Versace, Gianni (1946-1997) Encyclopedia Article

Versace, Gianni (1946-1997)

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As a boy, Versace observed his mother's dressmaking studio in Reggio Calabria, Italy; as a man, Versace moved to Milan to design for other companies from 1972 to 1977 and established his own company in 1977. A consummate dressmaker, Versace rocked the world of fashion by other principles: featuring hot models; packing runway shows with celebrities; dressing famous men and women from Elton John to Princess Diana to model Elizabeth Hurley; and creating body-conscious clothing for the most self-confident clients. His body-exposing black safety-pin dress worn by Hurley to a London movie premiere was the most photographed dress of 1994. Leather and metal-mesh dresses from his last collection in 1997 referred to Byzantine art, but clung to the body. In sensibility and life, Versace was flamboyant and larger-than-life. He realized fashion as media and created Cinderella fantasies for the 1980s and 1990s. He was murdered on the steps of his Miami mansion in July 1997.

Further Reading:

Martin, Richard. *Gianni Versace.* New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art/Abrams, 1997.

——. *Versace.* New York, Universe, 1997.