



Versace: Signatures

Gianni Versace, Omar Calabrese

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The first English language monograph of Italy's great couturier, "Versace/Signatures" presents a kaleidoscopic array of the designer's best clothes for men and women, for dancers and singers and stars. Hundreds of full-color photographs document his work from recent years - the bright printed silks and painted tights, the bodices festooned with beads, the playful reappropriation of leather straps and chains - with an occasional glance back to the pieces that first made Versace famous: the wide shoulders and supple leather jackets and metal mesh of the early '80s. The book, which was the companion volume to the triumphant 1992 New York show at the Fashion Institute of Technology, closes with a survey of his theatrical costumes and chronology of the designer's career. Versace's sources were everywhere, ranging from his mother, a seamstress "who always made the sign of the cross before she cut into the fabric," to the sophisticated forms of royal ancient Egypt and the rich variety of Russian folk costumes. Art Deco, Pop Art, and Op Art all served as springboards for his imagination, together with the traditions of the Baroque and Rococo. All this is conveyed in powerful photographs by Irving Penn, Richard Avedon, Bruce Weber, Herb Ritts, and many others; and the book is peppered with witty quotes chosen from Wilde and Proust. In addition, there are comments on Versace's work by experts as diverse as art critic Ingrid Sischy, choreographer Maurice Bejart, director Robert Wilson, and fashion observers Anna Wintour, Polly Mellen, and Liz Tilberis.

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