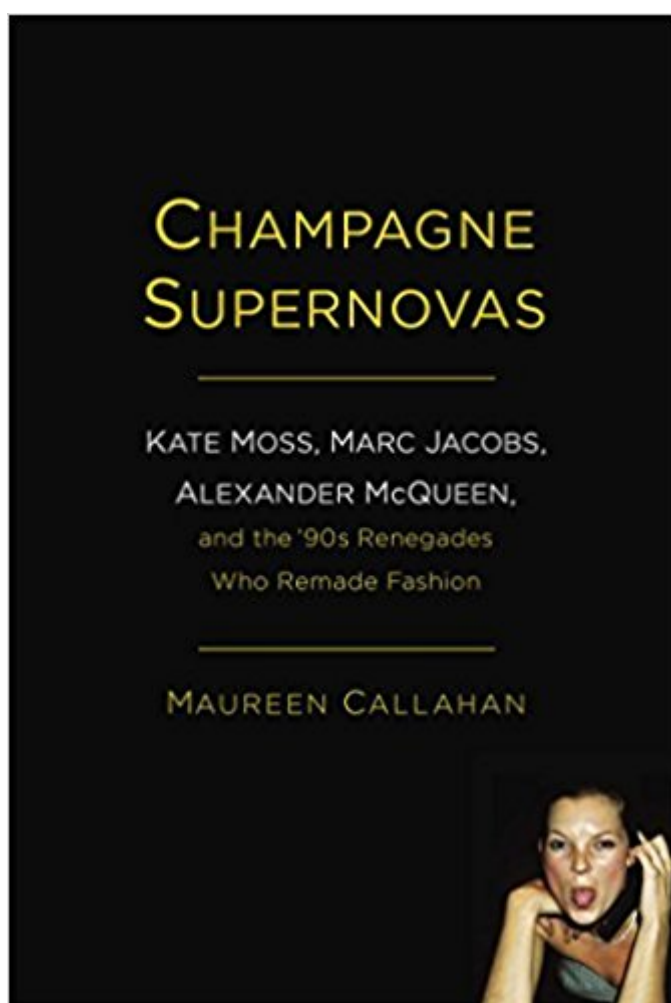


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# Champagne Supernovas: Kate Moss, Marc Jacobs, Alexander McQueen, And The '90s Renegades Who Remade Fashion



## Synopsis

A glittering history of fashion in the 1990s, told through the lives of Kate Moss, Marc Jacobs, and Alexander McQueen—the three iconic personalities who defined the time. The 1950s had rock & roll and the 60s had the Beats. In the 70s and 80s, it was punk rock and modern art. But for the 1990s, it was all about the fashion—and Kate Moss, Marc Jacobs, and Alexander McQueen were the trio of rebel geniuses who made it great. Veteran style and pop culture journalist Maureen Callahan takes you back to the 90s, to the moment when supermodel gals gave way to heroin chic, the alternative became the mainstream, and fashion became the cradle for the most exciting artistic and cultural innovations of the age. Packed with dishy stories of some of the most celebrated personalities of the day, *Champagne Supernovas* gives you the inside scoop from designers like Anna Sui and Isaac Mizrahi; scenesters like Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth and *Sassy* magazine's Jane Pratt; plus a bevy of supermodels, stylists, editors, photographers, confidantes, club kids, and scenesters. They'll discuss why Kate Moss and Johnny Depp broke up, how Marc Jacobs came through the crucible of the AIDS crisis, and what really drove Alexander McQueen to suicide. Steeped in the creative brew of art, decadence, and genius that defined the era, *Champagne Supernovas* gives you front-row tickets to a gloriously debauched soap opera about the losers and freaks who became It Girls and Boys, and changed the world in spite of themselves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“As someone whose knowledge of fashion runs fairly pedestrian, I was surprised to find myself unable to put down Maureen Callahan’s propulsive *Champagne Supernovas*. With a scholar’s eye and a tabloid reporter’s touch, Callahan bursts open one of the most exclusive industries in the world, revealing to the grit and glamour, the damaged, drug-addled underdogs, and the tortured geniuses who forever changed the way we comprehend and commodify beauty. This instant classic -- a master class in how to write smart, intimate, at times shocking, but always compulsively readable non-fiction -- deserves its place as the 90s answer to other pop culture giants, *Easy Riders*, *Raging Bulls* and *Fifth Avenue, 5AM*. (Susannah Cahalan, author of *Brain on Fire*)

“Maureen Callahan has pulled off a very neat trick in *Champagne Supernovas*, capturing the essence of a fleeting moment when fashion’s guard changed. This rise-and-fall story has it all: sex, drugs, rock, and frocks. Fasten your seat belt. It’s a scary fun ride.” (Michael Gross, author of *Model: The Ugly Business of Beautiful Women* and *House of Outrageous Fortune*)

“Shocking but never cheap, sometimes hilarious but more often heartbreaking, *Champagne Supernovas* is a thorough, intimate, and bracing look at the complicated and deeply troubled figures who sparked a fashion revolution.” (Alan Light, former editor-in-chief, *Vibe* and *Spin* magazines)

“The 90s: a time when fashion suddenly mingled with punk rock, movie stars, art school, the fantasies of the whole world, in ways both deadly and revolutionary. Callahan brilliantly connects all the glittering wreckage from a uniquely explosive moment in pop culture, from London to Seattle to the Viper Room. A major work on a one-of-a-kind pop era.” (Rob Sheffield, author of *Love Is A Mix Tape* and *Turn Around Bright Eyes*)

“A titillating ride through the 90s fashion world, as Kate Moss, Marc Jacobs, and Alexander McQueen eclipsed the reigning gls with their waifish chic.” (Elle)

“Terrifically exciting and fun|this book works as a fun, if cautionary, read about some of the folks who changed fashion in the 1990s. Readers will wonder when a similar trio will arrive to save us all from the Kardashians.” (Publishers Weekly)

“The author makes great use of personal interviews and reference materials, and through cross comparisons, she discovers like-minded commonalities they all shared with each other|A lucid, smoothly executed look at a pivotal decade in the legacy of American fashion.” (Kirkus Reviews)

“*Champagne Supernovas* puts readers in the front row and three of the era’s biggest names in the catwalk spotlight. . . . The pace is as quick as an H&M runway knockoff. Callahan’s prose is tight, and she stitches together momentum and suspense by alternating chapters on the trio. . . . A page turner filled with juicy behind-the-scenes tales.” (Associated Press)

“Fast paced, gossipy and cleverly put together . . . fantastically entertaining and thoroughly researched . . . this is a book about how myths are

made. (Telegraph (UK)) "Maureen Callahan proves, in a biography as dramatic and addictive as Game of Thrones, that the decade represents a revolution not just in fashion, but also the broader ideals of beauty. . . . A former editor and writer at New York magazine, Spin and the New York Post, Callahan crafts an intoxicating brew of scholarly rigor, dishy anecdotes and wicked commentary." (Chicago Tribune) "A juicy and gossipy account of the '90s fashion scene. . . . You might not fully approve . . . but you can't help wishing you were there." (Daily Beast)

Maureen Callahan has worked as an editor and writer at the New York Post, covering everything from the subcultures of the Lower East Side to local and national politics. She has also written for Sassy, Spin, New York magazine, and Vanity Fair. She lives in Brooklyn. Visit [ChampagneSupernovas.com](http://ChampagneSupernovas.com).

This is a very light read and not exactly the in-depth reporting a reader might hope for. Despite the chapters alternating between Marc Jacobs, Alexander McQueen and Kate Moss I would say the author really wanted to write a book on Kate Moss, unfortunately other than being a clothes horse and doing mountains of drugs and having tons of indiscriminate sexual encounters, Kate Moss lacks the personality to really carry a full book. So the author decided to flesh it out by accentuating Kate with two designers who happened to work and party with her. Jacobs and McQueen are odd choices. On the one hand Callahan is attempting to portray three influential characters that defined the 90's, so why did she feature Marc Jacobs who peaked in the 80's, got it all wrong and blew his career in '93 when he jumped on the Grunge bandwagon the year after it was over? Jacobs fails to not only come across as interesting but his career pretty much flatlines throughout the rest of the '90's. How is that shaping an era? McQueen really does take off in the 90's and is interesting, inspiring, terrifying and tragic - and unfortunately gets better coverage elsewhere. Particularly in "Gods and Kings: The Rise and Fall of Alexander McQueen and John Galliano" by Dana Thomas. In here he is mostly a tangent, providing more than shocking sex, drug and rock-n-roll tidbits - which Kate and Marc are primarily only capable of as he and Isabella Blow are trotted out for emotional and intellectual filler. The book was just fine for those looking for tabloid level entertainment as the author seems to struggle with trying to create a more serious statement piece but has made an unfortunate choice in choosing two people who are devoid of personality and a third who has so many psychological issues going on that to do proper justice would be an overwhelming research project and quite frankly, Callahan clearly wants a simpler read that tells itself. Not bad, not

great and Callahan touches on designers that would have clearly been more interesting. For example I now want to find really good books about Isaac Mizrahi and Tom Ford, whom actually flourished in the 90's.

“No great mind has ever existed without a touch of madness,” Aristotle once said and it’s within this dichotomy that *Champagne Supernovas* thrives. Seasoned journalist Maureen Callahan takes us back to the 90s and into the footsteps of three tortured souls who inspired, revolted, and shaped a world’s culture on a scale likely, probably, never to be repeated. We meet Kate Moss, the “rough little diamond” with eyes like “E.T.” she was on her own at 14 and by nineteen had defined the look of the times – “heroin chic.” And Alexander McQueen, a high school dropout tragically uncomfortable in his own skin, in the face of adversity he only worked harder and harder – yet always felt like an impostor on his own stage. And finally, Marc Jacobs, estranged from his well-to-do family, raised by his grandmother, steered by Perry Ellis, he was on his way toward a fashion empire at age 25, all thanks to a smiley face sweater. In these pages, we ride the roller coaster with them, up, up, from rags to riches until we cross the precipice of success and keep climbing, knowing all the while that what goes up, must come down. *Champagne Supernovas* is resplendent with powerful, efficient writing, revealing Callahan’s deep insight into the world of her story. Take, for example, this description of Kate Moss and Johnny Depp: “Both cultivated an arid cool: Kate was the accidental supermodel, Depp the punk-rock Beat poet who just happened to be a movie star. Both wore their staggering beauty with disinterest, even as their attempts to mar it with greasy hair and bad habits only underscored its imperviousness. Prepare to dive deep into *Champagne Supernovas*, to live fast, fall hard, and emerge thirsty for breath. This is why Moss, Jacobs, and McQueen still captivate – and always will.

I’ve often wondered if creativity was a byproduct of madness...or the opposite. Does it take a certain madness to be creative or does creativity cause madness; driven mad by the creative demons? I’m being a bit metaphysical here and I can’t prove a damn thing, but I know that most of the creative geniuses in “*Champagne Supernovas*” by Maureen Callahan barely survived the 1990’s. Callahan highlights clothing designers Alexander McQueen and Marc Jacobs, as well as the fashion model Kate Moss. McQueen died a suicide in 2010, after creating some of the most avant garde fashion, both for his own label and that of the venerable house of Givenchy. (I think of Audrey Hepburn’s

fabulous clothes when I think of Givenchy; not spray paint and designs modeled by a double amputee model.) Alexander McQueen, who dumped his real first name, Lee, in favor of his more chi-chi middle name, Alexander, was a depressive, drug taking mess, who was known for his savagely mean nature. His treatment of his - supposedly - closest friend and first muse, Isabella ("Issie") Blow as she wallowed in her own depressive state until her suicide in 2007, is indicative of a malignant nature. (I do think that Isabella Blow - she of the ultra-odd hats and boas - is perhaps the saddest person in the book. There are several biographies out on her and she seemed like a sad, well-meaning, dependent person who was ill-treated by the creative geniuses who used her as a muse.) Kate Moss, the "model" of the 1990's and later is the "bad-girl" whose slight body and plainish face set off the clothing of McQueen, Jacobs, and the other designers. Her insouciance, whether on the cat-walk or in the clubs, made her a role-model of that was "now". Women of all ages wanted to wear what Kate was wearing. American designer Marc Jacobs is the third of the creatively mad trio. He is still alive - unlike Alexander McQueen - and still designing. He designed his own line, and, until 2013, was the head of Louis Vuitton. All three - McQueen, Moss, and Jacobs - shared both creative genius and an insatiable appetite for drugs and liquor and sex. Kate Moss has rarely been sober, even when pregnant with her daughter, Lila. The amount of cocaine they went through - both alone and with friends - is astounding. All tried stints in recovery facilities, with varying degrees of success. But was their creative output driven by drugs and genius? Would they have been half so creative if they'd been sober and sane? I don't know and I'm not sure Maureen Callahan knows, either. She writes of McQueen, Jacobs, and Moss as cautionary tales. And what's left from these tales is a bit of sadness that the demons of the three were so present in their genius.

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