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**On View at SBMA**  
Hansel Mieth, *From Road to Nowhere*,  
1936. Gelatin silver print. Santa Barbara  
Museum of Art, Gift of Georgia Brown.



**On View at Channing Peake Gallery**  
Mike Eliason, *Walking to Work*, 2005.  
*Santa Barbara News-Press*

## **Free Community Events Showcase Power of Collaborative Exhibitions**

***Taking Root: A Century of Migrant Workers in California***

**April 22 – August 6**

On view at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art

and

***The New Okies: A Tribute to the Strawberry Pickers of Santa Maria Valley***

**May 15 - August 25**

On view at Channing Peake Gallery

April 20, 2006 – In conjunction with the opening *Taking Root: A Century of Migrant Workers in California* and *The New Okies: A Tribute to the Strawberry Pickers of Santa Maria Valley*, the community is invited to attend a series of free activities associated with these significant exhibitions. The events kick off with an authentic, Oaxacan-style festival on May 19, and continue with related film screenings and lectures through the end of June.

This collaborative effort between the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission, the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art traces the history of one of our state's most valuable resources – the farm laborer. On view at SBMA, *Taking Root* is comprised of 25 vintage prints by photographers from the 1930s to 1970s, spanning the time of the Works Progress and Farm Securities Administrations, *Life* and *Look* magazines, and images of protest related to Cesar Chavez's legendary march to Sacramento.

Serving as counterpoint at the Channing Peake Gallery is *The New Okies*, a photographic essay by the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, featuring the Mixtec Indians who come from Oaxaca, Mexico, to pick the county's top cash crop. The *New Okies* exhibit includes approximately 60 color photographs of Santa Maria strawberry pickers taken by *News-Press* photographers in the fields, at home, and in the community, together with a dozen black-and-white photographs of California Dust Bowl refugees, on loan from the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission.

The official opening of these two exhibitions launches with a Community Celebration on **Friday, May 19** in the plaza between the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and Public Library, which will be transformed into an outdoor fiesta – complete with traditional folk decorations, food, music, dance, art activities, and bilingual guided tours of both exhibitions.



*Rancho California (Por Favor)*



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A screening of the 20<sup>th</sup> Sundance Film Festival World Premiere Selection, *Rancho California (Por Favor)* concludes the evening. This film by UCLA professor and producer John Caldwell is a compelling journey through migrant work camps in suburban Southern California where homeless indigenous Mixtec workers coexist nearby gated designer homes in Carlsbad, La Costa, Encinitas, and Del Mar. The film shows racial identity to be carefully cultivated in the region, and it illustrates how grass roots development efforts by indigenous Mixtec organizers work to resist conditions of deprivation hidden at the heart of this otherwise scenic landscape.

These events continue on **Saturday, May 20** with an intriguing panel discussion that further explores the themes of migrant labor and documentary photography. The discussion, moderated

by SBMA Curator of Photography Karen Sinsheimer, features Professor Sally Stein, scholar of documentary photography, Nik Wheeler, *National Geographic* photographer, and photographer and scholar Dr. Sandra Sturdevant.

On **Saturday, June 3** the *Santa Barbara News-Press* also will host a panel discussion, spanning 65 years of migrant history in California. The panelists will be Ray Rush and Earl Shelton, Dust Bowl refugees from Oklahoma who worked as children in Weedpatch, CA in 1941; Joe Talaugon, a former migrant from Guadalupe who worked with a Filipino lettuce crew in the early 1950s; and Pedro López and Natalia Bautista, Mixtec Indians from Oaxaca, Mexico, who pick strawberries in the Santa Maria Valley today.

*Santa Barbara News-Press* senior writer Melinda Burns, photo editor Len Wood and other *News-Press* photographers will also present a slide show on **Monday, June 19**, highlighting the newspaper's longstanding effort to document the lives of Mixtec Indians in the Santa Maria Valley and Oaxaca, Mexico.

Additional film screenings on **June 22 and 29** further compare the vintage with the contemporary with *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Ford's classic 1940 black and white film adaptation of John Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize winning novel, and Cedar Sherbert's award-winning short documentary that follows a day in the life of a current Mixtec migrant worker and his family in Santa Maria during the strawberry harvest.

The events associated with the *Taking Root* and *The New Okies* exhibitions are listed below:

**Friday, May 19**  
**Community Celebration and Film Screening**

**5 – 7 pm**

The public is invited to a community celebration highlighting SBMA's *Taking Root* and Channing Peake Gallery's *The New Okies* exhibitions. At the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, enjoy a Oaxacan-style festival complete with traditional folk decorations, food, music, dance, art activities, and guided tours of the exhibitions. In addition, Channing Peake Gallery will be hosting an opening reception from **4:30 - 6:30 pm** at the County Administration Building.

Location: Santa Barbara Museum of Art and Channing Peake Gallery

**Free**

**7 pm**

Following the celebration, SBMA will screen the film *Rancho California*, a troubling journey through the world of migrant camps. Introduction and comments by filmmaker John Caldwell. In collaboration with UCSB.

Location: Planning Commission Hearing Room, Santa Barbara County Administration Building

**Free**

**Saturday, May 20, 3 pm**

**Panel Discussion**

To complement the exhibitions *Taking Root* at SBMA and *The New Okies* at Channing Peake Gallery, the Museum will host a panel discussion to further explore the themes of migrant labor and

documentary photography. The discussion, moderated by SBMA Curator of Photography, Karen Sinsheimer, will feature Professor Sally Stein, scholar of documentary photography, Nik Wheeler, *National Geographic* photographer, and photographer Dr. Sandra Sturdevant. Partially funded by Friends of Photographic Arts.

Location: Planning Commission Hearing Room, Santa Barbara County Administration Building  
**Free**

**Saturday, June 3, 3 - 5 pm**

**Panel Discussion**

***The New Okies: Same Fields, Different Workers***

Five farmworkers, past and present, will talk about their experience as migrants in the fields of California. The panelists will be Ray Rush and Earl Shelton, Dust Bowl refugees from Oklahoma who worked as children in Weedpatch, Calif. in 1941; Joe Talaugon, a former migrant from Guadalupe who worked with a Filipino lettuce crew in the early 1950s; and Pedro López and Natalia Bautista, Mixtec Indians from Oaxaca, Mexico, who pick strawberries in the Santa Maria Valley today. The panel is organized by the Santa Barbara News-Press and sponsored by the County Arts Commission and Santa Barbara Museum of Art. In Spanish and English.

Location: Santa Barbara Museum of Art

**Free**

**Monday, June 19, 6:30 - 8:30 pm**

**Slide Show**

*The New Okies: Covering the Story*

Santa Barbara News-Press senior writer Melinda Burns, photography editor Len Wood and other News-Press photographers will talk about the newspaper's longstanding effort to document the lives of Mixtec Indians in the Santa Maria Valley and Oaxaca, Mexico. Sponsored by the County Arts Commission. In Spanish and English.

Location: Faulkner Gallery, Santa Barbara Library

**Free**

**Thursday, June 22, 5:30-8pm**

**Film Screening**

***The Grapes of Wrath (1940)***

Directed by John Ford, 129 minutes

Professor Charles Wolfe of UCSB's Department of Film Studies will introduce John Ford's classic 1940 black and white film adaptation of John Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize winning novel, setting it against the backdrop of social documentary photographs of the period. This powerful film follows the dispossessed Joad family's journey from the Oklahoma dust bowl to the inhospitable "Eden" of California and the fruit harvest. Shown in conjunction with *Taking Root: A Century of Migrant Workers in California*.

Location: Santa Barbara Museum of Art

**Free**

**Thursday, June 29, 5:30 - 7:30 pm**

**An Evening of Short Documentary films**

Sundance award winning indigenous film maker Cedar Sherbert will introduce his short documentary, created in conjunction with the *Taking Root* exhibition. This brief lyrical piece follows

a day in the life of a Mixtec migrant worker and his family in Santa Maria during the strawberry harvest. Mr. Sherbert will also introduce and screen *Al Otro Lado*, a 90-minute documentary that looks at immigration and drug trafficking through Mexico's 200-year-old tradition of corrido music.

Location: Santa Barbara Museum of Art

**Free**

The *Taking Root* exhibition has been made possible by the Wallis Foundation, with additional support from Susan and Donald Bowey.

This project is made possible in part by a grant from the CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES and is part of its statewide California Stories Initiative. The Council is an independent non-profit organization and a state affiliate of the NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES. For more information on the Council and the California Stories Initiative, visit [www.californiastories.org](http://www.californiastories.org).



The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is a privately funded, not-for-profit institution that provides internationally recognized collections and exhibitions and a broad array of cultural and educational activities as well as travel opportunities around the world.

**Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA. Open Tuesday - Sunday 11 am to 5 pm. Closed Monday. Free every Sunday. 805.963.4364 [www.sbma.net](http://www.sbma.net)**

**Channing Peake Gallery, 105 E. Anapamu St., Santa Barbara, CA. Open Monday – Friday 8 am to 5 pm. 805.568.3990 [artscenecal.com/ChanningPeake.html](http://artscenecal.com/ChanningPeake.html)**