

BREATHLESS

an exhibition text in three acts

curated and written by

James Bolton

EXT. PARIS STREET - BASTILLE - AFTERNOON

PATRICIA, a young American student walks along a busy Paris sidewalk selling the NEW YORK HAROLD TRIBUNE. MICHEL, a young FRENCHMAN dressed like Humphrey Bogart approaches from across the street.

PATRICIA

NEW YORK HAROLD TRIBUNE! NEW YORK HAROLD TRIBUNE!

MICHEL

Come with me. I'm off to a gallery in the 5th.

PATRICIA

Trouble again?...NEW YORK HAROLD TRIBUNE!

MICHEL

No, doll. It's a new show, some of the best young painters in all of New York and Paris. Come with me!

PATRICIA

What's the place called, and why all the urgency?
NEW YORK HAROLD TRIBUNE!

MICHEL

Myriam Chair Galerie! It's the opening. I need a beautiful girl like you on my arm, doll.

PATRICIA (LAUGHING)

Last time it was Rome, now it's an opening.
NEW YORK HAROLD TRIBUNE!

PICASSO crosses the street and stops in front of them. He throws his cigarette at the ground, digs into his trowser pocket, and pays for a newspaper.

PICASSO

Give me one.

Patricia hands him a NEWSPAPER and he quickly unfolds it to see the FRONT PAGE headline: "'BREATHLESS' EXHIBITION TO TAKE PARIS BY STORM!"

PICASSO

They didn't ask me, but how can I miss it...

Picasso hails a taxi and he's off.

PATRICIA

That was Picasso! Let's go!

MICHEL runs into the street, causing a CAR to SCREECH to a halt before him. He then pulls out a PISTOL, opens the driver door, and waves it at the DRIVER. The driver runs from the car.

MICHEL

Get in!

They climb inside and drive off, turning onto PONT MORLAND and a setting SUN.

CUT TO:

EXT. MYRIAM CHAIR GALERIE - EARLY EVENING

The CROWD inside has overflowed onto the sidewalk and street. MICHEL takes PATRICIA by the hand and enters the Galerie.

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT puts his arm around Michel.

BASQUIAT

Michel! Give me a cigarette?

Michel hands him a cigarette, then looks up to see ANDY WARHOL and TOULOUSE LAUTREC.

MICHEL

And the exhibition?

WARHOL

It'll be the toast of Paris.

BASQUIAT

Leonard Baby, Ginny Casey, Logan Sibrel...

WARHOL

Be still my heart!

BASQUIAT (CONT)

...Maximilian Xeno Carnig, Kat Lowish, Larissa Bates, Nathan Ritterpusch, Cathleen Clarke, Heather Drayzen, and Ellie Kayu. New york is so strong.

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

Paris also could not be more proud to be represented by such fine painters! Lise Stoufflet, Louise Janet, Adele Salaun, Barbara Penhouet, Nicolas Gaume, Antoine Carbonne, Margarite Piard, Lara Bloy, Pierre Bellot, Norma Trif and Paul Bonnet.

WARHOL

Figurative and Narrative are back!

BASQUIAT

Artists from two of the most important cities in the history of art in conversation. What a trip man.

WARHOL

So good. Why didn't I think of it!

MICHEL

Let us see for ourselves!

CUT TO:

INT. MYRIAM CHAIR GALERIE - CONTINUOUS

PAINTINGS hang on every wall. MICHEL and PATRICIA move through the crowded gallery. They pass MYRIAM CHAIR and JAMES BOLTON speaking with GERTRUDE STEIN.

STEIN

For a hundred years, Paris was the art center of the world. Then New York happened. These young painters have so much to say to each other about color, content, space, a shared history and their own unique experience.

Patricia stops before a PAINTING, transfixed by the work.

MICHEL

What is it?

PATRICIA

So many emotions. It's my favorite. I would be so happy to live with this one. Is it a New York artist or are they from Paris?

MICHEL

Doesn't matter...it's yours.

In an instant, MICHEL swipes the painting from the WALL, takes Patricia by the hand and runs out of the gallery. Onlookers gasp!

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

MICHEL and PATRICIA are in bed and under the covers. They have just had sex. The PAINTING from the BREATHLESS EXHIBITION is on the wall above them. Michel takes out a cigarette and lights it.

MICHEL

Amazing!

PATRICIA

I can't stop thinking about that exhibition either.

MICHEL

No, YOU'RE amazing, doll. But you're right, that damn New York artist broke my heart. Let's move there. I'll clean up my act.

PATRICIA

The artists from Paris really spoke to me. I don't ever want to leave.

A POLICE SIREN SOUNDS outside the window, startling them. MICHEL jumps out of bed, runs to the window to see two POLICE CARS below and a POLICEMAN lifting a BULLHORN.

POLICEMAN

Come out with your hands up! And bring the painting!

MICHEL

No chance! My girl gets what she wants! Connard!

Michel takes his pistol from his jacket pocket and fires a SHOT. The Police return fire and then there is a GUNFIGHT. MICHEL steps in front of the window to fire, but before he can pull the trigger he's HIT by a bullet. He falls to the FLOOR. PATRICIA comes to his aid, lifting his head into her hands.

MICHEL

Now I'll never see New York.

PATRICIA

We were in New York tonight, remember? New York was in Paris. It was on the walls all around us.

Patricia moves close to KISS Michel.

MICHEL

Take your painting. Get out of here. Through the back door. It'll never stick. I'll see you in Rome, doll.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END