



## MATTHEW BARNEY AT SCHAULAGER – MEDIA INFORMATION

With "Matthew Barney: Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail", from 12 June to 3 October of this year, Schaulager is presenting Drawing Restraint by Matthew Barney. Drawing Restraint is a series of performances, numbering sixteen thus far, in which Matthew Barney leaves traces in an environment of self-induced physical and psychological restraints. Works emerging from these performances, such as sculptures, vitrines, drawings and videos, are juxtaposed in the Schaulager exhibition with works of art from the Northern Renaissance.

The Foundation that operates Schaulager, the Laurenz Foundation, will acquire, in partnership with the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, Matthew Barney's archive of this performance series. Thanks to the joint acquisition by these two institutions, the Drawing Restraint Archive will be presented to the public as a whole for the first time.

The basic idea of Drawing Restraint is that form can only take shape when it struggles against resistance. Drawing Restraint was initially conceived such that its apparatuses would frustrate the ease of drawing. Matthew Barney started the series while still a student at Yale. The first performances consisted of environments with ramps, sloping surfaces, elastic belts and obstacles that expressly served to restrict the artist's skill. As the series developed, the setting of the performances became increasingly sophisticated and the narrative more allegorical.

Objects deriving from the performances capture certain aspects of the action as "secondary forms" – drawings, sculptures, vitrines and photographs. These objects are never random but always carefully selected and arranged. Each action is also documented on video.

"Drawing Restraint 9" is conceived as a full-length feature film. For the first time Matthew Barney acts with his partner, Björk, who also contributed the soundtrack. The two of them play lovers on a mysterious trip aboard a Japanese whaling ship. This work is about metamorphoses, meditation, the act of creation and death and resurrection.

The Drawing Restraint series numbers sixteen parts thus far. The so-called Drawing Restraint Archive includes sculptures, vitrines, videos and drawings. The archive is the point of departure for a significantly broader-based exhibition at Schaulager, with works from the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation and additional loans. Matthew Barney's works enter into a dialogue with works of Christian iconography by artists such as Martin Schongauer, Albrecht Dürer, Urs Graf and others.

The point of juxtaposing works by old masters with the Drawing Restraint Archive is not to draw parallels between secular and religious visual traditions. Rather, the arrangement is an

attempt to bring out latent meaning in Matthew Barney's work. These include the expenditure of energy, the overcoming of resistance, rising and falling, which also have a tradition in Christian iconography.

The exhibition at Schaulager will be arranged on two floors. The entire Drawing Restraint Archive is shown on the ground floor, with counterpoint provided by woodcuts, engravings and drawings from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. On the lower level, three monumental sculptures belonging to Drawing Restraint 9 – *Torii, Cetacea, Occidental Restraint* – are presented along with a new work.

Schaulager has appointed Neville Wakefield as guest curator for the exhibition. The New York based author and curator has a profound knowledge of Matthew Barney's work and will be organising the exhibition project in close collaboration with the artist and the Schaulager team. Schaulager is the sole venue for this exhibition.

#### **PUBLIC PROGRAMME**

A series of events – films, guided tours and a lecture series – will accompany the exhibition. The detailed programme will be published in newspapers and at [www.schaulager.org](http://www.schaulager.org).

#### **PUBLICATION**

A publication in the Schaulager-Hefte series will include colour illustrations of all the works exhibited, an introductory essay by Neville Wakefield and other texts.

Published by Schaulager and Schwabe Verlag, Basel. Price ca. 35 Swiss francs.

#### **MEDIA**

Media Conference: Wednesday, 9 June 2010, 11:30 a.m.

The curator and the artist will be present. Registration required.

All of the texts and illustrations for the media can be found on our homepage under Media Service

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