

## ANDREAS GURSKY

**Photography from across four decades – From early beginnings on the Rhine and Ruhr, to the famous iconic and new works**

MKM Museum Küppersmühle of Modern Art, Duisburg  
09.09.2021–30.01.2022

**Andreas Gursky (b. 1955) ranks among the world's most acclaimed contemporary photographers. Possessed of a highly distinct photographic vocabulary, his works critically explore a diverse range of societal themes and topical issues. From September 9, the MKM is unveiling some 60 photographs from across the past 4 decades, beginning with his early works from the Ruhr region, his famous iconic images through to his new, large-format productions - to furnish a comprehensive insight into the photoartist's visual cosmos.**

Gursky's at once detached and subjective gaze onto the phenomena of our quotidian culture, our mass consumption, globalisation, the environment, climate, economy or politics elevated him to a unique observer of our age. Numerous details and structures of complex systems are revealed in his works, which in their juxtaposition of proximity and distance enable the viewer to see the "bigger picture". The partly monumental works are often taken from extreme distance. By the application of digital processing and the removal of individual elements, the artist manipulates the original motive and reinforces the abstraction of his photographs. Consequently, with the aid of technology, his images become a simulation of reality, with the photographic shifting between authenticity and artificiality conjuring a new form of depiction.

MKM director Walter Smerling has curated the exhibition in close collaboration with the artist, who has designed the retrospective specifically for this site - with its close links to the region. For the Ruhr region often served Gursky during his studies at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art under Bernd and Hilla Becher as the setting for his early works: *"The exhibition in the Duisburg Küppersmühle holds strong emotional components for me. Raised in the district of Lohausen, in north Düsseldorf, my early photographic excursions through the Ruhr area always began in Duisburg. I am very familiar with the region and am currently working on a photograph which focuses on the industrial architecture of the Ruhr region - perhaps an unconscious tribute and homage to my great teachers Hilla und Bernd. Specifically for the Duisburg exhibition, I have designed a cabinet room with strong associations to the locality."*

The work titles pay eloquent testimony to his forays through the local environs, such as 'Ruhrtal' (1989), 'Mühlheim a.d. Ruhr, Sonntagsspaziergänger' (1985), 'Krefeld, Hühner' (1989) and 'Duisburg, Brücke' (1989). Alongside these works from his early years, older and current large-format images afford a fascinating insight into the world of the photo-artist. For example, the over four-metre-wide close-up of a cruise liner 'Kreuzfahrt' (2020), takes viewers on a journey which leads over the snow-bound landscapes of the 'Antarctic' (2010) to 'Paris, Montparnasse' (1993) and then back across the Ruhr region to 'Hamm, Bergwerk Ost' (2008), to name just a few of his destinations.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

In staging the exhibition "Andreas Gursky" we are greatly indebted to the magnificent commitment of the artist and his team, and to the cooperation with the Sprüth Magers Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts, Leipzig. A special thanks also goes to the NATIONAL-BANK Aktiengesellschaft, without whose financial support it would not have been possible to hold the exhibition on this scale.

## **ARTIST'S BOOK**

Accompanying the exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Leipzig was the artist's book "–2020. Andreas Gursky", which is now on sale during the show in Duisburg. The artist consciously eschewed the form of a classical catalogue, opting instead for an artist's book which invites art lovers to embark on a journey of discovery through the photographer's visual cosmos. In addition to the iconic works, and hitherto unpublished photographs, private snapshots, mostly taken on his smartphone, are also on display, which reveal much about his methodology. Furthermore, works by his father and grandfather chronicle the family's longstanding photographic tradition and their strong ties to Leipzig. Selected quotes from Robert Musil's novel "The Man Without Qualities" weave together these various levels.

"–2020. Andreas Gursky", Artist's Book, ed. by Andreas Gursky, 188 p, 57 plates, hard cover with linen binding, 30 x 26.3 cm, ISBN 978-3-00-066711-4, a publication by Andreas Gursky, 1st Edition 03/2021. – 89 euro –

## **PRESS MATERIAL**

Available for download at: [www.stiftungkunst.de/kultur/presse](http://www.stiftungkunst.de/kultur/presse)