

Disgusting movie *River of Fundament* gets Sydney outing

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Fundamentally revolting: A scene from Barney's film. *Photo: supplied*

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Its scenes of human defecation, anal penetration and animal disembowelment have divided and disgusted critics. Its six-hour length – with interval – has tested the patience of fans.

And now Sydney audiences will be given the opportunity to see *River of Fundament* by New York artist Matthew Barney.

A Sydney Festival spokeswoman confirmed the sexually explicit arthouse film will be screened as part of the 2015 festival.

"We acknowledge our involvement with Matthew Barney's *River of Fundament*," she said.

The spokeswoman declined to confirm when it would be shown ahead of the official launch of the Sydney Festival on October 23, but Fairfax Media has confirmed the film will be shown at Carriageworks.

River of Fundament is loosely based on Norman Mailer's notoriously unreadable Egyptian novel *Ancient Evenings*, and is a meditation on death and rebirth.

It features a recreation of the author's Brooklyn apartment, a journey to reincarnation that involves



"Certainly *Ancient Evenings* has got to be one of the most scatological books ever written and [Bepler and I are] both very willing to go there," Barney said last year.

Despite its confronting subject-matter, it has a star-studded cast including Maggie Gyllenhaal, Salman Rushdie, Debbie Harry, Paul Giamatti and Mailer's son John Buffalo Mailer.

Sydney will be the third Australian city to screen Barney's film, which premiered at New York's Brooklyn Academy of Music in February and was shown at this year's Adelaide Festival to mixed reviews.

The Age's arts editor Debbie Cuthbertson said: "Barney's film – full of faeces, genitalia, and plenty of blood and guts, as well as beautiful cinematography and innovative music – goes beyond the pale, then pushes further.

"What is most troubling is Barney's treatment of women, seeming to reduce many of them to wordless cameos in which they are only there for shots of their gaping, penetrated body parts."

The ABC's Alison Croggon said watching the film was a feat of endurance she had no desire to experience again.

Ahead of its Sydney screening, *River of Fundament* will be shown in Hobart on November 21 in tandem with an exhibition of sculptures, drawings and storyboards from the film at the Museum of Old and New Art.

The show will also feature Egyptian antiquities from MONA's collection and David Walsh will appear on stage with Barney at Hobart's Odeon Theatre on November 22.

Barney is a contemporary art figure, renowned for his film series *The Cremaster Cycle* and *Drawing Restraint*.

A former college footballer and model, Barney was in a long-term relationship with Icelandic singer Bjork, with whom he has a daughter.