

Stop 26—Department of the Host (Drawing Restraint 9)

[music: taiko sample]

NARRATOR: The sculpture in front of you was cast from a room used in the Drawing Restraint 9 film. The room was first used as a mold to cast petroleum jelly. Then the walls were removed, and the contents allowed to slump into a blob. Barney then recast the resulting form in white plastic. If you look closely, you can see a stylized kettle and cups embedded within the flowing form. * *

In the film, this is the room where the two main protagonists, Barney and his co-star, the singer and composer Björk, are brought together for the first time. Called Occidental Guests, they join in a formal tea ceremony.

As the ship crosses through a storm, the room slowly fills with liquid petroleum jelly. The Occidental Guests begin ritually cutting each other with the very same flensing knives used for the flensing of whales. Through this process, they transform into whale-like creatures, and at the film's end have been released into the ocean as sea mammals.

Matthew Barney:

**BARNEY (Reedit of SFMOMA interview 2—
MBarney_OccidentalGuests.wav):**

00:13:24;17 the tea ceremony requires, you know, a certain amount of knowledge to participate.

00:13:24;17 — I started ... to think of these characters as ... sort of gaining knowledge as they were passing, you know, through their respective paths, and as this gravitational force was bringing them together.

00:14:01;19 ... in this scene where they're starting to flence one another, ... the same thing would be true, ... they would be compelled to do it, but ... you wouldn't witness any reason.

00:14:27;27 You know, which is tricky, when you have two individuals cutting one another, to try ... to make it feel natural, essentially, and not combative and not, ... reactionary.