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Cinematic Rotterdam: the times and tides of a modern city

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CHAPTER 16. RE/VISIONS

§ 1. the human dimension

Rotterdam had been rebuilt as a ‘functional city’ according to CIAM’s ‘Athens Charter’ from 1933, which became internationally the main reference for post-war planning. However, a group of architects within CIAM, among them the Dutch architects Jacob Bakema and Aldo van Eyck¹⁸²⁴, observed a technocratic tendency and a preoccupation with functions rather than with human needs. In 1954 this group wrote the *Doorn Manifesto*, which started as follows: ‘It is useless to consider the house except as a part of a community owing to the interaction of these on each other.’ One had to ‘study the dwelling and the groupings that are necessary to produce convenient communities’, but one also emphasised that: ‘The appropriateness of any solution may lie in the field of architectural invention rather than social anthropology.’

This group, which became known as ‘Team X’ [Team Ten], did no longer think of architecture and planning as the sum of functions, but as the ‘material form of relations’, with form having its own function, inseparable from social interaction¹⁸²⁵. New ways to arrange dwellings and communities were conceived through issues like the ‘layered city’, circulation, growth and change, flexible structures, the aesthetics of numbers, and generally the link between architecture and urbanism – the premises of what was later called ‘structuralism’. One argued that individualised approaches were needed, rather than a charter with general prescriptions. As a result, CIAM was eventually dissolved in 1959¹⁸²⁶. Bakema and Van Eyck subsequently became involved with ‘Forum’, which was a magazine that represented the new movement, which would also include people like Herman Herzberger, Herman Haan and Piet Blom, among others¹⁸²⁷.

Bakema, together with his companion Van den Broek, was a key figure within the modern movement in Rotterdam, and as such their studio received much attention¹⁸²⁸. At the same time Bakema was also its critic. Besides his emphasis on the human dimension and social needs, he spoke of *beeldend functionalism* (‘visual functionalism’) and ‘the function of the form’, which he also expressed in a television series, VAN STOEL TOT STAD (‘From Chair to City’, NTS, 1961-1963). The series, which made him a well-known personality in the Netherlands, were like public lectures, with Bakema explaining his ideas on design, architecture and urbanism, while drawing on a blackboard¹⁸²⁹. The series dealt with the development of human settlement, and the search for a balanced relationship between people and their surroundings, including nature and the social environment. It was an appeal to the senses, to understand space, and to understand the position of the individual in industrialised society. Although a small book was published afterwards (1964), which made use of the material from the series, live television, allowed for a different rhetoric, which made use of the ephemeral character of the medium¹⁸³⁰. Rather than a written argumentation that could be read once and again, with fact and figures to be checked, this was a communication of ideas through speech, gestures and drawings¹⁸³¹. The

¹⁸²⁴ Other members were Georges Candilis, Giancarlo de Carlo, William & Jill Howell, Alison & Peter Smithson, John Völcker, Shadrach Woods. www.team10online.org/team10/text/doorn-manifesto.htm (2007-04-10).

¹⁸²⁵ See e.g. www.kunstbus.nl/verklaringen/team-10.html (2007-04-10).

¹⁸²⁶ Cf. www.kunstbus.nl/verklaringen/team-10.html (2007-04-10). Team-X remained to exist for 20 years.

¹⁸²⁷ All of them would become involved with projects in Rotterdam: Aldo van Eyck contributed to the E55; Herman Hertzberger made a design for the Schouwburgplein (not carried out), see Pim Korver’s news report for the NOS JOURNAAL (1977-03-30); Herman Haan built various private houses (e.g. ‘Woonhuis Uitenbroek’, 1954-1956) and the office of the GEM (1963), a.o.; Piet Blom built the ‘cube houses’ (1976-1984).

¹⁸²⁸ Besides various programmes that included their work (e.g. OPENBAAR KUNSTBEZIT; MODERNE ARCHITECTUUR, NOS, 1963-10-07), see also e.g. KIJK OP KUNST, KRO, 1962-11-01.

¹⁸²⁹ Cf. Van den Heuvel e.a., 2003: 64.

¹⁸³⁰ Only one show (1961-10-22) has been preserved through telerecording (i.e. 16mm recording from a television screen).

¹⁸³¹ The series is often mentioned in (biographical) texts on Bakema, but little has actually been recalled. More specific references make use of quotes from the book.

programme had a great impact, both within the community of architects and outside it, and as such it contributed to a critical discussion on architecture and urban planning in general.

At about the same time a public discussion started on the development and the identity of Rotterdam. Whereas the reconstruction of Rotterdam had first been heralded as a model of modern planning, it became subject to criticism once it reached completion. The VPRO broadcasting Van der Velde's *POLDERS VOOR INDUSTRIE* (1961) was important. Although this documentary concerned primarily the extension of the port, it also drew a link with city planning (see Chapter 13. §2). In 1965, the discussion was propelled by the KRO report *DE NIEUWE STAD, LEEFBAAR?* It was broadcast on the 10th of May, the day of the German invasion in the Netherlands in 1940, and shortly before the publication of Rein Blijstra's book, the opening of the exhibition *Rotterdam, Stad in Beweging*, and the premiere of the remake of *EN TOCH... ROTTERDAM* (Polygoon), which celebrated the achievements of the reconstruction. Instead, this television report focused on *leefbaarheid* ('liveability').

DE NIEUWE STAD, LEEFBAAR? starts with explanations by Van Traa, who was just retired, but willing to address once more the spatial merits of the city plan, especially its openness. City architect Rein Fledderus explains that some people are not so happy with it today, but it may take two more generations to see the results, both in the city centre and the suburbs. Only then a community and an urban culture will be fully grown. The film pays respect to the intentions of the planners and architects, but still questions the principles on which the city is conceived. It recognises that the rectangle is a clear and powerful matrix of Rotterdam's planning and architecture, which is illustrated by various images (e.g. of the suburb 'Ommoord'), but at the same time, it is said, it is boring when it is endlessly repeated, up to 'deadly uniformity'. Instead, an argument is made for 'organic growth'. This is stressed by architecture critic J.J. Vriend, who calls Rotterdam 'an exhibition of architecture that closes at ten p.m.' He finds it difficult to predict what the next generations will consider as 'liveable', but according to him it means a pub and things like a carpenter's workshop around the corner, where residents can be in touch with the city. The film thus asks attention for 'more simple things' that generate an urban atmosphere.

In the meantime, Jan Schaper worked on the documentary *STAD ZONDER HART* (1966, see Chapter 11. §2), broadcast by NCRV, which expressed a similar view. Television in general, and Schaper's film in particular, played an important role in the public discussion on the identity of Rotterdam. Within this discussion, a renewed interest in the old city came to the fore, and what had happened with it during the war and afterwards. Like *STAD ZONDER HART*, which made use of images of Von Bary's *THE CITY THAT NEVER RESTS* (1928), many of these films made use of existing footage, in order to evaluate the historical process¹⁸³². Schaper's emphasis on the vividness of the old city, his argument for the human dimension, for the city to enable social interaction, is striking if one considers the fact that he began this film only a few years after his plea *in favour* of modernist planning (*OLD TOWN GROWING YOUNGER*, 1958).

The changing public opinion directly affected business interests. Therefore D.C.P. van de Pavoordt, director of department store Vroom & Dreesmann, commissioned a study to analyse the problems, which was conducted by social-psychologist Prof. Dr. Rob Wentholt. In the resulting publication, *De Binnenstadsbeleving en Rotterdam* (1968), Wentholt reached the same conclusion as Schaper: Rotterdam had become a victim of modernist planning ideology that did not take into account vital psychological functions of a city, like sociability, vividness, and visual attractiveness. He suggested to turn Rotterdam into a compact city with a high density of

¹⁸³² See e.g. *TELEVIZIER* (AVRO, 1964-04-17), on the bombardment, *DE BEZETTING*; AFL. 20: *DE HONGERWINTER* (Milo Anstadt, NTS: 1968-02-13), including an interview with Ms. J.M. van Walsum-Quispel on razzias in Rotterdam for the *Arbeitseinsatz*; *ACHTER HET NIEUWS* (VARA, 1970-04-20), an interview with General Kurt Student; *ROTTERDAM SINDS MENSENHEUGENIS* [stories about the city before WWII] (AVRO, 1970-05-10); various films by Jan van Hillo: *INTERVIEW MET ELISABETH VAN DOP-HUFKENS* (1975), and *DE TIJD STOND EVEN STIL*; *ROTTERDAM - 14 MEI 1940* (NCRV: 1978-04-24), on the bombardment, including a film fragment of the fiction film *ERGENS IN NEDERLAND* (1940, Ludwig Berger), and *INTERVIEW MET DR. W.B. VAN STAVEREN* (1978), also on the bombardment.

dwellings in the city centre, instead of shops and offices, and to intensify public space. According to Paul van de Laar (2000: 542), who did not notice the television reports, this book started the public discussion on the identity of Rotterdam (cf. Rooijendijk, 2005: 153, 178). It is remarkable though that Van de Laar does not refer to the reason of this study, and its initiator, Van de Pavoordt (who is mentioned, however, by Rooijendijk, 2005: 182).

Parallel to the rising critique upon the city, television came to discuss socially problematic issues, such as homelessness, drug abuse, and crime, which had remained underexposed so far¹⁸³³. This too showed the limits of the modern project. Illustrative is the case of prostitution. It caused a serious planning problem in the 1970s, which was amplified through reports from various broadcasting stations, whether Socialist, liberal, Catholic or Evangelical¹⁸³⁴. Like in any port city, prostitution had always been prominently present in Rotterdam. Until the 1920s it took place in the Zandstraatbuurt, right in the city centre; the quarter became then subject to a 'civilisation offensive' and it was 'sanitised' to make place for the new town hall. Prostitution simply moved elsewhere, near the Schiedamsedijk, which was closer to the port¹⁸³⁵. The war changed this situation again, and it subsequently moved to the old quarter of Katendrecht, a peninsula surrounded by harbours. It remained there, as the 'sailor's quarter' that Van Traa had foreseen in the 'Basisplan' was not carried out¹⁸³⁶. Katendrecht gradually deteriorated. The municipality recognised the problems of the residents, but advised them to move, by offering housing elsewhere¹⁸³⁷. Residents refused it and united themselves (i.e. *Aktiegroep Redt Katendrecht*). It caused tensions with the pimps, which resulted in shoot-outs and fires. The reports on television enabled a public discussion, which caused the municipality to rethink the problem. The municipality developed a plan to concentrate prostitution in an *Eroscentrum*, to be located in the 'Poortgebouw' (1879, arch. J.S.C. van der Wall). This was, in turn, not accepted by the residents of Feijenoord, and the plan was finally cancelled. Other plans to relocate it failed too¹⁸³⁸. While Katendrecht was appointed as an urban renewal area, prostitution moved to different parts of the city, which was finally left that way since nuisance turned out to be limited as such¹⁸³⁹.

This case shows one of the problems that the municipality could not solve by way of planning, like so many other problems that occurred in the old quarters, which I will discuss in the next section. They would dominate the political agenda for the next decade, after the national elections of 1972 (November 29) were won by the social-democratic PvdA. With the progressive cabinet Den Uyl, spatial planning got to serve social welfare first of all, which required new approaches¹⁸⁴⁰. 'The focus shifted from form and function in design to the regulation of decision-

¹⁸³³ One could think of issues such as homelessness, which was addressed by programmes like VARA's ACHTER HET NIEUWS (e.g. 1964-09-24), KRO's BRANDPUNT (e.g. 1969-04-05 and 1974-02-16), as well as the NOS JOURNAAL (e.g. 1972-01-02); illegal gambling houses (e.g. AKTUA, TROS, 1975-01-20); vandalism (e.g. JOURNAAL, NOS, 1974-05-30 and 1977-09-17); because of its port, Rotterdam became a major centre for drugs traffic, see e.g. NOS JOURNAAL 1973-12-24 and 1974-12-24; crime in general became an important issue (e.g. ACHTER HET NIEUWS, VARA, 1966-05-14 [= work of the police]; AKTUA, TROS, 1978-02-14 [= crime victims] a.o., including JOURNAAL reports), and with it the accommodation for detention (e.g. of women: KENMERK, IKOR, 1963-04-15; TELEVIZIER-SUPPLEMENT, AVRO, 1972-10-04; JOURNAAL, NOS, 1978-02-04; AKTUA, TROS, 1978-02-07; HIER EN NU, NCRV, 1978-11-13).

¹⁸³⁴ See: AVRO's TELEVIZIER (1971-12-27; 1974-10-18; cf. 1972-09-11); NCRV – HIER EN NU (1973-08-21); NTS – PROSTITUTIE OP KATENDRECHT (1975-02-13); EO – NADER BEKEKEN (1977-10-04); EO – NADER BEKEKEN (1977-10-18); VARA – VARA-VISIE (1978-01-21); KRO – BRANDPUNT (1979-03-30). For a general image of Katendrecht, see: KAAP DE GOEDE HOOP (1970, Mathieu van den Bos).

¹⁸³⁵ Van de Laar, 2000: 294.

¹⁸³⁶ Van de Laar, 2000: 545.

¹⁸³⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸³⁸ E.g. to move prostitution from Katendrecht to Wijnhaven (JOURNAAL, NOS, 1975-06-27).

¹⁸³⁹ Van de Laar, 2000: 546.

¹⁸⁴⁰ De Vletter, 2005: 40. Minister of housing became Hans Gruijters; secretary of state for urban renewal became Jan Schaefer and for social housing Marcel van Dam. One of the measures taken by this government was the introduction of a system of income-related rents (ibid, p47).

making processes, and from grand plans for the future to small-scale and more topically driven interventions' (De Vletter, 2005: 40). The attitude was no longer to think in terms of large-scale planning, but rather in small-scale social involvement with great social prospects. Architecture and planning concerned above all the human environment. Its main subject was not space, form and structure, but social relations that were accommodated, generated and mediated by space. This, however, went beyond the ideas of Team X, so that planning and architecture eventually turned into a kind of applied sociology¹⁸⁴¹. Communication became an important part of it, to such a degree that media became direct extensions of planning – with the media themselves shifting from aesthetic approaches of form, rhythm and perception towards social engagement¹⁸⁴².

§ 2. urban renewal

Most of the old quarters surrounding the city centre had been saved during WWII. Built around 1900, when the city grew fast, they were characterised by jerry-building and narrow streets. After the war the conditions of these quarters rapidly worsened. It caused the more wealthy residents to move to the new suburbs, and as a result of it, low-income groups became concentrated in the old quarters, which reinforced the problems.

Along with the plans for the reconstruction of the city centre and the creation of new residential districts, plans were made for the redevelopment of the old quarters, which had to be carried out after the reconstruction would be finished and after solving the problem of housing shortage. Based upon older ideas of slum clearance, one foresaw the demolition of about 20,000 dwellings, which implied that an equal number of households had to be relocated.

A priority scheme of quarters was made. It suggested that preparations were going on, but nothing was actually done¹⁸⁴³. As Paul van de Laar has emphasised (2000: 540), Mayor Van Walsum said that the money was needed to develop the port. Next to that were social-economic complications. For many of the residents from the old quarters the rents for new houses would be too high. Certain residents were also stigmatised as 'antisocial', who would not match the model workers family that appreciated a good dwelling¹⁸⁴⁴. Already in 1953, the physician and critical PvdA city councillor H.J. Lamberts (who also appeared in *POLDERS VOOR INDUSTRIE*, 1961, Wim van der Velde) predicted that adaptation to the new conditions would create too much pressure for the residents, with serious effects, which would worsen their position (Van de Laar, 2000: 540). Lamberts advised to restore the old quarters, and to involve the residents. However, these ideas did not correspond to the modern ambitions of Rotterdam. One thought of building *for* society rather than an interactive development process *with* society. Moreover, the question how existing social relations and their related physical structures could accommodate processes of renewal was not much of an issue within the discourses of architecture and planning.

Another critical PvdA city-councillor, Jan van der Ploeg, argued that, in any case, the city had to take its responsibilities and he proposed a "sanitation committee" to prepare concrete plans for the old quarters. It started in 1958, but it took eight years before the committee came with a report of the committee. On that occasion, the television programme *ACHTER HET NIEUWS* (VARA, 1966-10-25) articulated the need for action by showing the deplorable condition of many old houses. The report proposed demolition in order to build new high rise housing estates, which ran parallel to ideas to solve traffic issues. It took another three years before the plans were elaborated and made into the so-called *Saneringsnota* (1969)¹⁸⁴⁵. This, however, would cause a

¹⁸⁴¹ Cf. De Vletter, 2005: 45.

¹⁸⁴² See also the so-called *Samenlevings-Opbouwweek* in various districts in Rotterdam (Ommoord, Pendrecht, Dijkzigt, Katendrecht) and the report about it on national television by HV (broadcasting: 1973-09-30).

¹⁸⁴³ I.e. around 1956. Van de Laar, 2000: 539.

¹⁸⁴⁴ Van de Laar, 2000: 540.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Van de Laar, 2000: 541.

phenomenon that Van der Ploeg called *saneringsnomaden* (“sanitation nomads”), which were residents that moved from one slum to another¹⁸⁴⁶.

One of the sanitation areas was Het Oude Westen. In 1964 the “Department for Urban Development” (*Dienst Stadsontwikkeling*) presented a study for its redevelopment. The suggestion was made to build here the new Erasmus University and other city functions¹⁸⁴⁷. In this plan the quarter would be swept from the map, and residents would be moved to new suburbs¹⁸⁴⁸. In 1968 the *Rotterdamse Kring* of the Union of Dutch Architects (BNA) took Het Oude Westen as a case-study to develop approaches for sanitation¹⁸⁴⁹. Five different plans were made, among others by Ernest Groosman, and Leo de Jonge, which were presented to the municipality on the 6th of March 1970 – one month before the city council would discuss the *Saneringsnota*. The plans were not so different from those of the municipality, except for one, which was made by a group that included Nico Witstok and the Swiss architect Pietro Hammel, who were residents of the quarter themselves¹⁸⁵⁰. Architect and critic Endry van Velzen has mentioned (1993) that the four other plans still followed, in steps, the idea of the *tabula rasa*.

The different phases of sanitation were actually nothing else than burdensome stop-overs on the way to a new final situation, the City of Tomorrow, whose becoming required unfortunately twenty years. Hammel and partners instead took the duration of the renewal process as the starting point for their plan; there is no City of Tomorrow, only a City of Today, which could be tinkered with continuously.¹⁸⁵¹

Hammel articulated his ideas in his book *Unsere Zukunft: die Stadt* (1972), in which ‘Het Oude Westen’ served as a case-study. According to Van Velzen, the book followed the ideas of the American urban theorist Jane Jacobs, for whom ‘city diversity’ was the key term. It implied mixed functions, small units, a combination of old and new buildings, and a high population density. Hammel combined it with the ideas of Aldo van Eyck, with whom he and Witstok had already had an exchange of ideas in the magazine *Forum* a decade earlier¹⁸⁵². Van Eyck addressed the importance of urban and spatial ‘identity’, where (social) events and place define each other. Such events could be triggered by combining different functions in a well-composed spatial and non-hierarchical urban configuration, instead of a generic plan based on standardised units. Van Eyck had also drawn an argument in which existing structures, rather than the *tabula rasa*, became the point of departure. However, such ideas caused commotion within the circle of the BNA, to such an extent that Hammel and Witstok even withdrew from the union¹⁸⁵³.

Four days after the studies had been presented, the conditions in Het Oude Westen were first reported on television by the popular-liberal AVRO in its news programme TELEVIZIER (1970-03-10). Reporter Marcel de Groot showed deteriorated houses, traffic jams, obstructed fire engines, children dancing on the roofs of cars and some residents distributing posters, calling for change. These activists became the pivotal force in the redevelopment of the quarter. As

¹⁸⁴⁶ Van de Laar, 2000: 543.

¹⁸⁴⁷ Groenendijk, 2004: Architectuur > Personen > ‘Aktiegroep Het Oude Westen’.

¹⁸⁴⁸ www.rotterdam.nl/smartsite2043508.dws?Menu=2004581&MainMenu=0

¹⁸⁴⁸ Van Velzen, 1993: 29.

¹⁸⁴⁹ Van Velzen, 1993: 29/39n7.

¹⁸⁵⁰ ‘Studie sanering Gouvernekwartier Rotterdam’, werkgroep: A.J. ter Braak, W. Eijkelenboom, P.P. Hammel, A. Middelhoek, W.G. Quist, N. Witstok, see: www.bonas.nl (2007-04-14)

¹⁸⁵¹ Van Velzen, 1993: 30. Original quote: ‘De verschillende fasen van de sanering waren eigenlijk niet meer dan de hinderlijke tussenstations op weg naar een nieuwe eindsituatie, de Stad van Morgen, waarvan de wording helaas [p29] twintig jaar zou vergen. Hammel en de zijnen namen juist de duur van het vernieuwingsproces tot uitgangspunt voor hun plan; er is geen Stad van Morgen, alleen een Stad van Vandaag waar voortdurend aan moet kunnen worden gesleuteld.’

¹⁸⁵² Van Velzen, 1993: 39n13. *Forum*, 1960-1961; 4 & 9.

¹⁸⁵³ See: Van Elzen, 1993: 39n7.

architecture historian Groenendijk has mentioned (2004a), a number of mothers joined forces at meetings in social-cultural centre *Ons Huis* (“Our House”, later De Lantaren).

VPRO-radio reacted by reporting on a neighbourhood meeting that took place the next day, in which the plans were discussed, in favour of the plan by Hammel and company (VPRO-VRIJDAG, broadcast 1970-03-13). Its reporter, Bob Visser, opposed it to an interview with city planner B. Fokkinga, who understood that the residents had to be taken seriously. The attention paid by the media strengthened the self-confidence of the residents. As such they also protested against the C’70 event, for which they arranged the so-called *Ludiek Kreatief Sabotaasjesentrum*. They argued that the money spent on the C’70 could have been better used to improve the old quarters¹⁸⁵⁴. It was once more reported by VPRO-radio (1970-03-27)¹⁸⁵⁵. Next to that the residents founded an action committee, *Aktiegroep Het Oude Westen*¹⁸⁵⁶. They came together for another meeting, at community centre ‘Odeon’. This time it was attended by VARA television¹⁸⁵⁷. It reported on the discussions between residents and politicians, which showed the whole country that residents wanted to participate in the developments, while claiming support of the government in their struggle against the deterioration of privately owned estates. A few days later, on the 2nd of April 1970, the city council discussed the *Saneringsnota*. The public stand was packed with citizens from the old quarters to protest against the plans. Soon afterwards, in April, the *Aktiegroep* entered the house of Mayor Thomassen and took a bath in his bathroom, to address that they did not have a bath or shower at home. This act received much attention from the newspapers¹⁸⁵⁸. In the same month the *Ludiek Kreatief Sabotaasjesentrum* occupied the C’70 office, which was reported by the NOS JOURNAAL (1970-04-25) as well as ACHTER HET NIEUWS (VARA, 1970-04-25). The Mayor and Aldermen, replying to the *Saneringsnota* and to the protests, put away the notion of *sanering*, and spoke instead of *stadsvernieuwing* (urban renewal).

Once Het Oude Westen had become a focus of the media, more television programmes followed¹⁸⁵⁹. Although they showed different perspectives, the attention shifted to the issue of increasing numbers of immigrants that came to live in the old quarters, their housing conditions, and their position in society¹⁸⁶⁰. Tensions increased between Dutch residents and so-called *gastarbeiders*. The “Turk riots” (*Turkenrellen*) were infamous in the Afrikaanderwijk in August 1972. A Dutch woman with children was evicted from her house by a landlord, who wanted to turn it into a boarding house for Turkish *gastarbeiders*. Neighbours defended the woman and the conflict escalated. For several days Dutch and Turkish residents were fighting, which was reported by various television programmes¹⁸⁶¹. In his book *Stad van Formaat*, Paul van de Laar says:

¹⁸⁵⁴ Cf. : De Winter, 1988: 112.

¹⁸⁵⁵ Bob Visser interviewed Alderman J.G. van de Ploeg and his opponent Mr. Barneveld of the Ludiek Kreatief Sabotaasjesentrum. Collection B&G, Docid: 77744, title: VPRO-VRIJDAG, nr.: HAD9660 Start ID 1 {DAT}.

¹⁸⁵⁶ Important people within the *Aktiegroep* were Theo Gootjes, a cartoonist, the metal worker Gerrit Sterkman (1901-1980), construction engineer Toni Koopman (1948-1982), as well as the Italian-Swiss architect Pietro Hammel.

¹⁸⁵⁷ i.e. ACHTER HET NIEUWS (1970-03-28), director: Siem Suurhoff, reporter: Pier Tania.

¹⁸⁵⁸ See: Van der Schaaf & Hazewinkel, 1996: 41. Cf. Wagenaar, 1995-1996: 325.

¹⁸⁵⁹ E.g. ANDER NIEUWS (NCRV, 1971-05-10); ACHTER HET NIEUWS (VARA, 1972-06-20) – the latter concerns an action meeting at Odeon, attended by Minister B.J. Udink for Social Housing and Spatial Planning, who demands that no media are present – so the camera was not allowed, but sound recordings were made nevertheless. Udink promises that the central government will improve the situation. The critical city councillor Dr. Lamberts is subsequently interviewed, who is indeed positive about the eventual support for the old quarters from the central government.

¹⁸⁶⁰ See: KRO-BRANDPUNT, 1971-09-10; VPRO: BERICHTEN UIT DE ZOMER; GASTARBEIDERS IN ROTTERDAM, 1971-09-16; VARA-ACHTER HET NIEUWS, 1971-11-30.

¹⁸⁶¹ E.g. NOS JOURNAAL 1972-08-10, 1972-08-12, 1972-08-13, 1972-08-14; KRO-BRANDPUNT, 1972-08-11; AVRO-TELEVIZIER III/45, 1972-08-14; NCRV-HIER EN NU, 1972-08-18; VARA-ACHTER HET NIEUWS, 1972-10-07. Already one year before, the latter reported on *gastarbeiders* buying houses in Feijenoord (HIER EN NU, 1971-06-14). For related reports, see (a.o.) TELEVIZIER, 1972-03-27 and 1972-11-20, AVRO). The event would have an echo for years; an example of a thoughtful background report that exemplifies this is EEN VAN MIJN BESTE VRIENDEN: AFL. 4. TURKEN (IKON, 1979-05-09).

The riot police was sent and Mayor Thomassen interrupted his holidays to hush the rioters. For several days the Afrikaanderwijk was front page news and the newsreaders of radio and television began with the racial riots in Rotterdam. In the evening, when watching TELEVIZIER [i.e. 1972-08-14, AVRO], you saw an affected Jaap van Meekren who began the AVRO night with a report on the riots, which suggested that *gastarbeiders* had become the target of Rotterdam fascists. According to the star reporter the riots were not an incident. He emphasised that the residents of these quarters had already forgotten the lessons of WWII, twenty-five years after the liberation.¹⁸⁶²

The images of the riots were alarming though, and foreign media reported on them as well. It caused a kind of ‘riot tourism’ (*reltourisme*), which worsened the situation¹⁸⁶³. It fuelled the discussion on local broadcasting, since that would have provided a more balanced media coverage, as said by Mayor Thomassen in the city council¹⁸⁶⁴. Van de Laar argues that the riots were actually an expression of powerlessness and discontent of residents, whose complaints had been ignored for years. At the same time the city did not develop an immigration policy, assuming that ‘guest workers’ would stay temporarily. It seriously underestimated their needs, not the least in social-cultural terms¹⁸⁶⁵.

After the *Turkenrellen* had taken place, the city introduced a measure to avoid concentrations of immigrants of more than 5% of the total population of a district, in order to spread them over the city. In certain quarters this figure was already 15%, which implied that people had to be moved. Those concerned rejected this policy, which was clearly ventilated in the television programme BRANDPUNT (KRO, 1972-09-30). Since this measure also concerned Antilleans and Surinamese, which were still part of the Netherlands and therefore Dutch citizens, it was considered as simply a matter of racism. The case was brought to the Queen and the measures were finally cancelled¹⁸⁶⁶. While television concentrated on this issue, the actual problems of the old quarters, and how they could be solved, received gradually less attention.

All this propelled the discussion on local broadcasting: ‘one clearly sees the necessity of appropriate communication between citizens, and between citizens and the government. Through a local broadcasting station one can achieve a social constellation that is also beneficial in respect of harmonisation of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary democracy’¹⁸⁶⁷. Local broadcasting would be valuable as an informative and educational medium, which could also be useful for *gastarbeiders*¹⁸⁶⁸. It would also enable citizen participation, in order to provide feedback to the college and the city council¹⁸⁶⁹. Local broadcasting, however, remained a future affair, notwithstanding the increasing need for it.

The issue of participation and communication became pressing when protests took place in other quarters as well, among them Het Oude Noorden, Rubroek, Crooswijk and Feyenoord. In

¹⁸⁶² Van de Laar, 2000: 531. Original quote: ‘De oproerpolitie werd ingezet en burgemeester Thomassen onderbrak zijn vakantie om de rellen te sussen. De Afrikaanderwijk was enige dagen voorpagina’s en de nieuwslezers van radio en televisie openden met de rassenrellen in Rotterdam. Wie ‘s avonds naar Televizier keek, zag een geëmotioneerde Jaap van Meekren die het avondje AVRO inleidde met een verslag over de rellen dat de indruk wekte dat Rotterdamse fascistische opgasterbeiders hadden gemunt. De sterreporter beschouwde de rellen niet als een incident en onderstreepte voor de kijkers dat de Rotterdamse wijkbewoners vijftig jaar na de bevrijding de lessen van de Tweede Wereldoorlog al waren vergeten.’

¹⁸⁶³ A. Daane, in: ‘Stichtingsvorm voor regionale omroep in Rotterdam’, p3 in: Elfferich, Edzes, Matthijsse, 1973.

¹⁸⁶⁴ Reference by A. Daane (ibid).

¹⁸⁶⁵ Van de Laar, 2000: 532. See e.g. JOURNAAL (NOS, 1976-12-25): *gastarbeiders* expressing their need for a mosque.

¹⁸⁶⁶ Cf. Van de Laar, 2000: 532.

¹⁸⁶⁷ Mission statement of SRRO, quoted in: Elfferich, Edzes, Matthijsse, 1973: 1. Original quote: ‘Grote steden, agglomeraties en gewesten wensen een eigen regionale omroep omdat steeds duidelijker de noodzaak wordt gezien van een behoorlijke communicatie tussen de burgers onderling en tussen de burgers en de overheid. Met behulp van een regionale omroep kan men komen tot een samenlevingsopbouw die ook nuttig is voor een harmonisatie van parlementaire en buitenparlementaire democratie.’

¹⁸⁶⁸ See: Bax, 1973: 4; A. Daane, in: Elfferich e.a., 1973: 3; Van der Staay; 1973: 14.

¹⁸⁶⁹ E.g. Van der Staay, 1973: 14.

these quarters one fought against the ‘Rottetracé’, a route to connect the north and south side of Rotterdam, to be constructed by demolishing housing blocks, filling in the historic river Rotte, and through a new tunnel under the Nieuwe Maas¹⁸⁷⁰. Due to the protests, the plan was finally cancelled.

In Het Oude Westen the *Aktiegroep* continued its protest against the housing policy and started to squat empty houses. In December 1972, after Mayor Thomassen had threatened with a police attack, the group had a meeting with him and started to collaborate. It was reported by Bert Bakker for KRO-radio (ECHO, 1972-12-12), who subsequently reported on the district meeting of the PvdA. A majority voted for the dismissal of PvdA Alderman H.W. Jettinghoff for urban development¹⁸⁷¹. His priority was to provide jobs, rather than solving housing problems. Due to internal policies, however, Jettinghoff kept his position. Bakker asked the district chairman about it. ‘Does it mean, regarding the opinions ventilated tonight, that the PvdA fraction in the city council will look completely different in 1974 [after the next elections]?’ Reply: ‘In any case different, in the sense that we will do everything to strive for a more homogeneous fraction than it is the case now, to get a more uniform policy and not the fragmentation that is shown at the moment’¹⁸⁷². Things were about to change. The developments in Rotterdam, and Amsterdam, contributed to the decision to have a Secretary of State for urban renewal, Jan Schaefer, in the new, progressive cabinet of Prime Minister Den Uyl.

Due to the commotion, Jettinghoff took the initiative for a ‘discussion film’ on urban renewal, in November 1973¹⁸⁷³. This was still before the municipal elections took place that resulted in a progressive college, without Jettinghoff, and with Jan van der Ploeg as a special Alderman for Urban Renewal¹⁸⁷⁴. The film was commissioned to Dick Rijnke, who had previously made a discussion film on drugs (FEELING BETTER YOU CAN NEVER TELL, 1971), which was broadcast on television (KRO, BRT) and shown at schools and youth centres. De Ridder, who collaborated with Rijnke on this and another film, was asked to collaborate again, all the more so since he had already been involved with urban development through Schaper’s Open Studio¹⁸⁷⁵. In the end, De Ridder was appointed as the director of the film, and as such a link might be drawn between Schaper’s STAD ZONDER HART (1966) and this film, called ‘T IS GEWOON NIET MOOI MEER (“It’s just not nice anymore”).

The film starts with the process of suburbanisation, due to deteriorating residential quarters in the city and increasing congestion. Moreover, residents prefer low-rise above the impersonal outskirts with high-rise estates, like Ommoord. While leaving the old quarters, immigrants come in their stead. Such developments, it is said, are the result of the city policy from earlier decades, which was just aimed at economic growth. A large number of banks and offices were built, while old housing blocks were simply demolished. Things could be different though. There are still remnants of the lively city that Rotterdam used to be. The department for

¹⁸⁷⁰ Rooijendijk, 2005: 172. Van de Laar, 2000: 541. An example of a quarter that was planned to be demolished in order to build the Rottetracé and new housing estates was Rubroek, see: Van der Schaaf & Hazewinkel, 1996: 63.

¹⁸⁷¹ 148 said yes to dismissal versus 30 that said no.

¹⁸⁷² Original quotes – journalist Bert Bakker: ‘Betekent dat gezien de uitspraken van vanavond dat de nieuwe gemeenteraadsfractie v.d. PvdA er in 1974 heel anders uit gaat zien?’ District chairman Gerard Spruit: ‘In elk geval anders in die zin dat we er alles aan zullen doen om te streven naar een meer homogene fractie dan op dit moment het geval is, wil je meer éénvormig beleid krijgen en geen gespletenheid zoals die thans gedemonstreerd is.’

¹⁸⁷³ ‘Discussiefilm Stadsvernieuwing’, p16 in: NRC Handelsblad, section Rotterdam/The Hague, 1973-11-17.

¹⁸⁷⁴ For a report on the programme of the new college, see e.g. ACHTER HET NIEUWS (VARA, 1974-05-21).

¹⁸⁷⁵ Following Schaper’s film STAD ZONDER HART (1966) and a report on Rotterdam from 1967 (Moen & Schaper), the Open Studio was commissioned by the VPRO to make a report on the presentation of five plans for het Oude Westen and the public discussion following it. De Ridder directed these recordings, but the material, however, has (most likely) never been broadcast (to be found at GAR, AJS p65 OUDE WESTEN 1 + 2; p71-72 THOMASSEN 1 + 2 + nr. 112).

Urban Development (*Dienst Stadsontwikkeling*) therefore tries to revive the old quarters, together with residents, through renovation and piece-meal implementation of new projects¹⁸⁷⁶.

The commissioners found the film hardly focused and too negative. After the filmmakers had ignored their request to revise the film, the commissioners decided to have just a premiere for invited guests, and no active distribution in the quarters as they had intended. The premiere took place on the 31st of May 1976. City planner Fokkinga introduced the film: 'Usually we carry out commissions which then raise tumult, now it's the other way round. We have given the commission, but it has also raised tumult'¹⁸⁷⁷. After the screening De Ridder gave his comments. 'This film has especially been made for the people in the old quarters, in order to give them a bit of trust again in the municipal policy.' The film makes clear that the municipality recognises that things have gone wrong in the past, that the present situation is miserable, and that plans are carried out to improve this situation, but De Ridder added to it that 'in this film the plans of the municipality stand out rather poorly against the big and many problems. This is not only the case in the film, but also in reality.' Hence, 'this should be a reason for the Mayor and Aldermen to go hard at it', but 'they do not face the many sides of the problems. The measures taken are merely a matter of fear, and then the government just acts at random.' Alderman Van der Ploeg replied. 'I have said it already in August 1975: the film is artistically attractive, but the message is unclear. It seems as if one has to leave the city as soon as possible, to buy a house outside the city. You have to face reality; 80% cannot leave the city.' Van der Ploeg was the only alderman on the bench that had served in the previous period too. He emphasised that many houses had been built since WWII, and that the city was good to live in, but that action needed to be taken in urban renewal areas. 'I have offered to sit around the table to discuss how the message could be communicated, and the proposal was to leave out the story on busy traffic and suburbanisation, but this has not been picked up.' He finally remarked that it was not only the fault of the filmmakers; since the film had started, two years earlier, there had been substantial changes.

The comments of De Ridder and Van der Ploeg were rhetorical. It was a dispute over scale and citizen participation. De Ridder argued that the *government* had to invest more in appropriate solutions within the context of *urban development at large*, whereas Van der Ploeg wanted to stimulate *residents* to contribute constructively to the plans of the *quarters*. This required efforts from both sides, in order to change municipal practices and policies¹⁸⁷⁸.

Besides the fact that Van der Ploeg had become Alderman for Urban Renewal, the appointment of Van der Louw as Mayor immediately followed his chairmanship of the committee that had to solve the crisis around Alderman Jettinghoff and the issue of citizen participation¹⁸⁷⁹. As such, Van der Louw was familiar with the issues at stake. Paul Groenendijk (2004a) has summarised the measures as follows.

In 1975, 'Het Oude Westen' was appointed a Project Group Urban Renewal (*Projectgroep Stadsvernieuwing*), together with ten other quarters, in which the action committee (*Aktiegroep*) held a majority. Besides that, private housing property was acquired by the municipality, which transferred it to the housing corporations *Maatschappij voor Volkswoningen* and the *Gemeentelijk Woningbedrijf*. 'Building for the neighbourhood' became the motto, which meant that affordable rents were guaranteed and that residents from the neighbourhood had priority to live there. The participation of the residents was regulated by a decision-making meeting of residents. For the

¹⁸⁷⁶ One may also draw a link here to television programmes that articulated such an approach, e.g. VAN GEWEST TOT GEWEST (NOS, 1974-10-23 about an exhibition on renovation, at Ahoy'; 1975-08-13 about saving ornaments of buildings to be demolished).

¹⁸⁷⁷ This and following quotes are based on sound recordings made of the speeches (in Dutch) given before and after the premiere = 'premiere 't Is Gewoon Niet Mooi Meer' (1976-05-31, GAR: Gb 898, CD-A 00161).

¹⁸⁷⁸ See also: Nycolaas: 1983, 194-195.

¹⁸⁷⁹ 'In Memoriam: André van der Louw', Hans Kombrink, 2005-10-20; www.denhaag.pvda.nl/nieuwsbericht/851

various new-build and renovation projects special groups of residents were formed. There was also a monthly neighbourhood magazine in five languages.¹⁸⁸⁰

Film and video can be added here as media that were used to involve citizens, and to make planning processes transparent.

After the ‘failure’ by De Ridder and Rijneke, the municipality decided to have another film made, *EERST ZIEN, DAN GELOVEN* (“to see it first, in order to believe it”, 1978, Ton Dirkse). This time it was the Office for Information that coordinated the film (1977), instead of the Department for Urban Development itself. The office was actively involved with the production, through the assistance of Ivo Blom and through the work of presenter Koos Postema. Next to them, an organisation and communication consultant, Margreet van Persie, gave the filmmakers advice and comments. This forty minute film does not only show the achievements of the urban renewal process, but also the problems and challenges, and what residents can do about it.

The film opens with nice shots of the urban landscape, taken from the Euromast; at ground level, however, things look different. The film leaves the larger picture of urban development and immediately focuses on the trouble of deterioration of the old quarters. It not only matched the idea of Alderman Van der Ploeg, but it also corresponded to an emerging generic format of films mediating urban renewal¹⁸⁸¹. Rather than providing an analysis of urban planning, filmmaker Ton Dirkse enters the homes of people to show their living conditions, and to ask their opinion. The people are often portrayed in close-up (in the spirit of 1930s realism). The film addresses the work of the residents’ organisations that collaborate in the planning process. These cases serve as templates, to motivate residents to contribute to urban renewal in a constructive way. Dirkse and Postema do not avoid critical notes, however. During a meeting of the Commission for Urban Renewal in the town hall, in which residents participate too, one resident remarks that the municipality has concentrated on physical improvement, but resident also want measures against impoverishment, criminality and drug abuse. It points to the complexity of urban renewal, beyond housing and urban design, into realms of social welfare. *EERST ZIEN, DAN GELOVEN* had its premiere at neighbourhood centre Odeon in Het Oude Westen, and it was subsequently shown at the municipal information centre (HIC)¹⁸⁸².

Besides this film, various bottom-up media practices developed as manifestations of an explicit social agenda¹⁸⁸³. An example is the video-documentary *KUN JE HIER NOG LEVEN?* (“Can you still live here?”, 1975), by Max Mollinger and Adriaan Monshouwer, who were students at the Academy of Visual Arts. It shows Het Oude Westen during the last five years, beginning with general impressions and women calling for action. The narrator tells that VARA’s *ACHTER HET NIEUWS* (1970-03-28) reported a meeting at neighbourhood centre Odeon. It shows fragments of

¹⁸⁸⁰ Groenendijk, 2004: Architectuur > Personen > ‘Aktiegroep Het Oude Westen’; original quote: ‘In 1975 kreeg het Oude Westen samen met tien andere wijken een Projectgroep Stadsvernieuwing, waarin de Aktiegroep een meerderheid had. Daarnaast werd het particuliere woningbezit aangekocht door de gemeente, die het overdroeg aan de woningbouwcorporaties Maatschappij voor Volkswoningen en het Gemeentelijk Woningbedrijf. ‘Bouwen voor de buurt’ was het motto, wat betekende dat er betaalbare huren waren gegarandeerd en dat de wijkbewoners voorrang hadden. De inspraak van de bewoners was geregeld via een besluitvormende bewonersvergadering. Voor de verschillende nieuwbouw- of renovatieprojecten werden aparte bewonersgroepen gevormd. Er was een maandelijks buurtkrant in vijf talen.’

¹⁸⁸¹ The same format is applied by two films on urban renewal in Glasgow, *IF ONLY WE HAD THE SPACE*, on home improvement grants, and *PLACES OR PEOPLE*, on area amenity improvements (both 1975, Charles Gormley). ‘Both films have some formal views of Glasgow, but their focus is on recycled tenements and landscapes and their ordinary residents. The slums and big projects have gone, but so it seems has the city and its future.’ (Lebas, 2007: 48)

¹⁸⁸² *Uitnodiging voor de vertoning van EERST ZIEN, DAN GELOVEN*, premiere on 1978-03-21 (at HIC: 1978-03-22 – 1978-04-08) – GAR, ‘Collectie Bibliotheek’, PV8.7, NB: map jaren ’30!

¹⁸⁸³ The discussion on local broadcasting can be framed in this perspective too, although the issue was not settled before the 1980s. The discussion was nevertheless valuable, since it articulated the social role of media, while it also touched upon issues of other new media such as cable television and video. For local broadcasting and cable television, see: Bordewijk, 1973; For video, see: Van der Staay, 1973: 13; Valk, 1973.

it and later on also of a report by KENMERK (IKOR, 1973-04-04), on residents pulling down ruins. The reports are explicitly mentioned for their role within the developments. Architect Pietro Hammel stresses the need for public space, and to develop plans that enable participation by residents. At the end, the renovation of neighbourhood centre Odeon (arch. Hammel, 1976) is proudly presented by the old activist Gerrit Sterkman of the *Aktiegroep*. The video then answers its title: 'Yes – But you must want it indeed!'. This production was no exception.

§ 3. the promise of video, social-cultural explorations, and cinematic interferences

Parallel to the development of urban renewal, new media came to the fore. Besides television, which became ever more important to monitor social developments, video and cable television offered new opportunities in this respect as well. These media became part of what sociologist Helga Nowotny (2005: 24) has called 'emergent interfaces' between different groups of people and institutions, which come along with increasing social complexity. The 'emergent interfaces' regulate 'interface turbulence', which is the result of 'conflicting claims over diverging versions of the past and the future, wrapped in entangled webs of causality.' This view emphasises the social dimension of what I have already addressed in terms of 'cinematic bifurcation', which is the splitting of cinema into various audiovisual media. Bifurcation implies oscillation between different formats, so I will consider the interaction between video and film in connection to artistic and social practices related to media.

Lijnbaancentrum

In 1970, the RKS founded an art gallery and centre for experimentation, which was called *Lijnbaancentrum* (1970-1984), directed by Felix Valk. Its aims were to stimulate visual culture, to provide information and insights about society by visual means, and to inform about artistic developments within broader social-cultural perspectives¹⁸⁸⁴. The centre invested a significant part of its budget in video equipment and a studio, and it established the LBC Videogroep¹⁸⁸⁵. It meant an impulse for the development of audiovisual practices in Rotterdam¹⁸⁸⁶.

Video was initially used to record interviews to accompany exhibitions, about eight per year, and to document such and other events (Valk, 1973: 14). Due to the low costs of recording, the range and number of subjects enlarged¹⁸⁸⁷. It caused Henk Elenga, one of the members of the group, to say that '[t]he video camera is like a vacuum cleaner that sucks up culture'¹⁸⁸⁸. 'That's what made it subversive in the world of cinematography', as design critic Ed van Hinte wrote in respect of the work of Elenga and his colleagues, who were still inspired by the cinema, but considered themselves as 'art hooligans'¹⁸⁸⁹. Since tapes could be used again they were free to experiment. It is illustrated by various examples, such as a recording of an encounter with the poet Waskowsky that never took place, a recording of an interview with the American artist Jim Dine, with the interviewer and interviewee changing roles during the conversation, or a recording of a talk with the writer K. Schippers, which consisted just of close-ups of his face and body¹⁸⁹⁰.

¹⁸⁸⁴ Kappert, 2001: 7.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Its first collaborators were, besides LBC director Felix Valk: Henk Elenga, Frederic Kappelhof, and Wink van Kempen (Valk, 1973: 15). The studio was later headed by Erik van Dieren (cf. Van Hinte, 2000: 51). Other people that became involved with the LBC Videogroep were a.o.: Marja Bijvoet, Har Brok, Raymond Campfens, Josse Fermont, Joop de Jong, Ernst Pommerel, Hein Reedijk, Albert Roskamp, Joost Swarte (cf. Kappert, 2001: 7).

¹⁸⁸⁶ The LBC-Videogroep also collaborated with the videogroup Meatball from The Hague (Valk, 1973: 14). Moreover, it linked up with an artistic scene that existed already in Rotterdam, with a strong connection to pop art (e.g. Wim Gijzen, Woody van Amen e.a.), see: Van de Laar, 2000: 584. Through the Lijnbaancentrum, various people have been able to gain experience with audiovisual practices and to set up studios themselves afterwards (1980s-1990s).

¹⁸⁸⁷ See filmography > LBC Videogroep for a selection of productions.

¹⁸⁸⁸ Elenga, quoted by Van Hinte, 2000: 55.

¹⁸⁸⁹ Van Hinte, 2000: 55-56.

¹⁸⁹⁰ Van Hinte, 2000: 51.

The Lijnbaancentrum also invited artists to use its facilities. Several pieces were made in this way, among them recordings of performances, abstract videos and studio experiments¹⁸⁹¹. One of the first to explore the medium in this way was Wim Gijzen, who made a series called 'mistakes'. His video *VERWISSELING VAN DE NAMEN VAN DE STEDEN ROTTERDAM EN DEN HAAG* (1971, Wim Gijzen) became well-known. It shows a view over the harbour, with an image of the skyline of Rotterdam, including the Euromast as its main landmark (and icon through the media). Gijzen enters the frame in order to install a sign post saying 'The Hague'. In the book *The Magnetic Era* (Boomgaard & Rutten, 2002: 42), on the early years of video art in the Netherlands, Gijzen explains that it was a reaction to the reality claim of television. Another example is a video made by Bernard Besson, who mounted a camera on a bascule bridge, which gave the tape its title: *BINNENHAVENBRUG* (1973). When the bridge opens for ships to pass, it turns the perspective of the camera, from the earth to the air.

According to historian Carin Gaemers, in a brief note on video in her study of the RKS¹⁸⁹², it soon emerged that neighbourhood organisations and study groups were also interested in video. In this way the LBC Videogroep also made recordings of protest actions, discussions at schools, and various services. What Gaemers has not mentioned, in spite of her concern with networks¹⁸⁹³, is how this fuelled a collaboration between different agents.

video rally

In the autumn of 1971, after the newly established *videogroep* of the Lijnbaancentrum had already made a number of video tapes, its director Felix Valk came with a plan for a collaboration between different institutions. The idea was first of all to rent out tapes through the *Centrale Discotheek*. In 1960, this organisation had been established to rent out music records (financially supported by the private fund *Volkskracht*¹⁸⁹⁴). On behalf of the *Lijnbaancentrum* and the *Centrale Discotheek*, Valk approached Renting, the director of the city archive, with the question if collaboration would be possible in order to save the still expensive tapes¹⁸⁹⁵. In a letter by Valk, several productions were mentioned for their general interest, among them on the orphanage Lindenhof (Schiedam), on alternative building plans for the city centre, on an exhibition of Man Ray in Museum Boijmans-Van Beuningen, and a planned production on the intended demolition of the Koninginnekerk (church)¹⁸⁹⁶. It was a clever move to ask Renting first, since he had been actively involved with setting up a film collection, next to a sound collection, to which end he had been supported by director Rob Maas of the Centrale Discotheek¹⁸⁹⁷. Renting was indeed enthusiastic and he wrote immediately a letter to ask support from Mayor and Aldermen¹⁸⁹⁸.

¹⁸⁹¹ E.g. Vito Acconci, Woody van Amen, Jules Deelder, Douglas Davis, Dennis Oppenheim, and Ulrike Rosenbach, among others, see: Kappert, 2001; Van Hinte, 2000: 50-57.

¹⁸⁹² Gaemers, 1996: 130; original quote: 'Aan de hand van contacten met het publiek blijkt al snel dat naast de kunstenaars, ook buurtorganisaties en werkgroepen grote belangstelling voor het gebruik van video hebben, maar dan vooral als voorlichtingsmedium'.

¹⁸⁹³ Cf. Gaemers, 1996: 18, in the historical introduction concerning the origin of the RKS.

¹⁸⁹⁴ A fund that had originally been established by industrialists and businessmen. The fund also continued to support the *Centrale Discotheek* afterwards, see: Van der Houwen, 1998: 137.

¹⁸⁹⁵ At that time one single tape cost about 200 guilders (app. 90 euros); a tape recorder between 10,000-15,000 guilders (4,500-6,750 euros). These costs were mentioned by Valk.

¹⁸⁹⁶ Letter from Valk to Renting, 1971-10-26, in GAR archive: 'Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam > GAR; Archief van het Archief', toegangsnr. 297.01, inventarisnr. 747. See also: filmography > LBC.

¹⁸⁹⁷ Kloppers, 1964: 8.

¹⁸⁹⁸ 'One of the tasks of the City Archive Department is providing and archiving of the municipal sound and vision documentation. The development of video recording implies, to my opinion, the consequence that the City Archive Department becomes active in this area too.' Original quote: 'Een der taken van de Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst is de verzorging en archiverig der gemeentelijke beeld- en geluidsdocumentatie. De ontwikkeling van de videorecording brengt naar mijn mening de consequentie met zich mee dat de Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst ook op dat terrein actief wordt.' Letter of R.A.D. Renting to College B&W, 1971-11-01, in GAR archive: 'Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam > GAR; Archief van het Archief', toegangsnr. 297.01, inventarisnr. 747.

In the meantime RKS director Van der Staay wrote a letter to J. Hurwitz, director of the Anthropological Museum (*Museum Land- en Volkenkunde*), in which he listed some possibilities of video. He suggested to commission tapes and to rent previously produced tapes for exhibition, and to produce weekly or biweekly cultural video agendas¹⁸⁹⁹. He also mentioned that this possibility was further explored with other cultural and municipal organisations and the 'Office for Information and Publicity'. These agendas, he suggested, could be shown on monitors in museums and other public places.

The letters by Renting and Van der Staay finally reached J.A. van Gorkom, the head of the municipal department of art and culture. After a discussion with other museum directors he wrote a report on video (1972-02-15)¹⁹⁰⁰. Three main questions were raised. What can be created by way of video that cannot be created by other audiovisual means? What problems are there in connection to equipment? What possibilities does video offer to museums? Van Gorkom mentioned concrete sites where monitors could be placed, including various cultural institutions as well as shops and even trains¹⁹⁰¹. He concluded that a commission (*werkgroep*) had to be formed, to follow current developments concerning video, to elaborate the points of the report, and to carry out the suggested possibilities in collaboration with different organisations.

As a result, the Mayor and Aldermen decided (1972-04-07) to organise the *Werkgroep Video*, for which Van Gorkom invited representatives of different institutions¹⁹⁰². During its first meeting (August 1972¹⁹⁰³), Renting was the first to express his thoughts. He made clear that besides collecting he had the intention to use video in the near future to 'draw into the neighbourhoods' and to record things that would be important for the history of Rotterdam, like the presence of *gastarbeiders* (immigrants). Other members proposed applications for museums, education and science, and, by way of Mr. Berggren of the municipal Office for Information and Publicity, the possibilities to use video in the *Open Boek* information centre for informative and promotional purposes in respect of sanitation and urban development¹⁹⁰⁴. Plans were made, furthermore, to establish a national network, through memberships of various institutions (a.o. *Video-werkgroep Openbaar Kunstbezit, Stichting Film & Wetenschap*). In the 'Bouwcentrum' in Rotterdam, a video workshop for educational purposes was established by the Netherlands Institute for Audiovisual Media for education (NIAM)¹⁹⁰⁵; in this perspective the *werkgroep* wanted to make a survey of the available equipment in the city, especially within educational institutions.

During the first meeting of the *Werkgroep Video*, Rob Maas of the *Centrale Discotheek* presented a booklet called *CD Video Visie*¹⁹⁰⁶. It emphasised the possibilities for individual

¹⁸⁹⁹ Letter by A.J. v/d Staay, 1972-01-28 (attached to the invitation by J.A. van Gorkom, 1972-07-31); GAR archive: 'Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam > GAR; Archief van het Archief', toegangsnr. 297.01, inventarisnr. 747.

¹⁹⁰⁰ Video-rapport ['Betreft: onderwerp Video'] by J.A. van Gorkom, 1972-02-15, in: GAR archive: 'Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam > GAR; Archief van het Archief', toegangsnr. 297.01, inventarisnr. 747.

¹⁹⁰¹ Mentioned are: *De Doelen*, the City Theatre (*Schouwburg*), *Bouwcentrum*, *Open Boek*, Town Hall, major department-stores, railway stations, metrostations and trains

¹⁹⁰² Invitation by J.A. van Gorkom, 1972-07-31 (for the meeting of 1972-08-04), in the GAR archive: 'Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam > GAR; Archief van het Archief', toegangsnr. 297.01, inventarisnr. 747.

¹⁹⁰³ Notes of the meeting of 1972-08-04, room 263 EN-gebouw (afd. Kunstzaken), in the GAR archive: 'Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam > GAR; Archief van het Archief', toegangsnr. 297.01, inventarisnr. 747.

¹⁹⁰⁴ An example of a video production that would serve such purposes was a report on the AFRIKAANDERWIJK (1972, LBC / Werkgroep Rob Maas).

¹⁹⁰⁵ NIAM (1970-2004) was the continuation of NOF (1941-1970). It was concerned with production and distribution of educational films and other media and provided video, film, sound and slides equipment for elementary and secondary schools. Its branch in Rotterdam was its training and information centre. See: *Nationaal Onderwijs Museum*, Rotterdam www.onderwijsmuseum.nl (website visited, 2007-04-20). Because of the survey Renting collected the booklet 'Cursusprogramma 1972-1973' by the NIAM, which as a result is kept in the 'archive of the archive': 'Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam > GAR; Archief van het Archief', toegangsnr. 297.01, inventarisnr. 747.

¹⁹⁰⁶ *CD Video Visie*, July 1972, in the GAR archive: 'Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam > GAR; Archief van het Archief', toegangsnr. 297.01, inventarisnr. 747.

programming (§ 2.02). In combination with (cable) television, video would make it possible for viewers to ask the station for particular programmes. It was also remarked that there existed a strong link between film and video, and that in the first years of video many existing films would be used, by scanning them, although this was still expensive. Therefore the *Centrale Discotheek* (§ 3.01) made a deal with Philips for a period of one year, as an experiment. For education many possibilities were awaiting, like schools producing their own programmes (§ 2.21). The role envisioned for the *Centrale Discotheek* was to establish a collection and to rent out tapes and equipment. At the end of the booklet (§ 4.00), which reads like a manifesto, the authors wrote¹⁹⁰⁷:

When the Lijnbaancentrum was furnished and when it was decided to invest many thousands of guilders in video, the Department of Art & Culture of the Municipality of Rotterdam did most likely not understand the shaking implications, and that is as good as it could be, because one would probably have hesitated and withdrawn, while Rotterdam today occupies a prominent position, and maybe even the first position in the cultural video realm.

The ‘manifesto’ ends with mentioning the collaborators, besides the *Gemeentearchief* also the medical faculty of the Erasmus University, and theatre De Lantaren, since they had become actively involved with video too, as I will briefly explain.

cable television

In 1967, the medical faculty established an audiovisual service and research centre. Headed by the physician A.C. Gisolf, it consisted of a team of thirty collaborators¹⁹⁰⁸. It was at the forefront of media applications for medical education, in order to enable self-study by way of video and to support the use of media for lectures. A cable television network had been integrated in the design of the faculty’s new building (1965-1968, OD 205), with the centre’s recording and editing studios being centrally located in the building¹⁹⁰⁹. The centre therefore had substantial experience with both video and cable television within the university, while experiments were carried out in respect of ‘social health’ and community organisation¹⁹¹⁰. In this way the centre also carried out a trial project for cable television in the district Ommoord, from December 1972, in collaboration with neighbourhood association *Stichting Wijkgemeenschap Ommoord*.

The audiovisual centre experimented with live broadcasting, for example when a new community health centre was presented (1972-12-08). Next to that it produced programmes such as *OMMOORD 1972* (Tonko Tomeï). Still shot on 16mm, and therefore suitable for additional screenings in neighbourhood centres, it was made to inform future residents of the new district ‘Ommoord’ (1962-1977, Lotte Beese). Although the film includes shots of the construction works, it mainly shows people who are concerned with its development: residents, social workers, a physician, a farmer who loses his land, associations, councils and committees. Building has first and foremost become social organisation, and those involved are critically monitoring its development¹⁹¹¹. Some people are enthusiastic about the new quarter, but there is also criticism, that the planning and architecture is too rigid to allow for spontaneous initiatives as well as possibilities for the youth to play. Tomeï interviews planner Beese, who replies that high-rise has

¹⁹⁰⁷ Original quote: ‘Toen bij de inrichting van het Lijnbaancentrum werd besloten enige tonnen in de video te steken, heeft de afdeling kunstzaken van de Gemeente Rotterdam vast niet begrepen wat men overhoop haalde en dat is maar goed ook, want anders had men zich misschien nog bedacht, terwijl Rotterdam nu een vooraanstaande plaats en misschien wel de eerste plaats in het culturele videogebeuren inneemt.’

¹⁹⁰⁸ See the booklet: *Audiovisuele Faciliteiten 1970, Medische Faculteit Rotterdam* (A.C. Gisolf), GAR: ‘Collectie Bibliotheek’ XXIXF390.

¹⁹⁰⁹ Van Spaandonk, 1973: 10; Binneveld & Vleesenbeek, 1976: 126.

¹⁹¹⁰ It also carried out an experiment with a beam transmitter on its building, which established a television connection with the universities of Leiden and Utrecht and the Instituut Film en Wetenschap (Utrecht), on 1972-04-06 – *Rotterdams Jaarboekje*, 1973: 33.

¹⁹¹¹ cf. AKTIE; OMMOORD (NCRV, 1970-12-19).

simply been emaciated (*uitgemergeld*) for economic reasons. She fiercely explains that she would like to design high-rise differently, since it has much more potential. One could, for example, reserve space for playgrounds inside a block. As a reaction to the film, Alderman Henk van der Pols, for neighbourhood affairs, called Ommoord nevertheless a model for urban planning¹⁹¹². The model that the film showed, however, was above all a model of social organisation. For that reason the film was enthusiastically received by the ministry for “Culture, Recreation and Social work” (CRN).

During the 1970s, cable television remained in an experimental phase, although the municipality made concrete plans, since 1976, for the creation of a cable network¹⁹¹³. In the 1980s cable television would gain a structural position in the media landscape of Rotterdam. It started in 1981 with a talk show presented by Raymond Campfens, who had been involved with the LBC Videogroep before¹⁹¹⁴. The show was about the issue of local broadcasting itself, and the next district council election, with discussions on the possible closing of Airport Zestienhoven and the renovation of houses in the old quarters¹⁹¹⁵.

De Lantaren and socially engaged productions

In the *CD Video Visie*, the authors remarked that the *Centrale Discotheek* was a rental centre, but a workshop would be established too (§ 4.02): ‘De Lantaren will offer the facilities in the next season’ (1972-1973). In 1969, when the RKS prepared the opening of the Lijnbaancentrum, it became also involved with theatre De Lantaren (“The Lantern”). Plans were made to turn it into an ‘arts lab’¹⁹¹⁶. In October 1972, the renovated accommodation was opened, which was reported by Polygoon: first are city and street shots and a woman commenting on the bad housing conditions, yet the reopening is reason for happiness; there are shots of a neighbourhood party, with cabaret addressing the pressing issues in a humorous way. De Lantaren coordinator Rommert Boonstra explains the activities of the centre, and interior shots exhibit the theatre stage, the graphic workshop and the new video workshop, which existed next to a film workshop.

Both the film and video workshop would be run by Jacques van Heijningen¹⁹¹⁷. He had studied at the Design Academy in Eindhoven, where he had come in touch with filmmaking through Frans Zwartjes, who was a teacher there¹⁹¹⁸. In Eindhoven he became also involved with ‘The New Electric Chamber Music Ensemble’. It was a group that experimented with various forms of acoustic and electronic sound, light and video, which was supported by researchers and engineers of Philips¹⁹¹⁹. With this experience he came to facilitate all kinds of film and video projects at De Lantaren¹⁹²⁰.

The *Aktiegroep Het Oude Westen* soon approached Van Heijningen, who lived in the neighbourhood himself, to make the video documentary HET LEVEN IN HET OUDE WESTEN

¹⁹¹² In: Meijer, Jan; ‘Ommoord 1972: historie van wijk in beweging’, [review] p15 in: *Het Vrije Volk*, 1973-06-13.

¹⁹¹³ GAR, coll. Kartografische Documenten, cat. nr. 2005-1369 and 1979-349, document title: ‘Kabeltelevisie | Rotterdam | R.M.O.’, Gemeentewerken, afd. Landmeten en Vastgoedinformatie / Kartografische Dienst.

¹⁹¹⁴ See e.g. BERNISSE JOURNAAL (1978, Jacques van Heijningen).

¹⁹¹⁵ UITZENDING REGIONALE OMROEP ROTTERDAM RIJNMOND (1981, Raymond Campfens).

¹⁹¹⁶ It would be directed by Rommert Boonstra (1972-1978). Although he was just thirty years old when he was appointed as the director, he had already been the director of the *Schouwburg* (theatre) in the city of Assen.

¹⁹¹⁷ Whereas De Lantaren had initially been a general ‘arts lab’, with a strong social function, towards the end of the 1970s it focused on film and the performing arts, which also included a theatre workshop (Willemsen, 1979: 11-13).

¹⁹¹⁸ ‘Frans Zwartjes had been my teacher, for 45 minutes; students had to discover film for oneself’. Jacques van Heijningen in an interview with FP, 2008-10-09.

¹⁹¹⁹ One of the main figures of the group was Wim Langenhoff, who worked for Philips (Jonker, 2008). Another prominent member was Piet Verdonk, who gave also a show at the *Academie voor Bouwkunst* in Rotterdam, under the title ‘The New Electric Cinema’ (1967-05-12). See: <http://iaaa.nl/rs/NewElectric/index.html> ‘The New Electric Chamber Music Ensemble’ (visited: 2008-07-10), and www.thenewelectric.nl/ (2008-11-04).

¹⁹²⁰ These varied from something like a funds raising film for disabled people in order to buy wheelchairs (which he directed himself), to artistic films like those by the artist Jan van Munster (for which he did the camerawork). See also filmography > Heijningen, Jacques van.

(1973). It featured, among others, the activist Gerrit Sterkman, and showed the daily life of an ordinary family (with Stien and Bas, who was the barman of De Lantaren). The video addressed the conditions of the neighbourhood, and the things that had to be changed. It was shown during action meetings at neighbourhood centre Odeon, which meant immediate feedback that served further initiatives in the neighbourhood.

Parallel to that, a production was made at the film workshop to address similar issues regarding the district Feijenoord, but cast in the tradition of documentary cinema. It was financed by the RKS film section, and made by the young photographers Frans Peter Verheijen and Adriaan Staal¹⁹²¹. The film, WIJK 20, emphasises the bad condition of the houses, some of which are closed off by timber. The filmmakers speak with residents, among them some elderly people, who still appreciate their neighbourhood, in spite of the problems. They are carefully portrayed through close-ups, in the fashion of Koelinga's DE STEEG (1932). A few younger people would like to move to new suburbs, such as Alexanderpolder, but this is difficult, due to high rents and waiting lists. There are some breaks in the conversations – one can see people thinking – which reinforces the social realism of the film in the style of *cinema vérité*. Shot on sensitive black-and-white film stock, WIJK 20 looks unpolished, which adds to the pressing atmosphere. The informal scenes are contrasted to a formal interview with Alderman Jettinghoff, who defends the 'Rottetracé', which requires demolition of old houses. The residents are against it and go into the street for a demonstration, yelling: 'this policy is not right, we continue the fight' (*dit is geen beleid, we gaan door met de strijd*). One person carries a banner with the text 'uncertainty is demolishing' (*onzekerheid is slopend*), which became the motto of the film. It had its premiere at a centre in the neighbourhood itself, where it was enthusiastically received¹⁹²². It attracted substantial attention, so that more than ten screenings would follow, which provided input for the local discussions¹⁹²³. Although Alderman Jettinghof had already left by that time, the problems remained, which were representative for those in various other parts of the city.

Verheijen and Staal were part of a socially engaged collective that was called 'Mediafront'. It also included designers and artists, who made things like posters and papers for neighbourhood organisations¹⁹²⁴. Among its members were Hansje Quartel, who worked for NCRV television, and Joop de Jong, who had collaborated on WIJK 20¹⁹²⁵. During the production of that film they noticed that there were relatively many children and elderly people in the old quarters, while the middle groups moved to the new suburbs.

The filmmakers decided to make another film on the position and housing conditions of elderly people. Many of them preferred to stay in their neighbourhood, but often they had to move to new homes for the elderly. The filmmakers approached ten of these homes and asked for permission to visit them, but in six cases their request was rejected. They visited the other four and concluded that they were neat, but that many of the residents were not satisfied; little was offered to them, and little was done to let them participate in neighbourhood life or within a larger community¹⁹²⁶. The film that resulted from it, ZORGVULDIG AFGESTOFT (1975, Verheijen &

¹⁹²¹ Verheijen has worked as a photographer, filmmaker, and web designer specialised in 'corporate identity', see: <http://flickr.com/photos/frans-peter-verheyen/page46/> and www.verheyen-design.nl/. Staal established his own studio for video productions, i.e. Dock-site productions.

¹⁹²² It was first shown at the Stampioenstraat, 1974-09-04, see: Meijer & Van Oosten, 1974..

¹⁹²³ 'Jonge filmers bezig met wijken en bewoners', p8 in: *Wijkwijs*, 1975/2. See also: De Vries, 1974.

¹⁹²⁴ De Vries (1975a).

¹⁹²⁵ Joop de Jong and Adriaan Staal would continue their collaboration for many years (1980s, 1990s), see the collection of GAR. This includes various titles in the sphere of urban renewal.

¹⁹²⁶ It was in contrast to the way outsiders looked at this issue; in 1973, for example, the German television director Lutz Bormann made a programme on Rotterdam as a model case concerning homes for the elderly (ref. 'Bezoekers', p26 in: *Rotterdam, Officieel Tijdschrift van de Gemeente Rotterdam*, vol. 11/2, 1973). On Dutch television, programmes were shown such as WERKWINKEL (NTS, 1973-09-30), on helping elderly people in Rotterdam-Zuid; WAT HEET OUD (KRO, 1976-12-29), about a service centre in Feijenoord that enabled elderly people to stay at home as long as possible. Similarly, the *Videocentrum* also made programmes on and for elderly people, such as JOURNAAL

Staal), included some staged scenes with alienating images, like a couple sitting quietly at a table in an empty room where nothing happens. The filmmakers had difficulties to finance the project, either because sponsors found it not artistic enough, which was the motivation of the RKS, or because the issue at stake was said to be ‘no priority’. In the end, however, they convinced the municipality and some social funds to support it¹⁹²⁷.

Besides such productions, which were shown at meetings of local organisations, and at De Lantaren, Mediafront made various short film and video reports, for example on the occupation of the Portuguese consulate, on issues like affordable housing, squat actions and something like the *Bouworde* (students renovating old houses), next to calls for participation in planning processes¹⁹²⁸. As such they collaborated also with Jacques van Heijningen¹⁹²⁹. In the meantime a new progressive national, and subsequently a local government had come into power, which paid special attention to neighbourhood activities. On top of that, the municipal *Werkgroep Video* gave a positive advice to the Mayor and Aldermen to invest in video as a ‘medium that will take a very prominent position among the communication media in the future’¹⁹³⁰.

Videocentrum

The RKS, De Lantaren and Mediafront, made a plan for what they called *wijkvideo* (“neighbourhood video”). At the end of 1974, it was submitted to the ‘Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work’ (CRM)¹⁹³¹. The plan was accepted, and with additional support of the municipality, the *Videocentrum* was established in 1976, which got its own accommodation¹⁹³². Besides the *wijkvideo* it encompassed the sections *kunst- en voorlichtingsvideo* (‘art and information video’), *videotheek & documentatie* (‘rental and documentation’), and *werkplaats* (the former workshop of De Lantaren), next to administrative and technical services¹⁹³³. Altogether the centre had five regular employees and three freelancers. The central figure became Bob Visser (•1950), who had previously worked as a journalist for VPRO-radio (he had reported on the events in Het Oude Westen a.o.¹⁹³⁴).

The Videocentrum became an instrument in the communication between citizens, in connection to the environment, in order to act upon it. As such it was a factor in the city’s

DIENSTENCENTRUM (1977, Bob Visser), about a service centre for the elderly in Crooswijk; cf. ROTTERDAM SENIOR (1978, Bob Visser).

¹⁹²⁷ Besides the municipality, the project was sponsored by the X-Y Beweging, Anjerfonds, and the Raad voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn (see: De Vries, 1975b). An example of a request for funding that was rejected: *Stichting Bevordering van Volkskracht*: proposal 1974-11-01 and reaction 1975-01-08, GAR, archive: ‘St. Bevordering van Volkskracht’, toegangsnr. 618, inventarisnr. 449.

¹⁹²⁸ De Vries, 1975a. Some of these productions were commissioned, e.g. SCHIEDAM 700 / INSpraak in Zuid en Oost-Schiedam (1975, Mediafront). This video was commissioned by the municipality of Schiedam, on the occasion of its 7th centenary and to promote the organisation of residents in associations – as a way to institutionalise and to channel participation in local governance.

¹⁹²⁹ Van Heijningen started to work at De Lantaren in 1973 and collaborated on all kinds of film and video production, while he made also registrations for various social and cultural organisations, e.g. ER IS WAT AAN DE HAND OP CHARLOIS (1975, Van Heijningen), a video report on issues in the district Charlois, to invite residents to come to a neighbourhood meeting, and, for example, GROTEKERKPLEIN HERLEEF (1975, Jacques van Heijningen), a video registration of a cultural manifestation near the St. Laurens Church.

¹⁹³⁰ [transl. FP] *Rapport van de Werkgroep Video*, 1973-12-07, GAR archive: ‘Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam > GAR; Archief van het Archief’, toegangsnr. 297.01, inventarisnr. 747.

¹⁹³¹ De Vries, 1975a.

¹⁹³² At the Kipstraat 29a. After 1979, together with the graphics workshop of De Lantaren, located at the Pelgrimsstraat. In the early 1980s the centre would also get involved with productions for transmission through cable television, among them programmes of ethnic minorities. Due to the reduction of government expenses, as well as debts of Film International (as part of the RKS), the centre would be dissolved in 1984-1985 – see: ‘RKS: Videocentrum kan verdwijnen’, in: *Het Vrije Volk*, 1984-05-12. Collaborators at the end were Cees van de Stoep, Henk van Bruggen, Adriaan Staal, and Michael Jansen.

¹⁹³³ cf. Gaemers, 1996: 130.

¹⁹³⁴ i.e. VPRO-VRIJDAG (1970-03-13); Visser reported also on other issues, e.g. negotiations in the metal industry: VPRO-VRIJDAG (1973-02-02).

development and in the emergence of a broader socially engaged movement. This can be understood through the notion of stigmergy¹⁹³⁵. Stigmergy causes the appearance of spatial and social structures at a general level, through a mediation of interactions at the individual level. In this case, individual residents joined forces in work groups or action committees. These collectivities acted as the constituent units, informed by local data, which resulted in large (social) networks that affected the urban environment as a whole. Within these networks, the Videocentrum, in collaboration with residents, provided feedback, both negative and positive, that stimulated or recruited residents to improve their neighbourhood, and to explore prospects for urban growth. Moreover, it also provided feedback to the authorities. There was ‘a two-way influence occurring in two distinct contexts’, to use the words of Nikos Salingaros regarding feedback and urban development. ‘Units or mechanisms act in parallel on any level, and their output is available to each other, and to the higher levels. An adaptive system will use feedback to influence both the smaller and larger scales’ (Salingaros, 2005: 233). In this light I will illuminate the practice of the Videocentrum through a number of video productions, by pointing to the interactions at stake.

In August 1976, Visser began with a production on the quarter Crooswijk, in collaboration with the neighbourhood organisation *Wijkorgaan Crooswijk* (CROOSWIJK DAAR WOON IK, 1976, Bob Visser)¹⁹³⁶. In the video, residents are asked to give their opinion about the neighbourhood and the housing conditions, by way of street interviews. Visser also records conversations in a local shop, goes to a home for elderly people, a playground for children and an elementary school. The production was shown on a monitor in a so-called ‘neighbourhood exhibition’ by the RKS, next to a monitor in the shop of a cheesemonger, and another one in the window of a carpet shop, with a speaker outside. In this way about 10,000 people saw the video¹⁹³⁷. Resulting from this production, the Videocentrum started a ‘neighbourhood newsreel’ (CROOSWIJK JOURNAAL). One of them (nr. 2 ‘Sloop Schutting’, 1976), deals with residents that come into action in order to pull down a dangerous concrete fence. The action leader explains that the municipality has not taken its responsibility, so the residents have to take command themselves. Visser asks various people for comments. A woman, speaking with a broad Rotterdam accent, complains about the bad condition of the fence since her son ‘went up’ because of it. A little later the astonished viewer realises that her son has died, because of a falling piece of concrete from the fence, only three weeks earlier, which is the reason of the protest action.

Visser and his colleagues approached all kinds of people for reactions, including Alderman Van der Ploeg (e.g. in *WAT DOEN WE MET CROOSWIJK*, 1976; *SLOPEN*, 1977). In this way, the Videocentrum became an active force within the discussions in the different quarters¹⁹³⁸. Moreover, residents could watch the productions not only in the neighbourhood centres, but also at home with a group of people, by borrowing a video player of the Videocentrum – something that is shown by the *VIDEOCENTRUM PRESENTATIETAPE* (1979, Bob Visser)¹⁹³⁹.

Regarding the *wijkvideo*, productions dealt with the old quarters as well as new suburbs, like Groot-IJsselmonde (i.e. *WIJK 26*, 1977, Bob Visser). Here people criticise the greyness of the high-rise and blame the architects for making no difference between ‘London and IJsselmonde’ (the latter used to be a village). This feeling is articulated by ominous electronic music. In the

¹⁹³⁵ For an argumentation of the principles applied here, cf. Bonabeau, Dorigo, Theraulaz, 1999: 11.

¹⁹³⁶ Information about this and following productions has been provided by Bob Visser (telephone conversation with the author, 2007-10-09).

¹⁹³⁷ Edzes, 1976: 17 – Adrie Monshouwer is also mentioned by Edzes as one of the key figures of the Videocentrum.

¹⁹³⁸ Besides the quarters and districts mentioned already, see also other videos by Visser on e.g. Spangen (1977), Delfshaven (1978), Noordereiland (1978) and other productions by the Videocentrum on Delfshaven (1977), Cool (1978), Hillesluis (1979), among many others.

¹⁹³⁹ This presentation tape, to promote the Videocentrum itself, which was made in April 1979, says that its activities started in July 1976 and calls itself *De Kleine Televisie van Rotterdam*; equipment can be used for free (*mobiele kijkkisten; huisbioscoopjes*). The Videocentrum exists in order to support *bevolkingsparticipatie*, and residents are its commissioners. Its task is to signal problems and to suggest solutions.

end, residents are invited to come to a neighbourhood centre with ideas to improve the public space.

Visser also made a series on children in different quarters¹⁹⁴⁰. They tell about their daily experiences and their contact with children from other ethnic backgrounds is addressed too (e.g. in Crooswijk). In *KINDEREN IN OMMOORD* (1977, Bob Visser), children read notes and comment upon the high-rise flats in which they live. They like the views from their flats and the playgrounds between the buildings, yet they would also like to play near their homes on the galleries, which they may not; they also address the problem of noise, since neighbours can hear them easily; some children don't like the elevators since it takes too much time, while others play with its alarm. The voice-overs of the children are accompanied by shots of their homes, the public space and the games they play.

Alternatively, a production like *MOET JE ZELF WETEN* (1977, RKS) was made by children themselves, from a school in Het Oude Westen. They showed their surroundings, addressing the problems with cars and the poor housing conditions in which they had to live. Comparable is the video *WONEN EN SPELEN, OUDE WESTEN* (1977, Chris de Jongh), which was made by the SKVR, a foundation for art education, which had also come to the fore in respect of video training and production¹⁹⁴¹. A range of self-made (video) productions started to be made, by different organisations, including calls to take part in neighbourhood meetings, video pamphlets addressing problems such as expensive apartments built in urban renewal areas, and (playful) invitations to take part in the planning process¹⁹⁴².

Many of the Videocentrum productions explicitly called for action¹⁹⁴³. In this way Visser also made the 'dramatised documentary' *BUFFELSTRAAT IN BEWEGING* (1977). The story, which is narrated by Koos Postema, is about a plan for a major road through a quiet suburb¹⁹⁴⁴. The residents (played by amateur theatre group *De Maasstadspelers*) try to find out how they can oppose this plan. Their struggle and their solutions provide an example for other citizens who want to raise their voice too: by organising themselves in an association that can be a discussion partner for governmental bodies. Hence, it is a matter of institutionalizing protest, to give it a direction and to make it productive. In fact, the video was commissioned by a foundation in Leiden called *Burgerschapskunde* (≈ 'Citizenship Studies'), which organised the so-called 'Open School'. As such, the video was part of one of its courses, and written material accompanied it.

interferences

Whereas Visser made *BUFFELSTRAAT IN BEWEGING*, another staged film, but shot on 16mm, was made by Mediafront, which was called *TE HUUR AANGEBODEN* ("For Rent", 1977). It shows once more a parallel development between video and film. The choice for film in this case was largely a matter of presentation; whereas the former was shown on monitors in classrooms, the latter was projected for large audiences at special meetings. To that end, Mediafront collaborated

¹⁹⁴⁰ i.e. Crooswijk (1976), Zuidwijk, Hillesluis, Ommoord (1977), Landzicht (1979, Videocentrum). Next to these video productions, various others were made by the Videocentrum about the subject of education, e.g. *DE BASISCHOOLO* (1978), *CROOSWIJK* (1978), *DE TOEKOMSTBOUWERS* (1979) a.o.

¹⁹⁴¹ At the time of writing this book, the video collection of SKVR at the *Gemeentearchief Rotterdam* was not yet accessible for research, which therefore remains a subject for further investigation.

¹⁹⁴² e.g. *VERSLAG WIJKVERGADERING* (1978, RKS): residents of Crooswijk claim participation in the development of a housing project (Heinekenterrein); e.g. *HUREN AAN DE HAVEN* (1979, RKS) on problems with expensive apartments in Feijenoord (and Crooswijk); e.g. *WERKEN AAN 'T BESTEMMINGSPLAN, MET Z'N ALLEN ALS HET KAN* (1979, RKS), played by theatre group *Diskus*, to set the agenda for the urban masterplan of 'Het Nieuwe Westen', for which the video mobilises residents to work on it collectively. See also filmography: Rotterdamse Kunststichting as well as Bob Visser.

¹⁹⁴³ e.g. *OUDE NOORDEN* (1977, Bob Visser & Kees Breedijk); *COOL, WOONWIJK?* (1977, Videocentrum); *AANKONDIGING WIJKORGAAN VERGADERING* (1977, Videocentrum); *ACTIEDAG NIEUWE WESTEN/MIDDELLAND*, (1979, Videocentrum); etcetera.

¹⁹⁴⁴ This is located in Kralingseveer, a village in the east of Rotterdam.

with fifteen different quarters, which also sponsored the film, together with an organisation for community work (*Instituut Opbouwwerk Rotterdam*)¹⁹⁴⁵.

Like Visser's, it is an 'applied fiction film', rather than a docudrama (which is a fact-based representation¹⁹⁴⁶). The story stands for many, but in itself it is fictive. It deals with a young couple looking for an apartment. They get trapped by real estate speculator H. Fennis (an existing person). While improving their new abominable apartment they join a (real) protest against this malicious entrepreneur. On this occasion the arguments are recapitulated when a radio reporter 'interviews' the protagonists. It seems no coincidence that after the film was made, VARA-VISIE (1977-12-09) also reported on Fennis¹⁹⁴⁷. On the 16th of May 1979, the NOS JOURNAAL finally reported the winding-up sale of Fennis, which was attended by many angry residents¹⁹⁴⁸.

The municipal policy to buy old houses in renewal areas caused speculation. The film agitates against speculation, arguing that the houses must be improved instead. Although this was also the aim of the policy, the film shows at the same time a fragile equilibrium between the municipality ('subsidizing speculation') and organisations like Mediafront. The latter remained critical towards the former, notwithstanding the fact that the film had been made through the support of municipal institutions. It was a typical manifestation of tensions at the 'emergent interface', resulting interchangingly in conflict and collaboration. However, in the long run public and private institutions adapted to the new situation, at least for a decade or so.

Just like Mediafront used both video and film, the Videocentrum started to make productions on 8mm and 16mm film as well. On top of that, the centre ran a section for artistic productions. An example is *THE SINKING OF THE STOLWIJK* (1979, Cor Kraat): a ship made out of cheese is heated in a pan and melts, like a sinking ship. It reflects Rotterdam's shipbuilding industry that was gradually declining, and with it a living, and as such it is a cross-media reference to television reports about this subject¹⁹⁴⁹. Other cross-media connections can be recognised in the unconventional youth information programme *TILT* (1978, Bob Visser)¹⁹⁵⁰. While it started as a Videocentrum production, it was continued on VPRO television, as *NEON* (1979-1980), after the VPRO had already broadcast Visser's *J.A. DEELDER'S STADSGEZICHT* (1977).

Since there was an ongoing oscillation between categories and formats, Visser contacted the film section of the RKS to ask if the film workshop of De Lantaren could become part of the Videocentrum, turned into a general audiovisual centre. Although the Videocentrum was related to the RKS, its film section had hitherto nothing to do with the Videocentrum, since it was only concerned with 'cinema'. One invited Visser and his colleagues Van Heijningen and Van der Stoep. Visser explained that with the support of the Dutch government the Videocentrum had been established, first of all to promote citizen participation¹⁹⁵¹. In this way he immediately touched upon a difficult issue. Whereas the practices of the Videocentrum, like that of Mediafront, were explicitly socially motivated, and which often did not mention any names at all, the RKS film section proceeded from the notions of 'art' and 'auteur'. They discussed if artistic

¹⁹⁴⁵ Besides this municipal support it was also funded by the *X-Y Beweging*. This social organisation, mostly concerned with Third World Development, also funded other film projects, e.g. *DE PALESTIJNEN* (1975) by Johan van der Keuken.

¹⁹⁴⁶ According to the definition of a docudrama, see Staiger (2005). An example of a comparable film, on urban renewal, made for the city of Amsterdam is *STRIJD OM DE STAD* (1978, Pieter Verhoeff).

¹⁹⁴⁷ Veronica also broadcast an informative programme on housing agencies: *INFO* (Veronica, 1978-04-05).

¹⁹⁴⁸ See also auction of Fennis' property (art works): *TELEVIZIER* (AVRO, 1983-09-03).

¹⁹⁴⁹ See e.g. *NOS JOURNAAL*, 1977-08-23; *VARA-Visie*, 1978-11-28.

¹⁹⁵⁰ It provided information regarding jobs, social support, social-cultural activities etc. It did so through reports, interviews, video trick images (i.e. *Tilt Code*, later: *Neon Code*), and 'acts', while it also included entertainment, e.g. music by Gruppo Sportivo.

¹⁹⁵¹ Bob Visser in RKS meeting, *Sektie Film* 1979-06-05 – notes in: GAR, archive: 'Mr. L.J. Pieters', toegangsnr. 168, inventarisnr. 155.

and social productions could be mutually inspiring or if they would obstruct each other. They concluded that collaboration was desirable, but how to do so remained a question¹⁹⁵².

The discussion on film and video was bound up with ideas on approaches and intentions. Already before, questions had been raised internally concerning the kinds of films that needed support; should the RKS film section 'restrict itself to art, or should the vision be broadened to social and political motivation poured into artistic form, or should the RKS, as previously intended, concerning expenses from the budget of film development, restrict itself to stimulating (fiction) film activities and experiments, or should it also support practical documentaries?'¹⁹⁵³. It was an ongoing discussion, but the pressure grew as the Mayor and Aldermen asked for a five-year plan.

To find a way out, the section suggested a special budget for documentaries. That remained a proposal. For the time being, no decisions were taken and the actual policy became that only occasionally the section would support documentaries, and submissions would be judged individually¹⁹⁵⁴. This was problematic for documentaries as much as it was for experimental films. One pragmatically concluded that the films sponsored by the RKS needed to have a strong connection with Rotterdam, and that they had to stimulate the film culture in the city¹⁹⁵⁵. These criteria remained vague. In 1979, the coordinators of the film workshop and members of the RKS film section jointly made a policy plan, in which they focused on 'level'. 'Is an objective level aspired, or is it stimulated to achieve a personal, relative level?'¹⁹⁵⁶. The latter was favoured. Next was the question for whom the facilities were meant. The answer was: 'for those working professionally', with the remark that one should understand 'professional' as 'the mentality to achieve an optimal result'¹⁹⁵⁷.

§ 4. divergent visions

The 'interface turbulence' that occurred between citizens and the (local) government was not easily settled. On the contrary, different visions came to the fore, around 1980, which resulted in professionals criticising the developments that had relied too much upon the ideas of citizens, while a new generation dismissed much of the developments altogether. Along with this, audiovisual media, both in terms of formats and genres, developed in different directions.

television mediating new housing estates

Housing developments in the 1970s harked back to those of the 1920s and 1930s, regarding issues of slum clearance and the creation of green suburbs. This was highlighted by media reports, such as the television documentary *EENE WONING VOOR DEN WERKMAN* (1972, Leo

¹⁹⁵² They decided that together they would look, first of all, how the workshops could support each other, i.e. Bals and F. Peters of the Film Section, Van Heijningen, Van der Stoep and Visser of the Videocentrum, Notes of the meeting RKS, Sektie Film of 1979-06-05. GAR, archive: 'Mr. L.J. Pieters', toegangsnr. 168, inventarisnr. 155.

¹⁹⁵³ Questions raised in respect of submitted proposal 'GAB-film', notes of the meeting of the RKS, Sektie Film, 1978-01-17. GAR, archive: 'Mr. L.J. Pieters', toegangsnr. 168, inventarisnr. 155.

Original quote: 'Naar aanleiding van deze aanvraag ontspint zich opnieuw de uitvoerige discussie of de Kunststichting zich moet beperken tot kunst of de visie moet verbreden tot in kunstvorm gegoten sociale of politieke beweging, of de Kunststichting zich, zoals eerder voorgenomen, bij bestedingen uit het budget filmontwikkeling moet beperken tot het stimuleren van (speel)filmactiviteit en experimenten of ook praktische documentaires moet gaan subsidiëren.'

¹⁹⁵⁴ See for example the notes concerning the proposal 'Makara'; meeting of RKS, Sektie Film 1978-10-04. GAR, archive: 'Mr. L.J. Pieters', toegangsnr. 168, inventarisnr. 155.

¹⁹⁵⁵ These were the criteria expressed in respect of a rejection of a proposal submitted by Edward Luyken, discussed by the RKS Sektie Film at 1978-11-28. GAR, archive: 'Mr. L.J. Pieters', toegangsnr. 168, inventarisnr. 155.

¹⁹⁵⁶ Original quote: 'Wordt er gestreefd naar een bepaald, objectief niveau (vgl. Muziekschool) of wordt gestimuleerd tot het bereiken van een persoonlijk, relatief niveau?'. Notes of the meeting RKS, Sektie Film of 1979-05-08. GAR, archive: 'Mr. L.J. Pieters', toegangsnr. 168, inventarisnr. 155.

¹⁹⁵⁷ Notes of the meeting RKS, Sektie Film of 1979-05-08. GAR, archive: 'Mr. L.J. Pieters', toegangsnr. 168, inventarisnr. 155.

Akkermans)¹⁹⁵⁸. It focused on the difficulty of creating affordable housing that also allows residents to appropriate it according to their specific needs. It showed garden village ‘Vreewijk’ from the 1920s, which became successful since its construction was accompanied by the establishment of social organisations and through the commitment of its residents. Concerning workers, for whom it was intended, only those with decent jobs came to live here, next to socially engaged teachers, writers and artists. The documentary also paid attention to plans by Van den Broek & Bakema for housing estates that enable residents to make extensions to their dwellings over the course of years¹⁹⁵⁹. Both cases were based on ideas of differentiation and a concern with individual commitment, not unlike the ideas of the urban renewal movement. This was a reaction to the increasing rigidity of modern suburbs. The film highlights another direction, that of a small-scale approach that offers space to individuals and a vital community life.

Next to the piecemeal renewal of the old quarters, new housing estates became also subject to this small-scale paradigm. The first projects as such were built by architect Leo de Jonge. In collaboration with his father he had designed several public buildings and numerous housing blocks in Rotterdam since the 1950s. His work relied upon modernist principles, which can still be recognised in his BNA-study for ‘Het Oude Westen’, which foresaw demolition and entirely new estates. However, De Jonge quickly adapted to the circumstances¹⁹⁶⁰. In this way he created projects in various urban renewal areas, and with success¹⁹⁶¹.

Mayor Van der Louw gave impetus to the housing development through his personal connections. He had previously lived in Hoevelaken (near Amersfoort), just like architect Jan Verhoeven. The latter was the founder of *Stichting Nieuwe Woonvormen*, a foundation for housing innovation in the Netherlands¹⁹⁶². In his hometown, Verhoeven built the first project of the foundation, which received attention from (indeed) VARA-television¹⁹⁶³. It was followed by a housing estate in the village Berkel en Rodenrijs (1969-1973), near Rotterdam, which Verhoeven created in collaboration with, among other, Nico Witstok, who was simultaneously involved with the successful BNA-study for ‘Het Oude Westen’.

When Van der Louw moved to Rotterdam he asked Verhoeven to build his private house¹⁹⁶⁴. He also received the commission to design ‘Housing Hofdijk’ (1977-1983), a complex

¹⁹⁵⁸ Concerning Vreewijk, cf: WONINGRENOVATIE (1970, Bouke Ottow). Other reports that refer to pre-war housing are e.g. VAN GEWEST TOT GEWEST (NOS, 1975-11-19, reunion of residents of Tuindorp Heijplaat); VOLKSWONINGBOUW 1920-1940 (1978, LBC Videogroep); WITTE DORP & BERGPOLDERFLAT (1977, Bob Visser & Kees Breedijk).

¹⁹⁵⁹ This concerns the housing project ‘t Hool’ in Eindhoven (1962-1972).

¹⁹⁶⁰ In the decades after WWII, father Jos and son Leo de Jonge created several public buildings, schools in particular (e.g. ‘Tweede Christelijke Technische School “De Vaan”, Montessoriweg, 1956-1961; pedagogical academy ‘St. Lucia’, Hennekijnstraat, 1954-1958), and housing projects in Charlois, Oud-Mathenesse, Schiebroek, Kleinpolder-Oost, Tussendijken, Zuidwijk, Westpunt (Hoogvliet) and Lombardijen (cf. Groenendijk e.a. 2007: 217). In 1972 a number of employees became partners; the office of De Jonge was then called ‘De Jonge, Dorst, Lubeek, De Bruijn, De Groot & Partners’. The first small-scale housing projects were ‘Veemarktterrein’ (1975-1976) and the neighbouring complex ‘Goudse Rijweg/Vondelweg’ (1975-1978). As such they carried out projects in a.o. Het Oude Westen, Cool, Kralingen, Charlois, Afrikaanderwijk, Provenierswijk, Liskwartier, and Het Oude Noorden. See: Groenendijk, 2004; Architectuur > Personen > Jonge, Jos en Leo de.

www.rotterdam.nl/smartsite229.dws?Menu=2004581&MainMenu=0&goto=2062613&style=1901

(2008-04-04). For other projects of this kind, designed by different architects, see: Nycolaas: 1983, 195.

¹⁹⁶¹ In 1979 critic Kenneth Frampton considered his project at ‘Goudse Rijweg/Vondelweg’ (1975-1978) as a major architectural achievement, see: *Wonen-TABK* (1979, nr, 16/17).

¹⁹⁶² See: www.bonas.nl >> zoekmachine archiwijzer >> alle architecten >> Verhoeven

¹⁹⁶³ I.e. ‘Housing Kyftenbeltlaan’ (1968-1971, Jan Verhoeven). VARA first showed Verhoeven explaining his plans and presenting models (ACHTER HET NIEUWS, 1968-08-10), followed by exterior and interior shots once they were carried out (GOED LEVEN, VARA, 1970-01-07). The latter showed first apartment blocks in Amsterdam Buitenveldert, as a contrast to the experiment by Verhoeven, which was followed by an item that addressed the problems of housing in Rotterdam. The project was also shown in VANDAAG OF MORGEN (AVRO, 1970-05-08), on housing in the Netherlands.

¹⁹⁶⁴ At Kralingseweg (1977-1980). See: www.bonas.nl, see also: Groenendijk (2004b):

www.wonen.rotterdam.nl/smartsite2033034.dws?Menu=2072028&MainMenu=2072028 (visited: 2007-04-14)

of more than 500 dwellings situated at the former Heliport, next to the river Rotte. Making use of its water, a canal was made in the shape of a rhombus, to create an island on which the complex was built (see e.g. TELEVIZIER, AVRO, 1980-03-24). The houses are individually recognisable through saddle roofs – which were ridiculed by critics. However, Verhoeven created a complex structuralist configuration, according to geometrical principles. Striking are the elevated walkways and squares that connect the houses and which facilitate contact between neighbours. The publicity that Verhoeven's earlier plans had received helped him to get his plan accepted, to such an extent that it was soon taken for granted. This is exemplified by amateur recordings as well as a television programme in which it illustrates the topic of mortgages and interest rates¹⁹⁶⁵.

'Housing Hofdijk' result from a study by Jan Hoogstad regarding the role of the river Rotte that had given the city its name, after the plans for the Rottetracé had been cancelled¹⁹⁶⁶. Instead the intention had become to reintegrate the Rotte in the city, to make it visible and to turn it into an attraction. As such it became also the subject of a television programme that showed the history and the current condition of the river (VAN GEWEST TOT GEWEST, NOS 1979-05-02). Another project that resulted from it was a housing complex at St.-Jacobsplaats (1975-1979)¹⁹⁶⁷. The latter was an ancient site, for which Hoogstad himself designed three hundred large, terraced dwellings with private and public platforms on the water and bridges connecting the parts.

Another member of *Stichting Nieuwe Woonvormen* was Piet Blom, who, like Verhoeven, had been a student of Aldo van Eyck in the late 1950s. In 1976, Blom was asked to make a study for a project near the *Oude Haven* ("Old Harbour"). For a number of years Blom had worked on his concept of 'the roof of the city': a high density of elevated dwellings, including public spaces such as squares and corridors, in order to leave the ground level available for other activities – similar to Verhoeven's plan (and Constant's 'New Babylon'). In this way, Blom created the Kasbah in Hengelo and cube houses in Helmond. They received much media attention¹⁹⁶⁸, which prepared a general understanding and appreciation of Blom's ideas.

Blom was convinced that housing around the old harbour needed to be connected to the other side of the Blaak avenue, to connect it to the city centre. He proposed to construct a bridge with dwellings. His final design consisted of three large canted cubes to be used for offices and the Rotterdam Academy of Architecture, (work)shops on the elevated ground floor, and thirty-nine smaller cubes for dwellings of three floors. All cubes are turned on one angle, each standing on a pole that is its staircase – hence the complex is called "Pole Dwellings" or "Blaak Forest"¹⁹⁶⁹. The whole plan was unconventional. Television helped to create support by paying attention to its concept. Still in an early stage, the plan was broadcast by the NOS JOURNAAL (1978-05-29). Pim Korver took a panorama shot of the old harbour area, followed by shots of the model of the Cube Houses, while reporter Herman van der Spek interviewed Blom. Half a year later TROS broadcast a documentary on Blom's work, which took his concept of *The Roof of the City* as its title: HET DAK VAN DE STAD (1978, René van Gyn). At the beginning Blom explains his ideas for Rotterdam. His other work is presented, and at the end are models of the cube houses. Within this narrative structure, the project in Rotterdam makes up the framework. The

¹⁹⁶⁵ Resp. WANDELING DOOR ROTTERDAM (1978-1982, Jan Soek), which documents the development of 'Housing Hofdijk' as a matter of fact next to the complex at the Goudse Rijkweg and 'De Peperklip' (1979-1982, Carel Weeber); and TELEVIZIER (AVRO, 1980-03-24).

¹⁹⁶⁶ I.e. study *Waterverband* (1971-1973, J. Hoogstad); www.architectuur.org/hoogstad.php B. van Hoek (2007-04-17).

¹⁹⁶⁷ For 'St.-Jacobsplaats', see: Groenendijk & Vollaard, 2007: 9. See also: Rodermond, 1979. Next to this the study also resulted in 'De Leuvehaven' (1975-1980, Apon, Van den Berg, Ter Braak, Tromp), see: Groenendijk & Vollaard, 2007: 73; see also: Groenendijk (2004): Architectuur > Personen > Apon. See: www.rotterdam.nl/smartsite229.dws?Menu=2004581&MainMenu=0&goto=2004061&style=1901

¹⁹⁶⁸ See: e.g. KASBAH PROJECT VAN PIETER BLOM (1974-wk42, Polygoon), DE PAALWONINGEN VAN PIETER BLOM (1976-wk06, Polygoon), DRIE MAAL TWINTIG (1976-11-17, AVRO).

¹⁹⁶⁹ The complex is flanked by a tower, called 'the pencil', and, on the other side, along the *Oude Haven*, a 'Mediterranean' housing complex of two-hundred-fifty dwellings, cafés, terraces and shops (all designed by Blom too) – Barbieri (e.a.), 1983: 206-207 (a.o.).

programme thus helped to understand and accept the work. This also applies to another programme that compared Blom's projects in Helmond and Rotterdam¹⁹⁷⁰. Already before their completion, in 1982, the 'Cube Houses' became an attraction, and in the next years they would frequently appear on television, for example in NCRV's BOKKESPRONGEN (1985-05-15)¹⁹⁷¹, in which Blom presents his own project as well as 'Housing Hofdijk'.

Next to these projects, some new suburbs were also based on the small-scale approach, like 'Beverwaard' (1978-1983, plan: Mol/Reyenga & Tetteroo) and 'Zevenkamp' (1978-1983, plan: Abma & Hazewinkel). The creation of the latter was also shown in a television report, which paid special attention to an experiment with wooden shell constructions that people could arrange themselves in order to design their own dwelling (TROS AKTUA 408, 1982-09-10)¹⁹⁷². However, due to economic changes and restrictions of budget, the small-scale paradigm was finally reduced to more conventional principles, both in terms of aesthetics and organisation¹⁹⁷³. It also lacked the vitality of the urban renewal areas, since the residents were not yet there, while new models of participation and planning were not further explored.

turbulence

The paradigmatic small-scale approach was, however, not a foregone conclusion. There was an ongoing debate in the press between 'culturalists' and 'progressists', as Cordula Rooijendijk has framed it (2005, ch. 5)¹⁹⁷⁴. The culturalists argued for urban renewal according to a piece-meal approach, which respected existing structures. In a similar way they asked attention, supported by the media, for historical buildings at the outskirts that were about to be demolished, such as the 'Veerhuis' (1767) in Overschie, and the country estate 'D'Oliphant' (1591) at Voorne – which would eventually be saved (although the latter was 'relocated' to Charlois)¹⁹⁷⁵.

Within the municipality, however, the progressist view was still strong, which is clear from the support for the 'Europoint' office towers (1971-1975, SOM), which would become the home of the departments of Urban Development and Public Works (see the prologue of Part III). In fact, many architects and planners came to resist small-scale development in the end. In 1979, in an interview for *Hard Werken*¹⁹⁷⁶, Carel Weeber spoke of it as a matter of *truttigheid* (≈ 'frumpiness'), as something that is snug, tiny and cosy, being the opposite of rational and straight. The city was turned inside out; the way most people furnished their homes became also the way the city was made¹⁹⁷⁷. It was a result, according to Weeber, of the participation processes in which architects had lost their integrity. This critique was immediately picked up by colleagues.

Small-scale architecture became known as *Nieuwe Truttigheid*, being the reversal of *Nieuwe Zakelijkheid* from the 1920s¹⁹⁷⁸. As a counter statement Weeber built 'De Peperklip' (1979-1982), a large curved monolithic housing block in the district Feijenoord. Since remarkable buildings in Rotterdam get nicknames, Weeber anticipated it and called it *peperklip* ("paperclip"). He wrote it in large letters on the façade, with an ironical reference towards Dutchified spelling of that time. However, the shape of a paperclip is only to be recognised from above; the building has little in common with the actual features of a paperclip. It is a bold gesture to be recognised and appreciated by architects and planners only. Although some critics called it a prison or 'housing fortress'¹⁹⁷⁹, it is generally considered as the end of the small-scale approach¹⁹⁸⁰.

¹⁹⁷⁰ VAN GEWEST TOT GEWEST (1981, NOS), with interviews with residents, models and constructed parts.

¹⁹⁷¹ NCRV (1985-05-15), interview with Piet Blom by Louis Kockelmann, 11'15" [B&G: 12212M75684 {FILM}]

¹⁹⁷² Initiator of the do-it-yourself project was Frans Boekhorst, in collaboration with architect Willem Wagenaar.

¹⁹⁷³ For a comment upon the plans, see: Nycolaas, 1983: 190.

¹⁹⁷⁴ This dichotomy is based on Françoise Choay, see Rooijendijk, 2005: 32-35.

¹⁹⁷⁵ See resp. JOURNAAL, NOS, 1974-10-25 and 1975-08-12; cf. [D'Oliphant] Polygoon, 1970-wk24.

¹⁹⁷⁶ Boonstra, 1979.

¹⁹⁷⁷ Cf. De Vletter, 2005: 49.

¹⁹⁷⁸ Cf. Barbieri, Umberto, 'De nieuwe truttigheid is dood, wat nu?', pp40-47 in: *Plan*, 1979/11.

¹⁹⁷⁹ *Gevangenis and woonkazerne*, ref. in: Groenendijk, 2004 www.wonen.rotterdam.nl/smartsite2043793.dws

Weeber is usually mentioned as the first to criticise the small-scale paradigm. Instead, art historian Patricia van Ulzen (2007: 78-83) has argued that the break happened with the VPRO broadcasting Bob Visser's film-essay J.A. DEELDER'S STADSGEZICHT, at Christmas 1977¹⁹⁸¹. Walking at night across an empty 'Schouwburgplein' and through 'De Lijnbaan', poet Jules Deelder – dressed in black, and wearing sunglasses – denounces the attempts to make the city *gezellig* ("cosy"). He prefers the baldness of Rotterdam and literally turns its facts and figures into poetry. At the end he reads his poem *Stadsgezicht*, which is a tribute to modernist architecture. He writes for example: *Tall and hard as spikes the sky // with a tinny twinkling sun or // black and low in flurry-fly // along a concrete skeleton*¹⁹⁸². He also calls the city a 'posthistoric prospect'. Van Ulzen calls the poem 'prophetic'.

It describes a Rotterdam that didn't exist in 1977 but would take shape during the 1980s and '90s. It also describes aspects of Rotterdam (high-rise, distant prospects, concrete skeletons) that were condemned and contested in 1977 but would be reassessed and appreciated by policymakers and the public at large some 10 to 15 years later. (Van Ulzen, 2007: 82)

Although Alderman Mentink had called the Shell tower (1976) 'the last erection of capitalism'¹⁹⁸³, other office towers appeared indeed a decade later. We may wonder if the filmmakers welcomed such capitalist erections, but if we take Van Ulzen's words in terms of a metropolitan life-style against 'fiddliness' we can follow her when she says (2007: 87) that this vision was picked up by graphic designers related to the paper *Hard Werken* ['Hard Working']: '*Hard Werken* gave verbal and visual expression to a clear perspective on the city of Rotterdam. Several issues included trenchant critiques of the small-scale architecture being built all over the city centre.'

It is unlikely that the film caused a mentality change to the extent that Van Ulzen suggests. It was important since it was Deelder's first television performance *as such*, after he had briefly appeared on television a few times before¹⁹⁸⁴. It contributed to his status of a cult figure associated with Rotterdam. Moreover, in 1979, Visser and Deelder, as a roving reporter, began a programme called NEON, for VPRO-television, about 'neon-romanticism' and punk, which was the continuation of the Videocentrum production TILT – and hence there is a direct link with citizen participation¹⁹⁸⁵. After the successful broadcasting of J.A. DEELDER'S STADSGEZICHT by the VPRO, it was acquired by the municipality to be shown at the *Hulp- en Informatiecentrum* at the Coolsingel¹⁹⁸⁶. And so this film too enabled the communication between the city and its citizens.

¹⁹⁸⁰ Groenendijk, 2004: Architectuur > 'Ontstaan en ontwikkeling' [Rotterdam]: 'The end of small-scale development in architecture is marked by 'De Peperklip' by Carel Weeber from 1982'. Original quote: 'Het einde van de kleinschaligheid in de architectuur wordt gemarkeerd door De Peperklip van Carel Weeber uit 1982.'

¹⁹⁸¹ The title can be interpreted in three different ways; 'stadsgezicht' means both 'city sight' and 'city face', while it is also the title of the poem that Deelder reads; hence the title of the film refers to 'Deelder's poem', 'Deelder's view upon the city' and 'Deelder's urban face'. The film was part of the programme HET GAT VAN NEDERLAND (1977-12-25), which consisted of different items, the first being the gospel according to St. Lucas read by Prof. dr. Piet Steenkamp. Other items followed that showed, in contrast, different sides of contemporary society. Visser's film was included as item nr. 8. www.beeldengeluid.nl (2007-04-17).

¹⁹⁸² Translation by FP; original verses: Hoog en spijkerhard de hemel // met een blikkerende zon of // zwart en laag in wilde wemel // langs skeletten van beton.

¹⁹⁸³ Cf. Van Ulzen, 2007: 76.

¹⁹⁸⁴ The first time was in POÉZIE IN CARRÉ (VPRO, 1966-03-21).

¹⁹⁸⁵ Others that contributed to this programme were, for example, Rijnke & Van Leeuwen (i.e. spot for Rock Against Religion in Kaasee / RAR-SPOT, broadcast as part of NEON, 1979-12-23). Deelder was also involved with the television production VERHAGENCADABRA (Wim T. Schippers, VPRO 1979-06-17). Another film that was produced by Visser is the fiction short HEB JE JETTA WEL 'NS GEHAD? (1978, Ab van Ieperen). Deelder and Visser would make various other programmes afterwards. It would eventually enable Visser to establish his own production company, called 'Neon'.

¹⁹⁸⁶ Schmidt, 1978: 19-20. Visser also collaborated with the centre in respect of TILT (a.o.).

In a similar way, *Hard Werken* had been initiated by Willem Kars, who coordinated the graphics workshop of De Lantaren¹⁹⁸⁷, which actively supported the urban renewal movement. Moreover, it had been Rommert Boonstra, the director of De Lantaren, who had interviewed Carel Weeber, who himself carried out also a large number of urban renewal projects¹⁹⁸⁸. Besides that, he was a member of the RKS, where he headed the architecture section (1975-1988)¹⁹⁸⁹. Among its projects was an international visitation of Rotterdam, the so-called *Keurmeestersproject* (“Master Inspector Project”, 1979), for which the RKS invited the critics Kenneth Frampton, Stanislaus von Moos, and Francesco Dal Co. Besides a number of reconstruction buildings they, Frampton in particular, also appraised some small-scale housing plans in the city centre¹⁹⁹⁰. They were, however, critical on the visitation itself, which was based on a short list of twenty representative buildings. Von Moos and Dal Co argued for an approach that framed the architecture of Rotterdam in a broader (culturalist) perspective, in terms of history and surroundings.

The ‘small-scale’ development, which Van Ulzen considers anti-metropolitan, actually concerned different realms: urban renewal, suburban housing, and public space. It is mostly the proportioning of public space that was criticised by Deelder, especially street furniture such as flower boxes. Weeber was especially disturbed by suburban developments. However, he himself had been related to the *Stichting Nieuwe Woonvormen*. Regarding this foundation, Wim van Heuvel has stated, in his book *Structuralism in Dutch Architecture* (1992: 32), that the criticism concerned above all its *offshoot*, due to ‘extremely personal ideas about architecture and the desire for form [that] led to picturesque details’. It raised costs, so one had to economise on other aspects, which reduced the overall quality.

Compared to urban renewal, projects drawn on a *tabula rasa* had a different relation to sociocultural structures. Whereas suburban quarters were entirely new and encompassed just housing, urban renewal put the focus on actual environments and the mixture of functions.

In 1980, the *Aktiegroep Het Oude Westen* received a major architecture award, the *Rotterdam-Maaskant Prijs* (initiated by Maaskant shortly before). The jury stated¹⁹⁹¹: ‘The urban renewal process deserves the award and the *Aktiegroep Het Oude Westen*, as the most important generator and as a symbol of this process, receives the award.’ The quarter was ‘a laboratory of urban renewal’, which continued till the 1990s. The *Aktiegroep* still exists today¹⁹⁹². It corresponds to Pietro Hammel’s idea that the city is alive and that it should not be framed as a final plan or a built ‘result’. It is above all a matter of organisation, of place and events, of communication and social relationships eventually. This is a ‘product’ of architecture that takes time, which, however, is not supervised by architects, whose official task ends once a building is ‘ready’.

Regarding ‘Het Oude Westen’, Groenendijk and Vollaard (1998, 266) write that the ‘vitality of the Rotterdam approach received international acclaim’. In spatial terms, the achievements are characterised by ‘[c]onnecting side streets, district facilities and garages below

¹⁹⁸⁷ See also: Van Ulzen: 2007, 93.

¹⁹⁸⁸ www.fondsbkvb.nl/archief/india/deelnemers/19_weerber.html (visited 2007-04-18). In Rotterdam he created the housing estates Voorhaven, Slaak, Oostzeedijk, Tolhuislaan, Vasteland en Pompenburg. Also *De Peperklip* was located in an urban renewal area, and as such it is also shown in the art video GROETEN UIT ROTTERDAM (1982, Van Brummelen & Dullaart). See also ‘Weeber’ at www.wonen.rotterdam.nl/smartsite2043793.dws (2008-08-20).

¹⁹⁸⁹ Cf. Van Ulzen, 2007: 95.

¹⁹⁹⁰ E.g. Goudse Rijweg and Vondelweg (1975-1978, Leo de Jonge e.a.); St. Jacobsplaats (1975-1978, Jan Hoogstad). It was published in a special issue on the project by the architectural magazine *Wonen-TABK* (1979, nr. 16/17).

¹⁹⁹¹ A.o. Hedy d’Ancona, Ruud Brouwers and Wim Quist (who had been part of the study group who drew the first plan for ‘Het Oude Westen’ in 1970). Quote taken from Groenendijk (2004a):

www.rotterdam.nl/smartsite2043508.dws?Menu=2004581&MainMenu=0 Groenendijk mentions 1980; Provoost (2003) mentions that the prize was given in 1977 (being the first time that it was awarded),

http://dissertations.ub.rug.nl/FILES/faculties/arts/2003/m.provoost/biografie_medewerkers_lit_opg.pdf (at 2007-04).

¹⁹⁹² See: www.aktiegroepoudewesten.nl (May 2008).

houses [that] have made living conditions more attractive. New-build and various types of renovation, at times retaining only the structural walls, can here be found side by side.’ Notwithstanding the initial success of urban renewal, less than three decades later ‘Het Oude Westen’ is actually the only case that is still mentioned. Reviewing urban renewal, the authors say that ‘its architecture and planning, however, suffered during negotiations, leading to the negative expression “urban renewal architecture”.’ This was actually the experience of architects and critics who had lost their authority¹⁹⁹³. Moreover, the criticism concerned mostly aesthetics. It reveals the disciplinary difficulty with the new circumstances. Procedures and institutions had to catch up, the implications and possibilities still had to be explored; new models, approaches and design strategies were needed to recognise the complexity of micro-level developments.

Urban renewal meant a shift from functionalism, its ideology and aesthetics, towards an anthropocentrism. Something similar applies to audiovisual productions, especially since the emergence of video, which gave citizens a voice in urban development. Within an ever adapting urban system, these productions served a feedback function. This would be continued over the course of the 1980s, for example by Adriaan Staal and Joop de Jong, and by some incidental film projects, such as the triptych ROTTERDAM (1984, Rolf Orthel), which was commissioned by the municipality on the occasion of ‘ten years of urban renewal’ as an official policy¹⁹⁹⁴.

dystopian Rotterdam

While urban renewal initiatives fought deterioration, it was cultivated by a number of feature films. In less than ten years, the image of Rotterdam had changed from one of ‘construction’ to one of decay. This development was part of a broader, international post-1960s *film noir* revival that expressed a dystopian modernism¹⁹⁹⁵. This too can be understood in terms of an ‘emergent interface’, especially in connection to a new generation that expressed other kinds of values.

Until the 1970s, hardly any ‘crime movie’ set in Rotterdam had been made, except for rather innocent youth films like BOEFJE (1939, Detlef Sierck), and its post-war counterpart PIETJE BELL (1964, Henk van der Linden), which were both based on books from the early twentieth century¹⁹⁹⁶. Things changed in the 1970s, especially when the issue of narcotics came to the fore.

This was first of the case with the film CHINESE KUNG FU AND GODFATHER (1974, Tso Nam Lee). This co-production from Hong Kong and the Netherlands was partly recorded in Katendrecht, which used to be a Chinese quarter from the beginning of the century. The starting point of the film, which had to attract western spectators too, corresponded to a tendency of increasing immigration from China, especially Hong Kong, in the 1970s, and the rapid spread of Chinese restaurants¹⁹⁹⁷. The film tells the story of a young Chinese immigrant (played by Kam Tong), who comes to the Netherlands to work in a restaurant, but he gets involved in drugs trafficking. He tries to escape and to start a kung-fu school, but he is chased by the Dutch ‘godfather’, played by Jan Willem Stoker, who was, in reality, Dutch taekwondo champion and the owner of a sports and fitness school in Rotterdam. In the film, the boy’s girlfriend (played by

¹⁹⁹³ Cf. De Vletter, 2005: 48-49. She remarks that the position of the architect had come under great pressure. Besides residents, consultants and managers came to the fore, since projects grew and became more complex. She argues that the marginalisation of the authority of the architect and the urban planner was partly due to their own discipline, which had difficulties to find a common ground and to establish a new paradigm (cf. p45).

¹⁹⁹⁴ Premiere: 1984-10-17, De Lantaren. It contained three stories, based on actual cases: RINUS (by Joost Kraanen), on an odd-jobber collecting things from houses to be demolished; he has to move to a suburb, but he wants to return to his old quarter; TURKSE VIDEO (Otakar Votocek), on Turkish adventures and homesickness; HET WONDER VAN ROTTERDAM (Gerard Verhage), on a landlord who loses his property due to urban renewal and plans to bomb the municipality. GAR, archive: ‘Collectie Tj. De Vries betreffende Rotterdamse Bioscopen’, toegangsnr. 1289, inventarisnr. 26.

¹⁹⁹⁵ For this broader movement see e.g. Luhr & Lehman, 2006: 177.

¹⁹⁹⁶ *Boeffje*: 1903, Marie Joseph Brusse; *Pietje Bell*: 1914, Chris van Abkoude.

¹⁹⁹⁷ Rijkschroeff, 1998: 94. About 80% of the Chinese in the Netherlands work in the restaurant branch, see also: www.acbkenniscentrum.nl/chinezen (2008-07-11)

Ine Veen) gets killed, and he takes revenge. Two versions of the film were made, one for release in Western Europe, in which both the hero and the villain die, and which furthermore includes explicit sex scenes, and a Hong Kong version in which the hero wins, and in which even kisses are left out.

Notwithstanding the problems of the Chinese community, including issues of criminality, it did relatively well. It is also emphasised by the fact that the film was financed and executed by someone from this community, the young entrepreneur Yung Nin Yuen, who lived in Rotterdam, where he was born as well. This, however, might be an exception if we compare it to the overall situation of immigrants and the condition of the old quarters of the city.

Another major production featuring Rotterdam and dealing with narcotics was Philippe Labro's thriller *L'ALPAGUEUR* (F, 1976), in the context of which I have already discussed the role of the municipality (Chapter 11. §4). Since Rotterdam became also a centre for prostitution, it might be no surprise that it became the setting for a film like *LE FEU AU CUL* (1976, Yves Prigent), which was a French hardcore porn movie. It tells the story of a gangster who is released and returns to Rotterdam to find his love, but she has disappeared without leaving any trace. During his search for her he has all kinds of (sexual) encounters, which constitutes the 'body' of this film. Taken the genre into account, critics have described it as a carefully made film, in which the atmosphere of Rotterdam, it is said, is well framed¹⁹⁹⁸.

Besides foreign films there were Dutch productions that showed the move into dark Rotterdam as well, including the still rather innocent television drama *LIEFDE EN LANGE VINGERS* (1975, Gerben Hellinga), as well as experimental productions like the short *IF YOU KNOW THE END* (1978, Ferri Ronteltap), on a lost industrialist who seems to have become a wanderer, and Frans Zwartjes' *PENTIMENTO* (1979). The latter was shot at the former waterworks complex (DWL Honingerdijk, 1874, arch. Van der Tak). Here the artistic community 'Utopia' contributed to the reconfiguration of the area into a complex of dwellings and workshops, while providing opportunities for experimentation. In his film Zwartjes turned the complex into an uncanny, chilly surrounding, which could be 'a slaughterhouse, a prison or a psychiatric hospital'¹⁹⁹⁹. Scientists, headed by a traumatised Japanese physician, subject women to violent and sexual experiments, as a cruel manifestation of power and helplessness that results in killings. The film raised strong protests from feminists, who stopped screenings in theatres by entering the projection cabin, taking away the projector and destroying the reel²⁰⁰⁰. Commentators have addressed, however, that the term 'pentimento', from the history of painting, indicates an alteration on the canvas that is to be seen through traces of the previous image. It concerns layers on top of each other, hiding another reality²⁰⁰¹. Alternatively, the notion of 'pentimento' also applies to the city: through the urban decay one sees a remainder of the modern city.

Urban decay is also an issue in the work of Zwartje's former student Dick Rijneke. After he started with experimental films, he made documentaries on drug abuse and, in 1980, the documentary trilogy *GROETEN UIT ROTTERDAM*. It showed a city in decay, and it paid special attention to the punk movement and its music, especially that of the Rondos²⁰⁰²; it was the most successful punk rock formation from Rotterdam, and the most political, articulated its anarcho-

¹⁹⁹⁸ De Volkskrant / VPRO: www.cinema.nl (2008-08-13). Original quote: 'Dit is nu eens een tamelijk verzorgde verfilming, waarbij de sfeer van Rotterdam goed in beeld is gebracht.' The visit of Prigent to Rotterdam is also mentioned in: 'Bezoekers', p25 in: *Rotterdam, Officieel Tijdschrift van de Gemeente Rotterdam*, vol. 13/2, 1975.

¹⁹⁹⁹ www.filmbank.nl/artikel/301/ 'Hollandse Meesters' (2008-04-04).

²⁰⁰⁰ Ibid. cf. www.film totaal.nl/module.php?section=nfdDetails&movieID=426 (2008-04-04) 'Pentimento'.

²⁰⁰¹ See e.g. Albers, 2004: 282-283.

²⁰⁰² Besides the Rondos it featured also the Tändstickorshocks a.o., which are also to be seen in *PINKEL* (1982, Dick Rijneke & Mildred van Leeuwen), as well as the video documentary *POPZIEN* (1980, Elenga & De Jong).

communism through its song texts, graphics, and its magazine *Raket* (produced at its studio *Huize Schoonderloo*, which had been a film studio in the past²⁰⁰³).

As a result of this project, Rijnke made the partly documentary and partly fictional feature film *PINKEL* (1982, Rijnke & Van Leeuwen). Whereas the former addresses the left wing radicalism of the punk movement, the message to ‘destroy the system’ turns into nihilism and even right wing radicalism in the case of the latter. There is a connection to be drawn here with the interests of Paul Verhoeven, who made at that time the provocative feature *SPETTERS* (1980), which was also discussed in film recordings that Rijnke made of an interview with Verhoeven, together with Wim Verstappen²⁰⁰⁴.

Like the other films, *SPETTERS* is a form of cultural oscillation²⁰⁰⁵. It was set in the historic town Maassluis, near Rotterdam, and in Rotterdam too, featuring locations like the Euromast, metro station Beurs and the Lijnbaan – all icons of the modern city. After its release, *SPETTERS* was criticised by both critics and the public, for racist remarks and sexual violence, especially by and against gays, and for its general shallowness. When the script had been submitted for state funding, the chairman of the *Productiefonds*, Anton Koolhaas, demanded a revision. This was done, but only on paper. Like the other productions, this film too reflects a shifting approach concerning the modern city. If we would only measure the strong opposition against *SPETTERS*, it fulfilled a negative feedback function within urban development.

While Anton Koolhaas criticised *SPETTERS*, its ideas were akin to those of his son Rem, who established his company OMA in Rotterdam (1978). In the previous years he too pointed to the other side of modernity, through his studies ‘The Berlin Wall as Architecture’ (1970) and ‘Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture’ (1972). It reflected the move of Constant, who began to realise the dystopian implications of his ‘New Babylon’, in which Koolhaas was particularly interested²⁰⁰⁶. However, after Koolhaas turned modernity inside out through his book *Delirious New York* (1978), by attributing agency to unintended developments, a move was made towards a new era that inscribed itself into the city²⁰⁰⁷. In respect of Rotterdam, Koolhaas made such an argument in his article ‘The Terrifying Beauty of the Twentieth Century’ (1985)²⁰⁰⁸. It was underscored by various other uncanny feature films shot in Rotterdam, as a city in decay, among them *Greenaways’ A ZED AND TWO NOUGHTS* (1985) and (erotic) thrillers such as *LOOS* (1989, Theo van Gogh) and *DE KASSIÈRE* (1989, Ben Verbong). The developments of the 1970s became, in a twisted manner, the prelude to the 1980s and 1990s: a new era of city planning, with booming architecture and media applications, with feature films concerning the city, its social life and functions.

²⁰⁰³ In the 1920s it was used by Rienks Machine Fabriek, which also started to produce films (as film company ‘Electra’). In the 1930s it became the studio of the *Rotterdamsche Smalfilmliga* (Smits, 2002: 12).

²⁰⁰⁴ See: *NOU, DAT WAS HET DAN!* (2005, Rijnke & Van Leeuwen).

²⁰⁰⁵ One of the main characters is played by Maarten Spanjer, who had made his first appearance in *LIEFDE EN LANGE VINGERS*. The cinematography of *SPETTERS* was the work of the German cameraman Jost Vacano. He had been a student of Andor von Bary in Munich, just like Rob Houwer, who had been the producer of previous films by Verhoeven (and thereby the link). The script for *SPETTERS*, like that of Verhoeven’s *TURKS FRUIT* (a.o.) was written by Gerard Soeteman. Besides fiction films Soeteman collaborated on other productions, including television programmes dealing with Rotterdam (e.g. *OPEN OOG, NTS*, 1968-05-24; *58 MILJOEN NEDERLANDERS EN DE ZEEVAART*, 1977, Jan Bosdriesz, NOS). For more information on *SPETTERS*, see: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spetters> (2008-03-02).

²⁰⁰⁶ Since he had interviewed Constant for HP, see: Van Garrel & Koolhaas, 1966.

²⁰⁰⁷ In Rotterdam, Koolhaas/OMA designed the projects ‘Busstation’ (1985-1987), ‘Museumpark’ (1985-1993), and the ‘Kunsthal’ (1987-1992) – see: Groenendijk & Vollaard, 1998: 355; see also Patteeuw, 2003.

²⁰⁰⁸ Reprint pp205-208 in: Koolhaas & Mau, 1995.