Michael Field has had a big year opening the Coast to Cactus exhibit as the lead exhibit designer at the San Diego Natural History Museum. In October, however, he enjoy the opening reception of Michael Field: Designer, Hiker, Photographer at the Imperial Valley Desert Museum in Ocotillo.

The temporary exhibit at the Desert Museum is part of the celebration of photography throughout San Diego County known as PHOTOLAB, a full month of exhibitions, workshops and photography-related events happening across the county.

Michael Field has been hiking throughout the deserts of Imperial County and shooting pictures for most of his life.

“My father always took photos on our adventures, so I grew up with that being a part of the outdoor experience,” says Field. “I bought a film camera that used 120 film when I was about 20 years old and started experimenting with night photography and natural landscapes with human made elements in them.”

The exhibit at the Desert Museum focuses on Field’s imagery of Imperial County and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Of note are his images of the Salton Sea and an image of Plaster City taken at night. Field is often in the county shooting images. “The Boy Scout troop I belonged to was very active and we went backpacking once a month. I’ve been continuing the “one overnight adventure per month” policy ever since,” says Field.

“I always leave the house with a specific destination and time of where I’m going to be when the light is going to be good,” Field explains. “To be perfectly honest, though, many of my better shots are opportunistic. Being at the right place at the right time can happen on short notice.”

The pictures on display at the museum are paired with camping gear and backpacks. Field also designs and fabricates his own line of equipment called “Bagriculture.” Examples of his work were on display in the exhibit.

The reception recently brought out many museum professionals and photography enthusiasts from San Diego, along with local artists from El Centro. A highlight of the evening was a three piece jazz band from San Diego, which provided a background for the event with music that is seldom heard in the Valley.

Michael Field: Designer, Hiker, Photographer, will be up at the Desert Museum through Jan. 31. It is a temporary exhibit and can be viewed while seeing the new permanent exhibit, The Land of Extremes, which focuses on the 9,000 years of human habitation in the Imperial Valley that was completed at the museum in August.