

# NYBG

## Backgrounder

### *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*

June 4–September 11, 2022

## Biographies

**Jessica B. Harris, Ph.D.**, is celebrated as America's leading scholar on the foods and foodways of the African Diaspora. Author of 12 critically acclaimed books, 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 and 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.

**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 of 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. Her 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. Puerta has held artist residencies at the Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art and Storytelling in Harlem, 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.

**André Trenier** is a renowned Bronx-based artist and muralist, distinguished for his dozens of murals in the Bronx and other boroughs, which include works 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 in New York City 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 where 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.

**Dante Micheaux** is the author of *Amorous Shepherd* and *Circus*, which won the *Four Quartets* Prize from the Poetry Society of America and the T. S. Eliot Foundation. His poems and translations have

appeared in *African American Review*; *The American Poetry Review*; *Callaloo*; *Literary Imagination*; *Poem-a-Day*; *Poetry*; *PN Review*; and *Tongue*—among other journals and anthologies. Micheaux's other honors include the 2020 *Ambit Magazine Poetry Prize*, and fellowships from Cave Canem Foundation and *The New York Times Foundation*. He is the Director of Programs for Cave Canem Foundation, a non-profit literary service organization committed to cultivating the artistic and professional growth of African American poets.

**Lawrence E. Moten III** is a New York City-based designer for plays, musicals, live events and installations. His design work, often new plays and world premieres, has been seen in New York City at Circle in the Square, with Page 73 Productions, 59E59 Theaters, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Cherry Lane Theatre, and Houses on The Moon as well as The New School and Marymount Manhattan College. Regionally his work has been seen at California Shakespeare Theater, American Conservatory Theater, The Old Globe, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, and many others. He has been the Resident Scenic Designer for the 2018, 2019, and 2020 National Playwrights Conference at The Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center. Moten was raised in Seattle, Wash., and San Antonio, Tex., and gained an appreciation for design, art, and music at a young age. He pursued his passion for design, earning his BFA in Theatrical Production Arts: Design from Ithaca College. He lives in Brooklyn and freelances across the country.

**Joanna L. Groarke** is Interim Head of Exhibitions at The New York Botanical Garden, where she leads a team that develops exhibitions, interpretive materials and publications, and public programming integrating NYBG's multidisciplinary mission areas of science, education, and horticulture. She has more than 15 years of experience in creating exhibitions, events, and audience development programs for institutions including the Irish Arts Center, New York, and Tufts University Art Gallery.

**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, and ecology, and has conducted field research in Mexico, Canada, and Ethiopia.

**Brian Sullivan** is the Vivian and Edward Merrin Vice President for Glasshouses and Landscape, where he leads a dynamic team of horticulturists that develops and cares for The New York Botanical Garden's permanent tropical and arid-land plant collections under glass, greenhouse production of exhibition and garden display plants, more than 50 outdoor gardens and collections, and NYBG's 250-acre National Historic Landmark landscape. Sullivan has cared for plants and created gardens for people more than two decades in his career in public horticulture in New York City and California.

**Marc Hachadourian** is the Director of Glasshouse Horticulture and Senior Curator of Orchids at The New York Botanical Garden. With more than 15 years of commercial and specialist horticultural experience, he supervises the care of all the plants grown for display gardens, exhibitions, and scientific research in the Botanical Garden's greenhouses. He specializes in orchids, aquatics, bulbs, and alpinists and is particularly interested in public awareness of global plant conservation and the appreciation of plant biodiversity.

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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.

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