



Introduction to Barbara Hulanicki. 3:45 min. Interview: Raymond Elman & Adrienne Bon Haes. Videography: Lee Skye. Music: Mr. Smith, Casino Blue. Recorded 6/17/2023, Miami Beach.

# Barbara Hulanicki

## The Queen of Biba

By Elman + Bon Haes + Skye

**BARBARA HULANICKI OBE** (b.1936) is a fashion designer best known as the founder of **Biba**.

Hulanicki was born in Warsaw, Poland, to Polish parents. Her father, Witold Hulanicki, was the Polish Consul General to the Middle East, stationed in Jerusalem. He was assassinated by the Stern Gang in Jerusalem in 1948, and the family fled to Brighton, England. In 1955, while studying at the Brighton School of Art, Hulanicki won an Evening Standard competition for beachwear design. She began her career in fashion as a freelance fashion illustrator for various magazines, including Vogue, Tatler and Women's Wear Daily.

Hulanicki sold her first designs through a small mail-order business that was featured in the fashion columns of newspapers such as the London Daily Mirror. In 1964, she opened her Biba shop in the Kensington district of London with the help of her late husband, Stephen Fitz-Simon. The shop soon became known for its "stylishly decadent atmosphere" and decor inspired by Art Nouveau and Art Deco. It became a hangout for artists, film stars and rock musicians, including **Mick Jagger** and **The Rolling Stones**, **David Bowie**, and **Bridgette Bardot**. In the shop, a young clientele bought affordable mini-skirts, floppy felt hats, feather boas, velvet trouser suits and unisex tee-shirts dyed in rich, muted colors. **Anna Wintour** started in fashion at age 15 as a Biba employee, and **Twiggy** was the main model.

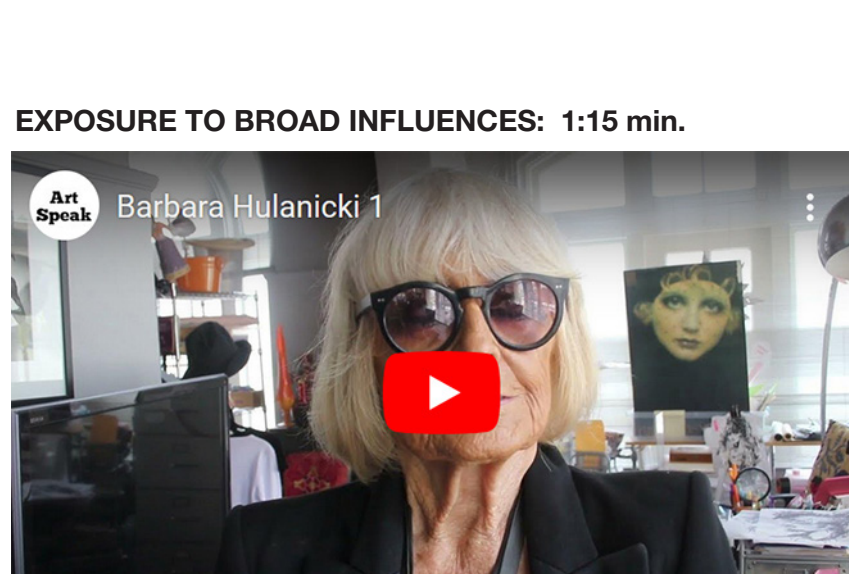
After the shop's 1975 closure, Hulanicki moved to Brazil, where she opened several other stores. She kept designing for labels such as Fiorucci and Cacharel and from 1980 to 1992 designed a line of children's wear, Minirock, licensed to the Japanese market. In 1987 she moved to Miami Beach, Florida, where she opened an interior design business, designing hotels for Chris Blackwell in Jamaica and the Bahamas, and reimagining several Art Deco hotels in Miami Beach, including a bar for Ronnie Woods of The Rolling Stones.

In 2021, Hulanicki started a new venture with virtual reality company, BrandLab360, to create a new label titled 'Hula'. The new brand will be sold exclusively to trade buyers on BrandLab 360's digital showroom and was created after Hulanicki met with the platform's founders in Miami Beach, where she has lived for 30+ years.

Hulanicki was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2012 New Year Honours for services to the fashion industry.

The videos below, are organized by Success Factor, and run between 30 seconds and 5 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

**EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 1:15 min.**



*Where did you grow up, and what was your first awareness of art of any discipline*

**EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 2:56 min.**



*Why were you living in Palestine before World War II?*



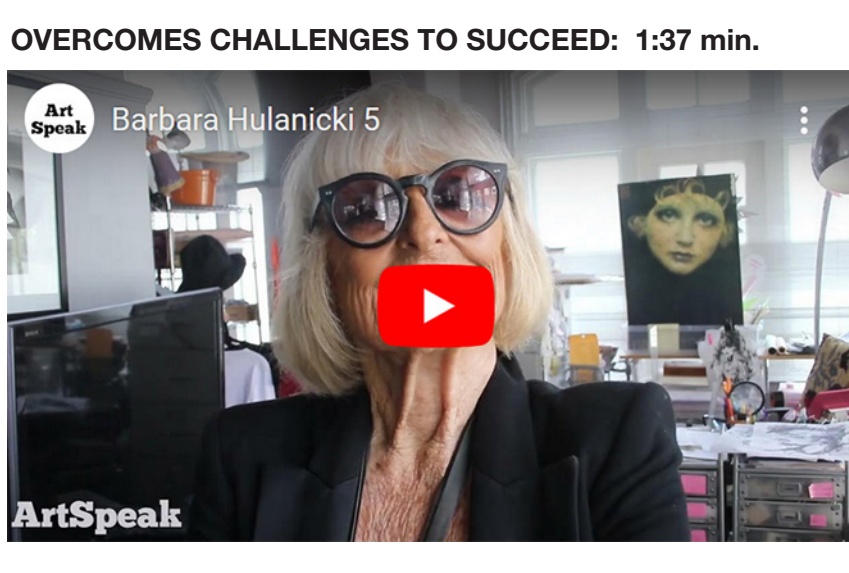
*Your father was assassinated in Palestine by the notorious Stern Gang, who were manipulated into action by the Russians, because your father was anti-Communist, and you had to escape to London when you were 12.*

**SERENDIPITY: 2:07 min.**



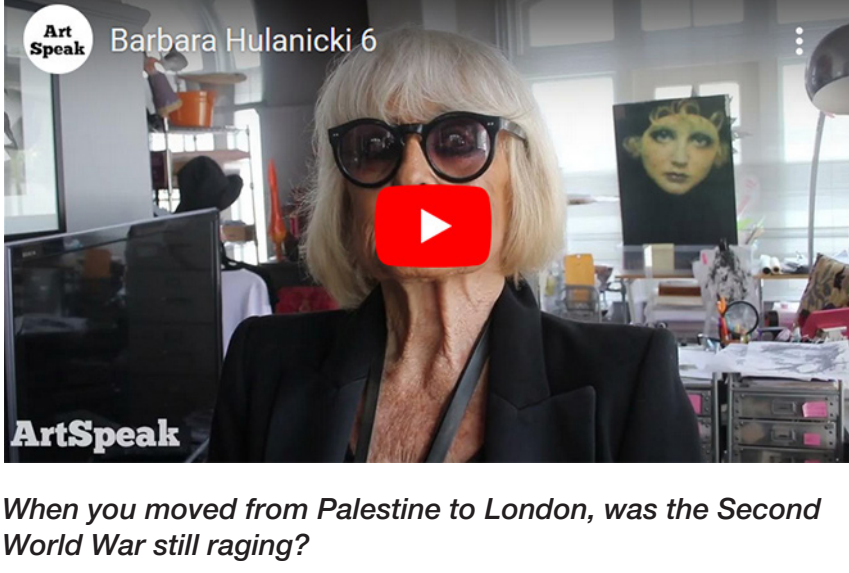
*How did escaping to London at the age of 12 impact you?*

**OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 1:37 min.**



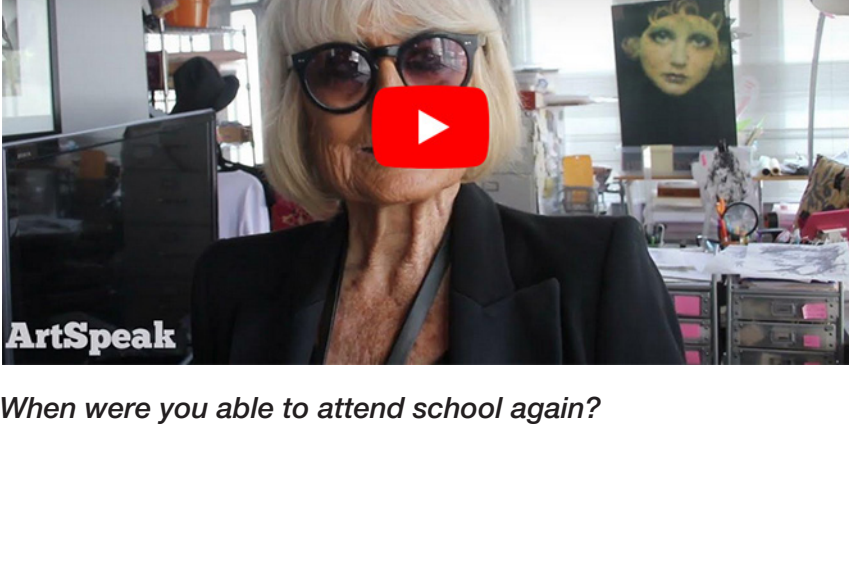
*You did a lot of drawing when you were young. At what age did you realize that you were good at it?*

**OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 2:26 min.**



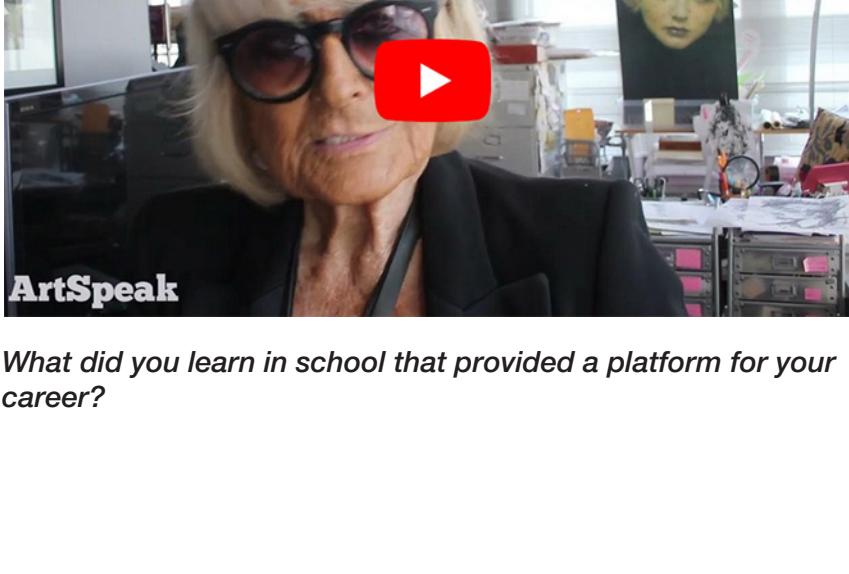
*When you moved from Palestine to London, was the Second World War still raging?*

**RESILIENCE: 1:23 min.**



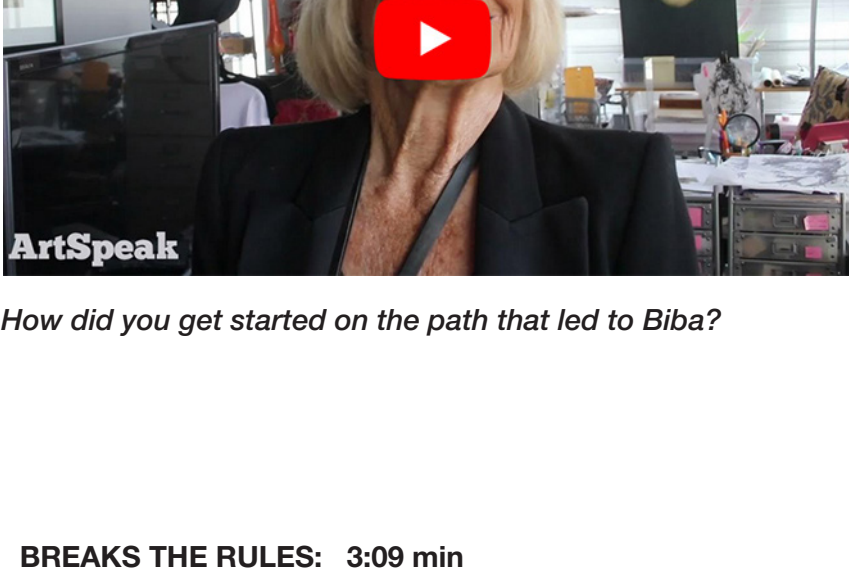
*When were you able to attend school again?*

**SELF-CONFIDENCE: 3:14 min.**



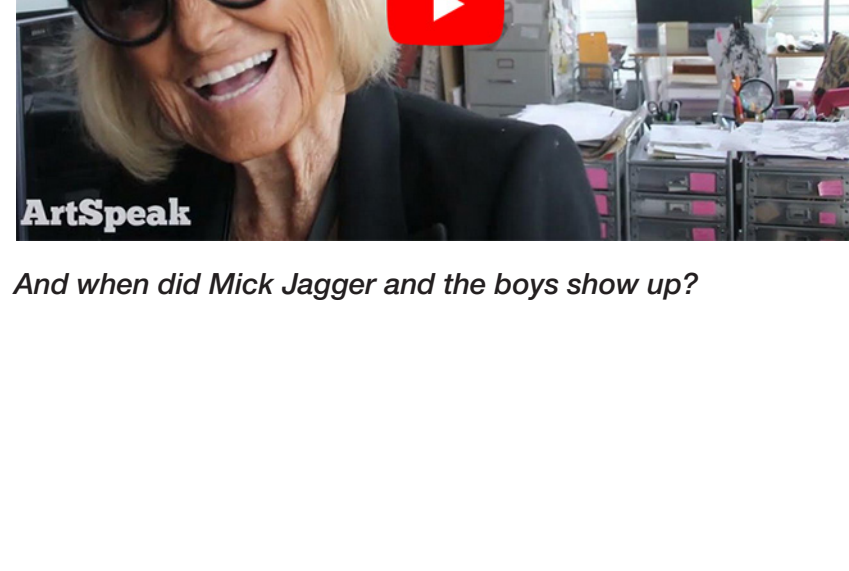
*What did you learn in school that provided a platform for your career?*

**SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 4:14 min.**



*How did you get started on the path that led to Biba?*

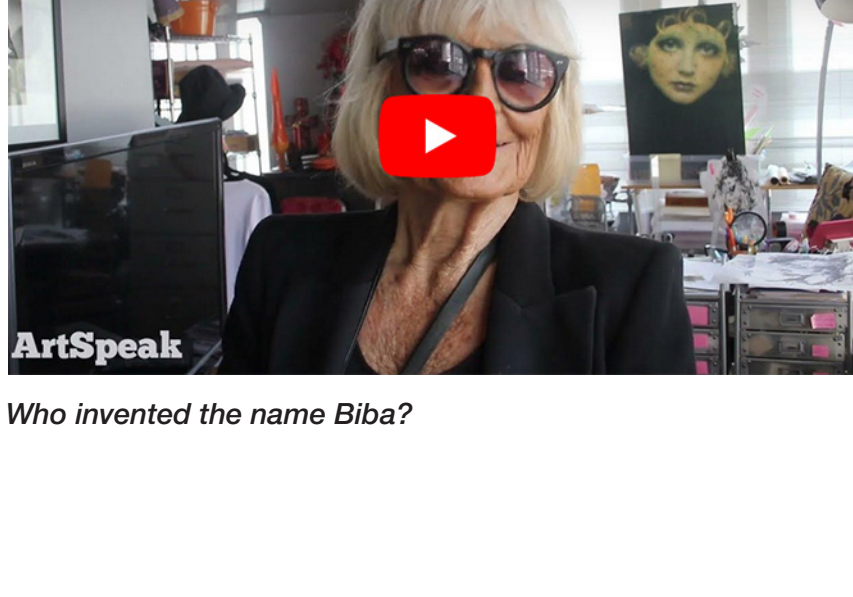
**BREAKS THE RULES: 3:09 min**



*And when did Mick Jagger and the boys show up?*

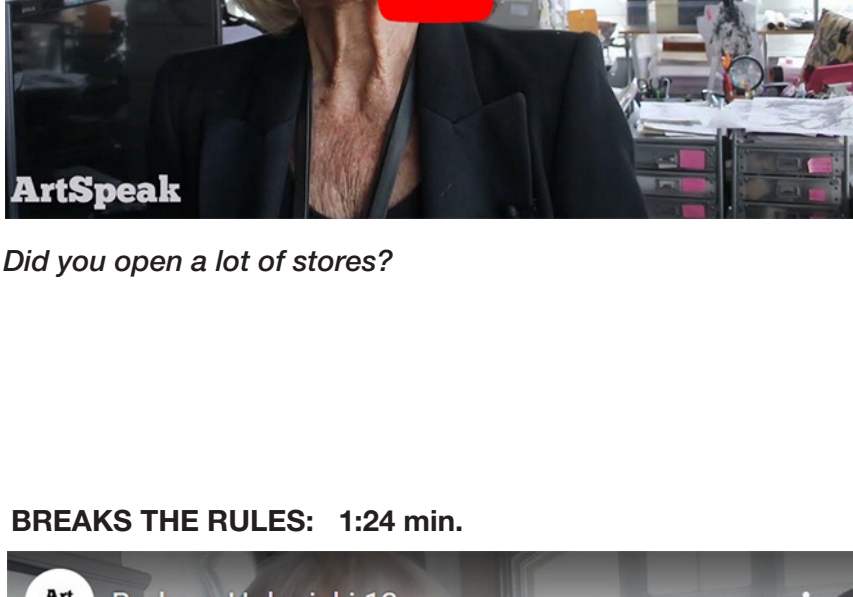


**SERENDIPITY: 0:53 sec.**



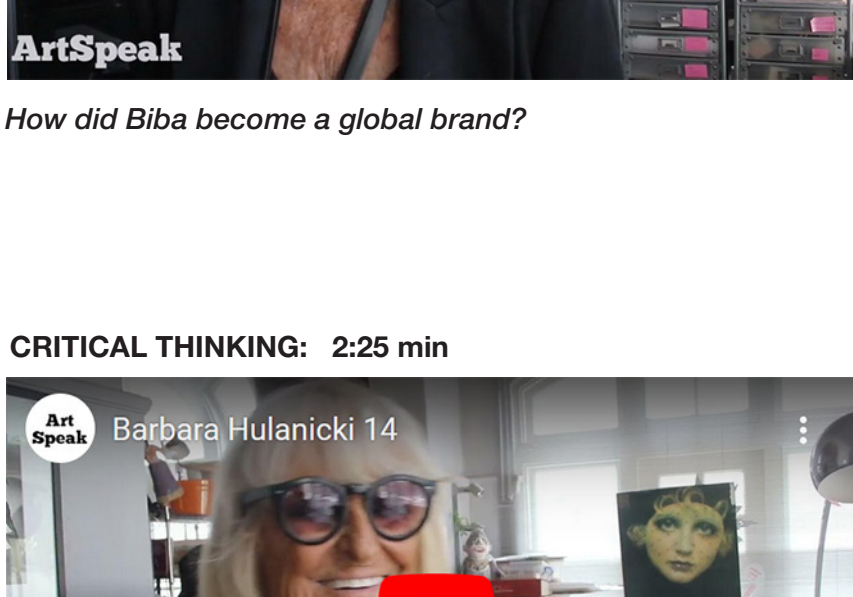
*Who invented the name Biba?*

**UNDERSTANDS THE AUDIENCE'S PERSPECTIVE: 0:52 sec.**



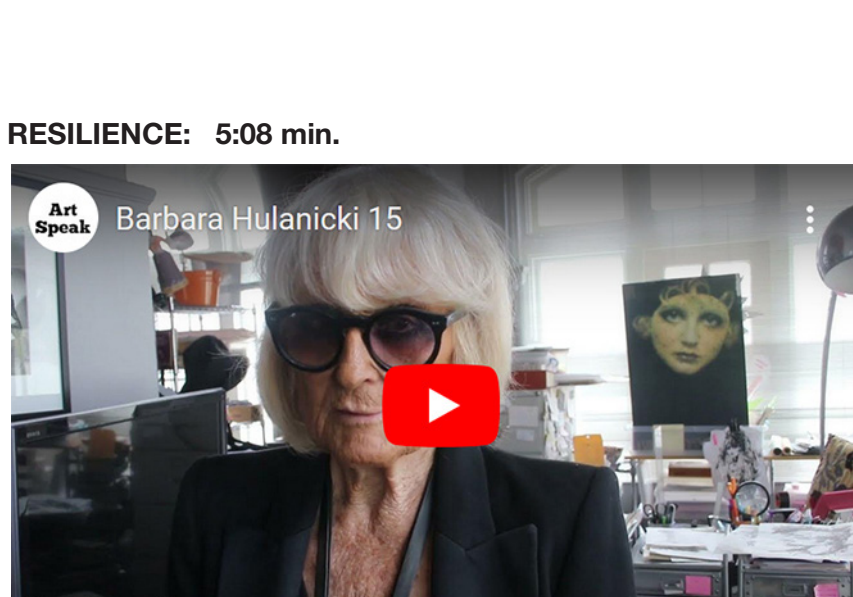
*Did you open a lot of stores?*

**BREAKS THE RULES: 1:24 min.**



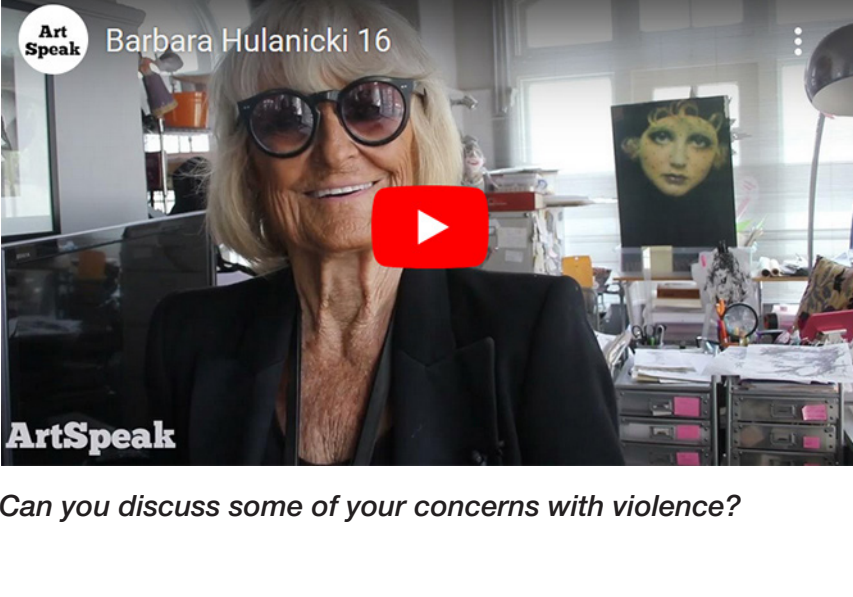
*How did Biba become a global brand?*

**CRITICAL THINKING: 2:25 min**



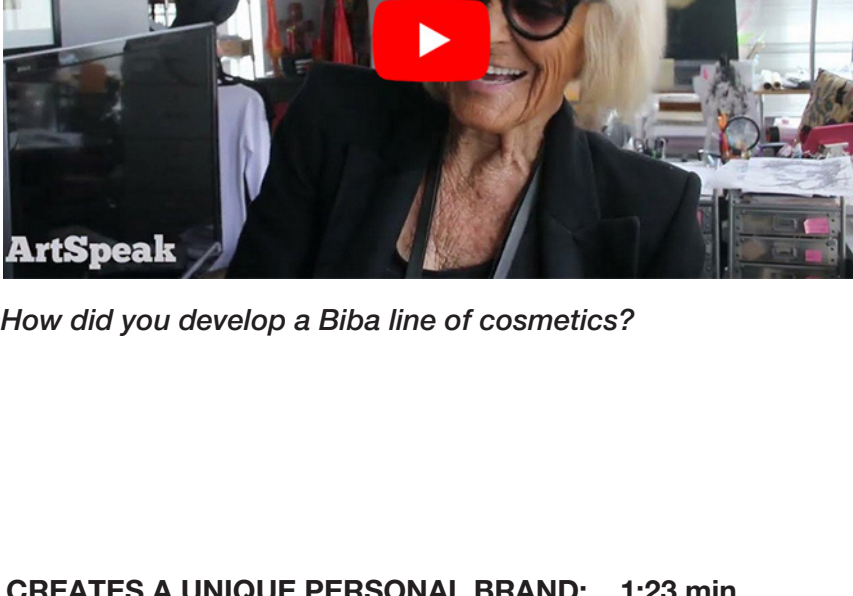
*How did Biba become a lifestyle brand?*

**RESILIENCE: 5:08 min.**



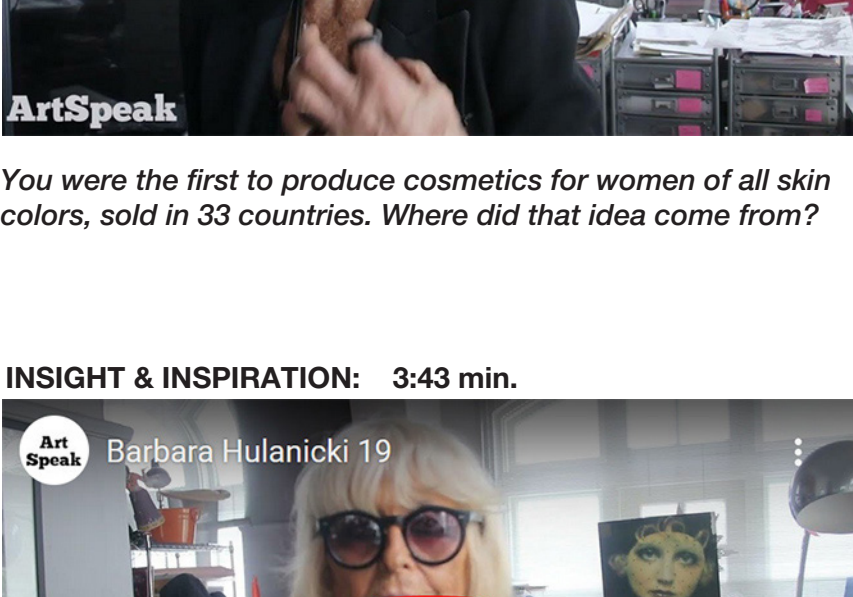
*Why did you move to Brazil in 1976?*

**RESILIENCE: 2:52 min.**



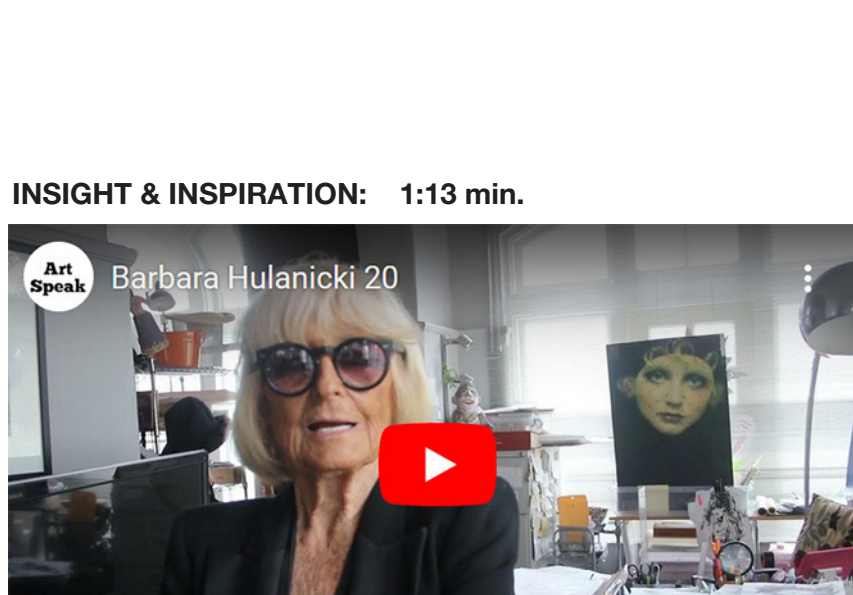
*Can you discuss some of your concerns with violence?*

**CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 1:34 min**



*How did you develop a Biba line of cosmetics?*

**CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 1:23 min.**



*You were the first to produce cosmetics for women of all skin colors, sold in 33 countries. Where did that idea come from?*

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 3:43 min.**



*When did you start coming to Miami Beach?*

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 1:13 min.**



*Given that Miami is such a global melting pot, what do you think of Miami as a global design capital?*