

MEXICANS MAKE 'SEEN'

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Body

Documented or not, **Mexicans** are one of the city's fastest-growing- immigrant populations. Filmmaker Brenda Campos says they're also the most invisible.

Soon after moving to New York from Mexico City two years ago, Campos saw there was a trove of true-life tales waiting to be told about her fellow countrymen here.

Campos, who trains other would-be directors at Asociación Tepeyac, a Mexican social organization in Manhattan, trained her camera mostly on undocumented workers. Two of her immigration-themed films, the short documentaries "Los Anonimos (The Anonymous Ones)" and "Mexican Link" (co-directed by Javier de la Torre), are part of this year's Nuestro Cine Latino Film Series, which begins Monday.

"They're about what it means to live and die in a city where you are not -officially recognized," says Campos.

"People here **see [Mexicans]** working at coffee shops and delis, but they -never listen to what they have to say and never realize who they really are.

"So one good thing about [Nuestro Cine] is that their voices are being heard," adds Campos. "The screenings allow them to speak out."

The free festival, now in its third year, is focusing entirely on hot-button issues affecting the Mexican community. One night is devoted to short films by Mexican directors living in New York, several of them trained at Asociación Tepeyac.

Other themes deal with Mexican workers who died on Sept. 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center, and the -commercialization of religious icons such as La Virgen de la Guadalupe.

The festival closes with "Señorita Extraviada/Missing Young -Woman," Lourdes Portillo's harrowing -documentary about the unsolved rapes and murders of more than 200 women in Juarez, Mexico.

Nuestro Cine, which began as a one-day event in a Brooklyn library, has spread to three nights and two venues this year, "because we're trying to bring these films to the communities that need it the most," says Rebeca Ramirez of the Association of Hispanic Arts.

"It's not only a reflection of how -immigrants are being trained to be filmmakers, but to empower the Mexican community here by giving them a voice that specifically talks about these -issues."

The screenings, every Monday through June 28, are at Carlito's Cafe

MEXICANS MAKE 'SEEN'

in East Harlem and La Casa Blanca in the Bronx. Call(212) 876-1242 for schedule and information.

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