

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 4, 2026

The New York Botanical Garden Announces Photographer Sasha Arutyunova as Recipient of the 2026 Larry Lederman Photography Fellowship



Sasha Arutyunova, 2026
Recipient of the Larry
Lederman Photography Fellowship

Bronx, NY—The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) has announced that Sasha Arutyunova has been selected from among more than 200 applicants as the 2026 recipient of the Larry Lederman Photography Fellowship. Established in 2023 through the generosity of photographer Larry Lederman, the Fellowship is awarded annually to an outstanding photographer whose work demonstrates both excellence and a creative approach to the art of landscape photography. During the nine-month term, which begins in spring, the Lederman Fellow pursues their personal vision of garden landscape photography in an urban setting, creating photographs that capture the aesthetic character, seasonality, and ephemeral quality of vibrant plant life. At least 20 percent of their work should include photos taken on-site at the New York Botanical Garden, a 250-acre National Historic Landmark, and across the Bronx. A portfolio of at least 20 prints, from the submitted body of work, will be presented to the Garden’s LuEsther T. Mertz Library at the end of the term to become part of the Larry Lederman Fellowship Collection.

“Gardens and cultivated landscapes are deserving of new photographic attention,” Larry Lederman said. “This Fellowship is my encouragement of that attention and to help landscape photographers realize their vision.”

The announcement of Arutyunova as the new Lederman Fellow followed the completion of the 2025 Fellowship by Daniel Willner, who presented his final portfolio on April 14, 2026, during a public program at the LuEsther T. Mertz Library titled *Linked Ecologies: The Bronx River and the Thain Family Forest*. The program also featured a conversation with Todd Forrest, NYBG's Arthur Ross Vice President for Horticulture and Living Collections. Willner's work, which explores the layered ecological systems of the Bronx, will become part of the Mertz Library's permanent collection.

About Sasha Arutyunova

The 2026 Larry Lederman Photography Fellow is Sasha Arutyunova, a Brooklyn-based photographer and director whose work is grounded in sensitive storytelling. Characterized by atmospheric visual language, her photographs strive to elevate the everyday, draw out connections between people and their natural environment, and convey nuanced perspectives of complex relationships.

Central to her practice is a long-term project documenting her family across Russia, Armenia, and the United States, exploring migration, memory, and cultural identity. Her book *Shelter*, documenting the 2020 pandemic lockdown in New York City, was published by TIS Books in 2021 and is included in the Museum of Modern Art Library. Her recent project, *Finibusterrae*, examines the lifecycle of olive trees in southern Italy amid ecological crisis.

Arutyunova's work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *National Geographic*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, and *TIME*, among other publications, and has been exhibited internationally. She has received numerous distinctions, including *Photo District News* magazine's "30 New and Emerging Photographers to Watch," and has been recognized by the Aperture Foundation and the Lucie Foundation.

Since its establishment, the Larry Lederman Photography Fellowship has distinguished itself as a significant cultural initiative in New York City, supporting photographers who engage with landscape as both an aesthetic and cultural form. The increasing number of applicants for the \$20 thousand grant each year underscores the Fellowship's expanding reach and its role in fostering new perspectives on the relationship between people, plants, and place.

The inaugural Lederman Fellow in 2023 was Ngoc Minh Ngo, a New York-based photographer whose work explores the intrinsic beauty of plants and nature. She is the author and photographer of *Bringing Nature Home*, *In Bloom*, and *Eden Revisited*. Following her work, Benjamin Swett, author of *New York City of Trees* and *The Picture Not Taken*, among other publications, was chosen as the 2024 Larry Lederman Fellow.

The 2026 Fellow was selected by a committee composed of photographer John Maggiotto; photographer and educator Bryan Whitney; and NYBG's Todd Forrest, Arthur Ross Vice President for Horticulture and Living Collections, Rhonda Evans, Director of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library, and Lucas Mertehikian, Fellowship Coordinator.

Jay A. Levenson, who served on the Fellowship's advisory committee since its inception, passed away on February 11, 2026. A distinguished curator and former Director of International Programs at The Museum of Modern Art, Levenson played a vital role in shaping the Lederman Fellowship through his generosity, deep knowledge of photography, and thoughtful guidance. His contributions were instrumental in establishing the program and will continue to inform its future.

Larry Lederman has been photographing landscapes for the past 20 years. His work has been exhibited in the Arthur and Janet Ross Gallery at NYBG and numerous other venues. His most recent book is *Gardening with Nature at The New York Botanical Garden*, and he is also the author of *Du Pont Gardens of the Brandywine Valley*, *Garden Portraits: Experiences of Natural Beauty*, *Magnificent Trees of The New York Botanical Garden*, and *Rockefeller Family Gardens: An American Legacy*, all published by Monacelli Press. He is the principal photographer of *The New York Botanical Garden* (Abrams), *Interior Landmarks: Treasures of New York* by Judith Gura and Kate Wood (Monacelli Press), and *Frederic Church's Olana on the Hudson: Art, Landscape, Architecture*, edited by Julia B. Rosenbaum and Karen Zubowski (Rizzoli New York).

About The New York Botanical Garden

The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) has been a connective hub among people, plants, and the shared planet since 1891. For more than 130 years, NYBG has been rooted in the cultural fabric of New York City, in the heart of the Bronx, its greenest borough. NYBG has invited millions of visitors to make the Garden a part of their lives, exploring the joy, beauty, and respite of nature. NYBG's 250 acres are home to renowned exhibitions, immersive botanical experiences, art and music, and events with some of the most influential figures in plant and fungal science, horticulture, and the humanities. NYBG is also a steward of globally significant research collections, from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library collection to the plant and fungal specimens in the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, the largest such collection in the Western Hemisphere.

The plant people of NYBG—dedicated horticulturists, enthusiastic educators, and scientific adventurers—are committed to helping nature thrive so that humanity can thrive. They believe in their ability to make things better, teaching tens of thousands of kids and families each year about the importance of safeguarding the environment and healthy eating. Expert

scientists work across the city, the nation, and the globe to document the plants and fungi of the world—and find actionable, nature-based solutions to the planet’s dual climate and biodiversity crises. With eyes always looking forward, they train the next generation of botanists, gardeners, landscape designers, and environmental stewards, ensuring a green future for all. At NYBG, it’s nature—or nowhere.

###

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.

Media Contact: pubrel@nybg.org