



CRUDE thoughts and fierce forces are my state. I do not know who I am. Nor what I was. I cannot hear a sound. Pain is near that will be like no pain felt before.

Is this the fear that holds the universe? Is pain the fundament? All the rivers veins of pain? The oceans my mind awash? I have a thirst like the heat of earth on fire. Mountains writhe. I see waves of flame. Washes, flashes, waves of flame.

Thirst is in the rivers of the body. The rivers burn but do not move. Flesh — is it flesh? — lies beneath some heated stone. Lava rises in burned-out fields.

Where, in what cavern, have such disruptions taken place? Volcanic lips give fire, wells bubble. Bone lies like rubble upon the wound.

Is one human? Or merely alive? Like a blade of grass equal to all existence in the moment it is torn? Yes. If pain is fundament, then a blade of grass can know all there is.

A burning number came before me. The flame showed an edge as unflickering as a knife, and I passed into that fiery sign. In fire I began to stream through the clear and blazing existence of the number 2.

Pain entered on a pulse. Each rest between each pang was not enough — oh, the twisting of hope, the tearing of fiber. My organs had surely distorted, yes,

REN

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“...Ren, one’s Secret Name, who left at once, even as a falling star might drop through the sky. That is as it must be, I concluded. For the Ren did not belong to the man, but came out of the Celestial Waters to enter an infant in the hour of his birth and might not stir again until it was time to go back. While the Secret Name must have some effect on one’s character, it was certainly the most remote of our seven lights.”

Norman Mailer
Ancient Evenings



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ANCIENT EVENINGS

REN is the first act of “Ancient Evenings,” a collaborative project by Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler that is inspired by American author Norman Mailer’s 1983 novel *Ancient Evenings*, set in ancient Egypt. A nontraditional opera, the “Ancient Evenings” project is structured in seven parts, corresponding to the seven stages of the soul’s departure from the body as it passes from death to rebirth according to Egyptian mythology: the *ren* representing the departure of one’s secret name; the *sekhem* of one’s power; the *khu* of one’s light; the *ba* of one’s spirit; the *ka* of one’s double; the *khabit* of one’s shadow; and finally the *sekhu*, one’s remains. Among other elements, the opera entails three live acts, each to be performed only once and in a different site-specific location across the American landscape. REN begins the saga of regeneration, formally staging the loss of the protagonist’s secret name through a ritualized loss of identity and propelling the transitional journey from death toward new life.



While Mailer’s novel chronicles the soul’s progression through death and rebirth as told through the story of a man who is reincarnated three times, Barney and Bepler’s story replaces the body of a man with the body of an automobile. Three generations of American automobile design act as vehicles that carry the narrative impulse: a 1967 Chrysler Crown Imperial (known for its crashworthiness) is transmogrified into a 1979 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am (known as the last high-performance engine of the original muscle car generation) and finally as a 2001 Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor (known for its tireless service in the U.S. Government fleet).

The story begins in south Los Angeles with REN and the 1967 Chrysler Crown Imperial from *Cremaster 3*, as it undergoes its first death and is prepared for rebirth as the 1979 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am. The second performance KHU is set in Detroit, bringing the Chrysler back to its birthplace, a city built upon the vast

ANCIENT EVENINGS

expanses of salt beds beneath Michigan. KHU is the only act that will feature all three automobiles. BA, the final live act, will take place in New York City as the automobile is further transformed into the 2001 Ford Crown Victoria.

Set amid the American landscape, “Ancient Evenings” uses the language of modern industrial processing and recycling to tell the story of its automobile protagonist, alongside the character agents deployed from *Cremaster 3* (the Entered Apprentice and Entered Novitiate) and the Egyptian pantheon (Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys, Horus, Anubis and Khepera). The mythologies inherent to the previous life of the 1967 Chrysler Imperial and to Mailer’s Egyptian-themed novel are met at each site with a set of local mythologies, symbolisms, and indigenous musical traditions as diverse as American, Mayan, and Celtic.

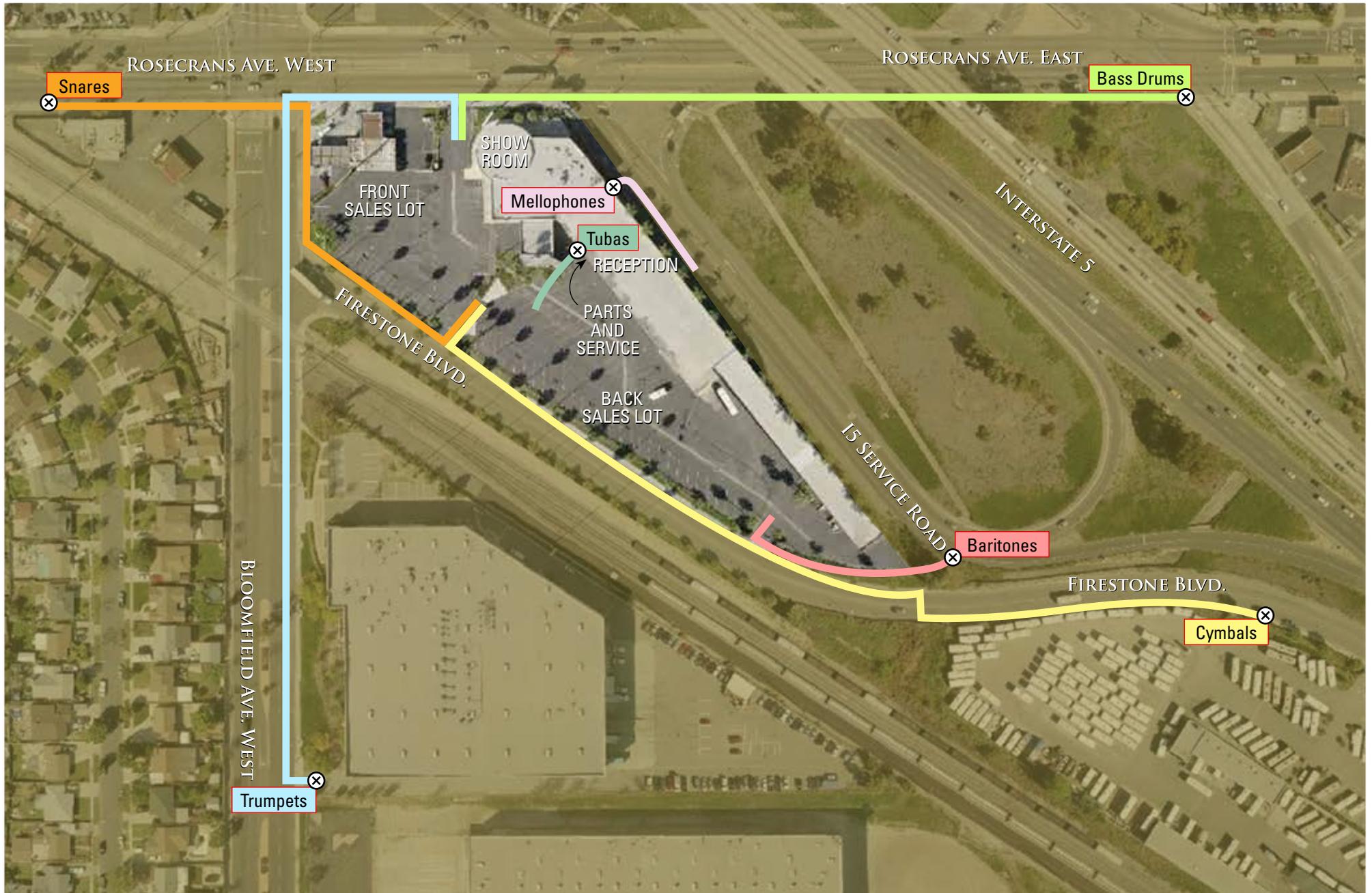
While each performance employs local talent, the characters inherent to *Cremaster 3* and Mailer’s *Ancient Evenings* continue to evolve and reappear, pervading the transformation of the automobile protagonist as it endures the seven soul states toward the journey of its three embodiments. Sculpture is generated with each transformation and as the narrative is materialized. Each act is further characterized by musical instruments that are constructed according to the logic of the narrative, so that the story unfolds sculpturally, theatrically and musically with an evolution of new forms in a moving arena where personal, local and cultural mythologies are interwoven.



Primarily excerpted from Mailer’s *Ancient Evenings*, the libretto also includes historical rites from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* and *The Pyramid Texts*, along with texts from American authors Walt Whitman, William S. Burroughs and Ernest Hemingway, offering a confluence of meditations on the timeless concerns of mortality and regeneration.

SITE MAP

SITE MAP





LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

12624 ROSECRANS AVENUE, SANTA FE SPRINGS

SUNDAY MAY 18, 2008

(one time only)

REN

ACT 1 OF ANCIENT EVENINGS

Directed by

MATTHEW BARNEY AND JONATHAN BEPLER

Written by

MATTHEW BARNEY

Music by

JONATHAN BEPLER

Produced by

MATTHEW BARNEY

with

JERRY GILES, LUIS ALVAREZ Y ALVAREZ, LILA DOWNS,
AIMEE MULLINS AND MOUSE

Presented in Association with

REGEN PROJECTS

Producer

MIKE BELLON

Director of Photography

PETER STRIETMANN

Production Design

MATTHEW D. RYLE

Stage Manager

TONY GERBER

Production Coordination

LUIS ALVAREZ Y ALVAREZ,
NICOLE GANAS

Special Effects and Makeup

GABE BARTALOS
ATLANTIC WEST EFFECTS

Associate Producer LA

STARR SUTHERLAND

THE SON ALSO RISES

Neville Wakefield

Situated at the edge of history, Los Angeles may be the Promised Land that never was. Manifest Destiny would surely have led Brigham Young and the Latter Day Saints to the fecund land of the Los Angeles basin were it not for his stated ambition to find, "...a place on this earth that nobody else wants." On July 24th, 1847, upon entering the most forbidding of lands, Young exclaimed, "This is the place!" There, amidst the inhospitable surroundings of the Great Salt Lake, he and his followers believed they would find refuge from the persecution they had recently fled. The belief system that rooted in that barren soil was one that would become threaded through the spiritual landscape of the American West. It passed through Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* and on through Matthew Barney's own hymn to the errant soul. This passage, based on Gary Gilmore's own confrontations with mortality, became stations in a cross that led the narrative of *Cremaster* from the flat horizons of Provo to the spires of New York.

Where Salt Lake was shunned for its harsh conditions, barren soil and innate hostility, Los Angeles has been embraced as the City of Angels, a place where dreams alone could hold mortality at bay. It is here that the first act of Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler's "Ancient Evenings" comes to pass. Drawn from Mailer's original text, the central character is no longer the man Menenhetet I, but a 1967 Chrysler Imperial, the embodiment perhaps, of a certain kind of man, as well as the industry and era that brought him into being. A year of multiple births, 1967 bore witness not just to the arrival of the artist himself, but also to the apogee of the Imperial marque, a car so solidly built as to have been banned from demolition derbies across the land.

This particular car – a car that would not die – is recognizable as the survivor of *Cremaster 3*. Wounded by the impact of others, its body bears testament to the violence of auto-infliction. The lobby of Walter Chrysler's temple to the Pentastar was the first site that this illustrious model withheld the choreography of its planned demise. There, in the language of its architects, mortal destiny and the refusal of death might have been an enactment of Masonic creed. Surviving carnage was also the practice of daily death. And so, both car and author having made their appearance in previous works are fittingly resurrected in *REN*, an operatic meditation on rites of burial and passage. Nor is it a coincidence that the bodies of one work pass into the bloodstream of another. This after all is Barney's own sacrament, scripted as it were by ancient Egyptian rites and the hallucinatory musings of Brooklyn's most notorious intellectual pugilist – a man himself, of as many lives.

Set in neither Brooklyn nor Salt Lake, *REN* takes its light and cues from South Central LA. Here, the sun's arcing horizon dials the daily passage

from one world to another. Cars, like myths, are traded in the rake of this particular light; a light that reaches from the sky and illuminates our desires. And just as the presence of steel made Detroit the foundry of the auto industry, so the cast of this light made Los Angeles its showroom, where fetish is written into every clear-coated surface. The car in Southern California is the true manifestation of lifestyle; a smog-tested religion whose creed of social and physical mobility has also spawned its most baroque expressions: automobiles that have been stretched, chopped, shaved and fed through a culture of continuous customization. South Central's own handcrafted resurrections can be found alongside the car lots and showrooms of the new. These, after all, are cars that have been actually revived from the past. Body and bones may be classic American dreamboat, but the pressure of liquids now transforms them into scrapers, newly articulated to allow one corner to kiss the ground as the other reaches for the sky. It is here, more than anywhere, that industrial regeneration has become an art form of its own.



Van Nuys Boulevard, Los Angeles

Reflecting this, the Imperial of Barney's own past comes adorned with a giant scarab. Typically placed over the heart of the mummified deceased, an amulet now crowns the V8 of an industrial past. Behind it, a great ball of dung has become the septic nutrient for another engine. This four-cylinder energy beats the announcement of its larval energy against the confines of the old. The myth of Isis and Osiris – the incestuous siblings who conceived Horus after Osiris was killed and dismembered by Set, god of destruction, only to be made whole again – is re-enacted as a tale of other transportations, betrayals and resurrections.

Markers in the migration of the soul from the deceased body, the ceremonial that originates in the Detroit of the 1960s concludes under the setting sun of contemporary LA. With the removal of the Pentastar insignia and other nameplates, the first death of *REN* is enacted. The wounded Imperial meets its fate at the hands of Set – incarnated as a twenty-ton excavator with a rotary shredding head – but the great fecal ball of rebirth takes us elsewhere. Descending into the dusty netherworld beneath the showroom lies a golden

THE SON ALSO RISES

(continued)

Pontiac Firebird. As the rites progress, a pall is pulled from the loins of a naked woman and scarab-like creatures are released to roam at will through the body shop below.

But the scarab marks more than just the beating of a dying heart. Just as the beetle would roll its payload of dung along the scorched surface of the earth before pushing it into underworld burrows, so Khepera, the solar deity associated with the scarab, was believed to push the sun across the arc of the sky before depositing it below the daytime horizon. The young beetles, having been laid within the ball of dung, emerge from it fully formed. The same cycle of creation, destruction and rebirth is played out in the late day setting sun. Each day the great orb of light tracks east to west, passing over the showroom and through its shadow-less zenith to sink back into the ocean from which it



Akhenaten as a Sphinx, Kestner Museum

came. And as the Imperial procession heads towards a dusk of its own, so the LA sun wanes. From the neighborhood compass comes the sounds of drum and bugle corps. As the bell flares of the brass instruments announce their physical presence to the cooling air, so they reveal themselves as if a hundred glinting stars, distant suns created out of their own night skies. Bugles sound; trumpets, mellophones and tubas add to the martial chorus; cymbals clash. The gold of the late day becomes the glint of night. It is also the livery of the Firebird, upon whose hood lies not the lapis, turquoise, carnelian and gold of the scarab, but the cheaply transferred decal of American patriotism.

The *Book of the Dead* exists in versions that are both ancient and modern. Mailer's book, which covers slightly less than two centuries (1290-1100 BCE), is catechism to a fraction of the history that precedes it by thousands of years, and continues to this day. In as much as the tombs and pyramids of contemporary America have been built around the dynastic successions of a

failing auto industry, Barney and Bepler's opus merely refracts the same tales of death, mutilation and resurrection across a different landscape. Here the obsession with the afterlife is marked by the urgency of downsizing. Corporeal and corporate bodies face similar fates. Torn asunder they await reassembly in some other sphere where they can live again in more than spirit. Just as the ghosts of other writers haunt Mailer's meditation on death as the bridge between two states, so elements of Barney's previous explorations reappear in REN as characters of transformation. The journey that migrated its own version of spiritual America west towards the Mormon basin is taken up again in the quest to trace the empire of Detroit into the showroom of the Pacific sun. The elements he takes from previous works are, for all that they appear in REN to reach a brutal demise, merely stations in a journey of ongoing transformation.



Los Angeles River

Mailer, for whom the spilling of ink and blood were so often intertwined, is identified in his own lucid delirium as the three times reincarnated magician, Meni the First. And if the Freudian displacement of the writer's body into the writer's book holds even partially true, then the paternal body behind all of Mailer's writing is Hemingway, whose towering presence takes the form of the great Pharaoh, Ramses the Second or Usermare, the beautiful and potent god from which he is incarnated. The passage of literary influence is marked by buggery of all sorts: first the father of the son and then the son of the father's muse, the queen and goddess Nefertiti. But the dialectic of sex and death, destruction and creation that course through the Egypt of Mailer's novel may not be so distant from those that guided the Gary Gilmore of *The Executioner's Song*. Alfa males all – Barney included – they pit the mythological vastness of religion against the mortality of the flesh. Whether evidenced by Gilmore's embrace of the inevitable or Barney's obsessive reincarnation of elements of his own created mythologies, the strive for immortality is the same. The Imperial, having survived the acts of the past, in REN appears to have found its final resting place in the twilight necropolis of a Los Angeles car showroom. But then to quote a title of a novel by Hemingway, the literary father to Mailer's patricidal son: *The Sun Also Rises*.





LIBRETTO

Mezzanine Level: Reception and Overture

CHRYSLER DEALERSHIP MANAGER (Jerry Giles)
6 SALESMEN CHORUS
JOB BOSS (Luis Alvarez y Alvarez)
30 DAY LABORERS
65 PIECE DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS

The Ren Chrysler dealership is hosting its seasonal promotional event. On a mezzanine level overlooking a long sales lot, SALESMEN mill through the crowd, past concession trucks, receiving guests. A DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS can be heard marching through neighboring communities, playing sparse mathematical patterns. An antiphonal surround effect ensues as the various sections of the band approach the dealership from all directions, moving into the crowd. Finally, they take formation and perform an intricate instrumental prologue.

The music comes to an end. The catering trucks drive out of the lot, revealing a demolished 1967 Chrysler Crown IMPERIAL. Deep folds in the car body are encrusted with salt. Its front end is shrouded with a mask made from a pristine 1967 Imperial hood, grill, and fender panels, painted the same pale green as the demolished car. The hood is inlaid with a winged scarab amulet of lapis lazuli, turquoise, carnelian, and gold. Impaling the back end of the IMPERIAL, a pale blue port-a-let connects to a massive, spherical septic tank. The tank is translucent white, encrusted with soil and roots, and partially filled with blue fluid. A large dark object is suspended inside.

The MANAGER of the Chrysler dealership introduces himself and addresses the guests, with the vacant emotion of a sales pitch. Gradually, his words become lyrical and intoned, echoed by flourishes from the drum and bugle corps.

(keynote and recitative)

MANAGER:

Welcome to Ren Chrysler. Each season at Ren, we release a new generation of fuel-efficient, compact cars into the Greater Los Angeles Region. Ren Chrysler is a descendant of the fuel shortage of the late '70s, and earned its five star status in 1979. Ren has been committed to the compact ever since.

In the Golden State, Khepera, the great scarab, burrows her glowing sphere beneath the earth in the darkness of the night, reemerging each morning to push a luminous ball across the sky, dropping it into the Pacific Ocean to create the evening. Khepera's ball of dung gives birth to the new day!

In Los Angeles County, there is an aqueduct of feces as deep as a pit. Across it, the dead must swim. The Ka of all but the wisest, most prepared, or most courageous, will expire in that river, weeping for their mother. They have forgotten how they came out of her. Between piss and shit are we born, and in water do we die for the first time, slipping off to death on the release of our waters. But the second death is in the full pits of the

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Pacific. Do I sit before you and fart? Do you smell every odor of the constipated, the gluttonous, the sulphurous, the caustic, the fermentative, the infectious, the rotten, the corrupt, the putrescent? It is because I had to swim the river of feces, and succeeded in crossing only at a great price. The spirit of human excrement is now in the breath of my Ka, which is to say, in my emotions, and in my irregular courtesy. Small wonder that every disproportion is also in my manner, yes, every happiness that was interrupted, every injustice to an honest endeavor, as well as all the squandered seeds of love that found no root. And this is not even to speak of energetic lust with no place to go but to the coils of one's digestion (although much of such lust turns to piss), enough! You have no gift for your trip to Southern California if you do not comprehend that shame and waste may be buried in shit, but so is many a rich and tender sentiment as well. How then can this cauldron of emotion be more than a burial chamber? Is it not also part of the womb of all that is yet to come? Is not part of time reborn, by necessity, in shit? Where else can be found those unresolved passions, which—frustrated, unworked, or, by their stench, maniacal—must now labor twice as hard to germinate the future?¹

Rear Sales Lot: Imperial Procession

(march)

A group of DAY LABORERS moves through the crowd. With long hemp ropes, they drag the IMPERIAL down a ramp from the mezzanine level to the sales lot, followed by the DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS and the audience. The lot is festooned with balloons, and full of late model Chryslers. After crossing the long lot, the procession stops at the entrance of the showroom.

Front Sales Lot: Preparation and Trans American Procession

(percussion and brass chorale)

The DRUM CORPS falls out of formation, dividing into smaller groups, which move in and out of the glass-walled showroom and begin a systematic percussion composition. Inside, a gold 1979 Pontiac Firebird TRANS AM sits alone among the sales desks, its windows blackened, its presence aloof. A sub-bass system resonates from within the TRANS AM, shaking its windows. In response the bass drummers play figures on drum-like pentastar Chrysler logos that adorn the walls.

The DAY LABORERS remove the IMPERIAL'S ornamented hood, revealing a mangled 440 big block engine. They strip its chromium "Pentastar," "Imperial" and "Crown" nameplates and deliver them into the showroom, placing them into the concave surface of a cartouche that lies on the floor. The cartouche is a 10-foot long, elliptical block of cast white plastic. A black rectilinear bar caps one end, and a cast plastic rope surrounds the ellipse.

Note: Some texts have been slightly altered for narrative continuity
[1]Reconstructed from several sources including Norman Mailer, *Ancient Evenings* (1983)

LIBRETTO

Showroom: *Ballad and Execution*

LILA DOWNS (mezzo-soprano)
12 PIECE MARIACHI BAND
6 SALESMEN CHORUS
30 DAY LABORERS

In the cacophony, the TRANS AM rolls across the lot, escorted by the tuba section, vacating the premises. A serenading all-women MARIACHI BAND enters the scene, followed by a ranchera singer, LILA DOWNS. They observe the departing vehicle silently. The DAY LABORERS drag the IMPERIAL onto the showroom's floor and back away. Smoke suddenly emerges from the car's front end, as the MARIACHI BAND begins to play.

(aria)

LILA DOWNS:

Crude thoughts and fierce forces are my state. I do not know who I am. Nor what I was. I cannot hear a sound. Pain is near that will be like no pain felt before. Is this the fear that holds the universe? Is pain the fundament? All the rivers veins of pain? The oceans my mind awash? I have a thirst like the heat of earth on fire. Mountains writhe. I see waves of flame. Washes, flashes, waves of flame. ²

As her song continues, fire erupts from the IMPERIAL'S engine block. The SALESMEN usher the remaining public out of the showroom and shut the doors.

A rollup door inside the showroom opens, and a 20-ton excavator caked with arid earth comes forward. Fitted with a rotary shredding head, the hydraulic arm of the excavator extends over the burning IMPERIAL and touches onto the engine block. Burning shrapnel and rock salt spray through the space, ricocheting off windows. Sheet metal tears away from the chassis. The hydraulic arm bursts the septic tank, and blue anti-bacterial fluid and human waste shower the showroom. A late model Chrysler 4-cylinder engine sits in the center of the open tank, submerged in a mixture of motor oil, blue fluid, and soiled toilet paper. The shredder has reduced the IMPERIAL assembly to a husk of steel chassis, and retreats through the rollup door.

The DAY LABORERS reenter the showroom, gather the remains, and separate them into piles of plastic, rubber, and metal. A young DAY LABORER climbs into the septic tank and drains the remaining oil from the 4-cylinder engine. SALESMEN now reemerge from their cubicles and form a chorus.

(separation chorale)

SALESMEN'S CHORUS:

All is lost. His bowels quake with oceanic disruption, ready to jettison whole fats, sweet meats and gravies of the old pleasure-soaked flesh, frantic as a traitor springing his leaks under torture. Oh, he would give up anything to ride lighter in the next wave of odium, and in the darkness of waves of flesh smacking raw waters of sound. ³

LIBRETTO

From a vial inside the tank, the young DAY LABORER pours mercury into the four cylinders, filling the crankshaft with quicksilver.

SALESMEN'S CHORUS:

Cold fires wash behind his sightless eyes as they prepare to leave. Nor do they take sudden flight, but depart with the decorum of a council of priests, all but one, the Ren, his secret name, who leaves at once even as a falling star might drop through the sky. ⁴

Parts and Service Department: *Requiem*

ENTERED NOVITIATE (Aimee Mullins)
KHEPERA (Mouse)
LILA DOWNS (mezzo-soprano)
6 PARTS & SERVICE MECHANICS
12 PIECE MARIACHI BAND
65 PIECE DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS

SALESMEN open the entrance to the parts and service garage, a stark white space with dim fluorescent lighting. A fleet of fifty wrecked, late-model Chryslers line the room's perimeter. The BUGLE CORPS stands in a ring around the approaching audience.

With a black veil over her face, the ENTERED NOVITIATE lies on top of the gold TRANS AM, at the garage's center. She wears her potato cutting shoes from *Cremaster 3*. Behind the TRANS AM, LILA DOWNS waits. Six mechanics stand guard. A lone figure, KHEPERA, stands before the gold car.

KHEPERA is a creature of uncertain sex, with breasts and genitals abstracted by a large black scarab. KHEPERA has no face, but a large ball of dung creates a forehead, sitting above a swollen, goitered neck, and below a perfectly coiffed platinum hairstyle covered with swarming black beetles. On the garage floor, KHEPERA begins to rotate at a nearly imperceptible rate. LILA DOWNS begins to sing, moving towards KHEPERA.

(lament)

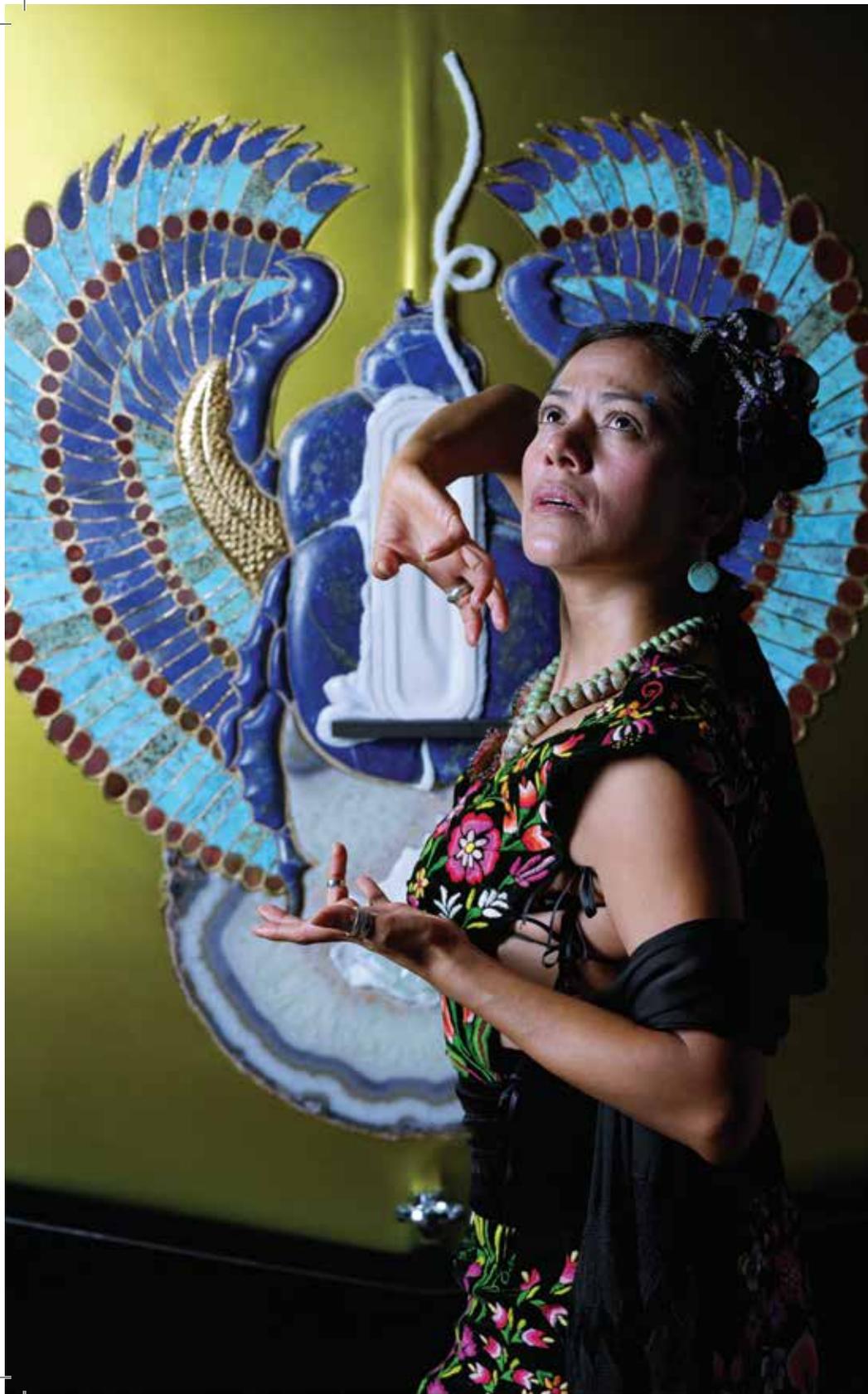
LILA DOWNS:

Thirst is in the rivers of the body. The rivers burn but do not move. Flesh—is it flesh?—lies beneath some heated stone. Lava rises in burned-out fields. Where, in what cavern have such disruptions taken place? Volcanic lips give fire, wells bubble. Bone lies like rubble upon the wound. Is one human? Or merely alive? Like a blade of grass equal to all existence in the moment it is torn? Yes. If pain is fundament, then a blade of grass can know all there is. ⁵

The PARTS & SERVICE MECHANICS now approach and kneel behind KHEPERA. They part the cheeks of KHEPERA'S buttocks and remove an impossibly long sheet of black plastic from its rectum. They unfold the plastic and hold it taut over the TRANS AM, over the body of the ENTERED NOVITIATE. In unison, the PARTS & SERVICE MECHANICS drop the plastic sheet, creating a floor length black veil over the body lines of the Pontiac.

[2]Ibid [3]Ibid

[4]Ibid [5]Ibid



NOTES ON THE MUSIC

Zach Baron

In *REN*, the first act of Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler's "Ancient Evenings," what you hear first is Los Angeles. The white noise of the city, soon to be reabsorbed and transformed into Bepler's score — reborn like *Cremaster 3*'s 1967 Chrysler Imperial, resurrected on a sun-soaked car lot, risen again like the Egyptian sun. There is the low hum that emanates from waterless reservoirs, fading billboards, contented palm trees; the city's cars in noisy gridlock. The distant peal of horns, the glint of gold, the low rumble of something settling into itself. Los Angeles is a city that anticipates its own ruin — welcomes it, even. Recreates it daily.

Opera — where the visual and the musical collide — is the form Barney and Bepler are working in here, but only loosely. Bepler's score references and incorporates the long history of California drum and bugle corps, in which men and women come to parade at the edge of the ocean, military exercises in paradise; the movement of the percussionists and the horn players gives the performance its contour and shape. It is a uniquely Californian ritual belonging to the innocence of youth: the sense of ample room, of a big sky and a bigger ocean; of hurtling through time and weedy intermediate spaces — repurposed in *REN* as a convocation to something more ominous and mournful, the bright brass noise gradually shading toward the rumbling of an extinguished car, one metal morphing into another.

Then there is the mariachi tradition, that sense of anguished heartache and sorrow, embodied by the ranchera singer Lila Downs — an old lament made new. With lyrics from Mailer's *Ancient Evenings* translated into Spanish, Downs' harrowing aria unburdens our dying protagonist, the '67 Chrysler: in her voice, we can hear pain. We can hear the vine-covered underside of the freeway, the interstitial spaces and distant sounds of Los Angeles that daily go unremarked upon. The corners on which those without cars wait. The day laborers whose very presence suggests that rebirth is a luxury. Reinvention is for those who can afford to be idle. Who can afford to be in ceaseless motion. Who have the machines to disappear into. Who have the time to start again.

Voices calling out to cars, cars calling out to no one in particular. The rapid fire sales pitch at the end of the world. At the edge of the country. A sound that's getting closer. Brass peals like gold, drum beats like wheels. A low voice like an engine. An engine like a thing that turns over and over and over again.



MATTHEW BARNEY, JONATHAN BEPLER



IVANO GRASSO

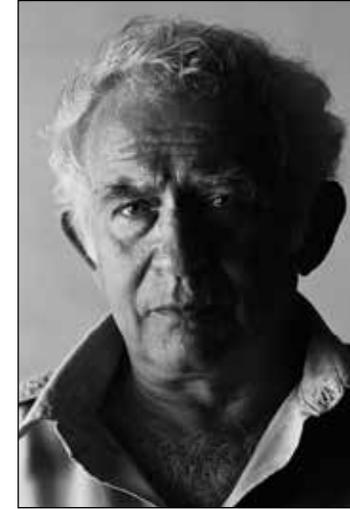
Matthew Barney was born in 1967 in San Francisco and lives and works in New York. He has been included in group exhibitions such as Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany; the 1993 and 1995 Whitney Biennial; and the 1993 and 2003 Venice Biennale. A one-person exhibition “The Cremaster Cycle,” organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, traveled to the Museum Ludwig, Cologne and the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2002-03). A retrospective of the *Drawing Restraint* series organized by the 21st c Museum for Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan, traveled to Leeum Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Serpentine Gallery, London; and Kunsthalle Vienna (2005-08). The forthcoming exhibition “Matthew Barney: Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail” will take place at Schaulager Basel, Switzerland in 2010. Barney has received numerous awards including the Aperto prize at the 1993 Venice Biennale and the Hugo Boss award in 1996; most recently he was the recipient of the 2007 Kaiser Ring Award in Goslar, Germany.



CHRIS MINOET

Composer Jonathan Bepler’s work with Matthew Barney has manifested in a wide range of influences and experience. The scores have included an opera/oratorio sung in Hungarian by Soprano Adrienne Csengery with the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra; a demonic shouting mass by the Tabernacle Bass Choir; a piece of Speed Metal abstraction with drummer Dave Lombardo (Slayer) with 200,000 honey bees recorded and programmed by the composer; a symphonic country two-step fantasy with the Norian Philharmonic and singer Patty Griffin; and organ music for six hands. A multi-instrumentalist, Bepler has led ensembles of both improvised and pre-composed music and has appeared often in New York and 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 multi-channel sound installation *For Broken Ensemble* was recently shown at Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati. Last year’s score for *The Rape of the Sabine Women* includes 600 voices in Athens’ Herodion Theatre at the Acropolis, a cliffside Bouzouki ensemble, and a piece for butchers, knives and meat.

NORMAN MAILER



Norman Mailer (1923–2007) was an American novelist, journalist, essayist, playwright, screenwriter and film director who is considered to have been an innovator of New Journalism, a form of creative nonfiction that wove autobiography, real events, and political commentary into unconventional novels. During his 60 year career, Mailer wrote more than 40 books, winning the Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction and the National Book Award in 1968 for *The Armies of the Night*, and a second Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1980 for *The Executioner’s Song*. In 2005 he was awarded the National Book Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters.

Mailer worked on *Ancient Evenings* from 1972–1983, spending more time writing this book than any other. Set in Egypt between 1290–1100 BC and chronicling the lives of its protagonist Menenhetet I, *Ancient Evenings* was declared “an ambitious and daring work of fiction,” by one critic, though it received generally negative reviews at the time it was published. As Harold Bloom wrote in the *New York Review of Books*: “Mailer’s is too formidable a case of an authentic literary drive to be dismissed, and dismissal is certainly not my intention. *Ancient Evenings* is on the road of excess, and what Karl Kraus said of the theories of Freud may hold for the speculations of Mailer also—it may be that only the craziest parts are true. Mailer probably is aware that his Egyptian obsessions are in the main tradition of American literature, carrying on from much of the imagery of the major writers of the American renaissance.”

The Executioner’s Song was the inspiration for Matthew Barney’s 1999 film *Cremaster 2*, in which Mailer portrayed Harry Houdini.

CAST AND CREW

CAST

REN SALES MANAGER.....Jerry Giles
DAY LABOR FOREMAN.....Luis Alvarez y Alvarez
RANCHERA SINGER.....Lila Downs
THE ENTERED NOVITIATE.....Aimee Mullins
KHEPERA.....Mouse
REN SALES TEAM.....Carolyn Barnes, Ernesto Briones, Lateefah
Devoe, Allan Louis, Sean Smith, Richard Tanner, Richard Yearwood

REN SERVICE DEPARTMENT.....Jade Archuleta-Gans, Kanoa Baysa,
Michael Branning, Julee Hightower, Matthew D. Ryle, Dwayne Wilson

DAY LABORERS.....Jose G. Arevalos, Jose Manue Arevalos,
Kevin Alvarengan, Christian Alvarad, Bryan Armendariz, Amador Barrios,
Billy Bernal, Jose Rolando Bravo, Joshua Brown, Eric Cartegena, Joshua Carvaj,
Luis Cervantes, Jose Cervantes I, Jose Cervantes II, Lorenzo Chavira, Giuseppe
DiMaggio, Christopher Escobar, Ernesto Escobar, Jose A. Fonseca, Rolando Fonseca,
Artemio Garcia, Pepito Garcia, Angel Olivares Garcia, Joel Gonzalez, Ernesto
Gutierrez, Emilio Hernandez, Freddy Jose Hernandez, Jose Anthony Hernandez, Jossue
Luna, Henry Maciel, Edward Maldonado, Daniel Mora Jr., Daniel Mora Sr., Michael
Olivares, Luis Perez, Mario Placencia, Isabel Ramirez, Oscar Ramos, Rogelio Ramos,
Justino Abel Rivas, Marcos Rosas, Jaime Sanchez Jr., Miguel Fonseca Ureno, Eric Velasquez

DRUM CORPS.....Corey Bleec, Sarayah Bourenane, Phillip
Camacho, Roque A. Casteneda, Caleb Gasteiger, Brian Horan,
Matt King, Phillip W. Kruse, Melissa McGoldrick, Eddy
Mendoza, Jose A. Mendoza, Jason Merett, Jason Morton,
Amador Padilla, Tyler Randall, Matthew Regua, Jessie Schultz,
Matt Tepas, Ramis Urribarri, Greg Valenzuela, Daniel Wahl, Jonathan Zuniga

BUGLE CORPS.....Clara Adame, Ezekiel Ah Sue, Sean Billings,
John Christianson, Michael John Daigeau, Elliot Deutsch,
Jonathan E. Goldman, Richard C. Harris, Jeff Helens, James Hovorka,
James Hsu, Vance Hu, Uma Kedharnath, Kurt Kilgus, Steven Lagosh, Travis
Martin, Ben McIntosh, John Nunley, Brian Owen, Christopher Powell, Jason Thor,
Natalie Salvatierre, Andrew Lewis Stewart, Steven Wade, Steve White, Steven Zuniga

FLAG GIRL.....Alex Gariano
MARIACHI ENSEMBLE.....Catherine Baeza, Lorraine Fusago,
Suzanne M. Garcia, Norma Herrera, Ariana Mejia, Diana
McConnell, Maya Martinez, Martha Ramirez, Diana Reyes, Melinda Salcido

REN KEY BOOTH ATTENDANT.....Kat Strietmann

CAST AND CREW

CREW

Written and Directed by.....Matthew Barney
Music Written and Directed by.....Jonathan Bepler
Produced by.....Matthew Barney
Director of Photography.....Peter Strietmann
Music Composed by.....Jonathan Bepler
Producer.....Mike Bellon
Production Design.....Matthew D. Ryle
Special Make-up and Effects.....Gabe Bartalos, Atlantic West Effects
Stage Manager.....Tony Gerber
Post Production Supervisor.....Chris Seguine
Production Coordination.....Luis Alvarez y Alvarez, Nicole Ganas
Sound Design.....Jonathan Bepler
Associate Producer LA Unit.....Starr Sutherland
Production Design Team.....Kanoa Baysa, Jade Archuleta-Gans,
Julee Hightower, Dwayne Wilson

Costume Stylist.....Lise Marker
Production Assistants.....James Frede, Jeff Hassay, Dax Henderson, Dane Johnson,
Joel Kyack, Jenny Nichols, Javier Rodriguez, Mike Taub, Jack Wilmarth
Still Photography.....Catherine Opie, Chris Winget, Ivanno Grasso, Kelly Thomas
Lead Audio.....Roswell Jones
Music Production Coordinator.....Daniel Tiede
Graphic Design.....Keith Riley
Animal Talent.....Birds & Animals Unlimited
Animal Trainers.....John McCormick, Gary Mui Scott Schweipzer, Tasha Zamsky
Prop Styling.....Luis Alvarez y Alvarez, Keith Riley
Beauty Hair And Makeup.....Geoffrey Rodriguez for GRBP, Inc.
M.A.C. Makeup Assistants.....Tiffany Johnston, Genoa Norris
Wig Stylist.....Natasha Ladek
Wig Assistants.....Carlos Ortiz, Griselda Quezada
Costume Assistants.....Ann Gale, Chelsea Rector, Kat Strietmann
Casting.....Francene Selkirk for Shoot From The Hip Casting
Guest Services.....David Rodgers Inc; David Rodgers, Lindsey Antrim, Justin Marshall
Regen Projects.....Stacy Bengston, Tanya Brodsky, Brad Hudson, Joseph
Imhauser, Jennifer Loh, Fatima Manalili, Jessica Minckley, Pete Ortel, Justin Waugh
Interns New York.....Theo Mercier, Jessica Coffrin, Kevin Stahl
Interns Los Angeles.....Drew Baldwin, Natasha Case, Nikki Caster, James Cone,
Richard Corral, Mirren Gordon-Crozier, Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer, Jesse Aron Green, Max Kuo, Jennifer
Lahotski, Manny Lopez, Kira Lum, Samantha Lee Mahoney, Richie Manuel, Gisela Morales,
Alexandra Outerbridge, Josh Patterson, Chelsea Rector, Lindsay Salazar, Colin Sieburgh,
Zachary Slobig, Chrystal Tezuka, Jackson Trugman, Stephanie Washburn, Amy Wong

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



GREGORY STORCK

Jerry Giles (*REN Sales Manager*)

Jerry Giles has been an actor since 1987. Although he came to California for singing and songwriting, he quickly found his way into acting and loved it. He originally wanted to be the next James Taylor, but soon discovered that there already was one and he was quite good at what he did. JT was not willing to give up his place in the music world. So Jerry dove into acting headstrong and has worked in well over 100 productions in stage, film and TV. In Jerry's career he has been fortunate enough to work with several icons in their respective areas, from Andy Griffith to Sir Richard Attenbrough to Matthew Barney. Jerry describes his career as a lot of small roles in a lot of big productions. His first role was opposite Andy Griffith. As a guy from Alabama, that was royalty to work with Andy! Some notable films for Jerry were *Chaplin* and *Little Miss Sunshine*. His TV roles have run the gamut from sitcoms to dramas. His most fun stage role was as Super Joe Wheeler in "The Trip Back Down."



ERIC TREIBER

Aimee Mullins (*Entered Novitiate*)

Aimee Mullins is an actress, public speaker, model, and athlete based in New York City. Her film debut was a starring role as the Entered Novitiate in Matthew Barney's 2002 film *Cremaster 3*. As an athlete, Mullins was a member of the Georgetown University Division I Track and Field Team and subsequently a member of the United States Team for the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic games. That year she set World Records for the 100m, the 200m dash and the long jump, and won two gold medals. She is an inductee in the US Track and Field Hall of Fame and a National Collegiate Athletic Association Hall of Fame Honoree. Her foray into modeling includes collaborations with Alexander McQueen, who launched her in her first runway show in 1998. Mullins is also a world-renowned public speaker and engages in topics around concepts such as the future body, identity, and design innovation. In addition to her professional career, she sits on numerous boards and is currently President of the Women's Sports Foundation. Mullins has been the recipient of awards including the Women of Distinction Award from the National Association of Women in Education in 1997; and the Doctor of Humane Letters Honorary PhD from St. John Fisher College in 2000. Mullins wrote and directed the short film *Cut Out* in 2008. Acting credits include *Marvelous* (Siofra Campbell), *World Trade Center* (Oliver Stone), *Quid Pro Quo* (Carlos Brooks), and A&E's *Agatha Christie's Poirot* drama series.



IVANHO GRASSO

Luis Alvarez y Alvarez (*Day Labor Foreman*)

Luis Alvarez y Alvarez is a film editor based in New York City. His feature film editing credits include Leonardo Di Caprio's environmental documentary *The 11th Hour* (2007); Matthew Barney's *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9* (2005); and Larry Charles' *Masked and Anonymous* (2003), which Mr. Charles co-wrote with Bob Dylan. He is currently working on a number of documentaries for National Geographic Television and ESPN. Mr. Alvarez y Alvarez was born and grew up in Mexico City. He began his film career in San Francisco in 1995 working on independent narrative films and documentaries. He then worked as an assistant editor on the Pixar Animation Studios feature films *Toy Story 2*; *Monsters Inc.*; *Finding Nemo*; and *For the Birds*, which won the Academy Award for Best Animated Short in 2001. He earned a Masters from New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program in 2006. He teaches film editing at New York University's Film Studies Program at the Tisch School of the Arts.

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



ELENA PARDO

Lila Downs (*Ranchera Singer*)

Lila Downs, a Mexican-American singer and song writer, is one of the most innovative exponents of Mesoamerican music on both sides of the border. By drawing on a pan-Latin palette of music as well as African root, American folk, jazz, blues and rock, Downs has won accolades and a devoted following of world music fans. Known for her smoky voice and magnetic performances, she has created a unique body of work that defies categorization in any single genre. In addition to earning a Latin Grammy in 2005 for Best Folk Album (*Una Sangre*), Downs has headlined venues all over the world, and appeared at major festivals and events including the World Festival of Sacred Music - appearing with such luminaries as the Dalai Lama, and at WOMAD, Live Earth, and the Academy Awards. Downs' music and performances have been included in several films such as *Frida*, *Tortilla Soup*, *Real Women Have Curves*, *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, and Carlos Saura's *Fados*.



PETER DENBY

Mouse (*Khepera*)

Amanda Hull aka Mouse lives in London and is best known for entertaining her audiences by using all of her orifices. She travels the world as a performance artist, model and now a writer, dragging with her an enormous Mary Poppins bag of props, wigs and naughty implements. Being vulgar and messy in a pantomime style, she prefers to leave the audience feeling sick and a little uncomfortable rather than to titillate. "I don't do erotic very well," she says. "Shock value is the name of the game and if anyone faints, well then to me, that is a bonus... I do, however, like to add a bit of comedy to the act and try to get the crowd all gooey and wet. All those years at dance and drama school, and all I needed to do was to pop to a hardware store and buy a plastic funnel, insert it, fill it up with sippy water, suck, aim, then fire. HOORAH!" One day she's a giant poodle shoving bones in places and eating tins of dog food. The next day, a Texas waitress popping out eggs and making breakfast with her crutch... So much fun. Mouse is influenced by *Tiswas*, Benny Hill, *Carry On* films and Disney.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

KHU

ACT 2 OF ANCIENT EVENINGS

OCTOBER 2010

THANKS TO



Mariachi Divas de Cindy Shea

Directed and founded by trumpet player Cindy Shea in 1999, the Mariachi Divas have made big waves on the national and international music scene. With four GRAMMY nominations, one Latin GRAMMY nomination and one GRAMMY Award under their belts, the Mariachi Divas are a unique, multicultural, all female ensemble, imbued with the true flavor of Los Angeles and have been represented by women of Mexican, Cuban, Samoan, Argentinean, Colombian, Panamanian, Puerto Rican, Swiss, Japanese, Honduran, Guatemalan, Salvadorian, Peruvian, Tongan and Anglo descents. All together, the Divas discography includes nine albums released through Shea Records and East Side Records. In addition to their musical career, the Divas have appeared in independent films, including *Dead Man's Shoe* and *La Dentista*, in which music from their record was used in the movie's soundtrack. The Divas' rendition of the Ricky Martin hit "La Bamba" was used in the film *Julia*. Since September 2003, the Mariachi Divas are the official mariachi of the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, performing weekly for audiences of all ages.

Additional Thanks

Shayne Anderson, Travis Andre, Mike Balasanian, Brandy of Bobo's Cocktail Lounge, Rafael Casillas, Champion Security, Classic Party Rentals, Crystal Palace Hotel and Casino, George Hammesfahr, Julie Herrera, Tom Lopez, Lisa Love, Mike Love, John Buffalo Mailer, Norman Mailer Estate, Norris Church Mailer, Thaddeus McCormack, Christina Morrison, Monika Music, OnStage Rentals, Catherine Opie, Palace Costume, Patrick Quinn of Z-Valet, Billy Ramirez of the Guest Suites Hotel in Norwalk, Reel EFX, Inc., Remo Drums, Kristin Reynolds of Royal Restrooms of California, Jen Sarotory, Lawrence Schiller, Stiers RV Center, Stout Thomas & Johnson, Bill Tayek of Downey Sign & Lighting, Neville Wakefield, and the City of Santa Fe Springs.

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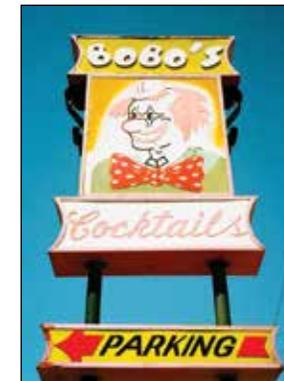
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



THERE WILL BE AN AFTER PARTY
FOLLOWING THE PERFORMANCE AT

BOBO'S COCKTAIL LOUNGE

14323 Studebaker Road at Rosecrans, Norwalk, CA 90650



front cover: *GUARDIAN OF THE VEIL: Norman Mailer, 2007*

inside front cover: *REN: Ankh, 2008*

back cover: *REN: Lapis Ren, 2008*

Edited by Rosalie Benitez
Designed by Keith Riley

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