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The Cremaster Cycle
by American artist MATTHEW BARNEY
presented in its entirety, in its Montréal premiere
by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
in the Cinquième Salle, Place des Arts
from November 20 to 28, 2004

Montréal, October 22, 2004 – *The Cremaster Cycle*, by American artist Matthew Barney, features hybrid creatures, fictional figures, struggling against dark forces. This particularly ambitious project, at the crossroads of film, performance and sculpture, is in keeping with the concept of the total work of art. *The Cremaster Cycle* is an epic series of five feature-length films, all conceived, written and directed by Barney himself, who also performs several roles in them. The themes of sexual identity and athleticism are central to the artist's practice. Shown in its entirety in its Montréal premiere by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, in a co-presentation with Place des Arts, *The Cremaster Cycle* is a must-see event. It runs from November 20 to 28, 2004, in Place des Arts' Cinquième Salle.

Born in San Francisco in 1967, Matthew Barney earned an arts degree from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. He made a much-noted entry onto the contemporary art scene in 1991, when he transformed the space of the Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York into a kind of gym, for an extreme performance in which he pushed his body to the limit in various trials of endurance. He has been the subject of international critical and public attention ever since. He has taken part in numerous group exhibitions, including Kassel Documenta in 1992 and received a number of awards, among them the prestigious Europa 2000 Prize at the XLV Venice Biennale in 1993 and the Guggenheim Museum's Hugo Boss Prize in 1996. A remarkable creative talent with a fascinating imaginary world, Barney began his film cycle at the age of 27. He shot the series out of order, beginning with *Cremaster 4* (1994), which was followed by *Cremaster 1* (1995), *Cremaster 5* (1997), *Cremaster 2* (1999) and *Cremaster 3* (2002). *The Cremaster Cycle* was first shown at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne in 2002, then at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris in 2002–2003 and the Guggenheim Museum, New York, the same year. An exhibition of related objects, sculptures, drawings and photographs, along with components of the film sets, accompanied the screenings in these three cities.

A "mythological" fiction without any true linear narrative, and a fantastical, baroque fresco, *The Cremaster Cycle* was described in ArtPress in October 2002 as "one of the most unique and accomplished projects in contemporary art in terms of its aesthetics, its complexity and its implications." For the five films, which have a total running time of seven hours, Barney took his inspiration from different biological mechanisms, including the ascending movement caused by the contraction of the cremaster muscle, which acts as the central metaphor of the cycle as a whole. He developed an iconography with multiple references that evolves over space and time. Each film abounds in symbols and actions that suggest sexual reproduction. Each is identified by an insignia and a colour, and is distinguished by the film genre to which it refers. The films also draw on the site, history and local culture of the place where they were shot: the Isle of Man, the Bonneville Salt Flats in northern Utah, the city of Budapest, etc. Barney's unbridled imagination combines mythology and athleticism, Hollywood movies and the art of magic, baroque opera and hardcore music.

The Cremaster Cycle by Matthew Barney will be presented in the Cinquième Salle, Place des Arts, from November 20 to 28, 2004. The five films will be shown three times altogether, according to the following schedule:

Saturday, November 20, 2004, 2:30 p.m.: Cremaster 1 and 2

Saturday, November 20, 2004, 8 p.m.: Cremaster 3

Sunday, November 21, 2004, 2:30 p.m.: Cremaster 4 and 5

Wednesday, November 24, 2004, 8 p.m.: Cremaster 1 and 2

Thursday, November 25, 2004, 8 p.m.: Cremaster 3

Friday, November 26, 2004, 8 p.m.: Cremaster 4 and 5

Saturday, November 27, 2004, 2:30 p.m.: Cremaster 1 and 2

Saturday, November 27, 2004, 8 p.m.: Cremaster 3

Sunday, November 28, 2004, 2:30 p.m.: Cremaster 4 and 5

The same week, the public is invited to take an overall look at Barney's project by viewing the documentary *The Body as Matrix – Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle* (47 min., in English) in Beverley Webster Rolph Hall and the Gazoduc Room at the MACM.

Tickets may be purchased at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 185 Sainte-Catherine Street West, (514) 847-6226, at Place des Arts, 175 Sainte-Catherine Street West, (514) 842-2112, and from Admission, (514) 790-1245. Cost: Students \$9 (\$22 for the series), adults \$12 (\$30 for the series). Musée website: www.macm.org. Place des Arts website: www.pda.qc.ca.

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