

Gianni Lee Biography

Visual artist, international DJ, and fashion designer, Gianni Lee was born and raised in West Philadelphia, PA. Larger than the prevalence of violence and drugs on the 5400 block of Delancey Street stood a family ethic from which Lee learned the power of loyalty and friendship. At the same time, because of his natural talents, he was often considered an outcast; a title he embraced knowing there was more beyond 54th street. With a strong encouraging mother, who is a former model herself, Lee's creativity was acknowledged and supported.

Growing up in West Philly only motivated him to pursue and develop his abilities. As a middle school student in the "mentally gifted" class, Lee would finish his work then sketch *Dragonball Z* characters—(an anime TV series (1996 -2003) from the original written and drawn by Akira Toriyama). He attended Charter High School for Architecture and Design where he studied many different forms of art and design. He had specialized two period long courses every day for 4 years along with a standard high school curriculum. Lee experienced a constant battle between being cool and being smart but it helped him appreciate both sides of the spectrum.

Lee went on to study Communications and Broadcasting at Temple University with the idea of pursuing art on his own. Temple afforded Lee opportunities in music and marketing. As a party promoter, Lee amassed a following in the club scene being known for bringing out huge crowds. Lee then ventured into making dance music, crafting his own blend of progressive melodies and live instruments into the more up-tempo Bmore/Philly club genres. Lee sites music producer/designer Pharrell Williams as his influence for venturing into fashion.

After college, Lee made the move to Los Angeles, California for more opportunities in music and fashion. Originally, he considered New York but LA won him over with a job on the table and its great weather. The move proved to be well worth it. Lee's continued success in music led to a chance meeting with singer-songwriter Rhianna where he gifted her a signature camo jacket. The generous exchange provided massive exposure to his fashion brand Babylon Cartel.

Exploring the world of fine art was soon to follow. As Lee recalls, a few of his friends saw him painting graffiti for the first time at SXSW and thought it was cool.

Based on that response he decided to get a studio and begin painting to put on canvass what he couldn't express on-line or with his music. Lee uses painting as a language to tell the story of a people fighting for their home and their existence. This story takes place in a distant dystopian future. His canvas and color choices are a platform for him to express inner-feelings on issues he can't put into words. He tells stories that speak about social issues in America and abroad including Suicide, Fatherhood, Racism, The Black Male, Capitalism, Disease, PTSD and more. Lee's goal is to be heard and relay a message of strength and accountability. He believes it's time to recognize the problem. To hold ourselves responsible and contribute to the solution. He hopes people will find courage for themselves through his vivid story-telling.

From Dragonball Z sketches in middle school, to South by Southwest to now, Lee continues to create personal, meaningful art and is working on various music projects with artists in the dance music world. His ultimate goal is to play his music in front of large festival crowds. He got his first taste of the festival circuit when he played The Roots Picnic and the Trillectro Festival; this inspired him to take dance music seriously and to start putting out tracks.

Knowing the sadness that comes with being in a place one doesn't desire to be in, Lee believes he must be a voice to generations following him. With his music, fashion and fine art - against the odds he made it out and desires to be a beacon of hope for others.

Gianni Lee

Visual Artist / Sound Designer / Clothing Designer - Babylon Cartel & CO. Clothing

www.babyloncartel.com

www.twitter.com/giannilee

www.instagram.com/giannilee

Producer / Artist Mixes: www.soundcloud.com/giannileemusic

Recent Press:

Hennessy Campaign: <https://goo.gl/7Cp951>

Kenneth Cole Campaign: <https://goo.gl/WQWhjR>

Interview Magazine: <https://goo.gl/WW8dIG>

Vfiles Feature: <https://goo.gl/LzEbzx>

Artslant Interview: <https://goo.gl/GVwaie>