



Gianni Versace Printed Textile

Gianni Versace was considered by many as one of the most influential and vibrant fashion designers in the world by mixing low-end and high-end culture. He made splashy, sometimes outrageous clothes that were favoured by rock stars and others among the young, rich, and famous.

Although he catered to the whims of the rich and famous, with items such as \$20,000 evening gowns and \$395 bath towel sets, Versace did not approach fashion with an elitist attitude but moved fashion into the public domain in the most strident way.

This particular piece of fabric was printed in the late 1980's and sold in stores such as Selfridges and Harrods in London. Unlike most of the textiles in this collection, this piece has been machine woven and printed to meet the consumer demands of the West.

Textile printing is the process of applying colour to fabric in definite patterns or designs. In properly printed fabrics the colour is bonded with the fibre, so as to resist washing and friction. Textile printing is related to dyeing but unlike dyeing where the whole fabric is uniformly covered with one colour, in printing one or more colours are applied to it in certain parts only, and in sharply defined patterns.

In printing, wooden blocks, stencils, engraved plates, rollers, or silkscreens can be used to place colours on the fabric. Colourants used in printing contain dyes thickened to prevent the colour from spreading by capillary attraction beyond the limits of the pattern or design. This particular piece would have been printed using rollers.

Traditional textile printing techniques may be broadly categorised into four styles:

- Direct printing, in which colourants containing dyes, thickeners, and the mordants or substances necessary for fixing the colour on the cloth are printed in the desired pattern.
- The printing of a mordant in the desired pattern prior to dyeing cloth; the colour adheres only where the mordant was printed.
- Resist dyeing, in which a wax or other substance is printed onto fabric which is subsequently dyed. The waxed areas do not accept the dye, leaving uncoloured patterns against a coloured ground.
- Discharge printing, in which a bleaching agent is printed onto previously dyed fabrics to remove some or all of the colour.

Resist and discharge techniques were particularly fashionable in the 19th century, as were combination techniques in which indigo resist was used to create blue backgrounds prior to block-printing of other colours. Most modern industrialised printing uses direct printing techniques.

