

## ARTS

# Haitian images show beautiful people, broken country

By Pam Dillon  
Contributing Writer

Haunting images of Haitian people surround the room that is also the home of two white doves at the Dayton International Peace Museum. Visitors can't help but be struck by the contrast of a despairing and politically unstable country in such a serene and peaceful setting.

New Carlisle photographer Robert Miller visited Haiti last June, and is presenting 25 images at the museum.

"I was drawn to help these people who can't help themselves. Haiti is so close to us, only a couple hundred miles south of our southern coast," Miller said. "In the midst of daily kidnappings and brutal killings, the people in the villages were so beautiful. They had big hearts and were full of love."

The exhibit includes poignant portraits and landscapes from Leogane, Haiti:

**Old Woman:** A beautiful old woman who Miller said would not look directly into the camera is wearing a headscarf and dress, leaning back against an old



'Best Friends' is among 25 photographs from Haiti by Robert Miller on display at the Dayton International Peace Museum.

wooden shelf. She has a certain dignity about her, and allowed her photograph to be taken for four U.S. quarters.

**Girl Selling Mangos:** A tiny child on spindly legs balances a 75-pound tub of mangos on her head.

**Best Friends:** Two young girls in their gingham-dress school uniforms. With crossed fingers,

metal door surrounded by 12-foot walls at the Mission Reach Out Haiti school. They patiently wait for the proper time to parade into the courtyard, line up and sing songs before classes.

"Robert Miller has used quite a few of the faces of Haiti, and I think those are the most descriptive," said Fred Arment, Peace Museum board member. "There is an undercurrent of suffering, and yet there is hope as they look into the camera."

The exhibit also includes a video of the images with text and Creole music. The text tells the story of what you can expect in Haiti: no industry — nothing to sell to the world; most people live in ramshackle huts with no electricity or running water; the smell of garbage and sewage in the streets; 75 percent unemployment rate with a \$250 average annual income; rampant malnutrition and disease; lawlessness and corruption every day.

"But first impressions can be misleading. Once you are able to look past their bleak existence, you see their unlikely spirit, stamina and perseverance," Miller says.

## How to go

**What:** *Rock in Water: Haiti Waits* photography by Robert Miller.

**Where:** Dayton International Peace Museum, 208 W. Monument Ave.

**When:** Through June 30.

**Hours:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, 1-5 p.m. Sunday.

**More info:** (937) 227-3223 or [www.robertmiller.org](http://www.robertmiller.org).

## How to help

For information about making a difference in Haiti, contact Mission Reach Out Haiti at (631) 283-6829, e-mail [Haiti@missionreachout.org](mailto:Haiti@missionreachout.org), or visit [www.missionreachout.org](http://www.missionreachout.org).