

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Publication Date: September 2007

Contact: Meg Parsont
212.787.5704
mparsont@earthlink.net

A memorable two-volume photographic journey through Asia

HUMANITAS

HUMANITAS II: The People of Gujarat

Photographs by Fredric Roberts

For thirty years, Fredric Roberts was a key player in the finance industry. He poured his energy, knowledge, and creativity into his business deals, achieving great success both for himself and his clients. Then, having witnessed an epidemic of financial wealth coupled with the spiritual poverty of many in his field, Roberts chose to leave the world of finance. Applying himself with the same dedication and creativity with which he crafted his business deals, he delved into the world of photography, and combined his newfound fascination with photography with his enduring passion for travel. For a total of five years Fred Roberts traveled with his camera throughout the most remote areas of Asia where he encountered people who represented everything his associates in the world of finance were lacking, namely, spiritual wealth. The results of Fred Roberts' personal and geographical odyssey are two remarkable collections of photographs: **HUMANITAS** (\$40 cloth) and **HUMANITAS II: The People of Gujarat** (\$60 cloth).

Cicero coined the term *humanitas* (literally, "human nature") to describe the development of human virtue in all its forms, denoting fortitude, judgment, prudence, eloquence, and even love of honor. **HUMANITAS** is a fitting title for Fredric Roberts's debut volumes. His images present a spectrum of humanity that fills us with respect and awe for these peoples' strength of spirit and innate dignity. Each photograph tells a compelling story, effortlessly prompting a cross-cultural dialogue that requires no words. From a touching portrait of a mother and child to monks at prayer, from men at work to children at play, Roberts's photographs are at once natural and poignant, subtle and revealing. Replete with intimate portraits of everyday life in Asia,

HUMANITAS and **HUMANITAS II** present a fresh perspective on the intrinsic meaning of prosperity that has played a vital role in Roberts' own life.

His powerful images lead us through a world seemingly entirely foreign from our own, and yet, just as Roberts overcame daunting cultural differences to take these pictures, we find ourselves relating to his subjects on a level beneath the surface. **HUMANITAS** is the result of Roberts' travels throughout Asia, from India to Cambodia, Bhutan to Thailand, Myanmar to China—areas recently in the spotlight after being ravaged by the tsunami. His photographs of religious rituals, time-honored traditions, and such age-old practices as fishing and livestock-keeping are a testament to the indefatigable spirit of the people of these regions.

HUMANITAS II focuses on the Indian state of Gujarat, where Roberts' color-drenched photographs move us through space and time, exploring India's present and its links to the past. They transport us to places far off the beaten path and spotlight in gorgeous detail the textiles, crafts, and above all, the sheer humanity of the villagers Roberts met and photographed, giving us firsthand experience of these peoples and shrinking the gap between "us" and "them."

In his introduction to the first volume, Arthur Ollman, Director of the Museum of Photographic Arts, describes the challenge facing Roberts. He writes, "[Roberts] has been hosted in the homes of villagers who have no possibility for material success. But their spiritual life makes them rich. For a man like Roberts, who has seen many wealthy people who seem spiritually bereft, this is an essential and life-changing recognition. Wealth comes from the inside. But photography generally sees only surfaces. Roberts' task, then, is to work for the intimacy that opens our view to a deeper, more essential vision of his subjects."

The two volumes of **HUMANITAS** give us the rare opportunity to look humanity straight in the eye and to redefine for ourselves, as Fred Roberts has done, the true meaning of prosperity.

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Fredric Roberts's work has been honored with numerous international photography awards. His photographs are displayed at Stanford University and San Diego's Museum of Photographic Arts. He lives in Los Angeles.

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Photographs by Fredric Roberts
Publication date: September 2007
88 pages, 55 color illustrations, \$40 cloth
ISBN-13: 978-0-7892-0948-1

HUMANITAS II: The People of Gujarat

Photographs by Fredric Roberts
Publication date: September 2007
158 pages, 143 color illustrations, \$60 cloth
ISBN-13: 978-0-7892-0949-8