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**BORDER CULTURE EXPLORED IN
Nogales: Storytellers in Cartel Country**



Mesa, AZ (Nov. 2, 2016) – *Nogales: Storytellers in Cartel Country* by Richard Montoya (American Night, Water & Power) of the acclaimed Chicano performance troupe Culture Clash (Bowl of Beans, Chavez Ravine), will be performed at Mesa Arts Center (MAC) Nov. 17-20 as part of the MAC's Performing Live Series. *Nogales: Storytellers in Cartel Country* traces in reverse the devastating headlines of a Mexican boy shot by US Border Patrol across the border fence. San Francisco theater artist, Sean San Jose, co-founder of Campo Santo, directs. Show times vary; tickets available at the Mesa Arts Center box office, at mesaartscenter.com or by calling 480-644-6500.

THE PLAY

Richard Montoya and ensemble members from San Francisco's Campo Santo unpack the story of a Nogales boy, shot in the back 15 times by a US Border patrol agent. Interviews with family members, Tohono O'odham community, gun enthusiasts, street kids, and Sheriff Joe Arpaio himself mix with multiple video projections, visual art installations, and ample humor to go beyond the headlines to explore this real life tragicomic theater of the border.

California artists Montoya, San Jose, and filmographer Joan Osato traveled to Phoenix and on through to Nogales, Mexico to immerse themselves in the border region. The play is the product of conversations with the people they met as they traversed the border landscape. The play is a journey into border culture, grappling with the flux of immigration and migration. Tensions rise under anti-immigration sentiments responsible for the militarization of the border. The play is a meditation of place, crossing over, crossing borders, bullets crossing and lives crossing.

INNOVATIVE STORYTELLING

The play's innovative approach to tackling a complicated subject gives the audience a deeper and unique perspective into the characters and situations presented. *Nogales: Storytellers in Cartel Country* is crafted in the style of more than 30 years of Culture Clash work, where plays as performance pieces are created from going into places and following many threads of a central issue. Complimenting this method is Campo Santo's interdisciplinary aesthetics. Artistic director of San Francisco's acclaimed Campo Santo Theatre, Sean San Jose interprets Montoya's interview-based script style through a distinctly Bay Area, "hybrid performance" aesthetic, which San Jose pioneered over the last decade: a place-keeping multimedia/interdisciplinary theatricality developed through working with non-traditional theatre collaborators like hip hop artists, installation artists, print makers, videographers, puppeteers, and multimedia artists. The end result is a "post-dramatic" theatre experience that is part performance art, documentary theatre, spoken word, and gallery exhibition.

The process that informs *Nogales: Storytellers in Cartel Country* is ethnographic in nature: interviewing, investigating, outreaching, being in a place and regenerating stories and art from these authentic experiences. *Nogales: Storytellers in Cartel Country* is told in full focus of poetic text, clinical language, film/video, song, dance, spoken word, dreams and nightmare escapes.

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About Mesa Arts Center

The Mesa Arts Center mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant. Owned and operated by the City of Mesa, Arizona's largest arts center is recognized as an international award-winning venue. The unique and architecturally stunning facility is home to four theaters, five art galleries, and 14 art studios and an artist cooperative gallery. For more information, visit mesaartscenter.com.

About the playwright:

Richard Montoya is a founding member of the historic performance trio known as Culture Clash. With over 30 years of creating politically urgent works for the national stage Montoya now turns his sights on the Arizona landscape and Nogales region. A solo playwright of several plays and film maker Montoya's work excavates the Latino reality and non-realities of life in the US. Poetic, lyrical, satirical and comic his plays have been produced by Arizona Theater Company, Yale Rep, Campo Santo, Goodman Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage among many others.

About the director:

Sean San Jose is a Director, Writer, Performer and Co-Founder of Campo Santo. For 15 years Sean San José was the Program Director of the Performance Program at Intersection for the Arts, where he produced and oversaw more than 100 premiere productions of theatre, dance and interdisciplinary performances, working with resident companies the Erika Chong Shuch Performance Project, the Living Word Project and Felonious among the more than 500 artists with whom he collaborated. San José was the Creator and Project Director of Alma Delfina Group- Teatro Contra el SIDA (1994-2002) and *Pieces of the Quilt*, a collection of more than 50

short plays including original works by Rhodessa Jones, Danny Hoch, Edward Albee, Lanford Wilson, Maria Irene Fornes, David Henry Hwang, Craig Lucas, Tony Kushner, Herbert Siguenza, Migdalia Cruz and many more confronting AIDS. San José's recent achievements include: multiple MAP Fund Awards, including a current one (2014-15) for a creation of this new work, *Nogales: Storytellers in Cartel Country*, with Richard Montoya and Joan Osato; commission of new piece for *Monstress* by American Conservatory Theatre, which San José co-directed as the opening piece in A.C.T.'s 2015/16 Season at the new Strand Theatre; a recent Headland Artist Residency (Summer 2014); a recent (2014-15) Creative Work Fund recipient with Cutting Ball Theatre for work on and the premiere of his new play with them, *Superheroes* (premiered November, 2014, published in Theatre Forum 2016); and he teaches regularly at the University of California at Berkeley, where he completed his second Guest Artist Residency and directed Culture Clash's *Chavez Ravine*, performed at the Zellerbach Playhouse working with more than 30 students.