



The New York Times **Style** Magazine

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

Now Showing | The World According to Gursky

CULTURE | BY STEVE PULIMOOD | MARCH 9, 2010, 3:30 PM



©Andreas Gursky/VG BILD-KUNST/Bonn 2010

Andreas Gursky, "Ocean I, 2010."

Since medieval times, the desire to make maps of the world remains a story of both necessity and art. If the recent surge of [books about maps](#) is any indication, cartographic art is for all ages. How better to visualize human history and keep track of one's empire while contemplating opportunities for expansion? [Andreas Gursky](#)'s latest body of work pushes his penchant for wide-angle photography to encompass the ever-increasing scope of his [Weltanschauung](#), or worldview. Verging on 13 feet by 8 feet, Gursky's photographs are cinematic in scale, and their exhibition in at Gagosian in Beverly Hills, Calif., is apt for a town filled with connoisseurs of cinematography (and movie moguls who can afford them).

456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210 T. 310.271.9400 F. 310.271.9420

LOSANGELES@GAGOSIAN.COM WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

As you stare into the oceanic abyss of these images, with hardly a cloud in the sky, indigos fade into inky blue-blacks at its most saturated depths, mossy greens dress parched tans of the continental crust, and milky whites highlight shallow coastlines. Unlike Alighero e Boetti's [hand-woven maps](#), which emphasize the political nature of borders, Gursky's use and subtle alteration of satellite imagery capture oceans as the untamed, unconquerable vastnesses from which humanity evolved. To contemplate these aqueous enormities reinforces the fact that the earth is mostly covered by water, and that we as terrestrial animals are surrounded by and survive because of it.

But standing on terra firma is not always the best way to see the planet. Instead of living on an increasingly hot, flat and crowded place, Gursky's photos seem to upend our perception of a globalized world. His views of the oceans are abstractions of the largest order, cool, deep and sparsely populated. By framing each image with islands and snippets of recognizable landmass at its edges, the oceans seem like a formless void that separates the continents in their indescribably [slow drift](#) apart. That none of it is visible to the unaided eye, let alone comprehensible in its scale, seems to have been David Bowie's [point when he sang in 1969](#), "Planet earth is blue and there's nothing I can do."

456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210 T. 310.271.9400 F. 310.271.9420

LOSANGELES@GAGOSIAN.COM WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM