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Art Market

How Beatrice Bulgari's Start in Film Fuelled a Lifelong Commitment to Video Art

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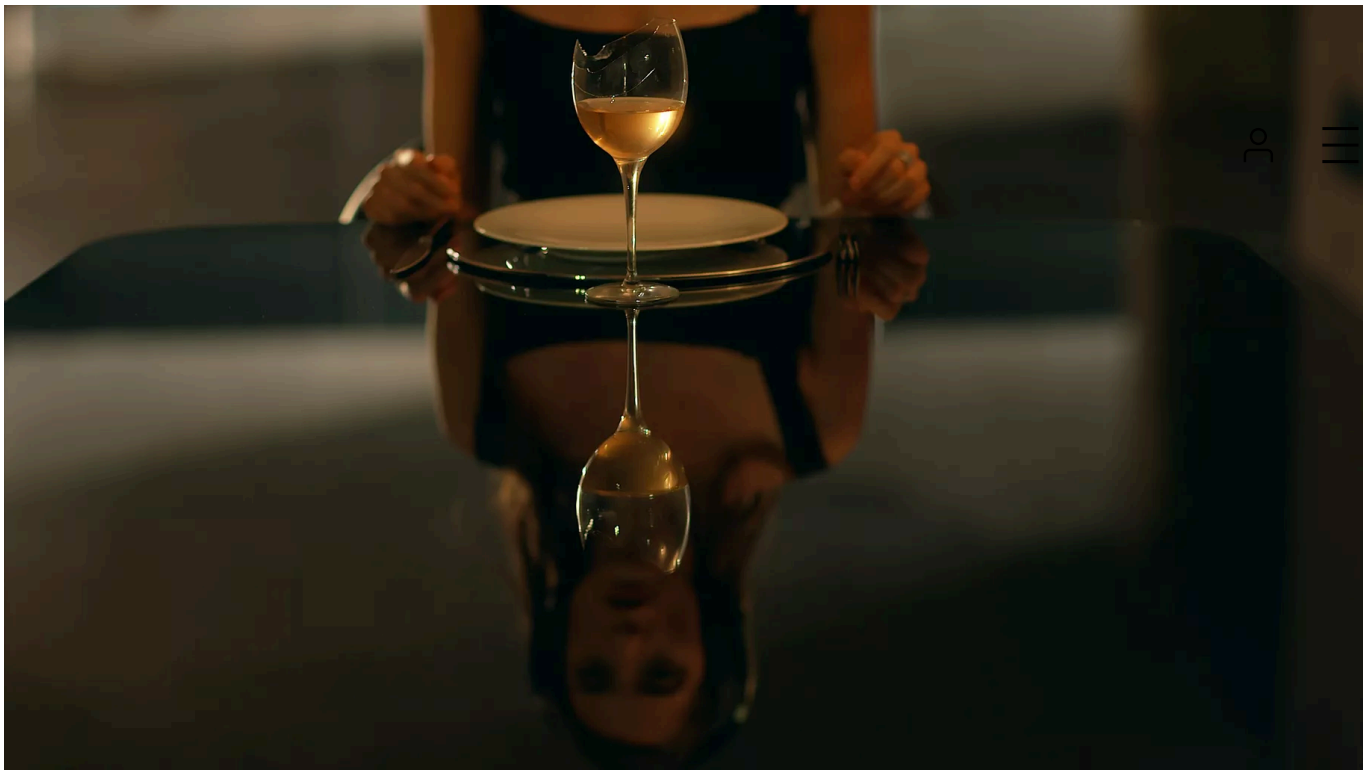
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One of the leading proponents of video art, Beatrice Bulgari, has a life rooted in cinema. She was a costume designer for more than two decades and, in 2012, founded her own production company, In Between Art Film, which has worked with artists including Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi.

Bulgari is best known to cinephiles for her costume work on the Oscar-winning *Cinema Paradiso* (1988). Set in her birthplace of Sicily, Italy, the film centers on a flashback to film director Salvatore Di Vita's childhood and burgeoning friendship with the town's cinema projectionist. In an iconic final scene, an adult Salvatore watches a projected montage of kisses. These snippets of transgression had been scissored out of their original film reels years before at the behest of a local priest, who would censor movies in advance of their public screening.

The montage evokes the “in between” quality—of both narrative cinema and fine art—that makes time-based media so unique. Bulgari explains that a video artist has the capacity, often in a short space of time, “to give you a different empathy, a different reflection.”



MASBEDO, still from *Daily Routine*, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and Fondazione In Between Art Film.

Art has been a consistent thread in Bulgari's life. As well as her personal collection of contemporary art (which includes works by ~~Damien Hirst, Lucio Fontana, and Alighiero Boetti~~), Bulgari has maintained a passion for the moving image. In Between Art Film has fostered relationships with institutions such as Tate Modern and the film festival Lo Schermo Dell'arte in Florence, where it developed FEATURE EXPANDED, a program helping video artists transition into feature films. In 2019, Bulgari founded the nonprofit Fondazione In Between Art Film, which commissions and produces work by exciting moving image artists and has staged exhibitions across Europe (including at the past two Venice Biennales).

Italian duo MASBEDO (which reminded her of Michelangelo Antonioni) in 2010, her passion was reignited: “I again started to be in love with contemporary art and cinema.” She thought the artists were ready to work on a bigger production, while retaining the “artisinality” of their video artwork.

What followed was *The Lack* (2014), a feature-length film exploring solitude through four stories, centered on six women characters. MASBEDO directed the film, while Bulgari produced, co-wrote, and even used her house as a filming location. This period marked “the beginning”: Her company went on to cultivate many artist and filmmaker relationships.



Karimah Ashadu, installation view of *Muscle* (2025) at Camden Arts Centre, 2025. Photo by Rob Harris. Courtesy of the artist and Fondazione In Between Art And Film.

major exhibition by British-born Nigerian artist Karimah Ashadu. “Tendered” showcases three of Ashadu’s films, alongside accompanying sculptural pieces. A new film titled *Muscle* (2025), co-produced by the Fondazione, focuses on a group of bodybuilders in Lagos pushing themselves to extremes, giving a close view of hypermasculinity in West African society.

Leonardo Bigazzi, a curator at the Fondazione, first brought Ashadu’s work to Bulgari’s attention, and the Fondazione has since worked with the artist on several projects, including *Machine Boys* (2024), which won the Silver Lion at the Venice Biennale. Bulgari wants to go further than acquiring a work by an artist and prefers ongoing relationships; “this is one of the other aims of the Fondazione, because you support, you produce, you show, and then you have to follow,” she emphasized.

Video art is not the easiest medium for a collector to engage with, and it can seem daunting at first. Bulgari admits that it’s niche; “it’s still something that people are not used to.” But she would encourage curious collectors not to simply follow the art market.



Still of Iván Argote *Espacios Seguros*, 2020. Courtesy the artist, Perrotin, Galería Vermelho, Galería Albarrán Bourdais and Fondazione In Between Art Film.

Instead, she advises that if something captures your attention and moves you, then at that moment “it’s important to take the risk,” she said. Time-based media does not regularly come up at auction, unless—as Bulgari points out—you are a huge star like the late Bill Viola. (Viola’s video diptych *Ablutions* (2005) sold for \$144,900 at Sotheby’s in January.)

But collecting video art can be rewarding on a deeper, more personal level. Bulgari recalls purchasing a small video work by a young artist who stopped producing shortly afterward. To Bulgari, the work has lost none of its value, and instead she describes treasuring it as “a precious thing, a moment of the life of the artist.”

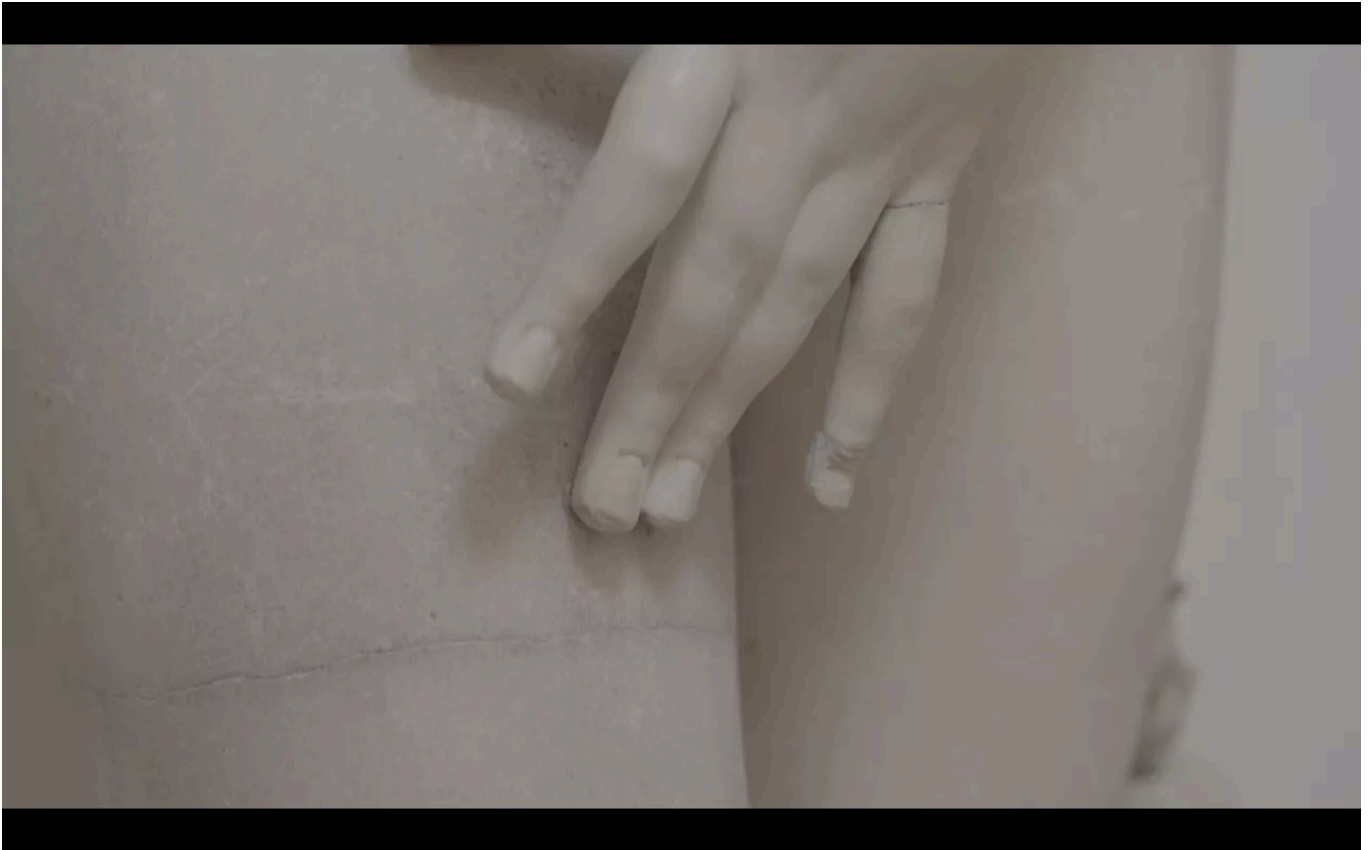
Most moving-image art is produced in an edition—usually of six—she explains, though the number can vary. Distribution is tightly controlled, and collectors can rest assured it won’t circulate freely. The way to discover this kind of art is often physical, so she advises attending film festivals, exhibitions, and biennales.



Eva Giolo, *Flowers blooming in our throats*, 2020. Courtesy of the artist, Fondazione In Between Art Film, and Elephy.

Collectors can also commission moving-image work on a subject they feel deserves attention. A good example of this is “MASCARILLA 19 – Codes of Domestic Violence,” one of the Fondazione’s first projects in 2020, inspired by a newspaper article Bulgari came across during the pandemic. “Mascarilla 19” was a code word, introduced by the Spanish government, which victims of domestic abuse could use in a local pharmacy to alert the staff there that they were in danger.

“Can you believe that we need all these kinds of strategies to save women?” Bulgari asked at the time. Out of this grew a major commission with eight artists, including Eva Giolo, ~~Iván Argote~~, ~~Janis Rafa~~ and ~~Silvia Giambrone~~, making work in response to this “emergency within the emergency.” Bulgari is happy to offer advice to the artists she is working with, but doesn’t expect them to follow it: “I like to be involved. Sometimes I say, ‘Are you sure that you want



Elena Mazzi, *Muse*, 2020. Courtesy the artist, Ex Elettrofonica and Fondazione In Between Art Film.

For Bulgari, embracing nontraditional media is not only about art ownership but about engaging with culture while trusting her instincts. *Hold On Miss! Isabella Ducrot Unlimited* is a 2024 documentary by Monica Stambrini that offers an intimate portrait of the 96-year-old Italian artist (an old friend of Bulgari's, who didn't start painting until her fifties).

Bulgari decided to produce the film after meeting Stambrini, who had amassed over 150 hours of footage. Curious, she asked the filmmaker to send her a couple of minutes, and based purely on the strength of this teaser, which she described as "magic," Bulgari was on board: "I said, 'This is incredible. So OK, let's go!'" ■