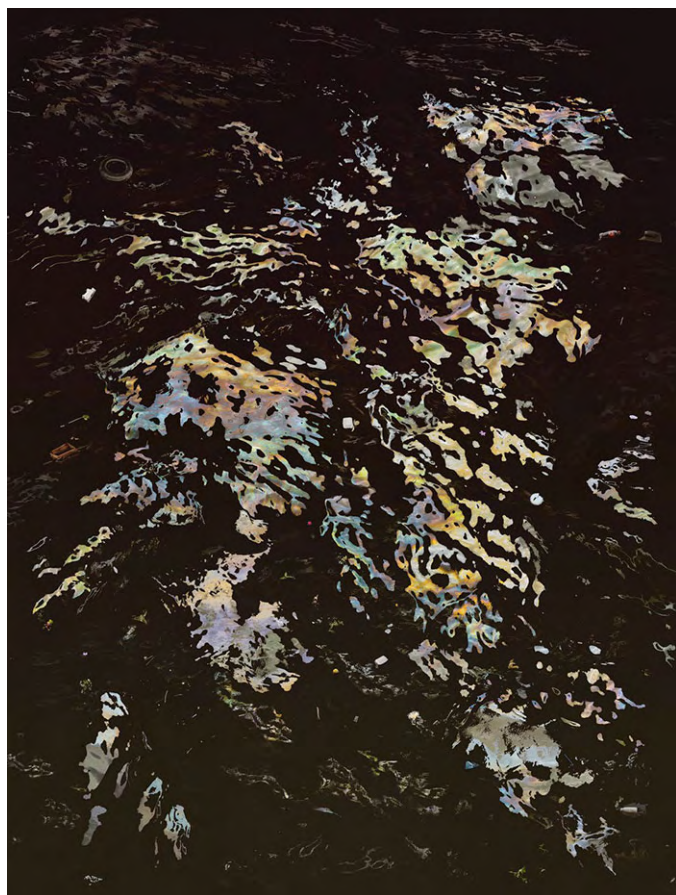


GAGOSIAN

December 7, 2017



ANDREAS GURSKY BANGKOK

Opening reception:
Thursday, December 14, 6–8PM
December 14, 2017–March 2, 2018

Via Francesco Crispi 16
00187 Rome

Since the photographic medium has been digitized, a fixed definition of the term “photography” has become impossible. When I started my work, I felt that I would always be dependent on the physical world. It seemed that it was more interesting to be a painter working in the studio, where one can decide what to do, how to develop the compositions. I am not a painter, but I have the same freedom now.

—Andreas Gursky

Gagosian is pleased to present photographs by Andreas Gursky, on view for the first time in Italy. Featuring works from the *Bangkok* series (2011), as well as the monumental *Ocean VI* (2010), the exhibition coincides with the tenth anniversary of the Rome gallery.

Gursky has demonstrated that a photographer can make or construct—rather than simply take—photographs about modern life and produce them on the scale of epic painting. Just as history painters of previous centuries found their subjects in the realities of everyday life, he finds inspiration in his own spontaneous visual experience and through reports of global phenomena in the daily media. From initially using the computer as a retouching tool, he

began exploring its transformative potential, sometimes combining elements of multiple shots of the same subject into an intricate yet seamless whole, at other times barely altering the image at all. The resulting pictures have a formal congruence deriving from a bold and edgy dialogue between photography and painting, representation and abstraction. Over time his subjects have expanded to map and distill the emergent patterns and symmetries of a globalized world with its consensual flows and grids of data and people, architecture, and mass spectacle. In pursuit of his aim to create “an encyclopedia of life,” Gursky’s worldview fuses the perpetual motion of existence with the stillness of metaphysical reflection.

In spring of 2011, Gursky visited Bangkok and observed the Chao Phraya that flows through the city and empties into the Gulf of Thailand. In the *Bangkok* photographs, he depicts the flickering surface of the fast-flowing river at close range. The luminous ripples, captured in an expansive vertical format, echo the chromatic effects of Impressionism, or the bold compositions of the American postwar modernists. The river mutates endlessly, revealing a mercurial, iridescent pattern; a symmetrical, Rorschach-like image; or, as in *Bangkok VI*, a bright swath of turquoise, reflected from the plastic netting of construction scaffolding. This formal beauty, however, gives way to a toxic, scientific reality. Like urban waterways worldwide, Rome’s own Tiber included, the Chao Phraya is revealed by Gursky to be at once a dumping ground for all manner of manmade detritus (used condoms, mattresses, car tires); a crucible for natural disorder (dead fish and the pretty but devastating weed known as water hyacinth); and a reflecting, refracting mirror of the modern city in a constant state of flux.

Ocean VI (2010) is a satellite view in which water becomes a sublime and inscrutable void. Mesmerized by the flight-path program during a long flight, Gursky saw the graphic representation—the edges and tips of sharply delineated land masses with wide blue expanses of ocean between—as a picture. For the *Oceans* series, he sourced high-definition satellite photographs from which to generate his own interpretations of sea and land, consulting shoal maps to obtain the appropriate visual density. Dominated by the Atlantic, with Caribbean islands and parts of the North and South American coastlines visible in the outermost edges, *Ocean VI* underscores the vulnerability of the Earth’s continents as ocean levels rise at an increasing pace. Gursky’s photographs thus touch a topical nerve in contemporary life, symbolizing environmental threats on both a local and a global scale.

Andreas Gursky was born in 1955 in Leipzig, former East Germany, and lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany. Collections include Tate Modern, London; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf; Kunstmuseum Bonn; Kunsthaus Zürich; Kunstmuseum Basel; National Galleries of Art, Edinburgh; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Institutional exhibitions include “Retrospective 1984–2007,” Haus der Kunst, Munich (2007, traveled to Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Turkey; Sharjah Art Museum, United Arab Emirates; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Ekaterina Foundation, Moscow, through 2008); Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates (2007); “Works 80–08,” Kunstmuseen Krefeld, Germany (2008; traveled to Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada, through 2009); Museum für Moderne Kunst (MMK), Frankfurt am Main (2008); Museum Haus Esters Haus Lange, Germany (2008); Pinchuk Art Center, Ukraine (2008); “Andreas Gursky at Louisiana,” Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark (2012); Stiftung Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf (2012); The National Art Center, Tokyo (2013); The National Museum of Art, Japan (2014); “Landscapes,” Parrish Art Museum, New York (2015); the 56th Biennale di Venezia (2015); Museum Frieder Burda, Germany (2015–16); Manifesta 11, The European Biennial of

Contemporary Art, Zürich (2016); and “Andreas Gursky – nicht abstrakt,” Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2016).

In January 2018, Gursky’s first major UK retrospective will open at Hayward Gallery, London.

Gagosian will participate in the Roman Photographic Walks, promoted by MiBACT, with guided visits to the exhibition “Andreas Gursky: Bangkok” on Saturday, December 16 from noon to 1PM.

Image: Andreas Gursky, *Bangkok II*, 2011, inkjet print, 120 7/8 × 93 3/8 × 2 1/2 inches framed (307 × 237 × 6.4 cm), edition of 6 © Andreas Gursky / SIAE, Italy.

For further information please contact the gallery at roma@gagosian.com or at +39.06.4208.6498. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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