

Since opening in 1968 with a retrospective of Henri Matisse, the Hayward Gallery has been committed to presenting the work of leading international artists whose work significantly expands and enriches the language of art, whilst also enhancing our understanding of our place in the world. Andreas Gursky is precisely such an artist. Over the past four decades he has profoundly changed how we think about photography, making pictures that draw on the full sweep of visual rhetoric and pictorial convention; at the same time, his images allow us to see our contemporary landscape in unprecedented ways.

*Andreas Gursky* features a selection of the artist's major works from 1982 to the present, ranging from his early pioneering photographs to pictures made during the past year. In photographing landscapes and cityscapes, massive man-made structures and multitudes of people, Gursky has been driven by his interest in forms of collective existence. Whilst he has incisively chronicled the visual forms and structures associated with global capitalism, his work has also significantly expanded traditional notions of photography. Repeatedly creating types of pictures that defy our expectations of what photographs should look like – as well as what constitutes a proper 'subject' for a picture – he has demonstrated that there is more than one valid or 'authentic' use of the medium. Though iconic, his photographs are never reducible to singular readings; instead they often comprise visual metaphors that condense particular cultural attitudes and perspectives, whilst simultaneously conjuring diverse ways of ordering the world. They challenge our thinking as well as our eyes.

From the beginning, it has been a great pleasure to work with the artist and his studio manager Annette Völker, and we owe our most profound thanks to their indispensable knowledge and unfailing helpfulness. We are also extremely grateful to the studio for lending us their artist's prints of works in the exhibition.

For their support of Andreas Gursky, we are infinitely indebted to Monika Sprüth, Philomene Magers and Sprüth Magers Gallery; Larry Gagosian and Gagosian Gallery; and Jay Jopling and White Cube Gallery. The exhibition is generously supported by the Gursky Patrons: Frieder Burda and Patrizia Kamp, Christian and Franziska Hausmaninger, Grażyna Kulczyk, Ringier Foundation, Dayana Tamendarova, Kurt von Storch, Prowinko Pro Art, and Sylvie Winckler. We are also very grateful to Robin Woodhead and the exhibition sponsorship provided by Sotheby's.

So much has already been written about Andreas Gursky that the task of trying to say something new is a challenge, but the contributors to this book have brilliantly succeeded in shedding new light on the artist's work. Our thanks go to Jeff Wall for his fascinating and far-ranging interview with Andreas; Gerald Schröder for his incisive essay illuminating the larger context around Andreas's Rhine photographs; Brian Sholis for his shrewd reflections on the artist's depictions of landscapes; and artist Katharina Fritsch for her personal recollections of Andreas. Hayward Publisher Rebecca Fortey has done an excellent job bringing together all aspects of this publication. Paul Neale and Inês Bianchi de Aguiar of Graphic Thought Facility have dazzled us with their splendid design of this book, which Gerhard Steidl has produced so beautifully.

From the Hayward curatorial team, a special thanks to Eimear Martin, who began organising this exhibition with her customary enthusiasm and thoroughness, and to Katie Guggenheim, who ably took over and has assisted in myriad invaluable ways with its realisation. I also wish to thank Hayward Operations Manager Thomas Malcherczyk and Hayward Installation Technician Phil Gardner for their work in planning and executing the installation; Hayward Registrar Imogen Winter for overseeing the transport of works; Lucy Biddle for her concise and lively interpretative texts; and Hayward General Manager Sarah O'Reilly for skillfully guiding all the many moving parts and keeping the big picture in focus. In addition, architect Nikolai Delvendahl deserves our thanks for his excellent work on the exhibition architecture.

As always, I am grateful for the support and enthusiasm of Southbank Centre Chief Executive Elaine Bedell and Artistic Director Jude Kelly CBE, as well as Southbank Centre's Board of Governors and Arts Council England.

Finally, our profound thanks to Andreas Gursky for all his brilliant work over the past 37 years and for making this exhibition as engaging and thought-provoking as possible. We began talking about this show over five years ago, and through the course of many conversations I have been continually struck by the depth of his understanding – not only of photography but of picture-making in general, and of the diverse and complex ways that images frame our experience of the world. It has been a rare pleasure to work with him and to learn from his art in so many unexpected ways.

Ralph Rugoff  
Director, Hayward Gallery

