

Visual arts/Record-breaker's back in the frame

By CHARLOTTE CRIPPS

Last year an image of the Rhine by Andreas Gursky fetched \$4.3m at Christie's New York, setting a record for a photograph. Now some never before shown large-format photographic works – handpicked by Gursky himself – will go on show next week in Germany, showing the artist's most recent creative phase.

It includes *Qatar* (2012), an image of a vast empty liquid-gas tank shimmering with golden light on board a transport ship in the Middle East. The German photographic artist Gursky had to climb 40 metres down a ladder into the tank so he was on the same level as the tiny person visible in a transparent tent. Another new work, *Bangkok V* (2011), catches the reflections and shadows at play on the Chao Phraya river flowing through Bangkok – there is some garbage, a plastic bottle – even some flowers. While a single work of a Viktor & Rolf fashion show could develop into a brand new series.

For this major one-off exhibition at Museum Kunstpallast in Düsseldorf, which is co-curated by Gursky and Beat Wismer, Gursky has selected 60 works from his archives – some of which are up to five metres wide.

"It is a very personal selection from 1984 to 2102," says Wismer, who is also the general director of Museum Kunstpallast. "His latest works show the more painterly attitude of the photographer – this *Bangkok* series is reminiscent of Monet or Clyfford Still's paintings. While *Qatar* looks like a shimmering stage set."

Since the 1990s, Gursky's computer-generated photographs of architecture, landscapes and interiors have been composed in the studio. "He searches for images, and then manipulates them digitally to compose the perfect picture that matches what he had in mind," says Wismer.

Ocean I (2010), based on a satellite image, shows a vast area of dark blue sea with a few tiny islands, framed by edges of land, while *Madonna I* (2001),

shows a sea of people at a Madonna concert. *Bahrain I* (left) from 2005 looks more like a black and white tattoo than desert roads. There is also a blown-up detailed photograph of a section of a Constable painting. Andreas Gursky, Museum Kunstpallast, Düsseldorf, Germany, 23 September to 13 January (smkp.de)

