

2012 SS Marc Jacobs

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By Nicole Phelps

[Marc Jacobs](#) is at the center of one of the biggest fashion stories in years. His prolonged negotiations to assume the design mantle previously held by John Galliano at Christian Dior have been making headlines for weeks. If and when he signs on the dotted line, Jacobs will become a couturier, fashion's fastest-dwindling subspecies.

Tonight he proved once again that he's one of the industry's consummate showmen. The Lexington Avenue Armory was decorated like a dance hall far removed from our current circumstances in both time and place. Old-fashioned lightbulbs were affixed to wooden beams. As the Philip Glass opera *Einstein on the Beach* got underway, a sweeping gold curtain parted to reveal his entire cast waiting to hit the runway. The models worked it—straddling, reclining, even leering over their bent wood chairs, *Chorus Line*-style, eyes fixed on the audience.

Once it was their turn, they hustled toward the cameras wearing kerchiefs in their hair and see-through plastic cowboy boots on their feet, and in between: drop-waist flapper dresses, denim workwear, sporty sweatshirts, and techno-gingham that was practically reflective. Some of the silhouettes echoed last season's clingy lines, but just as many had the boxy, drop-waist shapes of the 1920's. There was plenty of fringe, even more bold-colored sequins and paillettes, and most perversely, loads of that clear plastic cut and sewn into skirts or dresses worn over buttoned-to-the-neck shirts.

Backstage, Jacobs said, "I didn't want it to feel real." The show, in other words, was the thing. This definitely wasn't one of those Marc collections that sends his fans into a tizzy about all there is to wear in their real lives, nor was it as thought-provoking as his bravura performances have been in the past. Maybe he was preoccupied with his talks with Dior? If so, can you blame him? Despite all their shiny surfaces, the clothes here fell a little bit flat. What will linger: the flash and filigree of the gorgeous set.