



Algorithms conform audio visual creativity into “content pipelines”. Artificial intelligence threatens to mechanise human generation. Both are being embraced by a production industry with a crushing carbon footprint. We must act now.

Screen directors are the authors of audio visual works. We urgently need to resist being turned into [shot-gatherers](#) and stop both our cultural and planetary ecosystems becoming empty and uninhabitable. We must restore and nourish the intimate human connection between screen storytellers, our audience and the living world we share. We must champion such personal, organic film-making.

Our ACTION! manifesto bakes cultural and ecological sustainability into the DNA of audiovisual stories from the first moment inspiration twinkles in the eyes of their creators.

Inspired by the radical incitement to directors’ creativity of [Dogme 95](#), and the [Slow Food](#) movement’s promotion of local, organic production, working screen directors on the [FERA](#) executive committee have drawn up deliberately provocative Principles of Sustainability – challenges for directors designed to positively simulate creativity and cultural diversity while reducing carbon emissions. This increased creativity will not only deliver a better, more organic experience of connection for our audiences at the point of sale – during those minutes they pay to watch – it will simultaneously offer the more deferred, less tangible reward of a sustainable future for our species.

Currently maximum “greening” effort is first applied during audio visual production - too late for stories that only then begin to consider the tonnes of CO2 they’ve already committed to release into our atmosphere in their telling. The ACTION! manifesto goes upstream: from the dawn of script development screen directors will conceive and deliver diverse audiovisual stories that can be told with minimal environmental impact.

FERA will promote the Principles of Sustainability and the ethos that informs them to the 20,000 active screen directors we represent in 35 European countries . In collaboration with established audiovisual “greening” specialists, we will provide detailed guidance for our screen directors to become Eco-Leaders.

Principles of Sustainability

Our journey drawing up these principles will ideally mirror your reaction to them:

"That's impossible!... How could we do that?... That's too difficult!... That's too different!... OK, maybe... What if..?.. This might work... Hey, it's even better!"

As environmentalists will point out, the truly impossible thing for our species is to carry on working and polluting the way we are. Our work pollutes big. We must change big. The increasing urgency of the climate crisis indicates that gradual, evolving change may simply deliver too late – we need ACTION! now.

1. The Circle of Life: I will find my story inside a circle I will draw on a map. The radius of this circle will be 100km. Everything and everybody I will need to make my story universal is already part of the living culture there. I positively embrace this restriction as a spur to greater creativity.
2. I commit to tell my story through a nourishing organic exchange with the existing diverse culture in this Circle of Life – embracing a positive, truthful, human connection to the local community's cultural ecosystem will not only stimulate my creativity in ways which may surprise me and my audience: it will organically inoculate local talent with expertise. Local production spend will be long-term investment, not short-term compensation.
3. Every story and genre are possible inside my circle provided they respect this human exchange. By contrast, I reject mimicry synthesised by Artificial Intelligence as parasitic.
4. I will relentlessly search out the absolute minimum carbon emission required to creatively tell my core story to its maximum audience with maximum effect.
5. Development, script writing and preparation will take place in specific story locations as soon as they emerge and evolve.
6. I will capture image and sound with the fewest kilograms – lightweight, easily transportable equipment will allow storytelling to be more fleet, flexible and spontaneous: enabling more creative use of what there is in the "here and now", instead of relying on external resources.
7. I will positively embrace the aesthetic of cinematography that tells my story using available light, both day and night. Any minimal artificial light required in extremis would be powered locally by recycled solar, wind, water or other equal future eco power sources.
8. To best capture the essence of the energy we create together on set, I will author my story through skilfully selected camera positions and takes, which will minimise the number of set-ups and time a scene will require: no generic "spray and pray" shot-gathering! I will limit my shooting ratio to 10:1 to stimulate this creative storytelling rigour.

9. I will use all available technology on set that will help me eliminate or minimise retakes for technical reasons, sparing cast and crew from dispiriting repetition, and enabling best use of precious creative time on location.
10. I will ensure all my collaborators are fully attuned to these principles so sustainability is baked into the creative DNA of our work from the dawn of script development to the delivery of the audiovisual experience to the audience on the screen of their choice.

My supreme goal is to leave the lightest footprints as I coax the truth out of my characters and settings to share my story with the widest audience, and to share this manifesto with my fellow directors and collaborators.