



The Bad Bunny chairs taking over the art world

By Jacqui Palumbo | May 7, 2026



Edra Soto's 2025 "BB Chairs" have exhibited in museum and art fairs over the past year. (Courtesy Maria Burundarena)

Generally speaking, you can't sit on the art in a museum. But in one gallery of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago — which is currently staged to resemble a karaoke bar complete with a disco ball, stage and jukebox — three plastic chairs, upholstered with the face of Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny, are waiting for you to rest between songs.

Part of the exhibition "*Dancing the Revolution: From Dancehall to Reggaetón*," the chairs are the work of the artist Edra Soto, who transforms the objects of her childhood and the everyday design and architecture found in Puerto Rico into artworks and spaces that evoke life on the small island. She's mounted flat box fans that keep families cool in the shapes of Christian crosses; interpreted the colorful ubiquitous ironwork fences

that demarcate home and street into towering sculptures; and placed tiny keyholes in her sculptures that reveal quiet photos of Puerto Rican houses inside.

"All these objects are rooted in the home," she said in a video call from her home in Chicago, explaining that she is always thinking about them "in a way that is higher than their assigned function."

Together, her works often create contemplative spaces, and lately, she's delved more into the spiritual, with her own Catholic upbringing influencing the "tabernacle-like" atrium that is central to her current show at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, as well as her newest exhibition at the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico.

Her series of Bad Bunny chairs, then, or "*BB chairs*," made over the past year and a half, are perhaps representative of a different kind of devotion as the Puerto Rican singer has reached staggering new levels of fame. (His 2022 album "*Un Verano Sin Ti*" is the highest streamed album in Spotify's 20-year history.) In "*Dancing the Revolution*," he makes multiple appearances in the show, which is dedicated to the visual history and political power of Caribbean music and dance. The exhibition came to be in the wake of the summer of 2019, when mass protests over years of government corruption led to the resignation of Governor Ricardo Rosselló —demonstrations in which Bad Bunny became a central figure as he paused his tour to join the movement. In one monumental photograph in the exhibition, he stands tall above the crowd in San Juan waving the Puerto Rican flag, reminiscent of Delacroix's "*Liberty Leading the People*," curator Carla Acevedo-Yates explained during an exhibition walkthrough.



Soto in her studio in Chicago. She began upholstering plastic lawn chairs in 2014 as part of her wider body of work. (Courtesy the artist)

For Soto, she has been impressed with the smart and meaningful ways in which Bad Bunny communicates to Puerto Ricans — quite literally, as she recalled his appearance on the local news last year where he presented top stories and even the weather forecast. Her "*BB Chairs*" — outfitted in bootleg fabrics featuring the singer with

LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

1110 Mateo Street, Los Angeles CA 90021
213 395 0762 | gallery@luisdejesus.com
luisdejesus.com



“The place of dwelling,” at the Kemper Museum, displays works by Soto in its atrium around themes of home, belonging and devotion. E G Schempf/Courtesy Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art

my chair would look like if I was making a chair.” She said she couldn’t relate to high-end materials, and began thinking about the fantasy of luxury in both the practice of upholstery and the colorful, if culturally inaccurate, images associated with the tropics.

Not too on the nose, then, she decided, to splash the face of Puerto Rico’s biggest star on the chairs. After all, they had rapidly become central to his own visual iconography, and representative of the kitschy merchandise celebrities inspire when their fandom becomes fervent. She recalled a shop near her studio that was filled “top to bottom” with images of his face across all of its merchandise. “It was (like) hallucinating; it was incredible,” she said.



Soto’s chairs flank the walls of one of the rooms in the exhibition “Dancing the Revolution” that is staged as a karaoke bar. (Michael Tropea, Courtesy MCA Chicago)

sunglasses and buzz cuts — have been a tongue-in-cheek nod to both the plastic white chair ubiquitous to the island and the performer’s deep connection to his home. In addition to their appearances at the Kemper Museum and MCA Chicago, she arranged them on a pedestal with box fans at the art fair EXPO Chicago last year, drawing crowds and news cameras.

“I had this idea a whole year before I made them,” she said. “I was doubting myself. I was thinking maybe this is too on the nose.”

But friends excitedly reached out to Soto when Bad Bunny released the now history-making, Grammy Award-winning album “DeBí TIRAR Más FOTOS.” The album cover featured two empty white lawn chairs — an evocative symbol of home and belonging in Puerto Rico — and they had significance to Soto’s practice, too. Over the past decade, she upholstered plastic chairs with vibrant towels of tigers and lush jungles that had exhibited in shows and been written about by art publications. Her chairs were inspired by her husband’s own furniture business, but with the realization that her materials would be different.

“The furniture that I grew up with was wicker and plastic,” she explained. “I asked myself what



At the Kemper Museum, one BB Chair is displayed on a plinth among Soto’s other sculptures and objects. E G Schempf/Courtesy Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art

But that shop no longer existed, and Soto purchased the fabrics online for her set of chairs, some 15 in total. She has since been unable to locate more of the same — perhaps because of Bad Bunny’s popularity, or maybe copyright issues. Because of that, the set is unintentionally a limited edition for now, and at the MCA Chicago, she upholstered them again in plastic to keep them safe. Visitors can take a seat while browsing the exhibition — or during the museum’s planned karaoke nights.

“I’m not able to recreate them the way they are. I love the quality of the cheap fabric, just as an aesthetic that is very specific,” she said. At one point, she thought she found them again, only to be disappointed in the end. “I actually reordered and they never arrived. I don’t know what happened with my money,” she explained, laughing.

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