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## **Southern California’s Regional History Examined Through the Lens of Noé Montes at Riverside Art Museum**

October 11, 2025 through April 19, 2026

**RIVERSIDE, CA** – The Riverside Art Museum presents *Noé Montes: Regional History*, a powerful photo-documentary exhibition that illuminates obscured histories of Central and Inland Southern California’s working people and communities of color. The exhibition, on view from October 11, 2025 through April 19, 2026 in the Bobbie Powell & Ross R. DeVean Galleries and curated by Catherine Gudis, features three critically acclaimed bodies of work by Los Angeles-based photographer Noé Montes: [Coachella Valley Farm Workers](#), [Cuyama](#), and [Imperial Air](#). For each series, Montes collaborated with residents to create portraits and narrative accounts that highlight their collective efforts to help their communities thrive in the face of exploitation and injustice.

Montes’s work amplifies the voices and experiences of white working-class, Indigenous, Latine, Black, and other communities of color often excluded from dominant historical narratives. By documenting their lives, the artist creates a powerful visual and narrative history of the region, critically examining the enduring effects of colonialism and extractive industries—such as agriculture, oil, military, and logistics—on the land and its people.

“By scrutinizing the relationship between power and narrative, Montes’s work exposes regional histories that we don’t usually see in photographs and that rarely represent the agency of working people,” said Gudis, the exhibition’s curator and a professor of history at UC Riverside. “In all three series of photographs, Montes reveals the everyday richness of family and communal life and gives weight to the activism, generational leadership, and cultural preservation efforts of the community members with whom he works.”

From the essential labor that sustains the region’s agricultural economy, documented in *Coachella Valley Farm Workers*, to the environmental justice challenges facing the Inland Empire in *Imperial Air*, *Regional History* confronts urgent contemporary issues while celebrating the resilience and strength of local communities. The exhibition extends beyond the gallery walls with programs designed to engage local residents, filling gaps in historical records and emphasizing the multidimensionality of life in the region through personal and community-driven accounts.

**ABOUT THE ARTIST:** Noé Montes is a Los Angeles-based photographer whose work explores themes of social justice, community, and the environment. Through a blend of photography and storytelling, Montes amplifies voices often left out of mainstream historical accounts. His projects combine artistic excellence with a commitment to social equity, making him a vital voice in contemporary photography.

**ABOUT THE CURATOR:** Catherine Gudis is an accomplished curator, scholar, and writer with expertise in public and environmental humanities, cultural landscapes, and community engagement. She serves as a professor at UC Riverside in two departments: Society, Environment, and Health Equity and History, where she also directs the Public History Program. She is founder and co-director of [A People's History of the Inland Empire](#), a digital archive, mapping platform, and forum for public art collaborations. Her work often explores the intersections of art, activism, and urban history. Gudis holds a PhD in American Studies from Yale University.

**ABOUT RIVERSIDE ART MUSEUM & THE CHEECH MARIN CENTER FOR CHICANO ART & CULTURE**

Riverside Art Museum and The Cheech are dedicated to ensuring accessibility for all through a range of free, reduced-cost, and general admission ticket options. Details at [riversideartmuseum.org/visit/plan-your-visit](https://riversideartmuseum.org/visit/plan-your-visit).

The Riverside Art Museum (RAM) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit serving the Inland region since 1959. Through exhibitions, art education, and artist residencies, RAM uplifts diverse voices and fosters community connection. Housed in a 1929 Julia Morgan-designed building at 3425 Mission Inn Avenue—a registered historic landmark—RAM welcomes thousands annually for exhibitions, classes, and events. Learn more at [riversideartmuseum.org](https://riversideartmuseum.org) and follow @RiversideArtMuseum.

Opened in 2022, The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture of the Riverside Art Museum is the nation's first center dedicated to Chicana/o/x art. Located in Riverside's former public library at 3581 Mission Inn Ave., it houses the Cheech Marin Collection and presents exhibitions, programs, and scholarship exploring the legacy and evolution of Chicano art. Visit [thecheechcenter.org](https://thecheechcenter.org) and follow @TheCheechCenter.

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