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Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies 2017

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RAÍCES: Testimonios on Music and Danza en Memphis

Growing up as a brown latina, I did not see my latinidad represented in the South. In school, I did not read work by latinx authors, and I did not learn about art by latinx artists. In the news, brown folks were generalized, commodified, and villainized. The only true celebration of my latinidad I found was through my parents and my community. While I collected memories and histories from my family, I learned about the linguistic and regional complexities from latinx community members from countries including Mexico, Panama, Columbia, Honduras, Peru, Venezuela, Guatemala, Chile, and Ecuador. We complicated the latinx identity and investigated our raíces through food, music, and dance. In this sense, latinidad—and the "latino" identity which is a social construct created to categorize us in the United States—also brings latinxs together in a shared struggle to understand our complex identities.

RAÍCES: Testimonios on Music and Danza en Memphis considers the Memphis latinx experience specifically through the perspective of members of Danza Azteca Quetzalcoatl. Following testimonial narratives, the film offers a small look into the exploration of the latinx community in Memphis as well as the exploration of the individual self as each member investigates the role of danza within their own lived experience. Danzantes speak to the performance of identity and history through danza, a pre-Columbian cultural practice, and address the sharing of danza across their multi-generational community. They also reflect on processes of decolonization and acts of resistance and protest in predominantly white, Eurocentric spaces and institutions.

Through the use of testimonio, *RAÍCES* serves to complicate the narrative of latinxs in the South with the voices of latinxs themselves. These voices tell their movement and histories in

the South and connect them with their indigenous and national identities to challenge the oversimplified latinx identity.

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