

## Andreas Gursky – Reporter of the World Spirit

Andreas Gursky is considered one of the leading contemporary photographers. His current exhibition opened in Munich in the House of Art in February 2007 is regarded as one of the most important German exhibitions of the year. Long before its opening a great number of magazines acknowledged the artist's performance in extensive articles: "Reporter of the World Spirit. The most expensive contemporary photographer is tirelessly working on an Encyclopaedia of Globalisation" - said the headline of an article in the "art magazine" in March 2007. The exhibition in Munich is the first great retrospective after Gursky's legendary performance in the New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 2001. If you are interested in a text document on this exhibition go to the following web address:

<http://www.moma.org/exhibitions/2001/gursky>

About the other artists mentioned in the MoMA-text:

### **Bernd and Hilla Becher (born 1931/1934)**

Both photographers work on a systematic report and documentation of industrial buildings (e.g. water towers), thus taking up the tradition of realistic photography in the 1920s.

### **Joseph Beuys (1921-1986)**

J. B. is one of the most outstanding artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His aim was to restore the lost unity of art and life. This he tried to achieve with his work in a lot of different artistic forms and means of expression: drawings, installations, performances, etc. Furthermore he invented a great variety of individual symbols. "Every man is an artist" was one of his basic messages.

### **Sigmar Polke (born 1942)**

In his early paintings S. P. used a large number of trivial motifs taken from Pop Art. Later his work is characterized by irony and playful wit. Now his favourite theme is painting as such in all its different ways of expression.

### **Gerhard Richter (born 1932)**

Originally, G. R. painted after photo patterns in order to analyse the process of painting in all its variations and to question and find out what painting can possibly accomplish. In this context G. R. created a number of works that can be classified in groups. They all reflect on the relationship between image and reality.

### **Working with the text:**

*Print out and read the MoMA-text on Andreas Gursky and answer or comment on the following questions:*

*Describe and analyse the picture "99 Cent" by Andreas Gursky. Discuss: What role does man play in this picture?*

*Considering Gursky's work, what is meant by "Reporter of the World Spirit" and "Encyclopaedia of Globalisation"?*

*Where does the artist find the themes and topics for his pictures?*

*Search the internet for pictures by Bernd and Hilla Becher, Gursky's teachers, and compare them with Gursky's latest works.*

*Have a closer look at Gursky's latest pictures presented in the Munich exhibition and analyse them.*

### **Annotations to the MoMA-text**

<i>encounter</i>	<i>meet, discover, experience</i>
<i>sophisticated</i>	<i>anspruchsvoll, niveauvoll</i>
<i>unembellished</i>	<i>ungeschönt</i>
<i>remote from</i>	<i>far away from</i>
<i>enticement</i>	<i>Verlockung, Verführung, Lockmittel</i>
<i>hotbed</i>	<i>Brutstätte</i>
<i>vibrant</i>	<i>exciting, full of life</i>
<i>recognition</i>	<i>public praise and reward</i>
<i>mature( work)</i>	<i>created late in an artist's life showing great understanding and skill</i>
<i>panache</i>	<i>Elan, Schwung</i>
<i>in pursuit</i>	<i>following</i>
<i>scope</i>	<i>range</i>
<i>itinerary</i>	<i>plan of a journey</i>
<i>give way to</i>	<i>(wörtl. :) Vorfahrt lassen</i>
<i>stock exchange</i>	<i>Börse</i>
<i>allure</i>	<i>attractive, exciting</i>