

ACTION!

MANIFESTO

A CREATIVE PROVOCATION FOR THE PLANET

V60

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

Screen directors are the authors of audiovisual works. We urgently need to resist being reduced to **shot-gatherers** and prevent both our cultural and planetary ecosystems from 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 personal, organic filmmaking.

Our ACTION! Manifesto embeds cultural and ecological sustainability into the DNA of audiovisual storytelling—from the very first moment inspiration sparks in the eyes of its creators.

Inspired by the radical creative principles of **Dogme 95** and the **Slow Food** movement’s promotion of local, organic production, working screen directors on the FERA Executive Committee have developed deliberately provocative Principles of Sustainability. These challenges are designed to stimulate creativity and cultural diversity while reducing carbon emissions.

This increased creativity will lead to a more organic and meaningful connection with audiences during the time they spend watching—while also contributing to a sustainable future for our species.

Currently, most “greening” efforts are applied during audiovisual production—too late for stories that have already committed to releasing significant amounts of CO₂. The ACTION! Manifesto moves upstream: from the earliest stages of script development, directors will conceive and create stories that can be told with minimal environmental impact.

As environmentalists point out, the truly impossible task is to continue working and polluting as we do now. Our industry has a large impact. We must make big changes. The urgency of the climate crisis shows that gradual change may come too late—we need ACTION! now.

FERA will promote these Principles of Sustainability and the ethos behind them to the 20,000 active screen directors it represents across 35 European countries. In collaboration with established audiovisual sustainability experts, FERA will provide guidance to help directors become Eco-Leaders.

PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY

1. The Circle of Life: 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.

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