



***Bhutan: A Visual Odyssey Across the  
Last Himalayan Kingdom***  
March 12, 2010 – April 24, 2010

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Amanda Stevenson, Curator (713) 522-4652, ext. 207 or [astevenson@printingmuseum.org](mailto:astevenson@printingmuseum.org)  
**Museum Hours:** Tuesday through Saturday, 10am-5pm **Admission:** Free  
**Location:** 1324 West Clay Street, Houston, TX 77019 Tel: (713) 522-4652 Fax: (713) 522-5694  
**Web Address:** [www.printingmuseum.org](http://www.printingmuseum.org)

In conjunction with FotoFest 2010, the Museum of Printing History is pleased to present ***Bhutan: A Visual Odyssey Across the Last Himalayan Kingdom***, to be shown publically for the first time in Houston. According to Guinness World Records, *Bhutan* is the largest published book in the world, (about one of the world's smallest countries!). The gigantic book *Bhutan* measures 5 feet by 7 feet when open wide and weighs 133 pounds. Each image is nearly 2 gigabytes in size and each copy of the book requires more than a gallon of ink, 24 hours to be printed, and uses enough paper to cover a football field. The book features hundreds of photographs of the landscapes, festivals, ancient architecture, and especially the people of Bhutan, many of whom are pictured life size or bigger.

Published in 2003 by Friendly Planet (a Cambridge-based nonprofit charity devoted to education in developing regions), *Bhutan* is the brainchild of Professor Michael Hawley, an artist and researcher in the Media Lab at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Teams from MIT and Friendly Planet took over 40,000 photographs on four extensive expeditions through the Bhutanese Himalayas from 1998 to 2002, with help from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and from the MIT/Microsoft iCampus initiative.

This book exhibits a diversity of new digital, photographic, and printing techniques. While in Bhutan, images were captured with the latest photographic technology and equipment. The images were then GPS coded, captioned and then stored on pocket disk drives. Technical teams from Adobe, Amazon.com, Apple, Dell, FedEx, HP, Kodak and Microsoft contributed to the challenging production. Acme Bookbinding of Charlestown, Mass., invented a hand-built binding that combines the strengths of Western-style stitched books with Asian-style fanfolding.

Bhutan is the last intact Himalayan kingdom. Roughly the size of Switzerland but with a population of about 700,000 people, Bhutan is often called "the last Shangri-la" and with good reason. The pristine environment and incomparably kindhearted people make this a truly extraordinary place. "We thought we could allow readers to literally 'step into' this beautiful corner of the world--one which so few people will be blessed to visit," Hawley said.

A limited edition of 500 copies of *Bhutan* is being produced—the Museum's copy is #39. Each copy of the book is built expressly for the recipient. It is available exclusively to patrons who make a \$10,000 or greater contribution to Friendly Planet. Proceeds benefit Bhutanese schools, scholars and educational programs.

Photographers: Carolyn Bess, Sandy Choi, Dorji Drukpa, Becky Hurwitz, Choki Lhamo Kaka, Gyelsey Loday, Christopher Newell, David Salesin, and Ming Zhang



*The Museum of Printing History is funded in part by grants from the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*