

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

Wallpaper*

Andreas Gursky's new exhibition brings abstraction into crystal-clear focus

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German photographer Andreas Gursky debuts new photographs alongside older works in an exhibition opening tomorrow at Düsseldorf gallery K20. Photography: Sebastian Driën. © Kunstsammlung NRW

There's a touch of cheek in the subtitle – 'not abstract' – of German photographer Andreas Gursky's latest exhibition. On view at Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen's K20 gallery in Düsseldorf, the show presents a collection new images alongside earlier works exploring photographic abstracting, including a print of *Rhein II*, (1999), the most expensive photograph ever sold.

In contrast to his 2012 showing in Düsseldorf, an expansive retrospective at Museum Kunstpalast, this exhibition comprises just 20-odd large-scale photographs that form a dialogue with the gallery's existing collection. The K20 show finally realises an idea Gursky has been discussing with curator and Kunstsammlung NRW director Marion Ackermann closely for a long time.

The most striking works are his new photographs of temples of voracious consumption created especially for the show. In one image, an Amazon warehouse springs to life as a mecca of modern industry, a sea of packages swarming the frame. It's a violently chaotic affair, and yet, there is rigid order in Gursky's formal compositions that call to mind paintings by the Old Masters. Elsewhere, there's calm to be found in his aerial photographs of immaculately preened tulip fields, which offer a soothing respite of light, texture and colour.

Gursky's photographs are accompanied by a minimalist sound installation by the English/Canadian producer and DJ Richie Hawtin. Entitled *Concept 1*, it was first released in Hawtin in 1996 as 'a series of minimalistic tracks that pursue ideas concerning rhythmic abstractness in music'. Here, it forms an aural backdrop of musical grids and repetitions to Gursky's pictorial abstractions.

On the one hand, the images are rendered with such obsessive detail that they devolve into abstracts when gazed upon. Nevertheless, the images are never completely abstracted, explains Gursky, as they are bound to the objects they depict.