

SEAN KELLY

Bain, Marc. "Photos: This beautiful 9/11 tribute is the show everyone is talking about at New York Fashion Week," *Quartz*, September 14, 2015.

QUARTZ

Photos: This beautiful 9/11 tribute is the show everyone is talking about at New York Fashion Week



I love New York (Larry Busacca/Getty Images)

It's the show that's kept everyone talking. On September 11, on a Hudson River pier with the World Trade Center's Freedom Tower in view, French label Givenchy staged what critics have unanimously lauded as a glorious runway presentation.

It was a risky proposition, setting the show at that location on that date. Givenchy normally shows in Paris, and the Fashion Week event could have easily come off as crassly co-opting a day of memorial. But the show touchingly offered its own memorial—to the losses of 9/11 and to the diversity that makes New York what it is.

Riccardo Tisci, Givenchy's creative director, already had the city abuzz. He had given out 820 tickets to the general public, effectively opening up one of fashion's most exclusive shows to at least a small swath of New Yorkers and visitors.

He also chose legendary Serbian performance artist Marina Abramović to stage the show, which included performances and music from six different cultures and religions amid an industrial setting made of recycled materials.

On a raised platform, a man and a child surrounded by trees—a small bit of nature in all the steel and concrete—turned at times to face the Freedom Tower, while a woman on a neighboring platform stood beneath an open spigot. It was the urban equivalent of baptism, and it was both odd and moving, as Abramović's work can sometimes be.

And then there were the clothes. The models came down the runway—and then up over a step platform that caused a few minor stumbles—in soft, delicate clothes. The mood was meditative and calm, never somber or heavy. Lace was prevalent, and Tisci mixed in riffs on couture work, as well as some menswear.

Black and white made up almost the entire palette, while gold snuck in occasionally in the clothing and in the form of elaborate masks worn by some of the models.

Even fashion's toughest critics were taken by the show. "The spiritual symbolism was handled with deftness and care," wrote Cathy Horyn at *The Cut*, *New York Magazine's* fashion blog.

Tim Blanks, now at *Business of Fashion*, declared it "as trenchant as anything else we are likely to see this season." And Vanessa Friedman of the *New York Times* praised Givenchy for demonstrating "as gracefully as

anything I have ever witnessed, the power of fashion to reflect history and shared experience; to weave it, literally, into the garments we all wear.”

It was a terrific show. Barring any miraculous moments still to come, the evening seems certain to remain the highlight of fashion week.