

# NYBG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 29, 2019

## **NYBG Announces Major Exhibition for 2019, *Brazilian Modern: The Living Art of Roberto Burle Marx***

### **Garden-wide Exhibition Pays Tribute to One of the Most Significant Brazilian Artists of the 20th Century and His Contributions to Plant Discovery, Conservation, and Garden Design**

On View June 8–September 29, 2019



Rendering of proposed Modernist Garden for the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory Lawn at NYBG by Raymond Jungles, Inc.

**Bronx, NY**—The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) will present *Brazilian Modern: The Living Art of Roberto Burle Marx*, an exhibition on influential Brazilian modernist artist, landscape architect, and plant explorer and conservationist Roberto Burle Marx, from June 8 through September 29, 2019. The first ever exhibition to combine a large-scale horticultural tribute to Burle Marx's design work and a curated gallery of his paintings, prints, drawings, and textiles, the show will reveal deep connections between his artistic practice and his commitment to environmental conservation.

Visitors will discover Burle Marx (1909–94), a principal figure in the modernist art and garden movement in Latin America during the second half of the 20th century, and learn how his garden designs were fully integrated with his artistic work, his passion for botany and plant exploration, and his longtime leadership in plant conservation. The exhibition will highlight his boldly modern landscape

designs, executed in vibrant color and fluid geometric forms; his dynamic and influential works of art; and his celebrated contributions to horticultural exploration and plant conservation in his native Brazil.

### **Installations at the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory Inspired by Roberto Burle Marx's Landscape Designs and Plant Explorations**

Contemporary landscape architect Raymond Jungles, FASLA, who was a protégé of Burle Marx, will design a Modernist Garden on a portion of NYBG's Conservatory Lawn, an Explorer's Garden in a *Seasonal Exhibition Gallery* of the Conservatory, and a Water Garden in the Conservatory's Hardy Courtyard.

In the Modernist Garden, strikingly patterned paths will lead through extensive curvilinear planting beds to an open plaza with a large pool framed by a wall carved in relief, its creation influenced by a Burle Marx installation in the Banco Safra building in São Paulo. Other inspirations include Burle Marx's work in private landscapes, such as the Cavanellas garden near Rio de Janeiro; constructed landscapes, such as the roof garden at the Ministry of Education and Health and the Avenida Atlântica in Rio de Janeiro; and large parks, such as the Parque del Este in Caracas. The plant palette will include bromeliads, elephant's ears, colorful annuals, and other plants characteristic of Burle Marx's pioneering work. Mature palm specimens, primarily native Brazilian and Caribbean, dotted throughout the site will provide a sense of scale and enhance the tropical nature of the garden.

The Explorer's Garden will highlight many of the tropical rain forest plants Burle Marx discovered and incorporated into the landscapes he designed. The more intimate indoor installation will interpret Burle Marx's efforts to introduce Brazilians to their country's remarkable biodiversity through his landscape designs. The bold forms of philodendrons, bromeliads, and other plants favored by Burle Marx will be on display.

The Water Garden will explore Burle Marx's cosmopolitan plantsmanship, celebrating his use of plants from a variety of tropical regions in his designs in Brazil and beyond. Bismarck palms, traveler's palms, and elephant's ears will surround a pool containing hardy water lilies from NYBG's collections, augmented with tropical water lilies and other aquatic plants used by Burle Marx, including a hybrid of the enormous, much-celebrated *Victoria amazonica*, which produces leaves that can grow to six feet in diameter.

### **Burle Marx's Art and Garden Lifestyle Philosophy Examined in the Library Building**

An exhibition of paintings, plans, prints, and lithographs, and other archival materials by and about Roberto Burle Marx from the final 30 years of his career and life (1964–94) in the Art Gallery of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library will allow visitors to better understand the interconnected threads of Burle Marx's career and artistic practice. The art exhibition will be curated by Edward J. Sullivan, Ph.D., the Helen Gould Shepard Professor of the History of Art and Deputy Director, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

The Art Gallery will feature a grouping of Burle Marx's abstract, vibrantly colored paintings, drawings, and tapestries, which engaged with ever more complex and diverse abstract forms. The tapestries and

paintings on fabric demonstrate the range of media the artist employed, and a series of lithographs depicting Brazilian ecosystems dating to 1991 offer a rare example of figurative art from this late period. Collectively, these works showcase Burle Marx's ongoing exploration of abstract geometric and biomorphic forms as well as his engagement with Brazilian and tropical plants.

The Library Building's Britton Rotunda will bring to life the Sítio Roberto Burle Marx, the estate the artist purchased in 1949 and where he lived and worked for decades. The site houses a nursery, multiple gardens, greenhouses, and a studio, as well as Burle Marx's home, where he lived, worked, and famously entertained friends and colleagues, many of whom were leading botanists, artists, and cultural figures in Brazil and worldwide. Large-scale wall graphics will re-create the hand-painted tile walls of the Sítio's colonnaded dining room. Interpretive panels will display images of the site and introduce some of the prominent figures in Burle Marx's circle, including architects Lúcio Costa, Rino Levi, and Oscar Niemeyer; botanist Henrique Lahmeyer de Mello Barreto; botanical artist Margaret Mee; and landscape architects Conrad Hamerman, Raymond Jungles, and Haruyoshi Ono.

In the Britton Science Gallery, a science installation focusing on botany and conservation will feature plants of three key biomes of Brazil: the dry region surrounding Brasília known as the Cerrado, the world's most biologically rich savanna, which is home to more than 10,000 species of plants; the geographically isolated Atlantic Coastal Forest, which has one of the highest percentages of species of plants found nowhere else; and the Amazon, Earth's largest tropical rain forest, which is home to more than 30 million people, including 350 indigenous and ethnic groups. Displays will explore plants of particular ethnobotanical and economic importance in Brazil, Burle Marx's own botanical study of Brazilian plants, and the work of NYBG's scientists in the region.

An illustrated catalog, which features essays by Dr. Sullivan and other scholars and includes an interview with Raymond Jungles, will be published in association with the exhibition.

### **Complementary Exhibition Programming**

A diverse and engaging schedule of public programming for all ages will accompany *The Living Art of Roberto Burle Marx*. Some of the components will include a scholarly symposium, live performances of Brazilian music and dance, a Poetry Walk that explores Brazilian modernist themes important to the work of Burle Marx, a Brazilian plant tour, hands-on activities for young visitors and their families in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden, and a Burle Marx-themed Interactive Mobile Guide.

*Brazilian Modern: The Living Art of Roberto Burle Marx* is part of NYBG's year-long #plantlove series of exhibitions, programs, and projects exploring the essential connections between plants, people, and the environment.

For more information, including updates on ticket availability, please visit [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org).

## EXHIBITION DONORS

*Major Support provided by:*

*LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust*

*The National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor*

*Mobile Media supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies*

*Additional support provided by the Anne Fontaine Foundation and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.*

*Exhibitions in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory are made possible by the Estate of Enid A. Haupt.*

*Exhibitions in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library are made possible by the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust.*

*Additional support for Mertz Library exhibitions has also been provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and by a Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

*Exhibitions in the Arthur and Janet Ross Gallery are made possible by support from the Arthur and Janet Ross Fund.*

*Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

**The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road. It is easy to reach by Metro-North Railroad, bus, or subway. The Garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday and Monday federal holidays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The best way to enjoy the Garden is with the *All-Garden Pass*, which includes admission to the grounds as well as to seasonal gardens, exhibitions, and attractions such as the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, Everett Children's Adventure Garden, and Tram Tour. For ticket pricing, please check our Web site. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit [nybg.org](http://nybg.org)**

**The New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458**

**The New York Botanical Garden is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. A portion of the Garden's general operating funds is provided by The New York City Council and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The Bronx Borough President and Bronx elected representatives in the City Council and State Legislature provide leadership funding.**

**Contact:** Nick Leshi 718.817.8658; [nleshi@nybg.org](mailto:nleshi@nybg.org)  
Melinda Manning 718.817.8659; [mmanning@nybg.org](mailto:mmanning@nybg.org)