

NYBG

Backgrounder

Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love

June 4–September 11, 2022

Exhibition Advisory Committee

The New York Botanical Garden engaged advisors with expertise in documenting recipes and food histories, edible gardening past and present, food justice and food insecurity, global and local foodways, nutrition, the science of edible plants, and the visual arts to join a committee and participate in the development of *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*. Members include:

- **Toby Adams** is the Gregory Long Director of the Edible Academy at The New York Botanical Garden, where he oversees the Botanical Garden's organic gardening and cooking programs for more than 90,000 school children annually. He was instrumental in the development of the Edible Academy, which opened in 2018, and prior to that time served as Manager of the Family Garden. He has collaborated with NYBG Professional Learning colleagues to develop and implement teacher institutes dedicated to school gardening and has executed several grants with local partner organizations to promote garden and nutrition education. Adams is involved in New York City-area advisory panels focused on promoting health and wellness, garden-based education, and food education. He earned a B.S. in biology from SUNY Geneseo.
- **Journei Manzayila Bimwala** is a Bronx native who has dedicated her life to educating Bronx communities on the importance of using native and bioregional plants. Since 2017, she has been an active leader and Co-Chair of the Foodway at Concrete Plant Park, New York City's sustainable food landscape. She is a clinical herbalist, forager, and educator. She teaches children and families about wild plants and their healing/nutritional benefits. Journei began her skills as an educator through her Nature's Classroom program. She now educates Bronx River Alliance staff, partners, and volunteers, as well as the broader community, regarding the importance of medicinal and native plants and how we can incorporate them into our everyday life. During 2020, she led countless virtual tours of the Foodway and cooking demonstrations that brought nature and healing to hundreds of people who were isolated and often trapped indoors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Manzayila Bimwala remains a key player in the activation of the Foodway and shaping the way that we view the use of public landscapes.
- **Garrett Broad, Ph.D.**, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and Media Studies at Fordham University. His research and teaching explore connections between contemporary social movements, food systems, and digital media technology. He is the author of *More Than Just Food: Food Justice and Community Change* (University of California Press, 2016), as well as a variety of articles on food's relationship to environmental sustainability, economic equity, and the health of humans and nonhuman animals. An engaged scholar,

Professor Broad writes for both academic and public audiences, and works to develop collaborative research projects with a variety of social change-focused organizations.

- **Kate Gardner Burt, Ph.D., R.D.**, is an assistant professor, DPD Director, and Undergraduate Program Director of the Dietetics, Foods, and Nutrition Program at Lehman College, City University of New York. She teaches courses in cultural humility and foodways and in professional practice. Dr. Burt's research explores how systemic racial bias and the normativity of whiteness impact the dietetics profession and dietary recommendations. Dr. Burt received her B.S. in film and television from Boston University and her M.S. in exercise physiology and nutrition, and R.D. and Ph.D. in food and nutrition policy from Teachers College, Columbia University.
- **Ursula Chanse** is the Director of Bronx Green-Up and Community Horticulture at The New York Botanical Garden. In this role she has provided horticulture education, training, and technical assistance to Bronx residents, community gardeners, urban farmers, local schools, and community organizations, since 2005.
- **Winston Chiu** is a chef and co-founder of Rethink Food NYC, Inc., a non-profit based in New York City that was founded in 2017 to address hunger by contributing to a sustainable and equitable food system. Rethink collects food excess from restaurants, grocery stores, and corporate kitchens to provide nutritious meals for people living with food insecurity at low or no-cost. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rethink launched numerous initiatives to provide meals to underprivileged communities and essential workers and keep restaurant workers employed, collaborating with Eleven Madison Park, Fieldtrip, Collective Fare, Little Tong Noodle Shop, Brookfield Properties, and Union Square Hospitality Group. They also partnered with Bronx-based culinary collective Ghetto Gastro to provide meals to residents of the Bronx.
- **Von Diaz** is a writer, documentary producer, and author of *Coconuts & Collards: Recipes and Stories from Puerto Rico to the Deep South*. Born in Puerto Rico and raised in Atlanta, Ga., she explores the intersections of food, culture, and identity. Her forthcoming narrative cookbook, *Islas: Cuisines of Resilience* (Chronicle 2023) explores ancestral cooking on tropical islands across the globe, and how their cuisines express the profound resilience and creativity of island communities. She has contributed recipes and essays to a number of cookbooks and anthologies, is a frequent contributor to *The New York Times*, as well as *The Washington Post*, NPR, StoryCorps, *Food & Wine*, and *Bon Appétit*, among many others. In addition, she has taught food studies and oral history at Duke University and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and food writing and audio production workshops at New York University and The New School, among others. She currently sits on the Board of Directors for the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, the Advisory Board for the Toni Tipton Martin Foundation, and is a member of the Journalism Committee for the James Beard Foundation.
- **Sheryll Durrant** is an urban farmer, educator, and food justice advocate. She has been the Resident Garden Manager at Kelly Street Garden in the Bronx, New York, since 2016, and is also the Food and Nutrition Coordinator for New Roots Community Farm, which is managed by the International Rescue Committee. Her work has included developing community-based urban agriculture projects, providing expertise and technical assistance for gardens within supportive housing developments, and she currently serves as Board President for Just Food.

Sheryll has led workshops and spoken on issues related to urban agriculture for many key organizations, and was part of the 2019-2020 HEAL School of Political Leadership. As a former Design Trust fellow for the Farming Concrete project, she is now responsible for communications and outreach for the data collection platform that helps urban farmers and gardeners measure their impact. Previously, Durrant spent more than 20 years in corporate and institutional marketing.

- **Jessica B. Harris, Ph.D.**, is celebrated as America's leading scholar on the foods and foodways of the African Diaspora. She has lectured on African American food and culture across the U.S. and abroad, and her work has appeared in numerous publications. Among her awards and accolades are an honorary doctorate from Johnson & Wales University, and the DeMasters Award from the Association of Food Journalists. Dr. Harris was recently inducted into the James Beard Foundation's Hall of Fame was named one of *Time* magazine's *100 Most Influential People of 2021*. *High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America*, the popular Netflix series inspired by her most-recent book, has been renewed for a second season.
- **Mohammed Mardah** is the Chairman of the African Advisory Council to the Bronx Borough President and the Co-founder and Executive Director of Africans Help Desk. He is a board member of Bridge Builders, an advocacy organization in the Highbridge area of the Bronx, and a board member of the National Council of Ghanaian Association, an umbrella group of all Ghanaian organizations in the tristate area. Mardah is a community leader who has dedicated himself to advocating for the African community not only in the Bronx, but throughout the city of New York. He represents New York City Comptroller Brad Lander in his ex officio role on The New York Botanical Garden Board of Trustees, and also served in this capacity for former Comptroller Scott Stringer. Mardah graduated Summa Cum Laude from Lehman College with a degree in History and Political Science.
- **Alex McAlvay, Ph.D.**, is the Kate E. Tode Assistant Curator in the Institute of Economic Botany at The New York Botanical Garden. He studies the relationships between humans and their environments, the evolutionary and ecological impacts of humans on plants, and the traditional management of plant resources. He is an expert in the study of wild edible plants, *Brassica*, population genomics, cropping systems, crop wild relatives, plant domestication, and ecology, and has conducted field research in Mexico, Canada, and Ethiopia.
- **Lauren Mohn, Ph.D.**, is an ethnobotanist and educator based in Rochester, NY, with a deep interest in agrobiodiversity and its relationship to human wellbeing. Through her research and applied work spanning the Central Andes to the Great Lakes, she learned that the foundation for traditional crop conservation is humans' emotional connection to the natural world. She now uses botany education and outreach to spark these connections, most recently as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Swarthmore College and through freelance program development.
- **Dario Mohr** is a New York City-based interdisciplinary artist who creates interactive sanctuary experiences. Born in 1988, Mohr received a BFA from Buffalo State College, a MFA from The City College of New York, and an Advanced Certificate from Queens College. In addition to work created in painting, sculpture, or made digitally, he often includes assembled objects to

build immersive “sacred spaces.” In addition to his individual art practice, he is also the Founder and Director of AnkhLave Arts Alliance, Inc., which is a non-profit for the recognition and representation of BIPOC artists in contemporary art.

- **Gary Paul Nabhan, Ph.D.**, is W.K. Kellogg Chair in Southwest Borderlands Food and Water Security at the University of Arizona's College of Social and Behavior Sciences Southwest Center. He is an internationally-celebrated nature writer, agrarian activist, and ethnobiologist who tangibly works on conserving the links between biodiversity and cultural diversity. His work is primarily focused in the plants and cultures of the American Southwest. He is a pioneer in the local food movement and the heirloom seed saving movement, and catalyzed the initiative to have UNESCO designate Tucson, Az., as the first City of Gastronomy in the United States.
- **Henry Obispo** is a social-entrepreneur, environmentalist, and eco-gastronomer from the Bronx, New York, and the Founder and CEO of Reborn Farms, an equitable, climate-conscious urban farms. Motivated by his sense of social responsibility, Obispo's mission for Reborn Farms is to revolutionize and reconstruct local food systems to serve populations long ignored and disinvested, to bring forth access and a future of food sovereignty. He is also the founder of Born Juice, an ecological plant-based social enterprise, a zero-waste model aiming towards a carbon neutral reality, focused on hyper-local and circularity, for the betterment of the planet and her inhabitants. Through his community engagement, as an activist and food-justicer, Obispo has developed some of the most impactful food justice programs and initiatives in the Bronx. As President of the United Business Cooperative, he is an advocate of immigrant/BIPOC restaurant owners.
- **Lina Puerta, MEd**, is a Colombian-American artist whose work examining the relationship between nature and the body has been exhibited internationally. In her *Latino Farmworkers in the U.S. Tapestry Series*, Puerta celebrates the Latinx farm laborers who cultivate and tend commercial crops throughout much of the U.S.—making visible the hidden labor and humanity of often unseen essential workers and attempting to counter abuse, negligence, and injustice toward Latinx laborers and nature itself. Puerta's work has been exhibited at the Ford Foundation Gallery, El Museo del Barrio, Wave Hill, and Geary Contemporary in New York City; 21C Museum Hotels in Louisville, Ky., and Bentonville, Ark.; and Pi Artworks in London. She has held artist residencies at the Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art and Storytelling, Lower East Side Printshop, Smack Mellon Art Studio Program, Wave Hill Winter Workspace, and Socrates Sculpture Park in New York City, and the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans.
- **Michael Purugganan, Ph.D.**, is Silver Professor of Biology and the former Dean of Science at New York University (2012–19). He is an affiliated faculty member of the New York University (NYU) Center for Genomics and Systems Biology, NYU Abu Dhabi, and the NYU Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (ISAW). He is a leader in the field of evolutionary and ecological genomics, with a focus on identifying the molecular basis for evolutionary adaptations that occur in nature. His research has lately focused on crop domestication and evolution, working largely on rice and date palms. Dr. Purugganan is the recipient of an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Young Investigator Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, is a Kavli Fellow, and in 2005 was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He serves on the editorial boards of the journals *Genome Biology and Evolution*,

Molecular Ecology, Trends in Plant Science and the Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution and Systematics. Dr. Purugganan is originally from the Philippines, and did his undergraduate work at the University of the Philippines, his graduate work at Columbia University and the University of Georgia, and postdoctoral research at the University of California in San Diego. Prior to joining the NYU faculty in 2006, he was the William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor of Genetics at North Carolina State University.

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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

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.

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