



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER,
ARTLAB AT HARVARD, AND HARVARD UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR THE ARTS
ANNOUNCE FREE ARTSTHURSDAY CONVERSATION
ABOUT “HIGH ON THE HOG” THEATRICAL ADAPTATION**

(Cambridge, MA) — **American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University** announced today that it is developing a new theatrical experience based on *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America* by Dr. Jessica B. Harris. The piece will be further developed this coming November at a Faculty-in-Residency at the ArtLab at Harvard.

High on the Hog is conceived by A.R.T. Associate Artistic Director **Dayron J. Miles** and co-created by Miles and movement-based artist **Mayté Natalio**, with the aim to engage the audience’s five senses in the history of African American cuisine while centering food in the narrative experience.

As part of the ArtLab residency, the ArtLab and Harvard University Committee on the Arts invite the public to **Writing the Recipe: Developing a Theatrical Adaptation of *High on the Hog***, an ArtsThursday conversation with Harris, Miles, and Natalio on Thursday, November 20 at 6PM. Harvard’s **ArtsThursdays** series is a presidential initiative to offer free weekly performances, exhibitions, lectures, and other events across the University to promote access to the arts at Harvard. ArtsThursdays are sponsored by Harvard University Committee on the Arts (HUCA).

At **Writing the Recipe**, Dr. Harris will share background and inspirations for the book, and Miles and Natalio will reflect on the discoveries—and questions—that arose during the residency. Audience members are invited to bring a food memory or family recipe to share in conversation.

[Learn more](#) and [RSVP](#) for the public conversation.

The *New York Times* Bestseller *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America* by James Beard Lifetime Achievement-winning Dr. Jessica B. Harris explores the history of African American cuisine from Africa across the Atlantic. The book celebrates the foods of the African American experience and how each came to form important parts of African American culture, history, and identity. It was previously adapted by Netflix and One Story Up Productions into the series *High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Shaped America*.

The November residency at the ArtLab at Harvard will provide Miles and Natalio an opportunity to continue building an outline for the theatrical experience.

“African American cuisine, thus American cuisine, is central of our country’s legacy and a record of strength, perseverance, and triumph. Our theatrical adaptation of *High on the Hog* will not only underscore these truths—it will quite literally put them into the mouths of A.R.T. audiences,” said Miles.

“This theatrical adaptation of *High on the Hog* is a project we have been dreaming about ever since we conceived and designed our new home at the Goel Center for Creativity & Performance. It exemplifies the sort of boundary-breaking work A.R.T. is known for developing, and we look forward to producing it as a cornerstone production at the Goel Center,” said A.R.T. Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus.

American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University focuses on the research and development of groundbreaking theatrical experiences that catalyze dialogue and transformation. It has commissioned, developed, and/or premiered dozens of shows, including *Night Side Songs* by The Lazours, *The Odyssey* by Kate Hamill, *Becoming a Man* by P. Carl, *Diary of a Tap Dancer* by Ayodele Casel, *Endlings* by Celine Song, *Waitress* by Sara Bareilles and Jessie Nelson, Punchdrunk’s *Sleep No More* and the upcoming *Wonder A Great Big World* and Sarah Ruhl and *Black Swan* by Dave Malloy and jen silverman among many others.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Dayron J. Miles is a theater maker, producer, and cultural strategist whose work bridges artistic expression and civic engagement. He is the Associate Artistic Director of the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University, where he collaborates with Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus as a key thought-partner to advance A.R.T.’s mission to expand the boundaries of theater and in creating and sustaining the vision for the A.R.T. Miles is also a Lecturer on Theater Dance and Media at Harvard University. His creative practice centers audience and community in the artistic process, with a focus on expansive, equity-driven storytelling. In 2025, he directed Britten’s *Noah’s Flood* for Boston Lyric Opera, a large-scale community opera that brought together professional artists and more than 100 local performers. He is a 2025 ArtLab at Harvard Faculty-in-Residence. Previously, he was the Founding Director of Public Works Dallas at the Dallas Theater Center, where he developed annual participatory productions that blurred the line between professional and community artistry. Originally from Toledo, Ohio, Miles remains committed to collaboration, shared authorship, and the belief that art is most powerful when rooted in collective experience.

MAYTE NATALIO is a Dominican-American movement forward inter-disciplinary artist from New York City. As a choreographer, her Broadway credits include: *Suffs*, *How to Dance in Ohio and for colored who have considered suicide/ when the rainbow is enuf* (Associate Choreographer). Off-Broadway and regionally,

some choreography credits include; *Encores! Urinetown* (New York City Center), *The Winter's Tale* (Public Works/DTC), *Measure for Measure* (The Public Theater/Mobile Unit), *Into the Woods* (Barrington Stage), *Love in Hate Nation* (Two River Theater), *Hair* (The Old Globe), *Kiss My Aztec* (Hartford Stage) and *The Tattooed Lady* (Philadelphia Theater Company). Mayte choreographed the immersive production *Another Rose* for Virgin Voyages as well as Pyer Moss's Haute Couture Show for Paris Fashion Week. She also choreographed the 2024 Park Avenue Armory Gala and the 2025 Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Gala. She wrote, directed, and choreographed the digital piece, *La Hora Santa* for Ars Nova and was an Ars Nova Vision resident, during which she curated and produced 2 solo shows including *Tiger Daughter* by Charlene Kaye which has been performed nationally and internationally. Mayte has had an extensive career as performer, spanning concert dance, regional theater, Off-Broadway, international tours with pop stars and TV & Film. Most recently, she played the role of Rosie Perez in *Hippest Trip – The Soul Train Musical* (American Conservatory Theater). Mayte was honored with the 2024 Douglas & Ethel Watt Critz's Choice Chita Rivera Award.

ABOUT THE ARTLAB AT HARVARD

ArtLab at Harvard is a dynamic and versatile space that serves as a catalyst for creative expression and interdisciplinary collaboration. It provides a unique environment where artists from diverse fields can explore new ideas and experiment with their craft. Whether through residencies for faculty and guest artists, student-driven projects, or public programming, the ArtLab fosters a vibrant culture of innovation and artistic research.

The space's pinwheel layout, designed to be flexible, allows for a central hub connecting various studios and workspaces, including a fabrication workshop and media production facilities. This arrangement encourages spontaneous interactions and cross-disciplinary exchanges, providing an ideal setting for artists to collaborate and push the boundaries of their work. The hub also serves as a venue for performances and gatherings, helping to bridge the gap between art production and public engagement.

The building's commitment to sustainability, achieved through net-zero energy design and reliance on solar power, further aligns with its mission of fostering a forward-thinking and responsible approach to creativity. By providing resources and opportunities for artistic experimentation, ArtLab is a vital component of Harvard's broader academic and creative ecosystem, contributing to the cultural life of the Allston campus and the surrounding community.

ABOUT ARTSTHURSDAY

Every Thursday evening, a Harvard arts institution or organization will open its doors to the Harvard community and the wider public for free performances, exhibitions, lectures and other events as part of a presidential initiative that promotes access to the arts at Harvard. ArtsThursdays is a university-wide initiative sponsored by Harvard University Committee on the Arts (HUCA). Learn more at [Harvard.edu/ArtsThursdays](https://harvard.edu/ArtsThursdays).

ABOUT AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER (A.R.T.) AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking theatrical experiences that catalyze dialogue and transformation. Led by Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus, A.R.T. is a Tony Award-winning creative hub, launching productions seen on Broadway, across the US, and around the world throughout its 45-year history. As the professional theater on campus, A.R.T. plays a central role at Harvard University, catalyzing discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange, and sharing University resources with the broader community. Driven by its value to lead with inquiry, A.R.T. builds community with audiences, artists, students, staff, and neighbors across Greater Boston, embracing theater's power to cultivate the full breadth and beauty of our shared humanity. A.R.T. will relocate from Harvard Square to its new home in Boston, the David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Creativity & Performance in late 2026. Currently under construction, this new, inspiring center will include flexible adaptive spaces to rehearse, create, teach, and convene in community, fueling A.R.T.'s vision and creative work for years to come.

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