

NYBG

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The New York Botanical Garden Selects 30 Bronx Artists to Design and Create Mixed-Media Tables Exploring Central Themes of Its 2022 Exhibition *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*

Artist-Designed Tables Will Be a Major Component of the Garden-wide Presentation Celebrating Plants as Foundational to All Culinary Customs

***Around the Table* Will Be on View June 4 through September 11, 2022**



Many of the selected Bronx artists gathered for an orientation at The New York Botanical Garden on April 11, 2022. (NYBG Photo by Marlon Co)

Bronx, NY—After a call for artists that resulted in many impressive submissions, The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) announced its selection of 30 local artists, living or working in the Bronx, as finalists to design and create tables that will be on display across the Botanical Garden's 250 acres, as a major component of the upcoming *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*. The Garden-wide, multi-faceted exhibition, on view from June 4 through September 11, 2022, will examine the art and science of foodways and food traditions, many dating back thousands of years, exploring the cultural, horticultural, environmental, and historical significance of what we eat.

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The selected artists are: Priscilla Aleman, Noble Dre Ali, Ariel Alvarez, Santina Amato, Blanka Amezkoa, 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 will bring their visions to life in a studio space on the Garden's grounds and on triangular, square, or rectangular wooden tables with attached seating, supplied by NYBG. A behind-the-scenes peek at their first visit to the studio can be viewed [here](#). Illuminating the exhibition's major themes, the artworks will incorporate featured and other notable food plants, highlighting the plants' history and cultural significance. The tables and accompanying interpretation will encourage sitting, sharing, and storytelling. Visitors will be prompted to share their own food stories in the form of recorded video or audio messages (using their own mobile devices) or leaving messages, drawings, or recipes at the tables.

Using a broad range of materials and techniques, such as fabric, paper, metal, and photographs, and carving, painting, sculpting, and crocheting, the tables will serve 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 will reveal their creators' heritages, family traditions, and life experiences. The table stories will 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.

The locations of the artists' tables will be curated by subject matter and materials. They will be on view in places one might expect to see a table and other less obvious sites such as near historic NYBG structures and tucked into specialty gardens and living plant collections across The New York Botanical Garden's landscape. The artists' tables will illuminate an abundance of edible plants, from global dietary staples, including 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 will also illustrate how ingredients, dishes, and ceremonial gatherings—like sofrito, paella, and the Passover seder—bring people together and preserve cultural and historic memories for generations.

In addition to the 30 artist-designed tables, *Around the Table* will offer expansive displays of living edible plants, art and science installations, weekend celebrations, and wellness and culinary-themed programming. The exhibition will provide 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. On select days, complementary exhibition programming will include "The Art of the Table," during which individual table artists engage with visitors in special activities such as demonstrations, group painting, or storytelling.

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

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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