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### Cinematic Rotterdam: the times and tides of a modern city

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## CHAPTER 12. THE STRUCTURE OF MOTION

### § 1. film and mobility

Film scholars have often related cinema to the experience of modernity. Following Walter Benjamin (1936), many have considered cinema as a mode of perception that corresponds to the mobility of locomotives, metropolitan traffic flows, and the assembly line, as phenomena that called for new cognitive frames. The development of film montage, and cinematic time, as well as cinematic features such as the close-up or (non-diegetic) sound effects, have been analysed in such a perspective, for the assumed interrelationship with the acceleration of modern life, a simultaneity of events, and urban fragmentation. David Bordwell (1997: 140-147) has called it the ‘modernity thesis’, in order to criticise it. According to him, it brings difficulties to explain both the rise of certain stylistic conventions and alternative stylistic options that were explored at the same time. Instead he argues for a more refined historical account<sup>1330</sup>. ‘How did very sweeping economic and social changes create different ways of seeing among various groups?’

The 1960s, like the 1890s or the 1920s, witnessed ‘very sweeping economic changes’, which were interdependent with increasing mobility. For the 1960s, the car was the revolutionary vehicle. In 1950, one out of sixty-eight (1:68) people in Rotterdam had a car, which became one out of eight (1:8) by 1966<sup>1331</sup>. Perceptual correspondences between automobility and screen media have been addressed by various scholars, mostly affirming the modernity thesis<sup>1332</sup>. To some extent, film and television have been models for the urban experience, as well as city programming, in terms of sequencing and montage. My concern, however, is to move beyond a generic conception of media screens and their aesthetics. Instead, I will consider certain particularities of media productions, and compare different audiovisual practices, to understand the dynamics between film and television, and how they relate to the environment.

In the 1960s, television heralded infrastructural projects as indicators of progress. The ‘developing compositions’ on television showed the gradual process of building infrastructure. Serial reports created ‘suspense’. It engaged the audience with the development of the projects, which turned them into public achievements. Eventually this enabled a critical discussion, which also affected cinema, especially in the production of promotion films. This brings different purposes and groups of people to the fore. It can be exemplified, first of all, through educational films.

The rapid increase of automobility affected the nature of public space, which brought new possibilities, but also threats. Therefore, already in 1932, the “Dutch Association for Traffic

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<sup>1330</sup> Bordwell, 1997: 145: ‘If people can slip out of synchronization with the new mode of seeing or slide back to earlier modes, the history-of-vision account loses a good deal of its explanatory power. // Some vision-in-modernity theorists may nonetheless argue for plural and uneven development. But to accept this view we would need a more refined historical account than we have yet seen. How did very sweeping economic and social changes create different ways of seeing among various groups?’

<sup>1331</sup> Van de Laar, 2000: 523.

<sup>1332</sup> E.g. Friedberg (2002: 183-185) considers the film, television and computer screen as virtual windows that are component pieces of architecture, ‘which dramatically change the materialities (and – perhaps more radically – the temporalities) of built space.’ In this light she also frames the relationship between the spectatorial experience of cinema and travelling by car, through a case-study of Los Angeles (with references to experiments by the situationists in the 1960s, as well as ideas of Paul Virilio and Jean Baudrillard from the 1980s). ‘The post-war screens of Los Angeles – both the drive-in and the Cinerama Dome’, Friedberg argues (p200-2001), ‘negotiated the *materiality* and *mobility* of the driver – the need to *park* the vehicle – in order to reach the *immateriality* and *stasis* of the spectatorial experience’. They have had reciprocal effects, with the panoramic view being a common issue. That is also the case in the work of Verhoeff (2007: 3-4), who is similarly concerned with questions about the relationship between materiality and virtuality. She elaborates on studies by Kevin Lynch (1960s) concerning mobile perception of space and its implications for design, as well as studies on the car as a ‘mobile studio’. Verhoeff (p4) links them to ‘media archaeological studies about the development, theories and practices of screen media’, since ‘they both approach mobility as a perceptual and media shaped experience’ (with a reference to Wolfgang Schivelbush (1986) concerning the impact of train travel on the experience of time and space).

Safety” (VVN) was established<sup>1333</sup>. It became especially active after WWII, and its activities were accompanied by various films to explain traffic rules to children. Through the moving image particular situations could be simulated and explained. In 1961, the VVN asked the newly established company Mundofilm from Hilversum to make the film SLECHTS EEN PAAR REGELS (“Only a few rules”, 1961, Joop Burcksen & Ruud Herblot). The film was a humorous, fictional adventure of a medieval knight, played by the well-known performer Bueno de Mesquita, who had suddenly landed in modern Rotterdam<sup>1334</sup>. He did not understand the traffic rules, and fought against these beasts on wheels. The knight slammed cars in the streets – which was actually shot at a car dump. The filmmakers even got the Maastunnel at their disposal, where the traffic had to stop. In the film the knight forced the cars to move backwards – filmed in reverse with De Mesquito walking backwards<sup>1335</sup>. In a hilarious way, the motion of traffic highlights the art of motion pictures: its capacity to reverse time and movement, which in turn, through its unlikeliness, shows children the actual nature of traffic flows.

Mundofilm made many other productions for VVN afterwards, among them TV spots<sup>1336</sup>. Most of them were shot in Rotterdam too. Burcksen:

In Rotterdam we could often begin the next day, while in Amsterdam it took weeks. In Rotterdam we managed to do everything we wanted. When we asked for an extra zebra crossing, it was no problem, and the police, from the office Haagse Veer, was always willing to collaborate. On our request they did all kinds of little stunts, like sliding with a car on a square with cobbles, near the Veerhaven. Residents there got scared, since they did not see us, standing on the roofs with our cameras.<sup>1337</sup>

It is no coincidence that such recordings took place in Rotterdam. Besides the fact that Burcksen came from Rotterdam, the city paid special attention to the development of traffic. In Rotterdam there has always been a strong interest in mobility and traffic, whether in a positive or negative way. This has, similarly, been reflected by the media, for example by television programmes on car races that were held in the city, and reports on measures to regulate traffic<sup>1338</sup>.

Notwithstanding the measures taken to regulate traffic flows, and the infrastructural achievements of the 1960s, all kinds of traffic accidents occurred. However, it was only by the 1970s that it was regularly reported on television, after the frequency of newsreels increased, so that time became available for more ordinary subjects, which was news with a limited ‘use-by date’. Next to that (and probably related to it), a change of attitude towards automobility occurred, and criticism on the use of cars became stronger. Car accidents and related problems became a recurrent subject over the course of the 1970s; there were reports on multiple collisions, subsided tank trucks, flooded roads and tunnels, and attempts to solve traffic jams in the city centre. On the other hand, problems with trains were reported too, such as derailments or

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<sup>1333</sup> = *Verbond voor Veilig Verkeer*, later *Veilig Verkeer Nederland* (VVN).

<sup>1334</sup> See also a review in: *Telegraaf* 1961-09-27, by Henk ten Berge.

<sup>1335</sup> Information by Joop Burcksen from an interview by the author (FP), 2007-05-22.

<sup>1336</sup> These spots have been brought together into one film: *VERKEER OP TELEVISIE* (1965); Mundofilm would make films for VVN for about 25 years, e.g. *BOTSENDE MENINGEN* (1975).

<sup>1337</sup> Information by Joop Burcksen from an interview by the author (FP), 2007-05-22. Concerning the comparison with Amsterdam, a similar remark was made by Peter Alsemgeest (in: *Post* e.a., 1976: 2). Original quote Burcksen: ‘In Rotterdam konden we vaak de volgende dag al aan de slag gaan, terwijl dat in Amsterdam weken duurde. We kregen in Rotterdam alles gedaan. Toen we een keer vroegen of er ergens een extra zebrapad geschilderd kon worden was dat geen probleem. Bovendien kregen we altijd de medewerking van de politie, vanuit het kantoor Haagse Veer. De politie deed op verzoek allerlei stuntjes, zoals slippen op een pleintje met keien, bij de Veerhaven. Omstanders schrokken zich rot, want men zag niet dat er gefilmd werd. Wij stonden met onze camera’s boven op een dak.’

<sup>1338</sup> See for example reports on the ‘Tulpenrally’, e.g. *JOURNAAL* (NTS, 1969-04-28); *TULPENRALLY* (Veronica, 1977-06-01), and respectively, a report on traffic thresholds in Charlois, *HIER EN NU* (NCRV, 1973-05-02), next to video production that addressed traffic problems (e.g. *VERKEER WALRAVENBUURT*, 1977, Bob Visser).

obstructions<sup>1339</sup>. In this way the NOS JOURNAAL provided feedback on an important issue – traffic – for city planning, and an important feature of modernity in general. Rather than providing just positive feedback, of showing improvements, as it used to be done in the 1960s (like Polygoon), it began to show things that went wrong, so that measures could be taken.

Motion structured Rotterdam, and film and television helped to channel it. I will elaborate on this dynamic by way of three cases, regarding the main infrastructural projects carried out in the 1960s and 1970s in Rotterdam, which attracted substantial media attention: the metro, the *Ruit om Rotterdam* (ring road) and the airport – the Europoort gets attention in Chapter 13.§2. They are exemplary for what has become known as ‘non-places’ (Augé, 1992) and the ‘space of flows’ (Castells, 1996). That, however, is only one side to think of motion, in generic terms; the structure of motion has also another side, with particular coordinates and characters.

## § 2. metro

In 1959, the decision was made to build a metro<sup>1340</sup>. It was a novelty for the Netherlands, which appealed to the imagination. When the project started, in 1960, the *Nederlandse Onderwijsfilm* (NOF) produced an educational report about it, which exemplifies the importance attributed to it<sup>1341</sup>. The metro symbolised progress, and the metropolitan ambitions of Rotterdam, which caused a pride and a historical awareness among its citizens. It is reflected in amateur films, like those by Jan Soek, who followed the development meticulously over various years, while he and others would also document the later extensions<sup>1342</sup>.

The department of Gemeentewerken, in charge of the project, took care of its documentation and promotion as well. Its phototechnical service made, for example, detailed recordings of the construction of 375 large concrete beams for the metro fly-over in Rotterdam-Zuid (METROVIADUCT ‘BALKENFABRICAGE, 1965, Henk Vrijmoet). It was followed by a film about the transportation of these beams by especially constructed vehicles, whose function was explained through animations. The total length of a truck with a beam counted 50 metres, which had to travel through the streets of Rotterdam, three times a day (ROTTERDAM METRO BALKENTRANSPORT, 1965, Henk Vrijmoet). The films were part of a larger campaign, which included various publications – similar to the promotion activities for the ‘Maastunnel’ about twenty-five years earlier<sup>1343</sup>. Besides its own films, Gemeentewerken also asked Cinecentrum in Hilversum for a series of films. This joint-venture of Multifilm, Polygoon and Profilti was the most experienced Dutch film production enterprise, also in respect of films on construction works, including one on the Delta works<sup>1344</sup>. Among its cameramen was Peter Alsemgeest (•1927-†2004), who was then asked to film the metro<sup>1345</sup>.

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<sup>1339</sup> The examples mentioned here are NOS JOURNAAL reports made by J. van Rhijn: [fog, multiple collision] 1973-11-11; [subsided truck with fenol], 1974-07-19; [subsided fuel truck, Spijkenisse], 1974-08-30; [traffic issues, parking] 1974-11-09; [flood in city], 1975-06-24; [flood in city], 1975-08-21; [derailment] 1974-08-29; [aftermath derailment, Rotterdam-Zuid] 1974-11-21; [hoisting crane collapsed onto railway, Berkel] 1975-01-02.

<sup>1340</sup> Van de Laar, 2000: 537.

<sup>1341</sup> ROTTERDAM KRIJGT METRO explains that the city has serious traffic problems, and the metro offers a solution to that. The planned metro line is shown by way of an animated model and map.

<sup>1342</sup> I.e. METRO ROTTERDAM DEEL I, 1961-1967, and METROBOUW, 1974-1983; STADSVERNIEWING, METROBOUW EN SPOORTUNNEL, 1975-1985; BOUW VAN DE METRO OOST/WESTLIJN, 1978. For other amateur recordings on the construction of the metro, see for example: AANLEG METRO, 1963, Wessel Vermeulen; KRIS-KRAS DOOR ROTTERDAM, 1960-1970, Wemelsfelder; LOCAAL JOURNAAL, 1963, anon. a.o.

<sup>1343</sup> As addressed by Paul van de Laar (2000: 538).

<sup>1344</sup> A few years before, the “Ministry of Traffic and Waterworks” had given Multifilm an important commission, to make a film on the *Deltawerken* in the province of Zeeland (1953-1986). The first episode was called DE SLUITING VAN HET VEERSE GAT, 1958-1961, directed by Hattum Hoving, cameramen: Peter Alsemgeest, Pim Heijtman, Charles Breijer. See also the films: DELTA YPSILON (1969) and SPUISLUIZEN IN HET HARINGVLIET (1974).

<sup>1345</sup> Interview by the author (FP) with Alsemgeest, 2003-11-27. While he worked on this project, he also collaborated on HET KORPS MARINIERS (1965, Paul Verhoeven). Alsemgeest was asked by Verhoeven since the latter was impressed by his camerawork for the short fiction film BIG CITY BLUES (1961, C. Huguenot van der Linden). Both films received

Two episodes were released (METRO, 1965, and ROTTERDAM METROPOLIS, 1966), of 22 minutes each, before an omnibus was made, all by Polygoon-Profil<sup>1346</sup>. Next to this film various newsreels were made, probably from the same footage, for both Polygoon and NTS television. At that time, Cinecentrum, and first of all Multifilm, where Alsemgeest was actually employed, made also the recordings for the NTS JOURNAAL, more than twenty reports in total<sup>1347</sup>. The JOURNAAL started by presenting models of the project (1960-10-28). Polygoon followed two weeks later with a report on the official ceremonies and impressions of the construction works, including works under the river Nieuwe Maas, and a model of an underground station that is tested<sup>1348</sup>. Polygoon would make various other reports in the next years<sup>1349</sup>. Besides that, various television stations paid attention to the metro works<sup>1350</sup>. Even another construction film was made, by Eduard van der Enden, for the *Nederlandse Filmproductiemaatschappij*, which produced other films for the municipality at the same time<sup>1351</sup>.

For the first part, simply called METRO (1965), Alsemgeest recorded the construction of tunnel segments in a special dock at the Van Brienoord island. Spectacular is the moment when the pre-fabricated tunnel segments are transported. Tugboats pull a ninety metre long segment under the railway bridge. It is sunk in the river, and connected to the already installed parts.

After five years of construction, the metro stations got their shape. Through aerial shots, the course of the metro line was shown, still under construction, from Central Station, via Coolsingel to the river and further. What happened underground was recorded step by step, and illustrated by animations of the Toonder studio, as shown in ROTTERDAM METROPOLIS (1966, Peter Alsemgeest). Alsemgeest, who played with contrasts, through various cinematographic techniques like zooming and panning, showed the polished new underground stations as opposed to the 'battlefield' of the construction site above.

The construction of the metro was also to be seen in ROTTERDAM TOEN, ROTTERDAM NU (1966, Freddy Lievense), a general report on the new city. It was shown at the Cineac newsreel

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much attention. For Verhoeven it was the beginning of his career that led him to Hollywood. Alsemgeest, in his turn, continued to make films about industrial production and engineering (e.g. for Hollands Signaal, the Netherlands Space and Aircraft Laboratory, Stork, and DAF/Volvo). Notwithstanding his broad interest in cinema, as well as social issues, Alsemgeest preferred technical films, which he could handle in a technical way himself.

<sup>1346</sup> At the time of writing this book, the film collection of *Gemeentewerken*, among them many titles by Alsemgeest, was transferred to the Gemeentearchief Rotterdam, and not yet ready for consultation, so that much of this is subject to further investigation. For the first part (1965), on the construction of tunnel elements, at the Van Brienoord island; see: 'Metro in Film', p24 in: *Rotterdam, Officieel Tijdschrift van de Gemeente Rotterdam*, vol. 3/3, 1965.

<sup>1347</sup> Cf. Post e.a., 1976: 2. For reports, see: NTS JOURNAAL: [model] 1960-10-28; [models of the stations, construction at Weena] 1961-02-24; [first part tunnel ready] 1962-01-04; [tree cut for metro a.o.] 1962-03-08; [model and construction of station Leuvehaven] 1962-06-10; [first element sunk] 1962-11-27; [excursion construction works] 1963-05-19; [fire] 1963-05-28; [relocation of market], 1964-02-15; [traffic rerouted] 1964-02-18; [last element to be sunk] 1964-10-17; [decision on type of wagon], 1964-12-05; [works] 1965-10-19; [roof construction of station] 1966-01-24; [metro wagon exhibited] 1966-05-17; [fly-over] 1966-11-11; [new ticket service] 1966-11-18; [interview with Plantema a.o.], 1967-05-16; [test ride] 1967-06-03; [construction of the railways] 1968-02-09; [opening metro to Slinge] 1970-11-25. See also: MONITOR by NTS [directors of the metro], 1967-03-26; MONITOR [experience by a disabled person] 1967-11-19.

<sup>1348</sup> Polygoon, 1960-11-14. General-secretary of "Traffic and Waterworks", Mr. Gieben, rams the first dam wall near Rotterdam Central Station, and Mayor Van Walsum reveals an information board. A scale model of the metro explains the plan. Next are impressions of the construction works (Weena, Coolsingel, Leuvehaven). As the metro line crosses underneath the river, dam walls are built in the water, while tunnel segments are made on the other side of the river.

<sup>1349</sup> I.e. more than seven, a.o. BOUW VAN DE METRO BEGONNEN (1960); ROTTERDAM BOUWT AAN ZIJN METRO (1961); ENGELSE STUDENTEN BEZICHTIGEN DE METRO (1962); ROTTERDAMSE METRO VORDERT (1963); BOUW METRO (1965); ROTTERDAMSE METRO VORDERT (1967); METRO OFFICIEEL IN GEBRUIK (1968).

<sup>1350</sup> E.g. MEMO (NCRV, 1960-11-14); ACHTER HET NIEUWS (VARA, 1961-07-28); ONDERGRONDS PERSONENVERVOER (1962, Rob Mariouw Smit, NCRV 1962-11-09); TELEVIZIER (AVRO, 1967-03-25); KLOKKE VIER (KRO, 1968-01-13); NEEM LIEVER DE... (KRO, 1967-01-20); KOMPAS (TROS, 1967-06-29); WAAR EEN WIL IS, IS EEN WEG (VARA, 1967-11-28). Since Cinecentrum made recordings for various stations, some may have been shot by Alsemgeest too.

<sup>1351</sup> Personal communication FP with Eduard van der Enden. The status of this film is unknown.

theatre (October 1966), which was located at the Coolingsingel where the work was actually carried out. In this way the film was almost literally an extension of the construction work.

On Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1967, not hindered by a sense of superstition, the Coolingsingel was reopened by the popular television performer Tom Manders, who came to ‘test’ the ‘new’ Coolingsingel with an old-timer<sup>1352</sup>. Part of the celebration was the presentation of the station *Stadhuis* (Town Hall). It took a couple of months more before the metro line was officially opened (1968-02-09), which was the subject of a live report by the NTS<sup>1353</sup>. Princess Beatrix and Prince Claus were the first to buy a ticket from the ticket machine, which was itself a novelty, to which the NTS had already spent a report before<sup>1354</sup>. Together with Mayor Thomassen and the aldermen, the Princess and Prince travelled from Central Station to Zuidplein. About 400,000 people followed in the next days.

In 1968 Gemeentewerken released the film METRO, in different language versions, directed by Peter Alsemgeest, and shot in collaboration with Lajos Kalános (and sound by Nick Meijer). Like the preceding episodes, it starts with images of the harbour, and the need to have good connections across the river. The Maastunnel is not sufficient for efficient traffic flow, and hence in 1959, the films says, the city decided to build the metro. Many studies and reports followed, as the film illustrates, and the planned lines are shown. The Coolingsingel is temporarily a canal again, in order to transport especially pre-fabricated tunnel segments that are sunk in it. The line from Central Station to Coolingsingel and further on is shown from the air, which is followed by detailed shots of the construction process, including various animations. It shows the control chamber and the first (fast motion) test rides. The metro moves like a rollercoaster through the tunnels, and over the viaducts through the snow. The first passengers enter the trains.

Because of the metro, through its media coverage, Rotterdam received respect within the Netherlands. It strengthened its metropolitan image. As soon as the first line was opened, plans for extensions (to Slinge) were presented. In 1970 its actualisation was reported (NTS, 1970-11-25).

It motivated Amsterdam to build a metro too<sup>1355</sup>. It literally ‘appropriated’ Rotterdam’s metro, which is illustrated by the feature film NO PANIC (1973, Ko Koedijk) that used shots of the metro in Rotterdam as if it existed in Amsterdam<sup>1356</sup>. As a matter of ‘premediation’, Rotterdam was used to present the metropolitan ambitions of Amsterdam, but the tide rapidly turned. In 1975, riots took place in Amsterdam (i.e. *Nieuwmarktrellen*), when houses were demolished for the construction of the metro<sup>1357</sup>. To avoid such situations, the Rotterdam municipality, regarding the planned extensions, wanted to collaborate with its residents, all the more so since there had already been fierce protests in the previous years concerning housing.

For the construction of the metro, the municipality tried to inform the population as well as possible, in order to generate understanding, support and appreciation. Therefore Gemeentewerken commissioned a film, to be shown twice a day in a neighbourhood centre, as part of a permanent exhibition on the construction of the metro<sup>1358</sup>. The film was called BOUWEN TUSSEN DE MENSEN (1976), meaning ‘building amidst people’, but also ‘building between people’, hence connecting them. The credits at the beginning hold Peter Alsemgeest responsible

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<sup>1352</sup> Cf. Polygoon (1967-10-13). By then, Manders had just started ‘Cabaret Dorus’ in Rotterdam, Mauritsstraat 65 (building of chemics trade company v/h E. Schuddebeurs NV, until 1960). The studio, to record the television programme ‘Dorus’, existed for three years. [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom\\_Manders](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Manders)

<sup>1353</sup> I.e. OPENING METRO ROTTERDAM (NTS, 1968-02-09).

<sup>1354</sup> JOURNAAL, NTS, 1966-11-18.

<sup>1355</sup> The earliest plans for a metro in Amsterdam were made in 1922, but only by 1966 concrete plans were made, and in 1968, when Rotterdam opened its metro, the Amsterdam city council decided to implement the plans. [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amsterdamse\\_metro](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amsterdamse_metro) (2008-07-11).

<sup>1356</sup> They were situated at Dam, Marnixstraat, and the Munt, where no stations were planned at all.

<sup>1357</sup> <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nieuwmarktrellen> (website visited 2008-07-11).

<sup>1358</sup> The film was shown from November the 4<sup>th</sup>; the exhibition was shown in the neighbourhood centre Onésimus (Gashouderstraat). See: ‘Metrobouw Gefilmd’, p2 in: *Het Vrije Volk*, 1976-11-02. See also: Post e.a., 1976.

for 'design and direction' (*ontwerp en regie*); Alsemgeest operated like a 'cinematic constructor'. The film starts with a woman who wants to buy a piano and subtle differences are tested in a shop. When the camera moves outside one sees that this shop is located next to the construction site, and that sound annoyance is reduced to a minimum. Walls for pouring concrete are not rammed but 'trembled', and for the piles to be drilled into the ground, special coats are put around the rammers, in order to lower the noise. Alsemgeest used this opportunity to make his film an interplay between images and (electronic) music (by Nick Meijer). Inspired by *STEADY!* (1952, Herman van der Horst), it includes a montage-sequence directed by the sound of ramming.

The film pays attention to the social conditions, and even mentions protests against the metro. Kralingers do not understand that their quarter has to be sacrificed for a new one, the district Ommoord. Certain buildings have to be demolished indeed, but all efforts are made to save those that are in good condition, which required technical innovations. The film shows in detail how a housing block is maintained by constructing the tunnel under it<sup>1359</sup>. Besides location shots, Alsemgeest uses models and animations to explain it. The ground is dugged away around the foundations of the building. A tunnel is built there, and the building then rests upon the tunnel roof. Once it is finished the old foundations are removed. Alsemgeest follows the process in the claustrophobic space in which the workers have to operate, and he too. His cinematography is characterised by mobile framing. The camera often starts from a fixed position, turning towards something else that is happening simultaneously. This neatly interacts with the montage.

At the end, the pianist plays her new instrument at home. This shot becomes part of a special effect. The image is scaled down, to be inserted as a small image in a housing estate, filling one apartment. Images of other people doing different things are inserted too. Under the building an animation of a metro is shown. It is suggested that no one notices the work being done. Film is needed to make this clear.

The workers boring a tunnel are literally the precursors of the metro train that will run through it. Their struggle to move forward, to create space and movement, is the indexical counterpart to the metropolitan experience of a fast underground ride. Something has to become animated before it moves, quite literally here, as the film shows an animation of the result that it helps to bring about. Once this is a matter of fact, the index disappears, except for the film, if it were not subject to the same logic.

While Alsemgeest made *BOUWEN TUSSEN DE MENSEN* he also worked on a parallel commission from the "Public Transport Authority" (RET). RET spokesman Ton Michielse was appointed to assist Alsemgeest for the film *SAMENSPEL* ("Interplay/Teamwork", 1975). It addresses that the Department of City Planning closely collaborates with the public transport authority to design new city plans (i.e. the title of the film). Newly built quarters are shown, which have important implications for transportation. The film shows the problems of car traffic in the city. Through animations and an attractive cinematography and editing style, it presents the solutions offered by the interplay of tram, bus and metro services within an extensive public transport network.

While the West-East metro line was constructed, the North-South line was extended, to connect the new suburbs to the city centre. The satellite town Hoogvliet became the terminal for the time being, and Gemeentewerken commissioned Peter Alsemgeest to make another film: *METRO HOOGVLIET* (1977)<sup>1360</sup>. Alsemgeest was the 'court-filmmaker' of Gemeentewerken<sup>1361</sup>.

The fact that he was on very good terms with Gemeentewerken can be exemplified by the film *AFSCHEID DIRECTEUR GEMEENTEWERKEN PLANTEMA* ("Farewell to Plantema, director of Public Works", 1979, Alsemgeest). Alsemgeest initiated this film, of half an hour, as Plantema, who had been the driving force behind the metro works, turned sixty-five and retired. Alsemgeest

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<sup>1359</sup> Housing estates at the Chris Bennekerslaan, Adamhofstraat.

<sup>1360</sup> See also: *OPENING VAN HET METROTRAJECT NAAR HOOGVLIET* (Polygoon, 1974-10-25).

<sup>1361</sup> Post e.a., 1976.

made this film without budget, using 16mm colour stock that was available at *Cinecentrum*. This ‘slapstick’, as he called it, on which many colleagues of Plantema collaborated, was a playful tribute and presented to him as a surprise. The film is the materialisation of the close personal connection between Alsemgeest and Gemeentewerken. It is also a concise history of urban development and civil engineering in Rotterdam, especially in respect of the metro.

Alsemgeest continued to make films for Gemeentewerken until the early 1990s, among them METRO OOST-WEST (1982), to present the new east-west connection, and EEN GOED LOPENDE STAD (1989), on the role of Gemeentewerken in general. In the meanwhile Alsemgeest moved from Cinecentrum to Toonder Studios, taking his connections with him. On that occasion, his colleagues made a farewell film for him, just like he had done for Plantema.

### § 3. ‘De Ruit’

Since the late 1930s, ideas were elaborated for a ring road around Rotterdam, as part of a larger network of highways<sup>1362</sup>. In 1957, the decision was made to build a forty kilometre ring for automobiles, across five different municipalities<sup>1363</sup>. The so-called *Ruit om Rotterdam* (“Diamond around Rotterdam”) was carried out by the “Dutch Directorate for Public Works and Water Management” (*Rijkswaterstaat*, dir. A.G. Quack e.a.<sup>1364</sup>), in collaboration with the municipal departments of “Public Works” (Gemeentewerken, dir. J.A. Tillema) and “Urban Development” (*Stadsontwikkeling*, dir. C. van Traa)<sup>1365</sup>. Part of the *Ruit* was the creation of two connections across the Nieuwe Maas, a bridge and a tunnel, besides a series of junctions, for connections to the main national roads<sup>1366</sup>.

Through the ring, the city, the port and the new residential quarters and satellite towns became integrated. Wouter Vanstiphout and Michelle Provoost (Crimson Architecture Historians) have framed the *Ruit* in the perspective of the plans of Van Traa; for the new city he drew a grid of traffic roads, which served as an ‘irrigation network’ to the emptiness of the city<sup>1367</sup>. As Provoost has argued (1996: 171), the ring is thus much more than a technical intervention, since it structures social-economic processes. ‘The 1955 road network clarifies what Van Traa had in mind. This map shows the Roads and Waterways Department’s [*Rijkswaterstaat*] tangential highway structure around Rotterdam’s central city. Rotterdam’s traffic network within this structure proves to be a refined version of a regional, national and even continental network of lines and points’<sup>1368</sup>. As such we may consider similar projects that followed the example of Rotterdam. Belgium introduced a special coding system for urban ring roads (R0 = Brussels, R9 = Charleroi), while in Great Britain an elaborate system of orbital motorways was developed too, including the ‘London Orbital’ (M25)<sup>1369</sup>. Famous is also the ‘Boulevard Périphérique’ of Paris, built between 1963 and 1973. It is 35 kilometres long, and constructed on the military *zone non-aedificandi* in front of the former city wall; most of the exits correspond to the old gates<sup>1370</sup>.

<sup>1362</sup> Cf. Van de Laar, 2000: 307, map of precursor of the ‘Ruit’, 1937; and Van de Laar, 2000: 306, *Streekplan*, 1938.

<sup>1363</sup> Stuvet, 1969: 2. Municipalities: i.e. Rotterdam, Ridderkerk, Barendrecht, Vlaardingen, Schiedam.

<sup>1364</sup> See also: Meurs & Verheijen, 2003: 34.

<sup>1365</sup> The *Ruit* was connected to the city centre through the Maasboulevard (from the east), the Westzeedijk (from the west), the *boezem tracé* form the north, and the Vaanplein/Zuidplein from the south. The slack ground required to reinforce its basis first – see: Edzes, 1973: 3.

<sup>1366</sup> Cf. Meurs & Verheijen, 2003: 34.

<sup>1367</sup> Crimson, 2002: 43.

<sup>1368</sup> English quote: Crimson, 2002: 50. Original Dutch quote 1995b: ‘Uit het wegenschema van 1955 wordt duidelijk wat Van Traa aan het doen was. Op deze kaart is Rijkswaterstaats ruit rond Rotterdam aangegeven; het verkeersnet van Rotterdam binnen de ruit blijkt een verfijning te zijn van een regionaal, nationaal en zelfs continentaal netwerk van lijnen en punten’ Vanstiphout, Wouter / Crimson Architectural Historians; ‘Leegte’, 1995:

[www.crimsonweb.org/spip.php?article16](http://www.crimsonweb.org/spip.php?article16). See also: Vanstiphout, Wouter / Crimson; *Too Blessed to be Depressed*; *Crimson, 1994-2002, Architectural Historians*; Rotterdam: 010 Publishers / Rotterdam Maaskant Foundation, 2002.

See also: Provoost, 1996: 63 (the *Ruit* as part of *Stad Nederland*).

<sup>1369</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beltway> (2007-11-02)

<sup>1370</sup> [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boulevard\\_P%C3%A9riph%C3%A9rique\\_%28Parijs%29](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boulevard_P%C3%A9riph%C3%A9rique_%28Parijs%29) (2007-11-02)



Architecture historian Katherine Shonfield (2000: 111) has subjected the ‘Boulevard Périphérique’ to a cultural analysis, through an interpretation of Jean-Luc Godard’s film *DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES QUE JE SAIS D’ELLE* (1967). She has reached the challenging conclusion that ‘free circulation is free copulation’. Since the ‘boulevard’ cuts indifferently through existing quarters (exemplary for Rotterdam is the former village of IJsselmonde), it provides access to formerly hidden areas, and hence to people. It could be a way to understand the infrastructure as an instrument to recreate the city as a collective entity, socially, culturally and economically; it has transmitted modern values, giving an impetus to urban culture, which has been mediated by cinema and television.

The construction of the ring ran parallel to a major change in the media landscape. The way the ring came into the news exemplifies the changing relationship between cinema and television. The state subsidy that Polygoon received for its *bioscoopjournaal*, since 1964, shifted the relationship with the commissioners for which it used to make promotional films. Polygoon no longer enjoyed a favourable position. Television, in its turn, began to show in-depth documentaries too, such as *VOOR MILJARDEN WEG* (“For billions a way”, AVRO, 1968-04-01). Whereas its slightly critical title refers to the substantial expenses to build roads, it actually explains the reasons and the designs of projects accommodating automobility. Preparatory measures by *Rijkswaterstaat* are shown and the way designs come into being. The film includes aerial shots of the ‘Van Brienoordbrug’, the ‘Beneluxtunnel’, and *De Ruit*. It was the first time that the bridge and the tunnel were shown as part of one overall project.

Television accelerated modernity through its speed and frequency, but also by the tendency of generalising ‘cases’ into ‘conditions’. A particular achievement became instantaneously representative for a broad development, beyond the merits of the specific object. Such reports caused positive feedback, which reinforced the ‘structure of motion’.

### **Van Brienoordbrug and Beneluxtunnel**

Already in 1929, plans were made for a bridge east of the city, but the money was finally used for the ‘Maastunnel’, near the city centre<sup>1371</sup>. Once it was finished, new plans were made for the bridge. In 1941 ground was bought for this purpose in the village of IJsselmonde<sup>1372</sup>. Only by 1959 had the plans become concrete, and in 1965 the bridge was ready, after a design by W. J. van der Eb<sup>1373</sup>. It became part of the A16 motorway that connects the Randstad Holland conurbation with Belgium. With its characteristic bow, it became a national icon of urban expansion, increasing automobility and economic growth. Media contributed to this image, since *Rijkswaterstaat* made strategical use of them, by inviting journalists to witness key moments of the construction. Hence, the first reports on it were simultaneously provided by Polygoon and the NTS JOURNAAL.

Its first milestone was the installation of the bascules, the turning parts to let ships pass by. The Van Brienoordbrug became the largest bascule bridge of the country<sup>1374</sup>. Polygoon and

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<sup>1371</sup> Plan from 1929 according to a decision of the *Nationale Verkeerscommissie*, Van de Laar, 2000: 306. See also: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van\\_Brienoordbrug](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van_Brienoordbrug), article ‘Van Brienoordbrug’ (visited 2006-03-11).

<sup>1372</sup> Walhout, R.; ‘Dossier A 16’, *Nederlandse autosnelwegen - Dutch motorways / freeways - Niederländische Autobahnen*, [www.autosnelwegen.nl](http://www.autosnelwegen.nl), 2004-11-13, [www.r.walhout.freeler.nl/asw/dosA16.htm](http://www.r.walhout.freeler.nl/asw/dosA16.htm)

<sup>1373</sup> [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van\\_Brienoordbrug](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van_Brienoordbrug) ‘Van Brienoordbrug’ (visited 2006-03-11); built: 1962-1965. For the construction of the bridge, see: BRIENENOORDBRUG (1962-1965, Cornelia Guikink-Visser). See also: Meurs & Verheijen, 2003: 142. The bridge measures 1320m, the main suspension 287m, with an elevation of 24m above the river.

<sup>1374</sup> [www.bruggenstichting.nl/BruggenDB/nbs.asp?id=69&data1=&data2=&mode>ShowRecord](http://www.bruggenstichting.nl/BruggenDB/nbs.asp?id=69&data1=&data2=&mode>ShowRecord) ‘Van Brienoordbrug’ (2006-03-20).

NTS heralded this achievement with impressive images of the machines, installations and constructions<sup>1375</sup>. It supported the bridge as a model case for engineers and policy makers.

Polygoon (1963-wk22) framed the bridge explicitly in the perspective of connections between the Netherlands and Belgium, while at the same time it addressed its role within the ring around Rotterdam. While the reports by Polygoon were compact stories, those of the NTS built on common knowledge gathered through other media. It provided detailed reports on different aspects of the project, such as the mounting of the fixed part of the bridge, and the completion of its suspension<sup>1376</sup>. Shortly before the opening, the NTS showed a truck transporting sixteen lighting towers with a length of thirty-five metres each<sup>1377</sup>. Polygoon reported on it too, but in combination with shots of workers asphaltting the road, and an astonishing aerial view (exceptionally all in colour) of the entire bridge and its system of approaching roads, which the lighting towers would turn into a 'sea of light'. It created a contrast of scale with the images of the neighbouring village IJsselmonde through which the towers had just been moved.

Before the opening of the bridge (on 1965-02-01), *Rijkswaterstaat* decided to arrange a 'preview' for the general public. Polygoon reported on it in combination with shots of the official opening ceremony. The NTS, instead, covered the 'preview' and the opening as two separate events<sup>1378</sup>. Yet, it was the NTS this time that offered more of a background. Besides the opening ceremony it showed the bridge in its entirety, and including the connecting roads as well, also through aerial shots, and as such it presented the first part of the ring road. Afterwards, the NTS also showed the first traffic jam at the bridge, within a week after the opening (NTS, 1965-02-07).

Once the 'Van Brienoordbrug' was ready, it was featured in several television programmes, such as an informative essay on design, called VORM EN FUNCTIE; BRUGGEN (VPRO, 1966-11-10)<sup>1379</sup>. A man jumps over a ditch with a jumping-pole, which is followed by all kinds of images of bridges in the Netherlands and abroad. Movements of bridges are shown and also one that collapses. After impressions of old bridges in Amsterdam, the magnificence of the Van Brienoord is shown through aerial shots; historic Amsterdam is opposed to modern Rotterdam. The VPRO used this footage of the bridge also for a separate 'tv-poème', broadcast during a break between two programmes<sup>1380</sup>. It promoted the bridge as an example of engineering ingenuity and as built poetry.

Another example of a television programme that paid attention to the bridge was OPENBAAR KUNSTBEZIT (NTS, 1969-04-06)<sup>1381</sup>. Engineers of *Rijkswaterstaat* are interviewed about the artistic value of their work; 'a bridge is beautiful when it expresses its function'. Parts of Ivens's film THE BRIDGE (1928) are shown as reference material. In the same way, the filmmakers argue, one should look at the Van Brienoordbrug, which is shown from different angles. This is an instance of self-referentiality that is inherent in any system, whether that of

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<sup>1375</sup> e.g. Polygoon (1963-wk22); JOURNAAL (NTS, 1963-05-22). Both reports show how the second bascule is moved to its position by floating benches and installed by cranes. Polygoon, however, offers more of a background as it also shows the two existing connections across the river in Rotterdam ('Koningsbrug' and 'Maastunnel').

<sup>1376</sup> JOURNAAL, NTS, 1963-10-04; JOURNAAL, NTS, 1964-07-03.

<sup>1377</sup> JOURNAAL, NTS, 1964-12-01; BOUW VAN DE BRIENENOORDBRUG (Polygoon, 1964-week50). These towers were manufactured by Verolme, which also commissioned a promotion film about it, i.e. VEROLME VERLICHTING BIJ DE VAN BRIENENOORDBRUG (1964, Verolme United Shipyards).

<sup>1378</sup> DE VAN BRIENENOORDBRUG (Polygoon, 1965-06, rec. 1965-02-01) and JOURNAAL (NTS, 1965-01-30; 1965-02-06). Both of them showed speeches by Jan Klaasesz (Royal Commissioner of Zuid-Holland) and Jan van Aartsen (Minister of Public Works and Water Management), and the opening by Queen Juliana.

<sup>1379</sup> See also, for example, the educational programme BETON, LES 1. INLEIDING (Teleac, 1972-01-15).

<sup>1380</sup> NIET BEKEND (VPRO, 1967-10-16).

<sup>1381</sup> It was shot by cameraman Jochgem van Dijk and directed by Ton Aarden and Joes Odufré. Odufré began his career as a cameraman of BRUIN GOUD (1954, Louis van Gasteren). He was among the first tv-cameramen (NTS), and became a director for VPRO, in 1955, for which he made art programmes. After being head of VPRO-television he started Gamma Films. 'Joes Odufré (1925 – 2004), cameraman/tv-regisseur en producer' (May 2004).

[www.beeldengeluid.nl/template\\_subnav.jsp?navname=biografieen\\_o&category=collectie\\_informatie&artid=28193](http://www.beeldengeluid.nl/template_subnav.jsp?navname=biografieen_o&category=collectie_informatie&artid=28193)

media or engineering. The evolution of such a system ‘is a form of structural change that produces and reproduces its own preconditions’ (Luhmann, 2000 [1995]: 158). This can only happen through observations of former states of the system. ‘Today this is called “intertextuality,” which is another way of saying that the art system must have a memory’ (ibid: 245-246). Luhmann calls it the ‘self-programming of art’, which happens within the ‘autopoietic network of the art system’ (ibid).

Media and engineering subsystems are linked to each another within a broader system of social-cultural and economic development. In this perspective we should observe the way *De Hef* and the Van Brienoordbrug have been turned into icons of their time, *De Hef* as a railway bridge shown by film, as a new form of art, and the Van Brienoordbrug as a bridge for automobiles, covered by the mass medium of television.

As the general attitude changed in the 1970s, the bridge was no longer unproblematically presented, either as a work of art and technology or as an icon of modernity. Instead, it became subject to critical observations. At the end of 1973, the government took measures to decrease energy consumption, due to the oil crisis, combined with environmental reasons as addressed by the Club of Rome. The government announced the so-called *Autoloze Zondagen* (“Carfree Sundays”); the first one took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1973, and the last one on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 1974<sup>1382</sup>. During these days the bridge remained empty, which was something unique in its history. This image was included in different television programmes<sup>1383</sup>. The icon of progress was all of a sudden turned into its reverse. However, the numbers of cars crossing the bridge every day increased nevertheless, far beyond the estimated daily 144,000<sup>1384</sup>. Small disturbances resulted in major traffic jams<sup>1385</sup>. As a consequence, the bridge had to be broadened within fifteen years, which, finally, was also reported by the JOURNAAL (1979-08-23).

Besides the Van Brienoordbrug, *Rijkwaterstaat* made plans for the ‘Beneluxtunnel’ at the west side of the ring (A4)<sup>1386</sup>. In 1963 an agreement was reached on the financial plan, which was reported by the NTS JOURNAAL (1963-06-09). It also showed a map of the area and the purpose of the tunnel. The JOURNAAL would closely monitor its further development. Since the tunnel connected the city of Vlaardingen to the larger agglomeration, its ambitious Mayor Heusdens, portrayed in the report too, became the president of the exploitation company Beneluxtunnel NV. It took time before the construction works started, but at the beginning of 1965, when the Van Brienoordbrug was finished, the construction rapidly progressed<sup>1387</sup>.

At the opening ceremony, both Mayor Heusdens and Mayor Thomassen of Rotterdam were present, as the hosts of Queen Juliana (NTS, 1967-06-05). Driving through the tunnel offered another ‘cinematic experience’, which was shown as such by the NTS JOURNAAL (1967-06-05). The report also showed a close-up of the ticket machine, because of the toll to be paid. The Queen, seated in a special bus, was the first one to buy a ticket, as shown by Polygoon (1967-24), just like the audience watching it bought a ticket at the box office of the cinema. Polygoon mentioned furthermore that many drivers followed that day, anxious to enjoy this experience. It was actually the only report by Polygoon on the Beneluxtunnel, quite different from, say, the way it covered the construction of the Maastunnel about a quarter of a century before. It stresses the changed position of cinema newsreels in favour of television.

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<sup>1382</sup> [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autoloze\\_zondag](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autoloze_zondag) (website visited: 2006-04-05)

<sup>1383</sup> E.g. in a programme by Bob Holt for Yorkshire Television (ref. *Rotterdam*, vol. 11/4, 1973, p25), in ALLES OP ZIJN TIJD (NCRV, 1973-12-31), a film-essay on slowness, and briefly in a programme on environmentalism: DE KLEINE AARDE (IKOR, 1974-01-04).

<sup>1384</sup> De Bruin e.a.; 1998: 232.

<sup>1385</sup> E.g. when the bridge had to be closed because of falling pieces of ice, JOURNAAL, NTS, 1979-01-08.

<sup>1386</sup> <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beneluxtunnel>, article ‘Beneluxtunnel’ (visited 2006-03-11).

<sup>1387</sup> First came the work on the south bank, near Pernis (JOURNAAL, NTS, 1965-03-05), and then on the other side near Vlaardingen, which was shown by aerial and location shots (JOURNAAL, NTS, 1965-08-11). The next year the tunnel was opened by Heusdens (JOURNAAL, NTS, 1966-12-02), but it took another half a year before it was ready for use.

### traffic junctions

While the Beneluxtunnel was being built, *Rijkswaterstaat* started similar projects elsewhere too, such as the Heinenoordtunnel (part of the A29), which strengthened the connection of Rotterdam with the south of the country<sup>1388</sup>. On the north side a new road was built to improve the connection between Rotterdam and Amsterdam<sup>1389</sup>. At the east side of the Ring, the road A15 was constructed to connect Rotterdam with the Ruhr area in Germany, according to plans made by the former ‘road planning director’ and main engineer Le Cosquine de Bussy, who also opened the new road in front of the NTS camera<sup>1390</sup> (1964-03-22).

The ring around Rotterdam, which has been called a large roundabout<sup>1391</sup>, needed good junctions to connect these roads in order to regulate the flows to and from Rotterdam. In VOOR MILJARDEN WEG images were shown of ‘Kethelplein’ (A4-A20), still under construction. It would actually never be finished entirely, due to environmentalist objections<sup>1392</sup>. As soon as ‘Kethelplein’ performed its minimum function, *Rijkswaterstaat* started to build the next one: ‘Kleinpolderplein’<sup>1393</sup>. In contrast to the former, the proceedings were frequently reported by the media<sup>1394</sup>. Journalists largely followed press releases and invitations by *Rijkswaterstaat*.

The construction of Kleinpolderplein had been envisioned from the onset, and prepared since 1959, when the first measuring of traffic intensity was carried out<sup>1395</sup>. In 1967, *Rijkswaterstaat* commissioned Van Hattum & Blankevoort to build the project<sup>1396</sup>. They were previously involved with complex projects like the ‘Beneluxtunnel’ and the ‘Zeelandbrug’ (part of the Delta Works). The construction of Kleinpolderplein was promoted by a booklet and a film, EROP OF ERONDER (1971)<sup>1397</sup>, made by Joop Burcksen and Ruud Herblot, who had established their names in the field of engineering with their successful film ELEMENTS FACING ELEMENTS (1966) on the ‘Zeelandbrug’. The new film, which was commissioned by Van Hattum & Blankevoort, shows the construction step by step. It is a record of a project that is, at the same time, framed in rhetorical way to address rationalisation – once more an instance of the RRR, according to Hediger & Vonderau (2007).

Due to increasing automobility, the film explains, new infrastructure needs to be built, to solve traffic jams and to relieve ‘provoked drivers’ (*getergde automobilisten*). A map is presented of the *Ruit om Rotterdam*. The camera zooms in on Kleinpolderplein, with roads in four layers. Certain parts of the construction are prefabricated in Kats, a village near the Zeelandbrug, which establishes a direct link to the preceding construction and film project. Pre-fabrication, innovative

<sup>1388</sup> See e.g. JOURNAAL, NTS, 1968-07-10; INGEBRUIKSTELLING HEINENOORDTUNNEL, Polygoon, 1969-07-22.

<sup>1389</sup> See: Polygoon, 1958-wk, showing the opening of a part of the road A4 (Amsterdam – The Hague) by minister J. Algra (*Verkeer en Waterstaat*). In the early 1960s the road between The Hague and Rotterdam (A13) was widened and improved (JOURNAAL, NTS, 1964-03-18).

<sup>1390</sup> Opening of the part between Alblasterdam and Giessendam.

<sup>1391</sup> Fred Heuer (*Rijkswaterstaat*), in the article ‘Nexus-partners gaan ‘pijn verdelen’ op Rotterdamse Ruit’ (2006-02-08), [www.verkeerskunde.nl/moxie/actueel/nieuws/nexuspartners-gaan-pijn-v.shtml](http://www.verkeerskunde.nl/moxie/actueel/nieuws/nexuspartners-gaan-pijn-v.shtml).

<sup>1392</sup> [nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knooppunt\\_Kethelplein](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knooppunt_Kethelplein) (website visited: 2006-03-22).

<sup>1393</sup> [www.verkeerenwaterstaat.nl/?lc=nl&page=364](http://www.verkeerenwaterstaat.nl/?lc=nl&page=364) It started at 1967-08-01.

<sup>1394</sup> The first part of ‘Kleinpolderplein’ was already opened at the end of 1969 (JOURNAAL, NOS, 1969-11-11). Shortly afterwards it had already to deal with the problem of traffic jams, which was shown in a four minute film commissioned by the regional police service *Regiopolitie Rotterdam Rijnmond*. It also showed jams in the Europoort, at the Van Brienoordbrug and inside the city at Hofplein and near the Maastunnel (FILEVORMING, 1969, anon.). Film served the analysis of traffic movements. It was not meant for public screening. The authorities only addressed this issue indirectly (JOURNAAL, 1971-01-14). Later that year the official opening of the entire junction was shown, as a striking example of engineering, with four layers of roads, which offered a dazzling spectacle of compositions (JOURNAAL, NOS, 1971-06-23; Polygoon, 1971-wk30). Less favourable was a report on water abundance at the junction (JOURNAAL, 1971-07-21). For the construction, see also ROTTERDAM IN DE ZEVENTIGER JAREN (1968-1975, J.A. Visser).

<sup>1395</sup> Provoost, 1996: 79.

<sup>1396</sup> i.e. *Rijkswaterstaat Directie Bruggen*. For Van Hattum & Blankevoort, see [www.vhb-vsce.nl/](http://www.vhb-vsce.nl/) (2006-03-23).

<sup>1397</sup> The booklet is called *Kleinpolderplein* (Stuvel e.a., 1969), issued by Van Hattum & Blankevoort / reprint from the magazine *Weg en Waterbouw*, nr. 1969/07. The film was already commissioned before, but it was finished in 1971.

building methods, new ways of organisation and logistics, like transportation by waterway, are all needed in order to let the traffic go on during construction, which was one of the main challenges for the constructors<sup>1398</sup>. In the end the film shows aerial views of the finished junction. ‘Only a radical approach like that in Rotterdam is sufficient if one does not want to be confronted with complete traffic disorder on our roads in the future. There is no choice: one has to go up or down (*het is erop of eronder*)’<sup>1399</sup>. The title EROP OF ERONDER literally says: above or below, referring to the different traffic lanes, while it is also a Dutch expression to say ‘win or lose’. An epilogue follows, which is an artistic impression of the new infrastructural ‘sculpture’.

In the 1970s, the construction of motorways rapidly increased. It also generated protests, due to changing public opinion. It can be illustrated by the television programme HIER EN NU (NCRV, 1972-03-21). It starts with impressions of Kleinpolderplein. The first protest concerns the planned ‘Rijksweg A3’ (freeway), from Amsterdam to Rotterdam across the so-called Green Heart of the Randstad. E.J. Hennink, representative of the *werkgroep* against the road, argues that a precious nature area is threatened. It is illustrated by a film impression of the area, and opposed to plans of H.D. Prins, chairman of the “Dutch Association of Road Constructors” (*Nederlandse Vereniging Wegenvoerders*). Next is an explanation of the *werkgroep* against the Leidsebaan, a road in The Hague. Last is an argument of a committee to save the old country-seat Twickel, near Hengelo, from plans to build the road S23. Tracking shots through the landscape articulate the argument. The report finishes with more images of constructions, as opposed to nature. Not long after the programme was broadcast, all the three projects were cancelled.

Kleinpolderplein was built when the media became a battleground. In this perspective we may also understand the promotional value of a film like EROP OF ERONDER. Besides its particular interests, it helped to pave the way for other projects in Rotterdam. The next junction to be made (1972) was ‘Beneluxplein’ (A4-A15), at the end of the Beneluxtunnel south of the river<sup>1400</sup>. Notwithstanding its ingenious construction of three lanes on top of each other, it was left untouched by the media. The same applies to the turbine junction ‘Tebregseplein’ (opening 1973-06-21)<sup>1401</sup>, in the northeast of the ring (A20-A16), in spite of its separate lanes for private cars and trucks, and notwithstanding the fact that it provided an important connection with Utrecht.

About two years later, the JOURNAAL (1975-11-06) reported that the *Ruit* was ready, which was illustrated by tracking shots of ‘Kleinpolderplein’. For the next ten years, it was the last report on the infrastructural works around Rotterdam. Although one could indeed drive around the city by then, the *Ruit* was not yet finished. Only by 1979, the ring was truly completed, with the opening of the complicated star and clover-leaf junction ‘Ridderkerk’, which provided connections in the direction of Belgium and Germany<sup>1402</sup>. Four lanes pass on top of each other while at one side it counts sixteen lanes next to one another. Although it was a spectacular work of engineering, *Rijkswaterstaat* and the contractors refrained from further publicity.

By the end of the 1970s, infrastructural works were no longer presented as icons of progress, but as icons of environmental problems. An example is the programme AKTUA (TROS,

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<sup>1398</sup> This is also explicitly addressed, as reasons to make the film, in a letter (1973-01-24) that accompanied a film copy that was presented by Van Hattum and Blankevoort to the Gemeente Rotterdam ‘as a token of appreciation for the good collaboration’. GAR, letter in film can BB-0780, the letter is marked with the code ‘D174’.

<sup>1399</sup> Original quote: ‘Alleen een radicale aanpak zoals die bij Rotterdam is afdoende wil men in de toekomst niet geconfronteerd worden met een complete verkeerschaos op onze wegen. Er is geen keus: het is erop of eronder.’ The film, which had already been shown at different occasions, was officially presented to mayor Thomassen by Van Hattum & Blankevoort on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 1973, after the premiere of the film ZUIDPLEIN (1972, Aad Griekspoor); see: ‘Zuidplein film in première’, p8 in: *NRC Handelsblad*, 1973-02-01.

<sup>1400</sup> I.e. between Pernis and Hoogvliet – [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knooppunt\\_Benelux](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knooppunt_Benelux) (2006-03-21)

<sup>1401</sup> <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tebregseplein>. In 1977 was the opening of ‘Vaanplein’, in the east: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaanplein> (2006-03-21); a ‘windmill’, later combined with a ‘star’ and ‘clover-leaf’.

<sup>1402</sup> As a node of the A15 and A16, located in the south, where one finds connections to Nijmegen and Dordrecht [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knooppunt\\_Ridderkerk](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knooppunt_Ridderkerk), cf. : [www.beeldbankvenw.nl](http://www.beeldbankvenw.nl) (2006-03-21)



1979-09-29), on smog research by TNO, including images of oil tanks in the port of Rotterdam and of its motorways. Whatever critical opinions were demonstrated, the *Ruit* had become a matter of fact. Strategies changed, and communication processes along with them, in order to secure urban development in the end. The suburbs and the relocated port became connected and integral part of the city, which accommodated the increasing number of daily commuters. However, ideas for a second and larger ring around the whole agglomeration of Rotterdam, which was still discussed in 1969<sup>1403</sup>, were soon left behind.

#### § 4. Airport Zestienhoven

In May 1940, Airport Waalhaven was the stage of fights; the Dutch eventually destroyed it, and aeroplane factory Koolhoven, to prevent the Germans to use it. After the war the government did not want another airport close to Schiphol, but a location was nevertheless appointed in 1948<sup>1404</sup>. A construction board along the A13 highway boldly mentioned that a new national airport was under construction. Politicians were surprised and wanted to stop it, but it continued. 'Airport Zestienhoven', with a 1300 metre runway and a few wooden buildings, was opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1956 by Mayor Van Walsum. It was reported one day later by the NTS JOURNAAL (1956-10-02), which showed the connection to Southend-on-Sea (UK), while Polygoon (1956-wk40) showed the work that had enabled it: the construction of the runway and the control tower.

Although the KLM had run the first airline in Rotterdam in the 1920s, it took time before it came back. The first KLM aircraft at Zestienhoven was welcomed by Mayor Van Walsum, as shown in a relatively long report (JOURNAAL, NTS, 1959-11-06) on the history of aviation in Rotterdam. In the next years the airport would be frequently subject of television reports, which meant direct promotion<sup>1405</sup>. Due to the precarious development of the airport, its director Van der Hoeden maintained good relations with the media. Any kind of news was communicated, about subjects as different as a flight school, the hoisting up of a subsidised DC-9, or, for example, the transportation of small aircrafts to Tunisia for agricultural purposes<sup>1406</sup>. The airport's management even arranged a special flight for journalists to shoot a lunar eclipse (JOURNAAL, 1964-06-28).

In 1965 the Sabena helicopter flights were taken over from the Heliport in the city, which had to close<sup>1407</sup>. Due to the airport's success new companies came to Rotterdam, like Swissair, Lufthansa and Air France, and related businesses came along with them, so the airport had to renew its facilities. The plans were first presented by the JOURNAAL, by way of models (1964-02-23), which were accompanied by nice shots of the lit runway at night. When the construction works started, they were presented by a short film made by Gemeentewerken itself<sup>1408</sup>. The JOURNAAL, in its turn, reported twice on the construction, of the traffic control tower and the new hall. It continued to monitor the development of the airport, after the plans were carried out, in 1970, and when half a million passengers were counted after the next six months<sup>1409</sup>.

Besides regular flights the airport organised special events, such as tourist flights above Rotterdam, and air shows, which also attracted the attention of the media<sup>1410</sup>. Mayor Thomassen

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<sup>1403</sup> See for example Nieuwenhuijze, 1969: 15.

<sup>1404</sup> For these and following facts: 'Geschiedenis Rotterdam Airport' (March 2006) [www.rotterdam-airport.nl/generalmenu/Voor\\_kinderen/Schoolpakket/Terug\\_in\\_de\\_tijd/Geschiedenis\\_Rotterdam\\_Airport](http://www.rotterdam-airport.nl/generalmenu/Voor_kinderen/Schoolpakket/Terug_in_de_tijd/Geschiedenis_Rotterdam_Airport)

<sup>1405</sup> E.g. ESPRESSO (VARA, 1961-08-19), about a memorial; EXTRA (VPRO, 1965-11-04), on the growth of the airport; Polygoon (1963-week25), on the introduction of a new aircraft, the Carvair, to carry automobiles to Great Britain (the cars are lifted by a special elevator and then driven into the nose of the aircraft).

<sup>1406</sup> JOURNAAL [school] NTS, 1968-01-04; JOURNAAL [DC-9] NTS, 1969-02-11; JOURNAAL [Tunisia] NTS, 1969-12-05.

<sup>1407</sup> Already before, helicopter flights took place from Zestienhoven, see e.g. JOURNAAL, NTS, 1958-11-04.

<sup>1408</sup> I.e. LUCHTHAVEN ROTTERDAM (1967, Henk Vrijmoet).

<sup>1409</sup> JOURNAAL [construction of tower] NTS, 1969-09-16; JOURNAAL [construction of the hall] NOS, 1970-04-28; JOURNAAL (NOS, 1971-03-08): Alderman Polak explains the official report on the development of Zestienhoven.

<sup>1410</sup> See respectively: VRIJ UIT (NOS, 1970-07-17), JOURNAAL (NOS, 1970-09-26); cf. VLIEGFEEST OP ZESTIENHOVEN (Polygoon, 1965-10-02); VLIEGTUIGSHOW OP ZESTIENHOVEN (Polygoon, 1978-06-03).

thus promoted the airport in terms of ‘more welfare and pleasure’<sup>1411</sup>. It generated support among the citizens, but the airport faced nevertheless a difficult period in the early 1970s. First of all there was the threat of terrorists hijacking aeroplanes<sup>1412</sup>. There were also protests against its extension, which was transmitted by the JOURNAAL and by the VPRO that showed a meeting of the ‘anti-bulderbaan’ committee in Berkel & Rodenrijs<sup>1413</sup>. The JOURNAAL also reported on the results of a NIPO questionnaire that was held among the neighbouring residents, to ask for their experiences concerning noise and their opinion about the extension plans<sup>1414</sup>. The conclusion was that the airport could go on, when appropriate measures would be taken. But then the physical condition of the runway became problematic. After strong discussions, broadcast by the NOS, it was finally decided to renovate it<sup>1415</sup>. It was documented through the film *RUNWAY 06-24* (1974), made by Werner Jansen and his Rotterdam based production company Capricornus<sup>1416</sup>. With Jansen himself being trained as an engineer, the film fits the genre of the ‘construction film’, which was commissioned by Royal Stevin, one of the constructors<sup>1417</sup>. As the airport had to be closed for two weeks, Jansen used the tight time schedule to create a tension: man versus time.

Zestienhoven became a node in an international network, and as such a site for all kinds of encounters, which offered possibilities, but also threats. It was, for example, the stage for a ‘television narrative’ on the IRA kidnapping AKZO-director Tiede Herrema, who was held hostage for thirty-six days<sup>1418</sup>. After people went to Ireland to negotiate, the NOS finally reported the reunion of Herrema with his family awaiting him<sup>1419</sup>. While life went on, the destination of the airport remained uncertain, as the discussion about the need of a second national airport was fuelled again. The city council, anticipating a negative outcome, thought of using the area for housing. Employees went to the town hall to protest against the closure, and felt themselves supported by the JOURNAAL reporting on it (1976-01-27). Alderman Mentink stuck to his idea, which he expressed once more in an interview for the JOURNAAL (1977-07-26). The airport, he argued, could not become a major economic force like the port, as Schiphol was destined to hold such a role. Mentink, however, did not have the last say, and different developments took place simultaneously. KLM’s daughter company NLM even decided to fly to more destinations from Zestienhoven<sup>1420</sup>. In the end Zestienhoven was not closed, but continued to grow.

The development of Zestienhoven was the result of opposed forces; film and television played a moderating role in it. In respect of its size and importance to the country, the airport attracted a relatively large amount of attention. Besides the aeroplanes themselves, other discussions were ‘flying in the air’, concerning the connection between Rotterdam and Amsterdam, the position of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, the status of local versus national interests, the interaction between seaport and airport, and economic interests versus housing and environment. Media did not only give an image of the airport, its space, planning and logistics; they enabled a discourse on urbanism.

<sup>1411</sup> As mentioned by Van de Laar (‘meer welvaart en meer vertier’), 2000: 510.

<sup>1412</sup> See: *TELEVIZIER III 37* (AVRO, 1972-06-19), *JOURNAAL* (NOS, 1972-06-23).

<sup>1413</sup> I.e. *BERICHTEN UIT DE SAMENLEVING: GELUIDSHINDER*, VPRO, 1971-03-25; reports of the NOS *JOURNAAL* on this issue were broadcast on: 1970-04-28; 1971-06-04; 1971-09-14.

<sup>1414</sup> See: *JOURNAAL* (NOS, 1971-11-30; 1972-06-14).

<sup>1415</sup> See: *JOURNAAL* (NOS, 1974-04-19), *DEN HAAG VANDAAG* (NOS, 1974-04-24); and *JOURNAAL* (NOS, 1974-09-02), *VAN GEWEST TOT GEWEST* (NOS, 1974-09-11).

<sup>1416</sup> Capricornus was, since 1974, the continuation of Studio Freddy Lievense, Rotterdam (see filmography > Lievense). Capricornus was directed by Werner Jansen himself; collaborators were Inge Overkleef and Bertus van Dinter (for the latter, see e.g. *RIJNVAART III*, 1970). See: Happel, Frans; ‘Werner jansen, Bedrijfscineast: Gewoon, gewoon goed, gewoon filmgek’, in: *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 1975-04-02.

<sup>1417</sup> Stevin also commissioned other films, such as *WERKEN OM WATER* (1975, Joop Span).

<sup>1418</sup> Cf. Van Nimwegen, 2007: 44.

<sup>1419</sup> See: *JOURNAAL*, NOS, 1975-10-10; 1975-10-11; 1975-11-08; see also: *Polygoon*, 1975-wk46.

<sup>1420</sup> *JOURNAAL* (NOS, 1977-10-13).

## § 5. Rotterdam, De Randstad and the Netherlands

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the biggest cities in the Netherlands were Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Over the course of the century, each of their agglomerations grew to over one million inhabitants, but the numbers of the core cities have remained relatively stable since the 1920s; with some fluctuations they have counted about 700,000 and 600,000 people respectively. These figures are modest compared to major cities abroad. In fact, the Netherlands is characterised by its large number of relatively small cities. Since the Middle Ages, these cities were already competing with each other, so that each of them managed to develop its own commercial, cultural and educational institutions. After the fast industrial-urban growth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a new cityscape emerged, made up by different but closely related cities. In 1938, the founder and president of the KLM, Albert Plesman, called it the 'Randstad' ("Rim city")<sup>1421</sup>. Flying over the country, the chain of cities looked like a rim, with a 'Green Heart' in the middle.

In 1959, the Randstad was, for the first time, the subject of a documentary: RUIJTE, RUMOER, RANDSTAD ("Space, Noise, Randstad", Arie de Ruyter, VARA, 1959-02-25). The Randstad was used as a name to address increasing congestion. Regarding Rotterdam, we do not only see the city centre and its port, but also the way it is related to other cities; a map of the Randstad is shown, which was a novelty. In about a quarter of an hour, images of different cities interchange: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and several smaller ones, with all kinds of industries being related, from oil to horticulture. The congestion in the Randstad is opposed to other areas in the Netherlands, with lower population densities, and less employment. As such the film makes an argument for decentralisation, which, it is suggested, offers more possibilities for economic development within European perspectives.

The Randstad, as a planning concept, has never been clearly defined. However, the actual constellation, of an urban network with nodes that are complete cities with their own (historical) identities, comes close to the vision of Lewis Mumford. 'We can no longer think, in old-fashioned terms, of a "metropolis of three million people," for that no longer corresponds to the range of urban cooperation....'<sup>1422</sup> For Mumford, human interaction is the basis for urban planning. 'We must rather seek a new over-all pattern for both the small-scale and the large-scale unit. The expression and linking together of these units is the task of modern urban design.' The key to do so Mumford found in landscape planning, in order to 'provide a permanent green matrix'. It would allow for a larger structure to include different urban clusters, separated from each other by green belts, but connected by infrastructure.

This larger structure, unlike the present clumsy magnification of the old Stone Age container, is rather an open network, comparable to the electric power grid, which utilizes both small and big units to form a greater interdependent system. // With a regional grid, the smallest urban unit will be able to make demands and draw on all the resources of the largest unit in a two-way system of intercourse and cooperation. But to create such a larger system, one must begin with a reorganization of small units, by introducing balance, self-government, organic growth, and a dynamic, self-renewing form into the neighborhood, the precinct, the city, and into all the institutional components of the city, which have become clumsy and disorganized through unregulated overexpansion.<sup>1423</sup>

The situation of the Randstad corresponded to this vision, but also to the modernist ideal of a city with abundant air and space. Citizens could be outside the city in about fifteen minutes. Mumford elaborated on it in the article 'Landscape and Townscape' (1960).

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<sup>1421</sup> Wagenaar, 1992: 389 n97; cf. Van de Laar, 2000: 311. In the late 1930s, when a discussion took place in respect of the airports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, Plesman proposed an airport for the Randstad Holland, near Leiderdorp.

<sup>1422</sup> This and following quote: Mumford, 1968: 139.

<sup>1423</sup> Mumford, 1968: 140.



The most important public task, around every growing urban center, and far beyond, is to reserve permanent open areas, capable of being maintained for agriculture, horticulture, and related rural industries. These areas must be established in such a fashion as to prevent the coalescence of one urban unit with another. Within its metropolitan area, this has been the notable accomplishment of Stockholm, and in no small degree of the Netherlands as an ecological regional entity.<sup>1424</sup>

Mumford included De Randstad in his series LEWIS MUMFORD ON THE CITY (1963, Ian MacNeill), which was produced by the National Film Board of Canada<sup>1425</sup>. It was a project with many collaborators, among them the Dutch filmmaker Ytzen Brusse<sup>1426</sup>. Based on Mumford's book *The City in History*, the first out of six parts, of half an hour each, starts with the rise and fall of cities, and the creative and destructive forces that shape them, with Rotterdam as an example. In the second part, the Randstad is introduced, shot by Bert Haanstra, as a model to solve problems of congestion. This view would be elaborated by others, among them the British planner Gerald Burke, who spoke of the *Greenheart Metropolis* (1966).

Contrary to the planning policies, however, the 'Green Heart' became a place for suburban living, since the late 1960s. According to Wagenaar (1992: 284), suburbanisation was an implication of the *wijkgedachte*, which, as an idea, developed parallel to that of the Randstad. Suburbanisation reinforced social-economic ties within the region, but it also demanded good infrastructure. Hence a network-like urban structure emerged. Critic Niek de Boer has stated (1996) that this is no big city, and that a policy vision upon a big city is altogether lacking in the Netherlands. *Rijkswaterstaat*, however, envisioned the so-called *Stad Nederland*, with the country being a network of interrelated and interdependent cities, with 'functional parks' in between (i.e. for agriculture)<sup>1427</sup>. The regional planning authority of Zuid-Holland, in its turn, envisioned, for the end of the century, a megalopolis of 40 to 45 million inhabitants, including large parts of the Netherlands and Belgium, and the Ruhrgebiet, with Rotterdam as its main port<sup>1428</sup>.

While planners attempted to elaborate the Randstad as a concept, it became a common notion among the Dutch to indicate the western part of the Netherlands, its congestion and its economic prosperity, which kept a promise for the future. In 1960, it even became the name of an employment agency, the now renowned Randstad Holding. In 1961, it also became the name of a literary magazine (1961-1969, published by De Bezige Bij). However common the notion had become, it was hardly reflected by motion pictures. One reason is that there existed no Randstad government, to commission films about it. Although it was often mentioned in reports, it was not before 1978 that another programme explicitly took it as its subject, DE RANDSTAD HOLLAND (1978, Teleac) as part of an educational series on Dutch history. It showed urbanisation patterns in the Netherlands and it addressed traffic problems. It seems that the notion of Randstad referred first of all to infrastructure and congestion, rather than functional relationships between the cities.

Filmmakers still relied upon the idea of the metropolis, and felt more affiliated with a particular town than with the Randstad. For Rotterdam, it was also less of an issue than other large-scale urban constellations<sup>1429</sup>. More attention was paid to the Rijnmond, and the attempt to set up a Rijnmond administration (*Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond*, 1964-1986)<sup>1430</sup>. Alternatively,

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<sup>1424</sup> Mumford, 1968: 83-84.

<sup>1425</sup> For more information on this film, see: [www.nfb.ca](http://www.nfb.ca).

<sup>1426</sup> He was responsible for fragments of Part 4: THE HEART OF THE CITY.

<sup>1427</sup> For further references, see: Provoost, 1996: 61-73.

<sup>1428</sup> Lange: 1964: 15.

<sup>1429</sup> For films on regional planning in the province of Zuid-Holland, see e.g.: ZUID-HOLLAND (1964, Otto van Neijenhoff), and AAN DE ORDE IS... (1979, Werner Jansen), made for consultancy office *Adviesbureau Stad en Landschap*, and *Vereniging Dorp, Stad en Land* (association for planning interests).

<sup>1430</sup> Van de Laar, 2000: 499-501.

connections were drawn with port cities abroad, such as London and those along the river Rhine, which come to the fore in many foreign films<sup>1431</sup>.

Although there is no substantial body of films from the 1960s and 1970s on the Randstad, some titles can still be mentioned, such as the ‘television-poème’ SHOPPING CENTRA (1962, Joop Reinboud). This (16mm colour) film shows the cities of Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam. They are made into one cinematic composition through street shots and images of buildings, the people inside and the traffic around them. There are close-ups of posters, consumer goods and cars, and how people use them. Children ride a tricycle, a scooter and a cart, each in another city. By combining images of different places, a new place emerges on the screen. Something similar applies to a programme on playgrounds for children across the Randstad<sup>1432</sup>. Of a different order is a report on an exchange between Amsterdam and Rotterdam, with the Amsterdam city council and Mayor Samkalden visiting Rotterdam, hosted by Mayor Thomassen<sup>1433</sup>.

There are, furthermore, reports dealing with the interdependence of Dutch cities as part of the Netherlands as a social-economic and environmental system. A returning theme is housing, especially in respect of a housing shortage<sup>1434</sup>. It is exemplified by THE BUILDING GAME (1963, C. Huguenot van der Linden)<sup>1435</sup>. It was commissioned by the “Joint Building Enterprises” (*Gezamenlijke Bouwbedrijven*), to celebrate the fact that one million dwellings were built in the Netherlands after WWII. The film won a Golden Bear at the 1963 Berlin Film Festival<sup>1436</sup>, for its energetic and playful approach. Shots of buildings from various cities become one cinematic construction, through a sophisticated matching of colours and compositions. The result is a new, all-encompassing city. It corresponded to everyday experiences as far as people encountered similar buildings and styles in different cities, while within a city one could see many different styles and approaches. Particular building enterprises operated in different places at the same time, hence creating structural connections between them.

The film was made alongside Alsemgeest’s LEVEN IN DE BOUWERIJ (1963)<sup>1437</sup>, while there was also the publication of the Bruna pocket *Wij Bouwen* (1963, Godfried Bomans, photographs by Kees Scherer e.a.). Like the films, this book hardly mentions any city by name, but addresses the energy and possibilities of building. With an almost utopian enthusiasm they express the modernist paradigms of placelessness and timelessness, or it must have been a concern with the space of the future. In addition, an exhibition was organised at the ‘Bouwcentrum’ in Rotterdam, which also collaborated with KRO-television on a series of television programmes on housing<sup>1438</sup>.

The *Medienverbund* of the one-millionth dwelling promoted an industry, a modern way of living and thinking. The industry and the government shared the same agenda, which is illustrated by the film NOG NIET (“Not Yet”, 1970, Elvira Kleinen)<sup>1439</sup>. Made for the Ministry of

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<sup>1431</sup> e.g. LA PAROLE EST AU FLEUVE (1960, Claude Lafaille, Marianne Oswald), ZUM TOR EUROPA (1964, Renate von Ammon), DE RIJN ZOEKT ZIJN WEG NAAR DE ZEE; DE RIJNDELTA (1977, Ion Bostan).

<sup>1432</sup> cf. DAG NEDERLAND; KINDEREN IN VAKANTIETIJD (AVRO, 1972-07-22); impression of children in summer, playing in the Amsterdamse Bos, in the *Energiehal* and *Zuiderpark* in Rotterdam, and on a building lot in Utrecht.

<sup>1433</sup> i.e. MONITOR (NTS, 1967-10-29). Another example is the ‘police film’ VAN NUL TOT 24 (1968, Pim Korver), for the police forces in the main cities; all kinds of scenes are arranged in which the police has to come into action.

<sup>1434</sup> e.g. DE SOCIALE WONINGBOUW EIST EEN OMWENTELING (1971, Milo Anstadt); ANNO 1973 (Richard Hock).

<sup>1435</sup> Dutch title: BOUWSPELEMENT. It is a punning of words: *Bouw* + *Spel* + *Element* = Building Game Element.

<sup>1436</sup> Hogenkamp, 2003: 204; Hofstede, 2000: 109.

<sup>1437</sup> It is a punning of the saying ‘leven in de brouwerij’: life in the brewery = ‘something is going on’. The film is lost.

<sup>1438</sup> i.e. HUIS, THUIS, WONEN (1963-1964, Guus Kristel). Looking towards the future, the building enterprises anticipated the two-millionth dwelling in 1975. Therefore the exhibition showed the so-called *Woning 1975*, for which the ‘Bouwcentrum’ developed a prototype, designed by H. Eckardt, who also presented a full-scale model of it in the television programme. It was conceived upon notions like ‘elasticity’, with adjustable walls, together with ideas of industrial building, the use of new materials like plastics, and high-tech electronic applications (incl. in-built audiovisual equipment). Overall it followed some sort of structuralist lay-out, centred around patios and terraces.

<sup>1439</sup> Cf. BEWOONBAAR LAND (1968, Jan Wiegel), which is another film on planning that was also edited by Kleinen and commissioned by the Ministry of Housing and Planning.

Housing and Planning, this compilation film, including images of *THE BUILDING GAME*, gives an overview of housing production since 1945. It states that the targets have ‘not yet’ been achieved, which would require innovative approaches. While these films concerned a particular *subject*, other films (e.g. by Carillon), promoted the Netherlands *as a country*, to show foreign audiences its economic resources, in which perspective the port of Rotterdam was usually shown<sup>1440</sup>. Still other films drew a more general impression of the country<sup>1441</sup>. Many of them concern the theme of water and landscape, and hence the way Rotterdam is structurally connected to other places.

An example is the Shell film *HOLD BACK THE SEA* (1961, George Sluizer)<sup>1442</sup>. It was made to introduce foreign relations to the country. Rotterdam is shown for its port, as a major hub within a network of waterways connecting different places, and as a part of an overall environmental system. That is also the case in Bert Haanstra’s independently made feature-length documentary *THE VOICE OF THE WATER* (1966)<sup>1443</sup>. It shows the way the Dutch grow up with water, and how it is part of Dutch identity. In this perspective the port is shown as an impressive entourage and its dynamics are emphasised by fast-motion images. Giant ships seem even greater as they are filmed from below. In between them a boatman is busy with hawsers, which is a traditional job that is still needed in the modern harbour. All this is shown in contrast to the quietness of inland waters, with people fishing, and sailing on Frisian lakes. The Netherlands encompass a network of towns, but important too are the areas in between.

The assistant director of this film was Rolf Orthel. For British Petroleum (BP), concerned with mobility, he subsequently directed, with Haanstra as the producer and partly the same crew, *BRIDGES IN HOLLAND* (1968). According to a similar canvas, the film shows all sorts of bridges across the country, including Rotterdam. The connection between the bridges is the water that cuts through the landscape. Comparable is *SKY OVER HOLLAND* (1967, John Fernhout), which was a promotional film for the Netherlands, shot on 70mm, shown at the World Exhibition of Montreal (1967). The Dutch landscape is seen from the sky, which is closely related to masterpieces of Dutch painting, as the film shows. City and countryside, it is suggested, are part of one big composition. In all these films, Rotterdam is presented as part of a larger landscape. If it comes to identity, it is most of all a national one, and based on geography. The space of the Netherlands is shown, with its constructions, resources, and elements like water and air.

Whereas these films rarely dealt with urban culture as such, I should mention one more case. In 1975, the chief editor of AVRO’s *TELEVIZIER*, Jaap van Meekren, who generally spent the majority of his time on urban issues, made a documentary called “Searching for the world of tomorrow; the urbanisation of the Earth” (*OP ZOEK NAAR DE WERELD VAN MORGEN; DE VERSTEDELIJING VAN DE AARDE*, 1975-06-02). It deals with large scale urbanisation. Issues like criminality, pollution, conflicts, poverty and bad housing conditions are opposed to economic wealth and progress, and the human concern to direct the developments, to establish prosperous communities and unique cultures. The examples shown in the film, including Bombay, Tokyo, New York, Arcosanti, Brasilia, Reston, and Curitiba, serve as warnings, models, directions and opportunities for the cities of the Randstad, which are briefly shown at the end of the film.

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<sup>1440</sup> e.g. Carillon productions such as *HOLLAND TODAY* (1962, Gerard Raucamp), *D’HORIZON À HORIZON* (1963, Gerard Raucamp), *...AND THEY CALLED IT HOLLAND* (1967), *MAN, SHIPS AND OIL* (1960s, Gerard Raucamp); other examples: *EFG-DOCUMENTAIRE* (1964, Harry Hagedoren); *BESTAANSBRONNEN VAN HET NEDERLANDSE VOLK* (1967, Max de Haas).

<sup>1441</sup> Besides promotional films, this also included documentaries, educational and fiction films (e.g. the feature *GOING DUTCH*, 1973, Harry Booth).

<sup>1442</sup> For this film, see also: Hogenkamp: 2003, 2009-211. Other examples are: *THE NETHERLANDS PAST AND PRESENT* (1960, anon.), in which the country’s architecture is highlighted (a.o. Groothandelsgebouw, Lijnbaan), while water is called the ‘key of life’, and: *WATER* (Fred Oster / AVRO, 1961-07-14).

<sup>1443</sup> The narrator (Simon Carmiggelt) comments e.g. that ‘the water is great, humans just small’ and thus, ‘in order to survive in this low country, we have to think big’. Original quote: ‘het water is groot, de mens is maar klein’, en dus ‘om in dit lage land te blijven bestaan moeten we in het groot denken’.

As Mumford wrote, the city's functions are not the four listed by Le Corbusier; the city is above all a meeting place<sup>1444</sup>. Its social fabric and civic character define all other functions, which can be read from the list of media reports<sup>1445</sup>. The world of television, in which Rotterdam stands next to other places, reflects also a polycentric urban culture. Moreover, television people themselves ran from one node to another. As such they also contributed to an emerging urban culture, but to frame it remained still something to be explored.

## § 6. moving on

Regarding audiovisual media and mobility in Rotterdam, various kinds of media productions have come to the fore: educational films for children, cinema and television newsreels and documentaries for a general audience, television programmes that enabled public discussion, informative films for residents of particular neighbourhoods, films that have served engineers and policy-makers, or investors and clients, archival recordings for future generations, and amateur films for private use, among others. Although their common denominator is the issue of mobility, they are different in terms of target groups and numbers of spectators, budgets, forms of presentation, possible effects, and also in their cinematic approaches, convictions and styles.

Some of the productions are characterised by mobile framing, from a camera mounted on the doorstep of a tram, tracking shots through tunnels, to aerial recordings; some films have shown fast movements, of vehicles that pass by from different directions; expressive forms of montage have combined different places into a new urban space, or contrasted movements of different modes of transport. Many other films, however, have had little dynamics within them.

Motion exists when there is also standstill, and it makes only sense when there are destinations. Similarly there are 'directions' when there are also 'junctions' with particular coordinates. Following the same logic, films may contain mobile frames of static objects, or static frames of mobile objects. Or the camera may stand still in a moving environment (e.g. an interview in a tram). Motion can, alternatively, be present in the processes shown, and movement may be only noticeable through gradual development. This applies to construction films, but also to 'developing compositions' of (television) reports.

The structure of motion is a matter of cinematic engineering, in order to show directions to move to, and to support particular urban models. It has involved filmmakers, constructors, commissioners, and various groups of citizens, for whom different values were at stake. Exchanges between them did not result in one set of cinematic conventions. Returning to Bordwell, there seems to be no direct relationship between mobility, as a modern phenomenon, and cinematic perception, but instead there has been a web of interconnections. Together they have generated the motion that is characteristic for the modern city.

Television, as a public realm (albeit through private viewing), served public interests, while cinema was used for corporate interests. Film and television, in dialogue with one another, have been 'markers' regarding the urban environment, by showing perspectives and articulating prospects. Here one may finally recognise the issue of stigmergy. Agents follow signs in the environment, which are related to previously established paths. Media reporting on the creation of infrastructural projects can literally be seen as, respectively, signs and paths, which have informed the public and mapped possible directions for development. It has initially been a matter of positive feedback, which reinforced the development, but eventually it triggered negative feedback, which required other paths to be explored. This is a matter of collective learning through feedback that is fundamental to the way human society appropriates the environment, as a matter of systemic self-organisation<sup>1446</sup>. There is a parallel with other stigmergic systems to be found in nature. 'Negative feedback counterbalances positive feedback and helps to stabilize the

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<sup>1444</sup> In 'Yesterday's City of Tomorrow', first published in *Architectural Record*, Nov. 1962, reprint: Mumford, 1968.

<sup>1445</sup> Like AVRO's TELEVIZIER, as well as NCRV's HIER EN NU, VARA's ACHTER HET NIEUWS, KRO's BRANDPUNT a.o.

<sup>1446</sup> cf. Salinger, 2005: 233.

collective pattern: it may take the form of saturation, exhaustion, or competition' (Bonabeau, Dorigo, Theraulaz, 1999: 10). Instances of saturation include traffic jams and overcrowded parts of the city (to which traffic safety films are informative too), exhaustion has been illustrated by problems related to energy and natural resources, and competition is exemplified by different views of (urban) development, while next to that we have seen the competition between different media, particularly film and television. Such dynamics will be further elaborated in the next chapter.