

OOST RULES!

Annual report 2024

Foreword

Stichting Oost Rules! is dedicated to nurturing and promoting live music in Amsterdam Oost in a sustainable, inclusive, intercultural, innovative, and accessible way. We aspire to build an organization able to one day create and maintain a cultural center with a stage presenting diverse programming, creating new cross-community ties between the people of Amsterdam Oost. The envisioned music venue, in an area lacking in dedicated live music spaces, would not only contribute to social cohesion but also encourage cultural participation through music, drawing on the rich history of musicians in the area and establishing Oost as a music neighborhood. In order to build this space, Oost Rules! recognizes the need to bring the existing music community together. We do this through events, festivals, meetups and other activities that build community around music and cultural exploration with professional and amateur artists living in the neighborhood and tapping into existing communities and (sub)cultures.

Oost Rules! developed out of a group of neighbors and regulars of Bar Joost, musicians and music lovers who became friends over the years, frequently lamenting the lack of live music in the neighborhood. Our name stems from one of our early supporters and former neighbor, sound engineer and musician, Remko Visser. He moved to Oost (Indischebuurt) in the early 2000s. His friends in the city center questioned the move to such an uncool, much maligned neighborhood. But, here he found a supportive and diverse community of musicians who, in the era of legal squatting, had opened numerous rehearsal studios and performance spaces. In defense of their home and community, a group of musicians in the area made t-shirts that read: **Oost Rules!**

In just a few short months, we grew from an amorphous concept tossed around over drinks to a Stichting with a supervisory Board of three, a (currently volunteer) Director and what we call our Long Board: a group of 10 committed volunteers intimately involved in the planning and production of our activities. This core team is supported by a larger pool of occasional volunteers and donors. Everyone involved has deep connections to the neighborhood and to the cultural and social fields with many on our team seasoned music industry professionals and musicians. We have no staff in paid employment and an all volunteer Board, but we strive to pay freelancers and performers fairly, always following best practices and Dutch Cultural Codes.

2024 was the first full year of Oost Rules!. This was a year of significant growth, with new events, new collaborations and new musicians. We are proud of the strong community we continue to build in Amsterdam Oost around live music. Though still a very new organization, we had many local businesses reach out to us in their search for local live music and we were able to connect local musicians to paid performances outside of our own events. We established long term partnerships and established goodwill with other organizations. In short, 2024 verified the need for Oost Rules! as an advocate and supporter of the Amsterdam Oost live music scene.

Mission

Our mission is to nurture and promote live music in Amsterdam Oost in a sustainable, inclusive, intercultural, innovative, and accessible way. We believe in the social and cultural value of live music and present programming that provides space for young talent and (sub)cultures to further develop. We are working to create and maintain a cultural center in Amsterdam Oost focused on live music.

Artistic Vision

Our artistic vision is guided by our founder and Director, Katie Poltz, with direction from the Board and support from our Programming Committee. The committee meetings are open to anyone who is interested to participate and our resulting programming is truly for and by the Oost music community.

Our focus on live music comes from our view that live music is a critical, and often marginalized, element of the cultural arts. Live music, pop music in particular, has often been viewed by funders and the public as commercial entertainment only. This narrow vision of the cultural field means society misses out on artistic creation that is un- or under- funded. This issue is compounded in underserved areas such as Amsterdam Oost, where often the artists live but have no space in which to rehearse or perform for their own communities. In addition, many residents of Oost do not have the expendable time or ability to venture across town and pay the high ticket prices of commercial and mainstream pop podia in the first place.

Live music can be transformative and powerful for the performer AND the audience, who often participates in the performance itself through interaction with the stage and other audience members, on a level not usually possible in other forms of art such as theatre or film. If you want to talk about the sociocultural function of the arts, then live music cannot be forgotten. Live music is about experiencing the act of artistic creation in real time!

Programming at Oost Rules! is not defined by a genre but by the neighborhood. The throughline in our programming is the rich cultural and musical diversity of Amsterdam Oost. Because of the international character of our neighborhood, we are not limited to local artists but work to make our programming relevant to local and international audiences alike. We strive to create a welcoming space in which the intersectional identities of our neighborhood can be explored and connected, brought together by a shared love of music.

At the end of the day, our vision is to create a space in which people can connect over cultural experiences and uplift cultural producers in Oost. We believe in collaborations and facilitation, not competition. The more we come together, the better it is for everyone.

Activities 2024: A Year of Community Building and Engagement

2024 marked the first full year of programming for Oost Rules!, a period characterized by significant strides in community engagement and the promotion of live music. Our key achievements include:

- **Musician Meetups:** Successfully organized multiple Musician Meetups at Oceaan and Archipel, fostering connections and collaborations within the local music community.
- **Community Events:** Actively participated in and organized events such as Cafe Struis terrace opening and De Buurtcamping Oosterpark, integrating live music into broader community celebrations.
- **Festival Participation:** Showcased local talent and engaged wider audiences through participation in the Indische Buurt Festival and Windows Festival.
- **Innovative Programming:** Launched unique events like Know Art and GhOost Rules!, demonstrating a commitment to diverse and innovative musical experiences.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Initiated efforts in securing rehearsal space, addressing a critical need for local artists.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborated with Camping Zeeburg for bookings, expanding our reach and opportunities for performers.

Communications: Building a Thriving Community

In our inaugural full year, Oost Rules! successfully transitioned from a nascent concept to a vibrant community of musicians and music enthusiasts. Our communication strategy, primarily driven by organic growth and targeted outreach, yielded impressive results:

- **Word-of-Mouth & Digital Presence:** Our primary method of promotion has been word of mouth, amplified by a strong presence on Instagram, a dedicated website, and a growing email list.
- **Effective Physical Promotion:** Targeted physical promotions through posters and flyers effectively engaged local audiences for our events.
- **Significant Reach with Minimal Investment:** With only a modest investment in promoted Instagram posts, our website, and posters, we successfully built a thriving and engaged community around our initial activities.

Reach (as of 31 December)

- **Instagram:** 1150 followers, demonstrating strong digital engagement.
- **Email List:** 80 subscribers, indicating a growing direct communication channel.
- **Website:** approximately 100 visitors per month, showcasing interest in our initiatives.
- **Physical promotions (posters/flyers):** 500+ distributed, contributing to local awareness.

Financials: Sustainable Growth and Responsible Management

Oost Rules! demonstrated sound financial management in its first full year, ensuring sustainable growth and impactful programming.

Income

- Carried over from 2023: €329.90
- Grants and Subsidies: €1495
- Donations: €4829
- **Total Income: €6324.00**

Expenses

- Operations: €3628.35
- Personnel: €200 (volunteer fees)
- Communications: €450.57
- Programming: €1636.51
- **Total Expenses: €5915.43**

Balance

- To be carried over to 2025: **€739.35**

This report highlights the significant progress Oost Rules! has made in its first full year, laying a strong foundation for future growth and continued impact on the live music scene in Amsterdam Oost.