

Bigger is better for MONA's new Matthew Barney exhibition

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- From: Mercury
- November 23, 2014 12:00AM



Co-curator Olivier Varenne says Matthew Barney's *River of Fundament* exhibition at MONA is a study of civilisation. Pictures: Carolyn Docking

Source: News Corp Australia

YOU don't need to know much about art to be impressed by how MONA's new major exhibition was put together.

More than 140 crates packed into six containers were shipped from Europe and the US and then craned into the Museum of Old and New Art for its latest show, *Matthew Barney: River of Fundament*.

ON SHOW: SEE THE GALLERY (<http://www.themercury.com.au/news/tasmania/photos-fnj4f7k1-1227131704628>)

One piece alone, the sculpture *Rouge Battery*, weighs six tonnes. It and several others were too heavy for the museum's services lift, meaning a wall needed removing for a crane-lift.

"This is the largest exhibition we have ever shown," co-curator Nicole Durling said as the exhibition was

readied for its opening last night. “It’s the biggest project we have undertaken since the opening of the museum.”

Big, too, is the name Matthew Barney.

The New Yorker is considered one of the top five artists currently working in the world.

Securing him for his Australian single gallery debut represents another coup for David Walsh, who was also involved in curating the exhibition. *River of Fundament* is made up of 90 works, including large-scale sculptures and a film opera that runs close to six hours.



Exhibit “Shaduf” in the Matthew Barney *River of Fundament* exhibition at MONA.

Source: News Corp Australia

It is based on the US novel *Ancient Evenings* by Norman Mailer, which tells the story of an Egyptian nobleman who uses trickery in a quest for eternal life.

Barney updated the myth for the modern age, with the character’s three lives represented by three classic American cars.

“The theme is really our civilisation and its links with other civilisations — how someone can build something so fantastic and [then] to analyse the decline,” co-curator Olivier Varenne said.

The project, which took eight years to complete, was first shown in Munich but incorporating 100 of MONA’s Egyptian antiquities makes this version unique.

Matthew Barney: River of Fundament runs until April 13.