

Jack Irving: "I'm obsessed with Showgirls"

"I was absolutely **ecstatic** to be asked. It was a big dream come true really," said Jack Irving on showing at On|Off. "I'd always dreamed of showing with On|Off and at London Fashion Week and I'm so thrilled everyone got behind me and believed in the **craziness**." A Central Saint Martins graduate, Irving opened his own studio in London in 2014, where he creates collections of **"wearable art"**. Inspired by his love of the theatre and performance, he has had the honour of dressing the likes of Lady Gaga and creating costumes for the X Factor. His main source of inspiration for his collection **"Alien Showgirls"** is a combination of **three times**. "I'm obsessed with Showgirls with their huge feathers and headdresses, so I looked a lot at old brochures from the Moulin Rouge in the 1970s and the The Lido in Paris," he explained.

"I collided this for my love with sci-fi comics like **Wonderwoman** and movies like **Barbarella** to create this vision of these **futuristic alien space showgirls**. I'm also mesmerised by **sea creatures** and drew my main inspiration from this for the **'alien' part** of my **aesthetic** for the **collection**. Every collection I do, I **always** try and **design** with the **'showgirl'** in mind and create a **different aesthetic** for her each year. My reason for this was mainly because **everything** happening in the **world** right now is all a bit **crazy** and **glum**, it was about **creating a show and performance which takes them on a fantasy away from our current reality**." The resulting collection, which included **sci-fi mini dresses** and bodysuits with **intricate corsets** crafted from **holographic fabrics**, complete with **inflatable detailing** and **sparkly headdresses**. Irving admits that his favourite look from the collection is the third look, complete with matching **thigh high boots**, as it was his **first time designing boots**.

He also reveals that he was slightly **afraid** that not all his **designs** would **fit** on **the catwalk**. "The **biggest issue** was the **technicalities** of my pieces, as my **biggest** was 4.5 meters wide and making sure that **fitted** on the catwalk," the **massive inflatable alien, sea urchin** **did in fact fit** on the catwalk, even if its **spikes** did end up **brushing against the ceiling**. "[Showing at On|Off] has been the most **incredible experience** and I'm **so thrilled**," added Irving. "The support from Lee and all the team has been amazing. My ideas for both the **show** and the **presentation** were **quite crazy** from the **start** and I almost **expected some of my ideas to be not allowed**. But instead my **crazy ideas** were **nurtured** and **celebrated** and the support was given to help bring them all **to life**."

Conversation with Mark Irving

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What inspired your collection

His **muse** is a **showgirl** in his **head**. Each aesthetic is created by what his showgirl would dress as on different planets. For instance the show urchin might be on an **orange planet/ Saturn**. He is inspired by **sea creatures** and his **signature being "sea urchins."**

How long did it take to create a piece?

"It took me **TWO YEARS** to develop the construction of my idea." My work consisted of a lot of **trial and error** because I needed to know how **much pressure** would equate to being the right amount. Making sure there is not too much pressure so the piece won't **burst** and making sure there is not too little pressure so the designs look firm and not floppy. Now I can produce one of these in **4 days**.

How do you bridge between fashion/ art?

He **doesn't** consider himself as anything in regards to being an **(artist, fashion designer or even fine artist)**. In fact, whenever Jack has **interviews** allows the **interviewer** to assume who he is in relation to an **art specialist**. Despite the fact, he studied set design at CSM and his pieces **appear** as if they are **couture fashion pieces**, he refers to them as a **"wearable sculpture."** Irving wants his pieces **evoke feelings of joy** to his **audience**. Even if **people hate** them or **love** them as long as **he is pleased** with his designs, he doesn't mind the slight criticism or hate surrounded by his designs. He likes his work big like **VERY BIG**, loves the use of **BRIGHT colours** hence why the colours he chooses are **orange or reflective**. With his signature being the **"sea urchins."**