



Stichting Oost Rules!
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Annual Report 2025

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 of Amsterdam 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 our own events, festivals, meetups and other activities, alongside connecting local musicians with local businesses and initiatives looking for musicians, to build community around music and cultural exploration with professional and amateur artists living in the neighborhood and tapping into existing communities and (sub)cultures.

2025 was the second full year of Oost Rules!. This was a year of solidifying our purpose and of continued growth: creating new events, establishing new collaborations and supporting established professional and up-and-coming musicians alike. We are proud of the strong community we continue to build in Amsterdam Oost around live music. In short, 2025 verified the need for Oost Rules! as an advocate and supporter of the Amsterdam Oost live music scene.

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 (Indische Buurt) 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!** We have adopted this moniker for both the historical significance and the literal one: Amsterdam Oost really does rule! We take a lot of pride in our community and strive to support and contribute to the musical offerings in our neighborhood in a way that brings people together, uplifts existing projects and creates new collaborations and opportunities for local musicians.



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In just a few short months, we grew from an amorphous concept tossed around over drinks to a Stichting with a supervisory Board, 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 seasoned music industry professionals and musicians on our team. We have no staff in paid employment and a volunteer Board, but we strive to pay freelancers and performers fairly, always following best practices and applying Dutch Cultural Codes.

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 as well as for local audiences to access affordable and free professional performances. We are working towards the creation of 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 money 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!



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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. 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 2025: A Year of Establishing Value and Creating Opportunities

2025 marked the second full year of programming for Oost Rules!, a period characterized by significant strides in community engagement and creative live music programming as well as success in raising institutional funds and private donations. We continue to take advantage of new opportunities that come our way, keeping our annual programming flexible and open to last minute collaborations. Our key achievements include:

- **Community Events:** De Buurtcamping Oosterpark, integrating live music into broader community celebrations.
- **Festival Programming and Production:** Showcased local talent and engaged wider audiences through programming for the Bredeweg Festival and Windows Festival.
- **Innovative Programming:** Launched unique programs such as Het Nieuwe Oost , demonstrating a commitment to diverse and innovative musical experiences.
- **Artist Development and Support:** Continued to successfully run our low-cost, professional rehearsal space, addressing a critical need for local artists.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborated with Restaurant Elixer and numerous community initiatives, expanding our reach and opportunities for performers.

Rehearsal Space

In 2025, we continued to rent our 25sqm rehearsal space at Krafthaus in Diemen. To attract new users of the space, we held a housewarming party we called Spaceheater in January 2025. This event inspired us to host other events at Krafthaus such as private parties and our Halloween event, GhOost Rules! (see below). We offer the rehearsal space at a rate of €15 an hour or 3 hours a week for €150 a month with a €100 refundable deposit, in line with market rates.

Thanks to the generous donations of our volunteers, we have been able to outfit this space with full backline: drum kit, PA, mics, amplifiers, a mixer and a variety of communal instruments.

While we are not yet breaking even on the rent, we feel we are providing a much needed space to musicians in Oost with great feedback from our users. Initially we intended to have musicians pay a monthly fee to use the space at a reserved time every week but soon found that hourly



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rentals were preferred. We therefore invested in an online booking system. More promotion is needed to fully utilize the space, but we have decided that the benefit of having a venue in which we can host events for free is worth the extra donations that Oost Rules! volunteers have had to give to fill the gap.

Bredeweg Festival

In order to diversify the offerings to better reflect the neighborhood, the Bredeweg Festival approached us to assist in programming local musicians on one of their stages. We referred three musicians to them, one of whom has been invited back for the 2026 edition. We have since been invited to program our own stage for the 2026 edition as well.

Liberation Day and 50th Anniversary Camping Zeeburg

Our collaboration with Camping Zeeburg continued into its second year with the programming of their Liberation Day event and 50th Anniversary celebration.

Het Nieuwe Oost

Having built a strong community of musicians and music lovers in Oost, we proposed a program offering the supported production of new music and a community oriented event that showcased new music and new bands in Oost - Het Nieuwe Oost. For this project, we received our first subsidy from AFK and a small subsidy from Het Cultuurfonds.

We put out an open call in February 2025 for participants (31 applications) interested in producing and performing new music (existing and newly formed bands) with an emphasis on music that had not yet been performed publicly. A seven person committee made up of Oost Rules! volunteers and board members reviewed the applications and scored their applications based on three main criteria: Eligibility, Artistic Quality and Connection to Amsterdam Oost. They selected six participants: ISORA, JUNO, Fabian Campuzano, Vincent Pino, Guiseppe Doronzo TWINS and Fragmented Memories.

Support was provided by Oost Rules! including the free use of our rehearsal space in Diemen over the course of 7 weeks, two listening sessions, and a stipend of €300 to assist in the writing of new music. Selected participants then had a paid opportunity (€300) to perform their new work during a free public showcase. Due to availability conflicts and a change in venue and date due to funding shortfalls, we organized a secondary showcase to accommodate two of the participants.



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We held two showcases with the Het Nieuwe Oost Participants: Vincent Pino and Giuseppe Doronzo at Camping Zeeburg on 15 June, 2025 and JUNO, Fragmented Memories, Fabian Campuzano and Isora over the three days of De Buurtcamping Oosterpark. The one-day music showcase we initially envisioned was ultimately too difficult to produce with our funding shortfall and we therefore found ways to incorporate the Het Nieuwe Oost showcases into other events. By doing so, our partners (Camping Zeeburg and De Buurtcamping Oosterpark) were able to absorb the production costs. Ultimately, this meant wider audiences for the Het Nieuwe Oost participants and made scheduling conflicts easier to accommodate.

For Oost Rules!, this project established us as more than just an event producer and solidified our role as advocates and supporters of local music. To be very frank, Het Nieuwe Oost proved we are a cultural organization. It showed we had more to offer than just connecting musicians with gigs but that we could also play a strong role in cultivating new talent and assisting in the production of new work. This project was an important part of this transition and we hope to not only offer this program again someday but to develop new projects that continue to uplift local talent and create new opportunities.

This was our first open call, and that was a big learning point. Developing the selection process and putting together a jury really helped us develop as a team in ways we had not worked together before. Previously, our Director was engaged in most of the preliminary work (funding, planning, administration, etc.) with the rest of the volunteers only participating in basic decision making at programming meetings and helping with operations during the actual events. With the jury process, which the Director merely directed and did not participate directly in, they were able to take a more active role in the process. This connected them more deeply with the organization and there has been a notable increase in their general participation especially in coming up with programming and leading up to events. Even those who did not participate in the jury have since been more engaged. This is likely due to an internal and external perception that Oost Rules! is now capable of doing more through the success of Het Nieuwe Oost.

Our board is also now more engaged particularly around developing our organizational structure and streamlining the way we support local artists and requests from local venues. Most importantly, we have been thinking more as a team about our artistic responsibilities and opportunities as an organization. In the past, we were more focused on individual events and how to get bands paid and audiences to attend for free, but now we are thinking about how we can contribute more to the artistic output of the musicians we work with.

De Buurtcamping Oosterpark

2025 was our second year as live music programmer for the stage at De Buurtcamping Oosterpark. We combined the 2025 event with our project, Het Nieuwe Oost, and presented



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four of the six artists on the stage alongside other musicians from Oost.

To make this happen, we

applied and received additional funding from Het Cultuurfonds. Approximately 200-300 people attended the performances each day, with around 50-100 people during each performance and a total of around 525 unique visitors throughout the weekend. The majority of attendees were participating in De Buurtcamping Oosterpark as campers, though at least a third of attendees came only for the performances or were simply passing through Oosterpark and stopped to see what was going on. There was a great mix of those with a distance to live music and musical education, those already actively involved in live music production or performance, those wishing to get involved, and neighbors who just wanted to meet their neighbors in low threshold activities.

The diversity of the audience in terms of socioeconomic status, age and origin was even better than expected. Many of the unhoused in Oosterpark joined for the performances as well as the primarily low income De Buurtcamping participants, in addition to the usual wealthier live music audience (both young and old) that the musicians themselves attracted. It was heartwarming to see positive interactions between these groups, especially as the unhoused population in Oosterpark has increased in recent months and there have been many negative reports by those coming to the park for recreation of unpleasant interactions. Our volunteers went out of their way to invite the unhoused to come enjoy the music and hoped this would ease tensions. While De Buurtcamping did experience some isolated incidents later in the evening after the performances had ended, we had no issues between the attendees during the performances. We received very positive feedback from everyone but especially the unhoused, who expressed gratitude for being so warmly included. We witnessed young hipsters sharing drinks and talking with older unhoused men and kids dancing with their parents next to them. We truly had a diverse and engaged audience over the three days!

Collaboration with Restaurant Elixer

During De Buurtcamping Oosterpark, we were approached by Restaurant Elixer who had recently moved to Indische Buurt from Zuidoost. New to the neighborhood, they were looking for ways to get better connected with the local community and wanted to offer live music. We helped them program their annual Oogstfeest with local musicians. The fruitful collaboration led to ending the year with our revived Musician Meetup taking place at Restaurant Elixer. We find this a fitting collaboration as we share the values of community engagement and sustainability and will continue to produce this monthly event in 2026.

Windows Festival - 2nd Edition

For one exceptional weekend, the windows and facades of Amsterdam Oud Oost and the Indische Buurt were transformed into a vibrant celebration of creativity, culture, and community



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in honor of Amsterdam's 750th anniversary. The Windows Festival turned the streets into an open-air gallery where art, music, and participation came together to showcase the diversity and

strength of the neighborhood, supported with funding from VSB, AFK, Fonds voor Oost, Stadsdeel Oost and a matched crowdfunding campaign with Voordekunst and Het Cultuurfonds.

The Windows Festival started as a simple idea, but as it developed through the encouragement and collaboration of multiple partners, especially Oost Rules!, it became a complex and intricate project to execute. Oost Rules! not only provided programming for the live performances but also acted as producer for the event, facilitators for workshops and provided volunteers for installation and during the festival as guides and documenters. The Festival went better than expected and we are extremely proud to have been a part of this project.

The visual and musical artists we programmed in addition to the workshop participants represented the diversity of Amsterdam Oost, coming from all over the world including: Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the US, China, Bonaire, Suriname, Italy, UK, Ireland, Iran, Cyprus, Spain, Russia, Ethiopia, and of course The Netherlands. Our goal was always to showcase the creativity and diversity of Oost, and this was embedded in our strategy and mission. The Festival brought together a variety of ages, backgrounds, creative levels, and socio-economic levels. Everyone had a chance to contribute and showcase the power of fostering creative expression and collaboration.

For such a small team (4 plus 15 volunteers) we were excited to have pulled off such a complicated installation and performance schedule. With 11 live performances over 2 days and over 20 new visual art installations, planning and executing our production schedule was complicated and left little room for error. But we did it!

GhOost Rules! - our annual birthday celebration

Initially planned to take place at Parknest in Flevopark, a letter from the Gemeente ordering Parknest to take down their outside stage and requiring the proper permits resulted in having to change venues for our annual Halloween/anniversary event. Due to the short notice, we had little choice but to move GhOost Rules! to Krafthaus, the Diemen warehouse that houses our Rehearsal Space. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise! With approximately 100 people in attendance we manage to raise enough funds through donations to give performance fees to all four performers as well as to hire a sound engineer. The space was a big hit with the audience and gave us installation opportunities we lacked at Parknest. The resulting event proved our ability to not only program great local talent but to transform a space into a true experience. Our budget for this event was acquired only from donations with no subsidy support. As our first



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attempt at running a full bar and managing a venue on our own, this event served as proof of concept for the future Oost Rules! venue with the event breaking even.

Communications: Building a Thriving Community

In 2025, Oost Rules! cemented our position as 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 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:** 1853 followers, demonstrating strong digital engagement.
- **Email List:** 185 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 and significant growth in its second year, ensuring long-term stability and the continuation of impactful programming. We experienced a significant increase in subsidies from multiple sources (AFK, Het Cultuurfonds, VSB Fonds) as well as individual donations. Our rehearsal space contributions, while not yet generating income, managed to get us close to breaking even. Our signature, upcycled, hand screenprinted Oost Rules! t-shirts continue to bring in donations at the various events we host and attend. We ended 2025 in the black with a healthy carry over into 2026.



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Financial Report

Carried over from 2024 **€739.35**

Income

Grants and Subsidies €10051.45
Private Donations €3888.42
Rehearsal Space Contributions €7451.00
Venue Contributions - €2307.00
Performance Fees

Total: **€23697.37**

Expenses

Operations €1458.69
Rehearsal Space Rent €8670.72
Personnel €3589.40
Communications €147.75
Programming/Performance Fees €9452.15
Fundraising €154.00

Total: **€23472.71**

To be carried over to 2026 €224.66
Ending Balance 2025 **€1083.51**

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