

# NYBG

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## **Mixed-Media Tables Created by 30 Bronx-Based Artists Bring to Life Central Themes of NYBG's *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love***

**Artist-Designed Tables Are a Major Component of the Garden-wide Presentation Examining the Art and Science of Foodways and Food Traditions and Celebrating Plants as Foundational to All Culinary Customs**

**On View June 4 through September 11, 2022**



One of the thirty tables designed and created by Bronx artists; *Tossed Salad*, 2022, Ruth Marshall (Photo by Ben Hider)

**Bronx, NY**—Thirty tables designed and created by artists living or working in the Bronx, New York, have been sited across The New York Botanical Garden's 250-acre National Historic Landmark landscape as a major component of the institution-wide, multi-faceted exhibition *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*. The tables illuminate the major themes of the presentation, which examines the art and science of foodways and food traditions, many dating back thousands of years; explores the cultural, horticultural, environmental, and historical significance of what we eat; and celebrates plants as foundational to all culinary customs. *Around the Table* is on view from June 4 through September 11, 2022.

Following a call for artists that resulted in many impressive submissions, NYBG—along with Dario Mohr, Executive Director of AnkhLave Arts Alliance, an organization dedicated to creating exhibit opportunities for BIPOC artists, and contemporary, Colombian-American artist Lina Puerta, whose work examining the relationship between nature and the body has been exhibited internationally and is featured in *Around the Table*—selected the following people to design and create the tables for the exhibition: Priscilla Aleman, Noble Dre Ali, Ariel Alvarez, Santina Amato, Blanka Amezkua, Gayle Asch, William Bentley, Leenda Bonilla, Reina Mia Brill, Michele Brody, Odalys Burgoa, Francesca Capone, Jill Cohen-Nuñez, Carlos Wilfredo Encarnación, Nicky Enright, Eric Escalante, Laura Álvarez Fernández, Elizabeth Hamby, Emily Henretta, Shawn Hill, Anthony Joseph, Catherine Herrick Lewis, Matthew

López-Jensen, Ruth Marshall, Yoshiko Mori, Lovie Pignata, Joely Saravia, Sylvia Vigliani, Dina Weinberg, and Natalie Collette Wood.

The artists used a broad range of materials and techniques, such as fabric, paper, metal, and photographs, and carving, painting, sculpting, and crocheting, to create their designs on triangular, square, or rectangular wooden tables provided by the Botanical Garden, which served as canvases for the artists' depictions of food and foodways. Through their art and inspired by their diverse backgrounds from all corners of the world—from where the artists live or work in the Bronx, New York, to island nations in the Caribbean, countries in South America, and many other places across the globe, including Ethiopia, Australia, China, Italy, and Japan—the tables reveal their creators' heritages, family traditions, and life experiences.

The placement of the artist-designed tables has been curated by subject matter and materials. They are located in places one might expect to see a table such as the Clay Family Picnic Pavilions, near historic NYBG structures including the Lillian Goldman Fountain of Life, and tucked into living plant collections and specialty gardens such as the Benenson Ornamental Conifers.

The artists' tables illuminate an abundance of edible plants, from global dietary staples such as rice, beans, squash, and corn to the regional spice and flavor provided by peppers, greens, and tomatoes, as well as interesting narratives tied to the lamb's quarters plant, ackee fruit, the teff supergrain, and more. Some tables also illustrate the ingredients and recipes that yield dishes such as paella and traditional preparations such as sofrito. Others explore how ceremonial gatherings, including the Passover seder, bring people together and preserve cultural and historic memories for generations.

The table stories unfold in different manners and styles, some offering opportunities for visitor engagement in interesting and unique ways such as through tactile experience of the works, viewing them through augmented reality, and creating their own complementary art through wooden rubbing plates. On select days, complementary exhibition programming includes "The Art of the Table," during which individual table artists engage with visitors in special activities such as demonstrations, group painting, or storytelling.

In addition to the 30 artist-designed tables, *Around the Table* offers expansive installations of living edible plants; an African American Garden curated by Dr. Jessica B. Harris, the leading scholar of foods of the African Diaspora; the work of contemporary artist Lina Puerta; and displays highlighting the art and science of edible plants and plant-based cookbooks. Programming for all ages includes "Around the Kids' Table" in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden, Wellness Wednesdays with the NYBG Farmers Market, weekend celebrations, and more. The exhibition provides opportunities to discover the diversity and beauty of plants that are grown for cuisine around the world, to uncover the botanical origins of the foods people think they know, and to cultivate deeper understanding of the environmental and social impacts of food choices.

For more information or to purchase tickets for *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*, please visit <https://www.nybg.org/event/around-the-table-stories-of-the-foods-we-love/>.

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**The New York Botanical Garden is located at 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458. For more information, visit [nybg.org](http://nybg.org)**

**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.**

**Contacts:** Nick Leshi at 718.817.8658, [nleshi@nybg.org](mailto:nleshi@nybg.org)  
Stevenson Swanson at 718.817.8512, [sswanson@nybg.org](mailto:sswanson@nybg.org)