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Cinematic Rotterdam: the times and tides of a modern city

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PART III.

THE CINEMATIC PROLIFERATION OF A CITY ROTTERDAM IN THE 1960s & 1970s

PROLOGUE TO PART III

modernism moreover, final destination

The rise of television in the 1950s caused a process of ‘cinematic bifurcation’: the splitting of cinema as a system, and the resulting proliferation of audiovisual productions¹¹³³. This happened in terms of formats, numbers and kinds of productions, which corresponds to an observation by Niklas Luhmann regarding the arts and media in general.

In the evolution of artistic genres, the development of types bifurcates in the wake of the differentiation of perceptual media for seeing and hearing and along with the differentiation of space and time. Any further development becomes a matter of additional bifurcations (text-art, painting, sculpture) or of combining seeing and hearing (film, theater). Under these frame conditions, a differentiation of genres occurs, which is culturally and historically important but unstable (Luhmann, 2000 [1995]: 231).

Television offered a range of programmes that had developed from cinema newsreels and documentaries¹¹³⁴. Due to the relatively low production costs of television, it allowed for approaches different from those of cinema, including critical reflections.

Until the 1970s, feature films were mostly left to cinema, since they required large investments and much production time, which television could not yet afford. Private commissions for promotional films were left to cinema too. Most film production companies, however, worked in both fields simultaneously¹¹³⁵.

Along with cinematic bifurcation, large numbers of (television) documentaries, newsreels, promotion films and some features appeared, as ‘extensions’ of public events and city life, or they communicated the ‘intentions’ of social-cultural, commercial and political bodies. As such I will consider both cinema and television and take their particularities and connections into account. However, as Luhmann remarks, the differentiation of genres is generally unstable, unlike the urban identity and the motivations to make films, which are subject to ‘path dependency’¹¹³⁶. The increasing complexity of the media landscape caused nevertheless a change.

Due to the bifurcation of cinema, the mediated perception of the city became more personalised. It can be illustrated by the flourishing practice of amateur film production¹¹³⁷. The *Rotterdamse Smalfilm Liga* was particularly successful¹¹³⁸. Its films, such as the personal documentary short ROTTERDAM, MY HOME PORT (1965, J. Harmsma), won many prizes within

¹¹³³ Based on the notion of bifurcation from complexity theory, see: CALResCo, 2008: §6.5.

¹¹³⁴ Besides news programmes, one can mention many kinds of television ‘magazines’ and genres here. In respect of productions that have also featured Rotterdam, one can consider youth programmes such as VERREKIJKER (NTS, 1960s) and TOEKOMSTMUZIEK (1963, Jan Schaper / NCRV); consumer information programmes such as KONING KLANT and OMBUDSMAN (i.e. Frits Bom, see: VARA), sports programmes, such as SPORT IN BEELD (NTS) etcetera. Occasionally, due to low production costs, television also allowed for productions that had previously been the realm of avant-garde cinema, such as the short ‘city symphony’ RITME (“Rhythm”, 1960, Ruud Keers/NCRV), which combines images of the construction works with images of the port.

¹¹³⁵ Till the end of the 1970s, television programmes were still often shot on film, and although it was 16mm rather than 35mm, the same techniques and infrastructure were used (many promotion films were shot on 16mm too).

¹¹³⁶ The (economic) theory of ‘path dependency’ became paradigmatic in the 1980s by the work of the economists Paul David and Brian Arthur (a.o.), to explain issues of ‘lock-in’. Ever since, it has had an important influence on (economic) geography too, where it has often been seen as a positive force (e.g. for the process of industrial clustering), cf: Scott, 2000 & 2005, Conti, 2005: 25; Britton, 2007.

¹¹³⁷ Besides film clubs there have also been youth houses (e.g. Arend en de Zeemeeuw; De Jeugdhaven, i.e. Bouke Ottow; De Brandaris, i.e. J.M. van Riet), various social-cultural organisations (e.g. Ons Rotterdam, i.e. Wessel Vermeulen; Stella Maris, i.e. W.B. Waardenburg), or enterprises with employees that made film recordings (e.g. the Blijdorp Zoo, i.e. H. Rueb; GEB, i.e. J. Lucas, see the film: GEB HULPCENTRALE, 1970) – for examples of titles, see: filmography and furthermore the collection of GAR.

¹¹³⁸ Smits (2002: 46) mentions all kinds of film groups emerging within the RSL, and also outside it.

the nationally and internationally well-organised amateur film circuit¹¹³⁹. In the late 1970s, the RSL also organised public screenings of its films, at the so-called ‘Film-In’ (Hofplein theatre)¹¹⁴⁰. Moreover, many citizens started to make private 8mm recordings: ‘retentions’ of happenings in public space, of everyday situations and domestic life, and often in combination¹¹⁴¹. Such films can be seen as a way to ‘appropriate’ the city; they appear as cinematic markers of that environment, in which one acts and communicates, and helps to develop. What these recordings show, above all, is that the city is not perceived or used as a homogeneous place; instead of a limited number of commonly known sites, they show a range of individual references, in and outside the city.

All these audiovisual productions together presented the new city in as many ways, different from the previous period. Until the early 1960s, films on the reconstruction of Rotterdam highlighted its premises and achievements. They put cognitive accents in the urban fabric and created focus points, such as the saved town hall, the reconstructed St. Laurens church, the banks that were early milestones of the reconstruction, and projects such as the ‘Central Station’, the ‘Lijnbaan’ and the ‘Groothandelsgebouw’. In the next decades, however, such buildings were no longer principal references in the daily lives of most citizens. Various services of the town hall became decentralised; while the St. Laurens Church was reconstructed, other churches were demolished, like the once praised ‘Koninginnekerk’ (1904-1907, B. Hooykaas, M. Brinkman), which had a direct impact on the skyline and soundscape of Rotterdam¹¹⁴²; banks in the city lost their primacy as they were incorporated by larger banking chains; the railway station had to fight the emerging hegemony of the car, and although the ‘Lijnbaan’ and the ‘Groothandelsgebouw’ remained important, various other commercial centres were built.

The ‘Groothandelsgebouw’ (1945-1952, Maaskant & Van Tijen), however, is a particular case. While this trade centre became an icon of the city’s progress, the building had various faces and functions, and it was open to different kinds of users. As such it set a trend. Maaskant explored this as well with ‘Technikon’ (1955-1970), a complex with eight technical schools, gyms, a theatre, and a swimming bath, among other. A fine, but relatively unknown example of a

¹¹³⁹ This film won the first prize of the Dutch NOVA-festival and the golden medal at the festival of the *Union Internationale du Cinéma* (UNICA, 1966) – www.rvsl.nl/de_staats_van_dienst.htm (2007-08-17), i.e. Rotterdamse Video and Smalfilm Liga (overview of titles), see also this website for other titles of films within all kinds of genres.

¹¹⁴⁰ Smits, 2002: 58.

¹¹⁴¹ Exemplary are the films by Jan Soek, who made, next to family recordings, ‘city walks’, such as *IMPRESSIES VAN ROTTERDAM* (1955-1979, Soek), with images as different as the demolition of houses on the Noordplein, the river Rotte, the construction of the Shell building, as well as a protest demonstration at the Schouwburgplein against nuclear weapons. He also filmed strictly personal references, including shops and people, see e.g. *WANDELING DOOR ROTTERDAM* (1978-1982). Soek also made his own ‘city news’ (*CAPITOL STADSNIUWS*). It included all kinds of subjects, among them many constructions works and events in the city. Among the projects that he meticulously ‘appropriated’ was the reconstruction of the St. Laurens church (1952-1968). Soek asked filmmaker Ron Corbet to edit the material into the film *RECONSTRUCTIE LAURENSKERK*, for public screening, most likely at Soek’s café-restaurant Capitol (Nieuwe Binnenweg 345) – ref.: ‘Caféhouder maakt Laurenskerk-film’, p9 in: *De Tijd/De Maasbode*, 1970-04-30. Another example is the collection of 8mm recordings made by J.A. Visser, including *ROTTERDAM IN DE ZEVENTIGER JAREN* (1968-1975, J.A. Visser); it starts with domestic activities, while it also includes, for example, the opening of ‘Scholencomplex Technikon’ (1970) by Queen Juliana and Mayor Thomassen. Many other examples of such recordings can be found in the film collection of the GAR, see e.g. Lensink-Bosman, B. Broersen, J.C. de Geus, Heynsius, J.W. van Loon, J. Nauta, M.G. v/d Rovaart, W. Vermeulen, J. Verseveld e.a.

¹¹⁴² The Koninginnekerk was demolished in 1972. Some other examples of churches that were demolished are ‘H. Ignatius’ (1892, arch. P. Cuypers, demolished 1968); ‘St. Franciscuskerk’ (1912-1913, arch. J. Magry, demolished 1975), see the amateur film: *SLUITING VAN DE KERK* (1975, P. v./d. Bosch); ‘H. Theresiakerk’ (1928, arch. P. Buskens – dem. 1972), St. Josephkerk (1881/1928-dem. 1974) – this church was closed in 1969 and used again for various other activities in the next years, which could not prevent, however, its eventual demolition (see: Polygoon, 1969-wk35). For a number of churches that were demolished, see: Wagenaar, 1995-1996: 330, 332; Van de Laar, 2000: 578. All of this was a very quick change within about ten years, if one considers just the fact that still shortly before various new churches had been built, which were also heralded by television, e.g. *HET HUIS VOOR GOD EN ONS* (1960, Manus van de Kamp, KRO); *MORGEN IS HET ZONDAG* (NCRV, 1962-11-03); *PAROCHIE IN EEN GROTE STAD* (KRO, 1966-09-06); *KERKBOUW* (NCRV, 1969-09-29) a.o.

multifunctional building that applied such ideas as well, albeit at a much smaller scale, is the 'Ecumenical Centre' (1961-1968, Rietveld, Van Dillen, Van Tricht). In its religious approach the centre unites different views, and so does its spatial design. It houses a multitude of functions, including a meeting hall, a sports hall, a library, lodgings, and workrooms, in a cubic volume¹¹⁴³. One can wonder why this building, a late work by Gerrit Rietveld, was not shown by films, not even by a NCRV television report on an international ecumenical youth congress that took place in Rotterdam at the time of its construction¹¹⁴⁴. The fact that the congress was reported, however, seems most important here. Architecture and media complemented one another. Although there were still films on the production of major buildings, the programmatic side of the built environment, and its actual use, received more attention.

A parallel can be observed between the emerging complexity of perspectives upon the urban environment and a growing spatial complexity. Built structures became larger, while the industrialisation of construction methods took command¹¹⁴⁵. New suburbs appeared, such as 'Alexanderpolder' (1952-1967, Beese, Bakema e.a.)¹¹⁴⁶. One of its main sectors was the quarter 'Ommoord' (1962-1977, Beese), which became emblematic as a modernist project, for its scale and height, up to fifteen floors¹¹⁴⁷. Besides suburbs, infrastructure was created too: a metro, a ring road (*De Ruit*), an airport, the Europoort, and container terminals, which have all been the subject of numerous newsreels and promotional films.

Service accommodations were built, like offices, banks, and hotels, such as the 'Rijnhotel' (1949-1959, Merkelbach & Elling¹¹⁴⁸), to be seen in the promotion film ROTTERDAM (1962, Eimert Kruidhof), and the 'Hilton Hotel' (1956-1964, H. Maaskant, F.W. de Vlaming), which mainly served business interests. It was also an architectural statement, for its interior design and its abstract composition that corresponded to the 'International Style'. The identity of Rotterdam relied upon an image of efficiency and rationality, and linked up to that of 'a city of labour'. This, however, was as much a matter of culture as it was an economic concern. Culture was not the 'icing on the cake', it was the cake. Along with its architecture, and in congruence with the city's social-economic institutions, the new city became also a showroom of modern art, with famous sculptures by Ossip Zadkine, Naum Gabo, Wessel Couzijn, Henry Moore and many others, which were, in turn, highlighted by television¹¹⁴⁹. In Rotterdam in the 1960s, the arts in general became increasingly the subject of television programmes¹¹⁵⁰. Next to that, various institutions for the arts were established that also expressed the modern values of Rotterdam, as an integral part of its development strategies.

¹¹⁴³ Cf. 'Ammanstichting' (1959-1962, H.V. Gerretsen), i.e. a combination of housing and education for deaf children.

¹¹⁴⁴ At 'De Doelen': ONDERWEG (NCRV, 1967-03-04), a report made by Jan Schaper and Christine van Roon.

¹¹⁴⁵ Nycolaas, 1983: 201. Pre-fabricated building largely contributed to the record of 6,000 new houses built in Rotterdam in 1962, and another 6,000 or so in the rest of the agglomeration.

¹¹⁴⁶ This major project, which was initially called 'Alexanderstad', is shown in e.g. BOUW PRINS ALEXANDERPOLDER (1967, Henk Vrijmoet), cf. ALEXANDERPOLDER (1962, Jan Soek).

¹¹⁴⁷ See also: OMMOORD (1972, Tonko Tomei).

¹¹⁴⁸ The initiator of the project, the youth organisation AMVJ (YMCA), began with it around 1949 and Piet Elling got soon involved with the development of the building, which was completed in 1957-1959, see: De Wagt, 2008: 372.

¹¹⁴⁹ I.e. OPENBAAR KUNSTBEZIT (NTS, 1964-11-02), see also, e.g. OPENBAAR KUNSTBEZIT (on Zadkine, NTS, 1968-06-19 and 1970-01-25), a.o. The art works mentioned here were all the results of commissions by private corporations: De Bijenkorf (Ossip Zadkine, Naum Gabo), Unilever (Wessel Couzijn), Vereniging Nederlandse Baksteenindustrie (Henry Moore), see: Van Adrichem e.a., 2002.

¹¹⁵⁰ For literature, see e.g.: SIGNALEMENT: ANNA BLAMAN (VARA, 1963-10-06); LITERAIRE ONTMOETINGEN; ALFRED KOSSMANN (AVRO, 1967-10-18); VERNISSAGE (VPRO, 1962-04-19, Cornelis Bastiaan Vaandrager opens painting exhibition by Niels Hamel); for the graphic arts (including a retrospective empowering of Rotterdam): SIGNALEMENT; WILLEM DE KOONING (VARA, 1968-09-15); SIGNALEMENT: DICK ELFFERS (VARA, 1973-11-04); HET MUSEUM VAN DE STRAAT (AVRO, 1966-09-06 on poster exhibition at 'De Nieuwe Doelen' and RKS) – many other examples could be given, also in respect of the performance arts. About 'Nieuw Rotterdams Toneel': OPEN OOG (NTS, 1968-08-30); NAMEN DIE JE NOOI VERGEET; KOOS SPEENHOFF [popular singer] (Fred Rombouts / KRO 1968-01-05); EEN MENS LEEFT NIET BIJ BROOD ALLEEN (Milo Anstadt / VARA, 1961-04-30), among others.

During the war, Museum Boymans was already predestined to grow. Its new wing, designed by Alexander Bodon (1963-1972), became an abstract, rectangular construction of glass and grey bricks¹¹⁵¹. It contrasted to the main building that was built in the style of Scandinavian traditionalism (1928-1935, A. van der Steur)¹¹⁵². It was a ‘vengeance’ of the modernists, after forty years¹¹⁵³. Next to that a plan was made for ‘De Doelen’, by the Kraaijvanger brothers. It took more than a decade before this concert hall would be finished, in 1966. It became a milestone of the new city, to which the media contributed significantly¹¹⁵⁴. Even before its official opening on *Opbouwdag* (1966-05-18¹¹⁵⁵), Polygoon reported: ‘Rotterdam has reached its *goals*’ (i.e. *doelen*), to say that with this building marked the reconstruction was completed.

New educational facilities were also planned by Van Traa, like the polytechnical school ‘Technikon’ (1955-1970, Maaskant e.a.), and the ‘Erasmus Universiteit’ (1963-1970, Elffers e.a.), which was already foreseen by the Club Rotterdam during WWII. The university building would become another instance of the International Style, a ‘non-place’ that embodied the ‘generic city’ or *Tatville*¹¹⁵⁶. The building could be anything and anywhere, which is exemplified by Paul Verhoeven’s feature *TURKISH DELIGHT* (1973) that presents it as a hospital¹¹⁵⁷. The complex got highly criticised¹¹⁵⁸. That also counts for the ‘Medical Faculty’ (1965-1968, OD 205), which was located on the other side of the city, next to the Dijkzigt hospital. With its 114 metres of height, and its ‘space age’ aesthetics, it became another landmark¹¹⁵⁹. It included elevated public spaces and through a large car park, it integrated architecture and infrastructure. This too was critically observed¹¹⁶⁰. However, the city planner B. Fokkinga, who succeeded Van Traa in 1964, went on where the latter stopped.

Illustrative is the case of the plan for a central square in the south of Rotterdam. Van Traa had already drawn a plan that included the high-modernist ‘Industriegebouw Zuidplein’ (1954-1961, H. Maaskant). A new commercial centre next to it became a matter of ‘amplification’. It was designed by Herman Bakker (1967-1972), who had largely contributed to the reconstruction of the city centre, while he had also built the commercial centres of the satellite towns Hoogvliet and Groot-IJsselmonde. The brutalist megastructure of ‘Zuidplein’ combines a shopping mall with offices, housing and infrastructure: a metro station and a regional bus terminal. It channelled the flows of the consumer society, but it was constructed at a moment of growing critique on such projects, which Fokkinga replied by a film that showed how it came into being (*ZUIDPLEIN*, 1972,

¹¹⁵¹ Also the interior showed a different plan. Instead of small rooms, the new wing had large exhibition spaces, which could easily be rearranged for different shows.

¹¹⁵² Cf. Groenendijk & Vollaard, 1998: 268.

¹¹⁵³ The most ambitious plan to accommodate the arts was the idea of a ‘cultural beehive’, to be located at the Hofplein, for which the Rockefeller centre in New York served as an example. It was already conceived by Witteveen before the war, but it was too expensive (Van de Laar, 2000: 50).

¹¹⁵⁴ E.g. in *GALERIJ* (KRO, 1965-10-25) the last phase of its construction was shown. See also next footnotes.

¹¹⁵⁵ On that occasion an underground car park next to ‘De Doelen’ and below the ‘Schouwburgplein’ was opened too (cf. *TELEVIZIER*, AVRO, 1966-05-13). The *NTS JOURNAAL* showed Mayor Thomassen arriving there with his old Ford *JOURNAAL* (NTS, 1966-05-18). It then briefly showed exterior and interior shots of ‘De Doelen’. Polygoon showed it in further detail, and addressed the fact that it had the largest concert hall of Europe: *SCHOUWBURG ‘DE DOELEN’*, Polygoon, rec. 1966-05-18. In a similar way the *NTS (MONITOR)*, 1966-11-13) showed the building on the occasion of a performance by Dave Brubeck. Many reports like this would follow.

¹¹⁵⁶ Resp. Augé, 1992; (Koolhaas, 1995), Tati after the set of his film *PLAYTIME* (1967).

¹¹⁵⁷ In the film it is the ‘Vesalius Ziekenhuis’, cf. [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turks_Fruit_\(film\)#Trivia](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turks_Fruit_(film)#Trivia) (2007-05-11).

¹¹⁵⁸ Cf. Groenendijk & Vollaard, 1998: 293.

¹¹⁵⁹ Other large hospitals would be built: ‘St. Clara Ziekenhuis’ (1963-1968, arch.: H.A.D. Campman), see: *ST. CLARA ZIEKENHUIS ROTTERDAM-ZUID* (RKK, 1968-12-01) and the ‘St. Franciscusgasthuis’ (1970-1975, arch. H.A.D. Campman e.a.); the move from the old ‘St. Franciscusgasthuis’ in the city to the new one in the outskirts has been documented by way of the film *ADIEU OUDE GASTHUIS* (1975), made by cardiologist and filmmaker Ton Hooghoudt.

¹¹⁶⁰ Still under construction, it is shown from a critical point of view in *STAD ZONDER HART* (1966, Jan Schaper) and later also in ‘*T IS GEWOON NIET MOOI MEER*’ (1976, Hans de Ridder & Dick Rijneke).

Aad Griekspoor)¹¹⁶¹. While working on 'Zuidplein', Bakker also drew the masterplan for the C'70. This event turned the cool business district into a public attraction. Based on a small-scale approach, of pavilions, art projects and decorations, it marked the beginning of a period of differentiation and involution, which also affected Bakker's later work¹¹⁶².

Another example is of a more radical character. Fokkinga, together with the social-democratic Mayor Thomassen (PvdA) and port director Posthuma, developed the idea for a World Trade Centre, in the form of a skyscraper at the Leuvehaven¹¹⁶³. It was the site where Van Traa had spoken of the 'window on the river', a perspectival view from the city centre that maintained the contact with the port. The port, however, had gradually moved out of the city. The American office Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM) presented a design for the building in 1968. It raised much resistance, and finally it was not made. Instead, SOM received a commission to build the 'Europoint' office towers (1971-1975), outside the city centre, in Rotterdam-West¹¹⁶⁴. This was officially a project of the private Overbeek, which had previously constructed a steel-and-glass office tower, through an innovative construction by Aronsohn Engineers¹¹⁶⁵.

With twenty-two floors each (92 metres), the Europoint towers not only resembled the originally planned WTC, they were actually a triple copy of the '500 North Michigan' in Chicago (1968, SOM)¹¹⁶⁶. This went beyond the parody of *Tatville*. The Europoint was highly criticised, and it was subsequently kept outside the publicity. Moreover, it was completed after the new Labour government had come into power, which dismissed such projects altogether. It exemplifies a media strategy that is characterised by the *absence* of media. There is only an amateur film (a 'retention'), made by an insider¹¹⁶⁷. The film shows that municipal officials, rather than politicians, still kept an interest, and that Mayor Thomassen actually did the kick-off. The film shows him also at the following reception and 'old boys' dinner. At last, when the market for offices collapsed in the mid 1970s, the municipality bought it for 131 million guilders. Employees protested, handing in a petition to the Mayor, which was (finally) reported by the *JOURNAAL* (NOS, 1976-04-29). The building became nonetheless the address of the departments of City Planning & Housing as well as Public Works, and of the Port Authorities later on¹¹⁶⁸.

The Europoint was the last bang of modernism. This Super Nova amplified its abstract imagination, based on rational *ideals*. However, in Rotterdam the modernist ideals were mostly framed as 'the real'. Similarly, in the 1960s the 'social ideal' was framed as the 'social real', by documentaries and informative films. It would be challenged though by a few daring films that

¹¹⁶¹ The film includes a fragment of the opening festivities: a public talk between television presenter Mies Bouwman and mayor Thomassen, who speaks of 'Zuidplein' in terms of 'attracting and radiating'. That also applies to this swinging construction film, with rhythmic sequences of machines and workers, of plaiting steel-wire and building concrete columns. At the end, aerial views are contrasted to interior shots of the mall. This film had its premiere at the *Hofplein Theater* within the Technikon building, which was attended by a large number of policy makers, planners and engineers. 'Zuidpleinfilm in première', p8 in: *NRC Handelsblad*, 1973-02-01; the premiere took place on the 31st of January. It was shown together with *EROP OF ERONDER* (1971, Joop Burcksen & Ruud Herblot).

¹¹⁶² Among them housing and office complexes, e.g. offices for Nedlloyd (1974-1978). Groenendijk, 2004: Architectuur > personen > Herman Bakker.

¹¹⁶³ See, for example, 'Plan Trade Center', pp22-23 in the magazine *Rotterdam*, vol. 6/1, 1968, Gemeentelijk Bureau Voorlichting en Publiciteit, Rotterdam; see also vol. 6/4 (1968), which is especially dedicated to the planned WTC.

¹¹⁶⁴ However, attempts had been made to change the plan of the WTC, for which a new architecture studio was contracted: Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker & Bor (UK), which was developed next to the former plan that was executed in Rotterdam-West. The initiator of the latter was 'Overbeek & Co', which collaborated with an English developer. For the new plan and the Europoint project, see respectively p18-19 and p22 in: *Rotterdam, officieel tijdschrift van de gemeente Rotterdam*, vol. 9/4, 1971. See also: '100 jaar architectuur in Rotterdam, 1975: Europoint'; www.xs4all.nl/~couvereur/ned/rdam/architectuur/100jaar/1975.htm (2006-05-03).

¹¹⁶⁵ The *Overbeekhuis* (1964-1965, arch. Verbruggen & Goldschmidt), was an office tower built around a monolithic core, with the first two floors left open. It was built top down by a downwards sliding floor; Szénássy, 1969: 139.

¹¹⁶⁶ Emporis Buildings, '500 North Michigan'; www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=117348 (2006-05-03). The only difference is that this counted 24 floors and 97 metres of height.

¹¹⁶⁷ i.e. *BOUW VAN EUROPOINT, 1971-1973*, anon.

¹¹⁶⁸ i.e. *Stedenbouw en Volkshuisvesting, Gemeentewerken*. In the 1980s the *Havenbedrijf* would be located here too.

balanced on the edge of fact and fiction. A major example is Ivens's EUROPOORT – ROTTERDAM (1966), produced by the *Nederlandse Filmproductie Maatschappij* that also produced fiction films – to break through the imagined 'social real'¹¹⁶⁹. Another example is the documentary STAD ZONDER HART (1966, Jan Schaper), which triggered a strong discussion. These films paved the way for the 'social critique' as the 'social ubiquitous' of the 1970s.

While the forces of modernisation got amplified, various architects already developed new visions, but it took time to actualise their ideas. Many concepts from the 1950s were only carried out in the next decades. In the meantime, new developments had started. An urban environment and how it is used, is hence a combination of ideas of different eras (cf. Choay, 1976). Opposing forces coexisted and intertwined, which were highlighted by audiovisual media.

The transition of the 1960s to the 1970s was a 'phase change' in urbanism. 'In effect, Modernism *magnified* the processes and problems of evolution', argues Stephen Marshall (2009: 290). Modernism 'was a case of big trial and big error', and although trial and error is inherent in evolution, its scale and pace 'made any errors very tangible'. While it also brought well-adapted innovations, it became problematic 'where ripping up the older functional order of the traditional urban fabric' that resulted in 'discord and dysfunctionality'.

Rotterdam was no longer a model city, but one that was lived by real people. They broke into the model and demanded modifications, by strikes in the rapidly automatizing port, and by protests in the old quarters. They also showed their preferences by leaving the city. Within only ten years, the number of citizens dropped from 731,000 in 1965 to 616,000 in 1975¹¹⁷⁰. The actual numbers that left the city were even much higher, about *one third* of the total population; immigrants came in their stead. City planner Fokkinga needed to think small, and to think of people first. As a result he proposed the 'finger city' (*vingerstad*), like a hand with green zones between the suburbs to offer citizens fast access to greenery¹¹⁷¹. The idea of the 'finger city', however, was soon replaced again, in favour of the 'compact city'¹¹⁷². Most important became the redevelopment of the old quarters (*Beleidsnota 1973*). Plans were made for urban renewal, together with residents, which also implied different kinds of media practices.

Audiovisual media, next to print media, remained important all along to monitor and channel these developments. This has been related to the appearance of new media practices, and the institutions to support them. I will link this to what Allen J. Scott has called the 'geometry' of cultural production, which encompasses five main 'technological-organizational elements' (2000: 12). The first one is *human involvement*, which is especially relevant in the case of labour intensive technologies like media (as well as architecture). Secondly, labour is organised through *a dense network* of (small) establishments. It is characterised, thirdly, by *a variety of skills*, and rapidly changing work relations, which reduces risks. Agglomeration also gives rise to *multiple stimuli* at points of interaction, which triggers creativity. Finally, agglomeration establishes *institutional infrastructures* that provide overhead services. Although Scott has distinguished these elements in the case of major cultural industries, they might have been at work in Rotterdam too, since the city became gradually, next to *Tatort*, also *Standort*, where films are produced, which is Scott's concern. It implies shorter links, in terms of feedback, between the environment and media dealing with it, which links up with classic cybernetic views (e.g. Bateson, 1972). This, however, should not withhold one from considering networks that extend beyond the city, on the contrary¹¹⁷³. It seems actually productive to link external conditions with events in the city, which I will do in the next chapter.

¹¹⁶⁹ Illustrative is the premiere of the film ROTTERDAM (1962, Eimert Kruidhof), itself a promotion film based on a fictive story, which was shown together with NFM's feature fiction film RIFIFI IN AMSTERDAM (1962, John Korporaal), at Lumière, 1962-10-03 (ref. *Rotterdams Jaarboekje*, 1963, p48).

¹¹⁷⁰ Van de Laar, 2000: 524.

¹¹⁷¹ I.e. *Structuurnota 1972*. It resembled Witteveen's plan with park ways and green belts (Van de Laar, 2000: 546).

¹¹⁷² I.e. *compacte stad* in the *Beleidsnota 1975*, see: Van de Laar, 2000: 547; cf. Rooijendijk, 2005: 155-156.

¹¹⁷³ cf. Riles, 2000: 62/184, elaborating on Bateson.