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EDITOR : TIM BLANKS



RETAIL LUXURY BEAUTY SPORTS SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING TECHNOLOGY GLOBAL MARKETS FASHION WEEK



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Givenchy Spring/Summer 2026 (IK ALDAMA)

FASHION WEEK

## Paris Day Five: Givenchy and Loewe

Intimacy and illusion add different levels of tantalisation as fashion tries its best to engage the senses, writes Tim Blanks.

By **TIM BLANKS**

04 October 2025

BoF PROFESSIONAL

It was just two months ago that Sarah Burton found the inspiration for her new Givenchy collection. “The Eye of Love” is a book of pictures Swiss photographer Rene Groebli took of his wife Rita during their honeymoon in 1954 that’s since achieved cult status. It reduces intimacy to (occasionally) bare essentials: Rita rolling in sheets, undoing her bra, wrapping herself in Rene’s white shirt. The nape of her neck, her wrist, her back: all of it utterly transfixing.

And all of it was on Burton’s catwalk on Friday night. Reduction was her end, the white shirt was her means. And a wrapped skirt. And a jacket so stripped of its canvassing, its structure that you could practically knot it like a shirt. (Elise Crombez did.) Burton said she was so used to seeing things with big shoulders and heavy construction that it took a while to get it right. “Peeling back the structure of tailoring,” she called it. The process was literalised in a kind of tuxedo jacket-dress hybrid with trompe l’oeil white cuffs whose neckline had been peeled back off the model’s shoulders.

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The soul of the collection was the white shirt, sometimes in leather. The heart was the wrapped skirt. Eva Herzigova nailed it. Burton imagined a woman taking a man's jacket off the floor and wrapping it round her waist, then cutting off the sleeves. When Jessica Miller came down the catwalk in a white wrap with a deconstructed jacket, I was reminded of those great slouchy sensual moments which set Donna Karan up as an American fashion icon in the 80s. A woman designing for women: could it really be something that fundamental? (Coincidentally, Jessica was thinking of the advice Donna had given her about not prancing like a show pony when she walked.)

Burton shaped the skirt with a dart across the bottom. Call it an ass dart. It created a bombshell, Betty Page effect. Later, there was a coat that inflated Marilyn Monroe's eye from the last sitting with photographer Bert Stern before her death into an abstraction. It was an image of powerful femininity for Burton, however doomed its subject.



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Groebli's images got Burton thinking about the intimacy of a woman's relationship with her clothing. "They're about the touch, the hand," she claimed. "They're not objectified, they don't feel voyeuristic at all. Their sexuality is very pure." But she admitted she wanted something more carnal. When I blandly confessed to feeling a hum of eroticism, Burton pushed the envelope to a hum of fetishism as well. "I really feel the sexuality in it," she said. "There's a fear of women who want to feel sexual."

Perhaps that explained the carry-over from her last collection, with fish-netted second skin pieces. There were also a couple of baby dolls that looked like they'd been knitted from nylon stockings. I appreciate she was toying with couture tropes, but I wasn't crazy about them then, and my feelings haven't changed now. They were bizarre outliers in a collection whose purpose and clarity was otherwise as crystal-clear as the vintage cabochons that functioned as spectacular embellishment. But by the end of my preview, she was wondering, "How do I get the pagan into Givenchy?" You can take the girl out of McQueen, but you can't take McQueen out of the girl.



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