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FOSSIL FREE CULTURE

COMPOST FOR WILD WEEDS

A PROLOGUE TO DISOBEDIENT ART SCHOOL

CONCLUSION
READY TO START

Compost is a continuous process in nature; alive, in motion, decaying and emerging at the same time. "Weeds" are resilient forms of life that can break through cracks in concrete, flourish in and remediate hostile ground, and persist beyond suppression. Together, they remind us that what one system discards can transform and nourish another, and what some perceive as unruly and troublesome, others recognise as pathways to renewal.

Let this text be taken in that spirit: as compost to be amended, remixed and spread, so that weeds of imagination may have to grow. Disobedient Art School is one node in this wider ecology. What we offer here is not a doctrine, but a set of practices, questions, and orientations - shaped in dialogue, grounded in struggle, and open to transformation. Our hope is that the tools, ideas, and principles shared here will be adopted, adapted, contested, and reimagined in ways we cannot yet predict.

This publication is not a conclusion, but a call. A call to disobey, not only unjust systems, but also the habits of mind and relation that keep them in place. A call to organise with care, to create with responsibility, and to build forms of learning that nourish collective power. If something in these pages resonates with you, challenges you, or opens new possibilities, we invite you to respond. To annotate, to argue, to carry it into your own context. To treat this text as a map, but be compost - something to be worked with, broken down, and used to grow something else.

The future we want is not yet here. But we believe it can be felt, rehearsed, and grown in the cracks of the present. This is what the document referenced in its title - Compost for Wild Weeds.



FOSSIL FREE CULTURE NL

COMPOST FOR WILD WEEDS

INTRODUCTION

On the cover: Ypsographer work *End the Fossil Fuel Age Now* at *Van Gogh Museum*, *2018*. This act of disobedient art embodies the spirit of Compost for Weeds: transforming decay into fertile ground for unruly, collective futures. Image by Alejandro Ramirez.

This document is the beginning of our effort to define what Disobedient Art School might become. It's a project that has ground on from Fossil Free Culture NL's artistic work, with the wish to share the methods and insights of the collective, and the intention of exploring what learning can become when art is treated as infrastructure for social change. As a collective, the main work of Fossil Free Culture NL so far has been to challenge and reject fossil sponsorship of Dutch public cultural institutions, staging unsolicited art and performance actions in those institutions directly - Offering artistic protest not as commentary, but as intervention. Art, in this sense, not as a service of activism, but art as resistance in itself. Through direct artistic action, we have exposed how fossil fuel corporations exploit the positive reputation of the arts to rejuvenate their reputations – a practice now understood as *artwashing*". But refusal alone is not enough. We are guided by a clear vision: a fossil free future built on *intersectional* equality, in both the human, and more-than-human world. We believe that art has a vital role to play in shaping this future - not as decoration or commentary, but as a political force. Our actions engage art as a form of disobedience, and disobedience as a form of imagination.

Simultaneously we have been building alternative narratives and infrastructures of resistance through workshops, talks, and presentations within both the climate justice movement and the cultural sector.

Art, as we practice at FFCNL, creates concrete social transformations. Since we began our work, multiple Dutch museums have ended their directorship arrangements with fossil corporations, and the term *artwashing* - which we have insistently foregrounded since 2016 - has entered the Dutch dictionary. As a form of resistance, our artistic output has brought the struggle against fossil oppression into imaginative spaces where dominant assumptions and systems, especially those presented as natural, permanent, or beyond question, could be broken open and challenged. One of our earliest actions was dropping a scallop shell dripping with imitation oil (molasses) in the Van Gogh Museum, protesting (the then so named) Royal Dutch Shell plc at a time when few questioned the ethics of fossil sponsorship. Nearly a decade later, in 2025, we created a memorial of regional beguakenes - earthquakes caused by gas extraction - by placing 1,923 black dots on the Groninger Museum's wall, giving visual form to an otherwise hidden cost. These gestures open spaces that hold grief, rage, joy, disruption of rising authoritarianism and social fragmentation - we need not only policies and protests, but also new imaginaries and methodologies, art allows us to build languages for what does not yet exist and to make those visions tangible enough to confront the powers that profit from exploitation and injustice.

Further, we recognise that traditional methods communicating the climate crises often fail to engage the public meaningfully. The challenge is one of addressing "deeper frames" - engaging people at a sensory and feeling level - in order to connect at the level of intrinsic beliefs and shared values that shape our understanding of the world (Boulton, 2016). Such frames are not easily accessed with data or logical arguments alone. This is where art and storytelling matter. When we talk about systemic injustices, like climate change, racism, or colonialism, we often rely on facts and theory. But without emotional and sensory connection, these truths can feel distant, overwhelming, or difficult to grasp in a personal way. People may know about an injustice intellectually, but still feel disconnected from it emotionally or morally. An experiential approach, through art forms, can help people feel the crisis in embodied, emotional, and sensory ways. An experience that doesn't just inform, but moves. To bridge the gap between abstract knowledge (e.g. "I know climate change is real") and lived understanding (e.g. "I can feel the injustice and urgency in my body; I understand it as part of my life, my responsibility"). When people feel the implications of a crisis, not just understand them intellectually, but recognise their meaning in relation to their own lives and the world, their perceptions generally begin to shift. They may begin to see their own role in systems of power or resistance, reimagine what change could look or feel like, and feel compelled to act. This is how the door to transformative shifts in perception are opened, shifts that are often necessary before people commit to action, solidarity, or co-creating alternative futures.

We came together as artists, activists, researchers, and cultural workers because we could no longer ignore the complicity of our cultural institutions in the catastrophic activities of the fossil fuel industry. Our motivation emerged from a shared refusal to allow our public cultural institutions to sanitise the image of an industry actively engaged in ecological destruction, and from a deep desire to reclaim cultural space for climate justice.

In 2016 we formed Fossil Free Culture NL, a collective committed to ending fossil sponsorship in museums and cultural institutions in the Netherlands. Our work is rooted in disobedient art, art in service of activism, but art as resistance in itself. Through direct artistic action, we have exposed how fossil fuel corporations exploit the positive reputation of the arts to rejuvenate their reputations – a practice now understood as *artwashing*". But refusal alone is not enough. We are guided by a clear vision: a fossil free future built on *intersectional* equality, in both the human, and more-than-human world. We believe that art has a vital role to play in shaping this future - not as decoration or commentary, but as a political force. Our actions engage art as a form of disobedience, and disobedience as a form of imagination.

Simultaneously we have been building alternative narratives and infrastructures of resistance through workshops, talks, and presentations within both the climate justice movement and the cultural sector.

WHY ART MATTERS IN THE CONTEXT OF STRUGGLE

Our practice begins with power analysis. We asked: What holds an institution's power in place? We work from the understanding that any powerful institution stands because it is supported by multiple "pillars of power" - sectors and relationships that give it legitimacy, resources, and influence.

HOW FOSSIL FREE CULTURE OPERATES

Since the beginning of Fossil Free Culture NL we have shared our knowledge and methods through workshops, using them as laboratories for the combination of art and activism that laid the groundwork for Disobedient Art School. These sessions have taken many forms - ranging from short introductions that teach grassroots how to create and stage pressure art, to intensive trainings that equip artists to design and deliver activist campaigns - always grounded in the idea that artistic practice can be a direct tool for political intervention. Over time, the workshops evolved in scope and depth - becoming more collaborative among participants, more politically focused through work on real local issues, and increasingly rooted in our developing methodology. In some contexts, such as with the Fonvya Academy of the Arts, they have grown into a full teaching block, where master's students in the Performance in Public Space programme spend three days designing an entire artistic activist campaign. The process ends with a disruptive art performance in the heart of the city, confronting passersby and sparking conversations and moments of critical reflection on the issues at stake. The enthusiasm and depth of engagement from participants convinced us that these methods needed a dedicated environment to cultivate and cross-fertilise their potentials - a place where learning and experimentation could continue beyond a single workshop.

Disobedient Art School emerged from this need: a space to collectively share, refine, and expand FFCNL's methodologies. We use the word "school" in its older sense, from the Ancient Greek *σχολή* (*skholé*): leisure, free time, the space in which one turns to learning and reflection. In classical Athens, *skholé* named the *freedom from labour* that allowed free conversation, philosophy, and study (Etymonline) - a privilege, both then and now, generally reserved for a narrow elite, built on the labour and exclusion of others. Over centuries, the word was reshaped by colonial expansion, industrial capitalism, and institutionalisation. We have detached from it the root in autonomous learning, free from the demands of labour and productivity, and its meaning and purpose were supplanted. It became a place to discipline knowledge for, and align education with dominant social hierarchies. Reclaiming *skholé* today is a political act: to redistribute time and space for collective learning, to dismantle the exclusions on which "free time" was once built, and to root education in feminist, anti-colonial, and anti-capitalist values and a living commons - a place to learn, unlearn, and rehearse forms of creative resistance against the extractive, colonial, and hierarchical systems we seek to dismantle. From this vision, we began building the school in practice - testing what such a commons could look like in real time.

Disobedient Art School first launched in 2022, hosting two initial workshops: a Training for Trainers session at Veem House for Performance in Amsterdam, focused on methodologies for artistic resistance, and a 'Gathering of Workshops' hosted by Casco Art Institute in Utrecht, creating space to share diverse tactics for activism through art. After this promising start, the school paused briefly, before regrouping in 2024 through extensive collaborative conversations between FFCNL co-founder Frida (Daniela Paes Leão) and David Linnarede. Linnarede leads Home of Participation, a project dedicated to designing, developing, and facilitating participatory art methodologies for groups experiencing conflict, vulnerability, and marginalisation, and advocating for civic engagement and fairer public spaces.

THE FIRST INSTALMENT: CO-CREATION IN PROGRESS

The conversations of 2024 became the ground for the principles of Disobedient Art School, presented on the other side of this fold-out. These exchanges followed a dialogical method-ology (Freire, 1970) - one shaped by listening, reflection, and co-creation. The making of this document is part of that same process: a cycle of action and reflection, experimenting with other ways of doing and building knowledge.

Open to collective authorship and shared before "completion," the text embraces uncertainty. It embodies our commitment to critical facilitation - where multiple voices shape the outcome; to community care - holding space for disagreement without losing trust; and to praxis - writing that is not only theory but also a tool for action.

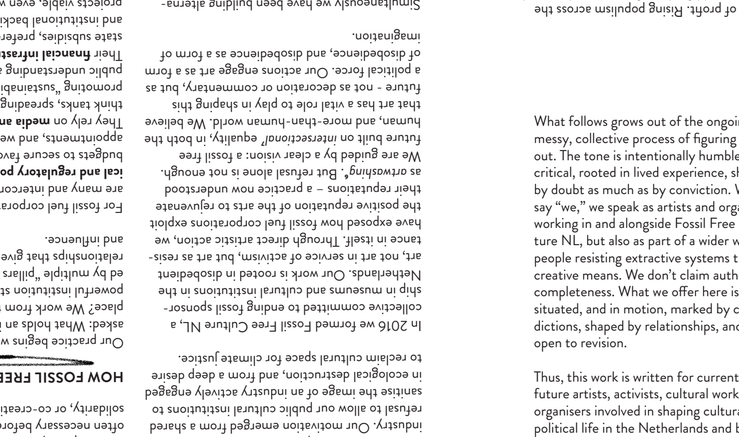
We do not offer a finished apple, nor instructions on planting an orchard. We prepare the soil together, unsure of what will grow. What you hold is the first instalment of a larger eventual publication: a pause in an ongoing process, a chance to articulate our working principles and invite others into this collective project.

It also aims to situate Disobedient Art School within ongoing artistic and activist struggles, to foster connections with our current allies, and to define with them a shared stance alongside others working at the intersection of art and resistance - rooted in, shaped by, or actively contributing to social and political movements.

The launch event for this first instalment is designed as an invitation for conversation. Rather than presenting a finished product, we are opening a shared space for listening, reflection, and collective imagining - an opportunity to co-imagine what Disobedient Art School could become, and how it might serve the urgencies of our time. To make this dialogue meaningful, the text has been shared in advance with a group of key participants: artists and cultural workers deeply embedded in shaping the artistic landscape of the Netherlands, and activists from organising actors in the climate justice movement. These are people who understand and have knowledge of both the creative and political stakes of the moment - who carry situated expertise of the challenges, tensions, and possibilities that arise when art and activism converge. Their feedback will be foundational to how the school grows.

Opening the process in this way is an expression of our commitment to accountability, relationality, and to building Disobedient Art School not as a sealed-off project, but as one node in a wider ecology of transformative cultural work.

This is our first attempt to name what is still taking shape. It is a prologue - sketched through practice, reflection, and shared struggle. We offer it as an invitation to join a living, breathing process of collective creation.



Dissonance Act 2: Afterthought (Fossil Free Culture NL, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, 2019). At the close of a Mozart concert, six performers took the stage and unrolled two 4 by 4 meters banners bearing a poem by award-winning poet Hannah van Binsbergen. Her vision of human extinction in the face of climate collapse was no longer a distant abstraction, but a present and urgent threat if we do not take action. Photos by Laura Ponchel, Masha Ru and Frida.

SOLIDARITY AND INTERCONNECTION

Rooted in these pedagogical commitments, Disobedient Art School will also work to cultivate forms of solidarity that respond to the complexity of the world we are part of. The school aims to deepen our understanding of what radical and intersectional solidarity truly demands. This means recognising that our struggles are not isolated. The same fossil-fuelled power structures that drive the climate crisis also uphold systems of working-class and racial injustice - for instance, the continued operation of the Tata Steel plant in IJmuiden, creating dangerous air pollution that disproportionately affects local working-class and migrant communities (Roosen, 2022). The same colonial logics that exploit and marginalise some lives are responsible for sustaining violence along lines of gender, class, and sexuality. For example, in The Hague, trans women sex workers, especially those from migrant backgrounds, are exposed to risk of lost income and employment due to the legal ambiguity they suffer under the current sex-work regulations. This further exacerbates and limits their access to support during crises, such as they experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic (Siegmann et al., 2022).

Rather than seeing these systems of oppression as separate issues, Disobedient Art School understands them as deeply interconnected, as part of a shared root system that feeds the crises we face today. In response to these entanglements, the school seeks to cultivate "response-ability" (Haraway, 2016): a collective capacity to pay attention, to listen closely, and to act with care in situations marked by complexity and inequality. This form of response is not individual or isolated. It emerges in a multilayered relation - with others, through time, and across differences. It is something we are committed to practicing together, imperfectly and intentionally, as part of an ongoing commitment to build more just and reciprocal ways of being.



Writing on the Wall (Fossil Free Culture NL, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, 2019). Fifteen performers pressed oil-drenched bodies against the glass façade, leaving haunting imprints that recalled those forced to clean Shell's spills with their bare hands. Pictures by Olga and Alex Bleu.

DISOBEDIENT ART PRACTICE AND PEDAGOGY

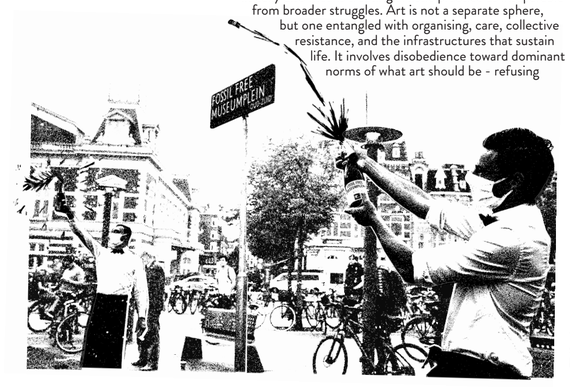
Art is not separate from the material conditions of struggle. Cultural production is deeply entangled with the ways people survive, resist, and build alternatives. Similarly, aesthetic practices can prefigure liberatory futures by making space for what does not yet exist (Muñoz, 2009). Through Disobedient Art School, we aim to deepen the role of art within the diverse social and political movements as infrastructure. This is not about making political art, but about making art politically: situated, risky, disobedient, and nurturing collective transformation.

To make art politically is to pay attention not only to what art says, but to how it is made. It asks who is involved in the process and how decisions are made. What power dynamics shape the work, and whose voices are centred or excluded? It means recognising that art is never outside of systems of power - it moves through institutions, markets, and public spaces that are shaped by political, economic, and social forces. Choosing to intervene in, disrupt, or withdraw from these spaces is itself a political act. Making art politically also means treating artistic practice as inseparable from broader struggles. Art is not a separate sphere, but one entangled with organising, care, collective resistance, and the infrastructures that sustain life. It involves disobedience toward dominant norms of what art should be - refusing elitism, professionalism, commodification, and the myth of neutrality. Instead, it embraces situatedness, risk, and collective authorship. Crucially, it sees artistic practice as a space to experiment with alternatives - a way to prefigure different ways of being, relating, and organising.

By approaching art politically, Disobedient Art School becomes the site where the above-described artistic strategies are not only practiced, but pushed further - where disobedient aesthetics and radical imagination are cultivated as groundworks through which resistance and transformation can take root. We use the term "groundworks" to signal that these strategies are not add-ons or final touches, but elements present - and often prioritised - from the beginning of the artistic process. They inform the first questions, the early brainstorms, the initial gestures from which a work begins to emerge.

Disobedient aesthetics refers to artistic practices that challenge dominant norms of authorship, professionalism, and neutrality. It also embraces situatedness, risk, and collective creation. Through these practices, disobedient aesthetics give form to radical imagination - the capacity to envision worlds beyond dominant systems of oppression, to imagine not only alternatives, but also the means to live and struggle towards them. For example, imagining a cultural institution no longer funded by fossil fuel interests is not only about rejecting extractive sponsorship, it also demands envisioning a new economic model based in ethical sponsorship, accountable governance structures, and a cultural sector that can thrive without legitimising abusive corporations. It is not escapist, but grounded in collective experience, political desire, and the refusal to accept the present order as inevitable - in our case, rejecting the artwashing of fossil corporations and capital.

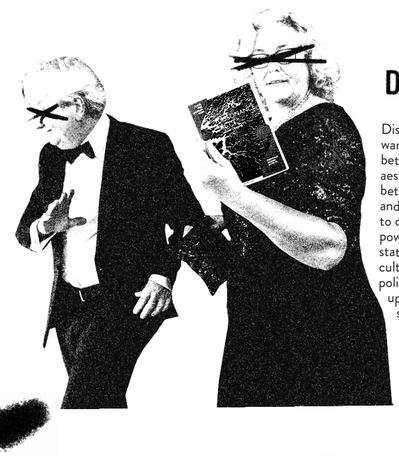
When Fossil Free Culture NL began in 2016, this idea felt unimaginable, utopian even. Today, it is taking concrete shape, raising urgent questions about the ethical responsibilities of our cultural institutions within society. This is just one example of creative, speculative and experimental work that fuels a radical effort to prefigure just and liveable futures. We understand "radical" here as going to the root of things: a commitment to deep, structural transformation that grows from lived experience and collective struggle.



Fossil Free Museumplein (Fossil Free Culture NL, Museumsquare, Amsterdam, 2020). Fossil Free Culture NL marks a historic victory as the Royal Concertgebouw ends its partnership with Royal Dutch Shell. With the Rijksmuseum and Van Gogh Museum already fossil free, Museumplein becomes the world's first cultural square free from fossil fuel sponsorship. Photos by Laura Ponchel.



Dissonance Act 1: Season Opening (Fossil Free Culture NL, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, 2019). Mournful, near-motionless performers carried trays with glasses of black champagne, disrupting the Concertgebouw's opening night, and denouncing the dissonance between the cultural festivity and an elite complicit in, and sponsored by, fossil fuel crimes. Fossil Free Culture NL made clear that there is little to celebrate on a dying planet. Photos by Laura Ponchel and Shofie.



Dissonance Act 3: Tempest (Fossil Free Culture NL, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, 2019). Ten performers unleashed 10,000 music scores in a visual paper storm, turning the Concertgebouw's main hall into a staged climate disaster. What first appeared as a beautiful whirlwind shifted as the pages revealed horrible written sounds, as a prefiguration of a future we refuse, ending with the tagline: "Made possible by Shell", warning that there will be no music on a dead planet. Pictures by Laura Ponchel.

CREATIVE RESISTANCE IN PRACTICE

Taken together, these practices form the basis for how Disobedient Art School understands its role, not just as a site of learning, but as a living process of creative resistance. In the face of these intersecting crises, we need practices that do more than simply describe or protest - they must also generate new ways of engaging, imagining, and acting together. This is the space where creative resistance takes shape, where the school positions itself, and where art and social struggle are brought into relation. Additionally, the school aspires to support the emergence and dissemination of methodologies that weave together artistic and political practice - bringing artists and activists into deeper exchange, while also connecting the multiple, overlapping facets of collective struggle. It aims to accompany artists in transforming their work toward greater social engagement, and to support activists in experimenting with creative approaches that nourish their inherent capacities for expression and transformation.

These practices and commitments set the foundation for the core principles that guide Disobedient Art School and are further presented in this document. In the following section, we introduce these principles, not as rules, but as evolving coordinates for how we learn, relate, and act together.

ROOT COMMITMENTS OF DISOBEDIENT ART SCHOOL

As the initiators of Disobedient Art School, we ground our work in the political and ethical commitments of Fossil Free Culture NL. These values are interdependent and mutually informing, not fixed positions but practices of becoming - commitments we hold even when our actions fall short. We approach them with humility and deep listening, aware of our limitations and open to being transformed through collective engagement.

These values are not abstract - they inform how we create art, organise workshops, and relate to each other. We hold that resisting oppression requires addressing how different systems - racism, sexism, classism, ageism and ableism - interact and reinforce one another. Justice cannot be achieved without confronting these overlapping structures together (Crenshaw, 1991). Our values ground this awareness in practice, weaving political imagination into everyday decisions and collective action. They form the foundation from which our pedagogical and organisational principles emerge, and they orient us toward the unfinished work of building more just and liveable futures.

ANTI-COLONIAL

While we do not speak from anti-colonial positions beyond Europe, we are committed to interrupting the colonial mindsets that continue to structure much of European culture, politics, and education. We do not treat "anti-colonial" as a fixed identity or position of expertise, but as an ongoing commitment to unsettle the colonial logics that shape our own practices, institutions, and imaginaries. By "anti-colonial" we mean not only the work of deconstructing colonial frameworks, but also the effort to learn from knowledges and ways of knowing that emerged from traditions that were never colonised in the first place. Thinkers such as Ailton Krenak (2020) and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2010) show how knowledge can be generated from relational, ancestral, and collective grounds that refuse the logics of domination, commodification, and separation. Their work points us toward counter-colonial or anti-colonial modes of thought that do not merely critique coloniality, but open ways of reasoning that grow from other soils altogether.

At the same time, we acknowledge a contradiction: we are writing these words in imperial English, using its categories to argue against the very structures it helped build. In a practical sense at this time, this is unavoidable, and so we have chosen to embrace it. We feel that the language we use is not the most important thing - what matters more are the intentions and actions behind it. Our commitment is to experiment with epistemological approaches that think of the world, its crises, and its possibilities in ways that are less *dichotomic*[8], less *anthropocentric*[9], and more relational. Anti-colonial practice here is not a destination but a method: an effort to live and think otherwise, even within the contradictions we inhabit.

ANTI-EXTRACTIVE

Extraction is not only the removal of natural resources; it is also the appropriation of knowledge, gestures, and relationships for purposes they were never meant to serve. In cultural and artistic fields, extraction often appears as the instrumentalisation of communities, symbols, or practices - turning living traditions into consumable products. Against this, Disobedient Art School grounds itself in an anti-extractive ethos. This means cultivating practices that regenerate rather than deplete, that give back as much as they take, and that build relations capable of sustaining life in its many forms.

Authors such as Krenak (2020) and Cusicanqui (2010) remind us that knowledges must be practiced within the relational contexts that give them meaning, rather than mined for abstract concepts. Their thinking invites us to refuse the logics of depletion and to seek ways of creating, learning, and organising that are cyclical, reciprocal, and experimental. For Disobedient Art School, anti-extraction is not only about resources but also about time, attention, and imagination. It asks how we can build infrastructures of art and action that nourish collective capacity without draining it.

ANTI-NEOLIBERAL

We reject the commodification of life and the normalisation of competition as a social ideal. Neoliberalism teaches us to treat each other - and ourselves - as units of production and consumption, measuring worth through efficiency, profit, and competitive status. It elevates individualism while eroding the collective ties that sustain us. Neoliberal policies systematically dismantle communal systems of care and survival, replacing them with isolation, scarcity, and precarity (Federici, 2012).

In cultural and artistic fields, neoliberalism often appears as the branding of creativity, the competition for visibility and funding, or the treatment of art as a commodity rather than a commons. Against this, Disobedient Art School grounds itself in an anti-neoliberal ethos. This means cultivating practices that resist commodification, that privilege cooperation over competition, and that reclaim time and space for forms of being together not governed by market logic.

Against this, we experiment with collective forms grounded in mutuality, care, and shared responsibility. For Disobedient Art School, this ethos is not abstract but practical: it informs how we share resources, how we slow down processes to value depth over speed, and how we hold space for vulnerability alongside action. It asks how we can build infrastructures of art and organising that nurture collective capacity rather than exploit it. In this way, disobedience becomes not only a refusal of neoliberal norms, but an opening toward collective ways of living where care, creativity, and responsibility circulate freely.

ANTI-RACIST

Racism is not only a matter of interpersonal prejudice; it is a structural force that organises societies, shaping whose lives are valued and whose are made disposable. In cultural and artistic fields, racism often appears in the erasure of histories, the narrowing of whose stories are told, or the appropriation of aesthetics without acknowledgment of the struggles from which they emerge. Against this, Disobedient Art School grounds itself in an anti-racist ethos. This means cultivating practices that expose and undo racial hierarchies, that redistribute visibility and resources, and that foster solidarities across different struggles for justice.

Authors such as Davis (2016) and Crenshaw (1989) remind us that racism cannot be disentangled from patriarchy, capitalism, and other systems of oppression. Their thinking invites us to approach anti-racism as a project of collective liberation, rather than isolated reform, and to see it as inseparable from feminist, queer, and decolonial struggles. For Disobedient Art School, anti-racism is not only about words but also about methods: how we facilitate dialogue, how we decide whose knowledge counts, how we address harm when it occurs, and finally how we create spaces where exclusion is unlearned and new forms of togetherness are practiced.

QUEER FEMINIST

Queer feminism shapes both our ethical compass and our methodological approach. It informs how we relate to one another, how we practice care, and how we resist fixed categories and binaries (Ahmed, 2017). Our thinking is influenced by the understanding of gender as performative - a product of social repetition rather than a stable identity. This opens space for resistance and nonconformity (Butler, 1990). In cultural and activist fields, queer feminism challenges the normalisation of *heteronormativity*[10], the invisibilisation of trans and queer lives, and the reproduction of gendered hierarchies. Against this, Disobedient Art School grounds itself in a queer feminist approach, cultivating practices that value relationality over rigidity and that affirm care, love, and vulnerability as political forces.

We are guided by a pedagogy of liberation, one that invites deep listening and refuses all forms of domination (hooks, 1994). For Disobedient Art School, this perspective shapes how we teach and learn together, how we create space for difference, and how we resist reproducing oppressive norms in our methods. It challenges us to create forms of art and action capable of holding diversity, fluidity, and shared existence.

INTERGENERATIONAL

We seek to build spaces where multiple generations can teach, learn, and co-create together. *Intergenerationality*[11] is about cultivating exchanges where knowledge, care, and responsibility move in multiple directions. In cultural and activist fields, ageism often appears as youth-centric cultures that fetishise innovation, or as the marginalising of elders whose experiences are dismissed as obsolete. Disobedient Art School grounds itself in an intergenerational commitment. This means creating spaces where learning is reciprocal and where experience and experimentation meet. It also means collectively fighting for a liveable future, for both current and emerging generations.

Our approach is informed by the concept of "hospicing modernity," which invites us to grieve and release dominant frameworks that no longer serve collective life (Andreotti, 2021). For Disobedient Art School, this is about more than pedagogy: it shapes how we design our gatherings, how we share responsibility, and how we acknowledge both the urgency of youth and the wisdom of age. Through this lens, we understand intergenerational dialogue as a practice of reciprocity and mutual transformation.

DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE

We understand diversity as more than representation, and inclusion as more than access. Practicing diversity means rethinking how power circulates, how norms are enforced, and how difference is held and valued. In cultural and activist fields, diversity is too often reduced to numbers or token gestures, while inclusion is framed as a checklist rather than a transformation of relations. Our approach is informed by disability justice frameworks that centre "*access intimacy*", interdependence, and leadership from the margins (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018). "*Access intimacy*" refers to the often-unspoken connection that arises when someone understands and responds to another's access needs without requiring them to constantly explain or justify those needs - a form of closeness rooted in care, trust, and shared accountability.

For Disobedient Art School, this perspective shifts how we think about pedagogy, facilitation, and collective action. It asks how we can create infrastructures of art and learning where difference is not merely accommodated, but cherished as the ground of collective strength.

PEDAGOGIES OF EMBODIMENT AND RELATION

This commitment to disobedience is shaping how we structure the school. We are creating a decentralised learning environment where the boundaries between teacher and student, knower and learner, master and apprentice are deliberately blurred. Within this space, we actively experiment with educational methods that challenge the norms of dominant Western systems.

These methods recognise that knowledge is not confined to academic theory or technical expertise. It takes shape through lived experience, through the senses and emotions, through memory and intuition. It also draws on ancestral practices, spiritual reflection, and pagan traditions, carrying lineages of knowing that have long been dismissed by colonial systems. It is found in storytelling and in the body itself - through movements, gestures, and actions that transmit meaning across time and space.

Acknowledging these other forms of knowing allows us to value perspectives that are often dismissed or devalued by systems that treat Western knowledge as superior, enforce racial hierarchies, extract resources and render some lives more valuable than others. In response, we also cultivate an approach to learning and being that resists these colonial logics. This includes fostering the courage, skills, and collective responsibility to act in public space and turn learning into a shared, embodied, and disobedient practice.

DISOBEDIENT AS METHOD

Disobedient Art School wants to foster the bond between disruptive and aesthetic practices, between radical politics and imagination. It seeks to open up other places of power that challenge the status quo of our dominant cultural, ecological, and political systems, those that uphold colonial legacies, systemic inequalities, and extractive logics. We understand disobedience not simply as refusal, but as a method situated at the intersection of anti-colonial practice (meaning ongoing efforts to unlearn and undo the knowledge systems, hierarchies, and assumptions imposed by colonial histories) and the effort to dismantle the conditions that created our current ecological, political, and cultural crises. Disobedience, then, requires the courage to act in the face of injustice, not merely to critique it (Thoreau, 1849).

[8] **Dichotomic** (*adj.*): relating to or involving a dichotomy, i.e. a difference between two completely opposite ideas or things.
[9] **Anthropocentric** (*adj.*): considering humans and their existence as the most important and central fact in the universe.
[10] **Heteronormativity** (*n.*): the state, system, or assumption of being heteronormative; i.e. suggesting or believing that only heterosexual relationships are normal or right and that men and women have naturally different roles.
[11] **Intergenerationality** (*n.*): the state or quality of being intergenerational, i.e. involving different generations.

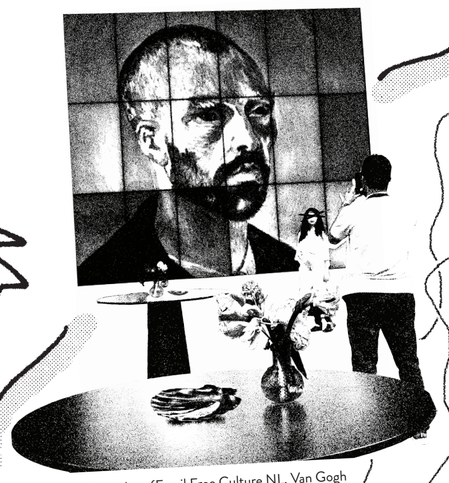


CORE PRINCIPLES - REHEARSING FUTURES, TOGETHER

The following diagram sketches the core principles that guide the Disobedient Art School. They are not fixed doctrines but shared orientations, shaped through conversations, readings, artistic experiments, and collective reflection. Grouped into three interwoven clusters - , , and — In other words; how we know, how we relate, and how we organise. Together, they help us navigate how to learn, create, and act in ways that feel alive and accountable.

We developed these principles through a year-long process of dialogue, experimentation, and moments of both friction and care. As artists rooted in activist and participatory practices, we approached this task not as solitary authors but through relationships: with each other, with Fossil Free Culture NL, with the cultural and political landscape of the Netherlands, and with the legacies of feminist, anti-colonial, and climate justice movements. The principles are still unfolding, reshaped by those who join us, in and around Disobedient Art School.

Rather than offering a finished program, the diagram gathers these foundations as orienting positions - open to critique, situated in relation, and alive to ecological imagination. In building this school together, we are rehearsing possible futures: grounded experiments in enacting the kind of world we want to inhabit. These rehearsals are not abstract; they contest the extractive, colonial, and patriarchal logics that structure the present. Even if the futures we seek are not yet fully realisable, we can trace their outlines, move toward them, and create moments that prefigure their arrival. In doing so, we resist the "prison house" of the now and practice living as if another world were already coming into being (Muñoz, 2009).



Shells Everywhere (Fossil Free Culture NL, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, 2018). 411 stained scallop shells were hidden inside the museum, each marked with an oil-like stain to expose the invisible influence Shell exerts via sponsorship. Photos by Laura Ponchel.

CRITICAL FACILITATION
POWER-CONSCIOUS ORGANISING

Function: Acknowledges power in facilitation and proposes a balanced, reflective approach - neither rigidly horizontal nor naively structureless. Draws on horizontalist traditions within anarchism - those grounded in mutual aid and collective decision-making - alongside anti-fascist vigilance and an ethics of shared responsibility.

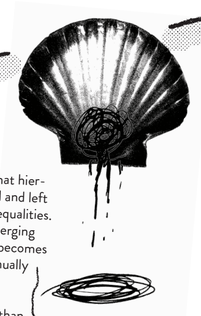
Role: Provides a structure for working together that avoids rigid, top-down hierarchies, while still recognising differences in skill, experience, and responsibility.

Facilitation always involves power. Disobedient Art School does not assume that egalitarian structures automatically eliminate all hierarchy. Instead, it commits to a practice of critical facilitation - a method of working together that actively navigates the tensions between horizontality and necessary forms of coordination. Disobedient Art School rejects both rigid verticality and naïve structurelessness. In their place, it endeavours to cultivate a reflective and accountable way of organising that honours autonomy while maintaining responsibility.

We refer to this approach as critical horizontality: a dynamic form of shared leadership grounded in consent, and collective care. It recognises that hierarchy is not always harmful - but when fixed and left unexamined, it often reproduces existing inequalities. Experience and skill are valued alongside emerging voices and situated knowledges. Leadership becomes a rotating practice, held with care and continually open to challenge.

Invisible hierarchies often wield more power than formal ones (Freeman, 1970). When roles and responsibilities are not consciously shaped, they are shaped by default - often in ways that reinforce domination, exclusion, or social capital. Critical facilitation therefore takes seriously the subtleties of voice, space, and influence. It attends to the reality that some people are more fluent in speaking, more comfortable in groups, or more familiar with political codes - and works to ensure that participation does not become a performance of privilege.

The facilitation ethics at Disobedient Art School are rooted in interconnected principles drawn from anarchist organising, anti-fascist vigilance, and intersectional responsibility. These are not moral postures but living practices - cultivated through attention, friction, and care.



WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS, FEELINGS, IDEAS?

TEMPORAL DISSONANCE
REFUSING PRODUCTIVE TIME

Function: Challenges the dominant, extractive tempo of capitalist time by honouring slowness, pause, and cyclical rhythms.

Role: Supports sustainability, presence, and depth in collective work. Protects against burnout by legitimising rest, repair, and refusal.

Disobedient Art School recognises that time is not neutral. Dominant systems enforce a linear, mechanical, accelerated, and extractive sense of time - demanding constant availability, productivity, and measurable progress. Against this, Disobedient Art School embraces temporal dissonance: the right to move at multiple rhythms, to slow down, to stop, to return, or to begin again. This approach acknowledges that urgency often serves the agendas of efficiency and control, leaving little space for reflection, care, or relational complexity.

This principle draws on seasonal practices, ecological cycles, and embodied knowledges that resist capitalist time (Haraway, 2016; Adam, 1988). It values the unfinished, the waiting, the dormant, and the cyclical - modes of being often erased by developmental or linear narratives of progress. It creates space for hesitation, non-linearity, and repair as essential conditions for ethical and sustainable collective work.

Rather than framing delay or rest as loss, temporal dissonance recognises these states as regenerative - necessary for resisting burnout, sustaining imagination, and cultivating depth. This refusal of urgency is not apathy; it is a political act that prioritises presence, relational pacing, and the reweaving of time as something held, not spent. To move at multiple rhythms is also to practice anti-extraction: resisting the demand to produce outcomes at a pace that drains people and relations. Instead, temporal dissonance creates space for replenishment - treating time itself as a commons to be cared for, not extracted.



Our Favourite Kind of Party! (Fossil Free Culture NL, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, 2018). When the Van Gogh Museum dropped Shell's sponsorship, we marked the moment with a party. Photos by Laura Ponchel.

VALUES IN FACILITATION:

ANARCHISM:

Offers a philosophy of self-organisation and mutual aid. Rather than insisting on total horizontality, it emphasises distributed responsibility, voluntary association, and a respect for autonomy. In this frame, facilitation is not a form of control, but a collective method for co-governing the space between us.

ANTI-FASCISM:

Is understood not only as resistance to authoritarianism, but also as a proactive culture of vigilance, refusal, and solidarity. Within facilitation, this means noticing the dynamics that might quietly replicate domination - be they racialised, gendered, ableist, or class-based - and interrupting them before they harden into patterns.

RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, AND NON-JUDGMENT:

Form the interpersonal basis of critical facilitation. Respect is extended to all contributions, responsibility implies care for follow-through and accountability, and non-judgment includes creating learning environments where risk and vulnerability are not punished. These values work together to foster spaces in which participants can express, question, and transform - without shame, and without fear of exclusion.

DECENTRALISATION:

And shared power remain guiding aims, though they are not romanticised. Disobedient Art School recognises that power differences are always present; instead of denying them, it endeavours to cultivate transparency, shared responsibility, and continual reflection on how power circulates.



SITUATED IMAGINATION
SPECULATION AS METHOD

Function: Activates imagination as a tool for contextual, collective sense-making and world-building beyond dominant paradigms.

Role: Enables creative risk, ambiguity, and visionary practice within both art and organising. It grounds speculation in lived experience.

Our approach to imagination is *situated*, rooted in the lived realities, struggles, and capacities of those who practice it. We recognise that this position emerges in a time often described as a *crisis of imagination*: a historical moment in which dominant systems narrow the range of futures people believe are possible, making it harder to picture life beyond extraction, competition, and control. Against this narrowing, we align with the tradition of *radical imagination*, where communities collectively envision and rehearse futures that break from the logics of domination.

Disobedient Art School values imagination not as escapism, but as a critical tool for envisioning and rehearsing alternative futures. In a time of social, ecological, and political crisis, imagination becomes essential for unlearning dominant narratives of inevitability and permanence.

Situated imagination is rooted in context. It emerges from lived experience, collective memory, and embodied perception. It draws from speculative traditions in art, (science) fiction, activism, and spirituality, yet always returns to the here and now, to the conditions we are trying to shift.

The term *situated imagination* is not new, it sits in conversation with earlier uses of the term. Nira Yuval-Davis and Marcel Stoetzler (2002) expand feminist standpoint theory to include a "situated imagination," recognising that imaginative work, like knowledge, is shaped by social positioning and power relations. More recently, Ludger van Dijk and Erik Rietveld (2025) have described it within *phenomenology*[12] and cognitive science as an embodied, context-bound, and action-oriented process. Our use builds on these resonances while grounding the concept in the political and collective practices of disobedient art.

It also builds on the ideas of *situated knowledges* and speculative fabulation from Donna Haraway, on José Esteban Muñoz's *queer futurity*, on bell hooks' grounding of creativity in lived experience, and Paulo Freire's praxis as historically situated action. Building on this lineage, we define situated imagination as both a political stance and a creative method: imagining from where we are, in dialogue with the conditions we seek to transform.

This principle encourages methods that stretch beyond the probable to engage with the possible. It values artistic experimentation, collective dreaming, scenario-building, and *affective speculation*[11]. These practices cultivate the capacity to hold contradictions, to act without guarantees, and to make space for what does not yet exist. Imagination, in this form, is grounded, practiced, and necessary - a tool for reclaiming the future from the grip of colonial, capitalist, and heteronormative timelines.

[11] **Affective Speculation:** **Affective** (*adj.*): connected with the emotions; **Speculation** (*n.*): to form opinions about something without having all the necessary information or facts; to make guesses.

[12] **Phenomenology** (*n.*): the study of phenomena (things that exist and can be seen, felt, tasted, etc.) and how we experience them.

PRAXIS
KNOWLEDGE THROUGH ACTION

Function: Reframes learning as a continuous process of action, reflection, and renewed action. It challenges academic hierarchies and centres collective, embodied, and experiential knowledge - especially the wisdom carried by those historically excluded from dominant systems like for example migrants, queer people, and people of colour, amongst others.

Role: Serves as the foundational epistemology of Disobedient Art School. Grounds its anti-institutional, participatory approach to pedagogy.

Praxis is the understanding that knowledge emerges through experience, challenging the division between theory and practice. It is not a linear process, but a cyclical one: action, reflection, and refined action inform one another in an ongoing loop of learning. This principle affirms that all individuals hold knowledge - particularly through lived experience - and seeks to amplify those whose knowledge is often devalued or ignored, especially those from marginalised positions.

This principle draws from the concept of praxis, where education becomes a practice of freedom through the ongoing interplay of reflection and action (Freire, 1970). It also resonates with feminist epistemologies that challenge the "view from nowhere" in favour of embodied, partial perspectives (Haraway, 1988).

Praxis also disrupts the traditional hierarchy between teacher and student. It fosters a collaborative learning environment where everyone is both a learner and a teacher. In this setting, critical thinking is not abstract or detached, but grounded in doing - emerging through shared actions, reflection, and experimentation. For Disobedient Art School, praxis is foundational: it asserts that knowledge will not be passively received but actively co-created. Through collective experience, insights will be systematised, shared, and re-applied.



Shell's Dirty Hands (Fossil Free Culture NL, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, 2018). Thirteen performers pressed oil-black handprints onto the museum's glass façade, making Shell's stain on culture visible and exposing the institution's complicity in artwashing. Photos by Laura Ponchel.

ORGANISATIONAL METHODS



REFERS TO THE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES AND SYSTEMS THAT GUIDE HOW A GROUP ORGANISES ITSELF - HOW IT MAKES DECISIONS, DISTRIBUTES RESPONSIBILITY, COORDINATES ACTIONS, AND SUSTAINS ITSELF OVER TIME.





Hammer Event (Fossil Free Culture NL, Groninger Museum, Groningen, 2025). Inspired by Fluxus scores, FFCNL staged a performance in which a wall was repeatedly damaged with a hammer, parodying the fossil fuel industry's destructive playbook of "business as usual." Flyers with the score were distributed to visitors, urging the museum's new directors to break ties with the fossil gas industry. Photos by Anisa Xhomaqi and Frida.

SITUATED COMMONING PROCESS
PRACTISING SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Function: To redefine how Disobedient Art School organises itself. It frames collective organisation as a situated, relational process that unfolds through reflection, action, celebration and rest.

Role: To translate .d.a.s.'s ethics of interdependence into practice. It guides the way in which responsibilities, decisions, and rhythms are shared - proposing not a system, but a living choreography of doing, sensing, and caring together.

We prefer not to use the term *governance*. The term carries histories of colonial administration and corporate control. Instead, we propose a *situated commoning process*: a relational practice, socially and materially specific to its context, in which responsibility is shared by those engaged in the doing. Situated commoning builds and tends the relationships that make shared life possible, recognising care, reciprocity, and accountability as infrastructural conditions for creating, learning, and struggle. It is a process that is never finished: it unfolds through cycles, listening to ecological rhythms and treating contradiction not as failure but as a site of learning. The *situated commoning process* also requires confronting friction, imbalance, and disagreement as a regenerative part of the task.

In this approach, what is usually called *decision-making* becomes a *praxis of deliberation*: a collective act of sensing, pausing, and responding. Deliberation is an act of care and accountability that shapes how we move together through uncertainty. Rather than seeking closure or efficiency, this praxis cultivates awareness of relations, capacities, and consequences for both human and more-than-human relations.

Practically, this means valuing soft resources like time, emotion, creativity, and care, as forms of knowledge; maintaining *anti-extractive* processes that prevent burnout and invisibilised labour. Operational power follows doing: responsibility and voice grow from participation rather than position.

Our aspiration is a horizontal structure that allows temporary, context-bound roles where needed, when validated by the collective and exercised with humility. Rooted in an anarchist lineage of self-organisation and responsibility, this *situated commoning process* remains plural and ecological, a living choreography of interdependence and care.

EPISTEMIC FOUNDATIONS

DISOBEDIENT ART SCHOOL STRIVES TO RESIST KNOWLEDGE FORMS THAT EXTRACT, DOMINATE, OR FLATTEN EXPERIENCE. INSTEAD, WE TURN TO WAYS OF KNOWING THAT ARE LIVED, SHARED, EMBODIED - AND GROUNDED IN THE PLACES, STRUGGLES, AND RELATIONSHIPS THAT SHAPE US.

DID YOU SEE BLIND SPOTS IN THE PRINCIPLES?





Burn Your Bridges (Fossil Free Culture NL, H.N. Werkmanbrug, Groningen, 2022). A life-size banner reading "*May the bridges you burn light the way forward / It's time to break up with gas*" denounced the Groningen Museum's fossil fuel sponsorship. Photos by Anonymous.

ART – AESTHETICS / ETHICS
PLURALITY AS POWER

Function: Redefines art as accessible, plural, collective, and ethically driven. Resists dominant/colonial aesthetics. Blurs boundaries between art and activism.

Role: Offers a vision of artistic practice that supports disobedience, multiplicity, and social critique.

Art, for Disobedient Art School, is both a medium of expression and a site of struggle. It refuses narrow definitions of art as professionalised, commodified, or discipline-bound. Instead, it affirms a transdisciplinary and plural understanding of artistic practice - one that allows for many ways of making sense of the world, expressing emotion, building knowledge, and resisting the forces of fossil capital, colonial extraction, and historical erasure.

This approach resonates with the idea that **aesthetic experience can be a tool for political transformation** (Boal, 1974). The school draws from practices like those of Fossil Free Culture NL, where aesthetics - through creation of unsolicited art performance and installations in museum spaces - are mobilised to touch, disrupt, and shift the perception of the viewer, thereby creating space for critical reflection. These gestures interrupt dominant narratives not through confrontation alone, but by engaging the senses and inviting a different kind of attention. Beauty and balance are not rejected, but placed in tension with interruption, vulnerability and discomfort. Art then becomes a space where emotional resonance and political critique do not cancel each other out, but amplify one another - where we can feel the weight of a crisis and reflect on its structure at the same time.

Simultaneously, we understand that aesthetics are never neutral - they are shaped by ethics. What is considered beautiful is typically determined by dominant norms, imaginaries, and systems of power (Rancière, 2004). Disobedient Art School will work to identify and resist oppressive aesthetics: those that promote exclusion, conformity, or the erasure of difference - such as sanitised depictions of climate solutions that erase frontline, or cultural representations that reinforce racial, gender, or body stereotypes. In contrast, we seek to nurture aesthetic forms rooted in other ways of living, sensing, and resisting. Inspired by traditions like the Theatre of the Oppressed, this principle foregrounds aesthetics that emerge from marginalised lives and insurgent perspectives - such as those shaped by migrant experience, queer embodiment, anti-colonial struggle, anti-patriarchal critique, or ecocentric worldviews.

This ethic is tied to a belief in **pluralism and accessibility**. Art is not reserved for those with formal training or institutional recognition. It is a collective production of culture - a language of the people - available to anyone who chooses to use it, reshape it, or invent new forms entirely. At Disobedient Art School, we wish to actively affirm a collective ethics of making: one shaped through context, negotiation, shared agreements, and ongoing listening - rather than one dictated by rigid moral codes. This means paying attention to the needs, desires, and stories that emerge in each moment of creation - and allowing them to guide how and why we make.

In this way, Disobedient Art School approaches art as a **transdisciplinary and insurgent practice** - one that blurs boundaries between disciplines and between art and life, and where artistic methods are understood not as specialised tools for the few, but as shared resources for imagination, collective struggles against injustice, and for transformation.



Drop the Shell (Fossil Free Culture NL, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, 2017). Seven muses sip an indigestible black liquid from scallop shells, letting it drip from their lips as Van Gogh's words on courage in the face of danger are spoken. Photos by Laura Ponchel.

SOLIDARITY
INTERDEPENDENCE ACROSS DIFFERENCE

Function: Grounds the project in intersectional and planetary responsibility, while acknowledging the limits of its positionality in Europe.

Role: Provides ethical orientation for working across asymmetries without appropriation. Cultivates humility and long-term commitment.

Disobedient Art School commits to approaching solidarity as an embodied, situated practice of accountability and connection. A practice rooted in the recognition of interdependence - between people, places, species, and struggles - and a commitment to nurturing relations across lines of difference.

This principle holds space for planetary thinking while remaining grounded in the specificities of being located in Europe. Disobedient Art School does not claim to speak from or for the Global Majority (the peoples and nations who have borne the brunt of colonial domination and who together make up most of the world's population). At the same time, we recognise that *hegemonic*[15] European culture itself has been constituted through colonialism, and that our own position is inseparable from these histories. In this sense, solidarity means listening across asymmetries, acting with awareness of colonial and extractive systems, and building forms of collaboration that are reciprocal, critical, and non-appropriative.

It draws from intersectional feminist thought, which understands that systems of oppression are interlinked and must be addressed together (Crenshaw, 1989). Solidarity, in this frame, is not charity or sameness - it is a way of standing with, of acting in relation, and of remaining open to correction and reorientation. It affirms connectedness while resisting flattening of differences.

It's important for us to note that, Indigenous communities have long been the primary protectors of biodiversity through lifeways rooted in interdependence, care, and resistance. The planetary crisis at hand is not intrinsically borne of humanity or human numbers, but of the violent systems that dominate it: capitalism, imperialism, white supremacy, and (colonial) extractivism. Solidarity means centering those most impacted - not as symbols, but as holders of vital knowledge for survival and transformation.

Whether expressed through shared action, resource redistribution, co-learning, aesthetic exchange, or other forms that emerge in relation to context, solidarity is held as a continuous practice - not a fixed position but a way of moving together through uncertainty and care.

[15] **Hegemonic** (*adj.*): strong and powerful and therefore able to control others, or relating to the idea that a country is like this.

STAYING WITH THE TROUBLE
EMBRACING COMPLEXITY AND DISCOMFORT

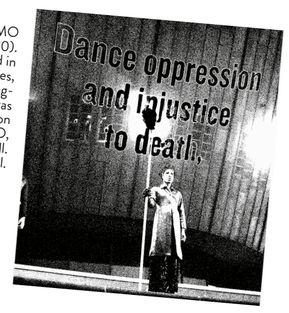
Function: Encourages tolerance of discomfort, critical reflection, non-perfectionist engagement, and sustained commitment in moments of contradiction, conflict, or uncertainty.

Role: Strengthens relational resilience and ethical depth. Enables us to stay present with discomfort, complexity and contradiction and apply this presence in interpersonal relationships, our collective work and wider political, social, and ecological struggles. Prevents collapse into shame, avoidance and reactive judgment. Fosters the capacity to act with care and clarity and remain grounded amid uncertainty.

"Staying with the trouble" means holding space for complexity, discomfort, and contradiction without rushing toward resolution (Haraway, 2016). Disobedient Art School adopts this approach as a core principle, working to resist the pressure for clarity, consensus, or moral certainty. In a cultural climate that often rewards closure and simplicity, Disobedient Art School strives to remain present in the messy, unresolved spaces where real transformation becomes possible.

"Staying with the trouble" means making room for ambivalence, for feeling torn, for navigating dilemmas that don't resolve cleanly. It asks for both self and collective acceptance: a practice of being accountable to each other without falling into shame, purity politics, or fear of being wrong. It cultivates a space where attacks can be transformed into dialogue, where discomfort becomes a teacher, and where complexity is not a problem to be solved, but a condition to be met with care.

This principle supports a culture that values reflection over reaction, nuance over simplicity, and relational resilience over ideological certainty. It holds space for contradiction, imperfection, and becoming.



Keep Dancing (Fossil Free Culture NL, NEMO Science Museum, Amsterdam, 2020). Commemorating the Ogoni Nine, executed in Nigeria in 1995 for resisting Shell. Nine flames, carried by nine guardians, honored their struggle, while Ken Saro-Wiwa's poem Dance was projected onto the museum's façade. This action marked FFC-NL's first performance at NEMO, calling on the museum to cut ties with Shell. Photos by Anisa Xhomaqi and Laura Ponchel.

RELATIONAL GROUNDS

WE WANT TO BUILD AND DISCOVER NEW GUIDING VALUES AND PRACTICES THAT SHAPE HOW PEOPLE RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER, TO MORE-THAN-HUMAN LIFE, AND TO POWER - WITHIN AND BEYOND THE COLLECTIVE.



[Sp]oiled Landscapes (Fossil Free Culture NL, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, 2017). More than twenty performers embodied a forest devastated by oil spills inside the museum, confronting the hypocrisy of the exhibition *Unspoiled Landscapes* in a Shell-sponsored institution. Photos by Laura Ponchel.

DO YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS, OTHER PRINCIPLES, OR REFERENCES?



Colonial Gift (Fossil Free Culture NL, Groninger Museum, 2022). A series of postcards placed in the Museum's Gift Shop redefines the Groninger Museum's building as a "gift of gas": a colonial fossil legacy embedded in institutional architecture. Through this public intervention, FFCNL demands the museum sever ties with fossil sponsors and calls for solidarity across colonial differences. Photos by Maartje Terpstra and Frida.

INTANGIBLE COMMONS
VALUING THE UNSEEN

Function: Reframes invisible and non-material contributions - such as time, emotional labour, intuition, and lived experience - as shared, collective energies vital to sustaining creative and communal work.

Role: Challenges dominant systems that ignore these contributions. Reorients attention toward less visible forms of labour, value, and care, including those shared with non-human actors and environments.

In the context of Disobedient Art School's ecocentric and relational ethos, the intangible commons refer to shared, often unseen contributions such as time, emotional labour, attention, intuition, and lived experience. These resources may not leave immediate traces, but they are foundational to sustaining collaborative, creative, and political processes. They circulate through a group quietly: in the care someone takes to hold space during a difficult discussion, in the deep listening that allows others to speak their mind fully, or in the intuitive labour of sensing group dynamics before conflict emerges.

Valuing soft or invisible labour builds on feminist economic critiques that highlight how such forms of work are systematically undervalued or erased in capitalist systems (Federici, 2012). Tasks like caregiving, emotional regulation, informal mentoring, or even the labour of imagining alternatives tend to be dismissed as secondary, despite being essential to the life of any community or movement. Yet these often-invisible commons are central to sustaining collective and creative work, particularly in settings that refuse extractive or hierarchical models.

Disobedient Art School will emphasise the need to actively recognise, protect, and redistribute these energies - not only among humans but also in relation to non-human actors and environments. This approach resists the extractive logic that demands endless output, and instead cultivates a culture of reciprocity where care, pause, and presence are seen as contributions in their own right.

Valuing these intangible commons invites a rethinking of what counts as contribution, capacity, or success. It challenges systems that privilege speed, productivity, and visibility over process, vulnerability, and sustainability. In doing so, it expands the field of who gets to be seen as a contributor, what forms of labour are worthy of acknowledgement, and how we might organise ourselves in ways that honour the quiet, continuous work of collective survival.

WOULD YOU DRAW OTHER CONNECTIONS?



Behind the Scenes (Fossil Free Culture NL, Groningen Museum, Groningen 2025) In an art performance the collective inscribed 1,932 gasquakes on the museum walls. A counter-timeline of harm demanding solidarity with Groningen communities against fossil fuel power. Pictures by Jedidja Smalbil and Ester Nano (Editing Anisa Xhomaqi).

ECOCENTRISM
BEYOND THE HUMAN

Function: De-centres the human. Embraces multispecies justice and interconnected thinking while critically acknowledging the colonial risks of appropriating non-Western or Indigenous knowledge.

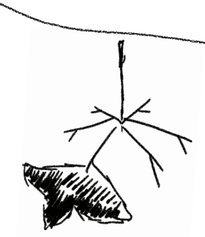
Role: Sets a broader relational frame - ecological, ethical, political.

Disobedient Art School begins from an ecocentric perspective, one that works to shift attention away from the human as the default reference point. We recognise the interdependence of all living systems, while remaining attentive to the ethical complexity of invoking perspectives beyond the human. We recognise that even in naming this, we expose the anthropocentrism of the cultures that shaped us, which continually pull thought back toward human perspectives and limits our ability to imagine otherwise (Plumwood, 1993). For this reason, we also strive to learn how more-than-human beings - plants, animals, and ecosystems - might be given active roles as participants in our aesthetics and politics (Meijer, 2017). This is not only an imagination, but an emerging reality: in 2022, Spain's Mar Menor lagoon became the first ecosystem in Europe granted legal personhood, recognised as a subject of rights with the capacity to be defended in court against ecological destruction. Such cases show how more-than-human worlds can intervene directly in political and legal arenas (stopecocide.earth). In this way, ecocentrism expands the field of participation: not only to more-than-human beings, but also to the diverse, land-based knowledges within Europe that have long been marginalised by dominant Western narratives. The school approaches these knowledges with deep respect, while actively avoiding appropriation. It seeks to decentre dominant Western narratives without romanticising or homogenising cultural difference, and to explore diverse epistemologies situated within the European continent. We focus here on European contexts because our work is grounded in the territories where we live and act, and we do not claim authority to speak from or for Indigenous knowledge systems rooted in other lands. This approach resonates with currents of land-based European knowledge that persist at the margins of official history - including, but not limited to ancestral practices tied to herbal knowledge, lunar cycles, intuitive sensing, and local cosmologies[14] often transmitted through women's oral traditions. These epistemologies, though long suppressed, reflect a deep entanglement with ecological rhythms and communal modes of survival, and invite a re-reading of European history from the perspective of those who maintained intimate, embodied relations with the land across generations (Federici, 2004). While some of the forces behind their suppression - such as patriarchy, capitalism, and imperialism - echo global patterns, in Europe these forces unfolded through historically specific processes: the witch hunts that criminalised women's knowledge of healing and reproduction, the enclosure of common lands that severed communities from their subsistence base, the Roman and later Christian campaigns to erase local cosmologies, and the industrial revolutions that reoriented economies toward extraction and wage labour. This shift was reinforced by the Scientific Revolution's mechanistic worldview, replacing earlier organic understandings of nature with the metaphor of nature as machine - rendering the earth inert, exploitable, and subject to mastery (Merchant, 1980). These differ from the histories of Indigenous peoples elsewhere, who faced settler colonialism and land dispossession under European expansion, yet they share a root logic of domination over people and nature.

Ecocentrism, as we endeavour to practice it here, intrinsically challenges entrenched power structures. It welcomes complexity, contradiction, and speculative thinking as tools for opening ethical questions and imagining alternate futures. While acknowledging the paradox of humans envisioning a world not centred around ourselves, we work to embrace this tension as a generative space for learning and unlearning.

[14] **Cosmology** (*n.*): the study of the nature and origin of the universe.

COMMUNITY CARE
BEYOND INDIVIDUALISTIC SELF-CARE



Function: Focuses on collective, mutual support. Emphasises joy, humour, emotion, and seasonal rhythms.

Role: Provides a relational and temporal structure for how Disobedient Art School sustains its people.

Community care reclaims care as a shared, political, and relational practice. It pushes back against the commercialised and individualistic version of self-care popularised by neoliberal culture. While self-care began as a radical strategy for survival and autonomy - particularly for those facing systemic violence - it has too often become an isolating and commodified burden.

This principle draws on the understanding that caring for oneself is not self-indulgence but an act of self-preservation in a hostile world (Lorde, 1988). Disobedient Art School builds on this lineage by relocating care in the collective. Here, burnout, depression, and exhaustion are not seen as individual shortcomings, but as outcomes of structural conditions - social, economic, and ecological. This principle also recognises that these pressures are not experienced equally: systems of oppression overlap and blend (Crenshaw, 1991), making care work inseparable from a commitment to justice. Community care, as Disobedient Art School endeavours to practice it, is rooted in shared responsibility, emotional reciprocity, and practical solidarity. It creates space for vulnerability and joy, and nurtures emotional intelligence as a vital tool for collective life.

Within this principle, celebration becomes a radical form of connection. Humour offers a way to navigate hardship while sustaining resistance. Seasonal practices invite us to reimagine time - not as a capitalist treadmill, but as a cycle of rest, emergence, fullness, and decay. Attuning to these rhythms, even amid ecological breakdown, becomes a method for living otherwise. These practices are not decorative; they are foundational to cultivating another way of being and caring together.

RESONANCES

This publication grew from many conversations, but also from books, essays, and manifestos that shaped our thinking. We do not treat them as authorities, but as interlocutors - texts that raise questions, unsettle our assumptions, and walk with us in the practice of disobedience.

ABOLITION & MOVEMENT PRAXIS

Angela Y. Davis (2016), *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* — a collection of speeches and essays linking struggles against racism, state violence, and colonialism across contexts, highlighting the necessity of global solidarity and collective resistance.

ART & AESTHETICS OF RESISTANCE

Augusto Boal (1974), *Theatre of the Oppressed* - a foundational work in political theatre that develops participatory methods where audiences become "spect-actors," using performance as rehearsal for social and political transformation.

Ludger van Dijk & Erik Rietveld (2025), *Situated Imagination* - reframes imagination as an embodied, context-bound process that arises through engagement with the environment, rather than as a detached mental act.

José Esteban Muñoz (2009), *Cruising Utopia, The Then and There Di Queer Futurity* - a groundbreaking work that envisions queerness as a horizon of possibility, where art and performance prefigure worlds beyond the limits of the present.

Jacques Rancière (2004), *The Politics of Aesthetics* - a key text that argues aesthetics is inseparable from politics, framing art as the "distribution of the sensible," which shapes what can be seen, said, and thought within a society.

DECOLONIAL & ANTICOLONIAL THOUGHT

Vanessa Andreotti (2021), *Hospicing Modernity* - invites us to "hospice" dominant modern frameworks by grieving what no longer serves collective life, while nurturing capacities for humility, responsibility, and radical unlearning.

Aníbal Quijano (2000), *On Coloniality of Power* - introduces the concept of coloniality as the ongoing global matrix of power born from colonialism, which continues to structure knowledge, labour, and social hierarchies.

Walter Mignolo (2011), *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* - exposes how Western modernity is inseparable from colonial violence, and calls for "epistemic disobedience" and pluriversal options beyond Eurocentric frameworks.

María Lugones (2007), *The Coloniality of Gender* - shows how colonialism imposed a modern/colonial gender system that intertwined racial and gender hierarchies, reshaping relations of power in ways that still persist.

DISOBEDIENCE & POLITICAL THEORY

Henry David Thoreau (1849), *Civil Disobedience* - a seminal essay arguing for the moral duty to resist unjust laws and governments, laying the groundwork for later traditions of nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience.

ECOLOGY & MORE-THAN-HUMAN WORLDS

Carolyn Merchant (1980), *The Death of Nature* - a groundbreaking ecofeminist history tracing how the Scientific Revolution reshaped Western views of nature from a living organism to a machine, legitimising both ecological exploitation and the subordination of women.

Val Plumwood (1993), *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* - a key ecofeminist text that critiques Western dualisms (man/woman, culture/nature, reason/emotion) and exposes how these hierarchies underpin both the domination of women and the exploitation of the natural world.

Donna Haraway (2016), *Staying with the Trouble* - a seminal work that challenges human exceptionalism and calls for multispecies alliances, proposing "making kin" as a way to navigate ecological crisis through care, entanglement, and shared survival.

Eva Meijer (2017), *Political Animal Voices* - a pioneering philosophical study that argues nonhuman animals are political actors with voices, perspectives, and capacities for participation, challenging anthropocentric notions of democracy and agency.

FEMINIST ECONOMICS & CARE

Silvia Federici (2004), *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* - traces how the rise of capitalism was built on the violent control of women's bodies and reproductive labour, revealing witch hunts as central to processes of enclosure and exploitation.

Silvia Federici (2012), *Revolution at Point Zero* - a collection of essays that foregrounds reproductive labour and care work as central sites of capitalist exploitation and as terrains of feminist resistance.

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (2018), *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* - a vital text that develops the framework of disability justice, centering interdependence, access intimacy, and collective care as practices of survival and transformation.

Audre Lorde (1988), *A Burst of Light* - a collection of essays and journal entries in which Lorde reflects on illness, survival, and activism, insisting that self-care is not self-indulgence but an act of political warfare.



FEMINIST PEDAGOGIES & COLLECTIVE LEARNING

bell hooks (1994), *Teaching to Transgress* - a foundational work in critical pedagogy where hooks argues for education as a practice of freedom, centering love, dialogue, and transgression as tools to challenge domination and create liberatory learning spaces.

Paulo Freire (1970), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* - a landmark in critical pedagogy that critiques banking models of education and advances dialogue, consciousness-raising, and praxis as tools for collective liberation.

Jo Freeman (1970), *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* - a seminal feminist essay exposing how the absence of formal structures often conceals informal hierarchies, arguing for transparent, accountable forms of collective organisation.

Nira Yuval-Davis & Marcel Stoetzler (2002), *Standpoint theory, situated knowledge and the situated imagination* - expands feminist standpoint theory to include imagination as socially and politically situated, showing how both knowledge and imaginative work are shaped by power relations and positionality.

INTERSECTIONALITY & STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color* - introduces the concept of intersectionality, showing how systems of oppression such as racism and sexism overlap, producing forms of marginalisation invisible when viewed in isolation.

QUEER FEMINIST THEORY

Judith Butler (1990), *Gender Trouble* - challenges fixed notions of gender by theorising it as performative, opening space for resistance against normative binaries and heteropatriarchal power.

Sara Ahmed (2017), *Living a Feminist Life* - weaves theory with lived experience to show feminism as an everyday practice of resistance, making visible the structures of power that shape personal and collective life.

RIGHTS OF NATURE & ECOCIDE

StopEcocide (2022), *Mar Menor lagoon: the first ecosystem in Europe to be granted legal status* - documents the recognition of Spain's Mar Menor lagoon as a legal entity, a landmark case in Europe that advances the struggle for the rights of nature and challenges extractivist frameworks.

TIME, RISK & CLIMATE NARRATIVES

Barbara Adam (1998), *Timescapes of Modernity, The Environment and Invisible Hazards* - a foundational work that examines how modern societies construct and experience time, showing how linear, accelerated notions of temporality obscure slow, invisible environmental harms and risks.

Elizabeth Boulton (2016), *Climate change as a 'hyperobject': a critical review of Timothy Morton's reframing narrative* - a critical engagement with Timothy Morton's concept of the hyperobject, arguing that framing climate change in this way highlights its vast, entangled, and often overwhelming scale, while also raising questions about how artists, policymakers, and activists can meaningfully respond.

Elizabeth Boulton (2016), *It's Time for a New Age of Enlightenment: Why Climate Change Needs 60,000 Artists to Tell Its Story* - a call for mobilising the creative and imaginative capacities of artists at scale, arguing that climate change is not only a scientific or political issue but also a cultural and narrative one that requires new forms of storytelling to shift collective consciousness.

DUTCH CONTEXT & CASE STUDIES

María Inés Cubides Kovacsics, Wáleri Santos & Karin Astrid Siegmann (2023), *Sex Workers' Everyday Security in the Netherlands and the Impact of COVID-19* - The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare and exacerbates the existing insecurities of sex workers. This paper asks: What are sex workers' everyday experiences of (in)security? And: How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced these?

Charlotte Roosen (2022), *Tata Steel and Wijk aan Zee, creating a citizenship out of the battle between Health and Economy* - An exploration of the perceptions of risk to health that is caused by the pollution of Tata Steel.

REFERENCE TOOLS

Etymonline, "school" *https://www.etymonline.com/search?type=all&q=school* - etymology of *σχολή*, tracing "school" to time for learning and reflection.