

**Anaïs Duplan, *You Take My Breath Away: A Sonics of Freedom*, 2020**

**VIDEO DESCRIPTION:**

This work is a video with an audio component. The below text is a transcript of the audio. The video element comprises one still image of a person who is wearing a light grey hoodie and dark grey knee-length shorts. They are also wearing a black backpack and are holding an orange ball (which could be a basketball) in their right hand. They have their back to us and appear to be running on a concrete floor. We can tell by the light in the image that they are outside although it is not possible to work out what time of day it is. The words “YOU TAKE MY BREATH AWAY” are overlaid on the image and typed out in yellow.

**TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIO:**

[The song *Take my Breath Away*, 1986 by Berlin is playing it slowly speeds up]

**00.10**

[computerised voice]: ‘You take my breath away a sonics of freedom by Anaïs Duplan’

[coughing, coughing, coughing, coughing, coughing, coughing, coughing]

**04:10**

‘Paradigms for liberation. Daily, I am enmeshed in a constellation of oppressions, which we could call the white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy. Has my life been predestined? Can I pursue liberation? What kind of liberation can I pursue? I have discovered that when I experience what is universal in me, I may leave my individual oppressions behind. This discovery is important, and at the same time, I need a way of working towards liberation that sees me as a unique person, occupying my distinct social positions as a black, Haitian, transgender, nonbinary, pansexual human being.’

[panting, panting, panting, panting, breathlessness, breathlessness. This continues while the spoken text below]

**06:15**

‘The praxis of attaining liberation as an individual, a member of society, and as a human is incomplete if, in my methodology, I don’t address each of these “nodes.” So far, I’ve found that one of my best opportunities for liberation is in esthetic experience. When I’m rushed by the smell of patties walking past a bakery, I’m having an esthetic experience. Works of art can provide these moments, too. 2 Art magnifies the sensual qualities found in my daily experiences. The memories of childhood brought on by the bakery’s aroma, the colors of its storefront signage, and the texture of the patties’ outer shell are all things a painting might also evoke. Life is this ongoing interaction between myself and my surroundings. The basis of this interaction is my drive to satisfy desire: I want to avoid destruction and death. My

environment is alternately supportive of and hostile about this goal. I fall in and out of equilibrium.'

### **08:10**

[cello drums and jazz piano can be heard underneath the text spoken below. Panting breathlessness and exasperated coughing can also be heard]

'After a period of chaos, the return to form and order is the beginning of the esthetic. How can art help us be free? In the words of Audre Lorde, through "the chaos of knowledge." The artist tries to return to union, which she does in and through conflict. The scientist tries to return to conflict, form and order marking the end of her work. The scientist illuminates the tension between thought and matter, which the artist tries to resolve. These figures need each other. Esthetic experience doesn't happen in a world without disequilibrium—a "perfect" world—nor in a world of always and only conflict. Sense is meaning. Without sense, there is no volition, motion, participation, or communication. As John Dewey writes in *Art as Experience*, "Oppositions of mind and body, soul and matter, spirit and flesh all have their origin, fundamentally, in fear of what life may bring forth." Art seeks this vitality. The many images and sounds that make up my experience gather sense together, and, at their conclusion, resound in unison.' [Coughing intensifies and fades away. Music intensifies and transitions. We can hear the sound of a saxophone]

### **11:05**

'3 Fear is unnecessary to live, but sometimes I force myself to live in it.'

[Daddy Cool, 1979 by Boney M starts playing and fades out]

### **11:50**

'Last night, I had a dream about lynchings. I was on a train with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a few other black folk, and many whites. [panting, breathlessness and music fade in] King held up his arms and suddenly the whites were gone. The lynchings in the dream were understood rather than seen. I had this dream after a late night phone call with my friend Jordan about the idea of harmony in Western esthetic theory. [Breathing turns into sexual moans] Beauty is truth and truth is beauty. Truth as a function of beauty. Harmony means white. Black is beautiful! Adrian Piper took photos of her naked body while reading *The Critique of Pure Reason* to make sure her body was still there. I don't want to talk about "the black body." Where is such a thing? I am not inside of anything. I want the monad. The monad, I want the monad, I want the monad I want integration, but not the kind that requires "white" and "black" to participate. Integration as the move from a dualist Cartesian world to the monist's world, so that transcendence is a misnomer—there being nothing to get beyond, to get above or around. [panting and breathing] In this single world-substance, everywhere is home; everything is forever; and everyone is inalienable.'

[Take my Breath Away, 1986 by Berlin is playing it slowly speeds up until the end.]

**14:00**

[computerised voice]: 'You take my breath away a sonics of freedom by Anaïs Duplan'