

21 March 2017

Hayward Gallery to stage UK's first major retrospective of Andreas Gursky

25 January - 22 April 2018

Press view: Wednesday 24 January 2018, 10.00-13.00

London's Hayward Gallery will stage the first major retrospective in a UK institution of the work of acclaimed German photographer Andreas Gursky (Germany, 1955) from 24 January 2018.

Widely regarded as one of the most significant photographers of our time, Gursky is known for his large-scale, often spectacular pictures that portray emblematic sites and scenes of the global economy and contemporary life. The exhibition will feature approximately 60 of the artist's ground-breaking photographs, from the 1980s through to his most recent work, which continues to push the boundaries of the medium. Gursky's art is driven by an interest, and insight, into forms of collective existence and includes depictions of massive man-made structures and huge gatherings of people in nightclubs, factories, arenas, and vast landscapes. As he has stated: "I only pursue one goal: the encyclopedia of life."

Andreas Gursky marks the beginning of the Hayward Gallery's 50th anniversary year and is the first exhibition to take place in the Gallery following its two-year refurbishment, along with two of Southbank Centre's other venues, the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room. For the first time since the gallery's original opening, the gallery's pyramid roof lights will allow natural light into the spaces below.

The exhibition includes some of the artist's most well known works including *Paris, Montparnasse* (1993), an immense and iconic photograph showing a seemingly endless block of flats; and *Rhine II* (1999/2015) a sleek digitally-tweaked vision of the river as a contemporary minimalist symbol. *Kamiokande* (2007) featuring the vast underground water tank within the Kamioka Nucleon Decay Experiment, Japan; and *May Day IV* (2000/2014) depicting hundreds of revellers at Germany's long-running Mayday techno music festival. Often employing a bird's-eye perspective, these large-format pictures – which rival the scale of monumental paintings – boast an abundance of precisely captured details, all of which are uncannily in focus.

Since the late 1980s, Gursky has depicted a broad spectrum of contemporary life including sites of commerce, industry and tourism across the globe, making pictures that draw attention to our changing relationship with the natural world and chronicle the effects of globalisation on day-to-day life.

From the frenzied stock exchange seen in *Chicago Board of Trade III* (2009) to the vast distribution centre shown in *Amazon* (2016), and from the sea of candy-coloured budget items featured in *99 Cent II, Diptych* (2001) to the eerily empty display shelves in *Prada II* (1997) his images provide a sweeping visual record of our age. Over the past three decades Gursky has increasingly made use of computer-enabled post-production techniques to make photographs whose scale, precision, composition, and complexity are unprecedented and have critically expanded the possibilities of the medium.

In recent years, Gursky's experiments in manipulating images have led him to create examples of 'fictional photography,' extending his implicit questioning of our faith in the factual veracity of images. As he has remarked, today, 'reality can only be shown by constructing it'. *Review* (2015) shows a constructed fictional scene in which German Chancellor Angela Merkel and her three predecessors gaze at (and are dwarfed by) Barnett Newman's *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* (1950–51).

Following a thread that has developed throughout Gursky's career, a number of recent pictures share more aesthetically with abstract painting than documentary photography. For example, *Untitled XIX* (2015), depicts acres of Dutch tulips which, seen from a considerable height, appear as a quasi-abstract composition featuring bands of subtly variegated colour. Straddling the line between abstraction and representation, these works underline the formal concerns that run through all of the artist's work.

Ralph Rugoff, Hayward Gallery Director, says: 'I'm thrilled that we will reopen the Hayward Gallery with an exhibition by an artist who has created some of the most visually compelling images of his generation – work that has changed not only the vocabulary of photography, but of picture-making in general. Acutely thoughtful as well as ingeniously composed, Gursky's photographs provoke us to reflect anew on contemporary social landscapes across the world. A true innovator engaged in thinking about and picturing the times in which we live in, Gursky is the perfect artist for launching the 50th anniversary year of the Hayward.'

Andreas Gursky is curated by Hayward Gallery Director Ralph Rugoff in collaboration with the artist. Eimear Martin is Assistant Curator on the exhibition.

Listings information: *Andreas Gursky*, 25 January - 22 April 2018
Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX

Tickets and further information: Tickets on sale autumn 2017
www.southbankcentre.co.uk / 020 3879 9555
Twitter: @haywardgallery
Instagram: instagram.com/southbankcentre/
Facebook: www.facebook.com/southbankcentre/

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A selection of images are available [here](#).

NOTES TO EDITORS

Andreas Gursky

Born in 1955 in Leipzig, Andreas Gursky studied Visual Communication from 1977 to 1980 at Folkwang University in Essen. He then continued his studies at the Academy of Art in Düsseldorf where, from 1980 until his graduation in 1987, he was a master-class student of Bernd and Hilla Becher. In 2010 Andreas Gursky was appointed professor at the Dusseldorf Academy of Art, teaching 'Liberal Arts' (Freie Kunst).

Hayward Gallery

Hayward Gallery is a part of Southbank Centre and has a long history of presenting work by the world's most adventurous and innovative artists including major solo shows by both emerging and established artists and dynamic group exhibitions. They include those by Bridget Riley, Martin Creed, Antony Gormley, Tracey Emin, Andy Warhol, Ed Ruscha, Jeremy Deller, Anish Kapoor, René Magritte, Francis Bacon and David Shrigley, as well as influential group exhibitions such as *Africa Remix*, *Light Show*, *The Human Factor*, *Psycho Buildings* and most recently *The Infinite Mix*. Opened by Her Majesty, The Queen in July 1968, the gallery is one of the few remaining buildings of its style. The Brutalist building was designed by a group of young architects, including Dennis Crompton, Warren Chalk and Ron Herron and is named after Sir Isaac Hayward, a former leader of the London County Council.

Hayward Gallery Refurbishment

Hayward Gallery has been closed since September 2015 so that it can undergo essential refurbishment. The focus of the refurbishment project at the Hayward Gallery is to restore the 66 glass pyramid rooflights in order to let controlled natural lighting into the upper galleries for the first time.

These pyramid rooflights, based on a concept by sculptor Henry Moore, unfortunately never worked in the way that they were intended and leaks forced the installation of a false ceiling that blocked out natural light, reduced the height of the galleries by several metres, and limited the work that can be shown. Other elements of the refurbishment include: replacing the gallery's stone floors; repaving the sculpture terraces to reduce puddles; and installing new climate control and other essential building services.

Let The Light In

Southbank Centre is carrying out vital refurbishment work on Hayward Gallery, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room to make the arts venues fit for future generations. The planned works include replacing Hayward Gallery's pyramid roof lights to let natural light into the upper galleries, and carefully restoring the original 1960s architecture. Generous support from Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and Southbank Centre friends, through the Let The Light In campaign, means we have less than £1m of our £25m fundraising target left to raise. Southbank Centre's Let The Light In campaign launched in September 2015 and offers people the opportunity to support this major repair and refurbishment project by sponsoring seats, dressing rooms and the Hayward Gallery pyramid rooflights. Further information here: southbankcentre.co.uk/letthelightin

Southbank Centre

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 17 acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as The National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. For further information please visit www.southbankcentre.co.uk