

GIANNI VERSACE ON HOW HE CHANGED THE WORLD OF FASHION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study that follows is to demonstrate the ways in which Gianni Versace quite literally brought about a completely different meaning to fashion. His genius was what laid down the blueprint for some of the most iconic moments in fashion. He molded his love for extravagance into a passion of work and sewed that thought as the twinkling embellishments on his garments to eventually create an empire so strong that the very essence and importance of it exudes still weighs heavy even twenty five years later . He believed in stepping outside the box and creating unusual perceptions of his into objects and displaying them to the world . Normal was never something that existed in his world. He relied on the extraordinary. His “scandalous” pieces were what always garnered attention and his sense of inspiration that he gilded to his creations was what made Gianni Versace, Versace. Gianni Versace was influenced by the ladies in his life in more ways than one. His passion for fashion was spurred by his mother's extremely successful clothes store. Growing up in this milieu, surrounded by fashion publications, textiles, and patterns, as well as his mother's strong influence, fuelled his enthusiasm and adoration for powerful women. It is no coincidence that the Versace brand is recognised for championing women.

KEYWORDS: Clientele, Ostentatious, Baroque, Medusa, Oroton, Embellishments, Couture, Gilded.

INTRODUCTION

"I think it's the responsibility of a designer to try to break rules and barriers," he once said. "I'm a little like Marco Polo, going around and mixing cultures." One of the most colourful and gifted designers of the late 20th century was a man called Gianni Versace (1946–1997). He was born on December 2, 1946 in southern Italy's Reggio Calabria. Gianni, like many brilliant designers, originated from humble beginnings. His father, Antonio, was a local coal dealer, his mother, Francesca, stitched gowns for the town's elite. He marked his debut with his first collection on

his own in Milan. Next up , with the help of his sister Donatella and brother Santo, he later established the wildly prosperous Empire of Versace. Gianni made his first dress, a blue one-shoulder evening gown, when he was nine years old and forty years later ,Princess Diana would donna variation of the dress.

When its wealthy clientele were cut off from what was going on in the streets, in modern art, and in movies, Versace started his career in real designer fashion in 1972. There, he found inspiration and attempted to persuade even the most resistant client to accept his varied real-world expertise. His striking designs, which had historical roots, established the standard for contemporary dress: a moving mark that identifies the wearer as a collaborator with a creative mind.

He was born in Reggio Calabria, a city in southern Italy, where his mother Franca managed a dressmaking business with 45 other seamstresses. The couture workroom was his playground as a child. After graduating from high school, he worked with his mother until moving to Milan in 1972, when he was contracted to develop collections for many Italian fashion companies. "When you are born in a place such as Calabria and there is beauty all around a Roman bath, a Greek remain, you cannot help but be influenced by the classical past," he once said. Those themes, Italian Baroque, Grecian patterns, and Etruscan symbols, were intertwined into his collections, as were today's themes of celebrity, rock, pop art, metal, plastic, and even bondage, with legendary gowns he finished with leather straps. Because of the way those Baroque ideas transferred into flashy fashion, illustrated by the acceptance of his garments as an object of ambition in the film "Showgirls," his name became synonymous with vulgarity for many.

Versace made significant contributions to both fashion and the presentation of art. He was the first fashion designer to capitalise on the marketing potential of the contemporary fashion show, packing the front row with well-known people who later appeared in high-profile advertising campaigns captured by Richard Avedon, Bruce Weber, Herb Ritts, and Helmut Newton. The Artist (formerly known as Prince), Elton John, Madonna, Jon Bon Jovi, and most recently Patricia Arquette all posed for Versace commercials. Conservative periodicals condemned the advertisement because it typically featured sexual imagery and showed more nudity than fashion. For his performances, he paid musicians like Prince to sing about "The Versace Experience," and he offered his audience special edition compact CDs.

Gianni Versace was a true fashion pioneer. Many designers have had an impact on fashion all around the world ranging from a show stopping design to a much-copied ensemble there, but none more so than him. Versace redefined the term "fashion." He put fashion up on a pedestal amongst the world of celebrities amidst all the glitz and glamour , and clothes at the centre of popular culture. He completely changed the ways we discuss fashion. The palettes of choice in terms of colours on the runway were raised, the volume was cranked up, and the haute couture

was always a jaw dropping event . He shifted the audience’s focus on garments and peaked their interests the same way pop culture did. The 1991 catwalk show, in which models Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Linda Evangelista, and Christy Turlington walked the runway while lip-syncing to George Michael's Freedom, was one of the pivotal moments in his career that jammed iconic photographs back to back like a movie trailer.

Versace battled prejudice from the beginning. His attire violated the traditional fashion conventions. There was a lot of print, a lot of shine, a lot of exposed flesh, and a lot of raw sexuality. The colours embraced street fashion's loudness and overt image and took it to the catwalk for the first time. Nonetheless, both the flavour and the quality was undeniably excellent. His ambitions for construction and production were enormous. He was the first to create dresses with pliable metal mesh panels, a form of magnificent, shimmering, flowing chainmail that has since become a red-carpet fixture. He was an expert at complimenting the female body and sorting through to put together a piece of his art that was so very magnificent every single time. In an interview published in Vogue in 1985, the designer himself said: “I like to be different. I like to break barriers. I think it’s the responsibility of a designer to try to break rules and barriers.” And he was ground-breaking indeed in terms of gender and what is male or female. “Versace exposed the body, but men and women equally,” elaborates Blomqvist. “There was an ambivalence. He portrayed women as super female yet independent warriors and Amazons, while men were seen as super male but also sensual, sensitive and fragile.”

Gianni Versace stayed true to himself at a time when many of his peers were embracing stark simplicity. The extravagant styles of the famous designer set him apart from the rest of the apparel industry. With bondage-inspired outfits, vibrant colours, and dazzling mini-skirts, Gianni and his eponymous collection pushed the boundaries of fashion. When a needed method or cloth did not already exist, he invented it. He also helped to popularise the supermodel and was one of the first designers to properly integrate the music and fashion worlds by dressing notable singers. Versace's enormous passion and undivided dedication to fashion resulted in great accomplishments. Eclectic and extravagant, he poured references on his clothing and made improbable partnerships of materials and thoughts. He blended superb dressmaking with a bold rejection of fashion conventions. He was one of the most well-known fashion designers in the world until he passed away in 1997. In less than twenty years, he established a global company that made Italy a fashion powerhouse and established an unrivalled reputation for opulence and beauty. Versace's dramatic designs were synonymous with the 1980s and 1990s, and they were both aesthetically approachable and immediately identifiable.

REPUTATION

Due of the way his clothing evolved into ostentatious design, Versace's name began to be associated with vulgarity for many people. Many were surprised by his low neck line, but he couldn't give a damn what people thought of his work because it wasn't who he was. His advertisements typically featured sexual content, which conservative publications attacked for showing more nudity than fashion. When a designer had no need for the exposure and the risk could never yield rewards, only his passion for his work might convince him to take the risk. The Princess of Wales, Mike Tyson, and Woody Allen were just a few of the celebrities that Versace welcomed during the height of controversy because of his keen interest in what was happening in the world at the time. The era's supermodels were regulars on Versace's catwalk due to his strong connections and immaculate sense of style. He routinely sent faxes to his well-known friends letting them know that he was always there for them and that he was looking and listening. He pursued a degree in architecture and personally selected each element for his residences. He personally handled the property's renovation in Lake Como. And as stated before, the classical era significantly affected him. He was exposed to Italian Baroque, Grecian themes, and Etruscan symbols while growing up and integrated these influences into his collections. Along the same lines, his creative freedom and adventurous attitude were influenced by fashion as well as other important forms of expression like art and theatre. On other times, he took criticism in stride and improved his collections noticeably. People who had previously disapproved of him because of his "cartoon like style" were forced to admit that, in just seven years, he had transformed himself into one of the most important fashion designers of his day. To observe him pursue his goals was to see a development of design.

VALUES AND BELIEFS

- During the 1980s, most of his work was displayed in exhibitions, which gave him a massive amount of attention and led to him becoming one of the most fascinating creators in the 1990s.
- Versace was the first designer to recognise the value of celebrities sitting in the front row of a fashion show and then being shot for high-profile advertising campaigns. He recognised the significance of marketing. He admired celebrities and understood that they not only drew the attention of the press, but also helped to set trends.
- While many designers get recognised and cloister themselves away, Versace had an insatiable need for knowledge, and when he mastered something, he transmitted it to his audience through his work. His keen interest in the new was what kept his collections fresh and inventive.

- It was not surprising to find 50 volumes heaped on a single table at one of Versace's residences. He hired a full-time bookkeeper to organise his five libraries.
- Versace was more than a collector of art; he was a blotting surface for craftsmanship, devouring it, pondering it, and occasionally incorporating the colours or notions into his collections.
- Versace was a unique individual. Nobody has ever encountered someone who was so passionate about life, beauty, and living.
- He was happy in everyday life and gave everything back to the world. He was someone who was doing what he was meant to do and getting a lot of joy out of it.

MEANING BEHIND

Today, the Versace label continues to reference patterns and symbols developed by Gianni, furthering his legacy. They are:

➤ **BAROQUE PRINTS**



Supermodels of the 90s posing wearing clothes consisting of baroque prints



Beyoncé's On the Run II tour featured custom Versace Barocco looks

The vibrant, ornate works of the Baroque period, which was a continuation of the counter-Reformation period in which the Catholic church relied on expressive art to communicate, aroused Gianni's interest in art history. After introducing the motif for Spring/Summer 1992, Versace created series after series of Barocco prints that drew inspiration from the time period's intricate iconography and colour schemes. Versace's colourful designs were admired by celebrities like Lil' Kim and the Notorious B.I.G., who frequently wore and referenced them until they became ingrained in popular culture. To give his patterns the flowing, metallic look seen in coloured Baroque paintings, the creator of these prints usually used silk or other reflective materials. The effect is ideal for artists such as Beyonce, who dressed her entire dance team in Versace's Barocco pattern in 2018. In recent seasons, the fashion brand even included a poster by Caravaggio, a famous Baroque painter.

➤ BONDAGE



Donatella wears a Versace bondage dress in 1993



Cindy Crawford models for Versace's Fall/Winter 1992 Miss S and M Collection

The designs of the Italian fashion brand frequently glorified feminine sexual expressiveness. Gianni designed the Miss S and M collection for Fall/Winter 1992, which is now known as his bondage collection. Strappy, sensual black leather styles with metal embellishments referred to kinky sexual desires. The collection was divisive. Some saw the collection as reducing women to sex objects, while others saw it as empowering. Donatella Versace Fall/Winter 2019 paid homage to the first bondage collection by reintroducing straps and buckles.

➤ MEDUSA



YasmeenGhauri wears a Medusa medallion necklace on the Versace Fall/Winter 1992 runway



Versace La Medusa Campaign Spring 2021

One of the three Gorgons from Greek mythology, Medusa, is represented in the Versace emblem. Gianni was influenced by the Greco-Roman tales that dominated much of Italian art as well as the Italian ruins he grew up around. According to tradition, Medusa was a beautiful woman who transformed into a monster. Anyone who glanced at her face was instantaneously converted to stone, and her flowing golden hair changed into snakes. Even though a hideous creature would seem an odd choice for a fashion label, Versace picked Medusa to represent his brand. Anyone who seen her before she turned into a monster was powerless to resist falling in love with her. Even people who were scared by her after she became a monster couldn't look away. Gianni's comprehension and elevation of the Medusa tale demonstrates his ability to reconcile fashion with larger cultural issues.

➤ GOLD METAL DETAILING



Naomi Campbell walks the Atelier Versace Fall/Winter 1992 show



Versace Autumn/Winter 2019 show

Versace's collections frequently incorporated extensive metal accents. Gianni loved to push the frontiers of fashion, and he was experimenting with complex hardware even before the Valentino Rock stud or the current rivets craze. Gianni often worked with Baroque-inspired gold tones, albeit using silver. The designer essentially incorporated jewellery into his outfits, from utilising chains as straps to constructing couture pins or accenting skirts with massive metal ornaments.

➤ OROTON



Naomi Campbell and Kate Moss in Versace 1999



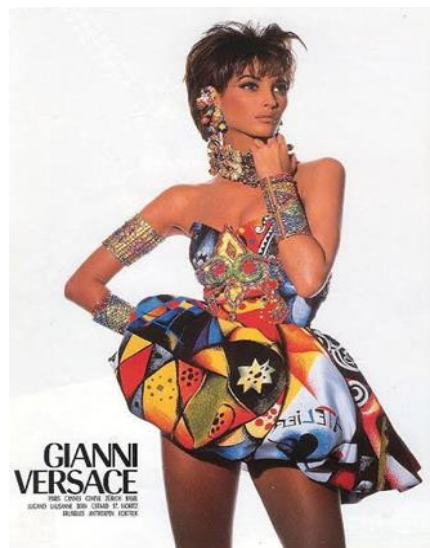
Iconic supermodels Carla Bruni, Claudia Schiffer, Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford and Helena Christensen close the Versace Spring/Summer 2018 show wearing Orotón dresses

Gianni invented the now-famous metallic fabric Oroton, which resembles a mesh. The chainmail fabric resembles a gleaming sheet of flowing metal. The thin material was developed by Versace in 1982, and it had its public premiere at a fashion show at the Paris Opera. Versace was known for forgoing normal sewing plans and instead creating all of his clothes by draping material directly over a model. The fabric was intended to resemble the classic old-world draping that was a hallmark of the designer's garments.

➤ POP ART



Naomi Campbell in Versace Marilyn Monroe Dress Spring/Summer 1991 collection



Gianni Versace SS'91 Collection

Gianni was influenced by both fine art and popular culture. The designer created a comprehensive pop art-inspired collection for Spring/Summer 1991, including Andy Warhol screen captures of Marilyn Monroe and James Dean into his clothing. Gianni often used pop art techniques like repeating motifs. The designer's personal collection of 20th-century artworks was auctioned by Sotheby's in 2009 for more than \$13 million. He was a devotee of contemporary art.

➤ SAFETY PINS



Naomi Campbell and Christy Turlington with Gianni Versace himself in 1991



Elizabeth Hurley wears the famous Versace Safety Pin Dress in 1994

When Elizabeth Hurley wore a Versace safety pin dress to the Four Weddings and a Funeral premiere, she rose to the status of a fashion icon. The appearance has a Wikipedia entry since it is now so well-known. The Spring/Summer 1994 design has large safety pin embellishments holding it together despite being shredded at the sides and thigh. Hurley wore the clothing since, at the time, she was unable to afford her own. Versace had agreed to give her a garment for the event at Hugh Grant's request, but it was the final one in the press room. It fit, and when coupled with gold hoops and a hefty bracelet, it immediately became one of the '90s' most famous outfits. Though some criticised the gown as obscene, Hurley praised Gianni's work, stating that "unlike many other designers, Versace crafts garments to glorify rather than destroy the feminine form." In 2019, her son Damian designed his own memorial jacket, and the safety pin pattern has resurfaced regularly in Versace designs since Gianni's death.

➤ HEAVY EMBELLISHMENTS



Naomi Campbell and Christy Turlington wear jewelled Versace garments in a campaign

Reflective materials were used to great effect by the brilliant designer. Gianni often employed lavish embellishments to produce recognisable themes in addition to just stunning patterns. Gianni knew how to catch eyes with everything, from blinged-out attire to straightforward

sparkling accessories. Additionally, celebrities still like wearing his distinctive ornamental creations.

➤ TROPICAL PRINTS



Jennifer Lopez in Versace at the 2000 Grammy Awards



Model Irina Shayk wears a seashell dress for Versace's Under The Sea themed SS21 collection

The infamous jungle dress still retains Gianni's signature even though Jennifer Lopez wore it after his passing away. The costume not only smashes stereotypes to elevate the feminine form but also shouts Versace with its vibrant, leafy pattern. Gianni, who cherished Miami, played a significant role in promoting the city's South Beach fashion scene. Given his love of the metropolis, it should come as no surprise that he loved prints of tropical plants and animals. In the 1990s, the designer developed various outfits with seashell and starfish prints, expanding the aquatic motifs to gold jewellery. This concept was revived by Donatella with an Atlantis-themed performance in the spring/summer of 2021.

COUTURE

Couture according to Wikipedia is “ The design and manufacture of fashionable clothes do a client specific requirements and measurements. Versace’s couture creations were intended to be made for the ultra-rich in mind , but his impact was seen across society through diffusion lines.

➤ THE COURTYARD

Versace was determined to breathe new life into daywear. He embellished finely tailored suits with risqué details like bondage-like fastenings or seductive pleats, created sensually tactile leather outfits, and clothed men and women in exuberant designs from head to toe. Versace created garments that could not be ignored by combining skilled craftsmanship with new materials.



Versace coat and belt, Autumn-Winter 1992/93, padded and quilted black leather with fox fur and astrakhan trim, black leather with gilded embellishments



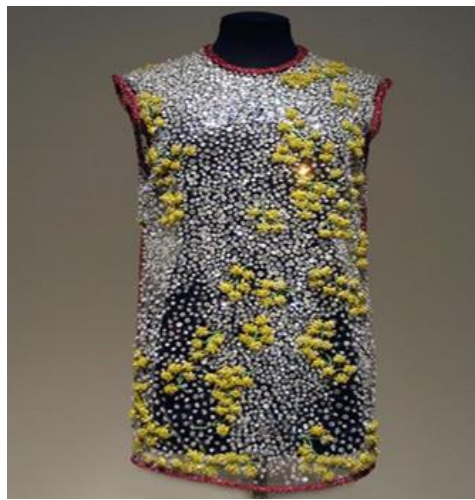
Mini evening dress, Spring/Summer 1996, Versace, leather, synthetic tulle, lace, beads and sequins

➤ THE BALLROOM

Versace is most well known for his tight, sensual 'celebrity' dresses, but he also adored creating conventional full-skirted ballgowns suited for socialites. He produced various evening designs in Orotón, the one-of-a-kind metal mesh 'fabric' he invented in the early 1980s, manipulating its weight and fluidity to create dazzling carapaces reminiscent of ancient drapes. Versace's 1989 Atelier haute couture collection was influenced by his love of overstatement. Sequins, diamantés, and metal strands were carefully stitched on micro-dresses and skintight jumpsuits. Versace, on the other side, experimented with structure and drama in a series of austere black dresses with opposing personalities. They were simple on the outside but featured wickedly plunging necklines and slit skirts on the inside.



Cocktail Dress, Spring/Summer 1994, Versace, Silvertone Orotón



Evening Dress, Autumn/Winter1995/1996, Versace, Vinyl plastic with diamonds and bead embroidery

➤ HISTORICAL

Versace was a man with boundless energy and excitement. He enjoyed all types of creation and visited institutions such as the V&A. Versace felt strongly about his background and the function of clothes, saying, "I come from a land with a rich history... its roots are old, ancient roots, that knew the aristocracy of sculptural draperies." Versace's extensive knowledge and reverence for the past set him free. He established a daring balance between the past and the modern that was never insulting.



Dress, Spring-Summer 1994, Versace, 'crumpled' tie-dyed silk with machine-made lace



Evening ensemble, bodice, skirt and belt, Autumn-Winter 1990/91, Versace, black net embroidered with multicoloured silks, sequins and diamantés, satin, duchesse satin and faille printed with various black and white geometric patterns

➤ THEATRE

Versace's runway collections were always magnificent and dramatic, and he found requests to make costumes for theatre and ballet (the first in 1982) enticing. These, in turn, had a strong impact on his fashion. Versace's most famous works were created for the choreographer Maurice Béjart. The inventions addressed severe practical standards while also enhancing the dancer's motions and providing a dynamic visual story. Versace drew inspiration for his theatrical costumes from the great masters of fashion theatre, Christian Dior, Cristobal Balenciaga, and Elsa Schiaparelli.



Theatre costume, Versace, 1987, black quilted satin and white satin with black and white appliqué

1997 , HIS DEMISE

All though my entire aim of this project was to bring about the genius of Gianni Versace and how he changed the face of fashion , I still think it is necessary to dive , no matter how little, into the news that too, the world by storm . Many today are still attempting to determine what motivated Andrew Cunanan to murder Gianni Versace. Cunanan approached the well-known Italian designer when he was coming back to his Miami Beach mansion after a morning stroll to a neighbourhood café on July 15, 1997. According to FBI documents, Versace was shot twice in the back of the head by Cunanan after he opened fire at close range.His assassination, which horrified the country, was also the subject of FX's *The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story*. What everybody does know about Cunanan and Versace is that Versace was not Cunanan's first victim. Cunanan was a serial murderer who was linked to four previous murders. He was on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list and the target of a global search when he murdered Versace in Miami Beach.

CONCLUSION

He had a daring vision for how his brand should seem, including the usage of supermodels and famous people, extravagant and sexy clothing, and Greek symbols like the Medusa head that

served as the logo. He introduced extravagance, glitz, and opulent retail dimensions to fashion in the way that only Italians can. When he was creating for the Versace woman, he produced vivacious clothing and had a distinct viewpoint. He became known as a fashion entrepreneur with an iconic brand because to his strong sense of style and vision.

Versace's history has been tumultuous, from its roots in Gianni and Donatella's small hamlet in southern Italy through Gianni's ascent to stardom in Milan, the sad tragedy in Miami, and the time the brand found its place again under Donatella's vision. Gianni and Donatella Versace share an uncanny resemblance that transcends biological connections. Even after Gianni Versace died, the fashion house continued to evolve as if the creative man had never departed. The muse, Donatella Versace, became the author, Donatella Versace. The Versace's family values have kept the brand prospering, making the business a global fashion industry heavyweight. Even though many people are aware of this, their narrative of perseverance deserves to be recounted, so let us state unequivocally: "It's Versace, not Versachee."

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