

The past decade has witnessed unprecedented growth of global riches, and marked the development of a new, interdependent world economy. Within this new economy, money has flooded emerging markets (Russia, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, India); economic powers have risen and struggled (Japan, Ireland, U.S.); and once unimaginable political and economic partnerships have emerged (China, Russia, U.S.). In a dramatic twist of history, old Cold War ideological battles pitting democracy against communism have been replaced by international debates about the value of currency, emerging markets, labor costs, and national debts.

'Embarrassment of Riches: Picturing Global Wealth, 2000–2010" presents more than twenty works by contemporary photographers and media artists who have depicted these historic changes in world wealth. The embarrassment they capture is not the pink-cheeked, modest kind. Rather, the works on view explore abundance, excess, exuberance, and the

effects of prosperity from Manhattan to Paris to Shanghai.

Photographers have long sought to document economic impact, from Lewis Hine, with his pictures of overworked child laborers, to the Farm Security Administration, with its photographic survey of poor migrant workers during the Great Depression. But they have focused almost exclusively on the plight of the poor and the socially disadvantaged. The artists in "Embarrassment of Riches" have taken on a very different point-of-view—representing the milieu of the rich and the visible signs of prosperity during our time. They look at private places of wealth and commerce, transformations in landscape and architecture, and social types and rituals across the globe. The repertoire of such images will no doubt continue to grow. But this exhibition begins the process of considering what wealth looks like and means within a new global culture and economy at the beginning of the twenty-first century.