



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO MOURNS THE LOSS OF
BELOVED ARTIST AND CHAIRMAN EMERITUS, TONY BECHARA (1942–2025)**

NEW YORK, NY, April 23, 2025 — El Museo del Barrio is deeply saddened to announce the passing of Tony Bechara, acclaimed artist, philanthropist, and longtime Trustee and Chairman Emeritus of the institution. A passionate advocate for Latinx and Latin American art and culture, Bechara’s visionary leadership and extraordinary contributions helped shape El Museo into the national and international cultural institution it is today.

Born in Puerto Rico in 1942, Bechara lived and worked in New York City for most of his life. His prolific artistic career, spanning over five decades, positioned him as a pioneering figure in contemporary abstraction. Known for his radiant, geometric compositions, Bechara’s work was the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including at El Museo del Barrio (1985), the Alternative Museum (1988), Artists Space (1993), and the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico (2008). His work has also been featured in landmark group exhibitions such as the groundbreaking *Nine Contemporary Puerto Rican Artists* at the Institute of Contemporary Hispanic Art (1972), *Islamic Allusions* at the Alternative Museum (1980); *With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art, 1972–1985* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and CCS Bard (2019–2021); *Point of Departure* at the Sheldon Museum of Art (2021); and *Artists Choose Parrish* at the Parrish Art Museum (2023).

Bechara’s paintings are held in numerous public and private collections, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, El Museo del Barrio, the Brooklyn Museum, the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, and the Sheldon Museum of Art at the University of Nebraska.

In addition to his work as an artist, Bechara was a devoted arts advocate and community leader. He served on the boards of many leading cultural organizations including the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Instituto Cervantes, and Studio in a School. His commitment to El Museo del Barrio was especially profound: he joined the Board of Trustees in 1993, became Co-Chair in 1997, and served as Board Chair from 2000 to 2015. In 2016, he was named Chairman Emeritus in honor of his exemplary service and steadfast dedication to the institution.



“Tony Bechara’s contributions to El Museo del Barrio are truly unparalleled. As a Trustee, Co-Chair, and longtime Chair of the Board, Tony played an instrumental role in transforming El Museo into a nationally and internationally recognized institution for Latinx and Latin American art. His visionary leadership, relentless advocacy, and deep belief in the power of culture to uplift communities helped shape the very identity of this museum. We are forever indebted to his passion, his generosity, and his unwavering commitment to our mission. His legacy will continue to inspire us for generations to come,” said **Karla Harwich, Chair, Board of Trustees, El Museo del Barrio.**

“Tony’s passing is an extraordinary loss for El Museo del Barrio and for the entire arts community,” said **Patrick Charpenel, Executive Director, El Museo del Barrio.** “He was a force of nature. His vision and leadership helped pave the way for what El Museo is today, and his legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.”

Throughout his lifetime, Bechara received numerous honors, including a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and public art commissions from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cooper Square Development Corporation. He held degrees from Georgetown University and pursued graduate studies at Georgetown Law School, New York University’s Graduate School of International Relations, the Sorbonne in Paris, and the School of Visual Arts in New York.

El Museo’s 2025 Gala will be held in honor of Bechara’s legacy on Wednesday, June 11, when artists, philanthropists, and members of the community will come together to celebrate his enduring impact.

A public memorial in Tony Bechara’s honor will be announced in the coming days.

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