

NYBG

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Ross Gallery Exhibit Showcases Photographs and Videos of Bronx Community Gardeners and Highlights a Mural Project by Bronx-based Artist André Trenier as Part of NYBG's Exhibition *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*

Multi-faceted, Garden-wide Presentation Celebrating Plants as Foundational to All Culinary Customs Runs June 4 through September 11, 2022



Photographs of Bronx community gardeners such as Sulan Chin of Bissel Gardens (above), taken by students from the Bronx Documentary Center, are showcased in an exhibit in NYBG's Arthur and Janet Ross Gallery. (Photo by Ricardo Partida)



Bronx-based artist André Trenier is creating a mural to salute the Garden of Happiness community garden. (Sketch by André Trenier)

Bronx, NY— . . *la tierra es nuestro alimento/the land is our nourishment* in the Arthur and Janet Ross Gallery at The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) showcases Bronx community gardeners and urban farmers and highlights a mural project by Bronx-based artist André Trenier saluting some of the featured gardeners and their gardens. The immersive exhibit of photographs and videos is an important component of *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*, NYBG's institution-wide, multi-faceted exhibition that explores the cultural, horticultural, environmental, and historical significance of what we eat and examines the art and science of foodways and food traditions, many dating back thousands of years. *Around the Table* is on view from June 4 through September 11, 2022.

The Ross Gallery exhibit includes excerpts of oral-history videos of Bronx residents whose stories form part of NYBG's ongoing Bronx Foodways Oral Histories Project and photographs of the participants taken by students from the Bronx Documentary Center. Interpretive signage recounts the histories of some of the oldest and largest community gardens in the borough and the biographies of their founders or long-time volunteers. Highlighted in the exhibit are Garden of Happiness, Taqwa Community Farm, New Roots Community Farm, Brook Park Urban Youth Farm, Rivers Run Community Garden, Bissel Gardens, and Garden of Youth.

Launched in 2021, the Bronx Foodways Oral Histories Project is a multi-year effort to collect, record, and archive personal food narratives from Bronx community gardeners, urban farmers, volunteers, and activists as a way of preserving their personal journeys for future generations. The archive—consisting of on-site video interviews, photographs, transcripts, and more—is an accessible and engaging resource for teachers, students, and the general public.

Bronx Green-Up—NYBG's long-standing community gardening outreach program—is gathering first-hand stories that reveal the broader history of Bronx community gardens, which began in the 1960s as a movement to reclaim abandoned and blighted city lots. Over the years, the borough's community gardens and urban farms have become centers for heritage, community, and social justice. Most recently, they have been essential food hubs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ross Gallery exhibit also highlights the murals that will be created as part of the oral histories project. Starting this year, NYBG will commission two public murals annually celebrating Bronx gardeners and farmers whose stories have been documented by the project. André Trenier, a renowned Bronx-based artist and muralist who has created dozens of murals in the Bronx and other boroughs, is creating the initial works in 2022.

The first mural—on a wall of an apartment building at 2157 Southern Boulevard, less than a mile from the Botanical Garden at East 182nd Street—salutes NYBG Trustee Karen Washington, co-founder of the nearby Garden of Happiness and a trailblazing leader of the community garden movement. The mural captures the colorful, bountiful beauty of the Garden of Happiness as it portrays Washington and her long-time collaborators and fellow gardeners Victoria Cabrera, Eufemio Rivera, and Cheryl Holt. It also references their involvement with La Familia Verde, a coalition of community gardens that supports Bronx neighborhoods through education, community service, and horticulture.

The mural's location is provided by Phipps Houses, the oldest and largest not-for-profit developer, owner, and manager of affordable housing in New York City. The project's second mural, to be completed this summer, will highlight Abu Talib, co-founder of Taqwa Community Farm in the Highbridge section of the Bronx.

In addition to . . . *la tierra es nuestro alimento/the land is our nourishment* in Ross Gallery, *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; 30 tables designed by Bronx-based artists; 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.

About André Trenier

Bronx-based artist André Trenier has created murals depicting sports legends Roberto Clemente, Satchel Paige and Mickey Mantle near Yankee Stadium; honoring Arthur Ashe and Billie Jean King near Forest Hills Stadium; and others portraying Jackie Robinson, Joe DiMaggio, and Muhammad Ali. He also contributed a mural to the *Take Care of Harlem* series and a soulful piece on the Grand Concourse for the Bronx Museum. A graduate of LaGuardia High School and the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Trenier perfected his spray-painting techniques in Europe from 2009 to 2013, painting large walls in France and Spain and competing in live art battles in which he won special awards for his impromptu and collaborative work. Trenier is currently an Artist in Residence at the Andrew Freedman Home, an artists' center and event space in the Bronx, where he participates in community service programming for local residents while continuing to push the envelope of artistic expression.

In addition to the mural project for the Bronx Foodways Oral Histories Project, he also created the representative art for *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*—a digital painting featuring NYBG's iconic Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, visitors gathered at an artist-designed table, and enticing and colorful edible plants.

About the Bronx Documentary Center

The Bronx Documentary Center (BDC) is a non-profit gallery and educational space. Through exhibitions, screenings, and public programming, the BDC shows the work of internationally-renowned and emerging photographers and filmmakers who are dealing with the themes that guide the BDC: justice, education, community-building, and positive social change. We also provide free education programs for middle-and high-school students as well as a professional education program for historically underrepresented adult Bronx-based photographers. This program provides opportunities for professional development and skills training in photojournalism, filmmaking, and documentary photography.

About Phipps Houses

Phipps Houses is the oldest and largest not-for-profit developer, owner, and manager of affordable housing in New York City. Its social services affiliate, Phipps Neighborhoods, provides children, youth, and families in low-income neighborhoods the opportunities they need to thrive through comprehensive education and career programs and access to community services. Together they are changing lives in New York City.

For more information about *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love* or to purchase tickets, 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

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