

**For Immediate Release**

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## **DENVER TO HOST SCREENING OF MATTHEW BARNEY EPIC**

*Presented by the Clyfford Still Museum and Denver Art Museum in partnership with the 2015 Biennial of the Americas; collaboration brings River of Fundament to historic lyric opera house*



Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler, "River Of Fundament," 2014, production still (detail), photo: Hugo Glendinning  
© Matthew Barney, courtesy Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels

### ***River of Fundament***

A film by Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler

Saturday, July 18, 2015, 5:30 p.m.

Ellie Caulkins Opera House

Denver, CO, April 30, 2015—Tickets go on sale **Friday, May 1** for a rare presentation of ***River of Fundament***, the six-hour, three-act cinematic spectacle produced over seven years by renowned contemporary artist **Matthew Barney**. The **Clyfford Still Museum** (CSM) and **Denver Art Museum** (DAM), in collaboration with the 2015 **Biennial of the Americas**, have partnered to present the richly staged project, which has been shown just three times in the United States. *River of Fundament* screens during Denver's Biennial of the Americas at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House on Saturday, July 18, at 5:30 p.m. Tickets will be available nationwide via [axs.com/river](http://axs.com/river) and at the Denver Coliseum box office. (\$20 general / \$15 CSM & DAM members / \$10 students).

Creator of what Jonathan Jones of *The Guardian* describes as "one of the most imaginative and brilliant achievements in the history of avant-garde cinema," Matthew Barney is a "master of the opulent grotesque" according to Linda Yablonsky of the *New York Times*. The *Paris Review* describes his work as "some of the biggest and most ambitious art of our time."

*River of Fundament's* diverse cast includes dramatic actors Ellen Burstyn, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Paul Giamatti, and John Buffalo Mailer; Matthew Barney and Aimee Mullins as characters from Barney and Bepler's previous collaboration, *Cremaster 3*; musicians Joan La Barbara (soprano); Milford Graves (free jazz percussionist); Eugene and Herbert Perry (baritones); Belita Woods (funk/blues singer); Lila Downs (ranchera singer); and the Mystic River Native American Pow Wow group; and specialists from various industrial processes. "I'm not sure what it is, but it's not a film," Barney said to interviewer Charlie Rose about the project. "What we've ended up with is a hybrid. It's somewhere between documentary footage of live performances and a piece of cinema."

"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," said **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."

"Our commitment to bringing the latest in contemporary art to Colorado is firm, and we are delighted to again be working in tandem with our neighbors at the Clyfford Still Museum," said **Christoph Heinrich**, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the Denver Art Museum. "Personally, I had the unique opportunity to watch one of the film's scenes being shot, and I'm looking forward to seeing how the visual pieces fit together."

"The Biennial of the Americas is pleased to partner with both the Clyfford Still Museum and Denver Art Museum as we welcome this monumental program from Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler to the line-up of this year's Biennial of the Americas," said **Erin Trapp**, CEO/ Executive Director. "This film epitomizes the Biennial of the Americas vision to bring the most inspiring artists, innovators and thought leaders to the Mile High City."

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Written and directed by Matthew Barney  
 Music composed and directed by Jonathan Bepler  
 Produced by Matthew Barney and Laurenz Foundation

*River of Fundament* is presented worldwide on behalf of the artists by Manchester International Festival.

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*River of Fundament* contains scenes of a strong sexual nature and may not be suitable for patrons under 18 years of age.

#### **MORE**

*River of Fundament* is an epic presented in the medium of film that combines narrative cinema with elements of sculpture, opera, and live performance. It is the culmination of seven years of collaboration between Barney and alternative composer Jonathan Bepler loosely based on Norman Mailer's 1983 novel *Ancient Evenings*. Set in pre-Christian Egypt, Mailer's novel elaborately chronicles the seven stages, in Egyptian mythology, of the soul's departure from the body as it passes from death to rebirth.

Barney and Bepler reinterpret Mailer's ancient mythologies to create a sprawling allegory of death and new life within the contemporary American landscape. Ceremonial acts and industrial processes see the automobile reimagined as the body of the film's protagonist. In the tradition of opera, musical and vocal performances carry much of the film's multilayered narrative. The film features scenes shot before live audiences at site-specific performances in Los Angeles, Detroit, and New York.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Matthew Barney** was born in 1967 in San Francisco and lives and works in New York. He has been included in group exhibitions such as Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany; the 1993 and 1995 Whitney Biennials; and the 1993 and 2003 Venice Biennale. A one-person exhibition, *The Cremaster Cycle*, organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, traveled to the Museum Ludwig, Cologne and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. A retrospective of the *Drawing Restraint* series, organized by the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan, traveled to Leeum Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Serpentine Gallery, London; and Kunsthalle Vienna. Barney has also received numerous awards including the Aperto prize at the 1993 Venice Biennale and the Hugo Boss award in 1996. Most recently, Barney was the recipient of the 2007 Kaiser Ring Award in Goslar, Germany, and the Golden Gate Persistence of Vision Award at the 2010 San Francisco International Film Festival.

**Jonathan Bepler** was born in Philadelphia 1959, and lives and works in Berlin. He has often collaborated with choreographers including John Jasperse (*California*), Sasha Waltz (*S, Gezeiten*), and Jennifer Lacey (*This is an Epic, Mhmmm*). A multi-instrumentalist, Bepler has led ensembles of both improvised and precomposed music and has appeared often in New York and in Europe. His concert music includes a 2006 commission for the Ensemble Modern (45 musicians and singers), and a work for the Glenn Branca Ensemble (12 electric guitars and percussion). His multichannel sound installation for Broken Ensemble was shown at Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati. The score for *The Rape of the Sabine Women*, created in Greece with Eve Sussman, includes 600 voices in the Herodeon theater at the Acropolis; a cliffside Bouzouki ensemble; and a piece for butchers, knives, and meat.

Visual artist **Matthew Barney** and composer **Jonathan Bepler** have worked together since 1995's *Cremaster 1*. Bepler continued to score Barney's films *Cremaster 2, 3, and 5*. Barney's *Cremaster Cycle* (1994–2002), consisting of the films and related sculptures; photographs; and drawings, was exhibited to critical acclaim at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. The *Cremaster* films have achieved worldwide distribution in the worlds of art, film, and music. With a strong belief in collaboration, Barney and Bepler have worked with a broad range of talents in the past including Norman Mailer; actress Ursula Andress; performance artist Marti Domination; singer-songwriter Patty Griffin; thrash-metal drummer Dave Lombardo; the Budapest Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra; hardcore bands Agnostic Front and Murphy's Law; and the Radio City Rockettes.

## ABOUT THE CLYFFORD STILL MUSEUM

Home to the world's most intact public collection of a major American artist, the Clyfford Still Museum opened in November of 2011 to promote public and scholarly understanding of the life and work of Clyfford Still (1904–80). Considered one of the most important painters of the twentieth century, Still was among the first generation of Abstract Expressionist artists who developed a new, powerful approach to painting in the years following World War II. In addition to approximately 9,000 square feet of exhibition space devoted solely to the artist's work, the Museum also houses the Clyfford Still Museum Archives and the Clyfford Still Museum Research Center. The *Los Angeles Times* calls the Museum "a marvelous model for what a single-artist museum can be;" *Smithsonian Magazine* describes the Museum as "among the best art museum experiences anywhere." The Museum was designed by Allied Works Architecture, which received the 2013 Design Award, 2012 Honor Award, and 2012 Craftsmanship Award from regional chapters of the American Institute of Architects for the project.

## ABOUT THE DENVER ART MUSEUM

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, non-profit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable

ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Denver metro citizens support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit [www.denverartmuseum.org](http://www.denverartmuseum.org).

### **ABOUT THE BIENNIAL OF THE AMERICAS**

The Biennial of the Americas connects business, art, culture and civic leaders from throughout the Americas by building lasting relationships, addressing shared issues and inspiring action. Beginning July 14, 2015 with opening week events, and continuing through August 30, 2015, the Biennial of the Americas will feature groundbreaking art installations, engaging conversations, live performances and free festivals and programs that celebrate our shared cultural heritage and rich connection to the world around us. For more information about the Biennial, please visit our website at [www.biennialoftheamericas.org](http://www.biennialoftheamericas.org).

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