

HOW TO MAKE A VIDEO CATALOGUE

A **video catalogue** is an **online archive of audiovisual moments**. Neither a documentary nor a form of performance documentation, it is intended to offer a set of glimpses or windows into performance practice. Each item in the catalogue is simple, but together they offer a kaleidoscopic view of the embodied knowledge that every performance company holds.¹

This document explains how to make a video catalogue in four steps.

1) Video Lab Sessions. To transform standard rehearsal or training sessions into “video lab” sessions, all you need to do is introduce a camera. Rather than hiring an external videographer, we recommend that performers and other collaborators take turns holding the camera. The aim is not to create professional-looking documentation but to integrate the recording process into your existing practice. The question of what and how to record should be answered in each moment, drawing on *the same knowledge* that informs the rehearsal or training process. In this context, rough, dynamic, integrated video may be more valuable than polished, static, external video.

2) Selection and Naming. Step 1 can generate quite a lot of video material. To keep things manageable, divide the footage among everyone who helped to create it. For example:

- If 3 people have created 6 hours of video together, each person is assigned 2 hours.
- If 8 people have created 24 hours of video together, each person is assigned 3 hours.

Each person watches all the footage they have been assigned and makes initial **selections**, choosing moments for the catalogue. These should usually be **no longer than five minutes**. For each selection, write down the **IN and OUT points and a proposed TITLE**. For example:

Selection 1: File MOV001.mpg @ 16:35-19:20 — “Warming up.”

To keep the authorship balanced, everyone should make roughly the same number of selections.

3) Discussion. Once everyone has made their selections, it is essential that the full group watch and discuss them. (The video files should not be cut until after this is done.) Watching the selections can be fascinating and is one of the most important aspects of this process. The questions that come up — *Why was this moment chosen? Why that title?* — will help you understand and articulate your working process. Selections can be revised or left out and titles can be changed through discussion. Only after consensus is reached are the selections final.

4) Publishing. Once the selections are final, the video files should be cut and uploaded onto the company website, along with their titles. This can be done easily on WordPress or most other web hosting platforms. Unlike the videography and editing, this step can be done by a web designer or someone else hired by the company. Congratulations — you have made a video catalogue!

Further Notes:

- A video catalogue can contain any number of videos, from 5 to 500. More videos, across a longer time period, will offer a deeper sense of how your company works.
- Optionally, company members can post written comments below the videos.
- For an example of a large video catalogue developed over six months, please visit the **Songwork Catalogue** at <<http://www.urbanresearchtheater.com/songwork>>.

¹ These techniques were developed by Ben Spatz with Nazlıhan Eda Erçin and Agnieszka Mendel during the project “Judaica: An Embodied Laboratory for Songwork,” with support from the University of Huddersfield and the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. You are free to adapt and share all or part of this document, with proper attribution (CC-BY). For more on the underlying audiovisual embodied research method, see *Making a Laboratory* (Punctum Books, forthcoming).