

Marc Jacobs

Marc Jacobs channels the 70s in grand final of New York Fashion Week

Jacobs sought to respect youth street style in show which turned focus to the audience in social media spectacle



Kendall Jenner on the runway after the models turned their phones on the audience. Photograph: Jamie McCarthy/Getty Images for Marc Jacobs

Last season's Marc Jacobs show provoked a social media row of epic proportions after the designer was accused of cultural appropriation for styling white models' hair into dreadlocks.

Thursday's show – marking the grand final of New York Fashion Week – seemed to be a reaction to that furore in more ways than one. The collection centred on hip hop – a plucky subject given the internet's recent ire – while its staging sought to examine the culture of social media.

On entry, guests were asked not to use their phones at all, an unusual move in an industry in which designers usually encourage online promotion and even provide a hashtag.

Later, in a spectacular outdoor finale, the omertà was lifted, and models pretended to take photographs of the assembled masses who were taking photographs of them. It was all a bit Black Mirror.

The set was eerily sparse with just two rows of chairs running down the centre of the 80-foot-high barrel-vaulted ceiling of the cavernous Park Avenue Armory. The show started without music or warning, the models passing closely by the hushed audience in a way that felt unusually intimate.

The clothes were typical Jacobs and densely referential, heavy on Beastie Boys hats, gold jewellery, tracksuits and oversized shearling coats, with grungey checked fabric in browns and oranges recalling

the 1970s palette of blaxploitation movies and the Seattle chic with which Jacobs made his name in the 1990s.

There were gold medallions including one fashioned after Jacobs's dog Neville, who inevitably has a social media account of his own, and another which Jacobs himself wore as he took his bow, blowing kisses to Lil' Kim who sat in the audience wearing seven-inch gold-sequined Marc Jacobs platforms.

Before the show Jacobs told a trade magazine, WWD (Women's Wear Daily), he had hoped to create an environment akin to a theatre performance, in which the clothes were viewed in context. That context, he said in notes headed "respect" that were left on attendees' seats, was one of celebration. Flagging up a documentary he had recently watched – Hip Hop Evolution – his intention, he said, was to demonstrate "an acknowledgement and gesture of my respect for the polish and consideration applied to fashion from a generation that will forever be the foundation of youth culture street style".