

Good morning, or etc., wherever you are, and welcome to **sleep and her brother death**, a monthly screening series from bed, that I—Francesca Bennett—co-host with Ratna Dhaliwal.

This screening has been on my mind since I first saw *This*—a 2014 film by Deborah Edmeades—two years later, in *Theatre Theatre* at the Art Gallery at Evergreen Cultural Centre. By that time, Deborah had been making films, performances, characters, and installations, with drawings, writings, collages, and sculptures, for more than 20 years—frequently multi-part and/or multi-vocal, and frequently with a(n apparent) freedom of movement (the kind) that turns out to be painstakingly choreographed and practiced...

And I say that "this screening" has been

on my mind\* since 2016, but it's not because I had any reason or anywhere to screen a film—I simply wanted to watch it again, but felt, of course, that I must have a reason. (So, "this" screening...)

From the first bootleg screening of this series—**Yvonne Rainer's *Hand Movie*** and **Doug Aitken's *electric earth***—choreographies of hands, or "hands doing things" has been a—or the—recurring motif of my selections for **sleep and her brother death**:

hands operating a weedwhacker in a field larger than the length of the video,

hands outstretched for balance, or in mock ta-da, hands at sides, bored,

*hands holding the jobs section of a newspaper, smoking a cigarette,*

hands smoking many cigarettes...

etc.

After that first screening, my friend **FABIOLA (CARRANZA)** texted me:

"The Rainer piece is something I've summoned every time I think about making art with my hands..."

"It's almost as if Rainer's film were a permanent fixture on a museum's vitrine, representing ALL hands in art, like dinosaurs show the path of evolution."

I know—from being told and from once having a photograph taken by an observer—that when I sleep, my hands have lives of their own: they curl and reach over my head, they hang in the air, and—I think now—after death, like anyone's, they will stiffen and the fingers will curl—my own hands, still.\*

When I am awake, I am aware of my hands, too aware—I know, from being told and from being called out by observers—that my hands have lives of their own: they

hang in the air, they twiddle my hair or someone else's, tap collarbones, or at least they used to, because now, when I am awake, I am aware of my hands, and now, when I walk, I often put one hand on my heart, to remind myself that I am human, and alive.\*

hands on two kinds of flute, alongside hands at an agitated side, all jumping and trilling, making or elaborating the sounds of mouths,

hands holding a camera in one place and time, a mouth narrating from another,

hands typing this, my mouth speaking this, my hands re-typing this, re-typing this,

etc.

Hands—like mouths—beckon and greet. Hands point the way; mouths call, and call out.

And it is "calling" that I think of—most of my waking

\* I think by "this" I mean the "thing" like the handled object but perhaps I mean the meaning...

life and sometimes, I know from experience, in my dreams—but it is "calling" that I thought of when I first saw Deborah's work—which I remember as being titled "In your physical presence, I am mute"—and it is "calling" that stays on my mind across her works:

[Monologues:  
Patriarchal  
Traditions and the  
New Age I and II](#)

[Divination, Chance,  
and Character](#)

[Artists, Mystics,  
Suffragettes A-Z](#)

[Debi's \(Teenage\)  
Philosophical  
Enlightenment](#)

and

[Strange Fate](#)

[Lucy at Last](#)

On a studio visit recently, Deborah and I talked about various callings: art, but also Christian Science, capitalism, astrology, self-improvement—which I recently

saw described as "America's favourite pastime"—

[Quintessence](#)

[The Seeker](#)

[Sustaining the Self](#)

[Wives](#)

[The Painter](#)

[The Fancy Ladies](#)

[Acquisitions '96](#)

[Sexy Debi](#)

and I always wonder if "calling" really is the same as "knowing"...

[Tainted Knowing  
\(fraudulent texts,  
hidden sympathy,  
and unfounded  
enthusiasm\)](#)

[Poems](#)

[Anachronic  
Televisions](#)

[On the Validity of  
Illusion \(and its  
attractions\)](#)

In "this", the video that we are about to watch together—which is called "This", as a reminder—all I will say is that the hands are doing

something, and the more that I think about it, the less I am sure whether the artist, filming "this", in spite of her practice and choreography, knows what her hands are doing, or knows what this\* is, or knows both things, or neither, in a similar but opposite way to how I, the viewer, can see what the hands are doing, can learn what this\* is, or can do both, or neither.

[Blinking and Other  
Involuntary Portals](#)

Perhaps, like my other selections so far, the hands make the mystery—time, space, what I have been thinking of lately as "what happens when a solid something passes through a gap"—here, in film, at least, if not in life.

My hands will now fumble with Zoom, as ever, and we'll begin—thank you for joining us for *This* and "this".

🎧 program 17



Deborah Edmeades  
*This*, 2014

[deborahedmeades.com/  
projects/this-and-this-  
and-this](http://deborahedmeades.com/projects/this-and-this-and-this)

🍿 a review

"*This* - so good!

"I watched the Yvonne Rainer *Hand Movie* right away afterwards. I'd never seen! I've always been a little suspect of hands in art....But now I am watching my hands typing and they feel separate from my body...

"B— once carved a hand with a very tiny baby animal holding onto it based on a cutout from G-'s studio, where I once cut out a juggling hand with a ball from the exact same ad in the exact same way [he] had years before—sleepless hives mind hands at work.

"I also thought of this work by J—... Though when I googled it the hands aren't so much a part of the work but there is something in the gesture..."

Maegan, thank you for some afterthought foggy morning hand associations...