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Punk'd

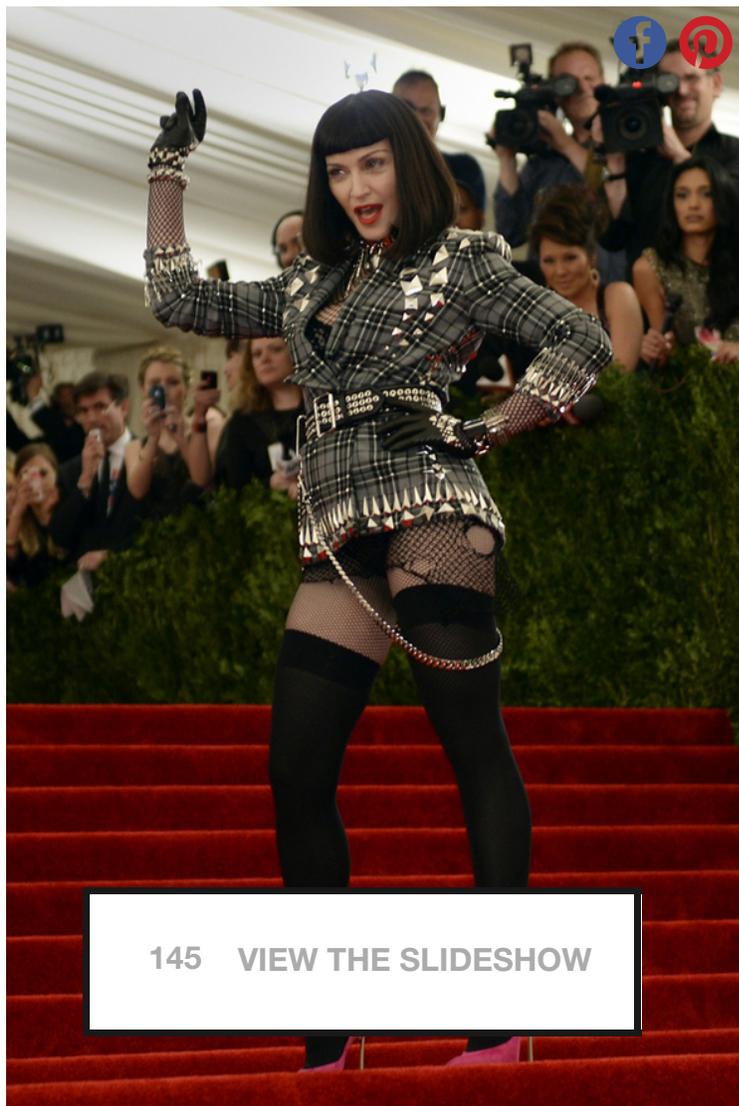


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Parties

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Studs, spikes, and tartan to spare on the Met gala red carpet.



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Madonna

"I don't think I fully understood the theme," a DVF-clad Kate Upton said at last night's Met gala. "I'm really excited to see the people who went all-out, though." The theme in question, of course, was punk, in honor of this year's exhibition, *Punk: Chaos to Couture*. And if it wasn't exactly anarchy on the red carpet, there were plenty of A-listers who approached the project with great enthusiasm.

Madonna—fashionably late, as always—went pants-less, wearing fishnet stockings, layers of chains and crucifixes, and a Givenchy jacket. "Punk is about not caring what anybody thinks," she told the crowd before striking a pose. Beyoncé's custom-made flame-print Givenchy dress, replete with a patent bodice and a positively epic train, had a noticeable punk tinge, and Sarah Jessica Parker, too, took the dress code seriously, topping her Giles Deacon gown with a Philip Treacy mohawk.

But as Met ball chair Riccardo Tisci put it, punk "is not so much about the look, it's about the personality." This, he explained, is why he dressed co-chair Rooney Mara in a white lace gown (albeit a white lace gown embellished with a buckled leather strap and zippers). "I wanted to respect Rooney," he said. "She's a very romantic girl, and the sexuality of the dress, and the romanticism of the lace, represents her."

Earlier in the day, at the exhibition's press preview, Costume Institute curator Andrew Bolton offered his own pronouncement: "Punk means different things to different people." Carey Mulligan, Giovanna Battaglia, and Karolina Kurkova embraced only safety pins. Others, like Zandra Rhodes, Vivienne Westwood, and Donatella Versace (who, having crafted a spiked gown for the affair, declared "my soul is punk!"), oozed rebellion from top to toe. So did Debbie Harry—although she argued otherwise. "I'm not really a punk, you know. I'm just a schmuck," quipped the rock star, who donned a black skull headpiece with her studded Tommy Hilfiger look. "You have to work really hard to be a punk in 2013," she added.

It comes easy to Kristen McMenamy. Flustered that her date, Alexander Wang, was

running late, the Balenciaga-clad model proffered a red-carpet critique. "This is the antithesis of punk," she laughed. "Punk is not putting it on. Punk is angry. Punk is not pretending. Punk is real. This is like a costume party for punk," she said before spitting on the steps. Greta Gerwig, cloaked in Saint Laurent, was dubious, too. "Punk is doing your own thing, sticking the finger to the man," she said. "I feel that we're not doing a good job of it tonight. But the night is young!"

One complaint overheard on the carpet was that the gala's glitz and glamour weren't in line with punk's original values. And then there was the fact that many of the evening's glitterati, Allison Williams, Dakota and Elle Fanning, the Olsen twins, and Anne Hathaway included, were born long after punk, in its purest form, had fizzled—although the Fanning sisters did look the part in Fall 2013 Rodarte. The rumored—and since confirmed—performance by Kanye West (who arrived with a rose-print Givenchy-clad Kim Kardashian by his side) raised an eyebrow or two, too. Was it OK to have a rapper take the stage at a punk party? "Kanye knows what's up. He's the new punk. He knows what to do," said Jimmy Fallon, who arrived with stitches on his nose. (He joked that his bandage was Saint Laurent.) The real vote of confidence, however, came from Ms. Harry herself. (Blondie also performed.) "Kanye's one of the biggest punks in the world. Didn't he jump up onstage at some awards thing? That's pretty punk. I hope he jumps up on me."

*Culture / Parties: 2013 Met Gala - Red Carpet Dresses,
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