

“Making Waves,” a short documentary, brings a story about immigrant roots, love, and community in the South to a national platform. What started as a couple’s dream of starting a bicycle cart peddling pour over coffee in North Carolina has flourished into three coffee shops and an award-winning roastery shipping coffee worldwide. Areli’s roots in Mexico and Leon’s love of history and spices culminate as Cocoa Cinnamon, the coffee shop, and Little Waves Coffee Roasters, the roastery, which are rooted in community as much as they represent a love story growing in the heart of Durham.

This story is one that informs and empowers. It’s about a couple working hard, and bringing their community along with them in their success. Through a surreal and celebratory reflection of Areli’s connection to coffee and her ancestry and Leon’s tender teamwork, the way roots become reverberations in all that she and Leon do in their industry becomes crystallized on screen.

The film shows Areli and Leon working to make sure that gender and racial parity is the groundwork for the coffee business and roastery, and how they’ve grown their majority women of color-led business as a bilingual (Spanish and English) welcoming space for all communities in an ever-evolving South.

With Durham’s hispanic population steadily growing, it's more important than ever for storytellers to commit to sharing stories that represent the communities that they’re a part of, and to ensure that they do so in a truthful way. This story does both.