

LISSON

TONY BECHARA



BIOGRAPHY

Tony Bechara's (1942-2025) dynamic, color-saturated paintings create a pure field of physical perception. Each canvas is meticulously painted with multicolor areas of quarter-inch squares. Using strips of masking tape, Bechara arranges carefully formulated hues into a playful and invigorating optical surface, made up of a multitude of small colored units. The work's overall rhythm is determined by a process that is systemic but designed to allow combinations of color to emerge by chance. Bechara cites influences across art history, including the colors of Matisse and Vuillard, the pointillism of Seurat and Signac, traditions of weaving and crafting, the precision of hard-edge abstraction, and the famed Byzantine-era mosaics at Ravenna. These influences are evidenced in Bechara's approach to painting: he uses a tile-like grid as the basis for his explorations into the principles of color usage, particularly the intersection of organization and randomness. The division of the surface of the painting into small modular boxes is similar to pixels; the gaze is constantly in motion. Bechara presents the viewer with their retinal and neurological relationship to color, balancing one's immediate impression of hue and the overarching logic of pattern.

Tony Bechara was born in Puerto Rico in 1942 and lived and worked in New York City for the majority of his life. A graduate of Georgetown University, Bechara attended Georgetown Law School and New York University before later studying at the Sorbonne in Paris and the New York School of Visual Art, benefiting in particular from the lessons of Richard Serra and Joseph Raphael. 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. His work was included in the 1975 Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. In 1980 he was granted a fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts, and in 1981 he was included in 'The Shaped Field: Eccentric Formats' at MoMA PS1 in New York. Bechara has had solo exhibitions at the 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, USA (2019), which travelled to the Hessel Museum of Art, CCS Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, USA (2021); 'Point of Departure: Abstraction 1958-Present', Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE, USA (2021); and 'Artists Choose Parrish', Parrish Art Museum, NY, USA (2023). His work can be found in numerous public and private collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA; el Museo del Barrio, New York, NY, USA; the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY, USA; the Parrish Art Museum, NY, USA; el Museo del Arte, San Juan, Puerto Rico; the Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska, Lincoln NE, USA; Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT, USA; and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA.