

### MUSEUMS



Southeast Museum of Photography

The hopeful expression of "Desperate Dog, Haiti," part of Eric Breitenbach's 1992-'96 series, makes his emaciated body and obvious wounds all the more painful. More than a mere document, the image expresses emotions that extend far beyond the limited experience of one small, lost dog.

## 'Life Stories:' Other places, other people

By LAURA STEWART

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-JOURNAL

**DAYTONA BEACH** — If the 99 images in "Eric Breitenbach — Life Stories" weren't all in crisp black-and-white, they might be impossible to experience.

Between 1984 and 2006, the Daytona State College photography professor documented subjects that are beyond painful to see, and opened his viewers' eyes on a long series of telling moments.

Small and unloved, the swayed-back "Desperate Dog, Haiti (1992-1996)" hangs his head while gazing into Breitenbach's camera with a heart-breaking blend of hope and fear.

In "Man and Camels, India (1999-2000)," a slim figure in tattered trousers and turban gazes somberly into the eyes of a newborn camel, his hand tenderly caressing her neck as her mother looks on.

They stand in a barren landscape, its cloudy sky a luminous haze that outlines their forms in sharp detail and makes them appear archetypal and timeless.

The hair ribbons and party dress worn by "Haitian girl (1994-1998)" makes her weathered hand and scarred face look even more shocking. Just so does the close-up of "Lory's Feet Pig Tales Sanctuary, Bunnell, Florida, 2003," with their soiled bandage and swelling, provide a sobering contrast to the affectionate attention she gives to her ungainly animals.

Irony is uppermost in several works in Breitenbach's "Landscapes" series, edging out nostalgia in works like

### If You Go

**WHAT:** "Eric Breitenbach — Life Stories," the first in the new "Faculty Focus" series.

**WHEN:** 1-5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday (summer hours, through July 31), regular hours 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Wednesday; 1-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; through Aug. 29.

**WHERE:** Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona State College, 1200 W. International Speedway Blvd., Daytona Beach.

**ADMISSION:** Free.

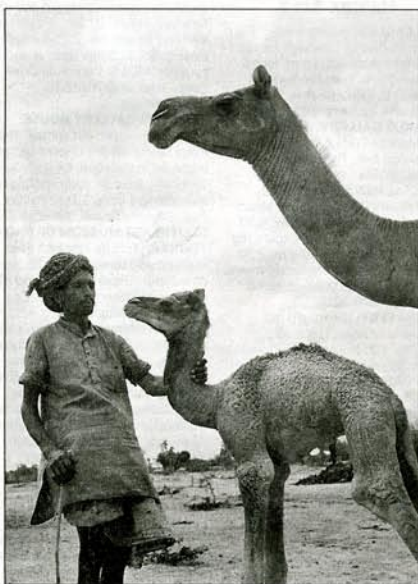
**INFORMATION:** Visit [smponline.org/lifestories](http://smponline.org/lifestories) or call 386-506-4475.

"Prayer in Signs (2001-2004)" and "Old House (2001-2004)." Leaning against a tumble-down barbed-wire fence, the sign's handwritten words are faded but still oddly, elusively provocative: "OUR DEATH AMEN."

And the house, little more than a frame shell still precariously balanced on high brick piers, looks like an isolated survivor of pioneer days — until the viewer notices its single electric wire, still linking the eroding structure to the grid like an umbilical cord.

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Museum images

The mother and baby camels in Eric Breitenbach's "Man and Camels, India (1999-2000)" stand together, the graceful curve of their necks expressing their connection and their links to the man who gazes at them with great affection and concern.

## LIFE: Black & white photographs offer profound glimpses

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So shy that it amounts to a photo-journalistic wink and nudge, that sort of incidental observation is a consistent grace note in Breitenbach's otherwise rather grim body of work.

His real subject, after all, is a head-on, unflinching look at the world around him. He drains it of color and cloaks it with the veneer of vintage photography, and gives his viewer a little welcome distance.

Nothing and no one is spared; his "Stray Dogs" series is a sad commentary on societies around the globe, and his "Portraits" offer profoundly touching glimpses of people at pivotal personal moments.

In color, such naked, raw moments would be very different. They would be too real but, at the same time, too trite.

The monotone of Breitenbach's "Life Stories" is pitch perfect.



"Indian Women" is part of the Eric Breitenbach exhibit at the Southeast Museum of Photography at Daytona State College in Daytona Beach.