

# Positions through Essaying

## Introduction

Breakfast is far more than just food; it's a small ritual and a subtle statement. The way we start the day often reflects how we see ourselves: are we hurried moderns, keepers of tradition, or something in between? In this video, the breakfast ritual is more of an Everyday transition performance. I explore through my hands, my mother's hands, my grandmother's hands, how the breakfast ritual reveals identity and something about disappearance, inheritance, and what still binds us across generations.

## Part 1

Every day at breakfast, my hands repeat the same motions, some consciously, some unconsciously.

I'm scrolling.

I'm pressing.

I'm picking up.

These quiet rituals shape my day before I even speak.

Digital habits have replaced a part of the traditional breakfast. We are woken up by its alarm, swiping through social media before we even get out of bed, and checking messages while brushing our teeth (Barman 2025). The report says that two in five adults look at their mobile phone within five minutes of waking up, and 71% say they never switch it off (Wakefield 2018). People queue at fast food restaurants in the name of 'saving time'. Part of the contemporary breakfast ritual has gone from warm ramblings by the hob to a hurried transaction between mobile phone screens and plastic packaging - we've replaced the aroma of food with data traffic and dissolved morning contemplation with the cult of efficiency.

In this case, I am constantly reflecting on what we have disappeared in our digitised mornings, where have those rituals gone that we have hastily replaced?

## **Part 2**

Influenced by Sorel Cohen's photographic work 'Le rite matinal', I tried to document the breakfast rituals of one day for three generations of my family.

In Les Diners de Gala and Cookbook of the Pandemic Year books, they both document recipes in a humorous, abstract language. It inspired me to deconstruct the ritual process in my family and turn it into a 'recipe' for a breakfast ritual. The 'recipe' includes who to serve, preparation time, ingredients and instructions.

I also record common hand gestures used in these rituals.

'Scroll'

'Click'

'Grab'

'Poke'

'In their rituals, time doesn't feel like something that needs to be fought over. It flows naturally - through the steam rising from the bowl, through the gentle clinking of chopsticks'

'I grew up watching these hands. I didn't understand the language of it then. But now I understand: ritual is not routine, but a way of embracing others, a way of saying 'you are cared for.'

'Some postures seem to be 'inherited' but then disappear between generations. '

'Rituals morph, but don't really die.'

Three generations. Three hands. Three rhythms shaped by different generations.

### **Part 3**

A further reaction to these ideas was a shift in the ritual processes between family members towards a broader reflection on time, identity and cultural inheritance. Judith Butler argues that identity is not innate, but 'performed' through repetitive ritual behaviours (Butler 1990).

In different spaces, our rituals were different, yet rhymed together. They carry our identities - not just individually, but collectively.

We are eating.

We are drinking.

Sara Ahmed believes that ritual, through its repetition and symbolic power, can create a sense of belonging and continuity in time and space (Ahmed 2006). Through the above I hope to allow the audience to experience the stories of others. and follow the ritual instructions to reflect on the connections between generations and identities.

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