



Matthew Barney: River of Fundament

Okwui Enwezor

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On the occasion of a major exhibition, performance, and film premiere, this book considers Matthew Barney's epic seven-year project, an odyssey of death and its mythologies. This long-awaited volume documents the full breadth of this ambitious new project, the first major series by the artist since the legendary *Cremaster* cycle. *River of Fundament* is directly inspired by Norman Mailer's Egyptian novel *Ancient Evenings*, his infamous classic that chronicled the passage of a narrator through the stations of death and reincarnation. In a sequence of unique live performances, a series of massive sculptures, and, finally, a marathon-length opera in cinematic form, made with the artist's longtime collaborator, the composer Jonathan Bepler, Barney has elaborated a richly perverse and complex universe in which mythology, iconography, narrative, sex, and death are inextricably entwined.

Organized according to the narrative structure of the film, the book features sculptures (made from elemental materials such as iron, sulfur, bronze, lead, salt, and copper), drawings, film and live performance stills, storyboards, and original scores by Bepler. A comprehensive essay on the exhibition and film project by Okwui Enwezor provides an overview of the entire project. The book also includes contributions by literary theorist Homi K. Bhabha and critic Hilton Als, as well as facsimiles of the playbills produced for the related live performances.

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