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Cinematic Rotterdam: the times and tides of a modern city

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CHAPTER 7. THE APPEARANCE OF A NEW CITY

§ 1. the void, a matter of projection

On the 18th of May 1940, three days after the bombardment, the city commissioned city planner Witteveen to draw a reconstruction plan. In three weeks, on the 8th of June, a road plan was ready. The fact that Witteveen needed such a little amount of time means that the plans were already there⁷⁵⁵. Before the war, various plans had been made to modernise the city, which, however, encountered fierce opposition⁷⁵⁶. After the bombardment these plans could finally be carried out. Mayor P.J. Oud thought nevertheless of restoring, rebuilding and maintaining certain structures, but decisions were then taken in The Hague, by Johannes Ringers, who was appointed as the “General Deputy for the Reconstruction” (*Algemeen Gemachtigde voor den Wederopbouw*)⁷⁵⁷. Ringers installed a state office for Rotterdam, *Adviesbureau Stadsplan Rotterdam* (ASRO), and Witteveen became its director. It made the decision to clear the old city. ‘Clearing this rubble – the removal of cellars, foundations, piping and ducting, the levelling and the expropriation – was the most significant urbanistic project since the damming of the Rotte at the Maas in the 12th century’, according to Crimson Architecture Historians⁷⁵⁸. This void, or *tabula rasa*, became the precondition for an entirely new city that would be built, according to the modernist principles of CIAM.

Although the Germans destroyed 99% of the city centre, things could have had a different course. In Warsaw, for example, the historic city was to be rebuilt in its old glory. In Rotterdam, the St. Laurens church is one of the few examples of a severely damaged building that was to be restored – although that was not even sure for several years⁷⁵⁹. Its restoration would be shown once and again by many films, which helped it to become a symbol of the resurrection of Rotterdam⁷⁶⁰. This, however, distracted the attention from other buildings. At least 144 buildings

Rademakers introduced him to Landré. Eventually, Van der Enden would be the director of photography of virtually all NFM productions. In 1960 Rademakers’s film was ready (*THAT JOYOUS EVE / MAKKERS STAAKT UW WILD GERAAS*). The film tells the story, written by Jan Blokker, of three families in Amsterdam-Zuid that prepare for the traditional Saint Nicholas celebration (5th of December). One deals with a divorce, another with a rebellious son, and the third with the father looking for a ‘joyous eve’ elsewhere. Notwithstanding the power of the kinship structures of Veder and Landré, the theme of family disintegration addresses a general trend that accompanied modernisation and city life (for the Amsterdam connection, see: Hendriks, 2006: 87). The film won a silver bear at the Berlinale (1961), but it was no commercial success (Hofstede, 2000: 108). According to Landré it was because of the unhappy end. It was ahead of its time; it is now seen as a classic of Dutch cinema (i.e. an instance of culture serving a memory and an oscillator function). The second NFM film was *THE KNIFE* (1961, Fons Rademakers), written by Hugo Claus, which was also too artistic for the general public, different from the next film, *RIFIFI IN AMSTERDAM* (1962), by John Korporaal (who also made *DE VERGETEN MEDEMINNAAR*, 1963). In order to produce such films (as well as artistic documentaries such as *THE REALITY OF KAREL APPEL*, 1961, Jan Vrijman), the NFM also made commissioned films, but still with artistic ambitions. It is no coincidence that most of these films, contrary to the fiction films, dealt with the port. Here too, moving between fiction and documentary, art and industry, one sees the oscillating function. At the same time this is a matter of ‘emergent interfaces’ (Nowotny, 2005: 28), which causes cultural complexity: the splitting of the culture core and its ‘economic arrangements’ into various cultural branches. If the culture core of Rotterdam is a ‘liquid city’, its extension means ‘stretching the liquid’.

⁷⁵⁵ Oudenaarden, 2004: 42; Van de Laar, 2000: 301.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid. p302, e.g. the case of stopping up the Blaak.

⁷⁵⁷ For Oud, see: Oudenaarden, 2004: 15; for Ringers, see: Wagenaar, 137 and 92-97 (a.o.).

⁷⁵⁸ I.e. English quote: Crimson, 2002: 34; original quote Crimson, 1995b: ‘Het puinruimen - het verwijderen van kelders, fundamenteen, buizen en leidingen, het egaliseren en het onteigenen – is het belangrijkste stedenbouwkundige project geweest sinds het indammen van de Rotte bij de Maas in de twaalfde eeuw.’

⁷⁵⁹ J.J.P. Oud was a member of the committee to investigate the possibilities for restoration. In 1950 he came with a plan to restore the tower, and to replace the nave by a square for contemplation and a new, modern building that would be detached from the tower, see: Taverne e.a., 2001: 462-463.

⁷⁶⁰ e.g. *OPBOUWDAG IN DE MAASSTAD* (1947-wk23, Polygoon); *OPBOUW SINT-LAURENSKERK* (1952, P. Rest), *DE RESTAURATIE VAN DE ST. LAURENSKERK BEGONNEN* (1952-wk21, Polygoon); *HOUEN ZO!* (1952, Herman van der Horst), the opening scene of the film concerns the church; *DE RESTAURATIE VAN DE ST. LAURENS* (1954-wk25, Polygoon); *ROTTERDAMSE ST. LAURENSKERK VLAGT* (1955-wk47, Polygoon); *JOURNAAL* (NTS, 1955-11-19 and 1959-

could have remained, according to an inventory made just after the bombardment⁷⁶¹. This is much more than the number of buildings that were finally saved, like the town hall, the central post office, the Schielandshuis, and the brand new trade centre ('Beurs'). It means that various buildings were simply broken down, among them the remarkable 'Groote Schouwburg' (1887, arch. J. Verheul)⁷⁶².

To remove the built structures of the city meant erasing its historical heritage. Empty space became empty time. The city had to reinvent itself, which happened as soon as one moved and left traces in the environment. These traces became means to distinguish between places where one had acted before, and where one still had to go. This is, as Niklas Luhmann has it, a matter of *memory* and *oscillation* that allow for *autopoiesis* (self-creation).

To be able to separate memory and oscillation, the system constructs time, that is, a difference of past and future states, by which the past becomes the realm of memory and the future the realm of oscillation. This distinction is an evolutionary universal. It is actualized by every operation of the system and thus gives time the appearance of a dimension of the 'world'. And if there are sufficient cultural guarantees for conceptualizing time, the distinction of time re-enters itself with the effect that past and future presents, too, have their own temporal horizons, their own pasts and futures. (Luhmann, 1997)⁷⁶³

Today the void offers the possibility to examine the way time comes into being as a human construct. This remains hypothetical, since neither the whole city had disappeared, nor did one forget about the times before, while one still interacted with other cities.

the cognitive appeal

The reconstruction of Rotterdam was not only a physical, but also a rhetorical act of planning, as Crimson has argued. They note that writers, by writing about the ruins, the emptiness and the plans, were immediately involved in the reconstruction process.

Up until that time [i.e. the destruction of the city], urban development had subsisted on the coincidence of the mental and organizational content of the city with its physical, three-dimensional form. Directly after the bombing the rubble-writers took as their theme the unhitching of city form from city substance. This was inevitable due to the fact that the idea of the city seemed to live on whereas the city as artefact had in fact vanished.⁷⁶⁴

Emptiness is the most extreme shape a city can have. Crimson raises a fundamental issue: what is a city like when it is no longer there? What is an object without its material form?

According to economist Sergio Conti, the 'identity' of a social system is closely related to its 'organisation'. Conti defines *organisation* as an 'ensemble of relations', and positions it against *structure*, which consists of 'material and historic qualities'. Conti says (2005: 33) that

10-30 a.o.); OPDAT HET WOORD WEER KLINKE (1959, B. Steggerda). In the next decade various reports would follow. The restoration was finished in 1968; see: SCALA (NTS, 1968-11-28); ROTTERDAM TE DEUM (NCRV, 1968-12-14); cf. Polygoon, 1968-wk49. It became once more a subject of reports when the church got its new organ, see e.g. NIEUW ORGEL IN DE ST. LAURENSKERK (Polygoon, 1973); LAURENSORGEL IN ROTTERDAM (Eelco Zwart/EO, 1974-02-28).

⁷⁶¹Cf. Van de Laar, 2000: 412; Roelofsz, 1989.

⁷⁶²For information on the 'Groote Schouwburg' at the Aert van Nesstraat, see: Van de Laar, 2000: 430.

⁷⁶³This argument can also be found in the work of others, among them the anthropologist Paul Bohannan (1995: 187), who considers time as the product of multilinear evolutionary processes. For the issue of time and feedback loops in artificial intelligence, see also: Bonabeau, Dorigo, Theraulaz, 1999: 41.

⁷⁶⁴English quote: Crimson, 2002: 41. Original quote: Crimson, 1995b: 'Tot op dat moment had stedenbouw juist bestaan bij de gratie van het samenvallen van de geestelijke en organisatorische inhoud van de stad met haar fysieke, driedimensionale vorm. Gelijk na het bombardement thematiseerden de puinschrijvers de ont koppeling van de vorm van de inhoud van de stad. Deze was onvermijdelijk geworden doordat het idee van de stad bleek voort te bestaan terwijl de stad als een materieel artefact was verdwenen.'

the structure changes more rapidly than the organisation, since ‘a radical modification of the relations that compose it can lead to the disintegration of the system.’ The structure is merely an outcome (ibid, 35). However, the identity might change too, as the organisation evolves over time, but according to its own laws (ibid, 33-34).

The question here is how a city is understood when it no longer functions as it should. When a city is in disorder, all cognitive functions are called upon to create order again, and to make sense of the city. Because of that, writers and artists have a task to fulfil. As Crimson has it:

At the moment when urban form is no longer an integral three-dimensional composition and a city’s significance no longer coincides with its physical shape, the urban form can only be described in terms of something other than itself. This goes far beyond simply describing the city in terms of the activities that take place there; it means – and here we touch upon an underestimated aspect in Rotterdam’s reconstruction – that the city is filled with stories, with narrative lines and points. Now that buildings and urban elements could no longer draw their significance from a general ground plan, they were artificially charged with rhetorical utterances on the identity of Rotterdam.⁷⁶⁵

Crimson argues that the city is filled with stories that give meaning to urban space, which cannot be found in the space that became emptiness. The emptiness, however, triggered the imagination.

The surface area of Rotterdam had no shape and no content. It presented a screen for all projections of a still imaginary Rotterdam, or a neutral table on which poetical utterances and centres of intensity could be jotted down.⁷⁶⁶

Besides architecture, other media were involved to create urban space, to put it in into perspective.

Crimson exemplifies it by a reference to a group of writers, including Ben Stroman, Leo Ott, M.J. Brusse and Anton Koolhaas, and analyses the case of the most influential literary piece of that time, which was the theatre play HET HART VAN ROTTERDAM (“The Heart of Rotterdam”). It was initiated by Koolhaas, together with J.H. Speenhof and Jan Musch, with contributions by several authors⁷⁶⁷. The play, which had its premiere on the 1st of September 1941, consisted of five tableaux, garnished by poems, songs, music, ballet, and slide projections, all made by different artists. The tableaux presented the city in a whirling imaginary journey through time, from the destroyed city to its roots in the middle ages, and back again: building the St. Laurens Church in the late middle-ages, the glory of the port in the 19th century, clearing the pieces after the bombardment, life during the war, and finally businessmen and shipping directors that find a new spirit in the brand new “Trade Centre” (‘Beurs’)⁷⁶⁸. According to Crimson, the play shows that Koolhaas and his colleagues wanted to integrate the violent destruction of the city in a historical continuum that also included its emergence and its expansion.

⁷⁶⁵ English quote: Crimson, 2002: 43. Original quote: Crimson, 1995b: ‘Op het moment dat de stadsvorm geen integrale drie-dimensionale compositie meer is en de betekenis van een stad niet meer samenvalt met haar fysieke gestalte, kan de stadsvorm alleen vanuit iets anders dan haarzelf beschreven worden. Dit betekent veel meer dan dat men de stad alleen beschrijft vanuit de activiteiten die er plaatsvinden; dit betekent - en hier komen we bij een onderschat aspect van de wederopbouw van Rotterdam - dat de stad wordt gevuld met verhalen, met narratieve lijnen en punten. Nu gebouwen en stedelijke elementen geen betekenis meer konden onttrekken aan een algemene grondvorm; werden ze kunstmatig opgeladen met retorische uitspraken over de identiteit van Rotterdam.’

⁷⁶⁶ English quote: Crimson, 2002: 44. Original quote: Crimson, 1995b: ‘Het stedelijk grondvlak van Rotterdam kende geen vorm en ook geen inhoud; Het vormde een scherm voor alle projecties van een vooralsnog imaginair Rotterdam, ofwel een neutrale tabel waarop poetische uitspraken en centra van intensiteit genoteerd konden worden.’

⁷⁶⁷ According to Van de Laar (2000: 431) the play had its premiere at the 1st of September 1940. Authors of the play were Anton Koolhaas, Ben Stroman, W.A. Wagener, Albert van Waasdijk, G. Zalsman.

⁷⁶⁸ ‘Beurs’, 1925-1940, J.F. Staal; see: Polygoon Hollands Nieuws, 1940-15.

To visualise the history, different techniques were used, such as kaleidoscopic images by several projectors that showed great buildings, cranes, bridges and the iconic ocean liner ‘Nieuw Amsterdam’, accompanied by crescendo music and a choir singing⁷⁶⁹: ‘We ram and mason, we break and pull down. // We build the city. // We hammer, build, dig and strike. // Enlarge the city.’ HET HART VAN ROTTERDAM became a successful multimedia show about the identity of Rotterdam, which makes clear that the argument of *Crimson* is not limited to literature. This case makes already a link with cinema. Besides the use of projections, the initiators themselves were interested in filmmaking. Actor Jan Musch, for example, had previously played the main character in the film ‘Dead Water’ (Rutten, 1934), whereas Anton Koolhaas would become a script writer – and later the director of the Nederlands Filmmuseum.

Writing about the bombardment, *Crimson* argues, was already an act of city planning. We might extend this argument to other artistic disciplines too. We could mention the drawings made by artists for Museum Boymans and the “Municipal Archive”⁷⁷⁰, and also the photographs by people like Jan Kamman, J. van Rhijn, Cas Oorthuys, and Eva Besnyö. The series of photographs by Besnyö is well-known. While she had previously carried out several commissions for architects, she treated the ruins in a similar way, like sculptures, and without people. Besnyö discovered a certain beauty in them, similar to the way the romantics had been fascinated by ruins. In this case, however, it was not about natural decay, but about violent destruction. Because of this aestheticisation, with the human dimension lacking altogether, Besnyö distanced herself from these pictures later on. ‘I still feel ashamed for that’, she said in an interview for the *Groene Amsterdammer* (see: Hendriks, 2002).

Like the photographs by Besnyö, several films were made too. Besides the UFA-film, several Dutch filmmakers recorded the effects of the bombardment. Although most of these films showed the destructions from eye-level, the human tragedy is also absent in these documents. The films are testimonies of the death of the city as a built structure.

A cinematographically refined example of the ‘ruin-films’, is *VERWOESTINGEN IN ROTTERDAM* (1940) by former *Filmliga* member Jan Koelinga. Some of the images show people strolling through the city, watching the remnants that have almost become an ‘attraction’. Different from most static recordings by others, Koelinga made use of all kinds of mobile framing, including overview shots taken from a train. These well-made and unique images have long been left unconsidered. The reason might be that Koelinga moved from a socialist engagement towards national-socialist sympathies, which caused him to collaborate on various pro-German propaganda films, although that was not yet at issue in this case.

Among the recordings of the ruins are also the images shot by architect Wim ten Bosch (*ROTTERDAM NA MEI* 1940), as additional material to his project *ROTTERDAM EN HOE HET BOUWDE* (1940). Many projects that were initially recorded by the film and the book were erased by the war. Among the destructions that he documented were the *Grote Kerkplein* with the damaged St. Laurens church, and shopping street the Meent, where Ten Bosch himself had made his major works only a few years before. It is not clear if there actually was a revision of the film, or if the additional material has been publicly screened. It might at least have been the intention, since a revision of the book was published too (1941). It is, however, remarkable that the film shows the destruction, while the revised book has no additional pictures of it, but only of the

⁷⁶⁹Original quote: ‘Wij heien en metselen, wij sloopen en breken. // Wij bouwen de stad. // Wij hameren, timmeren, spitten en steken. // Verruimen de stad.’ It is translated in *Crimson* (2002: 36) as: ‘We ram piles, build in brick, demolish and break // Reconstruct the city // We hammer, put together, dig and rake // Extending the city.’

⁷⁷⁰In autumn 1940, Museum Boymans organised an exhibition of the work by six artists. Director D. Hannema commissioned them to make drawings and watercolours of the ruins, to compensate their losses during the bombardment. Following this example, Hendrik Hazewinkel, director of the “Municipal Archive” (GAR) also commissioned drawings of the ruins for the topographical collection. A selection of these images was exhibited in the archive in February and March 1941 under the title: ‘Rotterdamse Stadsbeelden’. Roelofs, 1989: 178.

temporary shops that were built by then. Whereas the film and the book were initially conceived in terms of ‘city walks’, the project became suddenly a testimony of a past period. The film and the book framed the city as it used to be, which offered a starting point for the new city to come. What that could be like was hinted at by the work of Ten Bosch himself. At a time that doubts concerning the development of modern architecture had been raised within the movement itself, Ten Bosch embraced *Het Nieuwe Bouwen*, which has also been expressed by his designs for some emergency shops. Illustrative are the additional photographs made of them by Jan Kamman, including the ‘modern classicist’ shop ‘Eckhart’ by Van Ravesteyn, and the ‘expressive modernist’ shop ‘Willem de Jong’ by Ten Bosch.

Various films were made about the destroyed city and its reconstruction, among them a large number of amateur recordings⁷⁷¹. The amateur films are of particular interest, since official film production was problematic during the war. Moreover, as individual records they testify to a collective memory; these films were made due to a historical awareness, to document extraordinary events, to remember them in later years, and to cope with them in the present.

An outstanding example of an amateur film is 1940 ROTTERDAM (J. de Klerk)⁷⁷². It is part of the collection of De Klerk family films, which also includes ‘newsreels’ (*journaals*) that show all kinds of events in Rotterdam⁷⁷³. It is likely that the films were shown at the furniture store of H.H. de Klerk, to its twenty-five or so employees, and its customers. This ten minute film first shows the destruction of the city, including shopping street Hoogstraat, where De Klerk had one of its main shops⁷⁷⁴. Nothing is left of it, but people still stroll through the street. The display of commercial novelties is substituted by the novelty of mass destruction. Improvised shops are opened elsewhere, like that of H.H. de Klerk, in an old warehouse. The film ends with emergency shops that are built already within a few weeks after the catastrophe – which was also reported by Polygoon (a.o.)⁷⁷⁵. Among them is a new shop for H.H. De Klerk & Zn (arch. J.A. Lelieveldt, constr. A.D. Nederveen)⁷⁷⁶. A modern steel frame is combined with traditional masonry, which is carefully registered by the camera.

De Klerk’s concern with the city shows a mixture of commercial and public interests. Private destinies were connected to that of the city as a whole; the improvement of one’s own situation depended on the improvement of the conditions of the city. Similar to the film by De Klerk, this is also reflected by the film NA DE BRAND VAN ROTTERDAM (“After the fire of Rotterdam”, 1940, anon.), made for Dobbelsmann’s tobacco.

Such films, for private or public purposes, articulate a conscious engagement with the city, which can be approached through the notion of stigmergy. It is the way agents interact with the environment, which subsequently provides information to others, and a process is set in motion that strengthens itself⁷⁷⁷. Humans reflect upon it too, but this reflection is largely subject to routine as well. Conscious acting is heightened when there is a breakdown of routines, which applies to the case of the destruction of the city. The amateur films mark a historic condition, in order to remember and to act upon it. Stigmergy is highlighted when an environment is changed by external perturbation⁷⁷⁸, which triggers an intensive local communication process in order to

⁷⁷¹ E.g. ROTTERDAM PUINSTAD (1940, Jan Tirion)*; DE BRAND 14 MEI 1940 (J. van Duyvenbode)*, MEI 1940 (Foka)*, ROTTERDAM NA HET BOMBARDEMENT EN NADE BEVRIJDING (1940-1945, H. Philipsen)*, HET CENTRUM NA DE BRAND (1940, anon.)*, HERBOUW ROTTERDAM (1940-1945, W.G. de Jong), OORLOG IN NEDERLAND (1940-1946, Ed Millicam). Titles marked by * are also included by: De Jong, 2005.

⁷⁷² I.e. title on the film itself; catalogued by GAR as VERBRAND ROTTERDAM.

⁷⁷³ See e.g. ROTTERDAM JOURNAAL (1932, J. De Klerk).

⁷⁷⁴ De Goey, 2002: 125.

⁷⁷⁵ See: Polygoon 1940-31 and 1940-41; see also the aforementioned film OORLOG IN NEDERLAND (1940-1946, Ed Millicam), with images of the temporary fashion houses C&A and P&C. For more information on emergency buildings, see: Ten Bosch & Wattjes, 1941: 199-205; Van de Laar, 2000: 433-434.

⁷⁷⁶ It was located at Walenburgerweg / Schepenstraat.

⁷⁷⁷ Cf. Susi & Ziemke, 2001: 29.

⁷⁷⁸ Cf. Bonabeau, Dorigo, Theraulaz, 199: 16.

recover the situation. Cinema, and not the least amateur film production, as a typically local practice, is part of this process. Cinematic records provide, for a longer time, negative feedback, which calls for a continued series of actions.

news at war

Before the war, Polygoon from Haarlem provided weekly newsreels for the Dutch cinemas, which was called *Hollands Nieuws*, while Profilti from The Hague made *Nederland in Klank en Beeld*. During the war they produced interchangingly, each week, for one news show: *Tobis Hollandsch Nieuws*, which was supervised by the German authorities. The collaboration between Polygoon and Profilti was the Dutch answer to German attempts to replace the Dutch news shows by the German *Wochenschau*, like elsewhere in the occupied territories. Eventually this would also happen in the Netherlands, but not before April 1944⁷⁷⁹.

Polygoon and Profilti made various reports on the destruction of Rotterdam and the plans for its reconstruction, providing both negative and positive feedback⁷⁸⁰. One of the latter is DE OPBOUW VAN ROTTERDAM (Polygoon, 1941-wk11), in which city planner Witteveen is to be seen, standing behind a drawing board together with two colleagues of the planning office ASRO (*Adviesbureau Stadsplan Rotterdam*). It is followed by images of workers being busy in an empty city covered by snow, which is an exceptional view of Rotterdam. New waterways and new roads, indicated by numbers, are constructed, which suggest that the plans by Witteveen are carried out immediately. Another example is a report that shows the model and maps of the future city that were exhibited at Museum Boymans in October 1941 (MAQUETTE “NIEUW ROTTERDAM”, Polygoon, 1941-wk45)⁷⁸¹. Articulating what is shown, the commentator emphasizes that the new city is a matter of facilitating modern housing and fast traffic. Since the condition of Rotterdam became importance to the whole country, the reports extended its stigmery. The city’s environment was virtually augmented through the cinema.

Although Polygoon and Profilti kept some of their independency, the Tobis newsreels had to incorporate a number of items on the Dutch national-socialist party (NSB)⁷⁸². Moreover, Polygoon and Profilti also had to make newsreels for the NSB’s own news show (‘Spiegel der Beweging’). The local support for the NSB, however, was minimal, and only a few items for its show were filmed here, merely dealing with formal events, such as NSB leader Mussert visiting Rotterdam (1941), and on the installation of NSB Mayor Müller (1942). Next to that, reports were made to stimulate the *Arbeitseinsatz* in Germany⁷⁸³. Different is a report, for both the NSB and Tobis, on vegetables that are cultivated in city parks and gardens. It corresponded to one of the main ideas of national-socialism, that a country would be independent regarding food supply (i.e. *productieslag*). In this way potatoes are grown in front of Museum Boymans (NSB, 1942; Polygoon 1942-32), to motivate citizens to grow their own crops. This was also promoted by harvest feasts, like the harvest of rye that is celebrated in the city (Polygoon, 1943-31). Rural and traditional life in general was cherished, rather than urban culture⁷⁸⁴.

Reports on war events were, furthermore, necessarily biased. This was also the case when the allied forces attacked the city’s industry, since it produced for the German army. As such, one

⁷⁷⁹ De Haan, 1995: 163-173. By 1944, Tobis Hollandsch Nieuws was replaced by NEDERLANDSCH NIEUWS, produced by the national-socialist *Nederlandsche Filmjournaal Maatschappij*.

⁷⁸⁰ For a rare example of a report by another news provider, see PUIN EN WEDEROPBOUW (1940, Pathé).

⁷⁸¹ The exhibition was called ‘150 jaar Baksteen/Nederland Bouwt in Baksteen’ (‘150 years of bricks/The Netherlands build with bricks’), and the tower of Museum Boymans was shown on the poster by Jan Kamman, which, however, did not show any brick, but a modernist graphic composition (cf. Van der Pauw, 2006: 817).

⁷⁸² See also: Vermeer, 1987.

⁷⁸³ See: Polygoon, 1942-18 and 1942-20.

⁷⁸⁴ See also other reports dealing with Rotterdam, for example one on an exhibition of the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (Polygoon, 1941-42) and another one on the traditional craft of producing snuff (1942-17).

paid attention to the British Royal Air Force attack on the city, on the 3rd of October 1941⁷⁸⁵. Similarly, by way of anti-propaganda, it reported the controversial bombardment by the American Air Force on the 31st of March 1943, which took about four hundred victims⁷⁸⁶. It was intended as an attack on the shipyard Wilton-Fijenoord, but it destroyed large parts of the residential quarters Bospolder and Tussendijken. As a reaction to this, the national-socialist *Nederlandsche Volksdienst* organised support by collecting clothes and other goods, for which publicity was made through newsreels (e.g. Polygoon 1943-wk16).

According to Annemarie Vermeer (1987), certain employees of Polygoon did not mind the German involvement with the company, since it meant better working conditions. The directors of Polygoon, however, tried to minimise the German influence⁷⁸⁷. This has also been addressed by Jitze de Haan (1995), but he makes it clear that actually a large number of employees supported their directors⁷⁸⁸. Important is the fact that Polygoon combined its journalism with private commissions, which offered Polygoon a certain freedom. Especially in the last year of the war, when Polygoon was not allowed to make newsreels anymore, it made various films secretly⁷⁸⁹. When they had to go to Rotterdam for a particular event, they combined it with making recordings for long term films. These films, in their turn, also offered stock material for the news programmes⁷⁹⁰. For these reasons, no Dutch film company other than Polygoon and Profilti, was able to produce feature length films, or films that were made over a period of several years. Next to that, Polygoon had a well-established reputation in respect of commissioned films, and several films had been made in Rotterdam before. While the war began, Polygoon was working on a film about the Maastunnel (1937-1941). Twice a year, images of this film were used for newsreels too⁷⁹¹.

Polygoon also received the commission for the short *UIT ROTTERDAMS VERLEDEN*, ('From Rotterdam's Past', 1941), made for the *Rijksbureau voor de Monumentezorg* and the *Dienst Wederopbouw* (Diwero). Fragments of this film were used for a news report too⁷⁹². The film shows archaeological excavations concerning the Castle of Bulgersteijn from the 14th century, which were conducted at the end of 1940⁷⁹³. Archaeologists made use of the sudden opportunity that the bombardment had created. While a future city was being planned, the ground on which it would be built linked it back to the middle ages. Even more so, while drawings were made to suggest how the future city would look, the film showed drawings to reconstruct the image of the castle. This, however, was part of a strategy. Different from what is often suggested, city planner Witteveen wanted to build a new and modern city too, but one based on the historical

⁷⁸⁵ This attack took the lives of 130 people and ruined properties across the city, including the Norwegian sailormen's church and the library of the Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet. For information on this attack, see: Van der Pauw, 2006: 245. Another example of a 'propaganda report' is: Polygoon, 1941-wk29 (British fighter planes shot down).

⁷⁸⁶ Polygoon Hollands Nieuws, 1941-42; Polygoon Hollands Nieuws, 1943-15. Van der Pauw (2006: 847 and 855) mentions that the air raid of 1943-03-31 took 401 victims; 4600 dwellings were damaged, of which 2661 were completely ruined, which turned 16,500 people homeless. Besides that, a number of factories, workshops, stores, shops and public buildings were destroyed. The total number of victims of attacks by the allied forces counted about 750. For exact numbers, see: Van der Pauw, 2006: 847.

⁷⁸⁷ Vermeer, 1987: 69.

⁷⁸⁸ De Haan, 1995: 175.

⁷⁸⁹ De Haan (1995: 175) mentions a film for the Dutch red Cross, a film against tuberculosis and the short film *VRIJ NEDERLAND*, which anticipated the liberation from the Germans.

⁷⁹⁰ This is also clear if one considers the dates of recording, which are sometimes much earlier than the dates of the programmes in which they were shown.

⁷⁹¹ e.g. Polygoon Hollands Nieuws, 1940-12; 1940-46.

⁷⁹² *OP ZOEK NAAR OUDHEIDKUNDIGE SCHATTEN* (Polygoon Hollands Nieuws, 1941-01)

⁷⁹³ The castle was located between the Coolsingel and the Korte Hoogstraat (in the background are the 'Beurs', the 'HBU' and the St. Laurens church). The film shows the different steps of the excavation process, performed by various workers and scientists. The film makes use of old maps, and animations. Somehow striking is the fact that remnants from the 17th century are removed unproblematically.

city triangle, to respect the medieval structures and a historical development⁷⁹⁴. The film about the excavations can be seen in this perspective; in imagination, the new city was connected to the past. It respected the German preoccupation with a mythological history on which the national-socialist ideology relied. The film helped to create a historical narrative, which actually provided the opportunity to build a modern city, on top of and covering the remains of the past⁷⁹⁵.

§ 2. vision, strategy, network

Notwithstanding the emptiness, and the need to build a new city, the emergence of modern Rotterdam was not at all a *fait accompli* in the early 1940s. During the 1920s and 1930s, modern architecture and urbanism had manifested itself in Rotterdam, especially through the housing projects by J.J.P. Oud and the Van Nelle factory. However, it was still avant-garde, and hardly an established power. Instead of the architects of Opbouw, city architect Van der Steur preferred to commission projects to members of the more conservative *Bouwkunst & Vriendschap*⁷⁹⁶. Moreover, in the 1930s, a general turn to traditionalism took place. Some modernist architects too argued for a revision. Among them was Sybold van Ravesteyn, which is exemplified by his projects in Dordrecht, and by the ‘Blijdorp Zoo’ (1937-1941), which received substantial attention from the media⁷⁹⁷. These projects are characterised by symmetry, curved lines and ornamentation. After strong discussions within ‘De 8 & Opbouw’, Van Ravesteyn withdrew in 1938⁷⁹⁸. Oud, in his turn, who initially favoured the initiative of CIAM, criticised its rigidity later on⁷⁹⁹. Siegfried Giedion, who visited him in Rotterdam in 1938, said that he was ‘at a dangerous reactionary road’⁸⁰⁰. Oud too favoured a more classical approach.

Both Oud and Van Ravesteyn were among the architects that Witteveen appointed as supervisors for the reconstruction of the thirteen sectors in which he had divided the city centre⁸⁰¹. At that time, Oud also got the commission to build the ‘Savings Bank’ (1942-1957), which expresses his reorientation. He designed it together with A.A. van Nieuwenhuyzen, who also created, among others, the ‘Nationale Levensverzekering Bank’ (1941-1949, see the film: STERK IN DE STORM, 1959, C. Niestadt)⁸⁰². Other architects also applied classicist principles to their designs of bank buildings, among them Adrianus van der Steur, Cornelis Elffers, and H.M. Kraaijvanger (1941-1950, Blaak), who were also at the list of intended supervisors. One can hardly underestimate the force of these early reconstruction projects, for the fact that these banking companies were crucial for the financing of the reconstruction. This is also made explicit in the film STERK IN DE STORM, which, however, was made when finally a different direction was followed, something that is also reflected in its imagery.

C.H. van der Leeuw

A different course of things was envisioned by Opbouw, and a group of businessmen headed by the charismatic Van Nelle director C.H. (Kees) van der Leeuw (•1890-†1973). According to

⁷⁹⁴ Van de Laar, 2000: 415. Cf. Wagenaar, 1992: 16 (e.a.); Wagenaar draws an immediate link between the modern planning of Van Eesteren and Witteveen.

⁷⁹⁵ i.e. EN TOCH...ROTTERDAM (1950, Polygoon), and ROTTERDAMSE MIJMERINGEN (“Rotterdam Musings”, 1953, Alex de Haas, Piet Meerburg).

⁷⁹⁶ Van de Laar, 2000: 366.

⁷⁹⁷ The projects in Dordrecht are the office building ‘Holland van 1859’ (1937-1939) and theatre ‘Kunstmin’ (1938-1940). The media attention for the new zoo is exemplified by e.g. DIERGAARDE BLIJDORP GEREED (1940-50, Polygoon Hollands Nieuws), DE ROTTERDAMSE DIERGAARDE (1943, J.A. van Pelt), ZONDAG DER DIEREN / FLITSEN UIT BLIJDORP (1942, Rudi Hornecker), and ORCHIDEEËNKWEKERIJ IN DE DIERGAARDE ROTTERDAM (1939-1944, Jan Koelinga).

⁷⁹⁸ Groenendijk & Vollaard, 1998: 19.

⁷⁹⁹ Taverne e.a., 2001: 37.

⁸⁰⁰ Taverne e.a., 2001: 43. Original quote: ‘auf einem gefährlichen Weg der Reaktion.’

⁸⁰¹ Van de Laar, 2000: 417.

⁸⁰² Oud was assisted by the architect A.A. van Nieuwenhuyzen (cf. Taverne e.a., 2001: 437). Van Nieuwenhuyzen also designed the traditionalist ‘Nationale Levensverzekering Bank’ (1941-1949), ‘Bank NHM’ (1941-1950), and he carried out the renovation of the damaged bank building of Mees & Zoonen (1949-1950).

them, the proposed plan would be nothing else than an exercise to fill in the emptiness⁸⁰³. Rather than seeing the city as the sum of a readymade programme reduced to formal issues, and instead of dividing the city into sectors, they understood it as a totality that had to evolve over time. Plans had to be based upon functional and organisational schemes, rather than architectural prescriptions, as Witteveen proposed. This was not to ignore aesthetics, but to develop a different kind of 'style'. The group was against an urbanism that carried the signature of an individual planner, but favoured a 'style' that expressed the character and the needs of the population⁸⁰⁴.

The new city was thought to be entirely detached from the previous one. They rejected the idea to maintain the medieval principle of the 'city triangle' (*stadsdriehoek*) as the ground form for the city centre. They even did not want to maintain historical landmarks such as the 'Schielandshuis', neither the old 'Willemsbrug', nor the monumental neo-renaissance town hall⁸⁰⁵. However, they were also against Witteveen's idea of parkways – the green wedges that channelled traffic and nature into the city. To their minds, infrastructure had to be treated independently from the city's morphology, as a network, and not as an axis towards a centre.

We may have a closer look at the role of Van der Leeuw to see how the new Rotterdam emerged. Van der Leeuw's contribution to the reconstruction has been addressed by others before⁸⁰⁶, but the resonance in the literature is still limited in comparison to the attention paid to architects and planners. I will consider rhetorics related to social connections, and examine them in terms of an 'ego-centred network', which encompasses formal and informal relationships that correspond to situational involvements⁸⁰⁷. People perform different roles in different situations, according to different relationships (cf. Hannerz, 1980: 172)⁸⁰⁸.

Van der Leeuw first aspired to a career as an artist, but being the oldest son he joined his father's firm in 1913, at an age of twenty-three⁸⁰⁹. After four years, he became a director, and also a member of the executive board (*raad van bestuur*) of the private housing company *Maatschappij voor Volkswoningen*. He fulfilled a similar function in the case of the private *N.V. Volkswoningbouw* of the enlightened developer Auguste Plate and the architect Willen van Tijen, at the time that Van der Leeuw directed the building of the Van Nelle factory (1925-1930), and immediate connections can be drawn⁸¹⁰. After the factory was finished, Van der Leeuw went to Vienna to study medicine. He was a student of Adler and Freud and made his promotion in psychoanalysis in 1939. The same year he returned to Rotterdam, and started to work as a psychiatrist. Immediately after the bombardment, Van der Leeuw decided to take over the direction of Van Nelle again, and he did so indeed in June 1940⁸¹¹. His main concern, it seems, was not the production of coffee, tea and tobacco. The factory was the vehicle that enabled him to be involved with the reconstruction, and to fulfil his vision of a modern city.

This interpretation matches the observations by De Klerk (1998: 245), who has explicitly pointed to the correspondence between the ideas and planning processes of the Van Nelle factory and the 'Basisplan' for the reconstruction of Rotterdam. In the case of the latter, Van der Leeuw

⁸⁰³ Roelofsz, 1989: pp133-141.

⁸⁰⁴ See the *Nota betreffende den Wederopbouw van Rotterdam* (1942) by the *Kleine Commissie* of the Club Rotterdam, as quoted by Len de Klerk (1998: 236): 'De bevolking "moet zich dus kunnen uiten, wil er sprake zijn van een harmonie tussen bouwplan en behoeften, en van het ontwikkelen van een eigen "stijl", welke uitdrukking geeft aan het karakter van de bevolking en aan het kenmerkende van onze tijd."

⁸⁰⁵ For the town hall, see: Van de Laar, 2000: 462.

⁸⁰⁶ Roelofsz, 1989; Wagenaar, 1992; De Klerk, 1998 e.a.

⁸⁰⁷ It means that direct relations to Van der Leeuw are taken into consideration (i.e. a 'first-order star'), and sometimes connections between these relations (a 'first order zone', cf. Hannerz, 1980: 178). See also: De Certeau, 1997: 107.

⁸⁰⁸ In the case of Rotterdam, such roles are well-described regarding the elite of the city in the period 1850-1950, and I will make use of these studies (De Klerk, 1998; Dicke e.a., 2002).

⁸⁰⁹ Dirks; 2001: 154.

⁸¹⁰ When the factory was finished, its architects, Brinkman & Van der Vlugt, were asked to collaborate with Van Tijen on the highrise housing estate 'Bergpolderflat' (1932-1934), which was developed by the *N.V. Volkswoningbouw*.

⁸¹¹ Dirks; 2001: 154.

was not alone. The connectionism of his thinking was extended to the business society Club Rotterdam (est. 1928), and its active core, the so-called *Kleine Commissie*. Its chairman was Karel Paul van der Mandele, the president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (and the initiator of garden village 'Vreewijk'), who was among the first to develop ideas for the reconstruction⁸¹². Important too is that he kept in touch with Mayor Oud. Another active and socially engaged member was Jan Backx, the director of the stevedore company *Thomsen's Havenbedrijf*.

It has been said that the Club Rotterdam criticised the lack of public discussion about the plan, that the businessmen were not part of the process, and that even the municipality had little to say; most important, the plan did not meet the economic requirements of a modern port and trade city. This, however, seems merely a pretext for the fulfilment of their social visions⁸¹³. Any alleged self-criticism of Van der Leeuw in connection to the club (see e.g. Van der Pauw, 2006: 428), should actually be seen, in my opinion, as a matter of rhetorics.

Van der Leeuw was the driving force, but in such a way that it was the club or even 'the city' that expressed the ideas and requirements. Van der Leeuw mobilised the members of the group, by letting them appropriate and advocate the ideas of the modern movement. He deliberately conducted a strategy that has, I would argue, necessarily remained hidden, especially since it happened at a time of war. He turned his vision of the city as a 'totality' into a kind of 'conspiracy', vis-à-vis the Germans, conservatives, (architectural) traditionalists, and the revisionists among the modernists. Since it took place during the war, the city's future was all but clear. It required, as we might call it, a long term urban geopolitical strategy. Media were used too, which I will elaborate in the next section, especially regarding the 'total' reconstruction film EN TOCH... ROTTERDAM (1950, Polygoon-Profiliti), whose production started already in 1940.

In order to explain the position and role of Van der Leeuw, it might be illuminating to refer to Fredric Jameson, who wrote *The Geopolitical Aesthetic, Cinema and Space in the World System* (1992). In this book Jameson coined, in a constructive mode, the concept of 'totality as conspiracy' (1992: 9). The global society as a totality cannot be grasped by individuals. It is further complicated by the fact that what it is like is also affected by attempts to frame it. Understanding totality is therefore a kind of 'conspiracy'. The world system is of course of a different order than a single city, just like a city is different than a single building. Yet, a world view can be crystallised into a particular building, such as theosophy in the case of the private house of Van der Leeuw (Henderson e.a., 1999).

Jean-Paul Sartre has argued that one can only know that something is a cube if one has seen all six sides of it. However, one cannot see these six sides all at once. One can only see three of them, which in that case do not even appear as squares. One creates an image of something through the synthesis of different perceptions. Architect Jan Hoogstad (1990: 39), reflecting upon Sartre's Cube, has remarked that this implies movement and hence time, which turns an image into a process. In more complicated cases, like that of an entire city, the total image can only be created by different agents together. The resulting image is not absolute or fixed, but a collective approach and vision, or 'a conspiracy'.

Through the concept of 'totality as conspiracy', Jameson has proposed three directions for the 'cognitive mapping' of the world system. Firstly, Jameson asks how object-worlds can be 'allegorically prepared, disposed, and rewired in order to become the bearers of conspiracy'. It is a question of how one can appropriate the world of things to express its operations. Secondly he suggests 'to test the incommensurability between an individual witness – the individual character

⁸¹² On the 15th of May 1940, Van der Mandele invited various representatives of the municipality at his home to discuss the future of Rotterdam. He and Mayor Oud, among others, founded the 'Stichting Rotterdam 1940'. De Klerk, 1998: 160; Oudenaarden, 2004: 13.

⁸¹³ Cf. Wagenaar, 1992: 217.

of a still anthropomorphic narrative – and the collective conspiracy which must somehow be exposed or revealed through these individual efforts’ – i.e. to measure the individual experience of an overall process that one helps to bring about but that no one can fully grasp. And thirdly ‘the thing itself, namely, how the local items of the present and the here-and-now can be made to express and to designate the absent, unrepresentable totality; how individuals can add up to more than their sum...’ (Jameson, 1992: 10). These questions concern the relationship between the individual and the collective, part and totality, agent and system, by looking at the relationship between people and artefacts, including spatial structures and films.

The new city that was conceived could only evolve over decades. Moreover, it was an emerging complex system that enabled adaptations in the first place. The ‘void’ became a central notion to achieve that end, as explained by Crimson; it informed the design of the city and its buildings, as ‘the local items of the present and the here-and-now [that] were made to express and to designate the absent, unrepresentable totality’. The success of this ‘conspiracy’ depended on the way it was collectively conceived and carried out, by the scenius of the Club Rotterdam, and above all by the citizens. The new city could only become reality through ‘emergence’ – the way individuals add up to more than their sum. Within this process, Van der Leeuw may be considered as ‘the individual character of a still anthropomorphic narrative’.

Crucial information was passed to Van der Leeuw by Alderman Brautigam, who was in charge of the “Municipal Technical Service” (department of public works). He informed Van der Leeuw on the relationship between the city and the government in The Hague, concerning expropriation, allotments, and the general planning process⁸¹⁴.

Van der Leeuw would then also meet Witteveen on a regular base⁸¹⁵. In the meantime, new possibilities for housing were explored by the studios of Van Tijen & Maaskant, and Brinkman & Van den Broek, which was the continuation of Van Nelle’s Brinkman & Van der Vlucht (after the latter had died). The study was commissioned by the *N.V. Volkswoningbouw*. While Van der Leeuw was one of its shareholders, its director Plate happened to be a cousin of Van der Mandele. Since Van der Mandele’s Chamber of Commerce had moved to the new ‘Beurs’, the results of this study, together with photographs by Jan Kamman, were presented here in March and April 1941. Afterwards they were published as a book: *Woonmogelijkheden In Het Nieuwe Rotterdam*⁸¹⁶. The ideas would be applied in practice by the ‘Zuidpleinflat’ (1941-1947, Van Tijen, Groosman, Maaskant, Bakema)⁸¹⁷.

In October 1941, Mayor Oud was replaced by the Dutch national-socialist F.E. Müller⁸¹⁸. Since that time the Club Rotterdam needed to be especially careful, and therefore Van der Leeuw invited the members of the *Kleine Commissie* to meet, every week, at the rooftop pavilion of the Van Nelle factory⁸¹⁹. During these secret meetings, the group prepared its own reconstruction plans, which were elaborated by a study group of architects directed by Jo van den Broek⁸²⁰. Besides that, Van der Leeuw made a list of twelve required public facilities, including a commercial centre for maritime enterprises, a centre for the arts, a grand theatre in the city and another one in the south of Rotterdam, and a university of economics⁸²¹.

⁸¹⁴ Roelofs, 1989: 139.

⁸¹⁵ Wagenaar, 1992: 215.

⁸¹⁶ *Woonmogelijkheden in het Nieuwe Rotterdam* (“Housing Possibilities in the New Rotterdam”), 1941, Brinkman, Van den Broek, Maaskant, Van Tijen, published by W.L. & J. Brusse. Cf. De Klerk & Moscoviter, 1992: 200.

⁸¹⁷ In 1943, Plate asked Van Tijen and Maaskant to elaborate the results of their earlier study, now focused on the idea of de *Stedelijke Tuinwijk* (“Urban Garden Quarter”), as the new study was called (see: Bijhouwer e.a., 1983: 108-113).

⁸¹⁸ Oudenaarden, 2004: 13.

⁸¹⁹ Roelofs, 1989: 139; Wagenaar, 1992: 215; Dicke, 2003: 133; Van der Pauw, 2006: 422 – since October 1941.

⁸²⁰ Roelofs, 1989: 17.

⁸²¹ The list includes: 1. Centre Maritime (maritime enterprises); 2. Centre Artistique; 3. Extension to Museum Boymans; 4. Grand Theatre; 5. University of Economics (Handelshogeschool); 6. Exhibition Centre; 7. Theatre for Rotterdam-Zuid; 8. Country-Golf Hotel in Kralingen; 9. Maasbastion (a terrace over the river); 10. Park in Zestienhoven; 11. Park in De Esch (near Kralingen); 12. Water sports & Hippique Centre. Ref.: Roelofs, 1989: 17.

In 1942 and 1943 the Club Rotterdam expressed its viewpoints in two notes, and state planner Ringers considered this input indispensable⁸²². However, on the 1st of April 1943, Ringers was arrested by the German authorities, since he was secretly involved with the organisation of an intermediary government after the Germans would be defeated⁸²³. While he was imprisoned, Ringers was officially not dismissed; while being imprisoned he continued to work until he was brought to concentration camp Sachsenhausen in Germany (1944-04-24)⁸²⁴. In the meantime the relationship between the offices in The Hague and Rotterdam became complicated, and Van der Leeuw was appointed as “Delegate”, just before Ringers would be brought to Germany⁸²⁵. This invented, voluntary function, meant that Van der Leeuw became the director of ASRO, since Witteveen had to leave, officially because of illness⁸²⁶. Van der Leeuw accepted this function on his own terms, which meant that he was allowed to set commissions for the board of the ASRO, and to make the decisions and to approve the plans, instead of the state, although the “General Deputy” still needed to sign in the end⁸²⁷.

Van der Leeuw immediately reformed the ASRO⁸²⁸. Cornelis van Traa, a colleague of Witteveen, became the new city planner and started to modify Witteveen’s plan. In the meantime Van der Leeuw discussed the plans with members of Opbouw, which had officially been dissolved in 1943, but which continued under the flag of the Club Rotterdam, as *Opbouw Rotterdam* or OPRO (as the counterpart of ASRO). Besides the involvement of OPRO’s city planner Verhagen, Van der Leeuw privately asked Mart Stam to draw a completely new principle-plan (‘Plan OpRo’, 1944-1945), in which the ideas of the Club Rotterdam would be present from the onset⁸²⁹. Besides the fact that Stam had collaborated on the design of the Van Nelle factory, he had previously designed the masterplan for the industry city Magnitogorsk in the USSR. However, before Stam’s plan was elaborated, the Dutch state had already ratified parts of the plan that existed at that moment, without the approval of Van der Leeuw. He was upset.

Van der Leeuw called for urban planner Sam van Embden to become the vice-director of ASRO, and he approached also Cornelis van Eesteren, who had drawn the general extension plan of Amsterdam (‘AUP’, 1934)⁸³⁰. Already in 1942, Van Eesteren had made a proposal for the city of Rotterdam, and his idea, of disconnecting infrastructure and urban fabric, would come back in the eventual plan⁸³¹. Van der Leeuw engaged, furthermore, the *Nederlands Economisch Instituut*, headed by the renowned and socially engaged economist Jan Tinbergen⁸³². The institute was founded in 1929, to carry out applied business research, and to support new planning principles – one of its initiators had been Plate. It provided the plan of the Club Rotterdam with rational arguments.

The result was presented in March 1946 as the *Basisplan Herbouw Binnenstad Rotterdam* (“Basis Plan Reconstruction City Centre Rotterdam”). Architect Van Tijen explained it to the city

⁸²² De Klerk, 1998: 239.

⁸²³ Lichtenauer, 2008.

⁸²⁴ Ringers stayed first at the *strafgevangenis* ‘Oranjehotel’ in Scheveningen (1943-04-01 – 1943-11-24), at Kamp Vught (1943-11-24 – 1944-04-05), as a hostage at the *interneringskamp* St. Michielgestel (1944-04-05 – 1944-04-24) and finally at KL Sachsenhausen (1944-04-28 – 1945-04-21). After the war he became Minister of Reconstruction – ref.: www.parlement.com/9291000/biof/01855 ‘Dr. J.A. Ringers’ (website visited: 2008-11-29). While Ringers remained responsible for the most important decisions, J.C. Keller became the acting “General Deputy for the Reconstruction”, next to H.W. Mouton, chairman of the *Coördinatie Comité*, in The Hague.

⁸²⁵ Keller confirmed the appointment in a letter to Van der Leeuw, on 1944-04-19, see: De Klerk, 1998: 241, 334 n73.

⁸²⁶ Wagenaar, 1992: 176; cf. De Klerk, 1998: 240.

⁸²⁷ Roelofs, 1989: 139.

⁸²⁸ Dicke, 2003: 133.

⁸²⁹ De Klerk, 1998: 242.

⁸³⁰ Wagenaar, 1992: e.g. 26 [on Van Embden], e.g. 220 and 236 [on Van Eesteren]; Van de Laar, 2000: 420 [on Van Embden]; De Klerk, 1998: 244 [on Van Eesteren]. According to Wagenaar, however, there would be stronger structural resemblances between the AUP and the Plan Witteveen than between the AUP and the Basisplan.

⁸³¹ Vanstiphout, 2005: 148-151 (with a reference to Provoost, 1996: 47).

⁸³² Roelofs, 1989: 141. Cf. Wagenaar, 1992: 246-247, 253-254; Van de Laar, 2000: 420.

council in terms of social functions and the promise of a new urban society, with Rotterdam developing into the most modern and social city of the Netherlands by the year 2000. As such it received much appraisal⁸³³. The ‘Basisplan’ was a matter of models and indications, rather than a spatial design. Moreover, a cut was made between planning and architecture. Due to the emptiness, according to Crimson, ‘urban planning and even architecture were redefined as being primarily immaterial’⁸³⁴.

Crimson has argued (2002: 43) that the ‘Basisplan’ was a coincidental cross-section of the dismantling process of a previous plan⁸³⁵. ‘The programme is regarded as something with a fixed surface area but certainly no fixed form...’⁸³⁶. It appears that the ‘Basisplan’ used conventional terms and conditions, like building blocks, alignments and construction heights, in order to be comprehensible. However, while a building block was a ‘normative proto-object’ in Witteveen’s plan, it became an invitation for a deconstruction of the type in the plan by Van Traa (Crimson, 2002: 51)⁸³⁷. Following plans became more courageous, and less defined; some spots on the map were even left empty⁸³⁸. The ‘Basisplan’ had become an analytical model, instead of a forecast⁸³⁹. In this process, emptiness was not only a condition, but also a planning tool for a new kind of urbanism, which moved from structure to organisation to analysis – to take the use of space into consideration above all. In that development, ‘urbanism cannot do more than furnishing a city, or better, to equip a city, in such a way that it remains neutral in its spatiality, that it remains empty of spatial determinations. Hence an urbanism that enables things, and that remains doing so’⁸⁴⁰.

§ 3. information and publicity

The new Rotterdam needed to be sold, to its citizens, and the Netherlands as a whole. To that end, according to Cor Wagenaar (1992: 284), a broad propaganda campaign was set in motion. It is no coincidence that Wagenaar refers first and foremost to private contributions. Jan Backx established the organisation *Rotterdamsche Gemeenschap* (1944-1955), which envisioned a new society, based on community life and democratic values, to which the idea of the ‘neighbourhood unit’ (*wijkgedachte*) became emblematic. It aimed at generating public participation in the reconstruction process, and to stimulate debate about it. Film was one of the media used for that purpose⁸⁴¹. Next to that, the *Rotterdamsche Gemeenschap* also published a series of books,

⁸³³ Van de Laar, 2000: 463. Van Tijen published his vision in a series of the *Rotterdamsche Gemeenschap*, under the title *Rotterdam anno 2000. Werk- en woonstad* (1947) – see: Wagenaar, 1992: 286.

⁸³⁴ Crimson, 2002: 41 [Crimson, 1995b] ‘...stedebouw en architectuur werden hergedefinieerd als in de eerste plaats immateriële processen.’

⁸³⁵ One points at drawings of the elaborated, but less defined plan from 1953, which follows the scheme of functional zoning. Zones were identified by splotches to represent functions, without formal definition. ‘The pattern represented a random freeze-frame in a constantly fluent, thickening and diluting, mixing and curdling programmatic tub.’ English quote: Crimson, 2002: 44. Original quote (Crimson, 1995b): ‘Het patroon vertegenwoordigt een momentopname in een constant vloeiende, verdikkende en verdunnende, mengende en schiftende programmatische tobbe.’

⁸³⁶ English quote: Crimson, 2002: 44. Original quote (Crimson, 1995b): ‘Wat we hier zien is een krachtenveld; programma wordt gezien als iets met een bepaalde oppervlakte, maar zeker geen bepaalde vorm...’

⁸³⁷ Original Dutch quote (Crimson, 1995b): ‘Wat blijkt uit het Basisplan 1946, is dat de keurig weergegeven stedenbouwkundige randvoorwaarden zoals rooilijnen, bebouwingshoogten, bouwblokken, slechts tekens waren, wier enige rol was op een voor iedereen begrijpelijke wijze een toekomstig stedelijk programma aan te duiden. Op het plan van Van Traa krijgt een bouwblok een totaal andere betekenis dan op het plan van Witteveen, ook al is het verder identiek. Bij Witteveen is het een normerend proto-object, bij Van Traa een uitnodiging tot totale deconstructie van het type.’

⁸³⁸ In 1955, there are big empty spots without indicating a building, park or anything. Cf. Wagenaar, 1992: 16.

⁸³⁹ Crimson, 2002: 51.

⁸⁴⁰ Crimson, 1995b. Original quote: ‘Stedebouw kan dus niet meer doen dan een stad zo in te richten, of liever uit te rusten, dat zij in haar ruimtelijkheid neutraal blijft, dat zij leeg blijft van ruimtelijke bepalingen. Stedebouw dus die dingen mogelijk maakt, en mogelijk blijft maken.’

⁸⁴¹ The organisation also showed films. In October 1947, for example, it showed a programme with films about Rotterdam during the war and afterwards, see: www.cinemacontext.nl > Rotterdamsche Gemeenschap (2009-01-15). The

including Van Tijen's vision of Rotterdam in the year 2000⁸⁴², and a Dutch translation of Lewis Mumford's *The social foundations of post-war building* (1946 [1944]). The latter was an argument for an open and green city, of a regional character, and organised through smaller urban units that enabled a new community life. It was a premise of the 'Basisplan' too.

Wagenaar has also pointed to the architecture magazine *Bouw* (1946-08-10), which dedicated a special edition to the reconstruction of Rotterdam. Following the example of Great Britain, one gave expression to the motto 'it is their city, explain it to them' (*Het is hun stad, leg het hun uit*)⁸⁴³. The editors of *Bouw* considered it as a matter of taking the public into account, in order to let the people make up society. Information and publicity were therefore of crucial importance, to enable feedback, in order to improve the plan – and so on. Planning had become an act of democracy. However, as we will see in the next section, like the British films that were made to this end (Gold & Ward, 1997; Lebas, 2000 a.o), films on Rotterdam were also rhetorical statements to inform the public, rather than frames of reference to start a dialogue. According to Wagenaar (1992: 293), there was necessarily a split between reality and propaganda during the first years after the war, since not much was built until 1952; the information provided did not report on the actual conditions, but envisioned a possible reality. A democratic order, or the 'welfare city', could only become a matter of fact once its stipulations had been fulfilled.

One of the authors contributing to this edition of *Bouw* was Jo van den Broek, who articulated the social dimension of planning. He argued that 'comprehensive planning' was the most essential innovation that had come to the fore during the occupation. The city's accommodations were no longer seen as parts of a technical programme, but as instruments of the unity that is society⁸⁴⁴. Vanstiphout (2005: 169) has argued, however, that Van den Broek still kept his doubts concerning urban planning based on specific forms and a specific model (i.e. based on the neighbourhood unit'). Since he was not officially involved with the 'Basisplan', Vanstiphout argues, he had also no direct interest in building on the 'quicksands of the propaganda' (*drijfzand van de propaganda*) – with a reference to Wagenaar⁸⁴⁵. But the propaganda that Wagenaar refers to was hardly a matter of official institutions, or definite statements, but of views within a discussion heading towards a common attractor, which also affected Van den Broek. He actually played a major role in preparing what would become the 'Basisplan', as the secretary of OPRO and as an adviser to Van der Leeuw and the Club Rotterdam⁸⁴⁶. Besides that, Van den Broek, together with Bakema, would give shape to the outlines of the 'Basisplan' through various projects (a.o. 'Lijnbaan').

It is this circle of different professionals and the elite, this cross-disciplinary network, that propagated the plans in the first place, to which the municipality became the necessary vehicle to actualise the ideas. At last, Wagenaar refers also to the propaganda made by the municipality (p291), in particular the exhibitions that it organised. He quotes city architect Rein Fledderus, who addressed the problem of the communication, concerning architecture and planning, between the city and its citizens. He stated that the *democratic order* is the Maecenas of the municipality,

titles mentioned are: ALARM, ALS DE WINTER KOMT, HERINNERING, ROTTERDAM, WINTER, WINTERSPORT – these (16mm) films are unidentified (no further reference). Within the general view of the organisation, art and culture had to contribute to people's development (cf. Oudenaarden, 2004: 18).

⁸⁴² As articulated by Wagenaar, this publication followed the books *Woonmogelijkheden in het nieuwe Rotterdam* and *De stad der toekomst, de toekomst der stad*, on which he had collaborated too. See: Wagenaar, 1992: 284-287; cf. Van de Laar, 2000: 473.

⁸⁴³ Wagenaar, 1992: 287, reference to *Bouw*, 1946-08-10 (illustration nr. 107 in: Wagenaar, 1992: 292).

⁸⁴⁴ Van den Broek, quoted by Wagenaar (1992: 290-291). Original quote: '...eerst nu hebben wij die sectoren tezamen als een cirkel leren beschouwen, die op zichzelf een eenheid is en niet alleen een som van deze sectoren. Onze winst is dus, dat wij al die voorzieningen niet als een technisch programme voor diverse onderdelen, maar als apparaten van een eenheid zien, en deze eenheid is de sociaal-culture samenleving zelve.'

⁸⁴⁵ Cf. Wagenaar (1992: 316) has remarked that the *Basisplan* would bring fame to Rotterdam, but that it was, as it turned out later on, to no small degree built on the 'quicksands of the propaganda'.

⁸⁴⁶ Cf. Crimson, 2002: 49.

but that right after the war, there is, in Rotterdam, no *order* but chaos. The ‘Basisplan’, as a flexible plan that provided space for future developments, was therefore presented as the foundation of a democratic construction.

Paul van de Laar (2000: 463) has also addressed the importance of publicity, but in his turn he has focused on the municipality, and in particular its brochure *Het Nieuwe Hart van Rotterdam* (ASRO, 1946), which explained the ‘Basisplan’. According to Van de Laar, it was the beginning of an extensive series of promotional booklets and magazines. What neither he nor Wagenaar has mentioned is the fact that right after the presentation of the ‘Basisplan’, and in direct connection to it, the municipality opened the “Office for Information and Publicity” (*Bureau Voorlichting & Publiciteit*), on April the 1st 1946. Its director became the journalist Jan Nieuwenhuis, who distinguished seven major concerns⁸⁴⁷:

1. Maintaining systematic contact with the press;
2. Providing news (a.o. through press conferences);
3. Publishing articles, photographs, papers;
4. Archiving articles from press for internal use;
5. Hosting of guests, through excursions; and providing them with information;
6. Promoting the city by way of film (newsreels, reconstruction films), radio (assisting foreign reporters), own publications, exhibitions, city excursions;
7. Collaborating on propaganda for municipal services and companies.

This shows a comprehensive media approach, in which film was embedded in a larger field of information and communication practices. Most important was the concern with journalism, and as such we might pay special attention to Polygoon⁸⁴⁸. The municipality even commissioned newsreels, for example about the *tramdag* (“tram day”), to celebrate the reopening of the tramways, after they had been out of order during the last year of the war (Polygoon, 1946-06)⁸⁴⁹.

Although planners and architects were busy, little was still built. The port, moreover, got priority. An exception was the creation of a temporary cinema, ‘Lutusca’ (1946, arch. J. Hendriks e.a.), whose name was a contraction of Lumière, Tuschinski, and Scala, which had lost their theatres in the city and collaborated for the occasion. They also commissioned Polygoon-Profilitti to document the construction process, step-by-step: BOUW VAN HET LUTUSCA THEATER TE ROTTERDAM. It starts by saying that it has to be erected in a period of exactly one hundred days. It creates a narrative tension, and of course the builders succeed. This seemingly straight-forward report actually presents a heroic achievement, which is all the more symbolic since the building was made of recycled bricks from the ruins of the war.

and still...

The reconstruction of Rotterdam stemmed from a particular modernist vision. It was presented as objective and self-evident, which was a matter of rhetorics (cf. Wagenaar, 1992, 26; Crimson,

⁸⁴⁷ Hazewinkel: 1996: 35.

⁸⁴⁸ Many examples of (Polygoon) newsreels can be considered as results of the city’s information policy and publicity campaigns. Many of them concern anniversaries of municipal services, buildings etc., or certain achievements, e.g. reports on a news bus garage (Polygoon, 1947-wk18); the 75th anniversary of producing drinking water from the Meuse and another report (in the same news show, 1949-wk46) of the 10,000th ship arriving at the port after WWII; the 10th anniversary of the Maastunnel (1952-wk08), whose construction had been the subject of a Polygoon production commissioned by the municipality; a report on such a promotional event as ‘Lichthaven’ (1953-wk51); and, among many others, on something like the creation of a central city heating system (*stadsverwarming*, 1956-wk02).

⁸⁴⁹ Although it was presented as a newsreel, it is registered as a ‘commissioned film’ (see: B&G); it suggests that it was part of the film project EN TOCH... ROTTERDAM (1950, Polygoon), which was a common practice at Polygoon. Other commissioned newsreels are the reports on the farewell of Mayor Oud and on the inauguration of Mayor Van Walsum; see resp.: Polygoon Neerlands Nieuws 1952-wk05 and 1952-06. Concerning the operations of trams, Polygoon still reported early 1940 (wk03) the fact that women needed to work as conductors.

1995b; Provoost, 1996: 51). As I have addressed, it is somewhat comparable to the case of British films on city planning. In the case of Glasgow, Elizabeth Lebas (2007: 35) has accounted for its municipal films ‘in terms of the evolution they appear to chart of this modernising socio-political project; how as political instruments their imagery of the city and their implied audiences responded to shifts of power both within and without the Corporation, while the purposes they served and the message they conveyed were neither as simple nor as obvious as their departmental or individual sponsors in the Corporation claimed them to be.’ According to John Gold and Stephen Ward (1997: 66) planning in Britain was presented through film as the application of science, as social medicine, as revelation (vision), and as wizardry. This also applies to a range of promotional activities of the “Office for Information and Publicity”, and especially in the case of the film, EN TOCH...ROTTERDAM (“And still...”, 1950), which was made by Polygoon-Profilti⁸⁵⁰.

The subtitle of the film was a *filmsuite* of newsreels and documentaries from 1925-1950’. It suggested a loose, almost coincidental and entertaining collection of images. This increased the credibility of the film as a ‘document’. With a duration of 45 minutes, it was nevertheless carefully scripted, and much of the material had been especially made for it, since 1940 – although at the time of recording there was no idea yet what the result would look like. Immediately after the bombardment, Polygoon and Profilti made extensive recordings of the destructions and of the first reconstruction works⁸⁵¹. Certain images were used indeed for news reports, during and after the war⁸⁵². This, however, was concomitant, or at best a parallel track. Regarding the footage from before WWII, especially images from Von Barys’s THE CITY THAT NEVER RESTS (1928), this was actively gathered by Jan Nieuwenhuis, the head of the *Bureau Voorlichting & Publiciteit*. The collected material, which had become especially valuable after the destruction of the city, was subsequently handed over to the *Gemeentearchief Rotterdam*, which marked the beginning of its film collection⁸⁵³. After all, the imagery of the film was not just ‘found footage’, but collected on purpose, to be able to (re)construct the identity of the city.

The introduction of the film is an overview of pre-war Rotterdam. It starts with the statue of Erasmus and a library with books on the history of the city. The film recalls the most important public spaces, including the squares Hofplein and Oostplein, the shopping street Hoogstraat, canals and the old houses along them. These images show a lively city, but the narrator emphasizes that it was not a beautiful city. It was just dedicated to labour. We then see how the city is attacked by the German Luftwaffe, which are images from the UFA propaganda film ANGRIFF AUF ROTTERDAM (1940). While this material has often been used in films on WWII, this film is one of the rare cases in which it is explicitly said that it was shot by the Germans and that no images have been made of the Dutch resistance. The Germans occupy the city and the Dutch capitulate. They clear the ruins and commemorate the victims. The film mentions the figures of the destruction and subsequently the plans that were made to rebuild the city. The film

⁸⁵⁰ Neither the director or scriptwriter, nor any other collaborator of the film is known. In 1965 a second version of this film was made, which was directed by Nol Bollongino, who worked already for Polygoon by 1950, but it is not clear if he was involved with this film at that time.

⁸⁵¹ In the archives of Beeld & Geluid, various reels are preserved that are part of this production, e.g. DE WEDEROPBOUW VAN ROTTERDAM (1949) – see ‘overige opmerkingen’ in the file of this film at B&G; see filmography: EN TOCH... ROTTERDAM). More material is related to it, like recordings of the construction of emergency dwellings in the districts IJsselmonde and Overschie (1941). In order to build these dwellings Rotterdam incorporated various villages, following an older plan. Ringers also proposed the annexation of the towns Schiedam and Vlaardingen, also according to existing drafts, but that plan was cancelled (Van de Laar, 2000: 415).

⁸⁵² As soon as the war was over, Polygoon showed images of the devastations in Rotterdams as part of reports on the situation in the Netherlands in general, see: Polygoon (1945-wk39), and VERWOESTINGEN (1947, Polygoon).

⁸⁵³ Letter (1958-11-25) by H.C. Hazewinkel (GAR) to mayor and alderman, and an internal letter (1959-01-29) of the *commissie voor het archief* in the Gemeentearchief Rotterdam, archive ‘Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam’ (archief van het archief), dossier ‘correspondentie filmcollectie’, toegangsnr. 297.01, inv. nr. 461 (1958-1962).

addresses the hidden role of the Club Rotterdam during the war, and mentions that it held secret meetings at Van der Leeuw's Van Nelle factory every week.

The film shows Ringers and his colleague Mouton at the factory's boardroom. In the next image they appear together with Van der Leeuw and Van Traa, studying the plans, which are subsequently discussed in a meeting of Van Traa and Mayor Oud. These recordings must have been taken shortly after WWII, presumably June 1945⁸⁵⁴. This was before the Office for Information had been established, at the time that Ringers had become Minister of Reconstruction. The sequence is thus of special interest, since it is a contemporary account of the interaction between Ringers, Mouton, Van der Leeuw and Van Traa, among others, which as such is also a key to understand the film itself. There is a convergence of content and conditions of the film.

The film continues by showing an empty city and, for the time being, only emergency shops are built. The citizens have to wait for the liberators to come, which is the moment that the city can be rebuilt. After they have come indeed, we see draughtsman and architects, directed by Van Traa, followed by images of the construction of the main buildings⁸⁵⁵. The film presents a modern city that matches contemporary values and demands, which is as attractive and living as the old city, it is said. This modernity is emphasised by the new business accommodations 'Groothandelsgebouw' (under construction), department store V&D, and the temporary theatre that is built from the ruins. At the end of the film, by way of conclusion, we see aerial shots from the empty city, followed by aerial shots in which the city is being rebuilt. The emptiness is the evidence for the new city, framed in a historical perspective. The city has resurrected and is alive again, day and night, just like its port, of which we see several images too.

EN TOCH... ROTTERDAM was an attempt to generate support for the reconstruction plans. It created a frame of reference for the city itself, in order to let people understand what had to be done, and to make them enthusiastic to partake in the new developments. The conducted strategy was convincing and successful⁸⁵⁶. This, however, has also obscured the actual decisions and visions at issue, and the efforts and achievements that were made.

The fact that the production of EN TOCH... ROTTERDAM had already started in 1940 raises the question who initiated it. As we have seen, the clearance of the destroyed city and its reconstruction became initially a state affair and the responsibility of the (anti-Nazi) state planner J.A. Ringers. The first project that was carried out according to Witteveen's plan was a housing complex (Goudsesingel, arch. Jan Wils, 1941-1943). Its first pole was rammed in April 1941, which thus marked the actual beginning of the reconstruction. At this occasion Ringers gave a daring speech, stressing that it would be *Dutch* housing for *Dutch* people. It was attended by representatives of the industry and the municipality. Polygoon documented the event, by way of a commission⁸⁵⁷, while Profilti made a newsreel out of the material (Profilti, 1941-16). In its files at the *Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid*, just like in a number of others related to EN TOCH... ROTTERDAM, it is said that the recordings were commissioned by the Ministry of Reconstruction. This ministry was established after the war, but it was the successor of the department of Ringers, and Ringers was its first minister. It therefore seems that Ringers took the initiative. This is suggested by the newsreel of his speech. It is also likely if we consider the reconstruction films that were made for his ministry immediately after the war, which he

⁸⁵⁴ It seems that these film recordings were made at the same time as the photographs made by Van der Leeuw, June 1945, which are reprinted in: Roelofs, 1989: 140.

⁸⁵⁵ Including: the *Groothandelsgebouw* (trade centre, 1949-1953, Maaskant, Van Tijen), *Warenhuis Termeulen/Wassen/Van Vorst* and *De Klerk* (department stores, 1948-1951, 1949-1956, Van den Broek & Bakema), *Bouwcentrum* (building centre, 1946-1948 J. Boks), and *Centraal Station* (1950-1957, Sybold van Ravesteyn).

⁸⁵⁶ Once this was a matter of fact, the "Office for Information and Publicity" commissioned Polygoon to make a new version of the film (1965). It emphasised the accomplishment of the reconstruction, while the rhetorical argument was left out; the plans had become reality, and the first film, as a tool to achieve that, had become obsolete (see: ch. 15. §2).

⁸⁵⁷ i.e. rushes called WEDEROPBOUW ROTTERDAM (1941, Polygoon).

explained by saying ‘that the Netherlands do not know the Netherlands anymore, and that the medium of film is taken to make the people aware of the task that is ahead of them’⁸⁵⁸.

There is, however, no evidence who was involved with the film production during the war. One should notice that although the ministry is mentioned in the records, the Rotterdam planning office, ASRO, was officially part of it. More specific records seem to be lacking. To note such things down was dangerous – which became a matter of fact when Ringers was arrested and imprisoned. One should also notice that after March 1943, the reconstruction process was even carried out behind closed doors, and that no publicity about it was allowed⁸⁵⁹.

Considering the communication between Ringers and Van der Leeuw, it seems that both of them had been involved with this production. If we follow De Klerk’s argument that there is a correspondence between the planning process of the Van Nelle factory and that of the new city, this seems to apply to the accompanying films as well. Moreover, Polygoon had made films for both Van Nelle and the municipality⁸⁶⁰. They were also ‘functionalist’ in their conception and use, to channel the visions and attitude of the public, and professionals too. Concerning the municipality and the ASRO, we may also recall Van Traa’s interest in film, who had been the secretary of the Filmliga Rotterdam before, where Van der Leeuw was involved too. After all, this film is a comprehensive record of the ‘scenius’ of the new Rotterdam, an audiovisual component of the ‘conspiracy’ that effected a common direction of urban development.

alive and kicking

Four years after the release of EN TOCH..., the office for information and publicity commissioned Polygoon to make THAT MOST LIVING CITY (1954, Walter Smith). Even though this film is also an instance of ‘positive feedback’, it is rather different from the former. The film also starts with the statue of Erasmus reading a book, and about to turn a page. It is watched by a small English boy, who is lost in the city. A policeman takes him around for a tour, and hence the audience. He briefly explains how Rotterdam used to be before. Its reconstruction started by re-using material of the ruins. To celebrate the revitalised port, we learn about the Ahoy’ exhibition. Next are the city’s new icons: the ‘Bouwcentrum’, ‘Lijnbaan’, ‘Groothandelsgebouw’, ‘Maastunnel’, ‘Heliport’, a theatre, and some of the spared landmarks, such as the town hall⁸⁶¹, Museum Boymans, St. Laurens church, *De Hef*, and the Van Nelle factory. Next are churches, shops, parks, new housing estates – with laundry hanging outside – allotment gardens and summerhouses. The city, in short, is alive and kicking. The old city is not there anymore, but there is hardly any reason to recall history, other than Erasmus, who turns another page⁸⁶². The city seems to be ready; THAT MOST LIVING CITY presented Rotterdam’s attractions, its modern style and comfort of accommodations, without mentioning anything of the trouble of a city under construction. Everything seems to work smoothly. It shows the city’s ideal image, and hence the aims to be achieved, which needed to be confirmed as soon as possible.

§ 4. continuing projections

The scenius that directed the reconstruction of Rotterdam manifested itself in different ways. Important has been the establishment of the *Bouwcentrum*. It started as a centre for

⁸⁵⁸ At that time, the official name of the ministry was still *Ministerie van Openbare Werken*. Ringers said this on the occasion of the premiere of (a.o.) ARNHEM (1945, Herman van der Horst & Paul Schuitema), which took place in The Hague, 4th of August 1945. Hogenkamp, 2003: 29; original quote: ‘dat Nederland Nederland niet meer kent, en dat het middel van de film wordt aangegrepen om het volk besef te geven van de opdracht waarvoor het staat.’

⁸⁵⁹ Wagenaar, 1992: 158.

⁸⁶⁰ For Van Nelle e.g.: ACHTER GLAS! (1931), and various commercials, e.g. EEN FILMSTUDIE (1933), RECLAME VAN NELLE (1936); for the municipality e.g. BOUW MAASTUNNEL (1937-1941).

⁸⁶¹ See also: Polygoon, 1948-wk31, about a new carillon for the town hall.

⁸⁶² Something similar is reflected by the book *De Stad van Erasmus* (1952, photography by Kees Molkenboer), which was compiled by Jan Lebbink of the “Office for Information and Publicity”. Several other photographic books on Rotterdam would follow its example (see: Bool, 2004; Suermondt, 1993).

documentation and information concerning building, which had been the idea of Kees van der Leeuw and other members of the Club Rotterdam⁸⁶³. Its own building (1946-1948, arch. Joost Boks), which is in itself a remarkable example of modernist architecture, characterised by its circular structure, would become one of the first landmarks of the reconstruction of Rotterdam, which was heralded by Polygoon (1949-01).

Elly Winkel became secretary of the *Bouwcentrum*⁸⁶⁴. She played an important role behind the scenes, especially by maintaining contacts. Her career shows already a part of the network under consideration; she was appointed secretary due to the efforts of grain trader Willebeek Le Maire (Club Rotterdam), for whom she worked before, while previously she had worked for housing developer Auguste Plate (as the chairman of the employers association SVZ), and the architecture office of Van Tijen & Maaskant.

Jan van Ettinger became director of the *Bouwcentrum*; he had been the general-secretary of the Dutch foundation for statistics during the war⁸⁶⁵. In 1943, Ringers asked him to collect statistical information in order to make plans for the post-war reconstruction⁸⁶⁶. As a result of it, Van Ettinger directed a reorganisation of the Dutch building industry, which was closely related to the promotion of innovative production methods, especially in the field of housing. To that end the *Stichting Ratiobouw* was founded (1943)⁸⁶⁷. The reorganisation and rationalisation of the building industry was intertwined with an ideological plea for welfare, especially by economist Jan Tinbergen. Based on economic, technological and organisational innovation, welfare would eventually become the main attractor for (urban) development⁸⁶⁸.

Information and documentation were preconditional to carry out the reorganisation⁸⁶⁹. The *Bouwcentrum*, growing from the various foundations that had already been established during the war, was a direct result of this⁸⁷⁰. Van Ettinger understood its functioning in terms of 'a system of feedback', which he would later articulate in his book *Towards a Habitable World* (1960: 221). Information fuels research, in order to design and produce prototypes. This needs analysis and feedback, in order to produce a series, which needs analysis and feedback again for further development. Regarding this cycle, Van Ettinger emphasised (ibid) that 'the development of an efficient system of transmission of knowledge is one of the most important basic problems of our time', which he elaborated in further detail. 'In its simplest form it is a problem of integration, which did not involve any particular difficulties when the world was still little differentiated and specialised and when knowledge, experience and production were practically in one and the same hand or practiced by people working in very close collaboration' (Van Ettinger, 1960: 223). In this way he saw – similar to the ideas of Julian Steward – the emergence of new modes of communication. He discussed, first of all, what he called 'unilateral methods' for a one way transmission of knowledge, in the context of which he explicitly mentions film and television (pp226-229). Besides that, he discussed 'multi-lateral methods' that enable a direct exchange of views. He provided a detailed list of all kinds of media, including film, which can be used for this purpose, but only when complementary forms of communication are devised together.

⁸⁶³ Cf. De Klerk, 1998: 248. The initiators were C.H. van der Leeuw, F.W.C. Blom and W.B. Willebeek Le Maire, who were all members of the *Kleine Commissie*, ibid: 237.

⁸⁶⁴ Mieke de Wit (1995) has paid special attention to her position, which immediately shows a broader network, while it also exemplifies the pattern of the role played by women, from the individual home to the higher ranks of administration, to enable organisations to operate.

⁸⁶⁵ i.e. NSS, related to the CBS, see: 'Geschiedenis van het CBS', Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, p2 www.cbs.nl/NR/rdonlyres/E56C3AB2-2B6E-450E-8E74-06EE67B76CD5/0/GeschiedenisCBS.pdf (2009-03-10).

⁸⁶⁶ Van Ettinger, 1960: 255.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁸ Wagenaar, 1992: 247. It might be considered as Wagenaar's main argument, which the title of his book indicates too: *The development of the Welfare City*.

⁸⁶⁹ Wagenaar, 1992: 246.

⁸⁷⁰ Van Ettinger, 1960: 255.

Indeed, the *Bouwcentrum* often used film to accompany lectures and exhibitions. There is a direct link here with the *Technisch Filmcentrum* (The Hague), which produced and distributed technical films; it was established through Marshall funding (i.e. MSA), in 1954, on the basis of the idea that film was an efficient medium to raise labour productivity⁸⁷¹. Besides the films that the centre showed, it was also shown itself in a large number of newsreels and documentaries⁸⁷². As a focus point of international housing developments the *Bouwcentrum* was shown, for example, in Jacques Brunius's documentary *SOMEWHERE TO LIVE* (1950), a British production for the series 'Changing Face of Europe'⁸⁷³. The film addresses the housing problem in Western-Europe, and the need to apply innovative construction methods.

Particularly interesting is the film *TWINTIG UUR PER DAG* (1952), which was especially made for the centre⁸⁷⁴. It was directed by the young filmmaker Albert Brosens, who used to work for Multifilm, and who was asked to make other films on the building industry as well. Besides screenings at the *Bouwcentrum* and elsewhere in the Netherlands, Van Ettinger showed this film, which was also made through Marshall funding (MSA), as part of presentations that he gave in the USA, in June 1952. The film addresses the role of architecture in daily life, and special accommodations that one needs during one's life stages, from birth till death. It emphasizes the concern with prefab building methods, but also the mediating role of the centre between architects and industry, which together took the initiative to establish the centre, as the film says.

In an article on the film, Van Ettinger divided the film into five parts: society and building industry; the functional basis of building; the choice of materials, installations and constructions; building location and its organisation; and international collaboration⁸⁷⁵. Whereas these issues structured the film, they were also foundational to the centre. Moreover, the three Rs that Hediger and Vonderau (2007: 22) have addressed in the case of industrial film production – those of Record, Rhetorics and Rationalization – actually apply to the *Bouwcentrum* as a whole. Alternatively the production of the film, and the ambitions of the centre, can be explained in terms of the theory of Niklas Luhmann (1997). Record serves a memory function, while rhetorics is a matter of oscillation, and, applying complexity theory, rationalisation can be seen as the principle attractor. In this way, the media practices of the *Bouwcentrum* helped to institutionalise modern architecture and planning, and that of the Netherlands and Rotterdam in particular.

The members of the Club Rotterdam established also the public-private *Rotterdamse Kunststichting* (RKS), to support the arts in general, in order to give expression to the new society. Kees van der Leeuw was its founding chairman, and also Jan Backx played an active role in this initiative, which largely corresponded to the aims of his *Rotterdamsche Gemeenschap*. The RKS operated independently, but it was sponsored by the government. It gave practical shape to the municipal policy concerning the arts – against the will of Alderman Van der Vlerk for education and social development⁸⁷⁶. Rather than a governmental institution, it was indeed an instrument of Rotterdam's elite to implement its own ideas for a new culture, but the values that it promoted were actually the same as those of the municipal *Bureau Voorlichting en Publiciteit*.

The RKS was concerned with virtually every artistic discipline, including cinema⁸⁷⁷. One of its first acts was to invite Jean Cocteau and to screen his film *LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE* (1946),

⁸⁷¹ Hogenkamp, 2003: 138; cf. Schuyt & Taverne, 2000: 74. Since the reorganisation of the building industry had its consequences for the labour conditions too, film was also used to accompany this process, e.g. *BOUW VOORT* (1948, Triofilm), which was commissioned by the *Algemene Bouwarbeidersbond* (the union closely collaborated with the authorities in the years after WWII).

⁸⁷² Among the first newsreels are: Polygoon, 1949-wk01; Polygoon 1949-wk20; in the case of NTS *JOURNAAL*, e.g. 1956-02-16, 1956-05-16, 1959-06-12 (a.o.).

⁸⁷³ Cf. Dingemans & Romme, 1997: 142.

⁸⁷⁴ Van Ettinger, 1952.

⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷⁶ Van der Laar, 2000: 551.

⁸⁷⁷ Cf. 'Gemeentebestuur' in: *Rotterdams Jaarboekje*, 1954: 18.

just after it was released⁸⁷⁸. The RKS thus made an attempt to reanimate the avant-garde film culture in the city, which it gave a more permanent shape through its film programme at Luxor, which had become municipal property in 1945⁸⁷⁹. It was also the place where a new Filmliga started⁸⁸⁰.

For the programming, the RKS contracted Piet Meerburg⁸⁸¹, who had just founded the cinema Kriterion, while he also became the director of avant-garde theatre De Uitkijk, both in Amsterdam. Besides art films, the programme at Luxor included also various (historical) films on Rotterdam⁸⁸². Moreover, Meerburg himself would even produce and direct, together with Alex de Haas, the film ROTTERDAMSE MIJMERINGEN (“Rotterdam Musings”, 1953, Alex de Haas, Piet Meerburg), which was released by the Luxor. This film recalls popular and well-known places of entertainment and modern urban life before WWII, such as the Hofplein, Hoogstraat, Bijenkorf, and the Feyenoord stadium, but it also presents new landmarks, such as the ‘Groothandelsgebouw’. It shows a mix of cosmopolitan and village life, even with cows in the streets. The film offered the city a history and an identity, not unlike EN TOCH... ROTTERDAM by Polygoon-Profiliti, which, in turn, heralded the new film in its news show (1953-wk04).

The RKS, the *Rotterdamsche Gemeenschap*, as well as the municipality, in the person of Mayor P.J. Oud, supported also a national congress on the theme of ‘relaxation, film and adolescent youth’, which took place at Luxor on the 14th and 15th of January 1949. It was organised by the *Instituut Film en Jeugd*, and attended by about five hundred people, among them many prominent Dutch scholars in the fields of sociology, health care and pedagogy, as well as film professionals, policy makers and representatives of various social organisations. The congress was opened by F. Rutten, professor of social-psychology and the Minister of Education, Arts and Science (OKW). He stated ‘that during the last decade we have become aware of the significance which cinema has been going to take up in the daily life of people’⁸⁸³. The general opinion expressed was that too many bad films were shown, with possibly a bad influence. One argued that more research had to be done in order to understand the actual influence of film, and that film exhibition needed better supervision⁸⁸⁴. Moreover, cinema in the Netherlands was challenged to provide alternatives in respect of social values, individual and public development. The ideas expressed supported a critical cinema, like that of the Filmliga before WWII. This was also reflected by the board of the organizing institute, which included the names of film critic

⁸⁷⁸ Screening on 1946-10-29 – see: *Rotterdams Jaarboekje*, 1947. As such the RKS was important for the establishment of international connections regarding cinema.

⁸⁷⁹ It was first used as a stage for theatre plays, since there was no accommodation as such available anymore. After the opening of the new *Schouwburg* (1947, arch. Hendrik Sutterland), Luxor became a stage for cabaret, performances by the IvAO (a.o.), and cinema screenings, under supervision of the RKS, see: p9, policy note by the *SectieFilm*; ‘Advies voor de Sectie Film van de Commissie voor het Kunstbeleid’, February 1955: GAR, archive: ‘Secretarie afd. Kunstzaken’, toegangsnr. 487.01, bestanddeel 6.

⁸⁸⁰ The first screening of the Stichting Filmliga R45 took place on 1946-02-01, see: *Rotterdams Jaarboekje*, 1947, p18. Next to that, on 1946-05-28, a film festival was organised here to celebrate 50 years of cinema, see *Rotterdams Jaarboekje*, 1947, p59.

⁸⁸¹ Hendriks, 2006: 76. See also: Berg, 1996: 166.

⁸⁸² In 1948, for example, the Luxor showed a film called OUD ROTTERDAM (status unknown), see: www.cinemacontext.nl > films > ‘Oud Rotterdam’ (2008-08-29). On 1949-12-22, the *Historisch Genootschap Roterodamum* organised the ‘Rotterdamse Filmavond’ at Luxor, with films from WWII, a.o. ANGRIF AUF ROTTERDAM (1940, UFA), and UIT ROTTERDAM’S VERLEDEN (1941, Polygoon), see: *Rotterdams Jaarboekje*, 1950: 114.

⁸⁸³ *Verslag van een Congres over Ontspanningsleven, Film en Rijpere Jeugd, gehouden 14 en 15 januari 1949 te Rotterdam*, Instituut Film en Jeugd, Den Haag [collection Universiteitsbibliotheek, Universiteit van Amsterdam]; original quote p6 ‘Spreker betoogt, dat wij ons in de laatste decennia bewust zijn geworden van de betekenis, welke de film is gaan innemen in het dagelijks leven van de mensen.’

⁸⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p13, conclusion by one of the organisers, David van Staveren.

Adrianus van Domburg, educational film pioneer David van Staveren (see: 5.§1. – Schoolbioscoop), and filmmaker Paul Schuitema⁸⁸⁵.

Two things are important here: cinema was understood to play an important role within society concerning social development and the spread of common values, and people had to see quality films, in close connection to reality. Documentary cinema was given priority, all the more so since possibilities for feature film production in the Netherlands were marginal during the first years after WWII. Whatever the impact of these ideas have been within the Netherlands as a whole, they resonated for many years in Rotterdam, and affected also the municipal film policy.

On the 18th of June 1954, the Mayor and Aldermen established a committee for the policy on the arts (*Commissie voor het Kunstbeleid*), chaired by the socialist Alderman A.J. de Vlerk. It consisted of various sections, including one for film⁸⁸⁶. David van Staveren was one of its members, among several other prominent names. In its report, the film section addressed that cinema was the most popular form of entertainment in modern life, but, as one said, the level of most commercial films was rather low and a matter of bad taste. There were worries about possible psychological and social effects, especially among youths. One considered it to be the responsibility of the municipality to act, and to use film to fulfil a progressive social-cultural agenda⁸⁸⁷. The concern with cinema was divided into four aspects: production, distribution, exhibition, and screen education (*vorming*).

The production of local films needed active support. The section proposed to appoint an expert institution, in particular the *Rotterdamse Kunststichting*, in order to guarantee the quality – in which aesthetic and social features were closely connected.

The municipality should give commissions, possibly to cineastes from Rotterdam, to make films of local interest, about, for example, municipal services and institutions, or on the history and the development of the city, next to films of a more general interest, concerning issues such as animal protection, traffic safety, hygiene, public responsibility, etcetera. In this way the municipality can make a valuable contribution to people's development and education, and offer a chance to cineastes from Rotterdam to develop themselves.⁸⁸⁸

⁸⁸⁵ One may note here that Paul Schuitema had been an active member of the Filmliga before WWII, while he was simultaneously a member of the board of Opbouw – two organisations that had also been supported by Kees van der Leeuw, which adds another link to the hub that he occupied in the social-cultural and economic network at stake.

⁸⁸⁶ There were, furthermore, sections for the visual arts, dance, film, literature, music, and theatre, besides two general sections for art and youth, and art and citizenry. Members of the film section included Willy Hofman, the director of the RKS; writer Wim Wagener; and C.A. 't Hart, secretary of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra (see: RJ 1948: 16 and 1969: 9), who were members of all sections. Next were Piet Meerburg; film scholar Jan Marie Peters (the later director of the Film Academy in Amsterdam, professor of film studies at the University of Amsterdam, and director of the *Nederlandse Onderwijsfilm*), David van Staveren; secretary of the Volksuniversiteit, Ida van Dugteren, who supported both avant-garde and educational cinema; the chairman of the district council Oud-Charlois, A.A. Sterman (who embodied the *wijkgedachte*, see also: RJ 1955: 9), and clergyman Gijsbert van Veldhuizen (see: RJ 1964: 229), who worked in the labour district Crooswijk and wrote various studies and novels on social questions, especially concerning youths. See the final report (Van der Vlerk e.a., 1957: 4-5). See also the preparatory policy note by the *Sectie Film*; 'Advies voor de Sectie Film van de Commissie voor het Kunstbeleid', February 1955: GAR, archive: 'Secretarie afd. Kunstzaken', toegangsnr. 487.01, bestanddeel 6.

⁸⁸⁷ The film section emphasised this responsibility since the municipality immediately profited from the popularity of the cinema, due to the high tax revenues on film screenings. This was 35% until 1954, and 25% afterwards. It is also mentioned (*ibid*, p3) that 5,300,000 people went to the cinema in Rotterdam in 1953 (on a population of 700,000).

⁸⁸⁸ Original quote: 'De Gemeente geve opdrachten, zo mogelijk aan Rotterdamse cineasten, tot het maken van films, die van lokaal belang zijn, waarbij gedacht moet worden aan films over gemeentelijke diensten en instellingen, over de historie en de ontwikkeling van de stad, maar ook aan films, die niet van uitsluitend plaatstelijk belang zijn, zoals films over dierenbescherming, verkeersveiligheid, hygiëne, burgerzin, etc. // Op deze wijze kan de Gemeente een waardevolle bijdrage leveren aan de volksontwikkeling en opvoeding, en daarbij de creatieve talenten van de Rotterdamse cineasten kans geven zich te ontplooiën.' Pp5-6 of the policy note by the *Sectie Film*; 'Advies voor de Sectie Film van de Commissie voor het Kunstbeleid', February 1955: GAR, archive 'Secretarie afd. Kunstzaken', toegangsnr. 487.01, bestanddeel 6.

The section remarked, however, that the production of films for general educational purposes was not the duty of the municipality. They were already made by the *Nederlandse Onderwijs Film*, and only its distribution needed support (which was hitherto often paid by parents).

Concerning film distribution, the section advocated to enable various cultural institutions to show quality films, by providing advice and equipment, and by the exemption or reduction of taxes. Next to that, an argument was made to establish neighbourhood centres where films could be screened to the youths in a 'responsible environment'. A link was made to institutions that possessed films themselves⁸⁸⁹. One argued that all the films related to Rotterdam, including certain 'neglected' films from state archives, should be collected, catalogued and preserved by one municipal film archive. This institution could also advise and assist other organisations that wanted to show films⁸⁹⁰. One may recognise here the voice of Piet Meerburg, also a member of the committee, who had previously taken the initiative to establish the *Nederlands Historisch Filmarchief* (1946), the precursor of the *Nederlands Filmmuseum*. With his film ROTTERDAMSE MIJMERINGEN, moreover, he had also shown the value of historical footage; this film was quite literally an example of the cinematic reconstruction of the city. The war had raised an awareness of the importance to preserve films.

Although the actualisation of most of the ideas of the committee took more than fifteen years to become a matter of fact, one of the first results was indeed the creation of a film archive. This achievement has also been addressed by Wilma van Giersbergen (2005), in a study on the historical-topographical atlas of the *Gemeentearchief Rotterdam*⁸⁹¹.

It is remarkable that as early as 1956, at the request of the Rotterdam Council, the archives took an interest in film documentation. In 1959 the archivist H.C. Hazewinkel (who had been in charge since 1935) was officially given the task of compiling a film archive. The council resolved that all municipal departments should give the archives a copy of any films they commissioned. In addition, newsreels and films made by the Nederlandse Televisiestichting (NTS) that had to do with Rotterdam were purchased.

By preserving contemporary productions, the archive compiled a new kind of city, a cinematic city for future generations (of which this text is a testimony)⁸⁹². In this way, the feedback loops of film productions were enlarged from months or years to decades, and even longer. Cinema got a collective memory function that enabled the cinematic reconstruction of the city.

§ 5. manifesting positions

On the 1st of October 1946, Van der Leeuw withdrew as the Delegate for the reconstruction of Rotterdam. The immediate reason was that the Dutch state, rather than Rotterdam, had the last word in the city's reconstruction, and the influence of Rotterdam's representatives was minimalised (which remained so until 1950)⁸⁹³. Ringers had preferred Van der Leeuw to continue

⁸⁸⁹ Among them the *Bureau Voorlichting en Publiciteit* and the *Gemeente Film Archief* (still related to the former and for the time being hosted by the GAR, which included a.o. material collected for EN TOCH ROTTERDAM..., 1950, Polygoon), and also the *commissie van de Raad voor Lichamelijke Opvoeding* ("Committee of the Council for Physical Education"), *ibid* p7.

⁸⁹⁰ *Ibid* pp7-8 and financial appendix – Concerning youth films, such a role was already played by the institute *Film en Jeugd* – and extra support would be desirable. In respect youth, the section paid also attention to screen education, such as lessons of film aesthetics at schools and neighbourhood centres.

⁸⁹¹ Van Giersbergen, 2005: 12; continuation of the quote: 'The inflammable nitrate films were transferred to acetate material, and the nitrate films were destroyed. A cabinet was bought specially for the conservation and storage of films, because the film safe on the roof of the second storeroom was not cool enough. (...) From 1962 they were conserved on 35 mm instead of 16 mm film. In 1966 the film negatives were moved to the air-conditioned vault of the Dutch Film Museum. They returned in 1970, by which time the archives also had an air-conditioned vault.'

⁸⁹² See also: Gemeentearchief Rotterdam, archive 'Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam' (archief van het archief), dossier 'correspondentie filmcollectie', toegangsnr. 297.01, inv. nr. 461 (1958-1962).

⁸⁹³ Van de Laar, 2000: 467.

his function, but after Van der Leeuw had left, Ringers himself withdrew too (30th of October), since he did not agree with the Dutch policy to stay in power in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia)⁸⁹⁴. Van der Leeuw was then asked by Prime Minister Schermerhorn to become the curator of the Polytechnic University in Delft (*Technische Hogeschool Delft*, near Rotterdam), for which a new complex had to be created⁸⁹⁵. It seems likely that Ringers advised Schermerhorn to ask Van der Leeuw. It suited his personal itinerary. The masterplan of the university (1947-1950) became a template for modern planning, and the link with Rotterdam is a direct one, since Van der Leeuw asked several planners who were involved with the reconstruction of Rotterdam too, among them Sam van Embden, Cornelis van Eesteren, and Jo van den Broek⁸⁹⁶.

The function of curator also allowed Van der Leeuw to break the hegemony of traditionalism that dominated the influential faculty of architecture at the University of Delft⁸⁹⁷. Due to his efforts various new professors were appointed, first of all Van den Broek, as a professor of architecture⁸⁹⁸, and Van Eesteren and Van Lohuizen, as professors of urban planning⁸⁹⁹. Next was Elling, who had already carried out various projects in Rotterdam, among them buildings for Jan Backx, and later on also private projects for Van der Leeuw⁹⁰⁰. Another professor became Bakema, who had become associated with Van den Broek, in 1948, after Brinkman had died⁹⁰¹. Their studio was the continuation of Van Nelle's Brinkman & Van der Vlucht, and it created several of the university buildings, and complexes in Rotterdam as well. Among them was the terminal of the Holland America Line (1946-1949, Brinkman, Van den Broek & Bakema). Immediately after the bombardment in 1940, HAL director W.H. de Monchy chaired a committee for the architecture of the reconstruction, which, at that time, still envisioned a moderately modern city⁹⁰². De Monchy was also a member of the Club Rotterdam, and in this way the HAL terminal exemplifies the influence of Van der Leeuw.

Of special interest, in terms of (cross-)disciplinary networks is also an early project by Bakema, which was the rebuilding of the progressive cultural centre 'Ons Huis' (1909, arch. J. Verheul; 1948-1949, J. Bakema⁹⁰³). This centre, with the director of the municipal housing department, Alexander Bos, as its chairman, included also a cinema, 't Venster, which would be directed by Johan Huijts, the former chairman of the Filmliga⁹⁰⁴. It became a node between

⁸⁹⁴ Lichtenauer, 2008.

⁸⁹⁵ De Klerk, 1998: 232.

⁸⁹⁶ Also involved were Jules Froger and Kees Bremer (the latter had been engaged with the university since the late 1930s, for which he built the accommodation for Chemical Technology); Groenendijk & Vollaard, 1998: 214. Sam van Embden would later also design the master plans for the technical universities of Enschede and Eindhoven.

⁸⁹⁷ De Wagt, 2008: 155; Vanstiphout, 2005: 162.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid, see also: Smit, 2008. Van den Broek was professor of architecture from 1947 till 1964. In 1948 he became also involved with the establishment of a new international organisation in Lausanne, which was called *Union Internationale des Architectes* (UIA), with Van den Broek as one of the members of the board, and organiser of the Dutch section, which in 1957 became the Union of Dutch Architects (*Bond Nederlandse Architecten*, BNA) – De Heer, 1983: 52.

⁸⁹⁹ Van Lohuizen had previously worked for the city of Rotterdam (1921-1928), before he moved to Amsterdam, to collaborate with Van Eesteren. They were professors at Delft University between 1948-1957 (vE) and 1948-1956 (vL), see: www.efl-stichting.nl/naamgevers/132.htm (2008-08-18).

⁹⁰⁰ Elling was professor in Delft in the period 1957-1965. For the role of Van der Leeuw in this case, see: De Wagt, 153-156 (private projects for Van der Leeuw, including an apartment at Carlton in Amsterdam (1949-1950), and Van der Leeuw's private house in Wassenaar (1953), see: De Wagt: 219/234. Projects in Rotterdam included: the 'Rijnhotel' (1949-1959), various buildings for Backx Thomsen's Havenbedrijf (between 1954 and 1962), and the 'Havenvakschool' (1955-1960), which was initiated by Backx too.

⁹⁰¹ In 1949, after Brinkman had died, the name was officially changed into 'Van den Broek & Bakema'.

⁹⁰² Wagenaar, 1992: 134/148.

⁹⁰³ Mulder & Schilt (1993, 20). Cf. www.lantaren-venster.nl/info/algemeen.htm Director of Ons Huis was K.F. Proost. Opening of its cinema 't Venster took place on 1949-01-27 by mayor Oud; *Rotterdams Jaarboekje*, 1950.

⁹⁰⁴ Huijts joined 't Venster in 1954 (Smit, 2005: 36). Next to it was also a workshop for visual arts, and artists that frequented it became known as the *Venstergroep*, with Wally Elenbaas a.o.; see: Halbertsma & Van Uelzen, 2001: 82.

cinema and architecture, in terms of aesthetics and networks, with Bakema himself as a frequent visitor⁹⁰⁵.

The studio of Van den Broek & Bakema received also the commission to design Rotterdam's shopping centre 'De Lijnbaan' (1948-1953). This also included two department stores, as nodal points in the city's development strategy⁹⁰⁶. The construction of the shopping area, by building company Dura, was documented by the film *BOUW WINKELCENTRUM LIJNBAAN* (1953, B. Bollemeijer), which shows the building process and the inauguration, attended by Cornelis van Traa and others. Images of the construction works are also included in *STERK IN DE STORM* (1959, C. Niestadt), a film made for the insurance company *Nationale Levensverzekeringen Bank*, which financed this project, just like many other reconstruction projects in Rotterdam. Since 'De Lijnbaan' was exclusively an area for pedestrians, the plan received international recognition, for example by Lewis Mumford⁹⁰⁷. It would be frequently shown in films in the next two decades.

'De Lijnbaan' was part of a larger plan by Van Embden and Fledderus, which also included high-rise housing estates⁹⁰⁸, and, among others, various cinemas⁹⁰⁹. In the 1950s Polygoon often made film recordings in Rotterdam, and a direct connection is drawn here to its director Joop Landré, who came from Rotterdam. Polygoon's cameraman Joop Burcksen, born and raised in Rotterdam too, meticulously recorded the construction of the cinemas 'Thalia' and 'Lumière'⁹¹⁰. Besides that, 'Lumière' was also prominently present in his film *EEN WANDELING DOOR ROTTERDAM* (1955, Joop Burcksen) – made on the occasion of the E55. Especially 'Lumière' expressed the interest of 'De 8 & Opbouw' for cinema; due to its public character it became a reference in the oeuvre of its architect Alexander Bodon, who would design a range of other buildings in Rotterdam afterwards⁹¹¹.

Adjacent to 'De Lijnbaan' the new department store was built – 'De Bijenkorf'. It substituted Dudok's building, which had been partly destroyed by the war. For the sake of the city's new master plan, the remaining part was demolished. It raised criticism, but behind the façades something else was at stake. Due to the application of steel-and-glass as a consequence of the principles of functionalism, too much light entered the building, which negatively affected various products. Therefore, already by 1932, most of the windows were covered by blinds, which was noticed by various critics, among them Mumford (1957: 1198). Dudok himself came to realise that too⁹¹². During the war he made a design for a new building, which was the opposite of the former. He drew a closed box, which would be elaborated by Abraham Elzas, the chief architect of De Bijenkorf concern, in collaboration with the Hungarian-American architect Marcel Breuer. One might wonder why Dudok did not create the final design himself, but a well-known

⁹⁰⁵ This and following information is based on communication of the author (FP) with Fiona van Oostrom (2005-03-22). Bakema was part of a circle including: Jan van Oostrom, who was one of the organisers of the Ahoy!, E55, and Floriade (design by Bakema); Willy Hofman (director RKS); Piet Meerburg (Luxor e.a.); and Emiel Weier, who became director of 't Venster', providing his friends free seats at 'row 13'. Via Bakema several artists involved with 't Venster, like Wally Elenbaas and Louis van Roode, took part in Ahoy' (1950) – Van de Laar, 2000: 562.

⁹⁰⁶ 'Ter Meulen, Wassen, Van Vorst' (1948-1951) and 'De Klerk' (1949-1956), cf. Van de Laar, 2000: 469.

⁹⁰⁷ Mumford, 1957; 1968: 104 (reprint of Mumford's 'The Highway and the City', *Architectural Record*, April 1958).

⁹⁰⁸ 1954-1956, arch. Krijgsman, Bakker, Maaskant.

⁹⁰⁹ Particularly Thalia (1953-1955, Hendriks, v/d Sluys, v/d Bosch) and 'Lumière' (1954-1955, A. Bodon, A. Krijgsman). Krijgsman had also (re)built Lumière at the Coolsingel (1939), which was destroyed shortly afterwards. In the vicinity of the new Lumière other cinemas appeared too: 'Scala' / 'Cinerama' (1957), 'Corso' (1959, Carel Wirtz, Thomas Nix), see the film *BOUW CORSO THEATER* (1959-1961, anon., and 1961 Fox Movietone).

⁹¹⁰ *THALIA IS HERREZEN* (1953, Joop Burcksen); *LUMIÈRE THEATER TE ROTTERDAM* (1955, Joop Burcksen).

⁹¹¹ In Rotterdam Bodon had already built the factory of Van Melle's Confectionery Works (1949-1950, i.c.w. L.A. Cijssouw), which also commissioned a housing complex (1948-1952). Afterwards, Bodon built the 'Chemische Fabriek Nederlandse Dow Mij.' (1955-1957), 'Kantoorgebouw Nieuwe Eerste Ned. Verz. Mij.' (1957-1958), 'Passagebureau KLM' (1959), 'Loods Diepenveen' (1960), 'ENCI Factory' (Rozenburg, 1963), 'Museum Boijmans-Van Beuningen' (1963-1972). In Amsterdam he also built the 'Joop Geesink Filmstudio' (1964-1966) – Claassen, 2001.

⁹¹² Dudok in: Magnée, 1954: 74. The design was made between 1941 and 1944; cf. Wagenaar, 1992: 231.

foreign architect⁹¹³. Dudok's 'Bijenkorf' had been an icon of the modern ambitions of Rotterdam before WWII, but it was exactly this iconic building that revealed the shortcomings of functionalism as a wholesale principle. Moreover, Breuer, who was almost a generation younger, was a much more straight forward proponent of the international modern movement.

The new iconic image that had to be created, and the high expectations that accompanied it, were amplified by the media. Polygoon (1956-wk04) reported on the construction of the Bijenkorf, while it referred to the former one. Together with the brand new Cineac newsreel theatre located in the building, it was said, De Bijenkorf was about to occupy a special place in the new Rotterdam. One year later Polygoon brought the opening of the department store under the heading: 'the city approaches its completion' (1957-wk13). The report shows Mayor Van Walsum pressing a button to put the escalators in motion, watched by Breuer and Elzas, so that he and his wife can move upstairs to look around. The report finishes with contextual shots of the reconstruction. Polygoon made these reports as a part of a production of a promotion film, which rhetorically answered the expectations by giving it the title ROTTERDAM HEEFT 'T ('Rotterdam has it', 1957), which was also made by Joop Burcksen. In twenty minutes it shows the opening of the building and impressions of the store with its smooth interiors and fashionable products. The new store was a closed concrete cube, detached from all city life and fully directed towards the interior and its visitor, which the film emphasised. In front of the Bijenkorf, at the Coolingsingel, and part of the plan, a sculpture was made by the Russian-American constructivist artist Naum Gabo (see: JOURNAAL, NTS, 1957-05-23). He and Breuer embodied the international connections of 'De 8 & Opbouw'. The same applies to the Russian-French artist Ossip Zadkine, who made the later iconic 'monument for a destroyed city' (see: Polygoon, 1953-21)⁹¹⁴. It was (anonymously) commissioned by the general director of De Bijenkorf, G. van der Wal, and it would be shown in every film about the reconstruction of Rotterdam afterwards⁹¹⁵.

Besides 'De Lijnbaan' and its surroundings, a number of priority projects were built. First of all, Maaskant and Van Tijen received the commission for the 'Groothandelsgebouw' (Trade Centre, 1947-1953)⁹¹⁶. It offered space to more than two hundred wholesale companies. The building is to be seen in many films on the reconstruction of Rotterdam, while Multifilm and Polygoon-Profilti made also films just about the building itself⁹¹⁷. They showed it from various perspectives, exterior and interior, and through panorama and tracking shots. Especially the film by Polygoon showed its functioning. It showed all kinds of businesses, from cosmetics to agrarian vehicles, from hairdressing to exhibitions of modern furniture design, and from money exchange to an art gallery. The film applies an associative montage, for example by showing a women's bracelet followed by a chain of a ship, or shots of shop selling toys followed by shots of a garage where a businessman watches a brand new Cadillac. While customers drink a beer or buy flowers, trucks load and unload, making use of a forwarding street that runs through the building. It is an integration of architecture and infrastructure, which enables a modern and

⁹¹³ Dudok still worked in those years; one of his last buildings was the 'Havengebouw Amsterdam', 1957-1965.

⁹¹⁴ The connection with architecture, in the case of Zadkine, is also illustrated by his collaborations with, for example, Hugh Maaskant, i.e. on the Tomado buildings in Etten-Leur (1954-1955) and Dordrecht (1959-1962).

⁹¹⁵ For the history of this sculpture, see: De Man, 2002: 200.

⁹¹⁶ The initiative for this building was taken during WWII, cf. Van Traa, 1947.

⁹¹⁷ I.e. OPENING GROOT HANDELSGEBOUW TE ROTTERDAM (1953, Multifilm, for: NTS television); HET GROOTHANDELSGEBOUW (1955, Joop Burcksen/Polygoon), cf. Polygoon 1953-wk11 and 1953-wk23. The Polygoon production starts with busy traffic in front of the building. Businessmen enter the main hall, and, as described by B&G, 'report to the reception desk, where an attractive young secretary shows them the ropes by way of a wall board with the names of the companies established in the building'. Burcksen told (interview FP, 2007-05-22) that there was actually a man at the reception desk, but Burcksen asked if a young lady could play that role for the film. One looked through the building and someone was called, against the will of the receptionist, who got upset and immediately resigned. Catalogue B&G, original quote: '[zakenman en twee andere bezoekers] vervoegen zich bij informatiebalie waar aantrekkelijke jonge receptioniste hen middels muurbord met namen van in het gebouw gevestigde zaken wegwijs maakt....', see also: Polygoon Neerlands Nieuws, 1953-11.

efficient way of doing business, the film says. As a concrete structure, but also as an icon of the reconstruction, the building contributed to the redevelopment of the urban economy.

The 'Groothandelsgebouw' was built next to another cinematic icon of the reconstruction: the central railway station (1950-1957)⁹¹⁸. Because of his long experience with railway accommodations, Van Ravesteyn received this commission. It marked his return to functionalism, not unlike that of Oud, who built the functionalist office building 'The Utrecht' (1954-1961)⁹¹⁹. On the other side of the station appeared the district post office ('Stationspostkantoor', 1954-1959). This functionalist landmark was designed by the brothers Evert and Herman Kraaijvanger; the latter had been a member of OPRO, and collaborated with Van der Leeuw and Van Traa on the 'Basisplan'. The post office accommodated the mechanisation of postal traffic, which was heralded as such by television, once again as a matter of Record, Rhetorics, and Rationalization⁹²⁰.

⁹¹⁸ For the opening, see: JOURNAAL, NTS, 1957-05-21 and 1957-12-31

⁹¹⁹ Van Ravesteyn would also design the new "Grand Theatre" (*Groote Schouwburg*, later: *Theatre Zuidplein*; 1952-1954), which followed a composition of cubes according to a functionalist scheme. This new theatre was built in Rotterdam South as part of a strategy by Kees van der Leeuw to distribute culture outside the city centre, which was already mentioned on his list of the twelve required representative public functions in Rotterdam.

⁹²⁰ For the three R's, see: Hediger & Vonderau, 2007: 22. For television programmes, see: JOURNAAL (NTS, 1959-09-22; 1969-09-25); FLITS (Leo Akkermans / AVRO, 1960-05-14), and especially the youth programme ZIENDEROGEN (Neuman & Noordam, NCRV: 1968-02-03), which deals specifically with this building and its operations. The aesthetics of the three R's are also shown by the (exterior) artwork of Louis van Roode, and various interior pieces (a.o. by Dolf Henkes, Wally Elenbaas, Kees Timmer, Henk de Vos, Gust Romijn) – Groenendijk, 2004 > 'Stationspostkantoor'.