, using repurposed driftwood for the set, and stirring international music (including a Tibetan monk who sat serenely above it all), felt respectful and moving. I'm sure I'm not alone in feeling relieved that there was no popstar performance, no pumping house mix, no promotional gift of perfume.

But this being Givenchy, there were stars, loads of them: Uma Thurman looking especially regal in white, and a radiantly smiling Julia Roberts. Liv Tyler on her dad Steven Tyler's arm. The New York new guard of designers: Wang, Altuzarra, Proenza Schouler. And of course, Kanye and a very pregnant Kim, redefining maternity wear in a sheer black lace nightie.

Is the future of fashion elitist or democratic? What roles do celebrity and social media play in the industry? And how can designers integrate art and history into their work? This unique show (staged stateside for the occasion of Riccardo's 10-year anniversary and a New York store opening) somehow touched on all of these questions that have been floating around the fashion industry. Diffused live across giant screens from downtown to midtown, the show involved the city in a way that felt new. Plus there were those invitations for 800 members of the public (several of whom clapped when Kim Kardashian arrived). As the show ended and hundreds of attendees streamed toward Tribeca, attendees smashed into a parade of military supporters holding American flags. "Is this part of it?" asked a member of the crowd.