

THE LOOK

Why did you choose to draw inspiration specifically from the Versace fall/winter 1994 campaign photographed by Richard Avedon? What was it about that particular campaign from that year that drew your interest?

I was really drawn to the palette and the fabric. My work is very much inspired by what's on the runway. I love the idea of taking fabrics from fashion and putting them on upholstery. In fashion, we play around with a lot more textures and fabrics than in design and I want to bridge the gap between fashion and design.

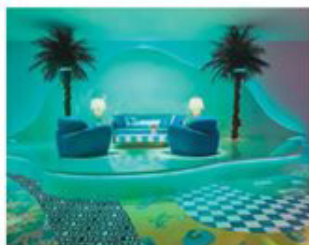
What are some of your favourite key pieces we should look out for from the new Versace Home collection?

I love the carpet which is an original design done by me. It is inspired by a candy swirl from one of those white and red mint candies. I included my favourite 1980s Versace icons inside the swirls and changed the colour to pastels.

You also created individual sets that showcase special reinterpretations of pieces from past Versace Home collections. Can you share with us the design process?

I used previous Versace Home collections because I needed furniture with rounded shapes to complement the cloud, the two islands and the carpet. I needed movement. I also wanted it to have a 1980s art deco revival influence. I used classic Italian Gianni baroque furniture as well which is always important with Versace, however, I added a hot pink faux fur on the Vanitas chaise and a checkerboard blue and white print on the lamps. My favourite piece is the Via Gesù dining table which I relacquered in all my pastel colours and did a multi-colour checkerboard top.

What kind of mood or environment did you want to set for the audience at the Via Gesù exhibition?



Ultimately I wanted to create something totally unique, happy and fun. I wanted to get people in the mood to party with the neon lights but I also wanted to bring Versace back to its roots while at the same time showing people a new concept.

What was your experience like working with the Versace team on this special collaboration?

It was like working with a family. I always say it takes teamwork to make the dream work and everyone at Versace is really dedicated to everything they do. I think everyone who works at this brand feels such a deep connection with Donatella and when I was working there I constantly felt this energy.

How do you balance your American aesthetic with Versace's Italian roots in this collaboration?

Although I am American, I don't really feel a connection to an American aesthetic. I have always been more drawn to a French or Italian aesthetic. I have lived in Paris and spent a lot of time in Europe my whole life. The two American aspects I am deeply connected to which are prevalent in all my work are the 1980s art deco revival period of South Beach, Miami with the influences of Miami Vice and Scarface, and the disco era of Studio 54 in New York City.

How important do you view collaborations?

I think collaborations are great when you have two people who share the same aesthetic values but can bring different things to the plate.

What is different about this collaboration compared with other collaborations you have done?

This is my dream collaboration. I can thankfully say at 31, I accomplished a major dream of mine. If there was ever a brand in my life that I felt a connection with, it has to be Versace.

As an interior designer and creative person, how do you identify with Versace?

The same way I would identify myself and my brand. Fun, fresh, wild, bold, glamorous and sexy. I want my interiors to have a mark on the world just as Versace does. I want people to recognise my interiors as a Sasha Bkoff just as how they would recognise a Versace garment.

You were dubbed 'Interior designer for the young and wealthy' by The New York Times and the 'Go-to decorator for Manhattan's well-heeled millennial set' by the New York Post. What is it about your designs that attract a younger audience?

I think that my designs attract a younger audience because my creations reveal a sense of self and tell a story about who we are and what we are passionate about. This generation has such a strong creative voice and vision, we are attracted to colours, patterns and designs that evoke a sense of emotion and fantasy. Through social media, this generation is able to digitally travel to places and gather inspiration and content and apply it to the mood boards of their lives. The thing about my designs is that they are inspired by the past but I breathe fresh new life into each space that I create. I am inspired by fashion, film, art, travel and nature, but I always look to recreate something totally unique and beyond one's imagination, which I think excites the millennial generation because it's different and in a way disruptive.

What does luxury lifestyle mean to you?

The ultimate luxury actually comes from within us. Being happy and confident with who we are and being able to carry out a certain lifestyle that enhances our happiness is the real luxury. Luxury is all about doing whatever you want, whenever you want. Obviously it helps to be surrounded by beautiful and expensive things but luxury runs deeper than that because if you don't have a sense of self love, you won't be able to enjoy the finer things in life. **LD**

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