The dynamic configurations described above, through the role of videographer and without requiring any secondary or external documentation strategy, generate what we can recognize as a new kind of audiovisual material. To grasp the significance of this material, we need to consider the very different ways in which both live performance and performance documentation can bring closure to an experimental process. Katherine Profeta identifies the projects of Ralph Lemon, on which she has long worked as dramaturg, as laboratories: “Performance was a laboratory for everything else: ontology, epistemology, anthropo-

1 Here, as above, “material” refers to the relative reliability of audiovisual data— that which makes it possible to watch, edit, replay, and transmit— rather than to a notion of materiality grounded in mechanical physics.
ology, sociology, politics. I understood ‘performance as research’ before that phrase took on its current cachet” (Profeta 2015: xi). I quote here at length a passage in which Profeta observes the inadequacy of the conventional closing cut of performing arts—the staging of a more or less repeatable work before an audience understood as public—when it comes to tracing the content of such laboratoriality:

[I]t is possible for intercorporeal work to be radical on a radically small scale. If the knowledge gained in the rehearsal room is not effectively disseminated, the collaboration will have been very meaningful for a very small number of people. Its impact could easily be limited to the owners of the bodies in question. And thus the dance dramaturg, spending her time thinking about intercorporeal exchange, still eventually shifts back to that old question of audience. How might other bodies, beyond those bodies in the room, feel the reverberations of this physical work? Could simply demonstrating the results ever be enough? [...]

One response to that question is to demonstrate more than just results. This relates to my gut feeling that the dialogues, tensions, and provisional solutions of our process, all of which I was attempting to archive in my notebook, were always going to be more interesting than any scene we might stage inside a proscenium
frame. It likewise relates to Ralph’s decision to publish his artists’ journals on the Trilogy’s process and to publicly define the Trilogy not as a collection of three proscenium stage events but as the larger constellation of performance events, research events, visual art installations, journal writing, cast interviews, and the unruly work that wove them all together. By a simple act of public redefinition — declaring that the larger process and all its many by-products were, collectively, the product — Ralph did much to shift thinking, within the rehearsal room, among his presenters, and among his long-term audiences.

Yet it nevertheless cannot be denied that the economics supporting all this process dictated that the largest number of people experiencing the work would be experiencing whatever part we put forward on the proscenium stage. (205)

The more a practice relies on dynamic interactions of the kind described in the previous section, the less adequately the cut of live performance will be able to trace its discoveries. Indeed, the idea that live performance can be a “work” like a painting or a sculpture depends upon a complete objectification of the performer in relation to the audience, as if what is being witnessed were not a chunk of life at all, but some kind of static object. This does not
mean that live performance is without value. The question, rather, is what such events are understood to accomplish. Making live public performance the closing cut for an experimental process ensures that experimentality—the openness to the unknown that defines the epistemic integrity of a process—cannot be prioritized. Instead, experimentality is channeled into rehearsal, in the sense of preparation for a more substantive event that can only take place once the audience arrives. A live performance is a moment, an event, an encounter. If it unfolds with most of the people present in the passive role of audience, that is only because of specific, often Eurocentric, histories of presentation and spectatorship. If, on the other hand, we want to prioritize the epistemic or research dimensions of embodied practice, then the closing laboratorial cut needs to be implemented transversally across that practice. This requires us to implement a different kind of cut, one that can be made transversally from the beginning to the end of the process. In the DCTV method, that cut is audiovisual.

Transversal video is, first of all, a turn away from performance documentation. Performance documentation brings archival stability to the closing cut of live performance, producing an inscription that captures some aspects of the live performance
event. As debates over liveness and documentation have shown (Phelan 1993; Auslander 1999; Reason 2006; D. Taylor 2007), this means that performance documentation is always asymptotically chasing what it can never have, namely the wholeness of the live event as experienced by those who were present. This remains true even when new technologies like motion capture and digital animation are brought to bear on performance practices (Delahunta and Whatley 2013; Jürgens and Fernandes 2018). One can set up the most interesting event in the world, but if one’s closing cut does not manage to trace what is interesting about it, then those aspects cannot be shared or assessed by anyone who is not physically present. One avenue of exploration suggested by this impossibility is the desire to collapse the fourth wall and bring the audience into the space of practice, a transformation that can range from the spatial (immersive theater) to the interactive (participatory theater) to the epistemological (applied theater). Frank Camilleri has recently called for a “post-psychophysicality” that “actively embraces” new technologies and would be “engaged in working with (thus relating rather than eschewing or bypassing) aspects of the real made perceptible and possible through new technologies” (Camilleri 2015: 121). Yet for Camilleri and others, the synthesis of video and theater still seems beholden to the
assumption of a public theatrical event as the closing cut of these processes. Here, I am more interested in alternative cuts. If neither live performance nor performance documentation can adequately trace the emergent discoveries of experimental practice and embodied research, then what alternative closing cuts might be implemented and how might this transform the entire endeavor? More simply, if we do not document performance events, then what do we document?

“Transversal” means that the cut is made laterally across the entire research process. This is true first of all in a temporal sense: Audiovisual traces are produced on the first day of laboratorial practice in the same way as on the last and, even though the latter may benefit from many discoveries along the way, in retrospect the former may well be uniquely interesting in their own right. Such a transversal cut effects a horizontalization of the research process, displacing any cumulative embodied work that might eventually be documented with a potentially unlimited quantity of audiovisual output, a new kind of audiovisual data. A parallel transversality also applies spatially, in that the videographer is invited—once the initial spatial mapping of the roles has been abandoned—to enter physically into the space of practice. Again, this marks a significant deviation from conventional performance documentation, which tends to locate
the camera physically outside the space of practice in order to replicate the perspective of a live spectator. Transversal videography abandons the closure of the work both temporally and spatially, cutting into and across what would usually, from a performance documentation perspective, be treated as a closed object. Moreover, in addition to such temporal and spatial transversality, there is also an epistemic transversality, which changes the very definition of that which is documented.

Transversal video does not provide a more faithful, objective, or comprehensive trace of any given moment of practice or performance. Instead, it jettisons the desire for objectivity as externality and brings videography inside the research process. The role of the videographer is extremely powerful, insofar as it has the most direct influence on the audiovisual traces generated by the research. However, this role is not all-powerful and its control over the audiovisual output is limited by the same factors that limit the potential tyranny of the director: First, the videographer is not in charge of what happens, but only of what is recorded, which is necessarily delimited by what happens. Second, the videographer has no special privilege when it comes to making editorial choices about how to publish the recorded material (just the opposite, in fact — see below). Third, the role of the
videographer circulates dynamically within the research team, so that videographic power is separated from the power of any individual. The audiovisual material generated by DCTV is best understood as rigorously co-authored within the temporality of an experimental practice session. Without the interacting choices and actions of all participants in a configuration, the audiovisual material could not exist. And because this temporality is rigorously separated from that of the editor, these audiovisual documents stand on their own as a kind of experimental or even empirical research data.

Transversality has a long history in film and video. Journalistic and documentary film, experimental and ethnographic film, and reality television have all made use of mobile cameras that cut through a space to produce a transversal tracing of a complex event as it unfolds. Transversal approaches to cinema developed alongside the birth of the medium (Vertov 1984) and continue through visual ethnography (Rouch 2003; L. Taylor 2014), experimental filmmaking (Geuens 2001; Mouëllic 2013), and the “film essay” (Papazian and Eades 2016). Psychological and sociological research methods have also used audiovisual recording in a variety of ways to produce experimental data (Knudsen and Stage 2015; Vannini 2015), a process explored further in transversal accounts of durational artistic
research (Arlander 2018). Recent technologies such as body-mounted action cameras and 360° cameras have extended the capacities of video as a research tool, leading some ethnographic researchers to “focus on the notion of the video trace: the idea that such cameras do not so much offer us the possibility to objectively capture the world as it appears in front of the camera lens, but instead record a video trace through the world as created by our movement in specific environmental, sensory and affective configurations” (Cruz, Sumartojo, and Pink 2017: 39). Today, video is increasingly used as a research method across the social sciences and beyond (Harris 2016).

The DCTV research method can be contextualized alongside these developments insofar as it relies upon the epistemological power of recording technologies to access practice in a way that combines the archival capacity of an inscriptive medium with the audiovisuality of embodiment. Nor is there anything to prevent a DCTV lab from working with body-mounted cameras or other more recent recording technologies. However, the specificity of DCTV does not reside in any particular recording technology, but rather in the way these are deployed within an experimental practice that is structured by dynamic configurations. It is the dynamic circulation of videographic power across bodies and in relation to other modes of power that
gives DCTV’s audiovisual outputs their epistemological status. In particular, the de-linking of both directorial and videographic power from editorial and authorial power gives DCTV a specific kind of experimental rigor. The strict separation of the temporality of the lab from that of editing works against deeply ingrained assumptions about what it means to make a film or video. In some approaches to experimental filmmaking, transversal videography is directed at the life of the filmmaker, either through archival footage or self-documentation (Gaycken in Papazian and Eades 2016: 256-74). In others, improvisation is allowed—empowering actors to respond spontaneously and in some cases thereby also transforming the work of the videographer—yet the process is still controlled overall by a director who retains final authorial power (Mouëllic 2013). New critical approaches to ethnography may go even further in distributing directorial and editorial power, aiming to develop “an ethics for working toward thoroughly collaborative film and video research” (Harris 2012: 14) similar to that proposed here, yet without this distributive ethics reaching all the way into the means of production and the structure of encounter.² DCTV is

² The “ethnocinema” proposed by Harris as a synthesis of ethnography and arts-based research (2012: 145–48) may
recognizably unique in the extent to which it disaggregates powers and roles, both within the shared interactive temporality of the lab and between the temporalities of experimental practice and of editing. This disaggregation owes everything to embodied research in collaborative creation, which has been conducted in fields of experimental theater and dance and of which most filmmakers and social science researchers remain unaware.

Each individual in a DCTV configuration is empowered to act freely within a particular domain, but none are in charge of the overall meaning of what happens. There is no final authority on what happens, what is audiovisually traced, or what might later become a publishable work. The videographer is empowered to make a videographic tracing of a particular moment come closest to DCTV in its ethics. This is a research method developed from the idea “that films made collaboratively are documents of relationship and are not representative of whole communities, ‘authentic’ individuals or unassailable ‘truths’ and that they trouble the very notion of authenticity itself” (14, italics original). The alternative and experimental narrative films studied by Mouëllic, on the other hand, demonstrate how actors and videographers can be partially empowered to improvise while still remaining firmly within the grip of autocratic or even abusive directorial control (2013: 121–29).
of practice. They make a series of cuts, first quite literally by turning the camera on or off. (The camera then also makes its own cuts, at 30 or more photographic frames per second and perhaps 44,100 audio samples per second.) The decisions of the videographer are at once momentous and mundane, determining which moments of practice will be audiovisually traced and how. Once the camera is on, a variety of videographic choices become available through the physical movement of the camera as well as shifts in focus, zoom, and other parameters. Once the roles are no longer rigidly spatialized, as described above, the videographer is free to move around, between, through, and even away from the practitioner(s) and director. This allows the mobile, active camera of the videographer to cut through space both visually and sonically. The visual effect of the moving camera is obvious, but its parallel auditory effect can be equally significant. Both the visual and audio tracks of the resulting audiovisual material trace not a separable object, but a set of shifting relations between the videographer and the interactions unfolding around them.

In the DCTV labs I have led, the active engagement of the videographer has often extended towards a kind of athleticism resembling that of the practitioners. This is not only because the videographer
transversal video: somaticizing the camera

responds to their movement, but also because the circulation of roles over time means that whatever physical skills are cultivated by the researchers as practitioners will gradually permeate their work as videographers. However, intensive videographic engagement does not have to be realized through physical movement, just as the work of the practitioner(s) need not be athletic or virtuosic. A videographer who is not able to move quickly in the space, or carry a heavy camera, can produce tracings that are just as epistemically valid and potentially valuable. Perhaps, then, rather than an “athleticism” of the videographer, a more appropriate term would be that suggested by Maria Kapsali when she referred to the DCTV method as a way of “somaticizing the camera.”

3 The Judaica project lab worked with a professional photographer and videographer in 2017, inviting him to move around in the studio with us while holding a moderately heavy DSLR camera (Nikon D750). His first comment after working with us was that he found it exhausting and that, as a videographer, he had not expected to be undertaking constant physical labor over several hours, as the three researchers in the project team often were. Kapsali used the phrase “somaticizing the camera” during a 2017 Judaica project event at the University of Leeds. For a related investigation in visual anthropology, see Claire Loussouarn’s guided practice audio track “Dancing with the Camera” in the
emphasized throughout, the crucial distinction here does not depend on any particular skill, but on the way in which the roles are conceptualized through dynamic configurations and the kinds of relationality this generates. Recording technologies in DCTV do not arrive from elsewhere to document a prior constituted event, or even a prior constituted ensemble, but instead are fully metabolized within the space and process of the laboratory, leading to a new way of relating to and handling the camera.

As with the role of director, the videographer does not need to have any special skills in order to enter into the particular ethics of relationality that define DCTV. They only need to be detached from the future power of the editor and thereby grounded within the shared temporality of practice, within which each member of the team is empowered to be creative but not to control. This shift makes it difficult to distinguish “good videography” in two different senses: one linked to the kinds of purely audiovisual qualities with which we are all now so familiar through movies, television, and advertising, and another referring to video that has a meaningful relationship to unfolding events, regardless of its independent audiovisual quality.

online Somatics Toolkit (http://somaticstoolkit.coventry.ac.uk/loussouarn-dancing-with-the-camera/).
Aesthetic and epistemic choices become inseparable and the usual standards by which audiovisual material is judged are displaced, although not disregarded. This onto-epistemological shift will become clearer in my discussion of the editor role below, but a simple comparison of two extremes may be useful here. First, of course, there are some “audiovisual moments” in which everything seems to come together: Bodies, actions, and meanings are traced in a recording wherein color, image, sound, and movement are strikingly composed. This may be due to the expert skill of the videographer, who manages to pay attention simultaneously to what is happening and what is being recorded, so that the latter captures the former with as much richness as the audiovisual medium allows. Or it may be a happy accident, a wonderful coincidence of technology and moment. On the other hand, it can happen that an extraordinary moment of practice is traced only roughly or glancingly by the recording device. The audio track may be noisy or clipping, the image jumpy or out of focus. Yet in the context of an important moment, such material cannot be judged purely on aesthetic grounds. Instead, it may be more like a fragment of documentary footage, such as a recording made accidentally within range of a momentous event. (The Zapruder film is a famous, forensic example.) This kind of material may require
more editorial work in order to become legible, but its overall value is no less for its poor audiovisual quality. Because DCTV is simultaneously aesthetic and epistemological, the most valuable footage it produces may not be the most visually or sonically effective.

As these examples reveal, the distinctive quality of DCTV’s videographic outputs is not ultimately audiovisual at all. While one can point to videographic choices that arose from momentary complicity and might not have been conceived by an external director or videographer, there is no strictly videographic technique available to the videographer in DCTV that could not in theory also be used in conventional cinema. Indeed, there are many ways in which temporal, spatial, and even epistemic transversality can be faked, so that audiovisual material is generated to look as if it arose from an experimental context when it was, in fact, precisely planned. The difference is onto-epistemological: It is a difference in the provenance of the material—how it was generated—which translates to a difference in its potential, in what can be done with it. The fact that one could stage a rehearsed moment in such a way as to make it look as if it were produced by DCTV is analogous to the fact that one can make beautiful charts whether or not the underlying data is accurate. The epistemological
value of a beautiful or compelling graphic display of data resides in its ability to convey the meaning of the data it visualizes, which cannot be separated from its effectiveness as a visual image. Composition is important, but only in relation to the question of what happened. This means that, in editing and reworking DCTV’s audiovisual materials, while we can feel free to draw upon all the design techniques of contemporary video editing, each technique must be reinvented from the ground up, in relation to the specific onto-epistemology of DCTV.\(^4\)

At the beginning of the first DCTV laboratory process, we asked ourselves: Does the camera change

4 An intriguing question, beyond the scope of this book, is what it might look like to analyze narrative cinema from the perspective of DCTV. This seems to have the potential to open a radically different mode of analysis, one in which even mainstream films are no longer treated as coherently authored works, like books, with the director in the position of author, but instead could be analyzed in terms of collaborative dynamics and fractional identities. Where the auteur director exercises strict control over the performer, videographer, and editor, we might now see this as a specifically narrow and restrictive approach that actually conceals and prevents us from accessing what is most interesting in the work, namely the divergence in perspectives amongst the co-authors as enacted through their various roles.
what happens in the space? Does its presence make us behave differently? Later on, others asked us the same question. This question is understandable, but it is a red herring. Asking how the camera changes the practice puts us back in the domain of performance documentation and the familiar subject–object split, according to which the freedom of practitioner and director ought not to be affected or influenced by the presence of the camera. Instead, we should be asking: How does the camera, as a closing cut defined by a particular kind of archival inscription, participate in the construction of meaning in this laboratorial space? As Barad writes: “Which cuts are enacted” is “not a matter of choice in the liberal humanist sense; rather, the specificity of particular cuts is a matter of specific material practices through which the very notion of the human is differentially constituted” (2007: 217). In the method described here, the human

5 Rheinberger makes the same point, focusing on technologies of archival inscription rather than the more abstract notion of the cut: “The research laboratory is a place where new knowledge comes into being leaving behind it a trail of rough notes, scrips and scribbles, and revised write-ups that offer insight into concrete processes of knowledge formation” (2010: 244). These are “graphematic traces” that, following Derrida, “have the capacity to become detached not only
(and not only the human) is constituted through a closure that is fundamentally audiovisual: audiovisual embodiment or the audiovisual body. The audiovisual body in DCTV is not the same as that produced by the cinema industry, reality television, documentary films, surveillance cameras, or video art. For all its variation and history, the history of audiovisual recording has been dominated by those who control the recordings generated by these technologies. With few exceptions, the people whose bodies are traced by recordings—whether professional actors or ethnographic subjects—have had little control over what is done with their audiovisual bodies. In most cases, the person designated as director is charged with directing not only performers but also videographers (or from their initial referent, that to which they originally referred, but also from the one who writes, the one who produces the trace.” They “lie between the materialities of experimental systems and the conceptual constructs that leave the immediate laboratory context behind in the guise of sanctioned research reports” (245). The difference between Barad and Rheinberger is again instructive: While the idea of the onto-epistemological cut is powerful, the relationship between this cut and specific technologies of archival inscription requires careful investigation as part of any politics of knowledge.
cinematographers) and editors. DCTV disaggregates these powers and in this way constitutes a radically different audiovisual body. Yet the power to cut, edit, frame, and publish that body cannot be eliminated, it can only be postponed. After any DCTV lab session has finished, the question of what can be done with the resulting audiovisual materials brings us into a different temporality and role: that of the editor.