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Vancouver Art Gallery the Only North American Museum to Present Exhibition by Renowned German Photographer Andreas Gursky

Media Preview with Artist – May 28, 2009 @ 9AM

VANCOUVER, BC – Andreas Gursky's photographs are celebrated as some of the most compelling images of our modern world. The **Vancouver Art Gallery** will be the only North American museum to present **Andreas Gursky: Werke/Works 80-08** the largest and most comprehensive exhibition to survey this renowned German artist's remarkable career. Selected by Gursky himself from his substantial collection of photographic work, this landmark exhibition of more than 65 artworks will be on view from **May 30 to September 20, 2009**.

"It is a privilege for the Gallery to be the only North American museum presenting this extraordinary survey of Andreas Gursky's photographs. Bringing the work of this internationally renowned contemporary artist to Vancouver would not have been possible without the partnership of our co-organizers the **Kunstmuseen** in Krefeld, Germany and the **Moderna Museet**, in Stockholm, Sweden," said Vancouver Art Gallery director, **Kathleen Bartels**. "The Gallery puts great emphasis on collaborating with other visual arts institutions to present the work of today's most important artists."

Gursky's towering ambition is to create an image-based "Encyclopedia of Life." Colossal German raves, crammed international trading floors, obsessively-choreographed North Korean political rallies, high tech production lines, multi-acre garbage heaps, rudimentary factory floors, cavernous ultramodern buildings, massive plots of land transformed by agriculture, kilometres of sunbathers on an Italian beachfront, solitary individuals in the midst of mountains, discount stores and prize fights – Gursky captures countless settings, often emphasizing the individual human's insignificance relative to the built and natural environment.

For the artist, photography is not a neutral tool of representation, but a medium for constructing reality. Highly detailed and massive in scope, Gursky creates images that often emphasize human-constructed patterns in urban, rural and remote landscapes to create compositions that are simultaneously representative and abstract.

For the first time in many years, Gursky will reduce the scale of his photographs to the panel picture format that launched his career. This method of presentation is a radical departure for Gursky. The artist has recently completed three major museum exhibitions that have featured a small selection of his images at the massive scale for which he has become renowned. Reprinting his images in the



Andreas Gursky, *James Bond Island III*, 2007, C-Print © Andreas Gursky / SODRAC (2009), Courtesy: Sprüth Magers, Berlin / London

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY
750 Hornby Street, Vancouver
www.vanartgallery.bc.ca

MEDIA CONTACTS

Andrew Riley
Public Relations Manager
604-662-4722
ariley@vanartgallery.bc.ca

Dana Sullivan
Director of Marketing and
Communications
604-662-4721
dsullivan@vanartgallery.bc.ca

panel format allows him the ability to present three decades of work in one comprehensive exhibition for the first time. *Andreas Gursky: Werke/Works 80-08* will provide an important opportunity to see how the meaning of the artist's photographs shifts with the change in presentation, and will offer an occasion for reflection at a critical stage in the artist's career.

Andreas Gursky: Werke/Works 80-08 spans the Gursky's entire career, including photographs from the artist's student days studying under Otto Steinert and influential documentary photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher, as well as seven new images printed in the monumental size for which he is best known. This massive selection of images depicts Gursky's progression, from early photographs based in the documentary tradition to his first experiments with digital technologies and his eventual fine tuning of the process to highlight the fabricated nature of the photographic image. The exhibition offers an unprecedented opportunity to witness the evolution of Gursky's subject matter, aesthetic sensibilities and conceptual strategies.

Werke/Works 80-08 is co-organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Kunstmuseen in Krefeld, Germany and the Moderna Museet, in Stockholm, Sweden and is curated by Kunstmuseen director Dr. Martin Hentschel.

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