



**ARTIST AND PATRON OF THE ARTS
TONY BECHARA (1942 – 2025) HONORED
WITH THE EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS AND OUTSTANDING PATRON AWARD
AT EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO'S 2025 GALA**



Photo on the left (from L-R): Victoria Espinosa, Maria Eugenia Maury, Karla Harwich, and Karla Martinez de Salas.
Photo on the right:: El Museo del Barrio's Executive Director, Patrick Charpenel.
Photos by BFA/ Peter Zwolinski. Images courtesy of El Museo del Barrio.

New York, NY, June 12, 2025— El Museo del Barrio hosted its annual Gala on Wednesday, June 11 at The Pool, located in the iconic Seagram Building in New York City. This year's event honored late artist and arts patron **Tony Bechara**, whose visionary leadership and extraordinary contributions helped shape El Museo into the national and international cultural institution it is today.

El Museo del Barrio's 2025 Gala brought together artists, philanthropists, and community members to celebrate Tony Bechara's extraordinary life and legacy. The gala successfully raised **\$1.1 million** in support of El Museo del Barrio's exhibitions, educational programs, and the preservation of its permanent collection.

The evening included a **special musical performance by renowned Puerto Rican opera singer Larisa Martínez** and a poem read by Presidential Inaugural poet Richard Blanco, as well as an **auction—hosted by Sotheby's**—which included over 25 exceptional works from pre-eminent Latin American and Latinx artists and the world's leading galleries. Guests of the event enjoyed a selection of smooth cocktails from Dobel Tequila, followed by a toast moment with Dobel's newest limited edition Extra Añejo release: **Dobel Atelier Animales Endémicos Edition**.



El Museo's Gala Chairs were: **Estrellita and Daniel Brodsky, Victoria Espinosa, Agnes Gund, Karla Harwich, Karla Martinez de Salas, María Eugenia Maury, Yolanda Santos; and Désirée von la Valette.**

"Tony's life and legacy will always be an inspiration to all of us. A devoted advocate, leader, beloved by everyone. He was relentless with his passion for many different cultural organizations. Tony loved his community, this city, and this museum [El Museo del Barrio]. It is one of the many things we have in common," said U.S. **Senator Chuck Schumer** during a welcoming video.

Notable attendees, in addition to the hosts, include: artist **Candida Alvarez; Daisy Auger Dominguez**; U.S. Presidential Inaugural Poet **Richard Blanco; Estrellita and Daniel Brodsky**; model and actress, **Juana Burga**; New York City Council Member **Tiffany Cabán**; El Museo del Barrio's Executive Director, **Patrick Charpenel**; New York City Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs **Laurie Cumbo; Valentina Ferrer**; artist **Coco Fusco**; Guggenheim Museum Curator, **Naomi Beckwith**; Ford Foundation Director and Chief Curator of the Studio Museum, **Thelma Golden**; Principal Dancer at the American Ballet Theatre, **Isaac Hernandez**; ; **Paola Mendoza**; fashion model **Hiandra Martinez**; Actor **Mauricio Martinez; Lineisy Montero; Henry Muñoz**; News Anchor **Ana Navarro; Claudia Peña-Salinas; Carlos Picón**; artist **Lee Quinones**; former news anchor **Maria Elena Salinas; Jean Shafiroff**; designer **Stephanie Suberville; Barbara Tober**; artist **Ruben Toledo; Jean-Pierre Villafañe; Julián Zugazagoitia**; the New York State Director of Latino Affairs in the Executive Chamber of Governor Kathy Hochul, **Sophia Zayas**; and Interim Chief Curator of El Museo del Barrio, **Susanna Temkin**, among others.

"Like so many of you here tonight, I held a deep admiration and respect for Tony—his vision, his generosity, and his unwavering dedication to El Museo and our community," said **Karla Harwich, Chair of the Board of Trustees at El Museo del Barrio** during her remarks.

El Museo's Gala Vice Chairs were **Bloomberg Philanthropies, Agustín Coppel Luken, Bechara Family, Gabriela Hearst, Carolina Herrera, COACH, Lisson Gallery, Morgan Stanley, Stanley Stairs and Leslie Powell, Maria Teresa Mata, Ramiro Ortiz Mayorga, Mac Schuessler, Barbara Tober, and Withers.**

"Tony's legacy will continue not just through what he created on canvas—but through what he built for generations to come. We miss him deeply. And we celebrate him with immense gratitude and love tonight," said **Patrick Charpenel, Executive Director, El Museo del Barrio** during his remarks.



El Museo's Gala Host Committee comprised: **Candida Alvarez, Renata Alves de Paula, Adam Bartos, Gaily Beinecke, Grace Brea Pomeranc, Barbara Briones, Esteban Cabeza de Baca, Nicole Calderon, Perla Capriles, Gilberto Cárdenas & Dolores Garcia, Charlie James Gallery, Cristina Camacho, María Magdalena Campos-Pons, Danie Cansino, Ella Fontanals-Cisneros, Virginia Cowles Schroth, Christie's, David Antonio Cruz, Olivia Cuissart de Grelle, EMBAJADA, Maria Luisa Ferré-Rangel and Cyril Meduña, Salomé Galib, Amanda Garcia Santana, Garth Greenan Gallery, Roberto Gil de Montes, Jeannette and Francisco Gonzalez, Elmer Guevara, Maria Guzmán de Capron, Gabriela Hearst, Lucia Hierro, Hispanic Federation, Instituto de Vision, Isabel and Julio Nazario, Nazarian / Curcio, Anina Major, Carlos Martiel, Diane L. Max, Monika McLennan, Monique Meloche, Alfredo Mineo, Miranda Family Fund, Ward L. E. Mintz, Morgan Lehman Gallery, Carlos Motta, ORTUZAR, Maria-Leticia Ossa Daza, Laura de Paula Seripieri, Claudia Peña Salinas, Jorge Perez, P.P.O.W., PROXYCO, Encarnita and Robert Quinlan, Lee Quiñones, Carlos Reyes, Craig Robins, Armig Santos, Jean Shafiroff, Chaveli Sifre, Sotheby's, Edra Soto, Elizabeth Steimberg and David Weiner, Swivel Gallery, TERN Gallery, Joey Terrill Pedro J. Torres & Cecilia Picón, Georgina Treviño, Jean-Pierre Villafañe, Vilma Vale-Brennan, Paul Vidich and Linda Stein, Carmen Rita Wong, and Julián Zugazagoitia**

ABOUT THE HONOREE

Tony Bechara (1942–2025) was born in Puerto Rico in 1942 and lived and worked in New York City for most of his life. He attended Georgetown Law School and New York University, and later studied at the Sorbonne in Paris and the New York School of Visual Art. In the 1970s and 80s, Bechara was included in exhibitions organized by the Boulder, Colorado based Criss-Cross pattern printing collective and featured work in the group exhibition 'Islamic Allusions' at the Alternative Museum in New York. In 1980 he received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Bechara has had solo exhibitions at El Museo del Barrio, New York in 1988; Alternative Museum in 1988; Artists Space in New York in 1993 and el Museo del Arte Puerto Rico in 2008. Recently, Bechara has participated in exhibitions 'With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art, 1972-1985', Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, (2019), which travelled to the Hessel Museum of Art, CCS Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, (2021); 'Point of Departure: Abstraction 1958-Present', Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE (2021); and 'Artists Choose Parrish', Parrish Art Museum, NY, (2023). His work can be found in numerous public and private collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; El Museo del Barrio, NY; Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico and the Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska, NE.



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.

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ABOUT EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

El Museo del Barrio is the nation's leading Latinx and Latin American cultural institution. The Museum welcomes visitors of all backgrounds to discover the artistic landscape of these communities through its extensive Permanent Collection, varied exhibitions and publications, bilingual public programs, educational activities, festivals, and special events.

The Museum is located at 1230 Fifth Avenue at 104th Street in New York City. The Museum is open Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 11:00am – 5:00pm. Pay what you can. To connect with El Museo via social media, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#). For more information, please visit www.elmuseo.org.

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