

AN INTERVIEW WITH EMMANUEL ORTEGA

An Oral History Conducted by Monserrath Hernández

Latinx Voices of Southern Nevada
Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV
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University of Nevada Las Vegas

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The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the *Latinx Voices of Southern Nevada*.

Claytee D. White
Director, Oral History Research Center
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PREFACE



In pop culture, Emmanuel Ortega is recognized as Babelito from *Latinos Who Lunch*, a podcast that he co-hosts with Justin Favela AKA FavyFav. Academically, he is known as Dr. Ortega, PhD, Marilyn Thomas Scholar in Art of the Spanish Americas at University of Illinois Chicago. And just as polar apart as those two identities may sound, during this oral history interview, Ortega navigates the past and the present as if they are one in the same. He lassoes the perspective of a “queer Mexican academic,” as describes himself, and engages in the conversation *con gusto*.

In 1982, Ortega was born to Maria Clementina and Jose A. Ortega in California. He was raised in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, until his father took a job in El Paso and moved the family. “That was a traumatic experience. We went from one of the busiest and most violent cities in Mexico to one of the boring cities in the United States,” he says. By 1998, the family had moved to Las Vegas, where jobs were plentiful and his father joined the union.

In addition to his work with the *Latinos Who Lunch* podcast series and being a curator and visiting professor at the University of Chicago, Babelito lectures nationally and internationally on the topics of images of autos-de-fe, nineteenth century Mexican landscape painting, and

visual representations of the New Mexico Pueblo peoples in Novohispanic Franciscans martyr paintings.

He graduated from Silverado High School; received his master's degree and doctorate from the University of New Mexico. He previously taught at UNLV. His husband is Emmanuel Ramas-Barajas, a video producer.



Babelito with the Latinx Voices team members (L-R):
Elsa Lopez, Maribel Estrada Calderón, Monserrath Hernández.

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June 6, 2019
in Las Vegas, Nevada
Conducted by Monserrath Hernández

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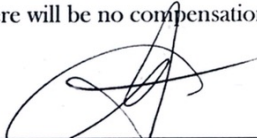
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Signature of Narrator

6/6/19
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6/6/19
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Hello. Today is June 6, 2019. We are in the Special Collections Reading Room, and I [Monserrath Hernández] am with...

Maribel Estrada Calderón.

Barbara Tabach.

Elsa Lopez.

Laurents Bañuelos-Benitez.

And today we are with Emmanuel Ortega.

Emmanuel, can you spell out your name for us?

My name is spelled E-M-M-A-N-U-E-L. Ortega, O-R-T-E-G-A.

How are you doing today?

I am functioning, so that's good, yes.

I like to start by asking: How do you identify yourself?

In regards to gender, class, race?

Todo.

I identify as a queer Mexican academic.

In that order or ¿Cómo sea?

No, no order.

Can you tell me more about your queerness and where does that come from or when did you realize that you were queer?

I think since I was born. I don't think I classified it until much later when I was pushed to, but I think I've always been gay, yes. I came out to my friends probably when I was eleven, and I came out to my parents when I was sixteen, seventeen years old.

You've been out for a long time.

I've been out. I was the first one in my family, and I left the door open and it hasn't been closed.

What year was this?

I came out...I was here in Vegas...in 1998; it was the first year that we got here. I got caught making out with a boy in a car, so I had to do it. But, yes, I came out to my parents in 1998, and it's been a process. I just got married in December and seeing my dad so happy at my wedding was a ten-year process. It was a very, very difficult ten years, but, yes.

When they initially found out, what was their reaction? Did they treat you differently?

Full disclosure? Yes, they did. My dad beat me up when I came out and he was very tough. But before I came out, I told myself that I was going to forgive my parents for whatever happened. It was a traumatic moment, but we overcame it. My parents worked really hard. My mom sent me to therapy, and I sent her back to therapy and none of us went. She's like, "You should go to therapy." I'm like, "You should go to therapy. Why should I go to therapy?" Now I go to therapy, but that's for many other different reasons.

It was a difficult process because in the Latino community it's still taboo. When we are immigrant kids, as queer kids we are pushed to classify ourselves according to what queerness means in the United States, and it's not the same in the rest of the world, so that's hard for us coming out and that's hard for our parents to accept. Queerness is something; queerness in the United States is something; queerness in Nevada is something; queerness in Mexico is something else. Understanding those dynamics, it's difficult for us as queer people, but it's also very difficult for our parents. For example, after ten years and after deciding to get married, I couldn't sleep for days because I had to tell my dad. Then I told my dad and he's like, "*¿Y qué quieres que haga?*" He's like, *so what? What do you need?* I'm like, "I need a dance floor." He goes, "Okay, I'll make that." And he built a dance floor, which was amazing.

Tell me a little bit more about yourself. Where were you born?

I was born in Los Angeles; I was born in Artesia, California. My dad was a truck driver in L.A., so still to this day he still thinks he knows all the freeways in L.A., but it's a fallacy. He hated the United States, so after I was five months old, he decided to go back to Juárez, which was the best decision they've ever taken as parents. I grew up in Mexico, in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, in the border town with El Paso, from the age of five months old to the age of thirteen, I believe, I grew up in Juárez. I went to kindergarten, elementary school, and middle school in Juárez. Yes, that's where I was born.

¿Qué los trajo de vuelta? [What brought you back?]

My dad became a construction worker, so he used to cross the border every single day. His job started at seven, which meant sometimes that he had to leave the house at three in the morning. From the time I was five months to the age I was thirteen, he crossed the border pretty much every single day. It got to a point where he said, *I'm done; I don't want to cross the border; this is too much*. Not only it's intense labor, but he was sleeping five, six hours every day, and that's not human.

He decided to move us all to El Paso. That was a traumatic experience. We went from one of the busiest and most violent cities in Mexico to one of the boring cities in the United States. The contrast of crossing the border was a lot for me growing up. I had ideas about the States, but by the time I was a teenager I was too attached to Juárez, so I didn't want to move to the States. I used to ditch high school, take the bus across the border, and meet my friends all the time. I got really emo, super dark. I started writing poetry. I think we went on a collective depression in my family, but we didn't know what it was.

My parents didn't like it; they didn't like the fact that you couldn't just sit in your chair outside without being stared at by your neighbors. I remember sitting in a window and being like, "Mom, somebody just walked by." Like, *go to the window*. Not knowing our neighbors went—my best friends to this day are people that I grew up with in Juárez when I was moved there, people that carried me in their arms when they were kids. It was a really, really difficult experience.

We were comfortable lower middle class in Juárez, and by lower middle class I mean we had everything we needed, no complaints. But by the time my dad crossed the border that was not the same salary in Texas. I don't know how it is today, but they don't believe in unions. It was really, really complicated and he barely made it. He barely made it every week and that's when he started to look at other states. This was the nineties. This was around 1996. That's when environmentally friendly casinos in Las Vegas were destroying themselves and building up again like nothing. My dad came here and he joined the union; within two years we were here in Las Vegas, in 1998, but it's all driven by my dad.

My dad's version of the American dream was a nice suburban home, so you know that we moved to the suburbs in El Paso, which was also adapting. Ideas of class, race and gender really came to fruition in my first years of high school. That's when I realized how things worked. Ciudad Juárez is an industrial city. Most of the money is new money, so the class distinctions in Juárez don't work the same as in central Mexico. When I was in junior high, one weekend I would go to a friend's party in the nicest home and then the next weekend we will go to the ghetto to go to another friend's party; it's just like we all *convivíamos juntos* [lived together]; it was different. Moving to the United States, moving to El Paso, no, those lands were not crossed. I saw it the first day when I didn't know where to have lunch. I didn't fit with the

Asians; I didn't fit with the blacks; I didn't fit with the whites; I didn't fit with the emos; I was just by myself. I had to start just hanging out with Juárez crew.

Did you speak English when you came over?

No, not a word. We all got together in *la cuadra*, in our street. We paid this professor to teach us English. But his version of teaching English was memorizing *Full House* episodes. "Michelle, is that a dollhouse down there?" I still remember some of those. So, no, I didn't learn anything. I memorized episodes and scenes, but I did not learn anything. It wasn't hard in El Paso because they were all Chicano professors. I would just sit there and wait for the class to be over and then I would go to my professor and be like, "*No entendí ni madre.*" I didn't understand anything. And they're like, *oh no, we talked about this, this and that.* Because elementary education and middle school education in Mexico is like ten years more advanced than the States, I already learned all of that in math classes, in chemistry classes, in physics, all of that. It wasn't until I actually came here to UNLV that I started to learn geometry, for example, that I learned in Juárez when I was in elementary, so it was very easy. I didn't learn any English during my first two years in El Paso. It wasn't until I went to Silverado High School here in Vegas where they didn't speak Spanish and that's where I had to sit there for hours and then go home and translate all of my books and that's how I learned.

What part of town did your family settle in when you guys came to Las Vegas?

Green Valley.

What was that experience like?

It's like going to El Paso; there were no neighbors; nobody around. We would go to Juárez once a month, but now my dad had Nevada salary. He was part of union. It was just completely different. There was a little bit more freedom. But we also loved Las Vegas because there were

people walking around in the streets. What a concept, right? I think for a whole year we entertained people because here in Las Vegas it was so fancy even though we live in a tiny, little apartment on Tropicana and Paradise. It's like a car rental place around there, so little apartments. I remember my mom and my entertainment was to sit out on the balcony and just watch the airplanes land and waiting for the Luxor light to come on. Once the Luxor light came on, it was just go inside and watch soap operas.

Wait, what was the question?

Where did you settle when you first came?

First it was that area, and then within two years we moved to Green Valley.

What was the population like? Were there a lot of Latinos, white people; what was the make-up?

In the apartment complex it was mostly *mexicanos*. In Green Valley it was mostly white, so we didn't know anybody. I think my parents were in that house fifteen years or something like that. We knew neighbors that visited neighbors in the winter; I think they came from Oregon, so they escaped the winters and they would come here, but just because they were sitting outside, the old man without his T-shirt every winter. But other than that we never really met neighbors. Just like migration community's function, my family brought with them a lot of people, so we had friends and family starting to move to Las Vegas because my dad took the first steps, like me coming out. I came out and all these *primos querían salir* [my cousins wanted to come out]. The same thing happened. We had a community of Juárez people here in Vegas.

I lived through that really shortly because the two years that we were in the apartment complex, I was living my life. I started making friends. As an artsy kid I couldn't relate to any Latinos. I had just my group of white kid artists for a couple of years. It wasn't until much later

that I started to come back. I didn't struggle with identity issues in terms of nation or race because I always had Juárez; my identity was there, so I knew that at the end of the month I will go back.

I attached myself to this crowd of kids that hang out at a coffee shop. I just saw that it got demolished. It was called Espresso Roma. It was on Maryland Parkway. I fell in love there like three times. I remember I fell in love with this dude. He was the manager of Espresso Roma. He drove a hearse and I thought that was the most romantic thing ever. Going to the movies was a thing. We had to park all the way to the end because that big-ass vehicle didn't fit anywhere. He went to Burning Man when Burning Man wasn't like a corporate event. It was the coolest thing. That was my crowd, so my identity in a way started to be developed based on the books that my friends read, the music that they were listening to, all the arts. I've always been inclined to that, but I found my little community here in Vegas.

By the time my parents moved to Green Valley, within eight months I met a boy and I moved in with him. I was with him for sixteen years, with a white man, but that's another story.

MARIBEL: *Which union did your father join?*

Carpenters.

What was his job?

He is construction worker. I think he did sheetrock and partitioned, mostly. But as a Latino he did it all.

Did your mom work here in Vegas?

My mom worked when she was a teenager in Juárez in a factory. I don't remember exactly what she was doing. But my dad never allowed her to work, so she was a stay-at-home mom. It's a blessing and it's not. My mom dedicated her life to us—and she still is. A lot of the things that

now in my thirties I want to accomplish with my husband has a lot to do with my mother. I can't wait to get that tenure track and get kids, and it's because of that; because my mom raised some really good kids and I want to do the same. She stayed home. Maybe a little job here and there, like helping *una tía o cosas así* [an aunt and other things like that]. But never really a job. She stayed home.

How many siblings do you have?

I have two sisters. I have my other sister that is five, the person that I identify most with. Five years older, I'm sorry. My younger sister was nine years younger than me. We were all separate, so we all got our chunk of time and they did that on purpose. My mom didn't want to have a bunch of kids together and now she has all the *nietos* [grandchildren] in the house running around; there's four grandkids now. She always says, "I never wanted to have a lot of kids at the same time, not to take care of them, and look at this house."

When you graduated high school, where did you go? What was after that?

I went to Silverado for one year and I was like, *this shit is boring*. Again, because I've always been a nerd and the education to me was not good enough, then I heard of community college high school. Then I started to go to community college. By the time I graduated, I graduated with sixteen credits or twenty-one credits; something like that. I went to Henderson campus and Charleston and Cheyenne; all the campuses. My mom was a taxi driver, *pobrecita* [poor thing]. She would drive me to Cheyenne campus one day and then pick me up and then I have a class in Henderson.

After I graduated high school, I stayed in community college because I tried to do my ACTs and I failed them. I had no idea... Those tests are not made for Latinos who had not been speaking English forever, so I just failed them. I had to go to community college in order to be

able to come to UNLV. I went to community college for two years and I was a photography major and I did photos, black and white. I was good; I was good at that.

Silver gelatin prints?

Yes. I would spend hours and hours in the darkroom. It was mindfulness. Now that I think about it, I wish I had an activity like that now in my life because nothing bothered me. I would just go from five p.m. to sometimes midnight. The darkrooms were sometimes open until ten, late. I just loved it. But I wanted to be an artist because, you know, I write poetry; I'm dark; I feel things. I didn't have the technical aspect down.

At the end of my second year, I sat down with a professor and he said to me and my friend Amanda, I remember he said, "I'm going to be honest with you. As artists you guys are brilliant. But as technical photographers, you guys suck, so you need to really think about continuing in photography because I don't think you're going to go anywhere." I was like, *okay, I need this conversation.*

That's when I was transferring to UNLV and at the time there was a big-time art critic who shall not be named because he is trash and everybody is like, "You need to take classes with him; you need to take classes with him. He is everything." He was leaving as I started, but they were teaching art history. I was like, *what? You can take a history of art?* At the time I was writing a lot. I remember reading Latin American literature: Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Mario Vargas Llosa; all the good ones. I remember reading their descriptions of a scene, and it started like: Louis the fifteenth furniture and this painting by this person. I'm like, *I don't know any of this material culture. The only way that I'm going to get to be a good narrator is going to be by learning art.* I took my first art history class within UNLV and within five minutes I was like, *that's it; this is what I want to do for the rest of my life.* Now I have a PhD on it.

Walk me through your process of becoming a professor in art history. What was that like?

It was all by chance. My sister went to college. I have two role models when it came to my work ethic and my education: It was my dad, seeing him cross the border every single day, and my sister, when she finished high school in Juárez, she started crossing the border every day to go to community college in El Paso. I looked up to her and I always wanted to do that. I couldn't wait to take the bus, cross the border and go to community college. I had that in mind, but that's it. It's not like I knew that you could have a career in academia. I didn't know none of that stuff. I just knew that I wanted to write—and to this day I'm the worst writer—I wanted to write and I love art.

I took my first art history class, I fell in love, and I just started taking all of the canon. I memorized the canon. I learned all of the things that a Latino kid did not necessarily need to learn. I know too much about the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo; all the usual suspects, or the Ninja Turtles. As I was studying, I was starting to get very involved in the art community. A lot of my friends were involved with the local artists. David Ryan, I think he teaches in the department still, and Tim Bavington, they were all like the people that were having shows in New York and Paris and all of the artists based on the sign and they're artists about light; it's about color; it's about an experience with the Strip. Then I started looking forward to that, and so I would go to their lectures, the art shows. I was working retail throughout undergrad at Caesars Palace and I would try to take my lunch at sunset just to see the lights of the casinos go on and the sunset lights, the red desert sunlight lights that I don't get in Chicago. The combination of all of that was just magical. I was a formalist queen; I just love anything that came that was about the sign; that was about art.

I never learned anything outside the canon, so I didn't know that I wanted to teach. My goal was to become a museum docent; I wanted to give tours. Around the same time, by my second or third year, I started meeting all these artsy kids. Then one of them, Katie Añanya—I was going to say *shout out*, but this is not the podcast—she is like, “Oh, they're opening a Guggenheim in the Venetian. You should apply. I started giving tours. So anything that I didn't learn in the classroom, I learned it by... There was a Picasso show, so I had to learn everything about that man, but a fool. Then there was an exhibition on Russia art, so I learned all about that stuff; Egyptian art; you name it. My undergrad classes and everything I had to learn to give tours, I was so happy.

Every time I gave a tour, I would perform. I remember we had a Pollock and I'm like, *and he threw the canvas on the floor and he would do this, this and that*. All the old ladies would be like, yes; they loved it, to the point that I had fans. There was a kid who was like seven years old and I saw them in the elevator once and the kid is like, “Hi.” I'm like, “Oh hi.” The mom is like, “We come here on the weekends because he loves to see you give tours, so we come to see your tours at least two or three times, every time you give a tour.” The kid wanted to become a museum docent because he saw me. I was like, okay, I can die now; I changed somebody's life. *Pobrecito* kid; he doesn't want to do that.

Again, I started getting more involved in the museum world. Then I graduated and I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't even know what grad school was. I didn't even know grad school existed until my friends and this old man—I hate that I don't remember his name, but there is a bench right here in the library with his name, dedicated to him—he took classes all the time, all the time, and he just sat there and just crossed his arms. He was just there and I would see him in all of my classes and the only time I really talked to him is when he said,

“Where are you going after this?” I said, “I don’t know.” He said, “Have you considered grad school?” I’m like, “I guess.” “What do you want to do?” I’m like, “I don’t know. I was just in Mexico and I saw all these churches and I don’t understand anything and I want to learn more about that.” He goes, “Don’t worry about that. Go to New Mexico.” I’m like, “Okay.”

I took a break first. During my break I wanted to experience the canons. A credit card that I’m still paying right now—this was in 2005—I went to Italy for a month and I just saw the canon. I was just like, *yes, Caraballo*; yes, all of the white straight men of the Renaissance—I mean, supposedly straight because they were not—I learned, and I enjoyed it a lot. I saw it all; I saw all the churches. I had a notebook with maybe fifty churches; I saw every single one of them. I wanted to experience that. I drank the Kool-Aid; I drank that Italian Renaissance Kool-Aid.

I then came back and started applying to grad school. This man said to go to New Mexico, so I wanted to know how come I knew more about Italy than Mexico. That’s not right. I said, why do I know everything about the Sistine Chapel, but I don’t know anything about the Sistine Chapel in Mexico, which is Atotonilco in Guanajuato, a Jesuit church, if I’m not mistaken, that is painted from the bottom to the top with frescos of the eighteenth century, a church where during the Independence War, Miguel Hildago, who was a Jesuit priest, started the revolution of independence against the Spanish, stopped in that church, picked up a painting of the Virgin de Guadalupe and used it as a flag for my country. Why don’t I know anything about this place? To this point nobody has written about that space. I want to do that. Why?

I went to Italy. Again, I fell in love. I fell in love with the canon. Then, because I was working here in the Guggenheim as a docent, I had the director of the Guggenheim write me a letter of recommendation to go do an internship, now they’re calling residencies, at the

Guggenheim in Venice. I was at the Guggenheim in the Venetian and I ended up doing an internship in the Guggenheim in Venice and I moved there for a month and I lived my Venetian fantasy.

First I hated it. I'm like, ugh, it's just water; I'm always wet; it's raining every day. I'm lost every single day. Every time you ask directions to Italians, they just talk really, really fast. Sometimes they fight, "*No, no, no, no lo mandes ahí; over there; over there.*" The first week I was miserable. Then I was like, *just enjoy it. You don't know when you're going to come back here. Your grandfather died wanting to visit Spain and you're here in Italy. Just live the moment.*

I had my cans of jalapenos with me because the first time I went to Italy we wanted spicy food and we couldn't find it. I would get off from work, buy my pizza, eat my jalapenos with my pizza, sit at the San Marco Piazza, go home, watch Italian MTV, and it was great. My sister visited me. My boyfriend at the time visited me. I loved it.

Then after that; because of that internship, now I became a candidate to grad school. Now I apply and I get in right away. My plan was to apply to grad school without doing the GREs because I had trauma from not passing my ACTs and not even doing my SATs. New Mexico is the only department that I know that doesn't require GREs and I got in. I was like, *fuck, it looks like I have to go to grad school.*

I went to New Mexico to check it out and I was scared. I was so scared. I was like, *what is this place? It's so ugly. I don't like it. There is nobody walking around. What is this?* I remember I called my dad from a motel and, of course, I stayed in the cheapest motel and it was scary as hell and I just locked my door. I'm like, "I don't want to live here."

I remember my advisor said, "Welcome to New Mexico. Welcome to the department." I'm like, I haven't said yes, but I had no choice; I wanted to continue to study, and I wanted to

learn. When I visited the campus, he had an exhibition of colonial paintings and it was the first time that I actually saw colonial paintings in a museum as opposed to the built environment of colonial Mexico. I was so impressed. I was like, *yes, I want to do this.*

I ended up moving to New Mexico for four years, finished my master's in three years, and I was like, *okay, back to my museum docent's life. What am I going to do?* My professor was like, "You're going to get a PhD." I'm like, *ugh, I guess.* So I started my PhD. I just graduated in December of 2017.

What was your thesis on?

Ooh, girl, my thesis is on Native assistance. My thesis is on eighteenth century painting of Franciscan martyrs that died in New Mexico. These images featured a Franciscan in the foreground of the painting and Natives in the most stereotypical and violent ways, killing those Franciscans, those religious men. There's a dichotomy where the imperial presence of the Franciscan is complemented by the, quote-unquote, barbarian. I'm reversing the formula and instead of showing Native violence, I'm talking about Native resistance. I call those painting *The Iconography of Anxiety*. I'm developing this whole thing about the iconography of anxiety. Right now, I'm working on a project where I'm looking at these paintings as proto-Westerns because the same anxieties against Native Americans in these paintings in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century is exactly the Westerns that you've seen in American films. That's in a nutshell what I wrote, my dissertation.

Why? I'll tell you why. I'm glad you ask. At the time that I went to grad school in Albuquerque, I have the privilege of being able to cross the border, so I would go to Juárez a lot. At that time Juárez was going through some rough violent, violent phase of *narco*s and violence. I started to see the circulation of incredibly violent images; of decapitated people. Friends and

families saw people hanging from bridges. My cousin, bless her heart, she saw a man die in front of her house, but she knew that if she went outside and tried to help, she would also get killed. This was happening at the same time I was studying images of the Inquisition and the history of the Inquisition.

I took Continental philosophy; I took psychoanalysis, trying to understand human cruelty. At the end I realized that human cruelty cannot be measured. You cannot explain that. Instead of using Western methodologies and epistemologies to try to understand the cruelty of men against each other, I decided to study the historical context of violence in Mexico. I started looking at images of the Inquisition and I wrote a master thesis on this painting of the *Acto de Fé*, which is a public performance of a display of power. These people are brought to a stage in front of everybody. Their sins are proclaimed. Their punishment is given. And then the day after that they are sometimes murdered in the park, beheaded, burned; you name it. Then I wanted to continue the theme of violence in the images because, again, I saw my family engaging with those images in Juárez, so I wanted to understand that.

Then in New Mexico, they remodeled the History Museum and there was a painting of a statue of a *virgen*, *La Virgen de Macana* and behind it you had twenty-one Franciscans dead. I found an article, but it was just about the effigy, the *Virgen de la Macana*. I started looking into those martyrs and I realize that there is a whole, entire visual culture of martyrdom in Mexico that is counter-reformative; that it comes from Europe. It was fascinating.

Just like I did to Europe, I took a month-long trip by myself. The first time to Europe was with cousins and friends. But I went to Mexico by myself, and I just looked at all the paintings and all the churches, just like I did in Italy, but now in Mexico. I was able to locate the paintings that related to New Mexico and then I went with that.

Right after that trip, we moved back; my boyfriend and I moved back to Las Vegas. I moved to New Mexico in 2007 and we moved back to Vegas in 2011 and that's when I started teaching in UNLV in the spring of 2012. I taught here from 2012 all the way to the spring of 2018.

What did you teach?

Because nobody cared about me, nobody knew what I was doing, I could do whatever the hell I wanted and I developed Aztec art class. I tell kids now and they're like, "What? That was being taught here?" I'm like, "That's right. You're not paying attention." Aztec art, European Baroque, survey of Mexican painting, survey of Mexican art, art appreciation, the first survey of art and the second survey of art, I just taught it all; I did it all. It was great. I miss UNLV a lot. I miss the student body.

Why do you say that?

It's all the colors. It's a beautiful classroom and it's all the backgrounds. When you teach a class about the colonial period and at the end of the semester a Filipino kid has a realization about race roles in their families, you know you're doing the right thing, and that's what I don't get in other places. Chicago is a great place. It's mostly Chicano kids and that's my community; that's who I'm serving. But UNLV has a different face and I miss that.

LAURENTS: *Can I have you reflect on your education, prior education. The statistics for Latinos, I think it's ten percent has a bachelor's degree, and as you go up that number drops. For you what does it mean to be—and I think the percentage for PhD is less than one percent, right?*

Yes.

Just to bring this home, you're the first Latino I've known with a PhD. I've met Latinas with a PhD, but you're the first Latino I've met with a PhD. What does that mean to you to be part of that less than one percent of our community that has a PhD?

It's engrained in my ethics. It's what I'm most aware of, the privilege. When I got my diploma, when I got my PhD, I received the diploma on the shoulders of my dad's construction work and my grandfather's farm work, and I'm very aware of that. I'm not an asshole about it; I'm not asking people to call me a doctor except in the classroom because I didn't have that. The only person I have that with was Dr. Perez here in the English Department. I don't know why I'm getting so emotional. His class on Chicano literature changed my life because I saw this brown man that could do all this stuff and I could do it, too. I just make sure to show that in my classrooms that I am Mexican; that I am working class; that I am queer. I try to manifest that and I try to perform that as much as I can within the classroom because that's the only thing I can do to change this world. It's all going to hell. It's very complicated. But the only thing I can do is to be able to have at least half of the impact that a person like Dr. Perez had on me, had on my kids. I'm very aware of that, so I'm always flaunting my privilege by talking about my PhD when it comes to the classroom setting. Apologies, sorry.

No worries. You've created a lot of exhibitions. Can you talk to us about how you choose your pieces and what you want to do with that position of curating? What do you want to have people notice when you put together a show?

I think curating is a very tricky thing because you have to work around the politics of the museum, and that's its own world. Museums are not made for us. Working through that is very complicated, and so I've done shows here in the United States in little places. I did one here in the consulate. They shipped the show. They were like, "We have all these prints from the

nineteenth century, and we don't know what to do with them." I put a show together like that. I've done shows with my cohost from the podcast.

I want to contextualize everything; I want shows to be smart because our communities are smart. I try to make it more complicated than that. I haven't curated in a while. I did two exhibitions in Puebla and that's its own politics and that's its own monster, but it's an extension and a reflection of my academic life, not necessarily of other aspects of who I am. There have been times when I've had the opportunity to curate more queer stuff, but I tend to do what I do best, which is to do my academic stuff, to contextualize.

Right now, my goal is to contextualize Native resistance because when it comes to the colonial period, we are thought that there was an extermination of Natives, which is true; there is an epistemicide, the extermination of epistemologies; to a certain extent that's true. But Native groups throughout the Americas never stop resisting. From this point on that's what I want to do. All of my papers, my book, and hopefully I'll have the opportunity to do a big show in the future. It's to highlight that the same way the Natives are protecting our water, they were protecting their right to exist in the colonial period, so that's one of the things I want to highlight more than anything else. Little things come here and there, but that's one of my goals with my academic life, to be able to share that to the world. If I get to write a book and do that exhibition, I can die. I will be more than happy.

Let's talk about a little bit about *Latinos Who Lunch*. How did that idea of having a podcast come to be?

A lot of that credit goes to my cohost, Justin Favela, because he is the—I've basically been a housewife since I was eighteen, so I don't know what's up. I met him in the gayest possible way. He was working—what's the name of the pianist with all the capes?

BARBARA: *Liberace.*

Liberace exhibition, yes. He's like, *what queer guy teaching art history? Mexican art history?* He came to one of my classes and then we started talking and then we clicked right away. Then you best believe that there were tacos and cappuccinos involved—mochas because I used to do mochas, not cappuccinos—all the time. We would just get into the best conversations and then he's like, "We should do a podcast." I'm like, "What's that?" I started listening. I'm like, "Okay."

After two years we were like, "Let's just do it. Let's just record these conversations. Let's talk about food. Let's talk about identity. Let's talk about race. Let's talk about gender. Let's talk about everything we talk about every time we go to Tacos El Gordo." Oh my god, that's one of the things that I miss the most, In-N-Out and Tacos El Gordo; I don't have that in Chicago.

Anyway, we decided to record it and it started developing very, very organically. The first episode, it's embarrassing. We were eating in the microphones and you just hear, *chchch*, chewing. But we're *Latinos Who Lunch*. Soon our friends are like, "Girl, please don't do that. It's too much." Okay, so we stopped.

And then...I wanted to be an extension of my teaching. We don't have the time to develop those episodes, like we did an episode just on the *Virgen de Guadalupe*—

Which is one of my favorites.

Yes. Thank you. Then we did just an episode on the caste system in Mexico and we did an episode on *colonialismo*, like those things, the lectures that I give in my classes, just being more free about it in the podcast. But I've been doing it for three years that it's the same person; just how you hear me in the podcast is exactly how I talk to my kids. I curse and everything. I haven't gotten in trouble yet.

It started developing and then Justin was a lot into drag queens. He got me into drag queens. I go in and out of the drag queen world; sometimes I love it and sometimes I don't. We just started talking about drag queens, and then we got the opportunity to go to DragCon with RuPaul. All this shit started coming up because nobody was doing what we were doing; an artist and an art historian talking about these kinds of things in a podcast? It's still now there. It's just us. Justin is so good. He is about social media and everything, so he started *hashtag Support Brown Podcast*; that blew everywhere. I tell you, at least once a month we get an email saying, "Thank you, we started a podcast because of you."

I was just talking to a friend and I said, "Well, I don't know how long it's going to last. This is very complicated. His life is getting very busy. I'm married now. I want to start a family. It's also going to get very complicated. He's like, "No, you guys are the pioneers; you guys are 'the' Latino podcast." And I'm like, "What?" I had no idea. The numbers may not reflect it, but even political people in Washington, I just find out that they listen to us. Somebody is working for some congressperson in Washington came to have dinner at her house, family with my husband. She's like, "Yes, all my political friends in Washington know who Latinos Who Lunch is." I'm like, *what the hell?* I don't want to stop for a while, but we'll see what happens.

From tacos and a conversation about race and gender to now these bigger topics that we're trying to cover, it started three years ago. We intentionally released the first episode on Cinco de Mayo. You want to be stereotypical, let's just go all the way. We haven't taken a break and we're finally taking a break for two or three months this summer. It's too much for Justin. I still can handle it, but he does a lot of the work, so he needs a break. But it's been a rollercoaster. My identity has been shaped because of the podcast in many, many ways. I met my husband because of the podcast.

How did you meet your husband?

In a club. We were hosting a party and we started going to the club in L.A., a queer, Chicano, punk night. In one of the times that we went I met him and I fell in love. It's so stupidly cheesy, but I was like, *you're mine*, and he is.

What's next for the podcast?

A break. I want to develop most episodes around bigger topics, so I think in the break we're going to regroup. I'm interviewing some people in Chicago, the librarian of the Newberry. The Newberry is one of the most important libraries in the country and it has an incredible collection. I went to the Newberry. I'm doing an investigation, I'm doing research on eighteenth century maps that have figures of Apaches because to the French and the English, they were all Apaches up here. I'm going to show how the perception of Native Americans in the paintings are a part of the literature and part of cartography and then later part of cinema.

We sat down and started talking and I realized, wow, this Chicana girl is a badass; she needs to be in the podcast. I'm like, "You need to be in my podcast." She's like, "Sure." She just kept typing, doing her thing. I said, "I have a podcast called *Latinos Who Lunch*," and she got red and started sweating. "Oh my God, I can't believe it. Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my God." *Let me show you this. Let me show you that.* She pulled out the map of Tenochtitlán that Cortés did in 1521 and a copy from 1524. There were only a few color copies in the world. A sermon of some of the martyrs that died, she also pulled them out.

Now we're going to talk about all of that in one of the episodes. I'm trying to hit all this Latino cultural makers in Chicago, and I've been doing it. I'm going to continue those interviews. Then after the two-, three-month break, we'll see what happens. If they don't come as part of *Latinos Who Lunch*, I will probably start another project. I hope it continues, but if it

stops I feel like we have accomplished a lot without even realizing. It's just like going into the classroom and saying that you're a Mexican PhD; just by being visible you're doing a lot of work.

LAURENTS: *I was asking, how do you reflect on it? Because on the show you tend to call yourself the pessimistic one and you tend to be the one “con el pero” [always has to say “but”] anytime you guys are talking. How did that role come up for you? Did it naturally come up between you and Justin that you were kind of the more critical one?*

Yes, because of the Frida episode, which was our second episode. One of my goals in my life is to destroy her legacy. I'm just kidding, but I'm not kidding. Around the time that I was getting my master's, in New Mexico there was a student who came from Puebla and we took classes together on race and gender with one of the greatest people I know, Kirsten Pai Buick. Read her book. She's amazing. He moved to Puebla and started Arquetopia, which is the largest artist residency now in Mexico. That's where I go every summer. Going every summer, I started getting woke. Going to grad school and going to Arquetopia every summer was painful. It was anxiety for months...I saw was that you had all these white artists from Australia, from Canada, from the States wanting to come to Mexico to live their Frida fantasy.

That's when I started to look at Frida Kahlo in a critical way and realized that her paintings are an extension of maps from the sixteenth century that have little cannibals in Mexico and Brazil; that the perception of Mexicans around the world has been constructed through this sort of visual culture. When you have this woman who is German, is *mestiza* in German, who wears different types of material cultured clothing that does not belong with each other because they're from different indigenous groups in Mexico, making self-portraits with monkeys and stuff that doesn't necessarily belong to Mexico City, and exporting that image around the world

and being celebrated as the greatest artist that Mexico has ever created, I found it very problematic.

I was like, *no, no, no, no, this is going to be a controversial episode, but we've got to talk about this because we cannot separate the legacy of Frida Kahlo with this long history of the way that the world has imagined Mexico as this wild, savage place.* We did that episode and it was a couple hundred people. But now people that are starting to listen to the podcast have listened, so at least twenty, thirty thousand people probably have listened to that episode, or more. That's when I started being critical and I started to apply that to all of the visual culture that we do.

It's a blessing in disguise because now everybody calls me *hater* because I'm critical. I went to a dinner party and one of the hosts, this Latino museum person, stopped me. He goes, "I'm not going to talk to you about this movie. I'll just tell your husband. Because you're going to hate it." Just plain, like that. It's happened to me several times.

Being critical of our visual culture is part of my ethics; it's part of what I do. That doesn't mean I completely dismiss at all. But I have yet to hear another podcast that is critical about Frida Kahlo. When somebody hears about it and they actually agree with me, they write an email. They're like, I never heard anybody talk about Frida Kahlo like that or talk about a TV show like that. I know that what I do may not have a lot of weight, but somebody has got to mention the problems behind a lot of her things.

One of the things that I want to do is deconstruct *Lotería*, which was designed by a Frenchman, but we don't talk about that. But all the stereotypes of Mexico, *Negrito* and Apache, all of that can be contextualized in the colonial period. I want to do things like that because we are limited to very few symbols that identify us. It's *conchas* because they're bright and they're

good. *Lotería*, Frida Kahlo, and the Aztecs. But all of that is rooted on ideologies of the empire that was Spain and later wanted to become Mexico, and nobody is talking about it; in academia they are, but the problem with academia is that it's like Vegas; what happens in academia stays in academia. One of the goals of the podcast is to push this idea to the general public.

Now I'm just a hater. Fuck it, I love it. I am at a point in my life that I've seen so much for research, I watch so much TV and so many movies, and I get to see something that fully satisfies me, and I'm just tired and it reflects and I need to change my attitude. But I'll just turn on the TV and watch a Netflix show and I'm like, *here we go*. I know there's new generations coming up and we've all got to learn and it's a process, but I'm getting, *ya estoy viejito*; I'm getting old and it's very difficult. If I'm going to be the hater of the podcast world, I will wear that badge with honor.

With the success of the podcast and your academic career, you've penetrated a lot of white spaces. Have you ever felt that there was resistance from the white people of the establishment for what you're doing?

Oh yes, just recently in a faculty meeting, very nice people. I don't have a say because I'm a visiting professor right now, so I just sit there. Every time somebody would knock on the door, I opened the door. At one point, because I cannot vote, I cannot do anything, the door knocked and a colleague goes, "Emmanuel." Just like that; just nodding, like, *go open the door*. I was like, *what?* Managing those micro aggressions, now I get it; now I can do it, but back then it was a little painful. Sometimes I raised my hand and they just shot me down.

You never really penetrate those spaces. You never really do. The only thing you can do is push more people because the more of us and the more space we take, the more of a change we can make. But I will always have my issues with art historians. Art history is an oppressive

discipline, and for that reason I'm doing it because I want to change that. With that territory comes the canon and the canon is white, so all of those spaces are always going to be white. I don't know how much I can change. This is why I take pride on my brown, Asia, black classrooms, because I can do more of an impact on that space than on this faculty meeting where they're just going to be like, *zip*, and I've been shut down a lot and I think it's going to take a long time.

I feel like I'm in a position of power, but I'm not. I don't have that tenure track. I don't have that book; that is going to be its own thing. When I wrote my dissertation, I had been having so much trouble writing because of grammar, because it's a new language, because I learned it no shade, but shade. My English classes and UNLV taught me absolutely nothing. When I was writing my dissertation, I was told not to write it in English; to write it in Spanish because I didn't know how to write, and that made me want to write in English more than anything. It's always been that; it's always been a little bit of a fight, and that's something that a lot of scholars that are not of color do not understand.

Right now, at UCLA there is a new Latinx art journal that UCLA started, I think, last fall, and it's about that; what is it to be a Mexican teaching Mexican colonial art? Apparently, there is less than a thousand of us in the country doing this. Everybody else is Caucasian. The whole, entire journal is dedicated to that and that's related to your question that there are very few PhDs and we're fighting everybody that teaches pre-Columbian art; it's mostly white. It's a problem because they've done strides and they've created amazing events in the way that we see each other, but there's something about the culture that they can never speak of.

Every semester I get a group of students thanking me for being Mexican because they never had that, and so I concentrate on that as opposed to those white spaces because, again, I'm

in a period of my life where I have no patience and I run out of *fucks* to give, so I just don't...I just sit there, look pretty, so I can continue teaching. It will get to a point where I will have a lot of weight in the department, but it's not time yet. I've got to be strategic because, otherwise, I will have no job. I want to buy my piece of land in New Mexico so I can raise my kid in the middle of nowhere and she becomes a little weirdo.

What advice would you give to young Latinos in academia that are trying to make it through?

To be very strategic and to balance their career goals because so many kids get discouraged to go to school because it's too expensive, because it's not for us. A lot of our families that have so much trouble migrating to this country do not necessarily place a lot of weight on education as opposed to labor. You need to balance those ethics with the ethics of being a student, and it's difficult. My dad's favorite saying is *agarra el toro por los cuernos*; grab the bull by the horns, and that's my philosophy on everything. *Okay, I guess I'll do a PhD. Sure, I'll curate this show although I've never done this before, but call me a curator.* Fake it until you make it. It is balancing what's expected of me and what I know of labor and work that has made me—I'm not going to call myself a successful scholar, but it's made me somebody that's been able to keep it going for ten years now.

Talk a little bit more about Las Vegas. What are your favorite aspects of Las Vegas and what do you think about the Latino community here?

It wasn't until *Latinos Who Lunch* that I started to pay attention to that to be honest because the Latino community was my family and friends. I think it's underrated, the power Latinos have in the country, but also Nevada and in Vegas. Seeing the Trump wall made out of taco trucks was something gorgeous, something beautiful. Seeing the power of the unions, it's scary, but, at the

same time, it's also a beautiful thing. When *Latinos Who Lunch* did a tour of the Neon Museum highlighting the Latino aspects of all the signs, of showing that El Capitan, I think was the name of the theater, was one of the first integrated spaces where Latinos could actually sit next to a white person, understanding that history made me appreciate that a lot more.

Latinos, for a big part, we are hard workers and we're about labor, and you don't see it reflected more anywhere else than you see it in Las Vegas and that's a wonderful thing. But it also comes with its perils because, again, a lot of times we are raised to appreciate that aspect of our identity as opposed to go to school. We drop off a lot. It's a little dangerous thing because I see it in my classrooms; I see a lot of kids that are making more money than I am as a PhD, parking cars. That's not necessarily a reflection of the Latino community, but it's just the way the labor functions here in Vegas, but we're a big, big, big part of it.

Seeing things like the taco truck, understanding the history made me very proud. People do not understand that there is a big community here of Latinos and that we have weight. My perceptions of the Latino community have changed a lot. That's in relation to labor.

In relation to food, this is the place, man. I miss it so much. But it's also a reflection of a lot of things. I know this is cheesy but having a taco chain from Tijuana informs not only the history of tacos on the border, but also the fact they opened two or three here informs a lot of things about who we are. You go to Chicago and there's a lot of people from Oaxaca. There's a lot of people from Michoacán here; there's a lot of people from Durango, from Chihuahua. Those are the things that you see reflected in our restaurants.

All of that I'm very aware of, but mostly labor especially through my dad. My dad, when he was a construction worker in El Paso, they actually built the sphynx of the Luxor. So when I

see this sphynx, I don't think of Egyptian history or Michael Jackson visiting back in the day; I think of my dad.

That's one of the things we talk about on the podcast a lot is that we don't see that reflected. You have Wynn's signature on a building, Trump's name on his building, you have all this monuments to white supremacy, but where is the sculptures for all the people that build this town? We are here. There is a lot of invisibility on that. that is the biggest struggle that I think we face as Latinos in a lot of cities; that our ideas of success do not measure up, or our placement on the importance of labor does not measure up to the United States' ideas of success just because of physical labor. It's very, very complicated. I want to see that reflected here, so hopefully it will change, but I don't know.

You mentioned Tacos El Gordo several times.

Several times.

What do you get when you go?

Lengua. When I took my husband there for the first time, he was like, "Augh, this is like sushi." It's so good, *lengua*, definitely, and *buche*. I get everything, girl. I eat everything. Oh my God, I'm so hungry. Yes, I get *lengua* tacos.

Which location do you go to?

Charleston.

How long has that been there?

God knows. Since I moved back from New Mexico. No shade to New Mexico. New Mexican food is its own thing. It's amazing. I make the best New Mexican enchiladas. Whenever you want me to make enchiladas in Chicago, just bring the chile and I'll make it.

How do you make New Mexican enchiladas?

You boil the chiles, but the chiles of New Mexico, the dried chiles are so good; they don't need anything else. You boil the chiles. You blend it. You strain it. Then you just put a lot of salt until you get all the sudden all the flavor of the chile comes out. You toast the tortilla a little bit so it doesn't break. You dip it in the chile and then you build layers. It's tortilla, *queso, cebolla*, tortilla, *queso, cebolla*, and then you put it in the oven and put the oven on two hundred degrees so you don't break your plates. Then you make an egg and put it on top of it. Then serve it with rice and beans and with *lechuga* and *tomate*. It's so good. And sour cream. My version of Mexican enchiladas is you dip it in the chile and then you fry it, so the chile burns a little bit. And you roll it, but not in New Mexico; you build it up. They might not sound that good, but they're good but it's because of the chile. I attempted to do that with chile California. I had to put *chile de árbol* and I put garlic salt just to get some flavor off of the chile because it's not as good as New Mexico.

When you come to Las Vegas, what is something that you always have to do?

Get In-N-Out, get Tacos El Gordo, get Japanese curry.

From where?

From Zen Curry. Hmm, hmm, it's just comfort. It's just home. That's it. I used to want to do everything. I have to go downtown. I have to go to PublicUs. I have to do all these things. But being away from all of it—being in Chicago is the first time that I'm away from my family. I was away from my family in Albuquerque, but I was driving back here a lot. I was gone for six months. I hadn't seen my parents in six months. I just want to see my nephews and nieces. I'm here for two days and that's all I'm doing. I'm coming back with my husband at the end of the month. We're going to eat. We're going to eat, but that's it.

LAURENTS: *Earlier you mentioned this interesting idea of where the conversations you want our community to have are happening, but they're happening in academic spaces and they're not coming down to the general population. How do we fix that in your opinion? How do we make those conversations more accessible to the rest of the community?*

I think it's by blending both. For example, I'm working on a project with my husband on what I do in the podcast, but with videos. We're going to do a video about the Virgen de Guadalupe, two- or three-minute video, a la MeTube. He is a MeTube video producer—he was. Try to push that and try to blend those two things because academia is dying and it's going to die. When people see what I do, they actually like it. Universities like the fact that they call me a public thinker, a public academic; I don't know. I think it's very, very important.

The example of that is the term *Latinx*. That didn't start in academia. It wasn't until it took off with kids, when it took off to the general public that it came back to academia, and so now you have journals with the term *Latinx*. You didn't have that back then and it didn't start in academia. I think things are starting to go back and forth, but you have to understand your audience. Mexicans don't YouTube. They listen to *Los Bukis* for hours on YouTube because they don't buy the albums anymore.

Again, because of the nature of everything, I don't know how long this is going to last, and I also don't know how long I'm going to be married, but I feel like doing YouTube videos right now is what's going to allow me to continue to push these ideas. Every time I do a little lecture on the Virgen de Guadalupe, they're like, *what? God didn't paint that? What?* I want to do that in other mediums. I think social media is going to continue to change because Facebook seemed king, like it was going to be here forever, and people are dropping like flies. The same thing is going to happen with Instagram. We get bored very easily. We need to understand the

ways of communications are managed in our communities and we have to push that. I feel like that if that is going to bring people into the museums, also. But it's a long, long, long process.

I feel very proud of what we've done with *Latinos Who Lunch* because I pushed a lot of kids to go to grad school and I get emails all the time. I've had kids saying, *because of you I decided to go to grad school*. It's a mission. It's a mission to be able to do that. If I don't do it through the podcast, I try to do it through videos; I'm going to try to do that. There is no right way, I don't think. There is no right way, but we need to understand that academia is dying, not to dismiss it, but to understand that and keep pushing for those other mediums.

You talked a little bit about the term *Latinx*. How do you feel about that term, and can you give us a little background, history, because our understanding of it is that it started in academia, but I think we're wrong?

You probably know more than I do. I know that *Latinx* was not part of academia—maybe it did start in academia, but it wasn't part of academia lingo. It was through non-binary Latinx kids that started to be pushed. Academia is now embracing it fully. I fought it at first because it seemed anti-intergenerational. My parents still don't use it and they're never going to use it. It seemed very Nahuatl-focused, but maybe it's not, because first it was Latinau, like Ebenau. Then it was Latinu, I think is the new one; somebody is adding U's to it; I don't know. Things change all the time. I fully embrace it because everybody else is embracing it. You cannot fight that. You cannot fight something that is almost engrained in us. I fully accept it. But I don't really know much of the history. What I know is that academia didn't embrace that term and it wasn't until it became popular on social media that now it's part of academia as well. Yes, we have conversations on the podcast about it. At first, we were making fun of it and that's where the whole Babelitx came from, because of that instead of Babelito, Babelitx.

ELSA: *I want to keep talking a little bit about Latinos in academia. You mentioned, and as we all know, because there is so little of us, sometimes we have to be the voice of representation, but then it also comes into thinking about, well, what's representation? What's tokenism? You probably talked about that, but I want to hear it.*

I am a token Latino in all of the art history departments and I'm always going to be that. But I am the face of representation in the classroom and that's exactly what we were mentioning before. I think understanding those roles is important when you go into academia because I had no idea. I had no idea what I was getting into; otherwise, I don't think I would have done it, and that's what is scaring a lot of kids; now they understand that, or when they hear the podcast, now they understand that. But I wouldn't discourage anybody not to go to grad school. It changed my life, so it was very important. It's very complicated. It's very, very complicated because even though we many times are tokens in a lot of departments, just like we're tokens in a lot of media, sometimes you have to start somewhere and I think it's necessary. I think my presence in UIC is loud. It's loud and I've made it so. My classes are popular. I don't think it has a lot to do with me. It's just the fact that I'm Mexican and teaching Mexican art.

We're hungry for that.

ELSA: *Yes, we are.*

We are and I see that with kids. I see kids switch their majors. I see kids telling me thank you because of that, and because of that we need to push for that because we need to make noise in those positions of power so that tokenism is not there anymore, but we're generations away from that and that's just a reality. It's a very complicated thing, but I think that things can start changing by understanding that. Don't go into those white spaces thinking you're white like everybody else. A lot of Latinos do that; they're just like, we're accepted. If this comes out

publicly, I will take it away. But *mi cuñado* (brother-in-law), he lives in France. Every time we have a conversation about privilege and about how fucked up colonial history is and that he walks out of the room. I'm like, "You're always going to be Mexican. We're always going to be brown in these spaces. That's just a reality. No matter how you see yourself, they're always going to see you as a fucking minority and it's something that you have to be aware of; otherwise, they're going to disarm whenever you less think about it." It's happened to me, too. I think understanding your role or your tokenism or your visibility helps a lot.

How do you balance the difference between being a token Latino and being exploited because you are brown?

I don't allow it to be exploited unless they pay me good, but that's not happening. I don't allow that because it's evident when somebody wants to do that to me. But I'm also not in a position where I'm an artist, for example, or an actor. It's different. If I'm being exploited for being a Mexican and I'm going to get a tenure track, exploit me, baby; I don't care. Once I'm there then I'm going to dismantle the system. But it hasn't happened to me—tokenism is different because you have to deal with micro aggressions and sometimes you have to be very specific of when to say yes and when to say no and how to say it because we're in a precarious position; we're finally making it into these spaces. It's difficult because I know where those comments come from; I know when I'm called Miguel in an email by the chair of my department; things like that where I'm just like, *oh shit, I thought I was coming here because it's a bigger and more diverse city*. Huh-uh, it's the same everywhere. It's hard understanding that. Instead, I'm like, "Oh, don't worry. My name is Emmanuel." Like, no, bitch, you called me Miguel. It doesn't weigh as much on me anymore. It's just like everyday labor and it's a little complicated.

I think it happened in grad school. One of the first classes in grad school, our professor, Kirsten Pai Buick, she said, “Who are you writing for? Who are you doing art history for?” It went around the table and it came my turn. I’m like, “Uh, I want to prove wrong all those fancy Mexico City people that I can be from the north and I can write out history and it’s about the academics.” And this and that. She’s like, “Okay.” She didn’t say anything.

Two years later it hit me. I remember raising my hand in another class two years later. It hit me after reading this book by Raj Patel; it’s called *The Value of Nothing* where it tells you that many times in our communities, capitalism is not necessarily something that we want to do, but something that we have to do. He starts his book by saying, as humans we’re wired to want to give as opposed to receive, and that’s the opposite of what capitalism teaches us. The idea is to gain, to gain, to buy, to buy. But as humans our brain is wired to give and that’s different.

Understanding that it made me realize that my audience was not the people in Mexico City; that my audience was my family, and that’s been my flag since then, since 2011, since 2010. Anything that I do is for my family. As long as I know where I came from, as long as I know that I come from my grandfather picking strawberries and my dad putting sheetrock in the face of the sphynx, the rest doesn’t matter.

I went through a traumatic breakup for many, many, many reasons, but I lost friendships on the way, a lot of friendships. Also, getting married also made me...It’s like I became a monster all the sudden; I wasn’t popular anymore. It’s just weird. I realize that the people that are still there for me is my audience; it’s my family. That’s all I do. It’s all for them. That’s why I’m really interested in getting to a professional mental and spiritual place where I can just continue the legacy of what my parents did for me and do that to my kids, I hope, I hope. ...

MARIBEL: *You mentioned that you are a role model for a lot of students; that you've encouraged them and inspired them in many ways. Who are your role models?*

In regard to what?

Anything.

My main role model is my dad. He has worked his ass off for his family. Academically speaking, I have a couple of people that I admire: Kirsten Pai Buick. So I have my *senseis*; I have my role models; I have my Yodas. I call her my Yoda. I think the people that have the most impact in my life have been my husband. He has changed the way I see visual culture forever. I study film now because of him. My father because I am my father. My mother, my sisters. Kirsten taught me about race in this country and how it functions. And my friend, the director of Arquetopia, Francisco Guevara. He whips me into shape every summer. I'm dreading to go to Puebla this summer because he's like a mirror every single summer and it's very difficult, but it's made me the person that I am. It's made me this hater. It's made me this role model. I don't take that lightly. I'm not saying that I'm like *un orgullo Hispano* [the epitome of Hispanic pride]—and then there's commercials of my on Univision because I'm not a fucking astronaut, but I know my role in the classrooms and I take that; I work hard for that. That's it, those people.

Talk a little bit more about your childhood. What are some celebrations or traditions that your family celebrated when you were a kid?

The usual Mexican ones. We were passive Catholics, thank God, so the Catholic guilt is not that big.

Can you tell me what a passive Catholic is?

It's going to church for *quinceañeras*, *bodas*, and *comuñones*; that's what a passive Catholic is. My mom—again, I was dark. Very soon as a teenager, I was like, huh-uh, no, no-no. They had this *virgen*. I don't know which one. Those fucking Franciscans made so much shit up.

ELSA: *So many of them.*

So many of them. But it has to do with they wanted to push the doctrine of Immaculate Conception. When they came to the Americas, they were like, every town is going to have its own virgin, and they have a lot of similar stories of operation. Another story.

I don't know, one of the *una de tantas, pinches virgenes*. They had an effigy, and they pass it around to different houses. I think I was mad because I was washing the dishes or something like that. I was like, “*¡Ay, esa señora que tienen en esa caja!*” [“Ay, that lady that you all carry in that box!"] Or whatever. *Oof*. That was the only time I made my mom cry, I think, not on purpose. She just left and she just started crying. I was like, *oh my God*. That was the most Catholic I've seen my family act.

Las *posadas* were very important. *Posadas* were the shit because my cousins, they were like *los riquillos* [the rich ones], so they would throw these big *posadas*. They would always go to all their cousins' houses. I loved it. I got to carry the *peregrinos* [ceramic or plastic figurines depicting Catholic figures] once. *¡Me sentía soñado! ¡Me sentía soñado!* [I felt like I was in a dream!] carrying those *peregrinos*. The food in the *posadas* is something that is so engrained on me.

What did you eat?

Tamales. Tamales. It's *ponche*, but we call them *calientitos*. Having all the candy, the *calientito*, *los buñuelos*. I remember all my *tías* stretching *buñuelos* and have the whole fucking living room

with towels, just resting the *buñuelos* overnight. That was a thing: every single year *buñuelos*. To this day I suck at them. I have no patience for stretching anything.

Even to this day even though I don't believe anything of it, Christmas is my favorite. When I was with my white boyfriend, *oof*, we had *foquitos* everywhere. That was my dream when I had my fucked-up ideas about class when I was a kid. That was success, having a shitload of *foquitos* [little lamps] outside of your house. To this day I always want to do that so I'm all about having *el arbolito de Navidad* with a little *nacimiento* [nativity scene]. I love all of that. It's always a struggle because that's when I perform my capitalism. I want to give everybody a present. I'm like Oprah; everybody deserves the car.

But other than that very important events in our lives were *quinceañera*, too. We just recorded another episode on Justin going to another *quinceañera*, and it was so lit; there were fireworks and everything.

Oh, wow.

Right. There was a live *banda* and stuff.

The best.

Right. *Quinceañeras* were also very important for me. I wanted one so bad. I wanted a *quinceañera*, but that was a big no-no back then. Now it's normal, but back then you couldn't have one. I think those big celebrations.

We also every Friday will go to my grandma's house. You will have twenty *cabrónes* [little jerks] running around. I think I have over sixty first cousins just to give you an idea, so I grew up with that; with that sort of community. Being with a white dude, I lost that. I thought that individuality was more important. That's something that I value and that I understand. But it's not part of who I am. Just placing so much importance on individuality as opposed to

community based, family traditions. It was a struggle for a while, but now I understand. My in-laws right now are in the house and I fucking love it. We barely fit. Two months ago, there was like eight people in my house and I was just so happy. But that's how I was raised and I avoided that for so long I think without really understanding that a lot of what I was, was repressed because—have you seen the Big Fat Greek Wedding?'

Yes.

Have you ever seen that scene where they go to her family and it's like a big-ass party and then they go to his family and they're just eating cheesecake?

That was me for a long time. You be sure to know that my wedding was lit. It was so amazing. I don't remember much of it; that's how good it was. There is a picture on Instagram of the before and after. Before is us dressed like *rancheros*. We look like Jorge Negrete. And the after party is me like *en la regadera, tirado* [in the mess, laying on the ground].

I think those are the traditions that my parents still instill in us. When we moved to Vegas, no matter what happened, even if I didn't talk or see my mother for a whole week, every Friday was at my mom's, every Friday. I'm not going to be here tomorrow, but I'm making food today, so today is Friday for us because I am cooking.

I'm the only person in my family that cooks, which is important. If that was a question, now it's a question and I'm going to answer it. I learned to cook in grad school because I missed my mom's rice. I wanted that rice. I still don't know how to make like her. I had to teach myself of how to eat. It was a combination of—I know—Rachel Ray and my mom because those thirty-minute meals lasted like three hours because I would just stop the TiVo and then go to the kitchen and chop the onion and come back and play. Now I do that with YouTube, but now I watch too many YouTube videos and I'm like, okay, I know how to do the whole recipe.

But I will call my mom and be like, “Mom, how do you do the rice?” She’s like, “Okay, *agarra el arroz.*” Okay, *jahorita te marco!* [“Okay, grab the rice.” Okay, I’ll call you right now!] Then I will just grab the rice. “What’s next?” She will be, “Toast it, but it has to be this color.” I’m like, “Okay, let me toast it and then I’ll call you back.” My poor mother.

I learned how to make rice like that. I will call her for *caldo de pollo* and then *caldo de res*. Pozole was the last one because pozole is sacred, right? Just like menudo. I never touched it. Menudo I still don’t touch but shout out—not shout out. Oh my God. There is this lady in Chicago, she has this restaurant called Lupitas. They have menudo off the hook. So as long as Lupitas is alive, I am not going to make *menudo* in Chicago.

But I still haven’t found good *pozole*, so I’m like, I’m just going to do it. Again, I called my mom like four times from the grocery store. Then her version of carne is *compra espinazo*. I’ll go to the grocery store. I’m like, what the fuck is that? They’re like, “*Dice mi mamá que ¿si tiene espinazo?*” [My mom is asking if you have—backbone?] *El señor va y le pregunta a otra persona* [The man goes and asks another person] and like that.

That’s how I learned how to cook and now I can make whatever the hell I want and I love to cook and cooking is the only mindful thing that I’m able to do nowadays because my mind is everywhere and I hate everything and it’s very complicated. But I teach *y se borra el mundo* [the world disappears] and I cook *y se borra el mundo*; those are the only two things that keep me a sane person, and read. I started to smoke weed. I highly recommend it, when it’s legal in your state.

You’ve seen so many art pieces. What has been the one art piece that spoke to your soul?

I’m so glad you asked that. The perception of looking at art and moving your soul, I think it’s like romantic love even though I drank the Kool-Aid. It’s a Victorian thing. It’s this idea that this

white man is going to make something inspired by God and it's going to transform you spiritually. Bullshit, right? But there are a couple of moments in my life—I'm going to talk about three.

The first one was when I didn't know what to study. I didn't know if I was going to do art history or what I was going to do. I went to the Met and there was this gigantic Jackson Pollock and I couldn't understand it and I couldn't understand why I was so excited in front of this Pollock. I was like, oh my God; oh my God. I was moved. I don't know how to explain it. It's like music; certain notes hit certain things in here.

I remember a friend of mine, we were talking about this Puerto Rican band called *Robi Draco Rosa*; something like that. He's like, "*Se me cae el corazón en pedacitos, lo construyo otra vez y se me vuelve a caer en pedacitos.*" [My heart breaks into little pieces, I put it back together, and once again it falls into tiny pieces.] That's how I felt in front of the Pollock and I couldn't understand. That was like, okay, I need to study art; I need to study art history.

The second one—again, I drank the Kool-Aid; don't judge me—I went to Marfa, Texas and Marfa, Texas has the Chinati Foundation. The Chinati Foundation was started by Donald Judd. He recuperated this artillery and he has an installation of minimalist art, so it's hundreds of boxes made out of steel. But you go into that room and the parameters, the measurements of the boxes correspond to the floor structure and the ceiling and the windows, so it's this perfectly harmonious space. The boxes are so shiny that you walk into the space and the way that the light hits, it reflects it back and forth. Sometimes you're walking around and they disappear; those boxes...the lines get all...I'll show you pictures. It's very complicated. Walking around the boxes without the presence of—and this is a Baroque idea—without the presence of the viewer, they're just boxes made out of steel. You have to be part of it in order to activate them as pieces

of art. Seeing that, walking around, all the sudden the boxes disappeared just with a play of material and light. That was a big thing. Minimalist is like white supremacy art; it's so oppressive. But, fuck, I love it. My soul rests because it makes me not think because it's just about shape and form and light.

The third one is in Tenochtitlan, in Mexico, a Jesuit church; it's like gold for days, gold for days. It's a space that is filled with altar pieces from the eighteenth century. The altar pieces have so much detail in it that their materiality is denied. It feels like you can touch them and they're just going to fall apart. The baroque is about the awe. It's about impressing you. It's about making you feel things in order to believe in God. The idea that God is in that space and that's why you feel the way you feel. Sometimes churches will show the outdoor that it has no color; they're very austere. Then you go inside and it hits you in the face. So that moment of *whoa*, where you're like, *whoa, Jesus*, like literally Jesus; that's what the awe is; that's what the baroque. That happened to me even though I don't believe in anything. I was walking around the museum and I turned around the corner and went inside the church, and, *boom*, it hit me in the face and I started crying. I was so moved. I was like, fuck, if I am like this, a guy who hates the church, who doesn't believe in anything and I'm moved to tears, imagine people in the eighteenth century who not only believed that stuff, they were like the Inquisition in their *huevos* believing this stuff, imagine the impact it would have had.

Those three moments allow me to still believe in art even though it's a myth, a lot of ideas that we have about art.

You mentioned crossing the border over and over again throughout the interview. Can you describe the process of crossing the border? How has that changed over the years?

It has always been complicated because it would take a couple of hours. There are four or five international bridges in Juárez; it's different in Tijuana where there's one or two now. It would be sometimes a process of ten minutes to cross the border. For somebody, again, with the privilege that I was given by my grandfathers because my grandfathers worked in the Bracero program, allowed my dad to have papers and allow us to have papers. Somebody with my privilege Juárez and El Paso sometimes felt like one city, one clean and one dirty city. I shouldn't say that because it's a lot more complicated than that. What some people see as order and chaos, to me it was one single thing because what people perceive as chaos, we don't perceive as chaos, and shit works in Mexico. People go to work and go to bed every day. When gringos go there and they're like, ah, this city is chaotic, I'm like, but people live here all their lives, so it's not chaos, what you perceive as chaos. For us, what we perceive as order and perfect and clean and everything, it's not like that. Those distinctions were really not there for me.

Crossing the border, now I appreciate it a lot more, especially being married to an undocumented man. I remember crossing the border and I didn't have anything. The guy is like, "What's your name?" I'm like, "Emmanuel." "How do you know that's your name?" "Because that's what my mom told me." I'm like, "Leave me the fuck alone." I was a teenager, too. He just laughed and let me go. That will never happen again today.

My daddy talks about going to shows because he was obsessed with the Rolling Stones. He would go to shows in El Paso. They would just go on top of the bridge with their bikes and then just wait for the border patrols to walk and, *zoom*, they would just go. That's how they went to go see shows.

But I also have friends that were deported. They cannot come to the States anymore. I have my husband that just turned in all the paperwork. Hopefully in a couple of months he will

be able to go back. It was nothing for me and now it's all I can think about. Every time I go to the airport, anywhere, the moment where you pass security, all of your rights as a human being disappear; they just are gone. If you make it through, you're a human being again. If you don't make it through...I remember the border in Canada. I saw some shit. Again, I think of my husband and his family. His family hasn't been back in twenty years. I was making fun of them and I shouldn't. *El pueblo esto, y que el pueblo lo otro y que en el pueblo hacíamos esto.* [Our town this and our town that, and this is what we used to do in our little town] I'm just like, *fuck*. We don't talk like that because we still do it. We still go to Juárez and do things.

Not it's part, also, of the conversation because with Trump...If somebody is listening to this fifty years from now, fuck you, Trump. I'm sorry. Now it's like three or four hours to cross the border when it was twenty, thirty minutes. For my dad it was always a process. Sometimes it would take him forty minutes. Sometimes it will take him two hours. That's why he had to leave the house at three, four in the morning. It was those perceptions, but never an obstacle. It was always a process, but never an obstacle, and now I see it differently. Every time I talk about—and that's something that Justin told me. He's like, “you talk about the crossing the border like nothing, but there's a lot of listeners who don't have that privilege.” I make sure to say that I have that privilege. I did that. That was just nothing. For me it was absolutely nothing to cross the border, but that's because I was born in L.A.

I notice you're wearing a lot of bracelets. Can you talk about that?

Oh, it's just me being Mexican, and I just took them off. For a while I was buying a bracelet every church I went in Mexico. This came from *la iglesia del Señor de las Maravillas* in Puebla. This was a friendship bracelet for my friends Crystal and Justin even though they don't wear it

and they lost it. But this is a reminder of friendship for me. I've been wearing this *cadinitas* from the switches of the lights all my life.

I don't wear jewelry. I used to wear when I was darks, I used to wear silver rings on all of my fingers. That's how one of my best friends met me. I was reading—Ay, *¿cómo se llama ese libro?*—*Maria* I think was the name. It was this romantic nineteenth century Mexican novel. I think I had a Nirvana T-shirt and then I had all my rings and I had long hair. My friend is like, *ah*, and she fell in love with me and we became best friends. Then I started getting rid of them because then I started understanding capitalism in another way. I started taking them off and then I had nothing. I remember my grandfather came to my dreams once and said, “That's your only protection, your rings.” I started wearing one and two. Then I stopped and now I only have my wedding ring now.

The bracelets, I noticed a lot of kids in Mexico started doing it when I started going to Puebla, so I wanted to be like them. Now I'm old. I had twenty more, but I'm like, *I'm forty; I need to stop*. I just have a couple. I'm probably going to buy one more when I go back.

Is this one, the red one, for *¿el mal del ojo?* [the evil eye]

No. This is just from *el Señor de las Maravillas*. Spirituality is a very interesting thing for me because learning what I know in Western University. Western University's knowledge is arranged according to five countries, from white straight dudes of five countries in Europe. Everything we know in the university is from that. We fantasize about science, all of these ideas of what's supposed to be knowledge, but a lot of epistemologies around the world got destroyed.

For a long time, I negated any form of spirituality because it didn't fit into that epistemology and those epistemologies that learned. However, learning that colonization destroyed a lot of ways of understanding around the world has made me just overthink things—

not overthink things, but think about it twice. Even though I may not believe in *el Señor de Maravillas*—it's a statue in Puebla that everybody prays to—there's got to be something about thousands of people touching that statue and putting all that energy. Western science is not going to be able to explain that to me, but there's something to it. The painting of the *Virgen de Guadalupe* wasn't made by God, but there's been millions of people placing all of their faith in that. There's got to be something to that. You know what I'm saying? It's a little bit of a reminder of that; that Catholicism is fucked. But, at the same time, all of our communities believe in it and there's got to be something to it. The reason why we have *una veladora*—I forgot the saying, but supposedly it's going to help my husband find a job. Like, *fuck it, let's do it*. We don't know that. I don't disbelieve anymore. I don't have the authority to say that there is a God or there is not a God. I don't have that authority and nobody should have that authority to tell me God exists or God doesn't exist. Even though I don't go to church, if I go to a church, I respect and I understand. I'm very cautious about those things. When people tell me about their brujos and brujas, at first I was like, ugh, here we go; it's just a trend. Now I'm like, okay, there's got to be something to it. I'm very respectful of that and this is a reminder of that, too.

You mentioned your grandfather being part of the Bracero program. Do you know what year and where did he work?

I don't. This is one of the only things I regret in my life, not talking to my grandparents. One of my aunts knows a lot of tea, so I need to talk to her.

Your family secrets?

Oh. There is this artist in Mexico; his name is Sebastián. I don't know if you're familiar with him. Have any of you been to Mexico City, had the privilege to cross?

No.

In Paseo de la Reforma, there's a big sculpture in yellow; it's called *Cabellito*. That's my uncle. But, wait. He is my dad's cousin, but when my grandma died, he's like, "I have some tea." But then she died, so we don't know. But he looks just like one of my uncles. He's not a cousin. We're pretty sure that he was a son of my grandfather. A lot of that information was lost, including that. I know he was part of the Bracero program or a branch of the Bracero program, but I don't know...I'm going to say in the 1950s, forties and fifties, but I think the Bracero program was much earlier. But I know that part of the compensation of him working for that was to get papers for him and all his kids. All the kids are like sayonara, so they all crossed the border. I think only one aunt stayed in Juárez and she is still there. Everybody else came to California and Texas. Now they're in California, Texas, Arizona; everywhere.

MARIBEL: *Where were your parents born?*

My dad was born in Camargo, Chihuahua in 1955, and my mother was born in Ciudad Juárez in 1956, so we're from the north. I want to look more into this hair, this curly hair. I am certain that we have Jewish blood and we have Tarahumara blood, but there's no way that I can quantify that without giving all my information to the government. I know privacy is an illusion in this country, but if I do those 23andMe and those DNA tests, a lot of that information goes to the insurance companies. If you are Jewish and you're prone to certain diseases, the insurance won't cover you because now they have your information. I refuse to do that. But I want to find more information because I think my grandma at one point said that her great-grandparents were German or something like that. Then you see my dad and my dad is brown. When did things get mixed and how did it happen, I have no idea. All I know is that I can drink a lot of dairy and eat a lot of meat and I don't get sick, so there's got to be some European shit happening in there. But I want to know more. Again, the only thing I regret.

I know that my grandma from my mom's side, they live in a hacienda in Durango; *y se casó con el pión y la deshonraron, y se tuvo que ir a Juárez* [she got married to a day laborer, they disowned her, and she had to go to Juárez]—like Revolution María Félix realness. She died. I've been so interested because I'm loving tango now. Ugh, I know. But my mom just told me yesterday, "Yes, your grandfather and your grandmother used to go and dance tango in Juárez." I'm like, "What?" There is this movie star, Libertad Lamarque, and the first time I saw a Libertad Lamarque movie, I'm like, *oh my God, I love her*. I don't understand why. I think as a kid I was listening to a lot of tango in my grandma's house. There's a lot of those things that are just gaps because the sense of understanding our identity through our history has not necessarily been instilled in my family. I think I'm the first one; I'm the only historian in the whole family. I've got to write my book first before I get into all of that so I can get that tenure track.

What is your favorite movie?

'Nazarín' by Buñuel. 'Nazarín' is so good. There's two. 'Nazarín' is a movie from the 1950s. Luis Buñuel is a director from Spain who comes to Mexico during *la época de oro* where there's movies about *charros* and *la hacienda y guara, guara la cuchara*; all this stuff. As a Spanish guy with all his privilege, he is like, what is all this bullshit? What is all this national identity, messed up thing? He will make movies about *charros* and about this, but with all those twists.

'Nazarín' is about a missionary and it's these two ladies who are obsessed with this missionary and following him everywhere. It's the biggest *burla a la iglesia católica* in Mexico that there is. The movie didn't do much. 'Los Olvidados'; that's a big one. 'Viridiana' and 'El Angel Exterminador'; those are the three movies that everybody talks about when it comes to living in Mexico. But Nazarín is the shit. It's so good. It's like a big F-U to the church; that and 'Volver' by Pedro Almodóvar. It's just melodrama and melodrama is in my blood. It's in our

blood. We all engage in melodrama. Nobody does melodrama right now like Pedro Almodóvar and Pedro Almodóvar is brilliant. I quote it all the time, all the time. ‘Volver’ y ‘Nazarín’ are my favorite. ‘Nazarín’ is so good.

Have you ever watched ‘Como Agua para Chocolate?’ [Like Water for Chocolate]

Yes.

What do you think about that?

It’s a magic realist, so I take it with a grain of salt. I was obsessed with magic realism until I find out that magic realism is just another excuse for people in Europe to say, you guys have surrealism; we have technology. Another reason why I don’t like Frida Kahlo. Magic realism was a title that people—have you seen the shows ‘Narcos?’ I think it’s the first season. The opening credits said like, “*No es casualidad que el realismo Mexicano venga de Colombia,*” [“It’s not a coincidence that Mexican realism came from Colombia.”] and the, *boom*, they start talking about narcos. That’s how people perceive us. As much as I love García Márquez and everybody, I’m also like, we don’t need people to perceive us in that way. *Like Water for Chocolate*, that scene where she cries and they gather salts, that’s brilliant. That’s amazing. Or in the *Hundred Years of Solitude*, he’s in love and there’s butterflies flying around him. I love all of that stuff, but I’m also critical, so I tend to stay away from that. Buñuel, that slap in the face to Mexican culture, I know he comes from a Spanish guy, but he did a really good job and sometimes we need a foreign perspective to whip us into shape.

You also begin Latinos Who Lunch with (qué show, qué show, qué show).

Somebody sent us an email about it. I was just reading it.

Where did that come from?

In Juárez we grew up with a lot of characters. My sister had what I perceived the coolest friends. My sister's sixteenth birthday was in our backyard and we had *una tocada*. Actually *Vice Mexico* just released an article like a year ago of all the bands from Juárez. It was a nice, cool crowd, and we were part of all of that. The first time I smoked it was in my backyard with live bands. It was so badass. They had their own lingo. There was a guy; his name was *El Güeros* [The White Guy] he was not allowed to leave his house, so he would sell weed from his window. He will tell my sister, "*Os dis, si usted quiere marijuana. Usted na'mas hagale* (demonstrates whistle) *y yo se la doy.*" ["You just tell me if you want marijuana. Just (demonstrates whistle) and I will give it to you."] He always will be like, *que show*. Instead of *qué onda o qué pasó, qué show*. Then all of them will be like *qué show*; it became a thing. Favy started doing like RuPaul, hello, hello, hello. So I'm just like, I'm going to do my thing, *qué show, qué show, qué show*. It's like my sister's marijuana friend. His name was *El Güeros*. He gave me my first copy of '*Matando Güeros*', which is an album by *Brujeria*, and the cover is a decapitated guy. There is a song called *La Migra, La Migra, La Migra te pica el culo* [Immigration, Immigration, Immigration your ass itches (in reference to the institution)] and it's a big LA MIGRA. It's so crazy. It's like an anti-*güeros*, really crazy. I remember from the window he gave us and it's this cover of this decapitated guy and it is this heavy, heavy metal music, and we're like, "This is so cool!" He died, *pobrecito no sé qué le pasó* [poor thing I don't know what happened to him.]

But it was always in three: *El Güeros, El Güeros, El Güeros*, always. So it's like *que show, que show, que show*. It's an homage to Juárez and my sister's friends and my friends, too.

Your adventures.

Yes.

LAURENTS: *Where did the nickname 'Babelito' come from?*

From...which was a recommendation that's going to come out in a couple of weeks...from a band called Santa Sabina. Santa Sabina made an album called 'Babel' and that's still my favorite album all time. It's part of the wave of *rock en español* in the nineties, but unlike *Café Tacuba*, *Fobia*, *La Maldita*, *La Lupita*, all of those, they were like this dark, vampire, blood-sucking lyrics and they always played with the Catholic mysticism. They did a whole album called Babel and to this day it's still my favorite album of all time. I started calling myself, Babel, Babelito. My email is Babel Ortega. I started using it in high school, but *no pegó*. It was in the podcast when I was like, I cannot be Emmanuel Ortega; I'm not going to get a job. I'm having problems as it is right now. Imagine people finding out that I'm cursing out to the world and talking bullshit about art history. It's not going to happen. So Favy is like, "Come up with a name." I'm like, "Easy. Babelito." Because my husband's name is Emmanuel...

How does that work?

I wanted to get his last name just to fuck with people. Emmanuel Ramos Barajas and Emmanuel Ramos Barajas. I'm Babelito. My nephews call me Mimo and his nephews call him Meme. So it's Mimo, Meme or Emma and Babelito. Because of the podcast and because of this relationship, it's just...now I tell people to call me Babelito. In school you've got to respect. I've had listeners take my class. They're like, "Oh, I listen to your podcast." I'm like, "We cannot talk about this until the end of the semester." The PhD *me costó un huevo para que* [cost me a fortune so that] they will respect me.

Just one more thing. What do you think of this project, us going out and recording the oral history of the Latino community?

The value of our community is in the archives and the archives sometimes are in the built environment and sometimes they are in the visual culture and sometimes they are in the recorded

history. The fact that you have a group of Latinx kids taking control of Latinx stories as opposed to allowing Netflix to do that, it's super valuable; it's super important. I only wish this would have happened when I was here so I could have been part of it. This is really, really exciting, especially coming from UNLV. It's really, really cool. Don't stop doing it. Once you guys graduate, pass the torch. It's very, very, very important because—we talked about it yesterday—we see ourselves reflected in media *y nos emocionamos todos*, “¡Ay!, un brown queer!” But it's like, who is producing that brown queer and who is managing those voices? Let's be careful. This is an opportunity to take control over that. How long we record, for an hour, two hours? Nobody is going to take away from me and from the community. If you allow me, I will nominate my dad just to continue.

Yes, please.

Okay, will do.

You talked a lot about us as Latinos, we can't try to decolonize because it's part of our blood. We can be anti-colonial. Can you talk a little—

People are listening, yes. Yes, because there is this perception that we're going to get rid of the colonial period. You know what? That's so bad because that denies the pain of the colonial period. People went through a lot, communities. I was just reading in the plane, and even though this is what I do, the genocide against Native Americans in Monterrey in the eighteenth century; that was the word, *extermination*. Denying the colonial period is denying all that pain and we're part of that pain. A taco is a colonial thing. Yes, it's very Mesoamerican. But the forms the taco has taken, it's like a colonial thing. As much as we hate it and it's really fucked up, we are a product of the colonial period and I want to push for that. It's a painful reality, but we have to accept the reality. As Latinos, as Mexicanos—I'm going to speak for Mexicans only—the

perception is that we're a product of the Aztecs, or like Independence fathers and Revolution leaders and that's it. But we are much, much more. We're the Inquisition. We are the missionaries. We are the resistance of those indigenous voices throughout five hundred years and today. By saying let's decolonize that, it's denying that; it's denying the pain of slavery; it's denying the pain of extermination; it's denying this pain of genocide; and it's also denying ourselves a lot of things of who we are as people. We were part of Europe, guys. I'm sorry, we were part of Europe. We're an extension of that empire. Mexico as a nation was modeled after an empire and it still is today.

Any last thoughts you would like to share? Any other stories you would like to share before we go today?

I'm drawing a blank. I feel like I talk way much more than I thought because you ask me a question and I always go into tangents. This is very important because one of the things that we don't talk about in our communities is mental health. Ever since I've moved to Chicago it's been a struggle to me. I'm going through a dark period in my life. Being invited to this, for example, allows me to see myself in a different light, which I haven't been able to do in a long time, so I just want to thank you for showing me that I matter. Just for that I want to thank you and please don't stop. Anything I can do for you guys, I'm here.

ELSA: You're talking about brown podcast. Well, we have a podcast or we're starting one, kind of. Do you have any tips you could give us?

Are you all starting a podcast?

Yes, we're starting it. What's going to happen is that we're taking all these interviews and taking clips from them and featuring them in our podcast and then we're going to start a

conversation like, *oh they said this; well, what does that mean to us as Latino kids or to the Latino community?*

Yes, that's good.

The Las Vegas Latino community. It's going to be the *Latinx Voices Unveiled* series and it will be part of Special Collections' archives as well.

Gorgeous. I can tell you so much. It's going to be a lot of work. Make sure to be able to develop a product before you get it out. Get a website. Get an Instagram. Get all the trendy shit that you need to do. Get a logo. Get your photos taken. Get a YouTube channel. Make sure to divide the labor in a fair way, but also know that you're going to do this; you're going to do this; you're going to do this; you're going to do this, and don't take more labor than you want to because that shit is going to come back and bite you in the ass. You have to be very careful about that. Value your friendships before the podcast because sometimes those boundaries can blur and it can be very, very complicated. As long as you understand your position in the project—it's not my project—make sure there's a collective effort. Take the ego out of it. It doesn't matter. If you do well, great; if you do not, you're still doing a fucking amazing thing. Just know that this is going to be a lot of work. I want to see you guys at some point talking about this stuff and hopefully around the country like we have done it. Just be careful. Have retreats. Talk to each other. Go have drinks. Talk about these things. Don't do something that you don't want to do and don't do something that is not fun because I'm assuming you all are having fun right now. Be fair with each other. Understand that life happens; that you may get married and the dynamics are going to change. Every time there is a big transformation in that make sure to regroup because, otherwise, it's going to get complicated.

But it's so worth it. It's so, so worth it and this is so valuable. Your questions are so concise and specific that you're allowing, like us, two hours talking. You're allowing me to have my own voice. I've heard podcasts where the questions are pushed towards, like, *tell me about your trauma. I want to know more about your trauma. When did you cry? Tell me about how you're going to have water when you cross the desert?* I've heard that stuff and some people don't want to relive that, so don't push it. To your interviewers, don't push it. Anytime you want to contextualize some of the stuff your guests say in a historical way, sign me up.

Okay, we'll definitely take that into consideration.

Definitely.

I noticed that we haven't asked you about University of Illinois. How did you get there?

I applied. I applied and, again, I was like, *fuck it*. I was just working here as an adjunct and this wasn't going anywhere. I was getting really serious with my husband, so I was like, *I need to move and find a job in L.A. I need to do something*. Then this came out. I remember I had just met him. He was like, "I'll move with you." He didn't at first, *cabrón*. I was like, *fuck it, I have nothing to lose. I have the love of my life who says he's going to follow me and I need to get something*.

I half applied and then I had the interview here. They gave me an artist studio that is the size of this table; that's where I had my interview. I had to make up a bookcase and everything so it would look like I looked legit. Oh, yes, you have to. You have to dress up. I shaved. I brought a lot of books so it looked like I knew what I was talking about. In the interview Alicia, here in the museum, the director of the museum, she said, "You're going to get one question and that is: Do you have any questions? That's your moment to make them look good, but make

yourself look better.” I was like, “Okay.” I always tell that to all my friends. “They’re going to ask you that question, so be prepared.”

I was just honest. I’m like, “Art history departments are predominantly white. I don’t want to have a white classroom. What are you going to do for me because you have one of the most diverse student bodies outside of Vegas?” Their faces and white gill just light up and they loved it.

I was getting ready to go see Beyoncé at Coachella when I got the news. That was one of the best days of my fucking life. I was like, “Let’s get drunk and watching Beyoncé because I have a job.” Then I went to Chicago and I got really depressed, but that’s another story.

Talk about that move.

It was stark because, again, after a breakup of sixteen years, I found myself and I also met the person that I wanted to be with all my life, but he also hadn’t moved there. My perceptions of a relationship have changed and shifted and it’s still changing, and it still gives me a lot of anxiety. My perceptions about friendship also changed at that moment. My understanding of the city has been very segregated. It was very potent and it still is. My role in the classroom was shifting. My role as a member of the faculty also was changing. Everything.

I have my “woke” periods: The first time was grad school and the second time is my years in Arquetopia and this is my third one, and this one is the most painful one. I didn’t believe in therapy because I thought *eso es de los gringos* [that’s for the White people]. But then I said this in the podcast and I was called out. I got a really good email that I will never forget that said, “You may not have grown up with ideas about mental health and therapy, but I’m sure there is alcoholism and drug addiction in our communities; that’s how we deal with that pain.” I was like, *oh my God, that is so true.*

Again, having lost a lot of friends, the perception that nothing is forever still fucks me up, and starting anew. I had everything in my house. All the furniture, nice. Art, everything. I was given three hours to get what I needed. Sixteen years of my life I had to throw to the trash. I just got my books and my art. In that moment I realized I don't need anything, but also adjusting to that is still a process right now.

Finally I'm understanding my queerness in a different way and also allowed me to find a queer Latino therapist that...Right, right. What a concept, right? That has allowed me to tell him my deepest, most embarrassing thoughts. I had no idea how much I needed that. Last week I forgot to go because my in-laws were there. I was like, "Please let me reschedule." He's like, "Sorry." He does that on purpose; it's like, you shouldn't rely on me, either. It's been a process. Every time I go there I feel renewed, but then every week, every week...I have gray weeks and then I have horrible weeks where my heart doesn't stop beating fast from the time I wake up until the time I go to sleep. I don't want to live like that for the rest of my life. If I don't want to take drugs, I need to continue doing this.

I was told by a dear friend of mine, who is not my friend anymore, he said, "You dump all your problems on your friends." It was also a wakeup call. My friends shouldn't be punished for what I'm going through, so I need somebody that gets paid for it. I value the friendships where I can still talk, but I try not to burn them.

Now I'm an advocate. Now I talk about mental health and I talk about therapy in the podcast all the time because it's essentially, especially in a world where we're attacked by our government where the polls are melting, where representation does not get any better. You've got to take care of yourself. You've got to practice mindfulness. Pokémon GO and therapy and film are my to-go.

You still play Pokéman GO?

Oh my God, I'm level thirty-four. We can be friends if you want to and I'll send you those Chicago gifts.

Okay, I will.

The festival is next weekend.

Which festival?

Pokémon GO Festival, girl. Yes, it's a thing. Chicago is the Pokémon festival. Teaching, cooking, as I was mentioning, and playing Pokémon are the only times when I'm not thinking about how anxious I am because that's anxiety. Anxiety is just thinking about how anxious you are. At the end of the day, it's your brain betraying yourself, and I know that and I still cannot help it. But when I'm playing Pokémon, I need to evolve this, so I need to find a candy.

You even dress like a Pokémon trainer.

I do. Oh my God, I do dress like...Oh my gosh. That's how I also—that's one thing I want to talk about in case I go home and I die in a car accident or something. Right now, I've been thinking a lot about encounters because we're about to, not celebrate, but commemorate the five hundredth year of the invasion of Tenochtitlan, of Cortés coming in and destroying everything. In Arquetopia, one of the things that I learned is that as Latinos we always reenact the encounter between Cortés and Montezuma in every interaction. I'm like, *what the fuck does that mean?*

I couldn't understand it for a long time. Then I started reading different scholars of color and Jewish scholars; one of them is Emmanuel Levinas. He talks about in his book *Totality and Infinity*—which reading that book is like talking to the Virgin. It's super complicated. There are other essays deconstructing what he means by encounter. In that book he talks about how as humans we tend to empathize with each other. We tend to meet each other and be like, oh you

and are similar because we're wearing the same tennis shoes or we have the same haircut or we have a beard or whatever, or we're both Latinos or we're both queer. That allows us to empathize with each other. But empathizing with each other does not allow us to actually create some change and actually learn from each other.

One of the things that Emmanuel Levinas tells us is that instead of trying to see what's similar to us, which Cortés failed with Montezuma—they're so different that we've got to eliminate you; we've got to kill you; we've got to transform you; we've got to make you Catholic—instead of looking at the similarities, we need to find respect in the infinity of our differences, so I practice that a lot. Every time I meet somebody, we're both Latinos, we're both dudes, I want to know, what is it about you that has nothing to do with me? I will learn more about you that way, and you will learn more about me, and, in return, we're going to learn more about the world. That's kind of a philosophy that I practice on everything, on the idea of the encounter and the respect on our infinities.

It's taken me years to understand what that means. The way that it was taught to me was like, like we're recreating the encounter every time. Byes. What is happening where empathy is evil? What? What, empathy...? But, no, I can empathize without empathizing. We can empathize and understand and help each other by understanding your differences. Because guess what? This is like donating for a cause. I donate five dollars; I feel good, but people are still starving around the world. I'm not changing anything. But then I'm going to buy my cappuccino after that. Nothing is changing. Instead of doing that what are the differences between you and I that are going to allow us to advance as humans?

That's something that is dear to my heart and I try to talk to my students about it all the time. I tell them to recreate the encounter of Montezuma and Cortés in every interaction, from when we go to the bar to when we talk to our parents.

Talking about highlighting differences, can you talk about the queer community here in Las Vegas?

I never experienced it and I always felt out of it. This is one of the reasons why—I mean, I am an advocate for you to feel comfortable. We're a queer podcast. But I've always been outside of the community because I always not felt welcome, always. Gay Pride to me always seemed like a celebration of gay, white, corporate, so I still don't go to that because I don't see myself reflected. I don't see myself reflected in queer media yet. I have yet to see a show about an art historian who cooks *pozole*. I don't think I'm going to get it. But I'm more than that. You know what I'm saying? And I've done that all my life. It doesn't mean that it shouldn't happen. It doesn't mean that you shouldn't wear your queerness however you want to do it. It's just like Vegas was brutal in that regard. Every time I tried to be part of the community, I was like, *fuck, I'm not good-looking enough; I'm not skinny enough*. It just felt wrong. I never felt welcome. Now it's different. We have a variety of places now, but still it's very limited. It's very, very limited. I think we have a long way to go because we're not L.A. For a while that was my refuge, just going to L.A., especially when I was single. Fuck Piranha [nightclub]. I would just go to L.A. to my queer, punk Latinx parties. If I would have had that here in Vegas, oh, child.

Talk about the queer punk scene.

It's amazing because those are kids that grew up with *rock en español* like punk. They played *Los Prisioneros* the kids go crazy and those are like teenager kids. I'm out of it because now I'm older. But my friend Rudy is the one who organizes those parties; it's called Scum. They had

crazy drop-ins. The first time I went I was like, this is not for me anymore, but if I would have had this when I was a teenager, *oof*, you best believe I would have been comfortable with my queerness because I wasn't comfortable with my queerness for a long time.

When did you become comfortable with your queerness?

I think it was through *Latinos Who Lunch*.

Really?

Yes, because it is a struggle for me. It has always been a struggle for me. Sometimes people, when they meet me, they're like, *that's not the perception that we get of you from the podcast*, because I'm always going to celebrate diversity, right? But it doesn't mean that I didn't have my struggles with my queerness. It's been difficult and especially when I'm like now, married.

Again, for the gay community it's like, *what the fuck?* Like, *no*. It's always been a struggle for me even today. That doesn't mean that I condemn it or anything like that. I celebrate it and I love it. but I've always had, not issues, but I've always had my struggles that are very, very personal with the community and it has to do with that because every time I open myself to be part of the community, I felt rejected. I really felt rejected because, again, I didn't see myself reflected. Now it's different. Now on Facebook you can become part of... There's entire academic conferences around queerness and this and that. The world has changed a lot, but I don't think I'm evolving fast enough for the world, but it's also beautiful to see. Having kids come out on the podcast has been a pleasure. A lot of things that I'm doing for the community through the podcast, or that Favy and are doing for the community through the podcast, it's things that I wish I would have had when I was a kid. I'm always going to be an advocate even though I may seem like a straight man cooking or a straight woman cooking at home.

You mentioned at the beginning of this interview that your parents, it took them years to come around. What was that process like? How did you educate your parents about being gay, about being queer?

When I came out, I told myself, *they're not going to accept you. It's going to be difficult.* I didn't think it was going to be violent. *It's going to be difficult, but it's not their fault. It's the culture. It's not their fault.* You've got to forgive them before you do anything. Even as I was getting ready even though I was outed basically, I had forgiven them. I never resented my parents. I told myself, *the only way that my parents are going to respect me is by seeing me as a scholar, seeing me as an educated man before seeing me as a gay guy.*

That shouldn't be the case for everybody, but that's how I approached things. I still approach things like that. I want people to see me for my work and for my humanity and for my relationships before you see me as this sexual object. You should be allowed to choose. If you want to be seen and respected as a sexual object or as a sexual human being, you should; you should have the freedom. But that's how I came to terms with my queerness. That's how I pushed to be to terms with my parents.

Graduating was a big important thing for me. I wanted them to see that I was a PhD before I was a gay guy. That pushed me to study even harder because I knew my dad, all he could see was...

Es gay, es gay, es gay.

Or the fantasies he has. Even my *suegro* (in-laws). My *suegro* has a couple of queer kids in the family and from a *pueblo chico* it's been crazy. He told me, "Meeting you allowed me to understand a lot of things *porque, ay, no sé qué me imaginaba. Cuando te dicen que eres gay, yo no sé qué te imaginas; los novios de tus hijos*" [because, oh, I didn't know what to imagine.

When they tell that you are gay, you don't know what to think; the boyfriends of your sons."] Meeting the person is so important. Him meeting me, and I'm just a Mexican dude before anything else, that appeased his anxiety. That was a way for me to appease my parents' anxieties to show them that I'm not really that exciting; I'm just like a regular person and I'm going to work hard just like you taught me, before any weird anxieties or fantasies you may have about my sexuality.

That's just me. That's my own. I rarely talk about my personal life on the podcast. I rarely talked about my ex. I mention Emma just because culturally speaking he is very relevant to what I do on the podcast. But other than that I don't tell them my business. That's maybe very conservative of me because there's a new generation of kids who don't give a fuck and I'm just like, *okay*, but that's beautiful. I don't have that. It may be a little late, but I celebrate it, too.

How do you think we should address taboos like queerness and gay and lesbian, mental health? How can the Latino community address those taboos that we've repressed for so long?

Putting it in context for your family in terms that they understand. I told that to my mom when I told her about—and there's a video on it that my husband did, too, where *mi suegra is like*, “¿Cómo vas a ir al psicólogo? Pues, ¿Qué hemos hecho mal?” [my mother-in-law is like, “What do you mean you are going to see a psychologist? What have we done wrong?”]

***Es la culpa.* [It's the blame.]**

Right. You have to put it into context, so I told my mom that. “Mom, I am not going to cope with drugs. I am not going to cope with alcohol.” Even though it feels good. But I'm not going to cope with that because there is a history of that in our family, so I have to be very careful. You have to think about it as the *consejero*, just somebody that I get to talk to. There are things that I

don't need to talk to you about and it's okay; you did nothing wrong. You have to contextualize. The same thing with the gay thing. That sounds horrible. But that's how they see it; it's like the gay thing. I had to contextualize it. I never was open with my dad about drag queen *esto o que me fui al antro* [a joint for delinquents], nothing. All I allowed my parents to see was my life as a family member and they got to respect me for that. As difficult as it was to see me getting married, now they talk about my husband and not my friend. With my ex, for sixteen years it was like, *es su amigo o es su novio*. It was like weird. But because they see Emma's family values very similar as mine, they understand me as a family person, which is what they know. You need to contextualize it in terms that they understand, and you can do that. Don't push it because I've seen families where...I've been to places with some friends who were like, "Okay, we're going to talk about colonization." I'm like, "But we're having enchiladas. Let's keep it down." There is a time and a place to talk about this and there's ways to talk about colonization without calling it in those terms that are going to increase those anxieties about it. So *La Virgen María no se menciona en la casa. Mi papá dice, "Después me platicas."* You tell me later. But my mom was like, "I don't want to hear it." And I'm like, "I respect that." If you don't want to hear the fact that the Virgen de Guadalupe painting was made by an indigenous artist, that's your choice and I'm not going to push for that. But that doesn't mean that I'm not going to tell her about certain oppressive things about the colonial period that affect us.

Therapy was a thing and my mom respects the fact that I go to therapy. I had this conversation with my sister. She came to Chicago and she's like, "Tú odias Chicago and it's a beautiful city and you should be more positive." I said, "I love you so I'm going to tell you this. I am depressed and that's all right. I am depressed and I'm seeking help and I'm getting better and I function. There are people that cannot function. You need to understand that your brother is

depressed. Don't shame me for the way that I pulled that energies by complaining about the place where I live. Chicago is a great fucking city even though I hate it, but it's a reflection of what's happening to me right now." Putting it in that context...Get it. Now she calls me once in a while to make sure that I'm okay. But now she understands that.

I don't want to have the conversation with my mother, but I have to have that conversation with my mother. I'm not going to use the word *depressed* because that's going to trigger her. Instead, I'm just going to be like, *I'm going through a difficult moment, Mom. Things are a little complicated. I'm not here for a whole week for a reason. I'm dealing with things and you have to respect that.* But they are very difficult conversations. I think that our solution for everything is *cuando coman* [when you're eating], just throw it over there.

Monserrath: *La platica.* [The talk.]

Yes. Favy talks about it, too. He is like, Thanksgiving is an opportunity to talk about genocide. It's a great opportunity. And it is.

Bring up the family traumas.

Yes. You have to. You have to. But you have to be strategic; otherwise, you're going to further those anxieties. I just want to make sure that when I mention difference, it's not to highlight separation between the encounter between you and I; it's to respect. It's not about highlighting differences, but it's about respecting differences; that's how we learn. Highlighting differences; that's what Hollywood does. They're like, *oh we're all the same; we're in a melting pot.* But then you watch all these shows that remind us. This is one of the reasons I have problems with certain media, Latino YouTube medias. Mi tú and all of those, because they celebrate the fact that we're Latinos and we all have *conchas*. But all these *cholos* trying all this shit, what they're doing is just creating a clear line of what a Latino is supposed to be and what it's not. I have a

big problem with that. When they approach us to do a video—and I tell that to my husband; I’m like, “I almost didn’t do it because I don’t believe in what you guys were doing.” It’s very complicated because those videos are meant to empathize, us to empathize with each other, but that is highlighting differences as opposed to respecting integrity of our differences. Anyway, I just wanted to say that because it was on my mind.

Anything else you’d like to share?

No. I’m glad I got to talk about encounter. Every time I have an opportunity, I’m doing it, especially this year. It’s 1519; Cortés started to attack Tenochtitlan in 1519, so this is something that we have to talk about. Hopefully, we can do a film series about it.

That would be great. Please let us know.

I’ll let you guys know definitely.

Thank you so much for coming down here and sharing your story. I know you only have two days to be here.

Yes, it’s my pleasure. I’ve heard of you guys. So when you sent me an email, I was like, down, I’m down.

Awesome. Thank you.

Thank you so much.

MARIBEL: Muchas gracias.

Gracias.

[End of recorded interview]