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**SFMOMA ANNOUNCES MATTHEW BARNEY: DRAWING RESTRAINT
Major Survey Highlights Artist's Newest Work in Sole U.S. Presentation**



DRAWING RESTRAINT 9 (production still), 2005;
© Matthew Barney; photo: Chris Winget; courtesy
Gladstone Gallery, New York

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present the exhibition *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT* from June 23 through September 17, 2006. SFMOMA will be the sole U.S. venue for this full-scale survey, the first to gather all of Barney's work to date made under the title *DRAWING RESTRAINT*. The exhibition charts the trajectory of this ongoing series—currently featuring twelve installments—which spans work from 1987 to the present. Barney's newest full-length film, *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9* (2005), as well as its accompanying sculptures, drawings, and photographs, also will be on view. Bringing together more than 150 objects in a wide range of media,

this major survey presentation provides new research into this intricate body of work, offering a fresh perspective on Barney's opulent visual language and elaborate cosmology.

Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT is conceived as a site-specific installation designed by the artist to integrate all its varied elements into a unified whole. At SFMOMA the exhibition will occupy an entire floor, which, for the first time, will be almost completely free of walls; the galleries will become an all-encompassing environment that invites the viewer to enter at any point and explore as if walking through a landscape. The works in the exhibition will include videos, sculptures, drawings, photographs, and performance remnants. The film component of *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9* (145 min.), featuring a screen appearance and collaborative soundtrack by Barney's partner, Björk, will be shown daily in the Museum's Phyllis Wattis Theater and incorporated into the gallery installation to emphasize the overlap of film and sculpture in Barney's work.

Co-organized by the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan, and the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Korea, SFMOMA's presentation of *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT* is organized by Benjamin Weil, adjunct curator of media arts, SFMOMA.

Weil states, "In light of our long history with Barney's work—SFMOMA was the first museum to give Barney a solo exhibition in 1991—the honor of presenting the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* survey has particular resonance,

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reinforcing an ongoing institutional commitment to his art. Focusing on a specific body of work and its evolution over the course of Barney's entire career, the exhibition sheds new light on his relationship to performance, as well as to his interest in rituals and constraints—something that reaches a climax in his latest installment, *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9*.”

Best known for his dazzling, five-film *CREMASTER* cycle, which culminated in a vast solo exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in 2003, Barney has created a universe of hybrid creatures and singular crossmedia fusions of sculpture, film, performance, and installation that have established him as one of the most important American artists of his generation. Both before and after completing his epic *CREMASTER* project (1994–2002), the artist has pursued the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series, a body of work that represents many fundamental principles at the core of his art.

Barney's entire artistic practice investigates the development of form, and *DRAWING RESTRAINT* is based on the notion that form emerges only through struggle against resistance. The idea grew out of the artist's early experience as an athlete and his thinking about resistance as a catalyst for muscle growth. By extension, he wondered how this bulking of tissue, known as hypertrophy, might make a case for self-imposed resistance as an impetus for creativity. The work proposes the body as an analogy for creative process and a model for the artist's conception of a productive state based on unresolved tensions between desire, stored potential, and repression.

The *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series began as a set of studio experiments conducted while Barney was still a student at Yale University. The earliest works in the series were performance-based actions, presented in this exhibition through video documentation and performance ephemera. In *DRAWING RESTRAINT 1* through *6* (1987–89), Barney used various physical restraints and spatial obstacles—jumping on a trampoline, scaling obstructions, tethering himself with latex ropes while trying to climb—to impede the act of drawing even as he attempted to create the most elemental mark of the artist, the hand-drawn line. Applying athleticism to aesthetic purpose, these early projects were primarily designed to assess self-constraint as a prerequisite for art-making.

As the series progressed, Barney looked beyond the body as a model for investigating the relationship between restraint and form and began to structure his experiments in a more narrative way. *DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*, his contribution to the 1993 Whitney Biennial, has been cited by the artist as both a precursor to the *CREMASTER* cycle and an important turning point in the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series. In this three-channel video installation that references Greek mythology, restraint takes the form of characters—satyrs struggling in the backseat of a limousine—and becomes a psychological state, or a force of conflict within a larger context, rather than a literal bodily condition.

DRAWING RESTRAINT 8 (2003), which comprises a series of framed drawings displayed in elegant plastic vitrines, is based on Barney's “field emblem,” an ovoid or capsule-like form with a rectilinear bar positioned across its center. Since the outset of Barney's practice, this construct has functioned as a graphic symbol that translates the artist's concepts of self-imposed restraint into shorthand. *DRAWING RESTRAINT 8* proposes a rupture in Barney's closed system by lifting the conceptual bar of restraint and releasing creative potential, allowing both eroticism and atrophy to take action in the body.

Invited by the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa to create new work for an exhibition, Barney began *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9* in 2003 as an opportunity to revisit the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series through a research-based exploration into Japanese culture. The artist became interested in Japan's historical position as a host country to foreign guests, how the local rituals are a type of productive restraint, and the interconnectedness of humans and nature as represented in Japanese spiritual philosophy. Customs referenced in the film embody the series' themes of cyclical biological processes: the metamorphosis of form; the phases of consumption, production, and excretion; and the restriction and release of energy. Also informing the project were the artist's interest in the historical significance of petroleum jelly and plastics—signature materials in his work—and the broader notion of exploiting fossil fuel, namely the process by which dead organic matter is converted into a source of life-sustaining energy. In the opening sequence of the film, a pair of anonymous hands carefully gift-wraps two halves of a fossilized shell in the elaborate Japanese custom. The scene serves as an introduction to both Japanese ritual and a cycle of transformation, which subtly merge as the narrative unfolds.

The story in the film takes place in Nagasaki Bay aboard the enormous ship *Nisshin Maru*—the only factory whaling ship still allowed to operate—and weaves together themes of Japan's whaling history. The ship functions as a character itself, acting variously as a metaphor for a body in water, a whale in the ocean, or the island of Japan, surrounded by the sea. It is also host to dueling concepts—order and disorder, desire and discipline—that thread the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series. These forces are manifested through two main narrative structures that unwind simultaneously over the course of the film: the transformation of a large sculpture of petroleum jelly, which goes through numerous stages of entropy before collapsing, and an encounter between two Occidental Guests (Barney and Björk), who are brought to the boat separately and together experience a dramatic metamorphosis.

On the deck of the ship, a gigantic mold in the shape of the artist's signature field emblem is filled with 25 tons of hot petroleum jelly. As the molten liquid cools, swaying gently with the motion of the ship, each guest undergoes a highly ritualized transformation below deck. Ceremonially shaved and bathed, the guests are suited in elaborate costumes of skin and fur resembling traditional Shinto wedding garments. They are brought together in a formal tea ceremony during which the tea master tells the story of the vessel. On the deck, the crew's solemn, careful choreography in handling the sculpture mirrors the highly precise, ritualized manner of the tea ceremony below. As a storm begins to rock the ship more violently, the couple comes together in a state of erotic union while molten petroleum jelly overflows from tanks above and begins to fill the room. Halfway submerged, the pair take up flensing knives—used for the ritual dissection of whale carcasses—and cut away the flesh from each other's lower limbs, revealing their bodies' mutation into whale-like creatures. With the gradual superimposition of these two interlocking narratives, metaphoric relationships emerge among architectural process, Shinto religious rites, Japan's whaling history, the implications of fossil fuel consumption, a love story, and the cycle of mammalian evolution.

The gallery component of *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9* represents the narrative crux of the film and encapsulates fundamental aspects of the project. The large-scale sculptures—constructed from various synthetics, metals, and cast petroleum jelly—are intended to stand independently from the film, extending its filmic content in three-dimensional form. *Cetacea*, 2005, depicts the cooled petroleum jelly that has collapsed on the deck of the ship once its mold is removed. Undergoing the same transformation observed in the film, the sculpture's heaving mass

resembles whale blubber; its complex surface pattern suggests a pristine, white ocean or field of arctic ice floes. *Holographic Entrypoint*, 2005, one of Barney's largest works to date, represents in concrete and white plastic the two flensing decks—inclined surfaces used for flensing whale carcasses—that appear in the film. One seems to emerge from the collapse of the other, as if suspended in a state of simultaneous destruction and regeneration. This allusion to architectural renewal was inspired by Japan's Ise shrine, which is rebuilt every twenty years on an adjacent site. *Ambergris*, 2005, made of plastic, cast shrimp shells, and a white cable that meanders through the galleries, represents the byproduct of a whale's digestive system, once valued in the perfume industry and figures into the film as a mysterious object fished from the sea and inserted into the molded petroleum jelly sculpture, furthering its intricate transformation. Some sixty photographs, framed in self-lubricating plastic and often arranged in groups, depict key moments from the story.

Several sculptures and drawings from *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9* not on view at the exhibition's previous venues will debut at SFMOMA. In addition, *The Path*, a small body of early drawings and notes that map out the conceptual underpinnings to *DRAWING RESTRAINT*, will be displayed.

DRAWING RESTRAINT 10 and *11* were created for the Kanazawa presentation of the exhibition in Japan. The former is essentially a re-enactment of *DRAWING RESTRAINT 6*, which was originally undocumented. It involved a 90-minute live performance in which the artist jumped on a trampoline set at an angle in order to draw two linking field emblems on paper fixed to the ceiling. *DRAWING RESTRAINT 11*, which also took place in real time, documents Barney's ascents up three forty foot-high gallery walls, during which he completes a drawing. *DRAWING RESTRAINT 12*, created for the Leeum's presentation, also took the form of a climb, using gravity as a form of resistance to overcome in order to create a drawing. Documentation of these three site-specific works will be represented in SFMOMA's presentation through videos.

Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT is accompanied by an eponymous three-volume catalogue. Volume I, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist (plastic cover, 96 pages, published by Walther König, 2005) addresses *DRAWING RESTRAINT* projects 1 through 8 and includes text by Francis McKee and an interview of Barney by Obrist. Volume II (plastic cover, 163 pages, published by Uplink, 2005) focuses on projects 9, 10, and 11 and includes texts by Yuko Hasegawa, curator at Museum for the 21st Century in Kanazawa; Luc Steele, a scientist specializing in artificial intelligence; and Shinichi Nakazawa, a notable theologian and folklorist. Volume III (plastic cover, 220 pages, forthcoming from the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art) looks at sculptures from the entire series as well as early works that preface *DRAWING RESTRAINT* and will include texts by Soyeon Ahn and Neville Wakefield.

SFMOMA was the first museum to acquire Barney's work, including his first major installation, *TRANSEXUALIS*, 1991. The Museum's collection also includes *FIELD DRESSING (Orifill): Manual A*, 1989; *REPRESSIA*, 1991; *DELAY OF GAME (Manual) B*, 1991; and *CREMASTER 2: The Drones' Exposition*, 1999, which had its West Coast premiere at SFMOMA.

The U.S. presentation of *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT* is organized by SFMOMA and is generously supported by Collectors Forum, an auxiliary of SFMOMA; Carla Emil and Rich Silverstein; and Barry and Lizanne Rosenstein.

Tour Schedule

21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan: July 2–August 25, 2005

Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Korea: October 13, 2005–January 8, 2006

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: June 23–September 17, 2006

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Museum hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas.
Koret Visitor Education Center: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$12.50; seniors \$8; students \$7. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings after 6 p.m. admission is half-price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit our Web site at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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