

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Tracy “Onyx” Montes

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Tumultuous 2020 Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-01

Onyx Montes, marketing manager and recent graduate student, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library’s *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: January 16 & 17, 2022

Location: Montes Apartment, Chicago, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Amanda Riggerbach, ALPLM Project Manager

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript being
processed.

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:56 / 1.93 + 1:36 / 1.60 = 3:32 / 3.53 hrs.

Session 1: early life, move to United States, experiences up to end of 2019.

Session 2: life during COVID-19 pandemic with remote work and graduate studies.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 11, 2022.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Onyx Montes, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-01

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Onyx Montes was born in San Francisco, California, in 1991. At the age of four, she moved back to Mexico with her mother, Lupita Ramirez, and grew up in a variety of states—including Sinaloa, Monterrey, and Cancún. She grew up primarily in Mazatlán, Sinaloa. At the age of fourteen, she moved to Mérida, Yucatán, to attend Colegio Teresiano, a prestigious high school. In the evenings, she attended a performing arts school to pursue her passion for theater. It was during this time Montes experienced living on her own and the associated challenges at such a young age. She lived in Mérida for three years until she decided to complete her high school education in the United States. At the time, her ultimate goal was to perform on Broadway. She took a year off of school to work and save money. She arrived in Seattle, Washington, with plans to stay with an aunt, but after a week, she was forced to find a new housing situation. She attended Tahoma Senior High School in Maple Valley, Washington, a suburb of Seattle and graduated in 2010. She attended the University of Washington Seattle and graduated in 2014 with a B.A. in Art History. During her undergraduate studies, she discovered her love for traveling and at the time of the interview had been to 19 different countries. After graduating, she worked a variety of jobs until she moved to Chicago, Illinois, to begin her career at Hyde Park Art Center as the marketing coordinator in 2017. She began her graduate studies at the University of Illinois-Chicago in Museum and Exhibition Studies in 2019. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Montes was starting her second semester of graduate school as well as continuing her work at Hyde Park Art Center, having been promoted to marketing manager. She had been accepted into a prestigious program at the Tate Gallery to curate her own show and was eagerly anticipating it in May of 2020.

When the COVID-19 pandemic caused the statewide shut down, Montes traveled to Cabo, the Baja California city her mother was living in. There she stayed in her mother's spa, to ensure physical distance as well as their safety, while working and attending classes remotely. She returned to Chicago in May of 2020, where she continued working and pursuing her graduate studies remotely. She graduated with her Master's in May of 2021 and was preparing for another trip to Cabo when her mother became sick with COVID-19 and was admitted to the hospital. Montes travelled to Cabo where she tended to her mother's store and visited the hospital every day. Montes closed the interview with a description of the care she gave her mother when she was released. She recounts the physical and emotional toll of being a constant caregiver.

Subject Headings/Key Words: COVID-19 pandemic; University of Illinois-Chicago; Cabo, Baja California, Mexico; Sinaloa, Mexico; performing arts; museums; Onyx Montes; Chicago, Illinois;

Notes to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee, and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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