

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

MCKIM MEDAL GALA 2025

The American Academy in Rome celebrated twenty years of the McKim Medal Gala on June 4, 2025 at Villa Aurelia, Rome

The McKim Medal Gala recognized the work of filmmaker Giuseppe Tornatore and oncologist Virgilio Sacchini

Led by Gala Chair Beatrice Bulgari, the McKim Medal Gala welcomed an international audience and raised €820,000 in support of artists and scholars at the American Academy in Rome.

The American Academy in Rome honored the extraordinary talents and visionary work of filmmaker **Giuseppe Tornatore** and surgeon **Virgilio Sacchini** at the 20th edition of the McKim Medal Gala, held at **Villa Aurelia** in Rome on the evening of **June 4, 2025**. **Beatrice Bulgari** chaired the annual benefit, dedicated each year to recognizing the outstanding achievements of individuals who have contributed to deepening the artistic and cultural dialogue between Italy and the United States.

Alongside **Bulgari**, guests were welcomed by **Calvin Tsao**, Chair of the Board of Trustees and 2010 Resident; **Peter N. Miller**, President and CEO; **Aliza S. Wong**, Director; **Ginevra Elkann**, **Margherita Marengi Vaselli**, **Carla Markell**, and **Maria Teresa Venturini Fendi**, Honorary Gala Chairs.

“This award brings back some very rewarding moments from my professional relationship with the American film industry and, above all, rekindles my deep gratitude to the great and immortal American cinema that has nourished me since my childhood and adolescence and continues to do so today,” said **Giuseppe Tornatore**. “The first film I saw, when I went to the cinema alone at the age of seven, was an American production. Since then, the flow of films from across the Atlantic has been uninterrupted, rich in inspiration and a source of desire. The power of American cinema, which was also nourished by the work of filmmakers, writers, and artists from all over the world, made our dream even deeper because that great melting pot of ideas and diverse (and thus rich) points of view appeared to us not only as an immense opportunity for learning, but also as a world in which anyone who so desired could find a place to belong. For many young people who discover and love cinema today, that dream has never faded. And it continues to live on today at the movie theaters, in gallery spaces, in libraries – and at the American Academy in Rome.”

“When I first received the news that I would be receiving the prestigious McKim Medal,” shared **Virgilio Sacchini**, “I tried to focus on the most important moments of my professional life... to share with you. The first memory dates back to the beginning of my medical career. On the very first day of my fellowship, my mentor told me something that has shaped my entire journey – be the best in your field. At that time, I never imagined I would one day move to the United States. I promised my wife we would spend just one year in New York. That was 25 years ago—and we’re still there. The second important moment came from a patient. He shook my hand and looked me in the eyes, and said, ‘Thank you for making me feel that I matter to you.’ That moment made me realize how essential it is to put ourselves in other people’s shoes. The third moment came from my students, during graduation. They thanked me not only for what they had learned, but also for helping them to become truly capable. These three values—striving for excellence, empathy, and passing knowledge to the next generation—are the essential cornerstones of a meaningful life. Thank you again for giving me this great emotion tonight.”

The **McKim Medal** is dedicated to rewarding those who have contributed to multidisciplinary dialogue between the arts and research and who, thanks to their vision and excellence in their fields, have become protagonists of cultural exchange between Italy and the United States. The medal, named after architect **Charles Follen McKim** (1847-1909), one of the founders of the American Academy, was designed by visionary artist **Cy Twombly** and is made by **Bulgari**.

“The McKim Medal Gala provides us with an opportunity to recognize and to celebrate visionary minds across the arts, humanities, and sciences, and to support the institution that nourishes them. We are excited this year to honor research scientist Virgilio Sacchini and filmmaker Giuseppe Tornatore. We are grateful to Beatrice Bulgari for serving as 2025 Gala Chair and as a longtime supporter and advocate of the American Academy in Rome,” said **Peter N. Miller**, President and CEO of the American Academy in Rome.

“It is a great honor for me to serve as Chair of the 20th McKim Medal Gala of the American Academy in Rome. This is an important anniversary for an institution that is an extraordinary bridge between cultures, languages, and visions. Being an active part of this community and contributing to its mission is a source of deep gratitude and responsibility,” said Gala Chair **Beatrice Bulgari**. “I am particularly pleased to present the McKim Medal to two individuals who, through different but equally remarkable careers, have left a profound mark in their respective fields: Giuseppe Tornatore, with whom I had the honor of collaborating for many years as a costume designer—from *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* to many other unforgettable films—represents the excellence of Italian cinema around the world and Virgilio Sacchini, an extraordinary cancer surgeon, works between the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York and the European Institute of Oncology in Milan, dedicating his life to care, research, and scientific innovation.”

The Gala, attended by **over 500 international figures from the worlds of business, academics, politics, art, fashion, and entertainment** to the historic Villa Aurelia residence, **supports the Academy's Fellowships**, including the Italian Fellowships, the only program among the foreign academies in Rome that welcomes Italian artists and scholars to be in residence. The Gala raised a total of **€820,000**. Due to the funds raised, the American Academy continues to support the life of its interdisciplinary community, promoting the sharing of ideas and innovative practices between American and Italian artists and scholars, as well as ongoing cultural exchanges with the city of Rome.

The musical group **The Gypsy Queens** serenaded guests during the Cocktail Reception between the Lemon Garden and the Italian Garden. The Awards Ceremony, hosted by **Giorgia Surina**, was punctuated by a special performance with singer **Gena West**. After the closing remarks by Director **Aliza Wong**, who dedicated the gala to the fundamental ability of art and culture to offer continuous hope for a better tomorrow, guests returned to the Lemon Garden for illuminations on the Villa Aurelia to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the McKim Medal Gala. The evening continued with a glamorous After Party where partygoers danced late into the night.

Corporate Lead Sponsor for the 2025 McKim Medal Gala is **Fondazione Bulgari**.

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The wines for the evening were provided by Paolo and Noemia d'Amico Wines and Château d'Esclans Whispering Angel Côtes de Provence Rosé, while the cocktails were supplied by Quattro Gatti Gin.

The McKim Medal

Virgilio Sacchini and **Giuseppe Tornatore** join distinguished previous McKim Medal Gala laureates such as: **Cecilia Alemani, Paola Antonelli, Bernardo Bertolucci, Massimo Bottura, Roberto Benigni, Sofia Coppola, Umberto Eco, Matteo Garrone, Luca Guadagnino, Riccardo Muti, Ennio Morricone, Luigi Ontani, Sir Antonio Pappano, Carlo Petrini, Renzo Piano, Miuccia Prada, Paolo Sorrentino, Cy Twombly** and **Franco Zeffirelli**.

The American Academy in Rome

Since 1894 the [American Academy in Rome](http://www.aarome.org) has functioned as a residential center for research and creativity. Its purpose has always been to enable highly motivated scholars and artists to immerse themselves in the experience of Rome, ancient and modern, and to be inspired by daily exchange with the other members of this creative community. The Academy has made an outsized impact on the intellectual and cultural life of the United States, and its Fellows and Residents have been recognized with 636 Guggenheim Fellowships, 75 Pulitzer Prizes, 54 MacArthur Fellowships, 26 Grammy Awards, 5 Pritzker Prizes, 9 Poet Laureate appointments and 5 Nobel Prizes.

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