

Ecological Compass Oerol 2024

This Ecological Compass is a document compiled by Oerol that defines artistic and practical frameworks for a future-proof, ecological way of working. It is a guideline with which we guide theatre makers and artists into a sustainable and climate-justified way of working on site.

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Dear participant, employee, volunteer, creator, artist, technician, visitor,
and everyone contributing to Oerol and bearing responsibility for the
festival and the island,

This is the new version of Oerol's Ecological Compass. After launching the Ecological Compass in 2023, we have learned and experienced a lot. The Ecological Compass is a living document, and each year we task ourselves with reviewing whether adjustments are necessary. Nature is constantly changing, so we must adapt accordingly, and the Ecological Compass evolves with it.

Introduction

Art, nature and landscape are inextricably linked to Oerol. Over the past decades, Oerol Festival has grown from a small-scale event with street performers and performances in barns and sheds to a large site-specific arts festival that takes place all over the island of Terschelling, in the middle of the Wadden area with fragile and unique nature classified as Natura 2000. The interaction with this nature is part of the magic that Oerol is built on, but we also notice that there is less room for manoeuvre (literally and figuratively). We are running up against limits that we want to, and are also obliged to, respect.

Oerol 2023 Rhisome - Chloé Moglia / La Spire powered by Volta Energy





Photo: Nichon Glerum | OEROL 2023 Tryater / **sâlt**

Nature under pressure

For years, a similar ecological report and approach allowed us to build the festival. This report combined with close agreements and discussions with Staatsbosbeheer and other landowners (Rijkswaterstaat, Wetterskip, municipality of Terschelling and private individuals) forms the basis of our current approach and is the basis for our WNB permit¹.

Nature is under more pressure than ever before. In practice, it is increasingly common for a project at Oerol to be relocated due to changes in nature. We realise that we cannot organise the festival in the same way as before and consider it a priority to take responsibility for a liveable planet. Therefore, it is crucial that a sustainable approach is integrated into the process from the beginning.

Oerol is located on Terschelling, but is a guest in the natural landscape during the months of May and June.

The landscape is managed and protected by various collaborative partners (Staatsbosbeheer, Rijkswaterstaat, Wetterskip, and private owners), but it is the habitat of the flora and fauna and the residents of Terschelling.

The artist, in collaboration with Oerol, engages in a dialogue with the land or property owner to align the plan, execution, and delivery with what is possible or ecologically suitable at the location.

Ecological Compass

We prioritise nature and operate from a nature-inclusive perspective, giving more space to natural and ecological values. We no longer use generators running on fossil fuels, have categorised locations into 3 groups to better assess the impact of a project and potential audience capacity in different areas. The Ecological Compass includes both artistic and practical guidelines, but given the complexity of working on location, it serves primarily as a guide for adaptation.

If you participate in Oerol as an employee, volunteer, creator, artist, technician, visitor, etc., we consider you a part and jointly responsible for Oerol. The aim of this compass is to ensure that our actions do not cause pollution or negative effects on the environment and contribute to a healthy climate and a sustainable Oerol festival. We prioritise ecological frameworks and duty of care, using them as a guide to make appropriate decisions.

We urge you as participants to implement this compass with us. By using the compass, Oerol wants to support artists in finding solutions together.

Oerol team

¹ The Nature Protection Act (Wet natuurbescherming) contains all the rules around the protection of natural areas and species.

Artistic Principles

- **The landscape and the island are your starting point.** As an artist, you research the ecological impact of your intended project from an artistic point of view. The consequence of this knowledge influences your artistic decisions, but ultimately also the choices on how to produce. *I know what my own expertise and role is in the production and ask experts for information if necessary.* In doing so, you ensure a sustainable balance between your idea, the location and the resources to be used.
- **The question "What do I give back to the location?" is central.** This requires everyone to have an open mind to examine the site and perceive where the interests of the site/location itself lie. Here it is not about what we as humans think is appropriate, but what is appropriate for the location. In this, the location is considered an equal co-player and is the foundation of your project. *If I can use nature as a source of knowledge; it is easier to find solutions that waste as few resources as possible. Rather than just taking knowledge, I integrate what I come to bring to the island and the people of Terschelling into my plans.* The questions, "What steps can I take to reduce the negative impact of my project?" and "What do I then give back to the location?" can help.
- **I apply the rule: 'We only do something undesirable if it triggers something desirable'.** For example: *'We take building materials (undesirable) to the island, but transport them in the most sustainable (desirable) way possible'* and *'We assess our undesirable/desirable choices using this compass and together with partners.'* Less (degrowth) is a real and feasible option in this regard. We realise that this rule still requires elaboration and testing in practice. In other words, as long as we are unable to produce entirely ecologically, there is room to make the least harmful choice.

Photo: Nichon Glerum | OEROL 2019 Post uit Hessdalen / 15 419 FT



Practical principles

- **Avoiding fossil sources:** We all contribute as much as possible to minimise our footprint for a better climate. We advocate for de-growth, focusing on a positive impact rather than convenience.

 - *Transportation:* Reduce transport movements, use bicycles instead of cars. Travel together, use delivery vans efficiently, share travel with another artists. Leave things that can stay at home behind. Explore local possibilities.
Artists arriving with a vehicle must be able to deliver set materials to location. You can obtain a driving permit from us for roads generally inaccessible to motorised vehicles. However, note that it is valid only for a one-time transport to and from the location: once for setup and once for teardown.
 - *Power:* Oerol operated without fossil generators in 2023. We encourage lower energy consumption, the use of low-emission tools, and reliance on sustainable energy sources. Instead of bringing a power supply, consider working with what is available. Oerol can make use of battery packs, solar panels, and other innovative technologies regularly tested at our festival.

- **Sustainable catering through conscious food choices:** The global food system is the leading cause of biodiversity loss. Vegan/vegetarian eating is the norm at Oerol. Use reusable tableware, and opt for reusable water bottles instead of plastic ones. Consider seasonal and local products from the island or those with an environmental certification.

- **Material use:** In truly sustainable productions, every material has had a previous life.

 - Second hand, rented, or borrowed from other artists. Carefully consider which materials are suitable.
 - Reused or materials with zero CO² emissions: recycled wood, steel, etc.
 - Low-carbon materials such as timber, plywood, or recycled steel, natural or organic materials.
 - Use responsibly sourced wood, like from the local sawmill on Terschelling, wood from Dutch forests, always ensuring it has an FSC or FSC-Recycled certification.
 - Avoid pure and raw materials like steel, PVC, tropical hardwood, synthetic textiles or materials, glitters, toxic paints, and dyes.

- **Climate Justice and producing:** Consider the impact of your production choices not only locally but also globally. An electric car may be sustainable in use but is not necessarily in production. Costumes from a large chain may be budget-friendly but have negative impact: materials, working conditions, and washing (synthetic materials).

- **Minimise waste:** Everything in a truly sustainable production has had a previous life and will have a future one. We promote circular or cradle-to-cradle material use and less material consumption. Properly separate waste, avoid single-use plastics and tableware, reduce printing, avoid straws, balloons, or confetti, and refrain from using contaminated liquids (such as paint, grease, or solvents) on-site. If you have a fire extinguisher, ensure it contains biodegradable foam.

- **Sanitation:** Prevent water waste, use water responsibly. If a nearby toilet is available, use it instead of a portable toilet. Use only cleaning products with an environmental certification (glass cleaner for lamps can also be made from water and organic vinegar).

- **No changes to the landscape:** digging causes irreparable damage to soil layers, therefore digging is not allowed. Pruning of plants, trees, or shrubs for the benefit your artwork is not allowed in the breeding season. The use of fire or smoking on-site is prohibited due to the risk of fire. It is important that after leaving the site there has been no reduction in natural value: leave it as you found it.
- **Sound and light:** Most natural locations fall under Natura 2000 legislation or are designated as quiet areas. Consider the impact of light and sound on-site. Use natural acoustics or light whenever possible. Although using light after sunset or providing amplified sound for large-capacity performances is inherent to a site-specific festival, ask yourself: will the added sound or lighting cause inconvenience to the environment? Exemptions can be applied for these locations, but the request must be realistic.
- **Drone use:** Using a drone for recording your work before, during, and after the festival is not allowed on Terschelling, not even with a license. Using a drone has a huge impact on breeding and foraging birds. It can cause irreparable damage on the growth opportunities of young birds and their food supply.
- **Sustainability doesn't always cost more:** It is a shift in the approach of designing your budget: you invest more in people instead of using your budget for things.
 - A sustainable design should use less material, with more material being reused or rented.
 - A different approach requires more time for thinking and working in the workshop. Purchasing materials takes more time. Everyone needs time to repurpose materials sustainably.
- **Accessibility:** In addition to preserving the landscape, we remain conscious that the work is accessible and inclusive for everyone. Oerol opposes all forms of exclusion and discrimination, striving for everyone to feel welcome, at home, and engaged. Sustainable production can align with initiatives to make culture more inclusive and accessible, and we believe the talent and insights of more diverse artists are necessary for the creative rethinking of the cultural sector.

For the development of producing sustainably, we also rely on existing innovations and insights. If you want to learn more about sustainable production, check our sources of inspiration:

[Theatre Green Book](#)

[Julie's Bicycle](#)

[Creative Carbon Schotland](#)

[Verborgen impact](#)

[Cultuurmonitor Duursaamheid](#)

[Green Events](#)