



## WEEK 5 DISCUSSION GUIDE: SHAKEDOWN<sup>1</sup>

Dir. Leilah Weinraub (T/F 2018)

- Using two sentences or less, describe what you think *Shakedown* is about. Is there a central theme or message the filmmaker is trying to communicate to the audience?
- What parts of the film were the most memorable for you? During those scenes, what emotions did you experience?
- How might someone who is different from you experience this film differently?
- In the *Shakedown*, one club patron says, "There's not that many gay clubs where you can go and just be yourself, and that's in the hood. Every other club is in Hollywood or Santa Monica. It's like, you need somewhere that's in the hood." Why do you think the filmmaker included this quote? What significance did it hold for the patron who said it?
- The film takes us onto the floor of the club, where we get to dance with the performers. And in those scenes, the focus is on the body, pleasure, and sexuality. But we also get to sit with the performers when the talk turns to business-- money, Google reviews, and flyers. What is the relationship between body, identity, and labor in this film? What is the relationship between body, identity, and labor in your own life?
- *Shakedown* was shot in LA over 15 years in the 1990s and early 2000s. What else was going on in Los Angeles in the 1990s? You might think of the police beating of Rodney King, the OJ Simpson Trial, gentrification, or the AIDS crisis. How do these moments-- which highlight historic and current systemic racism and homophobia in the city-- influence or add to your understanding of the film?
- The film ends with Egypt reading the following paragraph: "*Living In Los Angeles there is a visual language that you learn, to access the city. Nothing is what it seems from the outside and from the outside things look pretty much the same. Strip malls, brown buildings and concrete streets for miles stretching in all directions. Palm trees and cars. At night, it's more of the same but less light and less cars. Some places are just hard to find. Some places are just hard to find. Some places are just hard to find.*" Why do you think the film ends on the repetition of this line?

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<sup>1</sup> Discussion questions were created by Kelsey Kupferer, *RadioActive* Program Producer, KUOW.