A somatic approach to filming

https://dominiquerivoal.com/a-somatic-approach-to-filming/

Abstract 8
Keywords: 9
Preamble: my own journey 9
Introduction of main fields and concepts 11
Somatic practices 12
Dyadic practices 14
Translating the Somatic to the Audiovisual 18
Tracking (camera) movement 22
Research questions 25
Methods and Methodology 25
Methodology 25
Methods 28
The 'relating dyad' 29
The mover–witness dyad 31
Foundational Principles for the Moving Camera Witness 33
Main projects 33
Creative fields screendance 35
Dancer - camera relationship (Lewis Smith) 39
Dyadic approach (Jennifer Nikolai) 40
Opening and closing the eyes 41
Somatic camera 45
Dyadic relationship with the environment 48
Corresponding 50
Kinaesthetic empathy 51
Concluding thoughts 54
From merging to corresponding to reciprocal openness 54

Merging....54
Correspondence....61
The reciprocal openness of the dyad....62
The moving camera witness method....64
Goldhahn's Contribution to Camera-Witnessing....64
The moving camera witness method....68
Key features of the moving camera witness....68
The movement vocabulary of the moving camera witness:....69
Somatic approach to filming: arising practices....71
Relational dyadic approach to filming: arising practices....73
Overall Contribution of the research....76
Acknowledgements....78
Glossary....79
Bibliography....82
Declaration....93

Abstract

This practice as research (PaR) investigates how somatic and dyadic methods can inform the act of filming within the field of screendance. Drawing on over six years of collaborative enquiry, the project introduces the moving camera witness—a method that integrates somatic awareness, witnessing practices from Authentic Movement, and the enquiry process of the 'relating dyad' into a filming practice. Working closely with somatic movers, this research repositions the camera as a somatic, relational, and perceptual tool that can work alongside and support a somatic movement practice, ultimately becoming a somatic filming practice in its own right. The research contributes new audiovisual works, scores, interviews, and theoretical insights to screendance, while extending existing concepts such as camera-witnessing (Goldhahn 2015, 2021), the somatic camera (Salzer, 2020) and applies Ingold's idea of correspondence Ingold (2017, 2018, 2021) within the field of screendance. The result is a participatory and reflexive

filmmaking method that highlights the co-emergent nature of moving, filming, and witnessing.

Keywords:

Somatic — dyadic — movement — relationality — embodiment — camera-witnessing — attention — awareness — presence — kinaesthetic empathy — reciprocity — mutuality.

Preamble: my own journey

I arrived in London from France at age eighteen in 1989 and discovered a passion for dance through the raving culture. At twenty-four, I enrolled in the BA (Hons) Dance in Visual and Performing Arts with Liz Aggiss, followed by an MA in Choreography from Middlesex University in 2003.

Although I began without formal dance training, I was fortunate to benefit from the progressive vision of individuals and institutions that helped reshape dance education in the UK, expanding it from vocational training into higher education. Such opportunities would have been unthinkable in France, where dance was traditionally confined to conservatoires and for those who began at a young age. Coming from a working-class background, a career in dance or the arts had never seemed within reach. The UK context opened a door, enabling me to imagine myself as an artist and to pursue a path that merged creativity, education and healing.

The BA (hons) in Dance and Visual Art at Brighton University played a pivotal role in developing my interdisciplinary approach, merging dance with filmmaking. Throughout my career, I remained engaged in screendance, participating in festivals, workshops, and discussions.

In 1998, I gained a Master in Digital-Arts from Middlesex University, where I later worked as a Senior Technician. During this period, I also attended somatic movement classes such as Feldenkrais, Contact Improvisation, and Skinner Release in London. My MA in Choreography in Middlesex

University culminated in *Dancing with Angels* (2003), a funded project blending spirituality and movement. After this intense experience, I shifted my focus towards therapeutic practices, earning a Shiatsu diploma in 2008 and later attended a three-year professional training in Mind Clearing, completed in 2107. Mind Clearing is an emerging one-to-one talking therapy developed by Charles Berner.

My study of Authentic Movement (AM) began with Linda Hartley in 2017 at the Institute for Integrative Bodywork & Movement Therapy (IBMT). A student of Janet Adler, Hartley's teaching integrates Adler's rigorous attention to the relational dimensions of the mover–witness practice while also drawing on influences from Body-Mind Centering® and somatic movement therapy. Over the next seven years, I deepened my practice through regular retreats with Hartley in a closed group as well as an online during the pandemic, while also co-founding a London-based Authentic Movement peer group, meeting bi-monthly for the past three years.

My doctoral project brings together the different strands of my training, with a particular emphasis on my two most recent fields of study: Authentic Movement (AM) and Mind Clearing, both of which employ a dyadic format to explore direct ways of knowing.

I first encountered the dyad form, which underpins my research, during my training in Mind Clearing through the 'relating dyad' - a paired meditation developed by Charles and Eva Berner. The 'relating dyad' is a verbal exchange that combines a Zen-inspired self-enquiry process (who am I) with the interpersonal communication process of the dyad. My subsequent engagement with the mover–witness dyad from Authentic Movement, in which movement is the primary mode of exploration, deepened my curiosity. I began to wonder: what are the affordances of the dyad? What possibilities for relation and expression does it open up? These questions gave rise to a new line of inquiry: might the principles of these dyadic processes be brought into the realm of artistic research - specifically to investigate the relationship between filmmaker and mover?

Introduction of main fields and concepts

This ArtsD project is a movement-based experimental film practice that bridges screendance and somatic movement practices through a dyadic framework. Conducted as a Practice-as-Research (PaR) the project develops a somatic approach to filming, fostering alternative ways of seeing and being with. Guided by the overarching question - How might somatic and dyadic-oriented methods inform ways of filming? - my practice unfolds through a series of dyadic encounters between myself as a filmmaker and different somatic movers, structured across two main projects. The first is an iterative, durational collaboration taking place over six years, in which Claire Loussouarn and I engage in an ongoing correspondence (a concept by Tim Ingold) with Hackney Marshes, as a third partner in the exchange. The second project is an intensive three-day collaborative dyad with Helen Kindred exploring the shared authorship of the camera and asking: what happens when the filmmaker assumes the same level of visibility, presence, and vulnerability as the dancer?

These two main projects are situated within the field of Screendance, which brings together the ideas, theories, and methods of both film and dance. The connection between dance and cinema has been present since the earliest days of film, when pioneers such as Edison, Muybridge, and Méliès used dance to demonstrate the possibilities and enchantment of the new medium. Over time, this interdisciplinary field has developed under many different names—*dance on screen*, *video dance*, *dance for the camera*, among others. At first glance these terms appear interchangeable, yet closer examination reveals distinct differences in meaning, medium, and intent. From 2010, the term *Screendance* had gained widespread adoption, reinforced by the launch of the *International Journal of Screendance*, an open-access, peer-reviewed platform dedicated to the field. Douglas Rosenberg's *Screendance: Inscribing the Ephemeral Image* (2012) further solidified the form's status within contemporary screen culture, expanding its scope beyond television and cinema to include digital and mobile media.

Somatic practices

The term *somatic* was defined by Thomas Hanna (1928–1990), who drew from the Greek word *soma*, meaning 'the living body' to describe the study of the body from within. He defines somatics as 'a field which studies the soma: namely, the body as perceived from within by first-person perception' (Hanna, 1986, p.4), distinguishing it from intellectual or psychological perspectives. Today, the term is widely applied across various body-centred approaches that integrate principles from dance, therapy, and healing practices, all of which emphasise the lived, internal experience of the body. In her survey of the field, Martha Eddy identifies three key categories of somatic practices: somatic psychology, somatic bodywork, and somatic movement practice (Eddy, 2009, p.7). Staying alert to one's own physical sensations and emotional states is central to somatic education. Furthermore, somatic movement practices 'involve intentionally engaging in conscious movement' (Eddy, 2009, p.14) in order to enable practitioners to identify and consciously change movement habits that are no longer useful (Eddy, 2009, p.7). Similarly, my somatic filming approach uses somatic methods of self-awareness to reveal habitual ways of filming, opening possibilities for different ways of working and supporting the unlearning of these habits. This helps to shift filming away from a purely instinctive or learnt activity towards a consciously embodied, attentive, and reflective practice.

While Authentic Movement underpins this research, other somatic approaches have also informed it, including the theories of Hubert Godard, whose work bridges somatics and perceptual theory. I draw on Godard's ideas through the writings and workshop teachings of Caryn McHose and Kevin Frank (2006), who interpret and transmit his perceptual orientation models. In *How Life Moves*, they describe movement as organised around two primary directions: ground and space (McHose and Frank, 2006, p.15). Their workshops introduce ways of consciously orienting to gravity and space as a foundation for coordinating movement with perception, emphasising the interdependence of the two. Learning to consciously

orient prepares the filmmaker to extend their somatic awareness outward and enter a more embodied relationship with the environment and others.

A related perspective is offered by Natalie Garrett Brown in her long-term outdoor collaboration with Amy Voris and photographer Christian Kipp, *Enter & Inhabit* (2008–). Garrett Brown describes the work as cultivating 'a doubling of attention to inner and outer sensory awareness' (Garrett Brown, 2011, p.137), such that movement emerges from the meeting of bodily sensation and environmental conditions. Her articulation of this double attention provides a valuable bridge between somatic inwardness and environmental attunement and resonates directly with the demands placed on the somatic filmmaker.

Both of my main collaborators bring their own somatic lineages; Helen Kindred has extensive training in Bartenieff Fundamentals, which informs her movement vocabulary and embodied approach. Claire Loussouarn, meanwhile, has a long-standing practice of Amerta Movement, which has significantly influenced my somatic filming approach. Developed by Suprapto Suryodarmo (Prapto) in Indonesia and later taught in the UK by Sandra Reeve, Helen Poynor and others, Amerta Movement is an improvised, outdoor practice that cultivates environmental awareness. Reeve describes Amerta as engaging practitioners with 'the environment, the self, and the cultural presence of others' (Reeve, 2014, p.2). This multidimensional attentiveness is also central to the work of the somatic filmmaker, who is neither invisible nor neutral, and does not simply frame a dancer in isolation. Rather, they participate in a web of relations that includes the physical and emotional presence of both filmmaker and subject, the environment and its atmospheric conditions, as well as the broader socio-cultural contexts in which the encounter unfolds.

Dyadic practices

Whereas somatic practice develops the interoceptive capacity to know oneself from within, the dyad opens the possibility of knowing oneself through another. As Ingold notes, 'others are often in a better position to notice our affective condition as they can see our body language better than we can' (Ingold & Vionnet, 2018, p.84). The dyad - meaning 'two' in Greek, is the smallest possible relational structure, a relationship between two elements. Across disciplines, dyadic relations provide a framework for interaction: in psychotherapy, personal development practices, and bodywork, the dyad fosters exchange through attention, touch, voice, or movement. The mother–child dyad, for example, is widely recognised as a primary site of embodied and relational attunement. Other classical dyads include practitioner–client and teacher–student relationships. In an educational setting, the *Think–Pair–Share* method (Lyman, 1981) enables students to develop their own voice through discussion with a partner before engaging with the wider perspective of the group. Unlike group processes, the dyad creates a focused relational field that often feels safer and more contained; this in turn fosters vulnerability and honesty that may not arise within a group. By contrast, groups may generate dynamics of power, influence, and collective momentum, with less clearly defined roles. French philosopher Simone Weil captures this distinction succinctly: 'Everybody knows that really intimate conversation is only possible between two or three. As soon as there are six or seven, collective language begins to dominate' (Weil, 2002, p.511). It is also worth noting that dyads also manifest in competitive contexts, such as duels, and it is important to recognise that a dyadic exchange may give rise to both competitive and supportive dynamics.

Dyadic relations also unfold in dialogues between humans and materials—between sculptor and clay, foot and earth, musician and score. The duet is a foundational structure in dance. Steve Paxton, originator of Contact Improvisation, observes that for him the duet 'is not a dance about you, or your partner. It is a dance about its movement' (Paxton, 2022). His

comment emphasises the 'between' of the duet: the movement that arises through dialogue, rather than from the dancers as separate individuals. This understanding of movement as something that arises between partners resonates strongly with Ellen Kilsgaard's notion of a 'choreography of communication,' in which movement becomes the manifestation of an encounter (Kilsgaard, 2009). Kilsgaard, whose choreographic practice is grounded in relational sensitivities, has significantly informed my thinking. This is explored in *the reciprocal openness of the dyad* chapter.

At the same time, the attention can also shift fluidly towards a dyadic attunement between self and environment, or between camera operator and camera. These shifting relations emphasise the dyad not as a fixed pairing but as a dynamic site of encounter between two poles, through which one can sense, observe, and become conscious of what emerges 'in between'.

To do so, I draw on two distinct dyadic methods: the mover–witness dyad from Authentic Movement (Adler) and the 'relating dyad' developed by Charles and Eva Berner, a self-contained relational process of inquiry around a question. By adapting these methods to include a camera, I explore two core themes: a somatic approach to filming and a relational dyadic approach to filming. Together, these form the foundation for developing the moving camera witness approach, grounded by the method of witnessing developed by Janet Adler. Central to my aims is cultivating conscious awareness of my own embodiment and movement during the filming process. Yet, maintaining bodily awareness while operating the camera presents a particular challenge: the camera extends vision outward, potentially distancing the filmmaker from their own body. This tendency toward disembodiment is not solely a result of camera use; rather, it reflects what Drew Leder (1990), in The Absent Body, describes as the body's natural inclination to recede from awareness in everyday life. The act of filming can intensify this phenomenon, further disconnecting the filmmaker from their physical presence. My practice investigates how

somatic methods of self-awareness can help sustain embodied presence during filming, while also challenging the medium's ocularcentric tendencies.

This research draws on key writers from the field of somatics and the phenomenological insights of Sondra Fraleigh, particularly her work on the phenomenology of being seen (Fraleigh, 2019). I also engage with philosopher and former dancer Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, who asserts that 'movement gives us our first sense of agency' (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p.138), highlighting the foundational role of movement in embodied selfhood.

As stated above, Authentic Movement (AM) occupies a particular place in my research. In the introduction to the special issue *Authentic Movement: A Field of Practices* (Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices, 2015), edited by Jane Bacon, Bacon cites Adler's description of the *Discipline of Authentic Movement* as grounded in three realms: 'dance, healing practices and mysticism' (Adler, 2002, p.xviii, cited in Bacon, 2015, p.205). While my own practice draws on therapeutic processes, I position it within the aesthetic strand of AM. This special issue, together with Amy Voris's thesis (2019), provides an extensive survey of existing applications of AM within dance-making. Voris integrates AM into her choreographic processes and her long-term project *Perch* (2018), valuing it as a source of sustained creative development. She emphasises that AM enables her to articulate the 'inside-knowing' of her dance-making process, reframing moving as a relational and situated practice in continuous dialogue with environment, self, and context, supporting long-term creative growth.

Other artists who explicitly draw on AM as an artistic practice include Eila Goldhahn, who coined the term 'camera witnessing' (Goldhahn, 2015, 2021); Simon Ellis and Shaun McLeod, who explored the implications of AM as an improvisational practice in *The Currency of Play* (McLeod and Ellis, 2013); and McLeod, who has also staged AM in performance contexts such as *Witness* (2016), shifting the practice from its therapeutic frame into a performative one. Joan Davis, a senior teacher of Authentic Movement in

Ireland, has spent decades developing AM as a performative and site-specific practice, emphasising the interrelationship between spirituality, group process, and choreography. Her long-term research project *Maya Lila* (2007) investigates the integration of AM and other somatic practices into performance. Davis, alongside Emma Meehan, also examines the challenge of sustaining internal sensation while moving with the eyes open—an inquiry that resonates strongly with the perceptual and relational demands of camera witnessing.

My approach is also shaped by improvisational practices developed by Mary Overlie (Six Viewpoints) and Barbara Dilley (Five Eye Practices), which I explore in the section called *Dyadic relationship with the environment.*

From the field of Anthropology, I adopt Tim Ingold's concept of 'correspondence', which offers an alternative understanding of intersubjectivity (Ingold, 2013, 2017 2021). Within filmmaking, I draw on the work of anthropologist and filmmaker David MacDougall, who writes extensively from the first-person perspective of the filmmaker, exploring the corporeal dimension of images (MacDougall, 2019, 2006). This research also aligns with what writer and documentary theorist Bill Nichols terms the *participatory mode* (Nichols, 2010), in which the presence of the filmmaker is acknowledged and the relational dynamic between filmmaker and subject becomes integral to the work. However, it diverges by incorporating somatic awareness and kinaesthetic reciprocity as central elements of the exchange. Additionally, media theorist Vivian Sobchack has significantly influenced my approach, particularly through her reflections on the phenomenology of camera movement. The following quote by Sobchack has been especially resonant for the filming practice I have developed through this research:

> Watching a film, we can see the seeing as well as the seen, hear the hearing as well as the heard, and feel the movement as well as see the moved. (Sobchack, 1992, p.10)

Although my research does not centre on audience reception, this quote encapsulates the premise of my work by foregrounding the meta-presence of the filmmaker—the quality of their seeing, hearing, and moving in relation to what is filmed. Sobchack's notion of perceiving both the focal and non-focal elements of a scene draws attention to the implicit presence of the filmmaker, and how their embodied engagement with the filmed subject subtly shapes it.

While I immediately understood Sobchack's insights into visual and aural perception, it has taken the entirety of this research process to begin to grasp the deeper correlation between movement and the *moved*. Her assertion that we 'feel the movement as well as see the moved' (Sobchack, 2004, p.71) suggests a kinaesthetic mode of perception—one that extends beyond observation into an embodied experience of relationality. This tension and interplay between moving and being moved lies at the heart of my enquiry, where I explore how movement enables connection, and connection enables movement.

As an example, I would like to share an early short filmed dyad between Taiyueh Sean Chen & myself with original soundscape by Francesco Gennarelli so that viewers might experience something of the movement and the *moved* within the relational field between the two movers.

Translating the Somatic to the Audiovisual

One of the early concerns of this research was how to film a somatic mover whose primary focus is internal. I was working with the question: How can I 'capture' and 'represent' something that is invisible to the camera's eye? - grappling with the fundamental dilemma that the camera can only capture the external appearance of bodies, which seems at odds with the somatic agenda that emphasises sensing the self from within. Thomas Hanna's somatic focus on first-person perception stands in direct contrast to the third-person perspective of the camera, which views the body from the outside - much like a mirror. In fact, mirrors are often avoided in somatic

movement classes because they distance the practitioner from an internally sourced sense of self, reinforcing an externalised image instead. This externalisation disrupts the somatic principle of self-sensing from within and reinforces habitual patterns shaped by appearance and judgement.

How, then, can an audio-visual filmic practice engage meaningfully with an embodied, internally-oriented practice of dance? Can the embodied, emergent knowledge between two movers become visible in audio-visual form? I began to wonder whether these two fundamentally different modes of engaging with the body - somatic movement and camera-based observation - could be reconciled. McLeod and Ellis, reflecting on their collaboration *The Currency of Play*, posed a similar question in relation to Authentic Movement and witnessing with a camera: 'We are working with materials (the internal, embodied experiences of Authentic Movement) that lie beyond representational means, or beyond straightforward transmission, but in those 'beyonds' what becomes possible?' (McLeod and Ellis, 2019). Their inquiry resonated with my own, leading me to consider whether an alternative approach to filmmaking might be developed; one that integrates the inner attentiveness and relational awareness cultivated in somatic movement practice, while resisting the imposition of external control over the body.

These concerns were echoed by the screendance artists I interviewed—Jeannette Ginslov, Sumedha Bhattacharyya, and Ami Skånberg—who shared that, at the conclusion of the Screendance Symposium in 2022 (University of Wisconsin–Madison), participants collectively pledged to avoid terms such as *shooting* and *capturing* in their practice, recognising how these imply control over the dancer's body. Another important and central debate at this symposium concerned questions of visibility, inclusion, and representation—specifically, who gets to be seen and included within screendance.

In widening my search to the broader field of filmmaking, I drew inspiration from filmmakers who employed a relational approach to filmmaking. For example, Julie Perini, in her manifesto on relational

filmmaking, states: ‘Relational filmmakers do not make films about people […] relational filmmakers make films with people’ (Perini, 2011). Similarly, the feminist anthropologist Trinh T. Minh-ha, in her influential film *Reassemblage* (1982), filmed in Senegal, chooses ‘not to speak about but to speak nearby’ the women she is filming (Trinh T. Minh-ha, in Frieze, 2018), refusing to objectify the subject; emphasising an ethical and non-authoritative stance toward representation. The theories of Trinh T. Minh-ha also informs Ami Skånberg’s screendance approach of deconstructing the gaze, challenging dominant representational practices, and exploring embodied, non-hierarchical, and relational ways of filming. Documentary filmmaker Erica Colusso also reflects on the ethical relationship between filmmaker and subject, asserting that: ‘Filmmaking… allows for a unique and significant mode of relating between the filmmaker and the film subject; a qualitative 'listening' and a mutual awareness capable of profound transformation in both’ (Colusso, 2017 p.144).

Inspired by these female filmmakers, I began to reconsider my role as the camera operator. Choosing to ‘be with’ and positioning myself alongside the somatic mover allowed me to engage in my own somatic process in parallel with theirs.

Being alongside the somatic mover, rather than imposing an externalised gaze, offered a resolution to my earlier dilemmas of reconciling the inward focus of somatic movement with the outward-looking nature of the camera.

In this way, somatic filming integrates the first perspective of the filmmaker, who is attending to their own soma while simultaneously engaging in the relational act of filming. In this approach, the filmmaker can let go of the ‘burden’ of depicting or representing the dancer, and the dancer can drop the need to perform or entertain the filmmaker. Instead, both participate in a co-held somatic process of cultivating presence and awareness. This loosening of defined roles and expectations allows for greater interdependence and attunement, opening the possibility of recognising when a genuine connection arises between the elements in motion.

Upon reviewing the screendance literature, I identified a gap regarding the somatic engagement of the camera operator. Existing research predominantly focuses on somatic movement practices for the dancer, particularly in relation to movement and site (Garrett Brown 2011, Poynor Kramer, 2016;). Jeannette Ginslov and Alexander Petit Olivieri explore somatic resonance and kinaesthetic empathy between bodies, prioritising approaches that allow images and meaning to emerge from the interaction itself, rather than through pre-fixed shots intended to represent it. While Ginslov opens up the notion of affective transfer between the dancer and the embodied camera operator, and Salzer considers the somatic involvement of the filmmaker, the practice of filming itself as a somatic process remains largely underexplored. My research builds on the work of these practitioners to contribute further to screendance discourses by exploring filming from the embodied perspective of the filmmaker. To foster reflexive and relational awareness in this process, I also draw on Eila Goldhahn's ethic of camera witnessing - a practice that integrates the ethical dynamics of the mover–witness relationship as developed by Adler within Authentic Movement.

Dance phenomenologist Fraleigh asserts that 'somatic practices are autotelic; their values lie in the doing, not the showing' (Fraleigh, 2019, p.95). In line with insights, filming as a somatic practice is understood primarily as a process for the benefit of the participants rather than an audience - concerned with personal realisation and exploration rather than outcome. Accordingly, this research purposefully uses the phrase 'filming practice' (instead of the conventional term filmmaking) to highlight its on-going-ness and processual feature. This aligns with the view of Amerta movement practitioner and filmmaker Steve Hopkins, who describes his work as 'an experiential practice before being about aesthetics', asserting that 'the primary purpose of an embodied film practice is the process itself rather than an end product' (Hopkins, 2014, p.45).

In parallel, I intentionally use the term *mover* rather than *dancer* to align with somatic movement practices and to reflect that this research is

concerned with movement in its broadest sense, rather than with stylised or codified dance vocabularies. I also refer to the person behind the camera as the camera witness or the camera operator. This person takes on the role of the cinematographer, director of photography and more often the editor as well.

While my work resulted in two artistic outputs, its primary focus remained on developing a somatic approach to filming - one that prioritises intersubjective exchange over finalised compositions. The Hackney Marshes project enabled me to cultivate embodied ways of operating the camera in relation to the Marshes, the mover, and myself and develop the movement vocabulary of the *moving camera witness* method that emerged directly from this work. My second project explored the relational dyadic approach to filming using the back-and-forth dynamic of the 'relating dyad', in which the camera was shared between partners to foster reciprocal exchange and a bi-directional gaze. In both projects, the emphasis remained on relating as an embodied mode of engagement between artists before being concerned with its representations.

Tracking (camera) movement

Movement researcher Hubert Godard proposes that 'movement forms the foundation through which organisms establish relationships with one another and their environment' (Godard, cited in Newton, 1995). Similarly, philosopher and former dancer Maxine Sheets-Johnstone highlights the fundamental role of movement in human engagement. She asserts that 'movement is our primary, most elementary, and direct interaction with others in our environment' (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011). Furthermore, she emphasises that movement not only provides us with a first sense of agency but also acts as a bridge for building relationships (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999). Building on this idea that movement enables relating, I began to ask: Can I gain deeper insight into how I relate to the world and others by consciously attending to how I move the camera. Using the dyad—the smallest possible relational structure—as my

framework, I began tracking my own movement with a hand-held camera while in relation with another mover.

My understanding of movement as a perceptual mode was significantly shaped by choreographer Mary Overlie's work. Overlie conceptualises movement as an independent viewpoint in its own right, and her approach encouraged me to observe movement as a distinct perceptual lens through which the world may be met. As she writes, 'to be at the fundamental source of Movement, you must study motion as sensation' (Overlie, 2016, p.37). This perspective resonates strongly with my own process of attending to the sensation of my camera's movement, recognising it not only as a technical action but as an embodied way of perceiving, sensing, and relating.

Following this embodied understanding of movement, film phenomenologist Vivian Sobchack further expands the notion of motility into the domain of cinema. Sobchack considers the camera an externalisation of our embodied subjectivity, asserting that 'camera movement echoes the essential motility of our own consciousness as it is embodied in the world' (Sobchack, 2005, p.319)

Filming handheld, I began to feel as though I was carrying my consciousness in my hands. The body of the camera seemed to replicate the function of my ears, eyes, and relative movement — an extension of my sensing and moving self — bridging the inner world of the filmmaker with the external world they navigate. In this tactile engagement, I was no longer simply observing the world but participating in its unfolding through the motility of the camera. Movement became, for me, a signal that I was relating—that I was no longer separate from what I was filming, but in dialogue with it. This experience led me to reflect more deeply on the notion of relating itself. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the verb relating has several meanings depending on context, each of which offers a useful lens for understanding the act of filming:

1. To find or show the connection between two or more things.

An important part of filming is emphasising the relationship and the scale between elements, to reveal a link between something in the foreground and the background.

2.To tell a story or describe a series of events.

The camera is a unique tool for describing events that it encodes in audio-visual form allowing it to be re-told – recounted back to viewers.

3.To be able to understand a situation or someone's feelings because you have experienced something similar yourself:

In this meaning of the word, to relate implies feeling connected or sympathetic to another. Relating to another through empathy enables one to acknowledge the feeling of another, leading to an attuned response from the observer. There are different types of empathy, a cognitive empathy that amounts to a mental understanding, like placing oneself in someone else's shoes and an affective empathy that extends beyond the cognitive into a compassionate 'feeling with'. There is also somatic empathy which is a physical reaction, based on a mirror neuron response, feeling in your body what another may be experiencing at physical level.

Overall, 'relating' encompasses the idea of making connections in various ways, whether through logical association, narrative description, or empathy. Some forms of relating happen implicitly: for instance, my relationship with gravity, or the way the body intuitively navigates the shared space of a pavement. In attuning to the implicit relational ability of the self, I am to bring conscious awareness to the act of relating from the perspective of the filmmaker in an ongoing dialogue with the mover and the environment.

As the filmmaker I ask myself: how do I understand and relate to what is unfolding? Where do I place my camera in relation to it? Am I relating to it visually, aurally, emphatically or somatically? Is there something else to discover in this frame that does not immediately reveal itself? I began to

pay explicit attention to my movement and the subsequent movement of the camera—not to create meaning or interpretation, but simply to notice the shifts that brought us into closer proximity or further away. Did I have a preference between the two? Was this movement spontaneous, intentional, or in response to an invitation? How did I transition from observing movement to participating in the motional dynamic?

My research brings forward the notion that relationality is not only a theme but a method: cultivated through attention, embodied awareness, and shared presence. Through this lens, the camera does not simply document but participates in the unfolding of experience. What follows is a closer examination of how these ideas take shape across specific projects and encounters, articulating a practice of filming as an act of co-creation grounded in somatic and dyadic principles.

Research questions

1. How might somatic and dyadic-oriented methods inform ways of filming?

2. How might a somatic method of filming be articulated and shared?

Methods and Methodology

Methodology

My research draws on Practice-as-Research (PaR) as both a methodological and epistemological framework. PaR positions creative practice as a valid and generative mode of enquiry. Key contributors such as Robin Nelson have highlighted the importance of embodied knowledge and reflective practice, proposing that a dialogical engagement between theory and practice can stimulate both *affirmation*—a sense of resonance with one's

practice—and *de-familiarisation*, allowing critical distance and new insight to emerge from practice (Nelson, 2013, p.31).

In my research, engaging with the theoretical writings of Sobchack, Ingold, and Fraleigh has shifted my thinking away from conventional notions of representation, subject–object dynamics, and outcome-driven practices, towards an understanding of filming as an embodied, relational, situated, and process-led enquiry in its own right.

In developing a somatic approach to filming through dyadic practice, I draw on Vida Midgelow's notion of not-knowing as a 'generative and fertile' space for research (Midgelow, 2011). Adopting a beginner's mind and suspending judgement allows new knowledge to arise through embodied, situated, and relational enquiry. Conversely, in the 'relating dyad' context (explained in more detail below), it is the repetition of the same question that allows for an emptying of concepts and ideas, creating the conditions for accessing deeper 'truths' that are often taken for granted. In my outdoor work, adopting a beginner's mind means delaying meaning making and anticipation by staying with the immediate sensations. This resonates with Midgelow's later writing, in which she describes PaR as a form of 'thinking through doing' that involves 'unpacking assumptions about the practice' (Midgelow in Dodds, 2019, p.120). Both Midgelow and Jane Bacon—who draw from Authentic Movement, psychotherapy, and creative writing—are leading voices in somatic approaches to Practice-as-Research. They advocate for methods that honour the 'lived, felt sense' and extend beyond purely discursive forms. This is expressed through their co-developed method Creative Articulations Process (CAP), which combines movement and creative processes with 'languaging' as a way to bridge embodied experience and reflection. Within CAP, which involves a back-and-forth between movement enquiry and writing, 'languaging' is about staying close to the body's experience—finding words from the body, rather than speaking about it. As Bacon writes, 'at the heart of my methodological approach is this strongly felt desire to speak, move, write 'from' rather than 'about' the experience' (Bacon 2009).

Inspired by CAP, each of my filming sessions was followed by a writing practice to track insights that emerged during the filming process. These reflective and somatic writings played a crucial role in informing the editing of both the video essay and the resulting artistic outputs.

Ben Spatz's notion of the video way of thinking (2018) offers a methodology for understanding the camera as more than documentation, functioning instead as an active participant in embodied inquiry. He writes: 'The video way of thinking... amounts to a new way of understanding life, embodiment, and knowledge' (Spatz, 2018, p.146). Video thus becomes an investigative tool rather than a purely representational medium. Choreographer Jennifer Nikolai similarly notes that in the camera–dancer dyad the camera 'allows us to ask questions in the process, when it is given responsibilities parallel to those of the inquiring dancer' (Nikolai, 2014, p.59). My film *Tell me where you are* reflects this approach, showing the camera operating from inside the dyad.

A methodology that supports Spatz's *video way of thinking* is the method of witnessing, articulated by Janet Adler within Authentic Movement. In my own practice, I adapt this into camera-witnessing—an approach rooted in AM that differs from other common uses of the term in filmmaking and law. Eila Goldhahn was the first to explore this application, describing witnessing as 'a transferable methodology' (Goldhahn, 2020, p.2) and elaborating its ethical dimension, particularly the responsibility, attentiveness, and care required of the witness in relation to the mover.

In Authentic Movement, witnessing involves attunement through one's own body to another's presence and movement, resonating with Csordas's concept of 'a somatic mode of attention'; defined as 'a culturally elaborated way of attending to and with one's body in a context that includes the embodied presence of others' (Csordas, 1993, p.138). Elena Sokolova (2019), in her article *The Smartphone as Witness*, further distinguishes witnessing from anthropological observation by emphasising its reflexive dimension: the witness observes not only the mover but also themselves in relation to

the mover. This self-awareness supports kinaesthetic empathy, enabling the witness to internally sense the other's movement through their own bodily awareness. Thus, movement is perceived not only visually but kinaesthetically—as if the witness were moving themselves within the intercorporeal field that they share.

In my practice, camera-witnessing is more than simply filming to make a record; it involves reflecting-in-action, where the act of filming itself becomes part of an emergent, lived enquiry, positioning the filmmaker–mover dyad as a site for the production of knowledge. Importantly, this process of thinking-through-video extends into the editing phase, where different forms of knowledge emerge. While filming cultivates relational and kinaesthetic understanding, editing enables reflective and interpretive insights through the interplay of theory and audio-visual material. Tacit, embodied knowledge may become perceptible at this stage, as connections not fully apparent in the immediacy of filming are revealed. For instance, the extent to which Claire's movement responded to the sounds of the Marshes became more evident through the video medium, which brings audio and visual elements into correspondence—something less discernible within the richly stimulating environment of the Marshes themselves.

Furthermore, editing enables the articulation and sharing of process through the very video source material from which the films are made, inviting alternative modes of engagement that move beyond conventional academic text.

Methods

My research draws together two distinct dyadic methods: the mover–witness dyad developed by Janet Adler, and the 'relating dyad' devised by Charles and Ava Berner as part of Mind Clearing and practised within Enlightenment Intensives. Although these approaches emerge from different traditions, they share several core features: they are relational in

nature, involve an alternation of roles, and are oriented toward accessing a more direct, unmediated experience of the world. By adapting these methods to include a camera, I explore two core themes: a somatic approach to filming and a relational dyadic approach to filming. Together, these form the foundation of the moving camera witness approach, underpinned by Adler's method of witnessing. In what follows, I briefly introduce each method separately and then consider how they complement one another in supporting my inquiry into the filmmaker-mover dyad.

The 'relating dyad'

The 'relating dyad' combines Zen-inspired koans such as 'Who am I' with structured interpersonal exchange. Lawrence Noyes, who has been instrumental in disseminating Berner's teachings, writes that within the context of an Enlightenment Intensive, the 'relating dyad' combines 'intensive-style contemplation with dyad communication for self-discovery' (Noyes,1998, p.270). The practice is traditionally embedded within an Enlightenment Intensive (EI) - the first of which took place in 1968 in California, led by Berner (Noyes,1998 p.19). EIs are now practised worldwide, most commonly in the format of three-day residential retreats. In this back-and-forth process, partners sit facing one another and take turns responding to instructions such as *Tell me who you are.* As one partner verbally expresses the content of their contemplation, they are supported by the other's listening presence. Unlike ordinary conversation, there is no interruption or commentary. Each partner has an equal five-minute turn for speaking and listening, with a bell marking the moment of transition between 'the explorer' and 'the witness,' terms used by Sarah Dekker and Nic Burnand in their eBook: *The Witness and the Explorer: Learning Dyad Meditation.* The repetition of the same instruction, over and over, allows participants to move beyond surface responses and access deeper layers of experience. As Gestalt therapist Ursula Fausset writes, 'In expressing the content of their consciousness freely, without interruption, they are developing the courage to express "truths that are not usually shared"' (Fausset, 2017).

At the heart of this process lies Berner's emphasis on direct experience, which underpins the purpose of the 'relating dyad' itself. In Berner's work, direct experience refers to the immediate perception of reality as it is—free from interpretation or conceptualisation. Berner describes the purpose of the dyad as enabling a person 'to experience the truth directly, for themselves, without reliance on belief, memory or deduction' (Berner, 1977). In *Consciousness of Truth: A Manual for the Enlightenment Intensive*, Berner refines this idea, replacing it with 'conscious, direct knowledge' (Berner & Sosna, 2005, p.ix), signalling a shift towards a more stable and self-aware understanding of truth.

It was within the context of my Mind Clearing training with Alice Whieldon that I first encountered an EI, and with it, the 'relating dyad' that sits at the heart of this method. The first EI I attended, in 2016, was a pivotal experience. On the third day of this intense verbal exchange, I stood up and declared: 'This is me'. The movement of standing up was experienced as a rush of energy, revealing the importance of movement as a form of pre-verbal communication within a process that predominantly privileges speech. While participants are encouraged to articulate the outcome of their contemplation in any way possible, verbal responses are the norm, as the structure and setting of these retreats are rarely conducive to expressive or movement-based responses.

My impulse to move prompted me to investigate movement more explicitly as an alternative mode of expression—not for its own sake, but to cultivate an embodied awareness of movement within this process. Following a series of preliminary experiments, I introduced a camera with the intention of filming from within the 'relating dyad' itself, positioning the filmmaker as an active participant who simultaneously films and engages in the transformative power of the process. These ideas and the documentation of the experiments and workshop that I led are explored in my essay *A Relational Dyadic Approach to Filming*, particularly in the sub-section titled *The Enlightenment Intensive* and the two that follow, where

I frame this act of standing up as the catalyst that set my doctoral journey in motion.

The mover–witness dyad

The mover–witness dyad was developed by Janet Adler and forms the foundational structure of AM. Adler builds upon the work of Mary Starks Whitehouse, an American dancer and teacher who trained in modern dance with pioneers such as Mary Wigman and Martha Graham. In the 1950s, Whitehouse began studying Jungian psychology and later became a psychotherapist. Drawing on Jung's method of active imagination, she encouraged her dance students to 'stop dancing and just move' (Bacon, 2015, p.205). This marked a significant departure from codified vocabularies of dance training towards spontaneous, uncensored movement as a means of inner exploration, self-expression and transformation. Whitehouse made a distinction between movement driven by conscious intention - 'I am moving' - and movement arising from an unconscious place - 'I am being moved' (Whitehouse, cited in Pallaro 1999, p.82). This insight from Whitehouse has informed and inspired my own approach, whereby the moving camera witness continually attends to the different sources of their movement.

Adler formalised Whitehouse's legacy into the Discipline of Authentic Movement with the overarching purpose of developing the method of witnessing between a mover and a witness.: 'A mover takes on the role of being seen, and a witness takes on the role of seeing' (Adler, 2022, p.89). In this paired, ground-form structure, the mover attends to their inner world while moving with eyes closed, while the outer witness offers a stable, non-judgemental presence for the mover. The mover engages in what is referred to as *inner witnessing*: precisely tracking their movements, sensations, thoughts, emotions and images as they arise. The outer witness practises dual attending to self and mover: staying attuned to the mover while simultaneously observing their own judgements, interpretations, and

projections. In doing so, they engage in what Adler calls 'the art of seeing' (Adler, 1999, p.6).

An important aspect of witnessing—for both mover and witness—is staying with sensation. Attending to sensation accesses an embodied intelligence beneath concepts and keeps awareness anchored in the present moment, rather than drifting into narrative or becoming overwhelmed by emotion. For the outer witness, this supports a shift from simply looking to kinaesthetically empathising with the mover while staying connected to oneself. This attentional mode softens judgement and encourages a relational presence, reducing the impulse to interpret or assign meaning too quickly. At its core, AM aims to facilitate a direct, unmediated encounter with experience. This arises when inner narrative and image-making quieten and attention rests in the immediacy of sensation and presence. As Hartley describes, drawing on [Wellings and Wilde McCormick (2000)], there may come a moment when 'the mind rests in the moment, present to the fullness of all that is' (Hartley, 2015, p.300). Such moments emerge through the mover's capacity to remain embodied within unfolding energetic phenomena and through the enabling presence of the witness. Such depth of presence does not arise in isolation; it is supported and amplified by the relational field created between mover and witness. As Adler observes, a partner enables one to go further than might be possible alone. She writes: 'the attentive presence of a witness significantly impacts the quality of engagement for the mover, and enables a level of deep attention that is less accessible without their presence' (Adler, 1999, pp.153–154). These insights underpin elements of my own method, in which the attentional presence of the filmmaker supports and creates a safe container for the mover.

The legacy of Whitehouse and Adler's work and its relevance to my own approach is explored further in the video essay *The moving camera witness* in the sub-section called *Authentic Movement*.

Foundational Principles for the Moving Camera Witness

Taken together, these two dyadic methods provide a relational, embodied, and perceptual framework for my practice. While each offers distinct pathways into direct experience, their shared principles—attunement, reciprocity, role-exchange, and an orientation toward immediacy—form the foundation of the *moving camera witness.* Building on the methodological commitment to not-knowing introduced earlier, these dyadic methods help sustain an openness that resists premature meaning-making and allows the filmed encounter to unfold relationally in the emergence of the moment. Working with these methods, I developed two main projects in which the dyad provides the relational context for exploring the intercorporeal space between filmmaker and mover, illustrating how the two approaches complement one another in practice.

Main projects

The first dyadic project is a situated, durational, and iterative process of encountering between mover Claire Loussouarn and myself as filmmaker. We began to work intuitively, without paying attention to our different movement lineages. Claire used her Amerta Movement training to move in symbiosis with the environment. I drew on my AM training by practising self-witnessing. In this combined approach of Amerta and AM, the environment and its effect on movement became more visible to me through the act of witnessing Claire, whose heightened environment awareness shaped her movement. Working alongside Claire sensitised my filming process: her Amerta-informed attentiveness invited me to widen my perceptual field, soften the hierarchy of vision, and allow the environment to enter the frame as an active participant. Working in nature over an extended period further enabled me to develop a somatic approach to filming grounded in embodied attentiveness and haptic reciprocity.

'Haptic vision' is a term used by Laura U. Marks to describe a tactile-based, closer-to-the-body form of perception, in which 'the eyes themselves function like organs of touch' (Marks, 2000 p.162). Rooted in theories of embodiment, Marks's concept offers a way of understanding visual engagement as multisensory and intimate, rather than distanced and optical. In my approach, the expression *haptic reciprocity* draws from this understanding to describe the mutual, sensate exchange between body and ground. I imagined that I had eyes under my feet—at once sensing the ground and being sensed back by it. This image encapsulates the somatic attentiveness that underpins my somatic method of filming: a grounded, reciprocal relationship with place, where seeing can take place through the whole body.

The second dyadic project is a collaboration with Helen Kindred in the form of a three-day intensive, using the back-and-forth enquiry of the 'relating dyad' using a shared camera. Helen comes from a background in Bartenieff Fundamentals and is a deeply embodied practitioner whose work is grounded in breath, connectivity, and expert somatic awareness. Her Bartenieff-informed clarity and embodied organisation shaped how she oriented her movement toward the camera, bringing a grounded, responsive presence into the dyadic exchange. Here, the alternation of roles ensures that each partner experiences both positions, gaining insight into the embodied experience of each and, in turn, deepening understanding and nurturing a sense of accountability—what I later describe as a form of reciprocal openness. This experiment revealed agency on both sides of the lens: for the mover, in orienting toward the camera, and for the filmmaker, in framing and filming the mover.

Both projects and the practices that underpin them have been instrumental in developing my method of the *moving camera witness*, which I have shared through video essays, scores, and workshops to articulate and disseminate and share my research findings. Other small-scale dyadic experiments featured in my video essay include one-off collaborations in which the camera was spontaneously shared—most notably with Adesola Akinleye

in *A Relational Dyadic Approach to Filming*, and a filmed dyad with somatic mover Taiyueh Sean Chen that I shared in the introduction. These films, made in states of flow, reveal a kinaesthetic intelligence and attuned relationality that emerges through the shared act of passing the camera. In these moments, agency flows between us, and the resulting images reflect a relational quality that can't be scripted—only lived and witnessed.

These methods and the concepts that underpin my practice are explored in three video essays: *A process of somatic filming*, *A relational dyadic approach to filming* and *The Moving Camera Witness* . Together, these works articulate and exemplify my research into somatic, relational, and dyadic filmmaking practices, offering both a practical and conceptual framework for embodied camera work.

Creative fields screendance

As set out above, this research is situated within the field of screendance. In what follows, I approach this field from my own perspective, shaped by my engagement with it since the 1990s. My research was also informed by conversations with Screendance artists Jeannette Ginslov, Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, and Sumedha Bhattacharyya, each of whom integrates embodied experience into their research-driven, experimental film practices. These were compiled into this video. I also interviewed Dr Eila Goldhahn separately, focusing specifically on her approach to camera witnessing. Her full interview can be found here. This review also includes reference to somatic practitioners whose approaches in working with the environment have informed this research.

Together, these perspectives contribute to a broader understanding of the lineage and evolving practices that inform screendance and somatic movement approaches. From the outset, it is striking to note that screendance, both as an academic field and as an artistic practice, has largely developed within a Western, Americanised framework (Bhattacharyya in Rivoal 2025, 05:26). As Sumedha observes, this perspective tends to obscure long-standing traditions such as Bollywood,

where dance and camera have always been dynamically and stylistically intertwined.

I first became interested in 'Dance on Screen', as it was termed in the late 1990s, after completing my BA in Visual and Performing Arts with Liz Aggiss, herself a prominent artist in the field. The decade (1990) could be seen as a golden age for this 'new' artform, as television actively commissioned dance films through initiatives such as *Tights, Camera, Action!* (1992–1994) and the *Dance for the Camera* (1994) series, which brought dance to primetime TV audiences. Sherril Dodds, who dedicated a book to this era: '*Dance on Screen'* (2001) retraces how the genre sought to emancipate itself from documentation or recordings of live performances. Filmmaker-dancer Amy Greenfield had earlier articulated this symbiosis, observing how dance and film 'share a common language of both moving in time and space' underscoring the shared temporal and spatial foundations of the two forms (Greenfield, 1970, *Dance as Film*). During the nineties, there was extensive discussion about how Dance on Screen had to be created specifically for the screen. Dv8 dance company for example, reworked existing stage pieces specifically for the camera, thus extending the reach and the life of their work. The idea that the camera itself could act as a choreographic agent, rather than a passive observer, became a crucial part of the discourse. These new ideas encouraged filmmakers and choreographers to embrace an experimental spirit that could liberate itself from conventional narrative structures, moving the dancing body to outdoor and unusual locations away from the conventional stage. Dodds writes, 'it was about exploring movement in ways not immediately visible to the naked eye; 'through slow motion, magnification, gravity-defying effects, repetition, and pixelation' (Dodds 2001, p.147). Given television's poor image quality at the time, 'Dance on Screen' adapted through the use of bright colours, striking designs favouring visual aesthetics over television's realist conventions (Dodds 2001, p.99). In my interview with Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, she reflected on this era as feeling that she needed to be an 'exclamation mark …when I look at my old screendance pieces; I worked so hard to be visible' (Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt in Rivoal,

2025 01:08:23). Having lived through this seminal era of Dance on screen, I understand what Ami refers to. It felt as though the medium had to assert itself forcefully, by being original, bold, and daring - an initial approach it has since moved away from. During this period, I self-produced several films, including *Dreadnought Wharf* (2001), *Dancing with Angels* (2003), and *Tango Tomato* (2004).

From 2006 until 2023, in my role as a senior technician, I began teaching an undergraduate module in screendance at Middlesex University. A key resource for my teaching was *Envisioning Dance on Film and Video* (Mitoma, 2002), which chronicles a century of film featuring dance. Accompanied by a DVD featuring documentaries, archival footage, interviews, and ethnographic studies, this collection helped me to broaden my understanding of how film and video can preserve, present, and share dance in ways that are distinct from dance notation or written text. Mitoma reflects:

> The invention of film and video technology has had a profound impact on dance: on access to it, and on the creation, understanding, and appreciation of it. [...] Whether as a documentation tool, a study aid, or a creative medium, the recorded moving image has forever changed the way we perceive and experience dance (Mitoma, 2002, p.xxxi).

I found Mitoma's film selection inspiring for its embrace of diverse movement vocabularies alongside varied approaches and intentions in filming dance, which stood apart from the stylised aesthetics that characterised much of *Dance on Screen* in the 1990s and 2000s. As an ageing dancer, it is the field of Screendance, in fact that has enabled me to sustain my connection to dance and to nurture my interest in movement. Ami Skånberg observes that Screendance remains closer to the field of dance than to the traditional film world, noting the difficulties of bridging these practices within universities (Skånberg in Rivoal, 2025, 01:05:00). The reluctance of film staff to engage with dance students within university settings is regrettable, as film

practices could be greatly enriched by the embodied forms of knowledge that dancers possess.

Another key text in my teaching was Katrina McPherson's *Making Video Dance* (2006), which proved to be an invaluable teaching aid. The book not only offered practical guidance for choreographers and filmmakers but also highlighted how filming dance invites a different kind of intimacy and attention than traditional filmmaking practices. McPherson's approaches often include an improvisational element, which she terms 'mise-en-scène directing': carefully preparing the filming environment by removing visual distractions so that both filmmaker and dancer are free to improvise within a clear visual structure. In this way, McPherson creates conditions in which filmmaker and dancer can share creative agency in shaping the images (McPherson, 2020).

Often, in my own experience of working within an improvisational setting, the camera follows the movement, positioning itself in relation to the dancer. Part of my research has been to promote a bi-directional exchange between the two roles, using the dyad as an opportunity to explore and cross the distance felt between self and other. Miranda Pennell's film *You Made Me Love You* (2005) was particularly inspirational in this regard, as it is the dancer who takes their cues from the camera's movement rather than the other way around. Despite the 'uneasy' eagerness of the dancers to stay centre stage, there was something about their attentiveness to the movement of the camera that drew me in as a viewer.

By 2009, Claudia Kappenberg's article *'Does Screendance Need to Look Like Dance?'* questioned what she identified as the 'widespread celebration of mobility in contemporary screendance practices', marked by an 'excessive display of speed, continuous change and agile bodies'. She argued that 'an ongoing idealisation of mobility in the art form should be viewed with suspicion' (Kappenberg, 2009, pp.10–11). Her observation marked a significant turning point for the field: it challenged the dominance of the agile, flawless and youthful dancing body in Screendance and opened

space for alternative modes of representation. Kappenberg identified emerging practices that moved away from auteur-driven models towards what she terms an 'observational screendance approach' (2009, p.14), informed by traditions such as observational cinema (David MacDougall) and cinéma vérité (Jean Rouch). Both traditions involve a solo filmmaker engaging directly with their subjects over extended periods and prioritising letting situations tell their own stories rather than staging them for the camera. As such critiques gained traction, the field began to shift away from narrow ideals of virtuosic mobility and toward a more expansive understanding of what movement could be. In *Understanding the 'Dance' in Radical Screendance*, Anna Heighway asserts that 'the "dance" in screendance need not be "dance" movement, nor human motion, but anything kinetically driven, full stop' (Heighway, 2014, p.45). As the definition of screendance expanded, questions about authorship, agency, and representation within the filmmaking process became increasingly relevant.

Dancer - camera relationship (Lewis Smith)

In 2016, Lewis-Smith, who examined the evolving interplay between dancer and camera, uncovered a long history of imbalance, identifying what he describes as a persistent 'divide' between performers and filmmakers. In his article *A Brief History of the Dancer/Camera Relationship* (2016), he draws on Luigi Pirandello and Walter Benjamin to highlight the discontent of early performers who, with the advent of film, were required to relinquish both the immediacy of live presence and control over their own representation. Traditional production models, particularly within Hollywood, reinforced this hierarchy by subordinating dancers to the director's vision. To counter this, Lewis-Smith advocates for dance-led projects where the filmmaker is also a dancer, and for single-camera–single-dancer relationships that foster greater equality (Lewis-Smith, 2017). He highlights Katrina McPherson's emphasis on 'mise-en-scène directing' as one such strategy. While concerns about losing the ability to modulate performance for a live audience may seem

outdated, Lewis-Smith notes that power imbalances in authorship during production and postproduction persist in screendance. The filmmaker ultimately controls what is captured and preserved. The camera clearly holds power; as Ami Skånberg observes, it can even be weaponised on social media as a tool for bullying and humiliating others. (Skånberg in Rivoal, 2025, 00:53:36).

Yet within screendance there is often a desire to bridge the 'divide' Lewis-Smith describes. Also, dancers are not entirely passive recipients of the gaze but can actively orient themselves toward the lens, making intentional choices about how their bodies are seen. As Sondra Fraleigh reminds us, performers possess 'intention and agency in being seen' (Fraleigh, 2019, p.89). Similarly, filmmaker Heike Salzer, through her dual experience behind and in front of the camera, has developed an ability to move while simultaneously maintaining awareness of how she appears on screen. From this perspective, Lewis-Smith's narrative of division may reflect more the dancer's sense of being undervalued or objectified. In contrast, I view the roles of dancer and filmmaker as distinct but mutually beneficial: the filmmaker sacrifices some freedom of movement by holding the camera but gains an embodied way of investigating perception and motion, while the dancer relinquishes control over framing but discovers how their presence translates through the mediation of camera and operator.

Dyadic approach (Jennifer Nikolai)

Building on this call for more equitable dynamics, Jennifer Nikolai develops a dyadic approach that shares certain similarities with my own. In her article *The Camera-Dancer: A Dyadic Approach to Improvisation* (2016), she examines how lightweight video cameras, when placed in the hands of improvising dancers, can enhance compositional decision-making in a dance studio setting. She proposes that 'the camera, co-held in the hands of dancers, opens perspectives towards composition otherwise not considered' (Nikolai, 2016). Inspired by Maya Deren's and Dziga Vertov's

theories on the mobile camera, Nikolai's practice values both the embodied knowledge of the dancer with a beginner's mind—where the 'amateur' operates the camera. This approach fosters playfulness and spontaneous decision-making, generating instant composition (Nikolai, 2014, p.128). These recordings are then watched by the dancers and reenacted, taking into account what has been learned. In this way, Nikolai uses the camera as an iterative tool that allows an 'immediate and retrospective investigation of movement' (Nikolai, 2014, p.103).

Similarly, in my own approach the camera is used as a tool to investigate movement and the camera operator is a participant in the dance rather than a passive observer. However, while we both use a dyadic framework, our approaches differ in notable ways. My research is rooted in somatic movement practices, exploring the relationality at play within the filmmaker–dancer dyad, whereas Nikolai conducts a choreographic inquiry, exploring how the camera enhances choreographic composition in novel ways. Despite our different intentions, we both view the camera as a reflective tool (Nikolai, 2014, p.148) and a catalyst for exploring movement and instant decision-making.

Opening and closing the eyes

At the time of Lewis-Smith publication, I attended a screendance workshop with Katrina McPherson, where she introduced a score titled *'Eyes Open, Eyes Closed'*, an exercise that became pivotal in spurring my research onwards. This score, also referenced by my interviewee Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, has become a foundational teaching tool in screendance to embody the camera and understand its implications.

The score invited the participant to work in groups of three, with each person rotating through the roles of camera, operator, and dancer. The person taking on the role of the camera as 'human camera' was guided through the space by the operator, who instructed them when to open and close their eyes in response to the dancer's movements. The temporary

shutdown of vision; a method also used in Authentic Movement, heightens the other senses. I became particularly interested in the sensation of being guided through space as (if I was the camera) with my eyes closed, noticing how each operator's qualities shaped my overall perception and relations to the dancer. I noticed how touch, kinaesthetic, auditory, and even olfactory perception contributed to a kind of narrative even before the visual sense was re-engaged. This underscored how relating is supported by the entire perceptual field, not just vision. This score revealed a fundamental insight for my research: the way a camera is handled by a sentient operator translates into visual perception. I understood how the operator's physicality as well as frame of mind impacts the moving images in very subtle ways. Closing the eyes before engaging with the camera became one of my essential preparatory methods to refresh and expand perception prior to filming. Lewis-Smith observed that the hierarchies he had previously identified were further dissolved when he operated the camera blindfolded, relying entirely on the dancer's instructions to point the lens (Lewis-Smith, 2018, p.57). In this reversal of roles, the dancer assumed responsibility for the 'blind' cameraman, fostering a relational dynamic of reciprocity between the pair.

While closing the eyes heightens awareness of internal sensations, the challenge for the somatic filmmaker lies in sustaining this sensory awareness when the eyes reopen—resisting habitual tendencies to privilege vision over the other senses. Joan Davis, who brings AM principles into performance contexts, asks: 'How can I work with my eyes open and stay connected with myself without being pulled into my external environment?' (Davis, 2004). Emma Meehan, writing about Davis's work, notes that Davis began to use the eyes as 'another limb… scanning, seeing without reaching into seeing' (Meehan, 2010, p. 10). This evokes a shift from outward-directed looking toward a more sensorial, embodied mode of vision. Meehan, reflecting on her experience as a participant-researcher in Davis's *Maya Lila*, examines the tension between witnessing, somatic experience, and documentation. She notes how such practices resist visual capture and describes the difficulty of documenting without losing

connection to her own embodied presence (Meehan, 2010). She writes: 'I take a photograph but I feel like an uncomfortable outsider, separated from participation at the edges of the tunnel and behind the camera' (Meehan, 2023). While I recognise this sense of distance, my own practice seeks to bridge it. The camera participates within the relational field rather than observing from outside. Central to this approach is the ability to rest in stillness until moved into participation, while staying conscious of the subtle transition between these states.

A similar sensibility is found in the work of filmmaker Steve Hopkins, who describes how, when filming a group of Amerta Movement practitioners, he positions his camera on a tripod more or less at random and then resists altering the frame once it is set (Hopkins, 2014). This refusal to reframe invites an acceptance of what is and welcomes accidents and chance. Although I do not work with a tripod, I share Hopkins's commitment to remain with a single frame long enough for something to emerge, rather than moving simply for the sake of it. Looking through a camera already invites a different way of perceiving; a somatic approach to filming that includes reflexive attention further cultivates a more receptive, less controlling presence that acknowledges chance and emergence as integral aspects of the practice.

Remaining in stillness within extended takes becomes a somatic practice of attention—cultivating non-judgement and not-knowing, and resisting the impulse to anticipate what might unfold. The notion of anticipation in relation to site-based screendance is discussed by Kyra Norman in *In and Out of Place: Site-based Screendance* (2010), particularly in how artists engage with space while remaining aware of the future screen context. This resonates with Douglas Rosenberg's proposition that videodance is inherently site-specific, with video itself functioning as the site (Rosenberg, 2000, p.276), reinforcing the idea that screendance practice continually negotiates between the immediacy of presence and the anticipated experience of the screen.

As a filmmaker, I recognise that my attention often oscillates between actuality and potentiality, with a tendency to anticipate—especially when I am tired. One familiar form of anticipation in my practice is allowing the mover to exit the frame, using their departure as a convenient way to conclude a movement phrase. Yet such an ending may be artificial, as the phrase may not feel complete for the mover. Ami Skånberg describes a mutual awareness between camera and mover, where the ending of a movement exploration is not imposed but arises through shared attentiveness to each other's process (Skånberg in Rivoal, 2025, 00:42:33).

The method of witnessing from AM has been instrumental in helping me suspend judgement and avoid projecting desired outcomes. Camera witnessing similarly invites stillness—staying with something long enough to allow it to emerge, without interfering or moving simply to obtain a better angle. Through experience, I have found it is often more effective to stay with the simplicity of the original framing than to adjust too quickly.

At this stage, I would like to refer to Ellis and McLeod's alternative approach to maintaining the non-judgemental ethos of AM within their project *The Currency of Play* (2019). In this work, they experimented with a time-based approach, using a camera that automatically took photographs every thirty seconds as they moved with their eyes closed, partially removing the personal judgement and bias of the photographer. My own approach diverges from theirs - rather than aiming for a 'neutral' or indifferent camera, I foreground the subjectivity of the camera witness as an active participant, using a hand-held camera that responds to the shifting dynamics of the encounter. This shift—from a static witness to a moving witness—acknowledges the embodied and subjective presence of the filmmaker within the mutuality of the filming encounter. Here, the camera does not function as a passive recorder but as an extension of the witnessing body, responsive to the relational dynamics unfolding within the filmmaker–mover dyad.

In this sense, the camera witness becomes a live presence, echoing the witness's role in Authentic Movement: supporting the mover through attentive presence while simultaneously witnessing their own embodied state within the relational field. As Janet Adler writes: 'The attentive presence of a witness significantly impacts the quality of engagement for the mover and enables a level of deep attention that is less accessible without their presence' (Adler, 1999, pp.153–154). In this way, the filmmaker's attentive presence can deepen the mover's process, encouraging them to open further under the non-judgemental gaze of the camera witness. Conversely, the judgement or distraction of the camera operator can alter the atmosphere of the encounter. Claire often mentioned that she could sense my state of being—the difference between a still, supportive presence and a hurried, distracted one. This reciprocal sensitivity between filmmaker and mover reflects a wider understanding of somatic practice as relational and intersubjective, resonating with Niki Pollard's description of 'a duet… a giving and receiving of co-presence' (Pollard, *Enter & Inhabit*, in Brown 2011, p.70), which Garrett Brown draws on to frame the somatic-informed collaborative relationship as fundamentally generative and relational.

Somatic camera

Within the context of screendance and outdoors work, Heike Salzer articulates her concept of the 'somatic camera' (Salzer, 2019, p.75) as part of the relational field. Through her *Wanderers method*, Salzer developed a method in which the somatic encounter of the body in landscape is gathered with a *somatic camera* 'that captures the affective qualities of spaces, via the visceral engagement of the body with space, of both, the dancer and the camera, translating the rhythm of place onto the screen' (Salzer, 2019, p.154). This footage is later edited through a form of somatic editing to preserve 'the visceral memory of place' (Salzer, 2019, p.3). She writes: 'The decision of framing the body in landscape with the camera is influenced by the sentient body of the camera person, instigating a self-reflective interior-exterior encounter with landscape that is visible in

the way the frame is composed' (Salzer, 2019, p.82). She describes how the filmmaker maintains a dual awareness, attending both to the environment, the dancer and their own embodied presence in the landscape.

She argues that the somatic awareness of the camera operator is essential to enhance a kinaesthetic experience for the viewers of the film, 'otherwise the sensation of the viewer stays distant, and one of an observer' (p83). The somatic ability of the filmmaker to attune to site creates a crucial difference for the making of site-specific screendance, that differ fundamentally from those shot by camera operators coming from a cinematic background (Salzer, 2019, p.83). She adds that 'the camera person must have developed the ability of somatic awareness with place to be able to translate the sensorial information into the visual medium' (Salzer, 2019, p.83). My project builds on Salzer's concept of the 'somatic camera' by detailing how the filmmaker can cultivate somatic awareness with the camera in hand, as an ongoing process of embodied engagement. I do this by integrating the method of witnessing, adapted from AM, into my own approach - *the moving camera witness.* This is explored further in the next chapter, where I explain how I developed the movement features of my method directly through observing my own bodily responses while operating the camera.

Salzer explains that her extensive experience being both in front of and behind the camera allows her to hold multiple perspectives at once. She describes this as 'being in front of the lens and at the same time 'looking' through the lens in my imagination' (Salzer, 2019, p.78). This ability to maintain awareness of both real and screen presence is one I also recognise in myself and is particularly relevant to my dyadic relational approach and the film *Tell Me Where We Are?*, in which the mover and the filmmaker shared roles of seeing and being seen. This suggests that the dancers are not simply the object of the gaze but have agency in portraying themselves. While Lewis Smith argues that filmed dance often deprives dancers of agency by positioning them as objects within the cinematic frame, Fraleigh offers a counterpoint, explaining that 'being seen is a perception of myself through the eyes of others' (2004, p.87), and that performers 'actively

practice being seen' (p.100), which implies that being seen in performance is not passive but an expressive and embodied offering. As she clarifies, 'being seen is not the same as being watched' (p.88), distinguishing objectification from an intentional act of relational presence. During the three-day intensive in which Helen Kindred and I engaged in the process of filming each other, I also noticed that I actively engaged in self-framing, curating my image on the screen. Similarly, my dyad collaborator Helen Kindred reflected on how she voluntarily oriented herself towards the camera, as it provided her with a sense of visibility through the screen. This aligns with Fraleigh's assertion that to be seen is 'to give something over - to stand forth in the visibility of expression' (p.90), a gesture that is not narcissistic but conscious and communicative. Sustaining a sense of mutual witnessing through the screen became particularly relevant during the pandemic, when dancers adapted to online platforms like Zoom, intentionally framing themselves to be seen and to communicate. Eila Goldhahn observes that in such digital contexts, 'the camera captures what is already the mover's own vision of herself' (Goldhahn, 2020, p.10), suggesting that the camera in this context does not impose an external gaze but instead reflects the mover's self-perception. In this light, both the digital lens and the relational lens of the dyadic camera can be understood as part of a mutual and self-aware act of seeing and being seen.

As a way to sustain awareness of her image on the screen, Salzer describes asking the camera operator to communicate which part of her body is visible on screen using short phrases such as 'close-up, only your feet' or 'whole body, super wide shot' (Salzer, 2019, pp.77–78). This method, also explored by Omari Carter in a score (found in my list of scores from other artists), incorporates verbal communication to give the dancer greater control over their representation, fostering a shared authorship between the two roles.

However, a distinction between our two approaches is that Claire did not perform for the camera but instead regarded it as simply another element within the surrounding phenomena, like another tree or plant. Rooted in a

lineage of Amerta Movement, her approach emphasised attunement to place rather than a performative relationship with the lens, shifting the dynamic away from a conventional filmmaker–dancer relationship and towards a mutual process of correspondence between us and with the Marshes. This resonates with Helen Poynor's suggestion that dancers should be filmed 'as if they were wildlife' (Poynor, 2014), emphasising a non-intrusive mode of observation in which nothing is ever repeated for the sake of the camera. Likewise, when working with Claire we never directed one another; our process of corresponding unfolded through an attunement to each other's presence rather than through verbal instruction. The fact that the camera was not the central element in the relationship took me by surprise and required that I adapt to a different way of relating with it—one in which the filmmaker and the subject are disentangled, independent of each other, yet connected.

Dyadic relationship with the environment

As a way of adapting, I spent about a year embracing the freedom of attending to my own movement as if I were in a dyad with the Marshes. I became a silent camera witness—akin to the witness role in AM, where one attends solely to their own experience in relation to another, without speaking in the mover–witness circle. During this period, like the mover, I witnessed my own relationship with the Marshes and the movement that rippled through them. Inspired by my collaborator's Amerta lineage, I began to experience what Reeve (2014, pp.69–70) describes as 'being among': an approach that accords equal value to one's own movement, the movements of others, and the movements arising within the environment.

This mode of attending echoes Garrett Brown's idea of a 'doubling of attention'(Garrett Brown, 2011, p.137), enabling me to remain with my own embodied experience while also opening my senses to the Marshes as an active partner. To prepare myself for an attunement between self and environment, I often arrived early and used warm-up exercises from Mary Overlie's Six Viewpoints. In particular, I employed her scores *Walk and Stop*,

which invite movers to slow down, take a few steps at a time, and perceive the world from these different vantage points. This practice facilitates a dialogue between space, self, and perception, bringing habitual patterns of seeing into awareness. I also employed Barbara Dilley's *Five Eyes Practice*, a framework of five distinct modes of looking originally developed to investigate the role of vision within performance. Whereas my habitual way of seeing had been to focus on the mover with direct eyes (as described in Dilley's score), my field of vision gradually widened and softened, allowing the human figure to appear as part of the environment rather than the primary focus. Adopting Dilley's idea of 'infant eyes', I attended to movement with a childlike curiosity, free from the impulse to assign hierarchy. The swaying of long grasses, the buzzing of bees around a bush, and the arc traced by a crow's flight became as compelling as human movement. With each monthly return, I developed a growing sense of affinity with the Marshes. This is explored in my video essay *a somatic filming practice* in the sub-section: *relating with the Marshes*. As the practice deepened, I began to sense the witnessing qualities of the Marshes itself, and the feeling that repeated presence allows the environment to 'know' you back. Being witnessed by the Marshes enhanced the sense of reciprocity within the dyad. This became even more palpable when passers-by paused to observe us, becoming accidental witnesses who subtly altered the relational field and, at times, introduced more overtly performative qualities into my role. As Garrett Brown notes in relation to *Enter & Inhabit*, somatic-informed outdoor movement practices can reposition accidental passers-by as unwitting co-creators. (Garrett Brown, 2011). While filming in the marshes, I often included the movements of strangers within the frame as part of the overall motional field.

Over time, I came to understand the Marshes as a partner in its own right: a partner I could return to when the dyadic relationship between filmmaker and mover became too complex to address directly. This environmental partner offered a buffer, a holding force, a place of retreat and repair. I often reached the Marshes feeling stressed by city life and the burden of carrying equipment to the site, yet I always left in a more grounded state. Being

outdoors and engaging in a creative practice—supported by the ongoing commitment of my collaborator—had a consistently beneficial effect on my well-being.

I also came to recognise how the wider socio-political climate inevitably informed the filming practice. Before the pandemic, the Marshes were relatively quiet, frequented mainly by dog walkers; during lockdown, however, they became a popular destination where Londoners could maintain social distance. This sudden shift from a sparsely populated environment to a busy shared space highlighted how external circumstances continually reshape the relational field. This served as a reminder that a relational field such as the dyad is never isolated, but continually shaped by the broader social and environmental forces within which it is situated.

Having taken the time to cultivate my attentional presence towards both myself and the Marshes—and allowing myself to let go of a sense of obligation towards the mover as film subject—my attention returned to the mover from a more genuine place, accompanied by a deeper understanding of the value of attention itself.

Corresponding

Building on Tim Ingold's notion of correspondence as *'an alternative form of intersubjectivity'* (Vionnet and Ingold, 2018, p.85), I began to understand my encounters with the mover and the environment as parallel journeys — a *'going-along-together of flows'* (Ingold, 2014). To correspond with the world, Ingold explains, 'is not to describe it, or to represent it, but to answer to it' (Ingold, 2013 p.107). To relate with my camera using correspondence as proposed by Ingold, means answering the world with my own motional intervention in a relational participation and with a renewed sense of wonder and curiosity. This idea moves beyond simple interaction to describe an attuned form of co-evolution in which bodies, camera, and environment continuously affect one another.

Writer Daniela Hahn notes that somatic movement artists Paula Kramer and Simo Kellokumpu similarly draw on Ingold's concept to reflect on 'how the body is moved by the material worlds it inhabits' (Hahn, 2021, p.38). Such ways of thinking — of moving and being moved within larger ecologies — resonate with my filming practice, in which camera, mover, and environment exist in ongoing correspondence. I expand on this in my video essay *A somatic filming practice*, where I reflect on being moved by different scales of movement, ranging from the impact of a global pandemic to the sensation of ants crawling on my skin.

Salzer notes that her 'Wanderers' approach 'requires patience and trust for the action to appear' (Salzer, 2019, p.84), a sentiment I share. By slowing down and attuning to the process of encountering, we became receptive to the everyday motion of the Marshes and witnessed emerging moments of 'togethering' (Ingold, 2017 p41) in which the Marshes, the mover, and the camera witness came together in synchronicity without chasing images. Working with long, uninterrupted takes of about forty minutes, I learned to relinquish control, detach from the dancer as 'content creator,' and engage more fully in my own somatic process. This letting go of control was facilitated by the fact that from the start the focus of our work was on the process of encountering rather than on making a screendance product. It was only after two years of meeting that the idea of presenting our work in the form of an installation began to germinate, and following this exposition, we resumed our process of encountering for another four years. This material still remains unseen by the public.

Kinaesthetic empathy

Garrett Brown (2011) argues that somatic-informed movement reveals subjectivity as an always embodied and relational activity—one that emerges through continual bodily exchange with others and with the environment. This emphasis on intercorporeal subjectivity offers a valuable frame for understanding the relational dynamics of my own somatic filming practice. In my context, the filmmaker, while also being another

mover, is simultaneously the mover's first audience or witness, attuning to an intersubjective field that arises between bodies and place—something emergent and greater than the sum of its parts.

Alexander Petit Olivieri describes this co-emergent field within screendance as a 'kinaesthetic exchange': a 'shared connection built upon the actions of the body that emerge in a process of co-creation' (Petit Olivieri, 2022, p.176). He explains how this kinaesthetic exchange emerges through a process of mutual attentiveness and embodied responsiveness between the camera operator and the dancer. To explore this concept, Petit Olivieri interviewed screendance makers who specifically use mobile cameras. The hand-held camera, also favoured by Jeannette Ginslov, foregrounds the subjectivity and live presence of the operator. Petit Olivieri emphasises that the technical operation of the camera should not become an obstacle to creation; what matters most is the camera-dancer's embodied knowledge and their ability to 'tap into the connectivity of their body' (Petit Olivieri, 2022, p.185). This focus on embodied connectivity resonates with Poynor's insistence that site-based movement must emerge from relationship rather than imposition. Poynor is explicit that site-specific work should not treat the landscape merely as 'a lovely background' but must arise through active engagement with place. She refers to her own method as 'kinaesthetic research' —a process of devising material by moving *with* the site rather than imposing a preconceived structure upon it (Poynor 2014). Engaging with the relational connectivity of my body is central to my research. By tuning into my soma — attending to weight and sensation — I activate the body's innate capacity for relational attunement. Becoming aware of tension and releasing it is part of this process. Similarly, Steve Paxton, in his reflections on the Small Dance (Paxton 1986), notes that 'tension in the muscle masks the sensation of gravity', underscoring that cultivating ease in the body is essential for perceptual clarity and embodied responsiveness. By foregrounding this innate connectivity, which often operates below conscious awareness, I allow it to guide my framing decisions rather than relying on visual or technical considerations alone. For example, as the filmmaker, I attend to the sensation of being touched

back through haptic reciprocity with the environment, and I employ a peripheral mode of vision that softens visual hierarchy and fosters a more haptic form of perception—one in which the filmmaker includes themselves within the perceptual field and remains aware of how they are being touched and seen. As Godard observes, peripheral vision is a way of looking that does not name or fix what is perceived, but instead allows space and others to enter one's subjective field (Godard, 2006, p. 36). Importantly, I also attend to my own visibility behind the camera, ensuring that my movements are perceptible and readable to the mover. This attentiveness enhances the kinaesthetic exchange of co-creation and mutuality.

As a mover, in my second relational approach to filming - where the camera is shared - I maintain an awareness of the camera's position and orient towards it to make my movement visible. In my view, the sharing of the camera further supports what Petit Olivieri describes as a 'mutual offering of attention and care on a kinaesthetic and haptic level' (2022, p. 176). By alternating between filming and being filmed, both participants enter into a shared experience of vulnerability and empowerment that each role invites.

In reading Petit Olivieri's articles, my attention was drawn towards Adam Sekuler, one of his interviewees who articulates an observational method that resonates deeply with my own. Sekuler describes how he 'mostly works with the constraints of a static frame until he feels compelled to move with the dancer' (Petit Olivieri 2022 p.190). This approach, which allows relation, connection and movement to correspond, resonates deeply with my own method, in which I build an inner tension of staying with until I am moved. This is explored in the feature of the moving camera witness section.

Concluding thoughts

This selective review has traced the evolving terrain of screendance from the 1990s dance-for-camera culture to the emergence of relational, somatic, and co-creative practices that inform my current research. Across these developments, the camera has shifted from a passive recording device to an active participant in the dance, as articulated by Jennifer Nikolai, who also notes its unique capacity as a tool to investigate movement. This repositioning of the camera is furthered by Lewis-Smith's call for small-scale, single-take, mobile camera collaborations between dancers, as a means to dissolve hierarchies inherent in the film medium. McPherson's 'Eyes Open, Eyes Closed' score and Lewis-Smith's blindfolded filming experiments both point to how temporarily closing the eyes can override the medium's ocularcentrism and re-centre the filmmaker's embodied perception. Heike Salzer builds on this by showing how both the filmmaker and dancer can maintain dual awareness—of themselves, each other, and their shared environment. Her somatic camera approach teaches us that attuning to place requires patience, presence, and trust in emergence. These insights collectively reinforce a model of screendance in which embodied attentiveness, mutual care, and shared authorship are central. This is the context in which my somatic and relational approach to filming has evolved: a co-emergent, kinaesthetic practice of moving, witnessing, and being with, rather than looking-at.

From merging to corresponding to reciprocal openness

Merging

The dyad between a filmmaker and a mover creates a shared perceptual field shaped by overlapping influences. It is within this 'ambiguous space between filmmaker and subject' that David MacDougall suggests 'consciousness is created' (1998 p.25). Within this intercorporeal space, I began to observe within myself subtle shifts of resonance, dissonance, and

parallel action that pointed to an ongoing dance of relationships between self, other, and the environment.

The practice of witnessing, in which I observe myself while filming, became key in staying grounded while filming. Through this method, which involves precise tracking of movement, sensation, and attention, I began to notice small gestures of attunement such as echoing the mover's gestures with my own body. David MacDougall writes:

> One of the strongest indicators of the state of mind of the filmmaker is how the camera moves, or when it does not… Even moves that are apparently unconscious can be clues to deeper feelings of empathy. Synchrony between the movement of the camera and those of the film subject—a synchrony that Jean Rouch compared to a dance—often reveals a strong cultural or personal affinity. (MacDougall, 2019, p.28)

At first, this echoing was barely conscious—happening of its own accord—but as it gradually became more discernible, I began to wonder: was this a sign of merging, or, in other words, of losing my boundaries? Or was I, instead, becoming moved—drawn into a deeper relational attunement with the mover?

I began experimenting with consciously pronouncing these echoes - moving in synchrony with the gestures and rhythms of the mover. Cindy Engel (2024), in her book *Another Self*, refers to this mimicking as emotional and kinaesthetic contagion. She writes:

> Doing what others do is an ancient pre-verbal way to understand others… when we automatically imitate another individual's actions we experience with them, albeit non-consciously. At the same time, imitation also signals our interest in and comprehension of them. Automatic mimicry is therefore considered a fundamental component of empathy. (Engel, 2024, p.46)

Joining in with the movement of others came naturally to me, conversely, I noticed that movement that took me away from the mover felt more challenging. It was with interest that I read the reflection of filmmaker Christine Rogers who wrote: ‘Among strangers, [she] used the lens to construct belonging, but when filming her ageing parents, she used the lens to distance herself’ (Rogers and Gough-Brady, 2023). Reading this, I understood that movements away from the subject were not necessarily signs of disconnection, but rather ways of inviting more perspective or context into the frame. This insight shifted my perception: rather than interpreting distancing movements as emotional withdrawal, I began to see them as part of a wider vocabulary of relational choice. As Fraleigh suggests, 'we can become aware of habits when we pay conscious attention to our movement,' and that as we develop skill in somatic practices, 'we become a 'chooser' and not imprisoned by emotion' (Fraleigh, 2010, p.184). Over my six years of filming, I have slowly learned to let go of my preference for the movement that appears to unite over the movement that appears to separate. Both are expressions of a dynamic, breathing relation. Through the process of inner witnessing while relating with and through the camera, I became increasingly aware of how I adapted my camera movement in response to different movers. Prior to this, I held the assumption that I had a fixed filming style - that I was firmly myself behind the camera. I had not yet developed an understanding of the mutual influence between filmmaker and mover - how each body responds and adapts to the other across the lens.

This became particularly clear during a camera-witnessing session with dancers Marguerite Caruana Galizia and Amy Voris. Filming them individually, in the same space and at short intervals, revealed how I naturally modulated my filming style to attune to each mover’s energy, and how relational dynamics were continuously shaping my way of filming. The following 10-minute clip documents this process.

The method of witnessing offered me a way of relating that is open and receptive yet preserves my autonomy—without becoming rigid. An

illustrative example of this can be seen in this clip as part of dance artist Lizzy Le Quesne's research, in which she invited dancer Elisa Vassena to embody a somatic state. While filming her I found myself accentuating her movement through the camera. This required a delicate balance: opening to her experience, allowing myself to be affected, while staying grounded behind the camera. In recognising that I could be deeply in touch without becoming the same, I discovered a visually expressive way of being *with* the mover through the medium of technology.

Upon reviewing the footage, I realised that many of the subtle kinaesthetic resonances I had perceived during filming were not easily visible on screen. This is reinforced by Vivian Sobchack's reflection on camera movement from a cinematic perspective:

> Usually we are not consciously aware of camera movement as such; most of the time, it exists for us experientially at a prereflective and nonfocal level. Indeed, it exists for us much as does our own physical movement in the world. (Sobchack, 2005, p.318)

This helped me understand how, from the audience's point of view, the movement of the camera registers on beyond conscious perception. Sobchack continues:

> The camera's movement and its implicated presence as the subject of that movement are usually disregarded in favour of our attending (as the camera itself does) to that which the camera moves toward or away from, or alongside or around—to the object of its movement. (Sobchack, 2005, p.318)

Although my research does not focus directly on audience reception, Sobchack's point—that the presence of the camera operator is felt more than explicitly seen—underscores the importance of investigating the camera's somatic role. It is precisely on this subtle, embodied level that the presence and movement of the camera become perceptible.

In my interview with screendance artist Jeanette Ginslov, who investigates the transfer of affective resonance between filmmaker and mover, she articulated how 'the interconnectedness between two sensibilities of movement can be revealed through the act of filming' (Ginslov in Rivoal, 2025, 00:08:45). She speaks of the 'synchronicity and affective resonances between two individuals' and explains that her method of 'extruding' involves becoming a receiver while filming: 'I am no longer Jeanette entering into a reciprocal relationship where it is unclear who is leading' (00:36:28). She describes this 'as a kind of communion—a hypersensitive, meditative flow' (00:37:06). Losing self in the act of filming is also referenced by filmmaker and ethnographer Jean Rouch, who describes how, in moments of encounter, the filmmaker becomes 'no longer himself; entering a state of possession—a cine-trance—with electronic eyes and ears' (Rouch, 1974, p.8). Similarly, MacDougall writes: 'Filmmakers sometimes feel themselves emptied, for in reaching out to assimilate the experience of others there is a certain erosion of their sense of themselves. In sharing the worlds of others so intimately, it is possible to lose sight of your own boundaries' (MacDougall, 2019, p.137).

While I have found great pleasure in a flowing, reciprocal dance with a mover - moments where attunement feels effortless and deeply connected - I have also come to recognise that focusing so closely through the lens can blur the boundaries between self and other, heightening the emotional and kinaesthetic pull of the encounter. In Authentic Movement, the state of being merged with the mover is recognised as a potential risk. In extreme cases, Cindy Engel identifies the professions of documentary filmmakers, nurses, and therapists - those who form close relational bonds - as being at risk of vicarious traumatisation through empathetic engagement with trauma survivors (Engel, 2024, p.185). Keeping an awareness of self through tracking sensations and movements can help the filmmaker to remain grounded during challenging times.

In her article 'Merging and Differentiating,' psychologist and Authentic Movement practitioner Wendy Wyman-McGinty writes that merging and

differentiating are viewed as dynamic processes that unfold throughout one's life. She defines merging as:

> The tendency to bond or become one without experiencing a sense of separateness from another, be it a person, idea, feeling, or institution. The other becomes the object of identification (Wyman-McGinty, in Pallaro 2007 p.155).

By contrast, she writes that differentiating:

> refers to a process of separation, the sense of self in relationship to the other […] is related to an individual's ability to tolerate differences between self and other (ibid).

The state of merging - whether described by Ginslov as a 'communion' or by Rouch as a 'cine-trance' - highlights the powerful relational pull that can occur when filming another. Yet, as MacDougall reminds us, such deep involvement can erode one's sense of self. While these states can yield profound connection and insight, they also call for discernment. In somatic practices like Authentic Movement, merging is recognised not only as a gateway to deep attunement but also as a potential risk. Authentic Movement teacher Linda Hartley highlights three possible modes of outer witness relationship: (Hartley, 2019, personal notes):

- The empathic relationship, in which the witness feels the emotion of the mover directly. While this may foster deep connection, it can also lead to a loss of boundaries - merging becomes a potential hazard.

- The dialogic relationship, where the witness remains present and attuned without merging. For example, if the mover experiences sadness, the witness may feel compassion. There is connection, but also differentiation - presence grounded in awareness.

- The unitive consciousness, a state in which both mover and witness remain empty in intimacy. This is described as a place of grace, a shared space of knowing that arises beyond duality.

Hartley further articulates this state of witnessing in a published source, describing how:

> Embodied awareness can open the doorway to an experience of wholeness, where body, mind, and spirit are no longer fragmented but integrated - this is the ground from which unitive experiences may arise. *(*Hartley in Totton & Hartley, 2004, p.89*)*

The method of camera witnessing supports the filmmaker in sustaining a dialogic mode of filming through dual attention to self and other. I explore this in my video essay *The Moving Camera Witness: staying in dialogical relation without merging* (this link takes you directly to the chapter). In this example, the mover begins to cry and I am tempted to comfort the mover, but I remain grounded in my role as witness. Instead, I focus on my sensations, which helps me stay present without becoming overwhelmed by emotion. Focussing on sensation, allows the filmmaker to remain in the here and now, setting aside preconceived ideas or anticipations that only point back to the self. MacDougall (2006 p.7) writes that filming is 'a form of looking before being a form of representation or communication' but that many filmmakers are 'afraid of looking' (2006 p.8). I experienced this directly while filming Claire's body from above, concerned about the possibility of replicating the male gaze (Mulvey, 1975). This is exemplified in *A process of somatic filming: relating with the mover.* (this link takes you directly to this chapter). In this example focusing on the act of looking itself helped me to put aside these worries and meet the textures and the shapes contained within the frame with clarity instead of fear or projections.

For Adler, the path toward this kind of seeing begins by acknowledging how one's own judgement and projection can distort perception:

> The witness practices the art of seeing... she attends to her own experience of judgement, interpretation, and projection, in response to the mover as catalyst. As she acknowledges ownership of her experiences, the density of her personal history empties, enabling the witness at times to feel that she can see the mover clearly, and more importantly, that she can see herself clearly. Sometimes ... it is grace ... the witness embodies a clear presence. (Adler, 1999 p.6)

In this following example: the mover, the marshes and the witness are experienced as One I experienced what Adler describes as a moment of *clear seeing*. In that instance, I no longer perceived Claire as separate from the Marshes—I was witnessing her *as* the Marshes, not beside or within them, but as embodying the Marshes. This particular filming session, which took place in August, remains vivid in both our memories. When we arrived, we discovered that the Marshes had been abruptly partitioned by construction work. The disruption came as a shock, cutting through the landscape we had come to know. Yet in that moment—which I posit as one of *clear seeing*—I experienced a shift in perspective: a widening of my field of awareness in which I too was no longer separate. In such moments, it feels important to stay close to the experience itself, rather than later dismiss it through analysis, doubt, or judgement.

Correspondence

The dialogical model of witnessing highlighted by Harltey resonates with Ingold's notion of *correspondence*, which describes not a merging or a simple interaction between separate entities, but a *movement together*—a dialogical co-formation that unfolds through ongoing responsiveness. To correspond, as Ingold writes, is "to answer to one another in the process of each answering to the world" (2021, p.15).

This distinction is important. While interaction suggests a back-and-forth between fixed individuals, correspondence invites a shared process of *moving along together in time and space*. In the Marshes, I initially

experienced moments of feeling lost, without the mover offering content. Over time, I came to trust my own resources through a dialogical engagement with what was present. In this participatory approach, the camera becomes a means of *answering* rather than *representing*—responding to the world as it unfolds focusing on what made me more available: open, curious, attuned.

As the Marshes shift through the seasons, Claire moves with the plants; I respond with the camera. At times, we experience moments of unity—synchrony and resonance—before returning to the everyday rhythm of the Marshes. Every correspondence is a process without a fixed endpoint. It carries on.

The reciprocal openness of the dyad

In my second approach to filming, I employ the method of the 'relating dyad', adapted to include cameras, in which the partners take turns to film and be filmed. This approach furthers my enquiry into the dyadic framework and how the camera mediates this exchange. It cultivates a bi-directional gaze that differs from the somatic camera approach developed in the Hackney Marshes project. Whereas the latter practice emphasises a parallel correspondence between filmmaker and mover, here the focus is oriented directly toward one another, and movers are encouraged to face each other with eye contact.

The dyad offers a space in which each mover can express the content of their consciousness freely—through voice or movement. Through repeated iterations of the same question, participants are invited to shed superficial layers and explore their enquiry more deeply. This process differs from ordinary dialogue: it allows each partner to take their allotted time to figure something out without interruption, and in doing so, it supports the emergence of new awareness. As each person is met with unconditional, non-judgmental support, a sense of self—less constrained by preconceived ideas—may begin to unfold. According to Charles and Eva Berner, who

developed this process, when a thought is expressed, received, and understood, its unconscious potency is released—it becomes embodied rather than abstract (personal notes from Mind Clearing training with Alice Whieldon, 2016).

The willingness to be seen and heard within the dyad fosters a sense of accountability: to stay mutually present to one another. When one person takes the step to reveal themselves, it naturally invites the other to do the same, building a shared field of vulnerability. The experience of being seen and heard builds understanding, which in turn cultivates *reciprocal openness*. Here, the camera becomes a shared instrument mediating the process.

This process fosters empathy as participants experience both roles. They also move rapidly between different modes — opening toward and receiving the other — gradually developing the capacity to dissolve the duality between these modes and eventually hold both states at once. Dancer-researcher Ellen Kilsgaard writes: 'Becoming available to the relational space means to offer oneself into a meeting place and *simultaneously* become receptive to the other' (Kilsgaard, 2009).

As the filmmaker, I ask: can I at once, extend into the relational space created by the dyad and receive the mover? Filmmaker David MacDougall maintains that 'to the filmmaker, image-making is largely an extension of the self towards the other, rather than a form of reception or appropriation' (MacDougall, 2006, p.29).

Yet within the co-held space of the 'relating dyad', might both the mover and the filmmaker extend toward each other—*meeting both in space and inside the frame*? Having inhabited both roles, I have come to realise that, as the mover, I am not a passive recipient of the camera's gaze. I retain agency in how I am seen—through presence, gesture, and the subtle dynamics of self-presentation. Framing, selecting, and emphasising aspects of the whole is undoubtedly an expressive act for the filmmaker. But the mover, too,

participates in shaping the gaze—sometimes inviting it, sometimes resisting it, and at times actively co-composing the frame.

Kilsgaard adds: 'Receptivity does thus not mean losing myself into the other but means offering a surface for the other to tap into, and for the other to become receptive towards' (Kilsgaard, 2009). Might the camera lens, which occupies this middle space, become part of that surface — a membrane-like interface allowing permeability in both directions? Can filming be an extension of the self and a site for receiving the other? Perhaps the question can be reframed: can moments of reaching toward one another be witnessed through this technology and made available to others? This question motivated my use of this process in the research.

These movements—from merging, to corresponding, to reciprocal openness—traces a deepening of my understanding of relational dynamics within camera-mediated practice. Where merging suggests a loss of boundaries, and correspondence opens the possibility of moving alongside, reciprocal openness invites a conscious, embodied participation in the relational field. Through witnessing, tracking sensation, and cultivating awareness, I am learning to navigate a delicate balance—offering my presence for another while remaining anchored in myself. This quality of reciprocal openness not only informs my method of camera witnessing but also underpins the ethical and aesthetic choices I make in the filming process.

The moving camera witness method

Goldhahn's Contribution to Camera-Witnessing

Camera-witnessing was first explored by Eila Goldhahn, who describes the witnessing method from Authentic Movement as 'a transferable methodology' (Goldhahn, 2020, p.2) applicable across various contexts. Initially, she employed this approach to document Authentic Movement

circles, with the intention of giving audiences a glimpse into the private and intimate sphere of the practice. She explains:

> I would like to effect a 'witnessing', or seeing with a sense of interest and compassion, of the beauty of ordinary people performing improvised movements and gestures resulting in extraordinary configurations (Goldhahn, 2007, p.115).

She further integrated this method into her creative film practice—experimenting with moving in tandem with the dancer—and, more recently, applied it within therapeutic online sessions between therapist and client. In her 2020 article *Being Seen Digitally: Exploring Macro and Micro Perspectives*, she explains how her approach to camera witnessing derived from the silent witness: 'namely observing with interest, positive regard and the intention to not judge or categorise the seen' (Goldhahn, 2020, p.2).

In both the article and my interview with her, she emphasises the ethical framework underpinning her approach to camera-witnessing. This begins with the preparation of a safe space and the maintenance of a position at its periphery. She emphasises that this fixed placement fosters a sense of predictability for the movers, who move with their eyes closed. While seated on the floor, she employs minimal camera movement and, like an outer witness, attends to her own bodily experience in dual awareness with the movers, negotiating both looking through and above the camera. In Authentic Movement, the mover is regarded as the expert of their own movement and experience. Goldhahn extends this principle to the filmed encounter, asserting that movers are also in charge of their recorded image. After the experience, and once time has passed, she invites interested movers to review and approve the footage, offering them the opportunity to edit out anything they consider too exposing. She also explains that after this vetting process she also removes additional sensitive material.

Witnessing in Authentic Movement (Theoretical Foundation)

In the ground form, Authentic Movement is a dyadic practice that involves a mover who moves with eyes closed and a witness who offers a stable witnessing presence at the edge of the space. After the moving phase, the movers and the witnesses assemble into a circle where the movers explore their movement through language and receiving witnessing from the group.

There are several forms of witnessing:

- A **silent witness** who remains at the edge of the space and witnesses their own experience in the relational context without verbal witnessing, allowing them to focus solely on their own experience within the relational context.
- A **speaking witness** who remains at the edge of the space may repeat or echo simple words spoken by the movers; (repeating signals attentiveness, while echoing signals that the witness has been touched by the mover's words or movement). The speaking witness may also offer their direct witnessing in support of the mover's process.
- A **moving witness** who is inside the moving space as a mover; they offer witnessing from the mover's perspective.

My research context and alignment with Goldhahn.

In my own research, I employ the methodology of witnessing in two different contexts: through a durational outdoor filming practice, in which I sought to develop a somatic approach to filming, and in a studio setting, where I developed a dyadic relational approach. It is important to note that while informed by Authentic Movement, my collaborators are not practising AM and move with their eyes open.

In both contexts, my practice of camera-witnessing aligns with the ethics articulated by Goldhahn, while also diverging from her fixed position to explore a moving style of witnessing. One key aspect of this alignment is my commitment to stillness. I strive to maintain a stable physical and

mental presence while filming handheld, recognising that the stillness of the camera operator supports the mover's own exploration. This was also noted by Ami Skånberg (Skånberg in Rivoal, 2025, 00:42:33). At first, the importance of stillness in my practice was implicit—something I felt but had not yet articulated. It became particularly apparent while attempting to share my methods during the workshop *Being in Motion, Being in Relation* in 2023, where I observed a beginner camera operator struggling to remain still. Sumedha also reflected on this in her interview, noting that the camera doesn't always need to follow the dancer: 'the hardest thing to do is to be still' (Bhattacharyya in Rivoal, 2025, 00:30:04). This insight prompted me to revise my score number 1 and include stillness as an explicit component, acknowledging it as a foundational quality that supports relational filming.

Another central principle from Goldhahn that my own method follows is the collaborative review. I always share footage with my collaborators and ask for their consent. In editing the film *Tell me where you are*, I also carefully removed any material in which I was not comfortable with my own image.

The four-screen installation was edited collaboratively between Claire and me, ensuring that our decisions reflected shared intentions. This process became an intensely creative exchange. The interweaving of our distinct rhythms, intuitions, and embodied memories acted as a generative force, both enriching and integrating the *Hackney Marshes* installation from the first-person perspective of the dancer and the third-person perspective of the filmmaker. It required a significant act of letting go on my part and offered profound learning, revealing how the co-editing process deepened and expanded the installation.

Furthermore, while editing my video essays, I often relied on an embodied sense of what felt appropriate—sometimes omitting valuable material because it felt too intimate. This intuitive editing reflects what I see as a feminine gaze—a way of seeing that resists objectification and honours both the mover and the process.

The moving camera witness method

While Goldhahn draws primarily from the silent witness, maintaining a fixed position, my approach moves fluidly between multiple forms of witnessing I described above, integrating the mobility of the camera and its lens-based possibilities into the practice.

- As a silent witness, I maintain a still frame observing my judgement and impulses to move without acting on them.
- As a speaking witness, I respond with subtle motional echoes in dialogue with the mover
- As a moving witness, I take on the role of a mover, tracking my movement and sensation like a mover does, with the aim to bring conscious awareness to the source of my movement.

As the camera operator, I move between these modes—attending both outwardly to the unfolding relational field and inwardly to my own embodied responses, while paying attention to the source of my movement. This idea is inspired by Mary Starks Whitehouse, founder of AM, who distinguished between movement from the ego—'I am moving'—and movement from a deeper source—'I am being moved', a distinction that has been central in shaping how I track and reflect on my own movement as a camera operator.

Key features of the moving camera witness

- Handheld camera use: alternating between looking through the lens and using peripheral vision. Barbara Dilley*'s Five Eye Practices* offer a useful guide for varied modes of seeing.

- Comfort and stability: finding a sustainable position to hold the camera; many initial movements are about settling.

- Weight awareness: dropping into one's own weight to receive feedback from the ground, adjusting to the camera's added load.

- Multisensory attention: operating the camera through listening, touch, and felt sense—focusing on haptic reciprocity (touching/being touched, seeing/being seen).

- Visible presence: being visibly grounded and clear in one's movements supports the mover's sense of safety and shared presence.

The movement vocabulary of the moving camera witness:

Below, I share the vocabulary of camera movement that has emerged through this research. These movements are also explored with examples in my video essay: a process of somatic filming: Attending to camera movement. While camera movement resists fixed categorisation, I've found it helpful to articulate these qualities as a way of teaching and communicating this method.

Stillness

Stillness is foundational to the practice of the *moving camera witness*. Holding the handheld camera becomes an active, non-judgemental commitment to staying with what is. In this mode, I am with myself, closing my eyes for a moment allows me to acknowledge my mental and physical condition before putting it aside; sensing my weight is a personal key method to bring me in reciprocal relation with the ground that supports me. In this relative stillness the camera operator begins to observe their impulses to move without acting on them, without reaching for a better angle. In this framing, attention may soften or tune out from dominant elements, redirecting instead toward the subtle shifts: the flicker of light across skin, the slow transformation of colour and texture, the way shadows stretch or dissolve. Stillness becomes the condition for noticing

the quiet activity of the world—the movement that is always already there. Moreover, to truly perceive movement, one must first be grounded in its opposite. Beginning in stillness sharpens perception and allows for a more nuanced reception of change, motion, and affective shifts as they arise.

Relational Movement

Movement arises in response to the environment or to the mover. It may involve following an action, echoing or repeating a gesture, or gently adjusting the framing in relation to unfolding dynamics. These movements can also arise in response to an invitation—moving towards or away to allow for more space, more context. They are attuned and responsive rather than predetermined, emerging from a felt sense of the moment.

Intentional Movement

Here, the camera is moved deliberately. These locomotive shifts from A to B are intentional changes in perspective—responses to a question or attempts to clarify what I perceive. In *Phenomenology of Movement*, Caterina Di Fazio, drawing on the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, writes: 'Vision is the question and the movement is the answer' (Di Fazio, 2015, p.151). This quote neatly encapsulates what I feel as a filmmaker when I move the camera with intention. These movements generate new relationships with the unfolding phenomena and often lead back into stillness. Subtle camera adjustments—small shifts in search of the right frame—often come just before settling into that stillness.

Performative Movement

These camera movements are expressive. They often involve an added volume or flourish that emerges from an inner impulse. Movement is both a perception and an expression of the world. In this context, camera movement becomes an extension of the body's expressive intent—an embodied response to what is being witnessed. As Bill Nichols notes, from the perspective of documentary filmmaking: 'The performative mode

stresses the subjective or expressive aspect of the filmmaker's own involvement with a subject' Nichols, 2010, p.202).

Being Moved

These movements are often only noticed in retrospect. They are spontaneous, as if the movement comes through me, not from me. In these moments, movement becomes a sign of connection. I move because I am moved. When movement comes from this place, it feels truly relational, arising from an embodied resonance with the mover, the place, or both. These movements are often only noticed in retrospect. They are spontaneous — as if the movement comes through me, not from me. In these moments, movement becomes a sign of connection. I move because I am moved. When movement arises from this place, it feels truly relational — emerging from an embodied resonance with the mover, the place, or the moment itself.

In the video essay *A Process of Somatic Filming*, I also shared how I am moved by different scales of movement—from a global pandemic to the rhythms of seasonal cycles, the disruption of human groundwork, and the sensation of ants on my skin. Together, these influences shape the way I am being moved.

Together, these modes and vocabularies of movement form the foundation of the *moving camera witness* method—a dynamic, responsive practice modelled on the moving witness, characterised by dual attention to self, mover, and context. It is a way of filming that invites presence, attunement, and various levels of reciprocity, offering a means of engaging with the world through the lens not as an observer at a distance, but as a participant within a shared relational field.

Somatic approach to filming: arising practices

The following arising practices, developed during the Hackney Marshes sited practice, explore embodied ways of operating the camera in parallel

with a somatic mover. In this durational approach, the filmmaker cultivates somatic awareness with the camera in hand - sometimes without looking directly through the lens. Filming becomes a reflective dialogue with the filmed, while simultaneously attending to one's own movement and soma. These practices, combined in the method of the *moving camera witness*, support the development of physical and relational stability and deepen the filmmaker's awareness of the dynamic interplay between relating and moving. In applying this method, I discovered the following findings:

All movements are relational
Despite my initial attempts to categorise camera movements—towards, away, performative, I came to realise that all movement is inherently relational. Every shift of the camera responds to something—whether internal or external, visible or sensed. Movement is not made in isolation but in dialogue with the environment, the other, and the moment.

Movements towards and away are equal expressions of relational dynamics. I used to favour movements that appeared to connect or unify—moving toward the subject, for example. But this research has shown me that movements which seem to create distance—moving away, turning aside—also carry relational depth. These gestures can offer space, allow context to emerge, or make room for something new to enter. Withdrawal, too, is a way of relating.

Reciprocity informs framing
When I attend to the reciprocity between myself and the natural world, the camera becomes responsive — its movements shaped by the dialogue between touching and being touched, seeing and being seen. Rather than deciding in advance how to frame, I allow the frame to be guided by the body's inherent capacity to connect. The speed of walking, for example, is dictated by the terrain when barefoot. In this way, framing emerges not from control, but from attentiveness. A movement creates a new set of relationships, a new way of knowing the world. Before moving the

filmmaker can ask themselves is there more that can be revealed in this framing?

Relational dyadic approach to filming: arising practices

A significant strand of my research involved gradually adapting the process of the 'relating dyad' to incorporate movement and a shared camera, with the aim of cultivating a bi-directional gaze between filmmaker and mover and filming this transformational process from within the dyad. Initially these ideas were introduced in workshop settings, where it received feedback from the field; the video essay: a *relational dyadic approach to filming* retraces this process in detail. This experiment culminated in the film *Tell Me Where You Are*, a filmed dyad between Helen Kindred and myself, co-filmed during a three-day intensive. Throughout the research I also experimented with different instructions. The traditional EI prompt— 'tell me who you are'—felt too confronting for a public workshop setting, outside the self-help framing of the EI. The alternative prompt, 'tell me where you are', emerged during a public talk in which somatic educators Caryn McHose and Andrea Olsen reflected on the importance of the inquiry *'Where am I?'* as an integral aspect of somatic movement practice. This sparked my interest. Although not a traditional EI instruction, it shifted the focus from an individual inquiry toward an awareness of shared context and intersubjectivity. Unlike 'tell me who you are', which encourages introspection, 'tell me where you are' invites the eyes to remain open - to notice, relate, and respond to context. This includes not only the immediate surroundings but also the socio-political and personal landscape of the moment.

Both prompts, while simple, open pathways to deeper connection—with self, with another, with time, and with space. While 'tell me where you are' appears to ask about place, it also implicitly and metaphorically asks about the self, situating identity within a relational and temporal framework.

As I was recovering from Covid, the first two days of our intensive took place on Zoom. 'We attune to what is available to us, letting that be "enough"' (Midgelow, in Dodds 2019, p.137). For the final edit of the film, I chose not to include this online material, but I am sharing some extracts here that gave rise to valuable insights.

When we finally met in real space, the cameras became like interactive toys—left on the floor, recording passively, yet always available to be picked up and moved by either participant. (This was not how I imagined it!) This loosened our grip on authorship. Sometimes the frame emerged without intent; at other times, it was actively shaped. A focus for editing the final outputs were moments in which the camera was picked up, signifying in this context a moment of connections. The 'relating dyad' allows for an initial emptying of the overload of concepts and by observing their experience more closely, giving rise to fresh insights and a rediscovery of simple, foundational ideas often taken for granted. In applying this method, I discovered the following findings:

The camera becomes the moving eye of the still viewer
While on Zoom, I was touched when Helen took me on a tour of her space by moving her camera. It made me realise how the motion of the camera moves the viewer, who remains physically still.

Establishing a relationship must precede framing
On the third day, when we finally met in physical space, it felt unethical to look at each other through the lens before establishing a sense of rapport. This experience clarified the importance of building relational trust before attempting to film someone. Once we had settled into each other's presence, the camera could be gradually integrated into our process.

There is agency on both sides of the lens
While working via Zoom, I witnessed my partner placing herself in view of the camera, as this provided her with her visibility. On the third day, while sharing the same physical space, I became aware that I, too, could orient

myself toward the camera—that I had agency in how and which part of my body was being filmed.

Placing oneself in relationship

Instead of defining our position through physical location, Helen and I instinctively turned towards the relationships that emerged from where we stood, locating ourselves relationally rather than spatially. The prompt 'Tell me where you are' illuminated how our sense of self is not isolated but co-constituted and shaped through ongoing relational exchanges. It underscored a fundamental human impulse: to seek connection as a way of understanding where, and who, we are.

Opening and receiving

The dyad creates a back-and-forth exchange—between opening toward and receiving the other. In this oscillation between opposite poles, participants take turns being vulnerable and offering support, allowing these shifts to become more fluid. Over time, this may cultivate the capacity to hold both states simultaneously. This quality—kinaesthetically receiving the other while staying grounded in the self and offering my vulnerability—is one I seek to embody in my camera witnessing practice.

Filming as a dyadic practice

Gradually, I began to understand the act of filming itself as a dyadic process—two presences, one on either side of the lens. The camera becomes a meeting place, a two-way membrane: both an extension of the self and a receptacle for the other.

The filmed 'relating dyad' as a tool for modelling empathy

In the final dyad of the film *Tell me where you are*, I began to glimpse the possibility that the dyadic method could serve as a tool to model empathy for artificial intelligence. Elena Sokolova, who writes about the smartphone as a witness, concludes her article with the notion of *techno-corpo-reality* (Sokolova 2019 p.132)—an entangled and co-constituted relational space between bodies and machines. The dyadic model, situated at the intersection of embodied relational practice and machine learning, may

offer a framework through which to explore how empathy could be cultivated, interpreted, or even emulated through technology. This represents a possible direction in which I would like to take my research.

Overall Contribution of the research

My research engages multiple fields, offering cross-disciplinary contributions that intersect somatic practice, relational methods, and screendance. As a practice-as-research (PaR) project, it extends the boundaries of screendance in the sense articulated by Vida Midgelow—as a responsive, emergent terrain shaped by practice, employing bespoke ways of 'articulating and sharing research through artistic means' (Midgelow, 2018, p.111). In doing so, it contributes to an expanded understanding of screendance as a site of embodied, relational, and process-led knowledge production.

Within this context, my doctoral project contributes through the creation of new audiovisual works, video essays, practitioner interviews, and the development of the *moving camera witness* method. This method, along with its associated practices, can be explored through a series of adaptable scores and guiding ideas that not only articulate my own practice but also offer a framework for others to discover their own insights. These scores accommodate varying levels of somatic awareness and filmmaking experience, gently supporting the camera operator in cultivating embodied attentiveness while working with the camera in hand.

My method integrates the lens-based vision and mobility of the camera into the practice of camera witnessing, using its affordances to highlight shifts in awareness between self, space, and other. This approach invites the camera operator to recognise their own embodied presence within the relational dynamics of filming and to develop a more intentional movement practice—one that understands how movement itself can become a mode of connection.

Through sustained and iterative practice, I have come to see how the camera can support an inquiry into movement within somatic contexts, drawing on the witnessing principles of Authentic Movement. Filming involves a series of moment-to-moment decisions—of framing, proximity, and perspective. Within a relational context, these choices become opportunities for reflection-in-action while filming.

Over time, this process fosters awareness of ingrained movement habits and opens space for new, responsive ways of filming. These filmed encounters can later be reviewed alongside embodied memory, offering insight into how the relationship between filmmaker and mover takes shape in audiovisual form. Filming as a somatic practice becomes a mode of embodied inquiry—capable of unfolding in parallel with the mover's process or as a shared journey of co-creation and correspondence.

This research proposes a way of investigating movement with the camera through the lens of dyadic practice, reimagining filming as a somatic process of self-realisation and mutual witnessing. In doing so, it extends static modes of observation by integrating movement into a participatory approach that places relationality at its core. The camera thus becomes a supportive tool within somatic movement practices.

In this context, the dyadic process becomes a bridge—one that connects filmmaker and mover — and potentially offers tools for addressing wider relational divides in a world marked by disconnection and conflict. The dyadic structure provides a powerful ethical and perceptual frame, enabling both participants to witness themselves—from within, through the eyes of the other, and through the mediation of the camera.

Overall, this research offers a new practice-led framework for somatic and relational filmmaking, enriching the field of screendance through embodied, ethical, and co-creative practices.

Acknowledgements

This project has been instrumental in developing my voice as an artist and researcher. As I reflect on my journey and the lineage that has shaped it, I wish to acknowledge and thank the many people who have supported, guided, and inspired me — through dance and beyond.

I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt thanks to Liz Aggiss, who welcomed and nourished me during the BA in Visual and Performing Arts, and to Kay Lynn, whose presence also shaped those formative years. I am grateful to Chris Bannerman and Kate Flatt for their generous support throughout my MA in Choreography.

My deep gratitude goes to Linda Hartley, my teacher of Authentic Movement, whose witnessing presence has been central to the development of my own inner witness. I also thank the members of my close Authentic Movement group for their ongoing presence and companionship.

I am particularly grateful to Alice Whieldon, from whom I learned the therapeutic form of Mind Clearing, which has profoundly informed this journey.

I honour all the teachers who have guided my somatic journey in Feldenkrais, Skinner Release, and Contact Improvisation, as well as my peers, whose shared practices continue to enrich my path.

To Katsura Isobe — thank you for your generous support and powerful witnessing presence. I am deeply grateful to Lizzy Le Quesne, Marguerite Caruana Galizia, and Amy Voris for trusting me to document their practices and, in doing so, allowing me to gather insights that have significantly shaped my research.

To my friends — Stephen Hopkins, Katsura Isobe, Sharon Reshef Armony, Daphne Julia Dahrendorf, Agnès Perelmuter, and Virginia Farman — thank you for offering feedback on the development of my video essays.

To my collaborators: Claire Loussouarn, who from the day we met invited me into her practice of moving in the Marshes, and Helen Kindred, who entered the dyadic process with me so openly — thank you for your generosity and trust. Thank you also to Adesola Akinleye, Samuele Russo, Red K Elders, and Taiyueh Sean Chen for our impromptu dancing dyads.

To my interviewees — Eila Goldhahn, Jeannette Ginslov, Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, and Sumedha Bhattacharyya — thank you for sharing your practice and time with me so generously.

To my dance colleagues at Middlesex University — Angela Woodhouse and Yasmin Foster — thank you for your solidarity and companionship.

I would also like to thank César Salazar Portillo and Francesco Gennarelli for their composition and sound support, and Mikel Svak, Joe Jackson, and Bruce Allen for their technical expertise and assistance in setting up the installation. Thank you to Ariana Terry Prado, Max Dixer, and Juan A. Gordon for their support in documenting the installation and workshop.

To my family — thank you for your patience, understanding, and quiet support throughout this process.

To Billy Tomney, who kindly proofread this text — thank you.

Finally, my deepest thanks to my supervisors — Professor Vida Midgelow, Dr Stefanie Sachsenmaier, and Dr Vesna Lukic — for your unwavering support, insight, and encouragement. I am profoundly grateful for your guidance throughout this journey.

— Thank you

Glossary

Amerta movement was developed in the 1970s by Suprapto Suryodarmo (Prapto), (1945-2019) a Javanese movement artist. It is an improvised, non-stylized movement practice typically explored outdoors, aiming to cultivate heightened environmental awareness. It is also taught by Sandra Reeve.

Authentic Movement (AM) is a mindful movement exploration between a mover who moves with eyes closed and a witness who observes the mover's movement, offering a space for reflection and the development of consciousness. It originates in *Movement in Depth,* a practice initiated by Mary Starks Whitehouse (1911 – 1979), and further developed into the *Discipline of Authentic Movement* by Janet Adler (1941-2023).

A Dyad is a structure consisting of two elements or parts—for example, a mother–child dyad or a therapist–client relationship. In psychology, sociology, and relational practices, dyads are often used to explore interpersonal dynamics, communication, or co-experienced processes.

The 'relating dyad' is a partner-assisted self-enquiry process developed by Charles and Ava Berner in the 1960s. Designed as a formalised peer-to-peer communication practice, it was originally conceived as part of the therapeutic modality of Mind Clearing to make the benefits of self-enquiry more widely accessible. In this structured format, two people work with a specific, agreed-upon question, repeating it in cycles over a forty-minute period. Each person takes turns in the roles of speaker and silent witness for equal durations, establishing a parity of exchange. Social conventions such as nodding, physical touch, or verbal affirmation are intentionally suspended to create a non-reactive and contained space. This suspension enables deep listening, emotional release, and the articulation of truth without fear of judgement.

An Enlightenment Intensive (EI) is a group retreat designed to facilitate a direct experience of 'enlightenment' within a condensed time frame. Developed by Charles and Ava Berner in the 1960s, the format combines Eastern contemplative traditions with Western interpersonal communication techniques—particularly the 'relating dyad'. Participants alternate between speaking and listening roles in timed dyads, using prompts such as: *Tell me who you are*, *Tell me what you are*, *Tell me what another is*, or *Tell me what life is*. These structured dialogues are repeated intensively over several days. The method became an immediate success and remains Berner's most well-known contribution. Today, Enlightenment Intensives are held internationally.

Somatic
The term 'somatic' was originally defined by Thomas Hanna (1928 -1990) by using the Greek word Soma - meaning the living body, to refer to the study of the body from within. (Eddy, 2016, p6)

Haptic Reciprocity
In the context of this research, haptic reciprocity refers to the felt, tactile, and relational exchange between bodies and environment through touching and being touched. In dyadic filming, this reciprocity extends beyond physical contact to include an affective and kinaesthetic feedback loop between the mover and the camera-witness, where each respond in real time to the other's presence, movement, rhythms, and expressions. This mutual responsiveness invites a relational mode of filming grounded in somatic awareness and embodied attentiveness.

Mutuality
Mutuality, here, describes the co-constitutive nature of relational encounters in the filming process. Within a dyadic practice, it implies a shared field of attention, where both partners—the mover and the camera operator—are engaged in a continuous process of giving and receiving, witnessing and being witnessed.

The Moving Camera Witness

The moving camera witness is a somatically attuned filming method developed in this research, emerging from the intersection of dyadic practice, somatic movement, and relational filmmaking. This method foregrounds co-presence, affective resonance, and the ethics of witnessing, inviting a shift from representational modes of filming to relational and processual ways of knowing.

Bibliography

Abram, David. 1996. *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Adler, 2002. *Offering from the Conscious Body: The Discipline of Authentic Movement*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Adler, 2022. *Intimacy in Emptiness: An Evolution of Embodied Consciousness*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions.

Adler, J. (2002) *Offering from the Conscious Body: The Discipline of Authentic Movement*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Adler, Janet. 1999. "Who Is the Witness? A Description of Authentic Movement." In *Authentic Movement: Essays by Mary Starks Whitehouse, Janet Adler and Joan Chodorow*, edited by Patrizia Pallaro, 141–59. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Aron, A., Melinat, E., Aron, E.N., Vallone, R.D., and Bator, R.J. (1997) 'The experimental generation of interpersonal closeness: A procedure and some preliminary findings', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23(4), pp. 363–377. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167297234003 (Accessed: [15.03.2025]).

Bacon, J. (2009) *Sitting practice: expansion earth*, paper delivered at the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA) Annual Conference, University of Plymouth, 7–9 September.

Bacon, J. (2015) 'Introduction: Authentic Movement: a field of practices', Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices, 7(2), pp. 203–391.

Bacon, J. and Midgelow, V.L., 2010. Writing choreographic practices: A volume, a practice, a dialogue. Choreographic Practices, 1(1), pp.5–27.

Bauer, S., 2008. *Body and Earth as One: Strengthening Our Connection to the Natural Source with EcoSomatics. Conscious Dancer*, Spring 2008

Bainbridge Cohen, B. (2018) *Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering.* Expanded 3rd edn. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Balázs, Béla. 2003. "The Close-Up and the Face of Man." In *The Visual Turn: Classical Film Theory and Art*.

Ben Spatz (2018) The video way of thinking, South African Theatre Journal, 31:1, 146-154, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/10137548.2017.1414629

Bench, Harmony. 2020. *Perpetual Motion: Dance, Digital Cultures, and the Common*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.5749/9781452962627.

Bloom, K., Galanter, M. and Reeve, S. (eds.) (2014) *Embodied lives: reflections on the influence of Suprapto Suryodarmo and Amerta movement*. Alresford: Triarchy Press.

Berner, C. (1977) *The Transmission of Truth: A Manual for Enlightenment Masters*. Available at: https://payhip.com/b/i1wxS (Accessed: [3/11/25]).

Berner, C. and Sosna, M. (2005) *Consciousness of Truth: A Manual for the Enlightenment Intensive*. Available at: https://payhip.com/b/i1wxS (Accessed: [3/11/25]).

Brannigan, E., 2011. Dancefilm: Choreography and the Moving Image. Oxford University Press.

Büscher, M. (2005) 'Social life under the microscope', *Sociological Research Online*, 10(1). Available at: https://www.socresonline.org.uk/10/1/buscher.html (Accessed: 15.03.25).

Chapman, John. 1988. *Tell Me Who You Are*. J. and E. Chapman.

Christopher, K. and Paterson, M. (eds.) (2021) *Entanglements of Two: A Series of Duets*. Bristol: Intellect Books.

Clarke, G., *n.d. Movement and Meaning with Gill Clarke* [online] Independent Dance. Available at: https://www.independentdance.co.uk [Accessed 7 Apr. 2025].

Crawford, J.R. (2019) *Feldenkrais post: quotes, commentary, links, and an audio lesson.* John R. Crawford Blog. Available at: https://www.johnrcrawford.com/blog/2019/4/8/feldenkrais-post-quotes-commentary-links-and-an-audio-lesson (Accessed: 14 October 2025).

Csordas, Thomas. (1993). "Somatic Modes of Attention." *Cultural Anthropology* 8 (2): 135–56. https://www.jstor.org/stable/656467.

Davis, J. (2004). *Maya Lila – Movement and Art Perspective.* Inside Out Journal (Irish Association for Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapy), Summer 2004.

Davis, J. (2007) Maya Lila: Bringing Authentic Movement into Performance – The Offering. Southrepps, Norfolk: Elmdon Books.

Dekker, S. and Burnard, N., 2022. *The witness and the explorer: Learning dyad meditation* [audiobook]. Publishing Test Account.

Deren, M. (1959) 'Amateur Versus Professional,' included in *Essential Deren: Collected Writings on Film* (edited by Bruce R. McPherson). This book compiles many of her essays and theoretical musings on film.

Di Fazio, C. (2015) 'Phenomenology of Movement', *Eikasia: Revista de Filosofía*, 66, pp. 233–252. Available at: https://old.revistadefilosofia.org/66-07.pdf (Accessed: 24 March 2025).

Dilley, B. (2022) *This Very Moment: teaching thinking dancing*. Digital edn. Northampton, MA: Contact Editions. Available https://contactquarterly.com/contact-editions/title/this-very-moment#$

Dodds, Sherril. 2001. *Dance on Screen: Genres and Media from Hollywood to Experimental Art*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dodds, S. (ed.) (2019) The Bloomsbury Companion to Dance Studies. London: Bloomsbury Academic. Available at: https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/bloomsbury-companion-to-dance-studies-9781350024465/

Eddy, M. (2009) 'A brief history of somatic practices and dance: historical development of the field of somatic education and its relationship to dance', *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices*, 1(1), pp. 5–27.

Eddy, M. (2016). *Mindful Movement: The Evolution of the Somatic Arts and Conscious Action*. Intellect Ltd.

Engel, C. (2024) *Another self: How your body helps you understand others Independent Publishing Network*

Fausset, U. (2017) *Ordinary Truth*. Available at: *https://www.makeshifttheatre.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Ordinary-trutH-FINAL.pdf (Accessed: 15.04.2025).*

Fraleigh, 2020. "A Phenomenology of Being Seen." In *Back to the Dance Itself: Phenomenologies of the Body in Performance*, 89–101. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98059-1_5.

Fraleigh, Sondra. 2019. *Moving Consciously: Somatic Transformations through Dance, Yoga, and Touch*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Garrett Brown, N. (2011) 'Disorientation and emergent subjectivity: The political potentiality of embodied encounter', *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, 3(1–2), pp. 61–73. doi:10.1386/jdsp.3.1-2.61_1

Garrett Brown, N. (2011) 'Embodiment, performance and the political significance of the embodied encounter with the environment', *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices*, 3(1–2), pp. 127–145. https://doi.org/10.1386/jdsp.3.1-2.127_1

Ginslov, J. and Kozel, S. (2015). AffeXity: Performing affect with augmented reality. *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, 11(1), pp.85–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/14794713.2015.1016793

Goldhahn, E. (2007) *Shared Habitats: The MoverWitness Paradigm*. PhD thesis. University of Plymouth, Dartington College of Arts. Available at: https://www.techfak.uni-bielefeld.de/ags/wbski/GW2009/page6/abstracts/Goldhahn.pdf (Accessed: [27.02.2025]).

Goldhahn, E. (2015) 'Towards a new ontology and name for "Authentic Movement"', *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, 7(2), pp. 273–285.

Goldhahn, E., 2021. Being seen digitally: exploring macro and micro perspectives. Body,Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy 16, 87–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/17432979.2020.1803962

Hahn, D., 2019. 'Correspondences: Field, Body, and Material in Contemporary Movement Practices', in *Tanz der Dinge / Things that Dance: Jahrbuch TanzForschung 2019*, eds. J. Birringer & J. Fenger. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, pp. 37-44

Halprin, A. (2000) Dance as a Healing Art: Return to Health with Movement and Imagery. Mendocino, CA: LifeRhythm.

Hanna, 1995. "What Is Somatics?" In *Bone, Breath, and Gesture: Practices of Embodiment*, edited by Don Hanlon Johnson, 343. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.

Hanna, T. (1986). What is Somatics? Somatics: Magazine-Journal of the Bodily Arts and Sciences, 5(4), Spring-Summer, 4–8. https://somatics.org/library/htl-wis1

Hanna, Thomas. 1988. *Somatics: Reawakening the Mind's Control of Movement, Flexibility, and Health*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press (Perseus Books).

Hartley, L., 1995. Wisdom of the Body Moving: An Introduction to Body-mind Centering. North Atlantic Books.

Hartley, L. (2015) 'The way of the witness: Principles and practices in Authentic Movement', *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, 7(2), pp. 299–312. doi: 10.1386/jdsp.7.2.299_1.

Heighway. A. 2014. Understanding The "Dance" In Radical screendance - the International Journal of screendance volume 4 p44.

Hubert Godard and Caryn McHose, "Phenomenological Space: An Interview with Hubert Godard," *Contact Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2006), pp. 23–38.

Ingold, T. (2011). *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2013) *Making: Anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture*. London: Routledge.

Ingold, Tim, and Jon Vionnet. 2018. *Correspondences*. Tsantsa 23: University of Aberdeen.

Ingold, T. Correspondences., 2017 Published by the University of Aberdeen

Ingold, T. (2021) Correspondences. Aberdeen: Wild Honey Press.

Ingold, T. (2022) 'A conversation with Tim Ingold', *Arts Cabinet*. Available at: https://www.artscabinet.org/encounters-issue-1/a-conversation-with-tim-ingold (Accessed: 16.04.2025).

Kappenberg, C., 2009. Does screendance need to look like dance? International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media 5, 89–105

Kilsgaard, Ellen. 2009. "Experiments in a Relational Field-1." Accessed January 2024. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/542d2187e4b0e06ec5d29ca2/t/5444e29be4b090edefe818b1/1413800603573/Notesonexperiments.pdf.

Kramer, P., 2016. Working with physical exposure in contemporary outdoor dance. *Art Research Journal*, [e-journal] 3(1), pp.107-128. Available at: https://periodicos.ufrn.br/artresearchjournal/article/download/8458/6825/0 [Accessed 29 March 2025]

Leder, Drew. 1992. The Absent Body Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lewis-Smith, C. (2016) 'A brief history of the dancer/camera relationship', *Moving Image Review & Art Journal (MIRAJ)*, 5(2), pp. 152–168.

Lewis-Smith, C. (2018.) 'The Dancer and the Looking Glass'. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/100617538/The_Dancer_and_the_Looking_Glass (Accessed: 24 January 2025).

Logan, Kathryn. 2021. "Considering the Power of the Camera in a Post-Pandemic Era of screendance." *The International Journal of screendance* 12. https://doi.org/10.18061/ijsd.v12i0.8303.

Loussouarn, C. (2024) 'How to Be Feral: Movement Practices to Re-Wild Your Body'. Alresford: Triarchy Press.

Lyman, F. (1981) 'The responsive classroom discussion: The inclusion of all students', *Mainstreaming Digest*, University of Maryland, College Park, MD.

Lyman, F. (1981) 'Think-Pair-Share: An Ending Teaching Technique', *MAA-CIE Cooperative News*, 1(1), pp. 1–2.

MacDougall, D., 2006. The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses, STU-Student edition. ed. Princeton University Press.

MacDougall, D., 2019. The looking machine: Essays on cinema, anthropology and documentary filmmaking. Manchester University Press

Manning, E., 2016. The Minor Gesture. Duke University Press.

Marks, Laura U. 2000. *The Skin of Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Durham: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1198x4c.

McLeod, S. (2016) 'The ethos of the mover/witness dyad: an experimental frame for participatory performance', Brolga 40, Australian Dance Council – Ausdance Inc.

McLeod, S. and Ellis, S. (2019) *The Currency of Play.* Available at: https://www.skellis.net/currency-of-play (Accessed: 15 October 2025).

McPherson, K., 2018. Making Video Dance: A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating Dance for the Screen, 2 edition. ed. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY.

McPherson, K. (2020). The Performer, Camera and the Gaze in My screendance Practice. Retrieved from https://www.katrinamcpherson.com/research

Meehan, E. (2010). Visuality, discipline and somatic practices: The 'Maya Lila' performance project of Joan Davis. Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices, 2(2), 219–232.

Meehan, E. (2023) *Witnessing Somatic Experience in Maya Lila*. Substack, 7 September. Available at: https://substack.com/home/post/p-140796895 (Accessed: 15 October 2025).

Midgelow, V.L., 2009. Dance and the 'materialisation' of absence: Rethinking choreography as a practice-as-research. In: V. L. Midgelow and J. Bacon, eds. Articulating dance: Contemporary approaches to performing arts practice. Alton: Dance Books, pp.1–13.

Midgelow, V.L., 2011. Dear Practice…: The experience of practice as research. Choreographic Practices, 2(1), pp.15–32.

Milovanović, Dara. 2023. "From Ephemeral to Digital: A Study of Alexandra Waierstall's Screened and Live Contemporary Dance Performance." *Body, Space & Technology* 22 (1): 128–45. https://doi.org/10.16995/bst.9702.

Mitoma, J. (ed.) (2002) *Envisioning Dance on Film and Video.* New York: Routledge.

Mulvey, L., 1975. Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen*, 16(3), pp.6–18.

Mulvey, L., 1989. *Visual and other pleasures*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Newton, A.C. (1995) 'Basic Concepts in the Theory of Hubert Godard', *Rolf Lines*, 23(1), pp. 32–43. Available at:

https://alinenewton.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/basic-concepts.pdf (Accessed: 27.02.2025]).

Newton, Aline. 1995. “Basic Concepts in the Theory of Hubert Godard.” *Rolf Lines, Journal of the Rolf Institute,* March 1995, 1–10

Nichols, B., 2010. *Introduction to Documentary*. 2nd ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Nikolai, J. (2014) *The Camera-Dancer Dyad: A critical, practical dialogue of virtual and live studio methodologies*. Available at: https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/items/d1312ae1-0187-46b5-9e71-0c96186d0a75 (Accessed: 23 January 2025).

Nikolai, Jennifer. 2016. "The Camera-Dancer: A Dyadic Approach to Improvisation." *The International Journal of screendance* 6. https://doi.org/10.18061/ijsd.v6i0.

Norman, K., 2010. In and Out of Place: Site-based screendance. The International Journal of screendance 1. https://doi.org/10.18061/ijsd.v1i0.6141

Noyes, L. 1998. *The Enlightenment Intensive: Dyad Communication as a Tool for Self-Realization*. Frog Books.

Oliveros, P. (2005) *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice.* New York: iUniverse.

Olivieri, A. P. (2022). *Kinesthetic Exchanges between Cinematographers and Dancers: A Series of screendance Interviews*. *The International Journal of screendance*, 13

Olsen, Andrea. *Moving Between Worlds: A Guide to Embodied Living and Communicating*. Wesleyan University Press, 2022.

Pallaro, P. (ed.) 1999, *Authentic Movement: Essays by Mary Starks Whitehouse, Janet Adler and Joan Chodorow*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Pallaro, P., 2007. *Authentic Movement: Moving the Body, Moving the Self, Being Moved*: A Collection of Essays - Volume Two. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Paxton, S., 1986. *Drafting Interior Techniques. Contact Quarterly*, 11(1), pp.31–34. Reprinted in *CQ Contact Improvisation Sourcebook*, 1997.

Paxton, S. (2022) 'The Initiation of Contact Improvisation', *Contact Quarterly*, volume(issue), page numbers. Available at: [https://contactquarterly.com/contact-improvisation/newsletter/view/the-initiation-of-contact-improvisation#$] (Accessed: 5.03.2025)

Perini, J., 2011. Relational Filmmaking: A Manifesto and its Explication. Afterimage: The Journal of Media Arts and Cultural Criticism 38, 8–10. https://doi.org/10.1525/aft.2011.38.4.8

Petit Olivieri, Alexander . (2022) Kinesthetic Exchanges between Cinematographers and Dancers: A Series of screendance Interviews. *The International screendance Journal*, 13. DOI: https://doi. org/10.18061/ijsd.v13i1.8768

Poynor, H. (2021) 'Walk of Life Training in Non-stylised and Environmental Movement', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*.

Poynor, H. (2014) *Crossing Borders: Helen Poynor*. Audio recording, Independent Dance Digital Library, Siobhan Davies Studios, London. Available at: https://independentdance.co.uk/library (Accessed: 1.12.2025).

Rosenberg, D. (2000) 'Video Space: A Site for Choreography', *Leonardo*, 33(4), pp. 275–280.

Rosenberg, Douglas. 2012. *screendance: Inscribing the Ephemeral Image*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199772612.001.0001.

Rouch, J. (1974) *The camera and man*. Available at: https://www.der.org/jean-rouch/pdf/CameraandMan-JRouch.pdf (Accessed: 6 March 2025)

Rivoal, D. (2025) *in conversation with screendance artists Jeannette Ginslov, Ami Skånberg, Sumedha Bhattacharyya* . [video] Available at: [https://vimeo.com/1012917332/d4d71b0d64?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci]

Rivoal, D. (2022) '*The Shared Space of Hackney Marshes*', *Journal of Embodied Research*, 5(2). Available at: https://jer.openlibhums.org (Accessed: [03/11/2025]).

Rufo, R. and Weig, D. (eds) (2022) *Ecologies of Embodiment: Video Essays II. Journal of Embodied Research*, 5(2). Available at: https://jer.openlibhums.org (Accessed: [03/11/2025]).

Salzer, H., 2020. *Wanderlust in screendance: The Body in Landscapes*. PhD thesis. University of Roehampton. Available at: https://pure.roehampton.ac.uk/portal/en/studentTheses/wanderlust-in-screendance [Accessed 29 March 2025].

Sheets-Johnstone, 2011. *The Primacy of Movement*. Expanded 2nd ed. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Sheets-Johnstone, Maxine. 1999. *The Primacy of Movement*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Sinclair, S., McClement, S., Raffin-Bouchal, S., Hack, T., Hagen, N.A., McConnell, S. and Chochinov, H.M., 2017. Sympathy, empathy, and compassion: A grounded theory study of palliative care patients' understandings and experiences. *Palliative Medicine*, 31(5), pp.437-447. DOI: 10.1177/0269216316663499.

Sobchack, V. (2005) 'Towards Inhabited Space: The Semiotic Structure of a Material World', in *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 9–24.

Sobchack, Vivian. 2004. *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520937826.

Sokolova, E. (2019). The Smartphone as Witness: Technological Mediation of Bodily Sensory Experience. *Forum for Anthropology and Culture*, (15), 116–136.

Spatz. B *"The Video Way of Thinking."* South African Theatre Journal *31 (1)*: 146–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/10137548.2017.1414629.

Suquet, A. (2012) *L'éveil des modernités : une histoire culturelle de la danse (1870-1945)*. Pantin: Centre national de la danse.

Thomas Csordas's 1993 work *Somatic Modes of Attention* the article published in *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 8, No. 2.

Totton, N. and Hartley, L. (2004) *Body, mind and spirit: exploring the unity of body, mind and spirit in psychotherapy*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books.

Trinh, T.T.M. (2018) *There is no such thing as documentary*: An interview with Trinh T. Minh-ha', Frieze, 22 October. Available at:

https://www.frieze.com/article/there-no-such-thing-documentary-interview-trinh-t-minh-ha

Van der Kolk, B. A. (2015) '*The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Transformation of Trauma*'. London: Penguin Books.

Vionnet, C. and Ingold, T. (2018) *From experience to language: Towards an affected and affective writing: A conversation with Tim Ingol*, *Tsantsa*, 23, pp. 82–90. Available at: https://journal-sa.ch/article/view/7299 (Accessed: [insert date]).

Weil, S., 2002. *Gravity and Grace*. London: Routledge.

Whieldon, A. (2016). *Mind Clearing: The Key to Mindfulness Mastery*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Whitehouse, M.S., Pallaro, P., 2007. Authentic Movement: Moving the Body, Moving the Self, Being Moved : a Collection of Essays, Volume Two. (p.244) Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Videos

Rogers, C. and Gough-Brady, C. (2023) *Electronic Knowings*. *Screenworks*, 13(1). Available at: https://www.screenworks.org.uk/archive/volume-13-1/electronic-knowings [Accessed 25 Mar. 2025].

Soloway, J. (2016) *Joey Soloway on The Female Gaze | MASTER CLASS | TIFF 2016*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnBvppooD9I&ab_channel=TIFFOriginals (Accessed: 6 March 2025).

Trinh, T. Minh-ha. 1983. *Reassemblage: From the Firelight to the Screen*. USA. [40 min.]

Olsen, Andrea, and Caryn McHose. *Body and Earth: Seven Web-Based Somatic Excursions* https://www.body-earth.org

Amnesty International (2016) 'Look Beyond Borders – 4 minutes experiment'. Available at: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/05/look-refugees-in-the-eye/ (Accessed: 15.04.2025).en.uit.no

Workshops

Kevin Frank and Caryn McHose, 2025 Motor Re-Patterning, Structural and Behavioural Change

Little, Nita. Online workshop "Relational Intelligence at Home."

Rebecca Black. Online workshop : *The Six Viewpoints*.
https://www.deborahblack.net/courses

Conferences: https://screendancesymposium.art.wisc.edu/

https://kinesthesiafestival.org/

Podcast

Hudson, P. and Wood, K. (2024) *The EcoSomatics Conversations Series: environmental awareness through embodiment*. Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University. Available at: https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/3022557/3022558 (Accessed: 1 October 2025).
—----------

Declaration

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (https://chat.openai.com/) as a writing support tool to identify improvements in tone, structure, and clarity. ChatGPT was used as a dyadic partner to refine phrasing, maintain consistency, and support the development of a formal style appropriate for academic writing. This was particularly helpful with grammar, as I am a native French speaker.

This collaborative exchange facilitated a more precise articulation of ideas and contributed to the overall coherence of the text, while all conceptual development and final editorial decisions remained my own.

For example, I used ChatGPT to assist in the development of a synopsis for [the moving camera witness video essay and A process of somatic filming]. I provided initial prompts and the transcript and received a draft synopsis in response. The AI-generated text served as a starting point for refining the language, structure, and focus of the synopsis. The output was edited to align with my artistic and academic voice, ensure accuracy, and reflect the specific nuances of the project. All final wording, conceptual framing, and curatorial decisions were my own.