

CU Boulder Library Hosts Filmmaker Xun Sero as Part of Their Mission to Expand Its Indigenous Collection.

Through the award winning film “Mamá,” director Xun Sero defies stereotypes and sheds positive light on the indigenous village of Chiapas, Mexico.

Xun Sero held a conversation about his film “Mamá” at University of Colorado at Boulder. The event took place on Monday at CU Boulder’s Norlin Library and was a part of a new initiative to expand CU Boulder’s Library indigenous collection. Sero’s film, “Mamá,” was one of several new events highlighting the work of Indigenous people at CU Boulder.

The film is a dialogue between director Xun Sero and his mother in order to discover what is behind the veneration and violence surrounding his mother figure. The film and discussion also addressed broader themes of gender roles, cultural stereotypes and cultural expectations.

“There are a lot of stereotypes surrounding indigenous peoples and part of the reasons I wanted to make this movie is to show people what it really means to be an Indigenous person of Chiapas,” said Sero.

Sero highlights his goal of reclaiming representation, using film as a way to challenge outsider narratives and let Indigenous people define their own identity and experiences.

The discussion aligns with CU Boulder Library’s broader mission to expand its Indigenous collections. Since joining CU Boulder in 2018, Romance Languages Librarian Kathia Ibacache has helped grow the Libraries’ holdings to include hundreds of works by and about Indigenous peoples across the Americas. Supported by a 2024 President’s Fund for the

Humanities grant, Ibacache recently added 10 new Indigenous films, including *Mamá*, to the library's permanent collection.

The panelists for the event included assistant professor of Spanish and Portuguese John Kennedy, Professor of Women and Gender Studies Leila Gómez and CU Libraries Events Coordinator Sarah Lizarraga. Together with Sero, they discussed the importance of Indigenous representation in media and the preservation of Indigenous languages. *Mamá* was filmed entirely in Tsotsil, a Mayan language spoken in Chiapas, Mexico.

Panelist Leila Gomez also plays a supporting role to Khatia Ibacache in the CU Libraries mission to grow their indigenous collections. She expressed that there is importance for both Indigenous and non indigenous people to follow the CU libraries initiative. She thinks it's important for non-indigenous people in the U.S. to understand the history of colonization in South America and how colonists imposed violence upon indigenous communities. She also expressed the importance of the speech for Indigenous peoples.

“Seeing and engaging with Indigenous artists is empowering for Indigenous peoples living in the U.S.,” said Leila Gomez.

The event is part of a continuing effort by CU Boulder Libraries to challenge stereotypes, amplify underrepresented voices and foster meaningful engagement with Indigenous cultures through film, literature and scholarship.

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