

HELP! How to resist something that everyone loves?

How petroganda is winning hearts and minds in Norway (and Brazil).



About Klimakultur

Klimakultur is a Norwegian non-profit founded by Erlend Eggen and Julie Forchhammer in 2021.

Klimakultur works from a broad cultural perspective, including the arts and culture sector, but are also addressing the behaviors, beliefs and values ingrained in a major oil producing country like Norway.

Klimakultur is a member of CAAD (Climate action against disinformation) :

CAAD is a global coalition of over 90 leading climate and anti-disinformation organisations demanding robust, coordinated and proactive strategies to deal with the scale of the threat of climate misinformation and disinformation.

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Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre met with Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva during COP30. Both countries are fighting for the survival of the rainforest. At the same time, both countries advocate an expansive oil policy and argue in the interests of fossil fuel companies. Fossil fuel companies in Norway and Brazil play an active role in people's lives in order to improve their own reputation and gain social acceptance among the population. How does this affect the discussions and resistance in the two oil-producing countries? Photo: **Ricardo Stuckert / NTB**

CHAPTER 1.

The Beginning

By Julie Forchhammer, Klimakultur

This is where it begins. In this room. On this day. Climate disinformation takes many forms. Influencing children, parents and teachers through educational programmes is one of them.

It's Sunday, November 9, 2025. It's the day before COP30 starts in Belem, Brazil.

Later that week 13 countries will sign the Declaration on Information Integrity on Climate Change marking the first time disinformation has been prioritized in international climate talks.

I am thinking a lot about information integrity at this very moment even though I am very far away from COP30 and the Amazon.

I am standing in a huge ice hockey arena at Lillehammer in Norway. On the floor made of wood, not ice today, stands hundreds of children waiting impatiently.

The entry procession to the regional finals of **First Lego League** is about to begin. It's one of the world's largest knowledge and technology competitions for children and young people aged 6-16. With lots of legos as the name indicates.

And in Norway and Sweden where Equinor is the main sponsor, a lot of Equinor logos as well.

A long stream of children crosses the stage in Håkons Hall in Lillehammer. Over 50 teams, all wearing team jerseys in different colours.

On the front of every t-shirt there is an Equinor logo. And there's one on the back as well as the oil company's new slogan **Searching For Better**.

Later the teams will compete against each other on Equinor-decorated tables while being judged by judges wearing Equinor-decorated shirts.

This is the frontline of climate disinformation.

Or petroganda as Klimakultur likes to call it. The term is fitting in a country where so much of the fossil fuel industry is state owned. And where so much of the oil marketing is aimed at very young children and youth.

Sponsorships of children activities and community events are at the frontline of petroganda. It's a very physical and specific outcome of oily PR budgets. **It's local, it's personal, it's coming from people and organisations that you like, trust and respect.**

It's emotional. It's joyous.

Here in Håkons Hall, built for the 1994 winter olympics at Lillehammer, the children are engaged, **they are cheering each other on**, the parents look **happy**, the teachers look **relieved** to see so much enthusiasm about the classic STEM-topics (science, technology, engineering, math).



First Lego League, Lillehammer Norway

Back in 1994 Equinor (Statoil at that time) was one of the main sponsors of the winter olympics. **The olympic flame itself** was powered with gas from Statoil.

On this day, 31 years later, **the oil company is still fueling joy** on Lillehammer.

How do we critique these sponsorships that so many people love?

This debate is still in its toddler phase in Norway. We need to learn to walk, talk and take action.

Who can we learn from and find help? And how are oil companies like Equinor, (and Shell), exporting these petroganda tactics to other countries, like Brazil?

This is where it begins. HELP.

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This is the frontline of climate disinformation.

CHAPTER 2.

Summary of the HELP report

How do we build resistance against something everyone loves?

In this report we are exploring how to build awareness and engagement against something that many perceive as positive in Norway: Fossil fuel sponsorships of community events and children activities, culture, sport and education.

Klimakultur has followed big oil company Equinor's petroganda from small coastal communities in Norway to their sponsorships of major cultural institutions in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo in Brazil.

We have learned that Equinor has exported their PR strategies from Norway to other countries, like Brazil. And that other big oil companies, e.g Shell and BP, are doing the exact same thing. We also see how companies like Petrobras in Brazil have adopted these methods.

The fossil fuel industry all uses the same [playbook](#), developed and fine tuned for over a hundred years. This report could as well be about ExxonMobil, Chevron, Total or Repsol.

"Now There's Proof That the Fossil Fuel Industry Uses Cultural Sponsorships to Block Climate Action."

[DeSmog article May 2025](#)

Klimakulturs inhouse social anthropologist Erlend Eggen uses classic gift theory to describe Equinor sponsoring community events (folkefester) - and how these "gifts" makes it so much harder to resist the oil industry.

18 year old Kimi Nie-Nilssen from Harstad explains: "Many people feel there is a shortage of family events and things that can create a good atmosphere downtown...when you try to shed light on the negative aspects of Equinor's operations, it comes across as whining."

The Brazilian journalist Juliana Aguilera reflects on why there is so little opposition against fossil fuel sponsorships. She shows how the Brazilian state is encouraging them through tax incentives, and that lack of public cultural funding makes it hard to oppose these revenues.

Aguilera writes about how Shell, together with the Ministry of Culture, launched the "Rouanet Youth Program," an initiative to promote cultural engagement among Brazilian youth.

Harvard professor Naomi Oreskes reflects that even though she understands the need for funding, a lot of these sponsorships aimed at doing good are "fundamentally immoral".

Calum Macintyre from Folk Mot Fossilmakta (People Against Fossil-power) shows how disruption has been an effective tool for creating attention and mobilising against fossil fuel sponsorships of sports and culture in Norway.

In October 2025 Klimakultur arranged the very first, and very informal, [Petroganda Prize](#) in Oslo.

THREE ACTION POINTS

1. Connect the dots.
Build awareness about how the fossil fuel industry uses these sponsorships to slow down climate action.
2. Fossil fuel ad bans.
Get inspired and learn how to succeed with thorough descriptions by [World Without Fossil Ads](#).
3. Build community and support systems.
Support the local voices and mobilise regional and national interest groups and organisations.

The award brought attention to [32 nominees in 8 different categories](#) who had promoted the interests of the fossil fuel industry in Norway. Jury leader Ketan Joshi wrote about how Equinor sponsoring Red Cross' work to save human lives from disasters (funded by a company that only profits by making them worse) can be compared to grim tragicomic fiction like *The Big Short* or *This is Spinal Tap*.

Klimakultur has found some much needed help and inspiration from the Netherlands and the UK - where ngo's and engaged citizens have been resisting these sponsorships for a lot longer, and on a bigger scale, than what we have in Norway (and Brazil, as it seems).

Through examples from Shell sponsoring the Rijksmuseum Boerhaave and arranging the children's festival Generation Discover in the Netherlands; to BP sponsoring the National Portrait Gallery and its BP Portrait Award and Shell sponsoring the Science Museum in the UK, we learn how others have mobilised with great success.

The scope of these sponsorships are enormous. Equinor has spent [833 million NOK](#) (appr 83 million USD) on sponsorships in five years - including sports, culture and stem/education. Most of these have been spend on a population of only 5,5 million people in Norway (the population of Brooklyn and Queens together).

Some of the money is going abroad, to Brazil as we have learned here, and to the UK where "[Oil giant funds computer game EnergyTown](#) that promotes fossil fuels to schoolchildren"

The most important learning point for Klimakultur has been to realize how wide the specter of climate disinformation is. From the algorithms of big tech to community events in Harstad. Understanding the local context brave voices like Kimi are living in, is key to building resistance against the greenwashing of Big Oil.

The topic of climate disinformation and its connection to banning fossil fuel advertising and sponsorships have been almost non-existing in Norway so far. Klimakultur are learning out loud why and what we can do about it. And we are bringing you with us. Thanks for the help.

CHAPTER 3.

Harvard professor Naomi Oreskes

By Julie Forchhammer, Klimakultur

Klimakultur met up with Naomi Oreskes during the Beyond Oil-conference in Bergen, Norway in October 2025. Oreskes is a leading expert on topics such as the role of science in society and the disinformation campaigns that hinder climate action.

What do you think of companies like Equinor sponsoring good causes and humanitarian organisations like the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Cancer Society?

It's a kind of greenwashing where corporations who are doing damage try to clean up their reputations by giving money to good causes.

One famous example was the tobacco industry in the United States back in the 60s and 70s who gave a lot of money to women's sports and said: look how great we are - we're supporting women, and supporting equal pay for women in tennis tournaments.

This is a known strategy by which corporations essentially whitewash their reputations. People often buy into it for the obvious reason, they persuade themselves that there's a net good because then the money goes to do good things.

If I were running the Red Cross I'd be worried too about how I fund this activity, but at the end of the day I don't think you can justify doing damage over here because it helps you clean something up over there. I just think that's fundamentally immoral.

If I were in the Red Cross, I would say yes, we're trying to help people for sure, and yes, we're saving lives, but now we have to weigh those lives against the people who are dying from these products.

Are we complicit in the deaths of those people? If we take money from the tobacco industry or the fossil fuel industry, then the answer is yes, we are complicit.

If we enable those industries to continue business as usual, then we're not just complicit in the deaths that are happening today, but we're also complicit in the deaths that will happen in the future.

What do you think about Equinor sponsoring educational programmes for children like First Lego League?

I understand why schools feel that they need to partner with the private sector, and I don't want to say that that's always wrong.

But I really think that one of the things schools need to remember is that we count on schools to be independent.

School is one of the few places in life where we're not bombarded by advertising and media that's intended to sell us products.

When schools begin to cooperate in these campaigns which are essentially marketing programs, then we're really corrupting the school system. And we are undermining the independence and the objectivity of the education that our children are getting. And that can't be right.

How have companies like Equinor and the international fossil fuel industry influenced the work on climate change?

I would describe it as a 30-year disinformation campaign. The science about the role of fossil fuels in driving disruptive climate change has been known now for more than 30 years.

If you go back to 1992 when Norway and 190 other countries signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, that was an expression of understanding the science that we knew what was going on, and the idea that we needed to make a commitment to address it to protect people and animals and natural beauty and the safety of communities and coastal areas and all of these things.

We knew about this 30 years ago and we had political will. So ask yourself the question, what the heck happened?

Why have 30 now 33 years gone by and we've done essentially nothing? Oil and gas production is higher than ever. Fossil fuel industry profits are as high as ever.

And the answer is, we've done nothing because the oil industry has been there to stop action at every step.

Every time the world was getting close to doing something, whether it was Kyoto, Paris, Copenhagen, the oil and gas industry was there to say, "No, we can't do this. No, it's too expensive. No, it's too difficult. No, trust us. We're taking care of it. No, the solution is carbon capture and storage. Don't worry, we'll do geoengineering."

They've always had some explanation, some excuse why we didn't actually need meaningful governance to address the climate. And they've been powerful and they've been successful.

I can't tell you how many times I've been with colleagues at Harvard or colleagues at other universities who say, "Oh, but the oil and gas industry needs to be our partners."

Well, that's like telling a battered woman that she has to stay with the husband who's been beating her up, right?

When someone has behaved in a consistent pattern for more than 30 years, then you know what they're likely to keep doing.

And what they've proven to us is that they cannot be trusted partners and that it's just wishful thinking to think otherwise.



Naomi Oreskes holding a First Lego League t-shirt (size 6 year) Bergen, Norway, October 2025

CHAPTER 4.

The gift that keeps on giving?

By Erlend Eggen, Klimakultur

Classic gift theory is useful to understand the mechanics behind the fossil fuel industry sponsoring community events. Why is it so hard to critique these gifts?

Who refuses a free community event or criticizes a gift given to the whole community?

In Norway it is common for fossil fuel companies to take on the role of gift-giver in cities and communities around the coast..

In some cases, they give a free community event as a gift when a new milestone has been reached – for example, when a new oil field is about to open, or by being a sponsor and partner for a local cultural or sporting event that has a lot of goodwill and legitimacy among the local population. This is a really smart way to buy their way into both the hearts and minds of the people.

Welcome to a Norwegian folkefest!

As a Norwegian, I have been to a few community events (folkefest in Norwegian) in my life; it typically involves music with performances by both local talents and nationally known artists.

Food and drinks are often served, focusing on local specialties. Local associations are engaged to perform practical tasks. The largest and best folkefests also include official speeches from government officials or company representatives.

The goal is to include the entire local community, from children to adults, in a magnificent celebration that marks something the organizer believes is significant for the place or region.

What is a Gift?

In his essay *The Gift (Essai sur le don)* from 1925, the French sociologist Marcel Mauss defines the gift as a *total phenomenon* or an *obligatory exchange*. By this, he meant that the gift is not a voluntary and selfless act but is bound by obligations.

Mauss has been formative for all later gift theory and introduced the concept of reciprocity as the central driving force in all gift exchanges.

Simply explained, reciprocity means that we stand in a mutual relationship with one another.

In a gift exchange, there is someone who gives, someone who receives, and an expectation of return.

Mauss uses the Maori term hau (the soul/spirit of the gift) to explain why the gift must be reciprocated. The gift is not just a material thing but carries with it some of the spirit and power of the giver and will *return* to its original owner if it is not reciprocated. →

Ønsker hjelp fra frivilligheten til folkefesten

Equinor skal arrangere stor folkefest 24. mai i Generalhagen. For at festen skal bli så perfekt som mulig trenger de hjelp fra lag og foreninger.



Call from Equinor for volunteers to help with the community event
Facsimile: Harstad Tidende

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As the main sponsor, Equinor borrows the ‘legitimacy’ of a popular sporting event and ‘takes its place’ in the relationship the organiser establishes with the public through family activities, concerts and sports. Equinor also borrow legitimacy from everyone who contributes as volunteers and partners in the implementation of the event.

The gift that keeps on giving?

By Erlend Eggen, Klimakultur

The goal of the gift exchange is not primarily economic profit but to create, confirm, and cement social relations and hierarchies between individuals, groups, and clans.

Everyone who receives the gift helps maintain the idea of who is included and who must be kept outside.



Kimi Nie-Nilssen

Interview with Kimi Nie-Nilssen about Equinor sponsoring community events in Harstad:

What is it actually like to be a climate-engaged young person in Harstad when the town receives a major folkefest (public celebration/festival) as a gift from the Norwegian oil company Equinor?

This summer, Harstad was the starting point and host for the cycling race [Arctic Race of Norway](#) (ARN). It is one of Norway's largest sporting events, with the oil company Equinor as its main sponsor.

Kimi Nie-Nilssen is an 18-year old living in Harstad and one of the few local voices who spoke out critically about the event.

Klimakultur contacted Kimi to gain a better understanding of what it is like to be a young critical voice in a small local community where Equinor is an important employer and gift giver to the community.

Kimi Nie-Nilssen grew up in Harstad, a small Norwegian town where the oil company Equinor has established itself with 300 employees. His own mother works for the company.

Kimi has been involved in the climate movement since he was 11 years old. Today, he is 18 and a youth politician for the Green Party (Miljøpartiet de Grønne).

Kimi explains in [this interview](#) that criticism of Equinor as a sponsor is quickly met with characterizations of sulking and ingratitude:

"Equinor is trying to create a folkefest. Just throwing a lot of money in so people see Equinor as a great company. The consequence of that is that when you try to shed light on the negative aspects of Equinor's operations, it comes across as whining."

In [comment sections](#) and debate pages to the local newspaper iHarstad, we can read harsh criticism of those who raised critical questions about ARN.

In a small town where many people know each other, it quickly becomes personal when someone chooses to criticize what others perceive as a gift to everyone in the local community.

It is perceived as disloyal and ungrateful by friends and acquaintances alike.

Kimi explains that in small places, the feeling of ingratitude is amplified because not much else happens:

"Many people feel there is a shortage of family events and things that can create a good atmosphere downtown. So, many people feel that when something finally happens in Harstad, they don't want to think about either genocide or rising sea levels."

This is not the first time Equinor has helped invite the public to a community fair in Harstad.

Kimi recounts a celebration that Equinor itself organized earlier this year to mark the opening of the new [Johan Castberg](#) oil field:

"so that was purely a celebration of pumping up more oil and causing more climate change, but it still gathered a lot of people downtown and people had a good time, so it was quite literally an oil party that they organized with very few critical objections."

Kimi's stories from the Arctic Race of Norway and the Johan Castberg field in Harstad demonstrate that Equinor both participates in and organizes the community events in the town.

As the main sponsor, Equinor borrows the 'legitimacy' of a popular sporting event and 'takes its place' in the relationship the organiser establishes with the public through family activities, concerts and sports. They also borrow legitimacy from everyone who contributes as volunteers and partners in the implementation of the event.

It becomes very clear how Equinor succeeds in gaining local acceptance as a sponsor when Kimi raises critical questions about the event on social media or in the local newspaper. Those who ask critical questions are immediately perceived and shut down as ungrateful by the majority, who have accepted the community fair as a gift.

Logo branding on cars, stages, squares, and along the road ensures that there is no doubt that the fossil fuel companies are the sender of the gift. An expectation of loyalty and gratefulness has been created for everyone who receives the gift, and many people join in shutting down critical voices that are perceived as *disloyal* in the local community. Almost as a gift back to Equinor as the gift giver.

Why does it feel wrong to express criticism about a gift?

Is it the fear of the oil company or is it the social sanctions from friends and acquaintances within one's own local community that prevent people from daring to speak out?

To dig a bit deeper into the topic I reached out to **Tom Bratrud, an Associate Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Bergen.** →

The gift that keeps on giving?

By Erlend Eggen, Klimakultur

Tom reflected on how community events function as a gift and are received by the local population with an expectation of gratitude as reciprocation:

What characterizes the gift is that there are three principles:

First, you have a duty to give. If you want to have a social relationship with someone, you should give something at some point.

Second, as a recipient, you have a duty to receive. It's difficult to be offered something and say, 'No, thank you, I don't want it, take it back.' That is socially inappropriate. Because that rejects the hand that the giver is reaching out, quite simply.

And then the third point is the duty to reciprocate, if you have received something, you should give something back at some point. If not, you signal that you don't accept the relationship the giver is trying to initiate with you. That feels awkward for both parties.

So, there are some basic social psychological principles involved in gift giving that allow us to create relationships and community with one another, but which can also be exploited in a less noble way, one might say.

Tom continues by explaining that it is effective to organize folkefests in smaller places where not much else happens, as they engage whole families and provide a break from everyday life:

An actor who provides this experience may expect the recipient to be happy to accept it, because the recipient is receiving something they otherwise would not have had access to. They might therefore be expected to show gratitude in return.

As Bratrud points out, social acceptance is not created just by giving a gift; it also depends on people showing gratitude and reciprocating the gift.



Tom Bratrud

In the examples from Harstad, the gift is reciprocated by participating and showing gratitude.

But perhaps the very best way to give back for the gift is the popular defense of both the organizer and the oil sponsorship?

The community defends the organizer if someone locally goes public to say something critical, creating a rupture with what is expected when a gift is given and received.

Kimi Nie-Nilssen's stories show that the majority of the local community are ready to defend their loyalty in a gift relationship. Being one of few critical voices feels like a lonely position to take on. Kimi concludes by saying:

Ultimately, I believe it's difficult to be on my side because you experience so much harassment and so many negative comments. And it's also difficult in a town where several hundred people work in oil and gas to actually say that this is something you are critical of.

Equinorwegian Conditions

All the gifts from the oil industry contribute to maintaining what we in Klimakultur have called Equinorwegian conditions (Equinorske Tilstander).

A national state where the oil industry has a disproportionately large influence on public debate and political decisions at all levels, which we have written about in the report "[What is Norwegian Energy Culture](#)".

Specifically, the Equinorwegian conditions are characterized by three principles:

1. A culture of self-censorship has been created. People who criticize the oil industry are characterized as ungrateful and irresponsible, to the detriment of themselves and the rest of the local community.
2. The narrative of "the good Norway" is retold by politicians, media, and public commentators, contributing to maintaining the idea that Norway produces green and democratic oil that contributes to European energy security.

3. As Norwegians are bound up by a feeling of showing gratitude toward the oil companies, a false image has been created that the majority of people want continued oil and gas activities.

These narratives are fundamental for continued oil exploration.

Sponsoring culture, sports, community fairs, and activities for the entire family is an effective means of demonstrating generosity and creating an expectation of gratitude in return.

The local generosity of the oil companies may be one of the reasons why many Norwegians, and politicians in particular, do not dare to speak openly and freely about oil as a harmful product that we must stop producing.



This years winner of the Arctic Race of Norway representing Israel Premier Tech

CHAPTER 5.

Why are so few talking about Big Oil's soft power in Brazilian culture?

By Juliana Aguilera

Brazilian journalist Juliana Aguilera reflects on the lack of debate about oil giants' sponsorship and influence in cultural, sports, and educational events.

In 2023, I opened an internet search page to find out whether anyone had ever written about the Brazilian fashion industry's dependence on cultural investments made by oil companies.

What I found was exactly what I expected: nothing. No one had connected the dots and published anything about it online.

So I decided to broaden my research and look for analyses on fossil fuel companies' investments in Brazilian culture. The examples, in this case, are endless:

Petrobras Cultural, the state-owned company's program created in 2003, sponsors the Gramado Film Festival – one of the best-known film events in Latin America – and the São Paulo Municipal Theater.

In 2024 alone, Petrobras allocated R\$ 250 million (47 million USD) to cultural projects.

Shell, which sponsors Museu do Amanhã in Rio de Janeiro – a venue that receives 7 million visits a year – and created the Shell Theater Award, considered the most traditional prize in the Brazilian theater scene.

And Equinor, a sponsor of the Pinacoteca in São Paulo, one of the city's most famous museums, as well as the Museu da República in Rio de Janeiro – known for having been the residence of one of the country's most important presidents, Getúlio Vargas, where he took his own life in 1954.

Searching for resistance

Yet my search once again led me to a blank page. I kept investigating, convinced the mistake must be mine – that I wasn't using the right keywords.

But after several days, I still found no study, report, article, or news story addressing the flow of oil money into Brazil's cultural sector, even though this practice has been routine for decades.

Two years passed, and here I was again, searching for these topics, hoping that this time something would appear. And something did – but it was only my own 2023 article, in which I wrote: *Silent and permissive: the soft power of oil in fashion events*.



Photo: Prêmio Shell de Teatro

The discussion continues to be ignored in Brazil, despite rising global temperatures and the urgency of moving away from fossil fuels.

It is curious that this happens in a country whose political narrative seeks to present Brazil to the world as a leader in the energy transition, boasting one of the cleanest energy mixes globally and much of the Amazon rainforest. All that jazz.

The reasons behind the lack of debate about oil giants' sponsorship and influence in cultural, sports, and educational events stem from economic inequality, the absence of public policy, and political biases.

Context of economic disparity

Even as a child, twenty years ago, I knew Petrobras – the Brazilian state-owned fossil fuel company – as the business that supplied gasoline, something present in my everyday life because I saw its logo at the gas station when we filled up the car.

I also heard that the company promoted culture through Petrobras Cultural.

Despite knowing about Petrobras Cultural, I had never attended any event sponsored by them, because access to in-person cultural experiences such as theater, cultural fairs, or museums is neither free nor common in the lives of most Brazilians.

Culture is a neglected topic among many Brazilian politicians, who prefer to make campaign promises about improving security, jobs, and income.

According to a survey conducted by UOL, state governments in Brazil spent less than 1% of their available resources on culture in 2024.

On average, only 0.54% of the annual budget was used – dropping to 0.11% in the states of Rio Grande do Norte (Northeast) and Roraima (North). →

By Juliana Aguilera

A separate study – [Cultural Information and Indicators System](#) (2011–2022), released by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in 2023 – shows that public spending on culture has steadily lost ground within overall public expenditures at the federal, state, and municipal levels.

The Rouanet Law

Without public policy support, cultural expenses weigh heavily on Brazilian families' budgets, leading many to exclude activities such as sports, theater, and arts programs from their lives.

And, it leads to more fossil fuel sponsorships, incentivized by law:

According to [Martin Grossman](#), a specialist in cultural studies and aesthetics and full professor at the University of São Paulo's School of Communications and Arts, *since the State fails to provide resources, cultural incentive laws help bring extra funding to culture.*

One such law is **the Rouanet Law**, created in 1992. It allows companies to redirect up to 4% of their income tax to cultural projects approved through a federal selection process.

This is the gap that large polluting companies use to insert funds into the sponsorship of cultural events, sports, and education – creating emotional ties with the population.

Where there is a massive gap, the oil industry does its greenwashing

In 2024, Shell [was the 5th largest investor](#) under the Rouanet Law, allocating R\$ 84.5 million to approved projects. Of that total, 82.5% went to the Southeast region, the wealthiest in the country, reinforcing unequal cultural access across regions.

Symphony orchestras, museums, and cultural centers were among the beneficiaries.

In 2025, Shell [declared](#) it would invest more than R\$ 120 million in culture and sports in Brazil, supporting over 40 projects.

The funding includes literary fairs, museums, symphony orchestras, festivals, programs for including people with disabilities in sports, women's soccer, events dedicated to Black culture, among others.

Together with the Ministry of Culture, Shell also launched, in February 2025, the [Rouanet Youth Program](#), a pioneering initiative to promote cultural engagement among Brazilian youth.

In the [ministry's celebratory social media post](#), there was no criticism whatsoever of the fossil fuel company's involvement.

Shell [claims](#) its sponsorships aim to *reinforce the company's commitment to society and foster a better future.* But we know that's not true.

A [recent investigation](#) revealed that the Caminhos do Amanhã campaign – aired during prime-time soap opera commercial breaks and on social media – drove a 13% increase in fuel sales at Shell stations.

Equinor follows the same script.

On its [website](#), the oil company states: *in Brazil, our sponsorship portfolio focuses on supporting culture, education, and sports.*

Indeed, Equinor back an impressive list of initiatives: an institution in Rio de Janeiro that has provided professional arts training to vulnerable youth for over 20 years, the Pinacoteca – one of my favorite museums and one of São Paulo's largest – with an educational program that benefits around 100,000 people per year; and an organization that promotes sports for people with visual impairments.

And no one is talking about how problematic this is. →

About the Rouanet Law in Brazil:

This is the gap that large polluting companies use to insert funds into the sponsorship of cultural events, sports, and education – creating emotional ties with the population.

MINC (the Brazilian Ministry of Culture) launched the *Rouanet Youth Program*, in February 2025, sponsored by Shell.

349 15 85

minc We launch today, in partnership with Shell Brazil, the Rouanet da Juventude program, a pioneering initiative to promote the cultural formation of the Brazilian youth! 🌟

With an initial investment of R\$6 million, the unprecedented programme will strengthen cultural training actions aimed at 15-29 year olds in the North, North-East and Mid-West regions. The idea is to reach regions and segments historically less contemplated by the Rouanet Law.

The edit is available on our website! Link in bio.



Equinor presents the exhibition "Corpo Abrigo" by Bel Barcellos at the Museum of the Republic.

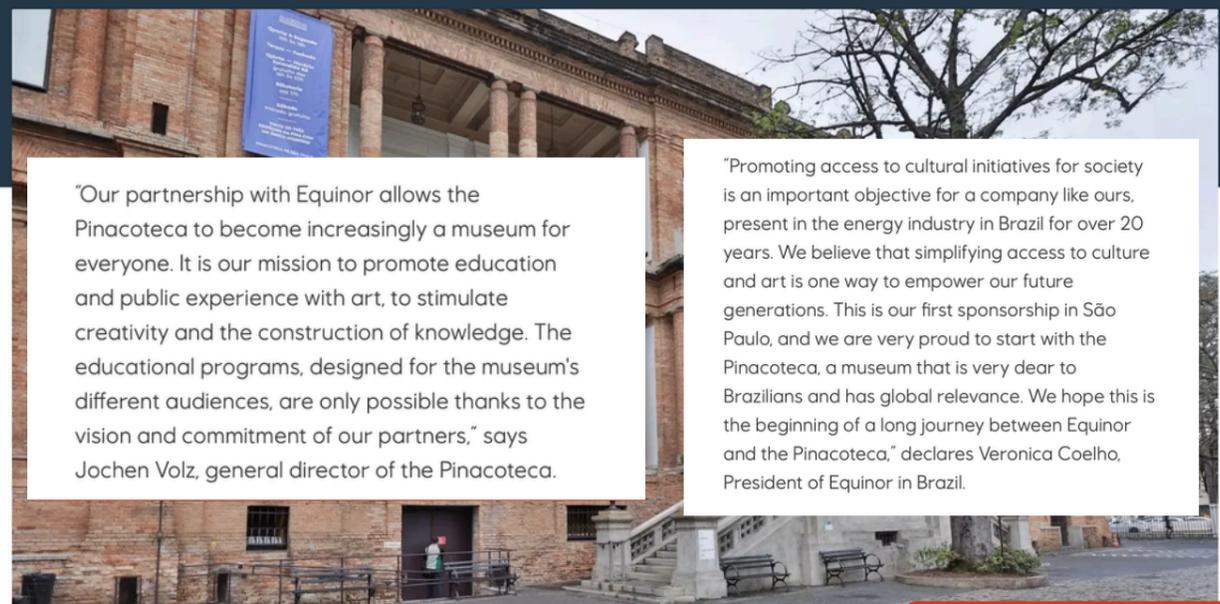
MARCH 13, 2025 18:01 (CET)



Source: equinor.com.br

Equinor becomes a sponsor of the Pinacoteca de São Paulo.

FEBRUARY 5, 2025 13:15 (CET)



"Our partnership with Equinor allows the Pinacoteca to become increasingly a museum for everyone. It is our mission to promote education and public experience with art, to stimulate creativity and the construction of knowledge. The educational programs, designed for the museum's different audiences, are only possible thanks to the vision and commitment of our partners," says Jochen Volz, general director of the Pinacoteca.

"Promoting access to cultural initiatives for society is an important objective for a company like ours, present in the energy industry in Brazil for over 20 years. We believe that simplifying access to culture and art is one way to empower our future generations. This is our first sponsorship in São Paulo, and we are very proud to start with the Pinacoteca, a museum that is very dear to Brazilians and has global relevance. We hope this is the beginning of a long journey between Equinor and the Pinacoteca," declares Veronica Coelho, President of Equinor in Brazil.

Norwegian multinational becomes Gold sponsor of São Paulo's oldest museum.
Disclosure: Pinacoteca de São Paulo/ Photo: Beto Assem

Source: equinor.com.br

By Juliana Aguilera

the Godfathers of climate chaos

The first step toward developing critical thinking about fossil fuel sponsorship is to reduce financial dependence by creating revenue streams from other sources. I chose not to name the smaller organizations funded by oil companies to avoid exposing them. I know that, for many, this is the only place where they can secure funding to keep their projects alive. Are they wrong to accept this money? In a reality where resources are scarce, I don't believe so.

In Europe, people easily associate climate change with oil companies. In Brazil, that is not the case.

When the licensing of Block 59 at the mouth of the Amazon River was being debated, many left-wing individuals downplayed the socioenvironmental impacts and believed exploration would bring development to the region. Major figures who should be opposing fossil fuels echoed denialist narratives.

While claiming to promote education and a healthier future, oil companies are polluting the world, driving global warming, and deepening inequalities.

It deeply saddens me to see how far we are from a mature debate – how difficult it still is for people to understand the need for a just energy transition and to fight the powerful greenwashing of Big Oil.

Shell, for instance, offers free admission to the museums it sponsors on April 13th, in celebration of its anniversary.

Who wouldn't want to enjoy a free cultural event?

I support the position of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who has said that fossil fuel companies are *the Godfathers of climate chaos* and should be banned from advertising while destroying the climate.

How to connect the dots and cultivate critical awareness of fossil sponsorships

With the increasing frequency of floods and heat waves, this topic has become slightly more visible in people's everyday experiences, but we need to talk about this more – much more.

When I ask my parents, who are over 70, not to go out in the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when temperatures hit 36°C, 38°C, they don't take it seriously. I always insist: *I work with this – listen to me – this heat kills!* We need to teach people that heat kills more than floods do in Brazil.

We also need to teach that, although most of Brazil's emissions come from land-use change driven by agribusiness, our country is dirtying its energy matrix by drilling for more oil than necessary.

The public would understand the issues behind fossil sponsorships better if environmental and climate education were more present in their lives.

Read more from Juliana Aguilera in this Desmog article about Petrobras:

[How Brazil's oil giant is using gen-Z science and climate influencers to green up its image](#)

Shell Discover Day (2016–2019)

A children's festival organised by Shell subsidised by the municipality of The Hague. The festival was about future solutions to climate change, the Sustainable Development Goals and clean energy – gas was promoted everywhere.

What was the overall content of the sponsorship?

It was an annual, three day festival for children aged 6–13 years old in the heart of The Hague, the Netherlands with a giant ferris wheel as the eyecatcher.

The event was promoted widely in schools (school classes got collectively to the festival), Dutch press, social media, and advertised on trams, in the streets and in newspapers.

Shell made kids sign a gag order in exchange for a free ticket, in which they allowed Shell to use their images without any restrictions.

Shell invited many organisations to partner up with them in the festival. Partners were, for example, the ministry of Defense, who had a tent at the festival where kids could participate in an imaginary drill when The Hague would be under water (which is not unimaginable with the climate crisis and sea level rise). Other partners were the police, science museums, educational institutions etc.

At the festival there were events for politicians. Government officials opened the festival.

During what period was the partnership active, and who were the primary target groups?

Generation Discover and Shell Discover Day was active for four years, from 2016–2019.

The event targeted kids aged 6–13, their parents and teachers, press, politicians and general Dutch public.

After the festival, Shell organised a year long challenge for elementary schools to come up with the best idea to save the future (Bright Ideas Challenge) and organised guest lessons by Shell employees at schools.

What effect did the event have?

According to Edelman: “The integrated media strategy achieved visibility in top tier media with nearly all major national dailies covering the topic. Coverage appeared across the broad spectrum of the media landscape on TV and in radio items, in print publications and online, amongst others via vlogs from relevant influencers and there was a buzz on social media.

According to Shell's creative agency, the approval rate of Shell went up amongst the general audience.

What was the resistance and pushback like?

An op-ed was written and a “twitter storm” was organised that took over the official hashtag of the event.

People was challenged to come up with memes about the festival, mocking the Shell festival slogan and images and share them on Twitter.

A creative protest march was organised from the festival to Shell about greenwashing. Cookies and stickers was handed out to the kids that went to the festival with the text “come to the green side we have cookies”.

Schools was convinced not to go to the festival, and politicians stated that the festival was not welcome in their town. Festival partners dropped out. News about the gag order that Shell made kids sign was revealed.

What was the impact of the protests?

Schools publicly refused to attend Generation Discover because of greenwashing.

The municipality of The Hague stopped its annual subsidies, mayors and aldermen was not allowed to attend the festival.

The revelation that Shell had children sign a stranglehold contract caused outrage among parents.

Extensive media coverage of the opposition from major national media outlets.

The House of Representatives has repeatedly asked questions about Shell Festival Generation Discover.

The Generation Discover festival left The Hague after all the protests.



Shell Rijksmuseum (2009–2021)

Shell was the main sponsor of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave, a science museum in the Netherlands, from 2009 until 2021. The partnership ended after two years of protests by groups like Fossil Free Education and XR Leiden.

What was the overall content of the sponsorship?

Shell was the main sponsor of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave, which is a science museum. As a sponsor, Shell exerted influence on the contents of the museum, according to this scientific study. For example, the museum had dedicated a part of its permanent exhibition about the history of Dutch science to the history of Shell. The then Shell Netherlands CEO Marjan van Loon spoke about windmills in a video that was exhibited next to Dutch Nobel Prize winners. (There's more dirt in the linked study).

A former Shell NL CEO was part of the board of the museum. He was also public about his denial of climate science – which is extra painful as the Boerhaave Museum is a science museum.

During what period was the partnership active, and who were the primary target groups?

The partnership was active for twelve years, from 2009 through 2021. The initiative specifically targeted children, parents, and teachers, along with the broader groups of tourists and stakeholders.

What was the resistance and pushback like?

Fossil Free Education and XR Leiden protested the sponsorship, the influence on the content of the exhibition and the climate denying Shell board member.

The protests consisted of op-eds, parliamentary questions, and creative action. One action was memorable. The Dutch King was invited – during covid-19 – to open a temporary exhibition with the title “Infected” (about the history of deadly viruses). Fossil Free Education and XR Leiden turned it around and said the museum was infected with Shell. We handed out soaps with a message for disinfecting the museum from Shell.

What was the impact of the protests?

- Parliamentary questions were asked.
- The Shell board member at the museum quit and was not replaced.
- The video of former Shell Netherlands CEO was taken down.
- Shell is no longer sponsor of the museum.
- The corner in the Dutch science department of the museum no longer exists.
- Press attention.
- The protests led to Shell's social acceptance in the Netherlands being eroded.



Shell Science Museum (2005–2023)

Shell's sponsorship of the *Atmosphere, Exploring Climate Science* gallery allowed the fossil fuel company to align itself with climate science, despite its history of denial and its own contribution to climate disaster. Scandalously, internal emails revealed that Shell also tried to shape gallery content and programming.

What was the overall content of the sponsorship?

Shell sponsored the London Science Museum's 'Atmosphere' exhibition on climate science from 2010–2015 and the *Our Future Planet* exhibition on Carbon Capture and Storage from 2021–2023, allowing it to align itself with climate science and in the promotion of unproven technological 'solutions' to the climate crisis which allow the fossil fuel industry to continue with business as usual.

Investigations have revealed how the company actively tried to influence exhibition content and associated events.

The Museum agreed to a contractual 'gagging' clause in which it committed not to *damage the goodwill or reputation* of the oil giant.

During what period was the partnership active, and who were the primary target groups?

The sponsorship lasted from 2005 to 2023 through various exhibitions. Children, parents, teachers, educators, STEM professionals and politicians were all targeted.

What was the resistance and pushback like?

In 2018, 46 scientists backed a formal complaint to the Science Museum Group, making the case that the partnerships with BP, Shell and Equinor was in breach with the organisation's own values and Ethics Policy.

When the Science Museum announced in April 2021 that its *Our Future Planet* exhibition would be sponsored by Shell, there was a huge outcry, including leading scientists calling it 'staggering and irresponsible'.

Youth climate strikers published an open letter calling on the museum to drop Shell, endorsed by over 200 scientists and organisations. Contributors to the exhibition went public about how unhappy they were.

What was the impact of the protests?

The museum's partnership with Shell ended in 2023 when the *Our Future Planet* exhibition closed and new criteria were adopted that now require sponsors to be aligned with Paris Agreement goals; this led to Equinor also being dropped as a sponsor in 2024. The museum has stopped using "gagging" clauses in its contracts.

“

As the world swelters and wildlife struggles in this unprecedented heatwave, MSI has decided to partner with Shell, one of the corporations responsible for fuelling climate change. A museum dedicated to science education should not be helping promote any company that is actively exacerbating this planetary emergency, until they show a serious proactive drive to switch to renewables.

Chris Packham, wildlife presenter and naturalist



BP Portrait Award (UK)

Shell Theatre Award (Brazil)

BP became the main sponsor of The Portrait Award in UK in 1989 (ended in 2022). At the same time Shell created the Shell Theatre Award in Brazil which is still going strong.

What was the overall content of the BP Portrait Award sponsorship?

The Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery (NPG).

BP replaced the tobacco firm John Player as sponsor from 1989. The partnership was ended in 2022.

Over the years, BP was widely promoted as the title sponsor of the Portrait Award, both within London and across the UK in public transport advertisements and online ads.

As a result BP's name became synonymous with the portrait prize and *high culture*.

Until 2020, BP's Head of Arts, Culture and Paralympics Des Violaris sat on the prize's judging panel, giving the oil company direct influence over the prize's shortlist and winners.

Late Art Critic, and former judge of the award, Brian Sewell, wrote:

BP's representative, Des Violaris, thought too much in terms of portraits that might make good advertisements...the NPG's director begged us to let Miss Violaris have her way, arguing that as the sponsor supplies the cash, the sponsor must be allowed the whip hand...

The NPG also signed a controversial non-disparagement clause with BP, impacting how the Gallery spoke about the company and its sponsorship.

What effect did the BP sponsorship have?

BP was presented to the public as a major philanthropist in the UK and supporter of the arts.

Alongside the National Portrait Gallery, BP also sponsored arts institutions including Tate, the Royal Opera House, Royal Shakespeare Company and The British Museum, often as part of a *block* sponsorship deal in order to maximise its supposed reputation as a generous donor to the arts.

Many across the art and culture sector regarded BP as a generous supporter of the arts and, when questions were raised about its involvement in the production of fossil fuels, it would often be countered by the argument that we all consume energy.

The leadership of the National Portrait Gallery and others would evade questions about the environmental and human rights impacts of BP's business but would reaffirm in the media that BP was a generous sponsor. →



Photos: Mark Kerrison





36th Shell Theatre Award

Created in 1988, the Shell Theatre Award is the most traditional award in the Brazilian theatre scene. By honoring the talents of the stage, Shell celebrates Brazilians and their stories.

“

We believe that culture is a fundamental pillar for empowering lives, connecting stories, and strengthening communities. That's why we invest in initiatives that create opportunities and broaden access to artistic expression.

Quote from the [Shell website](#) about the award.



In particular, they would propagate the myth that aspects of their programmes and output would simply not be possible without BP's payments. When the sponsorship deal ended, this was proved untrue with the Gallery finding a new title sponsor of the Portrait award shortly after.

What was the resistance and pushback like?

Creative protests included Art Not Oil's [25 Portraits in Oil](#) in 2014, and Liberate Tate's 2016 performance ['Birthmark'](#), which involved occupying the gallery to tattoo each other with the numbers of the CO2 concentrations in the atmosphere in the year they were born. BP or not BP? [blockaded the award ceremony](#) in 2019.

In 2014, a [letter signed](#) by over 200 artists and culture professionals was printed in the Guardian ahead of the BP Portrait Award, stating that: 'Art shouldn't be used to legitimise the companies that are profiting from the destruction of a safe and habitable climate.'

What was the impact of the protests?

Due to campaigner pressure and artist opposition, BP's representative was [forced to step back](#) from the judging panel of the Portrait Award in 2020 - although the gallery presented it publicly as a *refresh* of the panel that had been made by mutual agreement.

The sponsorship between NPG and BP [was then] ended in 2022. In 2023, investigations by Culture Unstained [revealed](#) how the NPG had spent more than £22,000 in legal fees to avoid disclosing information about the end of the contract with BP in 2022.

The remaining block sponsorships have also been terminated. [Tate](#) ended its relationship with BP in 2016 after sustained opposition; the Royal Shakespeare Company ended its in [October 2019](#), followed by NPG in 2022 and the Royal Opera House in [2023](#)

There are striking similarities between the BP Portrait Award and the Shell Theatre Award, which is still going strong.

The [Shell Theatre Award](#), is the most traditional award ceremony in the Brazilian theatre scene. The Brazilian Oscar for the theatre. Created and sponsored by Shell Brazil since 1988.

Why did Shell choose to sponsor a theatre awards ceremony: *Because it understands theatre as one of the most important and enduring artistic expressions, reinforcing its role as a company that values culture and has a strong socio-cultural presence.*

The trophy was created by visual artist Domenico Calabroni. The golden metal shell is inspired by the traditional Shell logo.

Shell appoints the jury

The members of the judging committees are appointed by Shell Brazil and chosen from among artists, critics, and personalities connected to theatre and the Brazilian cultural world in general. These committees will have representatives from Shell Brazil as presidents.

A representative from Shell chairs the commission.

The category "Energy that comes from within" awards projects, works, or initiatives related to the theatrical world whose results have demonstrated social impact.

PR giant Edelman involved

Edelman who handles the global PR account for Shell is listed as press contact for the award.

COP30 has received [massive critic](#) after appointing Edelman to handle communications for this year's UN climate conference.

How we resist

By Calum Macintyre

Three things I learnt from trying to resist Norwegian petroganda in 2025.

This year I have been involved in two campaigns aiming to challenge the entrenched power and influence of the Norwegian oil industry – specifically the state owned oil company Equinor.

Both were focusing on the sponsorship of major Norwegian events – the World Ski Championships in Trondheim and the Bergen International Festival.

Working with these two campaigns has taught me a lot about how important these kinds of sponsorships are for upholding the oil industries political power in a country like Norway. In this article I am going to describe the three most important things that I have learnt about how we can effectively resist.

1. Sport and culture is a key power base for the fossil fuel industry.

Growing up in Scotland, I never saw oil companies like Equinor embedded in every aspect of our sport and cultural life. Sports stadiums, science centres or my local sports clubs were not sponsored by oil companies. Norway however, is very different. Since I moved here in 2016 I see Equinors branding across the whole of society – ski teams, festivals, science centres, school competitions, art exhibitions, football stadiums. Everywhere you can think of.

These sponsorships create positive associations with oil and gas.

2. What does this do to a society?

The first thing I noticed was how little people talked about the industry's connection to global climate change. Oil and gas is by far the biggest emitter in Norwegian society - yet you can watch journalists interview the Norwegian climate minister and not mention the impact of the oil industry once.

I studied for a masters in climate change management and was shocked at how little we talked about the oil industry.

People in Norway don't talk about Equinor being *big oil* like we would elsewhere. Norwegians have a completely different association to Equinor than other oil companies around the world. It's *the peoples oil*, its *democratic* and its *low carbon and environmentally friendly*.

The stories that Equinor tells through its advertising and sponsorships sell a story to the Norwegian public that separates Equinor from the damage that its product actually causes the world. →

Calum Macintyre is a co-founder of Folk Mot Fossilmakta (people against fossil power) – an organisation mobilising people for civil disobedience to challenge the power of the Norwegian fossil fuel industry.

Two campaigns from Folk Mot Fossilmakta in 2025:

The 44th FIS Nordic World Ski Championships was held in Trondheim, Norway, from 26th February to 9th March 2025.

On March 7th over 30 of the world's top cross country skiers entered into an agreement with Folk Mot Fossilmakta to speak up against fossil fuel sponsorships in skiing.

Bergen International Festival (Festspillene i Bergen) is an annual music and cultural festival. It is the biggest festival of its genre in the nordics and is sponsored by Norwegian oil and gas giant Equinor.



How we resist

By Calum Macintyre

3. Disruption is effective.

Our theory of change with the two campaigns this year has been that in order to break through and actually create a story about how dangerous these sponsorships are – we need to get as much attention as possible. At the world ski championships we announced we would block the biggest race of the competition if they didn't take away the Equinor logos. At the Bergen International Festival we said we would block the main road in Bergen and protest performances unless the festival made a plan to phase out their Equinor sponsorships.

By announcing unignorable civil disobedience like this - we actually put ourselves into a negotiating position that would have been completely impossible for us otherwise. We are a tiny campaign with hardly any money or resources. Within one week of announcing the protest at the world ski championships we were invited into a meeting with the leadership of the competition to speak about our demands.

Within one week of announcing our protests at Bergen International Festival the organisers asked us to take part in a public debate about fossil fuel sponsorships.

The media in Norway love to focus on the disruption we are potentially causing and how annoyed people are. They often suggest that we are *damaging the conversation*. What they fail to grasp is that without us being disruptive – there would have been no conversation about fossil fuel sponsorships at these events at all.

During the world championships campaign we achieved 18.6 million kroner worth of media coverage (if we had paid for the same amount of advertising) to talk about the climate crisis and how dangerous fossil fuel sponsorships are. Put simply, disruption is effective. It gives small groups like ours the opportunity to cut through the conversation and talk about what needs to be talked about.

4. Respected voices need to use the platform that they have.

One of the biggest learnings from these two campaigns is how important influential voices are in challenging entrenched power structures. At the Ski World Championships a small group of athletes took what we were trying to say seriously and actually entered into an agreement with us to speak up against fossil fuel sponsorships.

That was much more important than any protest that we could have organised – it was why we ended up cancelling our planned protest before the race. There is a reason why big companies sponsor these kinds of athletes in order to sell clothing. People listen to them! When these people publicly challenge the established narrative and story that society is sold by the fossil fuel industry – they lend authority and moral weight to what small groups like ours are saying. They often also have huge platforms and the media listen to them.



Free the art from oil sponsorships. Folk Mot Fossilmakta during Bergen International Festival.

“ *without us being disruptive – there would have been no conversation about fossil fuel sponsorships at these events at all.* ”

A major reason why the fossil fuel industry wants to sponsor these kinds of people is that it silences them. The industry knows that as soon as these kinds of important figures start speaking up against them – they will lose the social acceptance they have in society. It's why both tobacco and alcohol sponsorships are banned in Norway.

We also got important help from international actors like Tzeporah Berman - the founder and chair of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. [Her op-ed about Equinor sponsoring winter sports](#) was an important factor in giving the campaign credibility and support.

There is a lot more work to be done. We need to not be scared to cause a little disruption, we need to try to get important voices on our side and above all we need to educate the public about how effective fossil fuel sponsorships are at blocking climate action.

The more people that resist, the quicker we will stop these dangerous companies from being able to influence our societies with their enormous marketing budgets.

[Check out more texts from Calum Macintyre here.](#)

The Norwegian Petroganda Prize

By Ketan Joshi

At the Petroganda festival in October 2025 I was lucky enough to be appointed jury leader; presenting the eight finalists for the first *petroganda prize* – an award granted to the most stunningly egregious example of fossil fuel company sponsorship in Norway.

I am not a comedian, but I am lucky enough to work in one of the most fundamentally funny topic areas currently existing in human society today: climate change.

It is full of ideas that are inherently amusing, and that you'd expect to find in grim tragicomic fiction like *The Thick Of It*, *The Big Short* or *This is Spinal Tap*.

It makes sense that fossil fuels choose culturally significant things to fund, when they're trying to paper over the hard reality of their actual reputation based on their actions and business models. But the flip-side of this is that they inadvertently end up drawing attention to their own impacts, in the grimmest, most tragi-comic way imaginable.

At the October 2025 Petroganda festival arranged by Klimakultur in Oslo, I was lucky enough to be appointed jury leader; presenting the eight finalists for the first *petroganda prize* – an award granted to the most stunningly egregious example of fossil fuel company sponsorship in Norway.

[Watch the petroganda prize on YouTube.](#)

It is a surprisingly difficult thing: often, the companies specifically choose emotionally significant subject areas to throw around their reputation-protection cash. The nominees included things like the Norwegian Red Cross saving lives, young kids learning how to build lego and learn to code, and the beloved skiing championships.

The Norwegian Red Cross is out there saving lives that have been threatened by the product that their sponsor, Equinor, sells. The kids grinning at the lego competition are going to face decades of significantly worse harm and suffering for every quarter of good profits Equinor sees. Perhaps most obviously, the entire sport of competitive skiing is already being trampled by the atmospheric consequences of the fossil fuel industry it relies on for sponsorship and funding. It is, as I said on the night, akin to a tobacco company funding a lung cancer ward.

Petroganda speaks right to the heart of Norway's relationship with fossil fuels. It is not just that coupling our country to the sale of the deadliest product in human history is acceptable: we have to see ourselves as "heroes" and climate champions.



In one shocking example I brought up on the night, Equinor's strategy director implies that interfering with their company's work on the energy transition is like interfering with a doctor performing a heart transplant.

It is in fact much worse than that: Equinor also claims they're performing the heart transplant on the patient while both they and the patient are *running a marathon* (a metaphor for the energy transition). Ah, famous Norwegian modesty.

Equinor is not a doctor performing a heart transplant while running a marathon. It is frantically running behind the doctors, trying to sell fatty burgers and artery-clogging fries. And we in Norway are not heroes, champions or world-leading energy transition aficionados. In trying to frantically reframe ourselves that way, we haven't realised how funny we're being, in the most blackly comic way imaginable.

Audience vote

After I ran through each of the nominees, hopefully using a dash of humour and sarcasm to highlight the grim irony of each of these funding arrangements, we ran a vote using a poll, where the audience could watch the results emerge in real-time.

A clear winner emerged almost immediately: the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Refugee Council, and their fossil-funded humanitarianism by Equinor. It was clearly the most powerful example of the incredible contradictions underpinning these arrangements,

When we flicked over onto the final slide for the Red Cross and the Refugee Council, as we were going through the nominees, there was an audible gasp from the audience. It is shocking that such a vital effort to save human lives from disasters is funded by a company that only profits by making them worse.

In Norway, there is very little focus on the hypocrisy and irony of fossil-fuel funded sponsorships. The deep cultural power of fossil fuel money is obviously a big part of this, but perhaps much of this is simply because so few have tried, maybe seeing it as too hard or too controversial.

The reality is that it is the cultural power of the subjects of their funding that gives us the power in criticising them. **We care about kids learning, we care about humanitarian aid, we care about art and sport. And we can call on those emotions and those deeply-held connections to point out how hypocritical all of this is.**

CHAPTER 12.

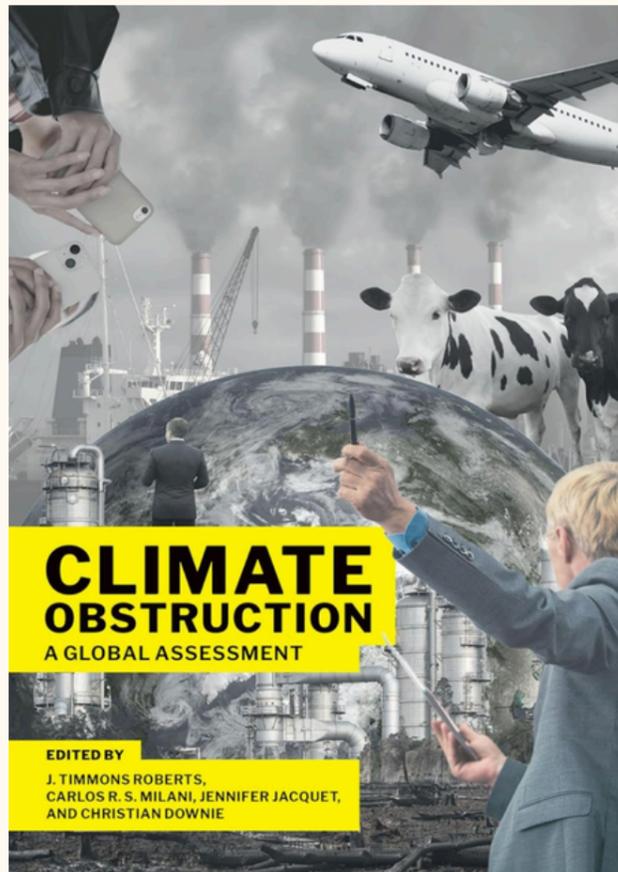
Resources



The Black Thread is a new documentary podcast unravelling Norway's complex relationship with prosperity, identity, and responsibility in a warming world.

Made by Dickon Bonvik-Stone and co-produced by Klimakultur.

[Listen to The Black Thread on Drilled Media now.](#)



In *Climate Obstruction: A Global Assessment*, from Brown University's global Climate Social Science Network, a team of more than 100 scholars explore who's blocking action on climate change and how they're doing it.

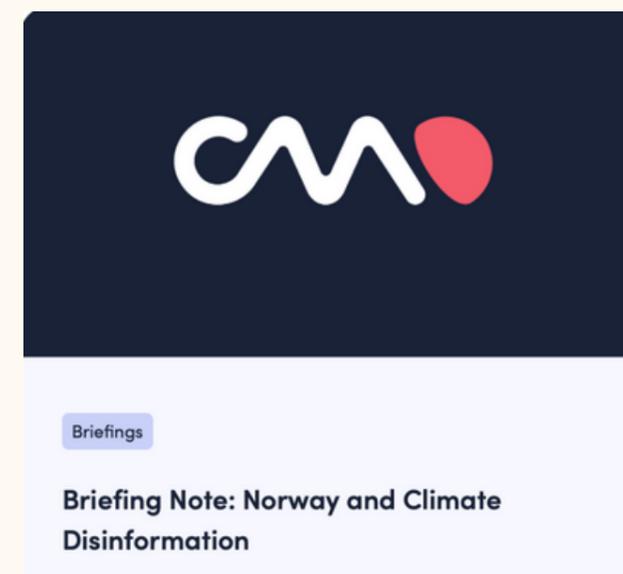
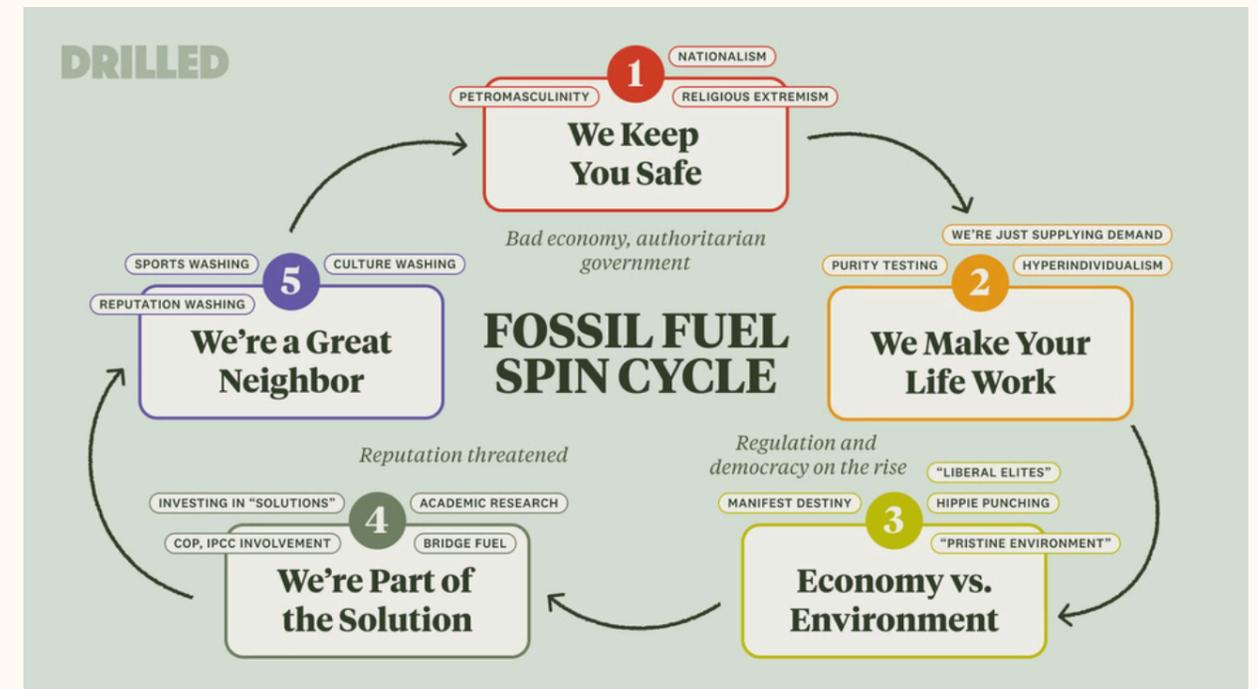
While fighting climate change was *never going to be easy*, it has been made exponentially more difficult by various forms of obstruction according to the text.

[Download the book for free here](#)

The examples of fossil fuel sponsorship presented in this report are all related to the five key narratives presented in The Fossil Fuel Spin Cycle by Drilled. Fossil fuel companies constantly return to these narratives in their sponsorships and PR. A fossil fuel sponsorship often covers several narratives at the same time.

"Having studied the narrative stylings of the fossil fuel industry for a good many years now, we here at Drilled have come up with a mind map of the industry's favorite stories. Every talking point they throw out fits into one of these five buckets, and while there are new flourishes here and there and certainly new delivery mechanisms, the five main stories really have not changed for about a century."
Drilled

["Read more about Petroganda narratives here"](#)



A briefing note from Klimakultur exposes the state-owned Equinor's [sponsorship school programs](#) and [heavy investments in new oil and gas projects](#), even as the government promotes Norway's green credentials internationally.

[Read the briefing note at CAAD here.](#)

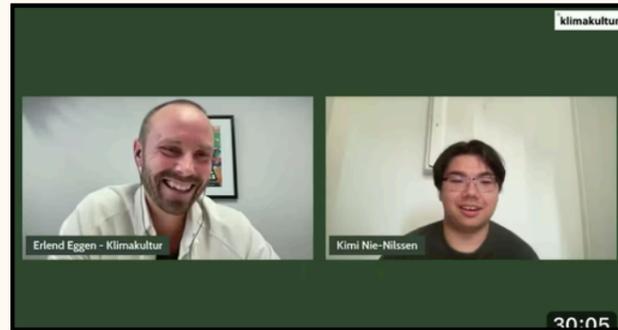
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[Check out Klimakulturs YouTube channel](#)



[Interview with Naomi Oreskes](#)



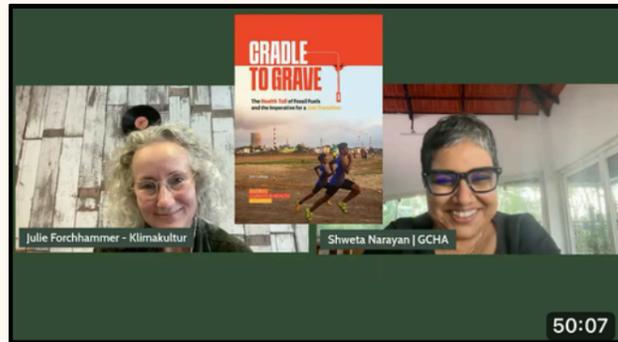
[Interview with Kimi Nie-Nilssen](#)



[Winter sports and oil sponsorships](#)



[Interview with Calum Macintyre](#)



[Interview with Shweta Narayan](#)



[Interview with Belinda Noble](#)



[Interview with Freddie Daley](#)



[Interview with Jonas Kittelsen, XR](#)



[Watch the Petroganda Prize](#)



[Ketan Joshi has played EnergyTown](#)



[About fossil ad bans](#)



[Panel: Is this petroganda?](#)

HELP! How to resist something that everyone loves?

How petroganda is winning hearts and minds in Norway (and Brazil).

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