MATTHEW BARNEY’S EPIC RIVER OF FUNDAMENT TO SCREEN AT THE 2015 BIENAL OF THE AMERICAS

BY SUSAN FLOYD
THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2015 | 2 HOURS AGO

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The Clyfford Still Museum and Denver Art Museum just announced their collaborative effort to bring River of Fundament, a six-hour, rarely screened, star-studded spectacle by artist/filmmaker Matthew Barney and composer Jonathan Bepler to Denver this summer for the opening week of the 2015 Biennial of Americas. “We’re delighted to collaborate with the Denver Art Museum and the 2015 Biennial of the Americas to bring this major work of art to Colorado,” says Dean Sobel, director of the Clyfford Still Museum. “Barney is without question one of the most inventive and formidable creative minds within contemporary art of the last 25 years.”


Barney, best-known for The Cremaster Cycle— an ambitious, five-film series and culminating museum exhibition that’s been called a grotesque masterpiece by some critics—based Fundament, the result of a seven-year project, loosely on Norman Mailer’s 1983 novel Ancient Evenings, which follows the seven stages, in Egyptian mythology, of the soul’s departure from the body as it passes from death to rebirth.

“I'm not sure what it is, but it’s not a film,” Barney told interviewer Charlie Rose about the project, which includes opera and other live musical interludes and appearances by actors Ellen Burstyn, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Paul Giamatti and John Buffalo Mailer, among others. “What we’ve ended up with is a hybrid. It’s somewhere between documentary footage of live performances and a piece of cinema.”

The program will screen at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, July 18 at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House in the Denver Performing Arts Complex. Tickets, $20 general, $10 for CSM and DAM members and $10 for students, go on sale Friday, May 1 and are available online at dca.com and at all Denver Arts & Venues box office locations (it’s not recommended for viewers under eighteen). Visit the Clyfford Still Museum, Denver Art Museum and the 2015 Biennial of the Americas online for additional information.