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The Life and Times of Gianni Versace

Gianni Versace was born on December 2, 1946. Born and raised in Reggio di Calabria, Italy, he was brought up into the world of design by his mother who ran her own business making dresses. His interest in fashion grew as a child when he would help his mother find precious stones that they would then embroider into the dresses. Versace's talent can be accredited to his mother who taught him the foundation for his skills. Rather than continue his education, Gianni went to work for his mother for a short time after completing high school. He then moved to Milan in 1972, where he worked for various Italian studios such as Genny, Complice, Mario Valentino, and Callaghan. He also designed his first collections under for these studios. With the help of the Girombellis, a popular Italian fashion family, Versace was able to launch his first company in 1978, under the name "Gianni Versace Donna." His brother, Santo Versace served as CEO of the company while his sister, Donatella Versace, worked as a designer and Vice President.

Gianni Versace became known for his sexy and sensational style of clothing. He used materials that some thought odd such as aluminum mesh on his dresses. Others thought his unique design style of laser technology used to fuse leather and rubber was innovative. The woman with snakes coming out of her head, or Medusa, was a symbol that appeared on many of

Versace's clothing and accessory items. His first couture collection was launched in 1989 and added two new lines of clothing to his business.

Versace was inspired by Andy Warhol, African tribal, ancient Greek art and mythology, also modern abstract art. One of his major influences would have to be Greek mythology as the logo for Versace is the medusa head. Seeing as how Gianni started out making clothing for women, it would make sense that his logo was of a woman who could turn men to stone with just a look.

Versace's career was decorated with numerous awards, including four L'Occhio d'Oros and an American Fashion Oscar in 1993. Versace was awarded the Maschera D'Argento prize for his contributions to theater. He also created stage costumes for such pop performers as Elton John, Madonna and Tina Turner. His work has been showcased in several different museums such as Chicago's National Field Museum and London's Royal College of Art.

During his time, Versace's products could only be purchased from his boutiques. Today, Versace can be purchased on the website and in department stores such as, Macy's and Nordstrom. They sell just about every piece of clothing imaginable, perfumes and accessories. Prices range from the low 100s to the high 1000s.

On July 15, 1997, Versace was murdered at the age of 50 outside his South Beach home in Miami, Florida. The beloved fashion designer was murdered by 27-year-old spree killer Andrew Cunanan, who was found dead in a Miami Beach boathouse eight days later. Versace was survived by his longtime partner Antonio D'Amico.

Works Cited

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