Film festivals: history and theory of a European phenomenon that became a global network

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Citation for published version (APA):
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“...the IFFR is very popular with a diverse and devoted audience.” p. 180

Figure 6: The IFFR icon drowning in popcorn. © 2005, De Filmkrant, Louk Röell.
Chapter 4

Rotterdam and the Rise of Specialised Festivals: From Cinephile Initiatives to Popular Events

4.1 Introduction

“Rotterdam was the first international film festival I attended, and those first few years remain precious in my mind as a time of nascent cinephilia, opening my eyes to filmmakers that I never would have discovered staying at home even in such a film savvy city as Toronto, who [sic] has its own excellent festival; anyone concerned that Rotterdam has grown unwieldy in recent years should come to Toronto and try to find anything like a familial environment or an unheralded discovery.”

Mark Peranson, IFFR January 25 2004

Editor-in-chief of the Canadian film magazine Cinema Scope

On the night of Wednesday, 28 June 1972, seventeen spectators attended the opening screening of the new film festival “Film International Rotterdam.” The sight of an all but empty cinema theatre prompted the Councillor of Arts, De Vos, to depart without performing the official opening ceremony for the film week that had been described as “super-experimental.” This label was the consequence of the outspoken – and controversial – taste preferences of the founder of the festival, Huub Bals, who was also the co-founder of the Fédération Internationale des Festivals Indépendents that included the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs (Cannes) and the Forum des Jungen Film (Berlin). Although the festival’s consistent focus has been on art cinema, experimental works and southern developing film countries, ever since its foundation, the popularity of the festival has increased dramatically. Today, the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) is the second largest audience film festival in the world with an attendance of 355,000 during the festivals in 2004 and 2005 and reaching 358,000 in 2006. This number also positions the IFFR as the largest event for paying visitors within the Netherlands. The IFFR pleases its visitors by offering a first feature competition program, the best films of
the festivals of the preceding year before their release in the theatres, national and international premiers that have not (as of yet) found distribution, thematic programmes, and highly popular Q&A sessions with filmmakers themselves, after the screening of their film. But one must also remain a bit wary of the attendance figure of 355,000 because, as IFFR’s CineMart director Ido Abram un-euphemistically puts it, “the number is a lie”. What one should bear in mind when reading this figure is that it does not represent the number of actual visitors to the festival. Festivals work hard to secure a positive image in the global competitive context, and so attendance figures are an important measure of success that is artificially boosted – in the case of Rotterdam, the published figure also includes all potential admissions through tickets sold at the festival box office to people visiting exhibitions at associated cultural institutions – in order to reach the impressive 355,000. This data is used to support the impression of the IFFR as an important national and international event when it applies for funding and looks for sponsoring, the two finance resources on which the festival organisation is dependent. However, because all film festivals use similar methods to calculate attendance, these figures retain their usefulness for comparing festivals.

In general, they point to an explosive increase in attendance in Rotterdam since the mid-1990s. The flattering attendance figures aside, the fact is that the IFFR is very popular with a diverse and devoted audience. As Mark Peranson suggests, not everyone has welcomed the growth of the festival with equal enthusiasm. Film critic and Filmkrant editor-in-chief Dana Linssen is among the sceptics, putting a satirical photo of the festival icon – the tiger – drowning in a sea of popcorn on the cover of the festival daily paper no. 5. Linssen expresses her concerns directly to festival director Sandra den Hamer, who, at the time, was soon be the sole captain on the festival ship, as co-director Simon Field had finished his Rotterdam career with the 2004 festival. Her editorial “Dear Sandra” appeared at a time when the director was probably considering some significant changes to the festival that bear her personal imprint. “Ik maak me bijvoorbeeld grote zorgen over de grootte van het festival, als journalist én filmliefhebber...[D]e echte hoogtepunten uit de ‘best of the fests’ [komen] toch later in de Nederlandse bioscopen. Hoe trots je ook kunt zijn als festivals op die lieve gekke filmofielen die een week vrij nemen om hier 50 films te gaan zien, ik kan me voorstellen dat je het met me eens bent dat het voor de algehele cultuur van eigenwijze, uitgesproken en artistieke film beter is als die mensen de rest van het jaar ook nog eens naar filmtheater of bioscoop gaan...Het IFFR moet kleiner, opvallender en behapbaarder worden.” Linssen is not alone in her

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“I am for example heavily concerned about the size of the festival, both as a journalist and a film lover...The real highlights from the ‘best of the fests’ are sure to be released in Dutch cinema theatres. No matter how proud you may be of this festival with all those sweet, crazy cinephiles who take a week off to watch 50 films here, I can imagine that you also agree with me that it would be better for the culture of wayward, pronounced and artistic films in general if these same people would once in a while go to the cinema during the rest of the
concern about the size of the festival. The logistical handling of Rotterdam's 355,000 visitors is a continuous source of concern for the organisation and frustration for the audience. A couple of days before the festival kicks off, the reservation line and ticket sales centre are opened. Within hours the most popular screenings are sold out. Tickets are difficult to obtain, especially for the evenings and the weekends. This is frustrating for those not experienced enough to know that you have to either arrive early and physically line up at one of the ticket counters in Rotterdam or persistently redial on your (mobile) phone(s) until you get through to one of the volunteer operators. In this respect, it is telling that the attempts to launch an on-line reservation system remained unsuccessful for a long time, because the early peak in traffic repeatedly created bottlenecks that effectively crashed the online reservation program. Before the 2004 festival opened, 130,000 tickets were reserved and 55,000 had already been sold.

In this chapter I will investigate the programming and audience of the International Film Festival Rotterdam. The festival differs from my previous case studies on Berlin, Cannes and Venice, because it was not founded in the context of pre/post-war Europe, but after the festival upheavals and the subsequent transformation of the festival network in the late 1960s. This implies that the festival is not rooted in a project for national or geopolitical interests like Berlin, Cannes and Venice were, but in the belief that film festivals ought to take responsibility for programming themselves and dedicate the services of their organisation to the "good cinema cause." The International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) is similar to Quinzaine des Réalisateurs in Cannes and the Forum des Jungen Film in Berlin in its attention for art cinema, avant-garde interests and auteurs. Like the Fortnight and Forum, the IFFR has put itself on the map of the international film festival circuit as an important and prestigious event that is specialised in what could be summarised as a "triple-A" niche of "art, avant-garde and auteurs." and where new film talent from around the globe, with a consistent focus on Asia, can be discovered. A second characteristic of the festival in Rotterdam is its success in attracting a large audience. Surprisingly, the focus on a type of programming that is traditionally not related to popular reception in a commercial context has not prohibited the festival from becoming one of the most successful audience events both on the international film festival circuit and on the cultural agenda in the Netherlands in the 1990s. The IFFR will be taken as case study for the rise of specialised film festivals and themed programming on the circuit. I relate the emergence of such festivals and programming to the historical events of the late 1960s, leftist demonstrations in the West, militant movements in Latin America and anti-Communist sentiments in Central and Eastern Europe. More specifically, the French New Wave will be identified as foundational to this new type of festival. Its effects are, however, not limited to the well-known author theory, offering the first

year as well [...] The IFFR should be smaller, more explicit and more accessible.” Linssen, Dana. “Beste Sandra.” Filmkrant in Rotterdam. 31 January – 1 February 2004: 5.
contours of a new model for festival programming, but also to the creation of a new audience, the cinephiles. The passion of cinephile programmers was central to the incipient phase of specialised festivals in the 1970s. I will show how the age of the programmer shifted into the age of the festival director. For this it is necessary to consider the effects of technological transformations and the rise of the experience economy, distinguish between the classical concept of cinephilia and its contemporary manifestation, and look into the increased demands of responsible management, co-operation, sponsorship and fundraising.

4.2 Specialised Festivals: historical conditions for emergence

The transformation of the festival network that began in the late 1960s was part of a larger cultural upset that swept through the Western world. Peace demonstrations against the Vietnam War, student protests and labour strikes provided the turbulent setting in which the upheavals at the festivals in Cannes, Venice (1968) and Berlin (1971) were embedded. It is important to note that the revolutionary spirit of the time, moreover, was just as strongly felt in the Soviet bloc and Third World Countries, in particular in Latin America. The “Prague Spring” (1968) offered brief hope for liberation from the straightjacket of Communist party authority in Czechoslovakia. The so-called velvet revolution also had a profound impact on cultural affairs, including cinema. Banned films were made available and New Wave directors freely experimented with forms and stories instead of committing to the style of Socialist Realism that had been previously imposed on them by Moscow. Although the reforms in Czechoslovakia were soon brought to a stop (the USSR sent in troops in August 1968) and the strict disciplinary policy of “normalisation” drove many intellectuals and artists out of the country, movements of political reform continued, with varying degrees of success, in other Socialist countries in Eastern and Central Europe. In particular Hungarian cinema flourished, keeping pace with the trends and developments in the West. The independent cinema activities in Brazil (Cinema Novo) and Argentina, moreover, predated the post-1968 trends of political cinema in the West. Influenced by the Hollywood classics and the European New Wave, these young Latin American film directors addressed the problems of their working class people with militant engagement. Western left-wing intellectuals and artists, in their turn, found inspiration in the “Third World” revolutions and even appropriated controversial, militant leaders such as Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and Mao Zedong as the (pop) icons for their anti-Capitalist struggle.

When the major European film festivals went through a transformation phase, brought about by the series of festival upheavals, the Third World filmmakers had already found susceptible audiences and support at new, specialised film festivals for their political cinema. In particular the Pesaro Film Festival in Italy generated worldwide attention for the new cinema movements of Latin America. As Julianne Burton reminds Jump Cut readers in
1975: “Virtually all the key films [of the militant New Latin American Cinema] – several of which are still not available in the United States – had their first screenings in that Italian seacoast town: Argentina’s HOUR OF THE FURNACES, Bolivia’s BLOOD OF THE CONDOR and THE COURAGE OF THE PEOPLE, the films produced in socialist Chile and in the heyday of Brazil’s Cinema Novo movement, and Cuban masterpieces such as MEMORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT, LUCIA and DAYS OF WATER.” Moreover, Pesaro had substituted the conventional festival format of international juries and prizes for a practice of roundtable discussions, lengthy publications and audience participation. Once the major European festivals had acknowledged their events were outdated and opted for reorganisation in the early 1970s, the existing alternative festival and cinema tradition offered models for reformation. However, as I have pointed out in chapter one, the A film festivals did not decide in favour of a comprehensive, radical intervention of the prestigious events themselves, but chose partial reformation of the historical festivals, while establishing new, parallel events to accommodate the “young,” “experimental” and “political” movements. It left the way open for more, new film festivals to fill the demand for specialised programming. The International Film Festival Rotterdam is one of the initiatives that successfully grasped the opportunity and put itself on the festival map as an important event that specialises in art, avant-garde and auteurs, using all that world cinema has to offer. In this section I will discuss what other constituencies influenced the historical emergence of specialised film festivals. My case study will be the festival in Rotterdam. First, I address the pivotal role of programmers in the new period and discuss in particular the idiosyncratic programming practice of Rotterdam’s first festival director, Huub Bals. Then attention will be drawn to specific historical circumstances in the city of Rotterdam. This will lead me to a discussion of the relation between the specialised film festival, the foundation of an alternative, non-commercial network of cinema theatres (art houses) in the Netherlands and the organisation’s (financial) dependency on favourable municipal cultural policies.

4.2.1 The Age of Programmers: Huub Bals
From roughly 1971 onwards, programming became the core business of film festivals worldwide. The format of the showcase of national cinemas was abandoned and, instead of National Film Funds, the film festivals took upon themselves the task of selecting films for the festival screenings. The success of festival programming strengthened the influence of film festivals as alternative model for commercial theatrical exploitation of films in which the principle of the box-office was substituted for cultural value (see chapter two). For cultural value was no longer tied to the idea of film as national accomplishment, but generated for the films and their filmmakers themselves, as art and artists. The programmers aimed at established auteurs, new discoveries (such as new waves in national cinemas) and/or the film-historical canon. Not limited by the number of invited nations they now could consider
the worldwide supply of (new) film products for selection. Some festivals used expert programmers to scout for cultural quality in the field of their specialisation. The Forum, for example, started with a group of engaged film professionals from the Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek that complemented each others' expertise: Erica Gregor with her eye for political films; Wilhelm Roth, who was interested in documentaries, Peter Schumann with his thorough knowledge of developments in Latin American cinema and Alf Bold who specialised in the avant-garde, all overseen by festival director Ulrich Gregor. Other festivals, like Rotterdam, depended more on the skills and passion of one person. Huub Bals (1937-1988), the founder of the film festival in Rotterdam, was renowned for his idiosyncrasy. "You have to watch films with your belly," he would say. The cryptic formulation indicated that non-rational, gut feelings were decisive for Bal when watching movies. Often he would be spotted leaving an auditorium within fifteen minutes because he intuitively "knew" that the film in question was "bad" and therefore not worth looking at any longer, or, at the other extreme, was "good" and an absolute must, and was added to his wish list of films for the festival in Rotterdam. Forum director Ulrich Gregor tells: "Het opstaan van Huub uit een film was exemplarisch. Soms dacht ik wel, waarom blijf ik eigenlijk zitten, maar het heeft ook te met karakter te maken: ik kan mij niet zo snel een categorische mening vormen." No matter how diverse the programmers of the time might have been in their selection procedures and taste preferences, the 1970s would be the age of the programmers. Never before did they have so much liberty to pursue cinephile and critical agendas without being restrained by national politics or economic interests. Never again would programming be as pure and unaffected by audience expectations or the financial side of event management that would become more and more important in the 1980s.

It is worth recalling Bals' growth to maturity as a programmer at some length. His rise (and fall) are emblematic for a period of independent programming and put contemporary specialisations of the festival in historical perspective. Bals had learned to watch films when working for the movie theatre operator Wolff in his hometown Utrecht. The Wolff Company was running four commercial cinema theatres in Utrecht when Bals started working there as assistant manager in 1959. Bals recalled: "Ik begon films te vreten, bij het leven! Nee, geen voorkeuren, dat heeft heel lang geduurd. Van mensen als Antonioni of Buñuel begreep ik nog niet veel, maar allengs ontstond er toch een bepaald gevoel. Zoiets van "joh, schakel je verstand maar uit en neem het maar in." Bals' biographers Jan Heijs and Frans Westra

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XXXVI "Huub's walking out of a film was exemplary. Sometimes I wondered why I stayed in my seat, but it has to do with character as well: I cannot form a categorical opinion that quickly." As quoted in: Heijs, Jan, and Frans Westra. Que Le Tigre Danse: Huub Bals een Biografie. Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel, 1996: 216.

XXXVII "I started devouring films intensely! No, no preferences, that took some time. People like Antonioni or Buñuel I didn't understand much, but gradually I developed a certain feeling.
describe how Bals attended the previews in Wolff's showroom. At this early stage of his career it was already evident that he displayed a preference for films that were overlooked by the others.\textsuperscript{287} Aside from his dawning passion for films, Bals proved to have a talent for film promotion. Soon he became Wolff's PR manager and started organising special events that attracted attention to the theatre. He set out to transform the theatre's interior to match the ambience of current events or pulled stunts in the city to promote a film – such as having a group of girls with umbrellas parade through the city for \textit{LES PARAPLUIES DE CHERBOURG} (France/West Germany: Jacques Demy 1964) or providing sirtaki lessons in the cinema's basement at the time that \textit{ZORBA THE GREEK} (USA/UK/Greece: Michael Cacoyannis 1964) was playing in the theatre.

In 1965 Bals visited the Cannes film festival. The experience was a revelation. He decided he should organise his own festival in Utrecht. The first \textit{Cinemanifestatie} was held from 26 January to 2 February 1966 and gave Bals the opportunity to combine his talent for organisation with his love for cinema. He had programmed twenty features and sixteen shorts among which: \textit{VAGHE STELLE DELL'ORSA} (SANDRA) by Luchino Visconti, \textit{HIGH AND LOW} by Akira Kurosawa, \textit{LE FEU FOLLET} by Louis Malle, and \textit{LORD OF THE FLIES} by Peter Brook. The program was very diverse, ranging from international hits, such as the winner of the Golden Lion (SANDRA), to new talent, for example Claude Lelouch – whose \textit{UNE FILLE ET DES FUSILS} had gotten bad reviews in \textit{Cahiers} but would be followed by the acclaimed \textit{UN HOMME ET UN FEMME} that launched his career. Dutch contributions were by Pim de la Parra, Adriaan Ditvoorst, Erik Terpstra and Frans van de Staak. The young Bals had created a programme with a focus on films that had not been bought for further distribution in the Netherlands (yet) and that offered space to future talent. Later he would apply the same principles at the film festival in Rotterdam. Because the first \textit{Cinemanifestatie} was a success Bals could organise the event bi-annually.\textsuperscript{288} In preparation for the second festival Bals started to travel. Besides Cannes he visited festivals in Germany and went several times to London and Paris. In this period Bals would still sometimes rely on the advice of others when selecting films for the program in Utrecht because he felt he could not bear the responsibility of the programming alone. In addition he was dependent on the (Dutch and international) distributors who controlled the acquisition of films for the Netherlands. He used his position as advice & acquisition contact to the company Actueel Film to approach sales companies in various countries and stipulate previews, but ultimately had to negotiate with the distributors operating in the Netherlands, such as Columbia, Fox Netherlands, MGM, Centra-film, Euro-film and Toho Films.

As Bals refined his cinematic taste and his passion for underexposed films grew, it became more and more difficult to completely identify with the

\textsuperscript{287} Something like 'come on, just rule out your reason and take it in'." As quoted in: Heijs, and Westra. \textit{Que le Tigre Danse}: 27-28.
original objective of the Cinemanifestaties: which in the end of course remained the promotion of the commercial cinema theatres. In 1970 he was called to account by the organisers of an “anti-commercial Cinemanifestatie,” an evening of underground films during which the Cinemanifestatie (and Bals in person) was criticised for only screening films that fitted the commercial policy of the cinema theatres. Though Bals defended his task as Wolff’s PR-manager with the assurance that the company was not making a profit from the event, he was, in fact, himself moving away from the original project. His interest shifted more and more from the promotion of the (commercial) cinemas to the programming of (art and avant-garde) films. He contributed to a list of hundred-fifty important films from 1960 onwards that had not yet been released within the Netherlands. The list gave a preview of the type of programming that Bals would realise in Rotterdam. It included films by “Solanas, Schlöndorff, Herzog, Fassbinder, Schroeter, Kluge, Ziewer, Loach, Roeg, Brook, Reichenbach, Renoir, Bresson, Garrel, Truffaut, Borowczyk, Franju, Malle, Makk, Janscó, Fabri, Szabo, Olmi, Pasolini, de Taviani’s, Cavani, Belloccchio, Ferreri, Rosi, Kobayashi, Teshigahara, Kurosawa, Oshima, Jodorowsky, Skolimowski, Zanussi, Has, Wajda, Sembene, Buñuel, Saura, Chytilova, Biberman, Warhol, Mekas, Lucas, Mailer, McBride, Huston, Tarkovsky, Konchalovsky, IOSSELIANI, Troell and Tanner.”

New chances presented themselves in 1972 when Bals became the managing director of the new cultural centre ’t Hoogt in Utrecht and the project to organise a film festival in Rotterdam took off. Bals was the perfect man to pull off this new project. He was approached to play a pivotal role in the new film festival that would be organised independently from the commercial theatres. The plan for this festival differed significantly from that the Cinemanifestaties in Utrecht. After the first festival in 1972 Bals specifically set himself the task of improving the film culture in the Netherlands:

De pers is zeer kritisch ten opzichte van de filmvoorziening in Nederlands. Het filmklimaat wordt steeds armer, het aantal films voor de arthouses daalt sterk. Mede door de vele prolongaties komen vele arthousefilms niet naar Nederland. We missen dan het werk van de nieuwe jonge filmmakers. Rotterdam zal zich in 1973 richten tot de jonge filmmakers; deze films zullen hoofdzakelijk geschikt zijn om in de non-commerciële theaters te worden gedraaid.xxxviii

Bals committed his support to films that were engaged, artistic and stylistically innovative. He also decided to invite filmmakers to the film

xxxviii “The press is very critical about the film situation in the Netherlands. The film climate continues to impoverish, the number of films for art houses is rapidly declining. Partly caused by many prolongations a lot of art house films do not reach the Netherlands. Which means we remain deprived of the work of new, young filmmakers. Rotterdam will concentrate itself in 1973 on the young filmmakers; these films will primarily be suitable for screening in the non-commercial theatres.” Heijs, and Westra. Que le Tigre Danse: 63.
festival in order to facilitate discussions with the audience and stimulate their active participation. The second festival welcomed nearly thirty filmmakers among whom many "great masters" of the art cinema such as Marco Bellocchio, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, Theo Angelopoulos, Akira Kurosawa, Jean-Marie Straub and Wim Wenders.

4.2.2 The Dutch Context: Rotterdam and Film International
Bals was not the only one concerned with the film climate in the Netherlands. For a lot of people the time was right to seriously consider the question of art cinema. With the general upset in Europe and the call for film reformations in countries across the world in the background, the Netherlands was ready for an intervention in the structure of its cinema provision. The foundation of the film festival in Rotterdam was part of a larger movement that also included the establishment of an alternative circuit of art-house cinemas and a specialised distribution company, called Film International. Bals' experience in the commercial circuit provided him with the expertise and commitment to become the undisputed leader of the national movement for non-commercial cinema. The Dutch context, however, was nothing like the bohemian protests of film critics in France, the revolutionary aspirations of filmmakers in Latin America or the waves of anti-Communist ideology in Eastern and Central European countries. In the Netherlands the credit for launching a new cinema movement went to the city of Rotterdam. The urban development of Rotterdam had been defined for centuries by the presence of its large harbour. At the end of the nineteenth century people flocked to the city in search of jobs in the booming local transport business or, alternatively, embarked on one of the Holland-America Line vessels to try their luck in the New World. Bad housing, unhealthy working conditions and low wages made the citizens of Rotterdam susceptible to the global surge of social democrat movements in the post-1917 period. As city historians Gerrit Vermeer and Ben Rebel argue: "Rotterdam [became]... a red city" with the social democratic victory at the 1919 municipal election: "After three centuries of unbridled growth and a period of liberalism during which private initiatives ruled, people realised that the government ought to re-figure the city." However, history prevented the newly embraced project of urban planning from being extended to something as frivolous as culture for a further four decades. At the outbreak of World War II, the Germans destroyed the city centre and large parts of the harbour (14 May 1940). The destruction was complete when bombings hit the city again in the autumn of 1944. After the war, the municipality gave high priority to, first of all, rebuilding the harbour and, secondly, to solving the problem of housing shortage. The harbour was of strategic importance, not only for Rotterdam, but for the European hinterland as well. It was the main port for the American Marshall Aid on its way to various destinations in Western Europe. The Cold War necessitated policies for urban development not subjected to any serious criticism before the city had recovered and slowly started to prosper at the end of the 1960s. By that time, however, the inner city had degenerated. The time was ripe to discuss
municipal policies in a broader light than industrial growth and housing shortage. When more and more people (the middle and upper classes) left the old quarters for new suburbs and the town centre faced, an increase of problems related to poverty and crime, the issue of “a liveable inner city” was added to the municipal agenda. One of the results was that “culture” was no longer considered mere icing on the cake, but seriously attracted the attention of policymakers.

Culture became a municipal concern in Rotterdam in the late 1960s. By that time, Amsterdam had already established itself as the national capital of culture, in particular for theatre, music, literature and fine arts (with internationally renowned museums such as the Rijksmuseum, Stedelijk Museum and Van Gogh Museum). In addition, Amsterdam attracted constant streams of tourists with its seventeenth-century mansions, picturesque canals and tolerant image of the city where drugs, prostitution and gay nightlife were readily available. Rotterdam, on the other hand, did not have the historical ingredients for an obvious urban self-image at its disposal. The director of the Rotterdam Arts Foundation (Kunststichting), Adriaan van der Staay, was dissatisfied with Rotterdam always being the proverbial underdog in matters of culture, and initiated a series of measures to improve the cultural position of Rotterdam. He smartly appealed to the city’s inferiority complex about its “secondary” status and used the rivalry with Amsterdam to generate funding. The intention was clear; Rotterdam would become just as important for culture as Amsterdam already was. His strategy was to concentrate on the “new” arts – poetry, architecture and film (later digital media would become another spearhead) – which had not been appropriated by other cities as of yet. In this way, he figured, Rotterdam could become a second (and not secondary) capital of culture because it did not have to compete with Amsterdam on the exact same grounds. Bals was asked to be part of a preliminary committee whose task it was to draw up a film paper. The municipality guaranteed to make all financial requirements available that would lead to the desired improvement of the film situation. The first draft provided for measures in film production, film distribution and film exhibition. I will concentrate on the latter two. One of the recommendations was to found an organisation, to be called Film International, which would function as distributor for artistic films and also be responsible for the yearly organisation of a film festival in Rotterdam. In addition, the plan provided for the establishment of a specialised art-house cinema where the artistic films – purchased by Film International – could be screened all year round. In the conclusion of the final paper (1972) it is stated:

Een lokaal of regional filmbeleid is een doorbreking van de landelijke monoplisering van het filmleven. Het is een eerste poging om – ditmaal in Rotterdam – het filmleven dichter bij de lokale samenleving te brengen. Als zodanig is de nota een oproep aan andere steden of regio’s om te proberen een alternatief te scheppen waardoor de kwantitatief belangrijkste culturele
uitgaansvorm zich ontworstelt aan het louter winstoogmerk, en wordt wat het dient te zijn: bewuste cultuurparticipatie.

The foundation of the festival in Rotterdam and the film distribution organisation were made possible with the financial support flowing from Rotterdam's cultural positioning project. The film paper ushered in a period of roughly eight years in which an alternative distribution network of art-houses unfolded in the Netherlands. 't Hoogt in Utrecht was the first art-house to open its doors on 20 June 1973. Rotterdam followed with Lantaren/Venster on 1 March 1974, smartly coinciding with the opening of the third film festival. Additional art-houses were opened in Nijmegen, Amsterdam, Delft, Eindhoven, Groningen and finally The Hague in 1980. Film International was the appointed distributor to supply this new circuit of art-houses in the Netherlands with "the better films." Film International would also purchase the films for the film festival. The idea behind this double distribution focus (both permanent, art-house, and temporary film festival exhibition) was to secure enough return on investment to continue the non-profit activities. As the local public interest was difficult to predict, subsidising the acquisition of films for the new festival alone was deemed too risky. By embedding the film festival within a larger circuit for alternative distribution and exhibition, the cinematic awakening of the Dutch audience became a national cultural project. Alternatively, the double distribution model can be understood as a strategic move towards centralisation of the city of Rotterdam. Its position as film capital of the Netherlands would benefit from the launch of a national network of non-commercial cinema theatres when its central organisation would operate from a Rotterdam-based office, subsuming both national distribution and the media-sensitive festival activities in Rotterdam. Film International received subsidies from the city of Rotterdam and the Ministry of Culture.

Despite its modest beginning, Van der Staay's strategy succeeded. The film festival would develop into one of the most prestigious cultural events in the Netherlands.

4.3 Programming, Passion and Politics

The age of programmers can be seen as a reaction against the dominant influence of geopolitical agendas and glamour in the period before. It is important to bear in mind, as I have pointed out in the historical framework for this dissertation given in the introduction, that the film festival phenomenon emanated from two major antagonistic forces in the world of cinema of that time: Hollywood on the one hand, and the (European) film

XXXIX “A local or regional film policy breaks the national monopolisation of the film world. It is a first attempt - this time in Rotterdam - to bring film closer to the local community. As such the document is a call to other cities or regions to try and create an alternative as a result of which the quantitatively most important cultural form of entertainment breaks free from pure profit intent, and becomes what it ought to be: committed culture participation.” Heijs, and Westra. Que le Tigre Danse: 91.
Avant-garde on the other. Indispensable to the survival of the festival network in the Interbellum and immediate postwar period was its ability to be instrumental to the conflicting national political concerns (Fascism versus anti-fascism and, above all, Western Capitalism versus Eastern Communism). Where the introduction of sound to the cinema in the early 1930s left the European film Avant-garde mute in the face of the problem of language (aspiring a future order that would transcend nationalist concerns instead) and the position of European film industries was further weakened as language severely hindered film’s exportability, the first European film festivals bent the troublesome circumstances to their advantage. The festivals were conceived as showcases of national cinemas. This not only meant that language could be perceived as an unproblematic and “natural” aspect of film as national accomplishment in an international arena, but also specifically responded to the nationalist struggles that divided the European continent by showcasing films as national products. Film festivals survived the incipient phase, because they blended cultural agendas with geopolitical concerns and economic interests (tourism, unofficial film market activity, etcetera), and combined the Avant-garde model of “traditional” artisanship with Hollywood glamour.

Over the years, the balance between the two shifted more and more in favour of Hollywood, especially in Cannes where glitter, stars and starlets established the popular myth of festival folly. The dissent among those more concerned with the cultural and artistic function of the festival grew proportionally. At the same time the West experienced a surge of anti-authoritarian and counter-nationalist feelings emanating from a growing self-awareness and wish for self-empowerment. The forefront of the film Avant-garde, from then on located in New York instead of Paris, went “underground.” They followed in the footsteps of their European precursors, who had been inspired by egalitarian, leftist (Communist) ideals and initiated new co-operative facilities to make their work available (e.g. Mekas’ Co-op). In Europe, the process of individualisation brought about a rather different type of film emancipation. The politique des auteurs in France would turn out to be highly influential for the transformations in the film festival format, reinstating cinema itself as its main raison d’être. Echoing the influence of the existentialist notion of “authenticity,” the critics of Cahiers du Cinéma – Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer and Rivette – had distinguished between metteur-en-scènes, who simply put pictures to the written dialogues, and auteurs, whose stylistic signature was visible in lighting, camera, set design and/or editing and who thus created personal works of art instead of contributing to the production of cultural commodities. The concept of the auteur also provided the ideal starting point for intervening in the festival format that had become outdated in the light of recent social developments. The idea of the auteur harked back to autonomous avant-garde artists, while being indefinable enough to be appropriated for popular (Hollywood) productions as well, thereby continuing film festivals’ reliance on the merits of both antagonistic presences. Programming became an issue of cinephile
passion (recognising new great auteurs and movements) and political sensibility (representing both large social movements or liberation struggles and personal issues that remained underrepresented in the mainstream public domain, such as those relating to gender, race and ethnicity). In this section I will show how passion and politics reset the film festival agenda on the task of programming: presenting, on the one hand, auteurs, new waves and "discoveries" and, on the other hand, creating "specialised" and "themed" sections. Then, I will elaborate on the emergence of such specialised and themed programming in the context of the international film festival circuit.

4.3.1 Auteurs, New Waves, the Dogma of Discovery and Politics of Participation

The French New Wave had left the cinematic world gasping for breath. There they were, a group of cinephile critics turned filmmakers, deciding they would reinvent cinema and proceeding to do exactly that. They presented films that were unlike anything else known at the time. Beautiful little gems with characters and stories taken from ordinary life that immersed the spectator with such vigour and conviction that these movies became larger-than-life experiences. *LES 400 COUPS* (France: Truffaut 1959) took Cannes by surprise in 1959 and brought instant fame for Truffaut's achievements as filmmaker. The film was a true discovery of what cinema could also be. The impact and novelty of the French New Wave informed the first part of the two-tier transformation that would provide film festivals with a new model in the early 1970s. If, before, revelations like *ROMA, CITÀ APERTA* (Italy: Rossellini 1945) in Cannes and *RASHOMON* (Japan: Kurosawa 1951) in Venice were still somewhat tempered by the national biases brought about by the festival format, the age of programmers that followed after 1968 gave way to unbridled sampling from the global supply of films, filmmakers and new waves. Following firstly the French New Wave, festivals appropriated the notions of auteur and new waves as strategic discourse. They deployed this discourse to distinguish themselves as institutions of discovery; the new festival task being to present the current condition of world cinema to the world. However, it would be a mistake to presume that film festivals merely report on current cinema developments. They actively select. As Jonathan Rosenbaum argues in *Essential Cinema: On the Necessity of Film Canons*: "[canon formation is] an active process of selection rather than a passive one of reportage." Therefore, beneath the surface of discovery, a more fundamental transformation can be discerned; towards programming. The international movement of the political avant-garde influenced this second part of the metamorphosis. Festivals adopted the idea that they could participate in film culture and make a political difference. By clustering carefully selected films in specialised and themed programme sections, they could frame the individual film screenings and mobilise public attention for diverse issues.

The first series of new waves that flooded the international film festival circuit in the 1960s and early 1970s came from countries as diverse as
Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary, West Germany, Brazil, Cuba, Argentina, Japan and Russia. Their novelty and relevance could be credited to formal innovation, controversial subject matter or socio-political message. Where Hollywood’s entertainment machine had fallen into a crisis in the late 1950s, only to recover thanks to the invention of the seasonal blockbusters in the mid 1970s, the various cultural youth movements and national liberation struggles of the time inspired filmmakers from around the globe to excel in cinematic experimentation and new (social/political) forms of storytelling. Especially the militant cinema from Latin America reconceived of cinema as a political act. Festival programmers set out to pick up on such new trends and present them at the increasing number of yearly and biannual film festivals. Festivals were again and again looking for mind-blowing discoveries similar to the one generated by the archetypal French New Wave. This dogma of discovery implied that every new wave would inevitably have a limited life span at the festival circuit. Once the aura of discovery had materialised into dedicated attention, the system would move on, craving fresh input. Filmmakers, on the contrary, were more likely to survive the expiration date of new waves. Looking at the situation from a traditional auteurist perspective, filmmakers could evolve from the discovery phase, in which they were one of the many “new talents” to the ranking of establishment, becoming “auteurs” with a recognisable signature that tied their work together. The role of the media is crucial in this respect. Film movements may come and go relatively quickly and thus the thing most essential for their discovery is the initial recognition of a series of (regional) events as worthy enough to be presented to an international public via festival exposure. Filmmakers, on the other hand, need prolonged recognition via favourable film criticism and festival awards to reach the cultural status of true auteurs (see also chapter three on cultural capital). Much more interesting, however, than regarding, for example, Godard as an auteur “going through phases” is to understand his presence at international film festivals from the programmers’ perspective of a politics of participation. Whereas the majority of the French New generation continued to ignore pertinent political issues such as the wars in Vietnam and Algeria, Godard broke with this tradition and developed a counter-cinema along the lines of the political avant-garde. The films from this “political period” were selected by festival programmers not only to present the authorial development of the filmmaker, but also – and sometimes solely – to contribute to the political agenda of a themed section of the festival program. With such sections festivals generate critical discourse and actively participate in political struggles.

The independent format of festival programming led to the phenomenon of the “festival film,” films that travel the international film festival circuit with success, but fail to “make it” outside. The so-called festival film smoothly fits into the model of auteurs, new waves, discoveries and political participation, which, in effect, provides a blueprint for filmmakers seeking festival exposure. Successful films on the festival circuit indeed incite whole sets of followers, who try to maximise their chances of
success by conforming to the acclaimed films as if they were a magic formula. Moreover, programmers are also embedded in a system that has, to a certain extent, become self-referential. Bill Nichols argues that the context of the film festivals adds another layer to the experience of film viewing that was not there before. The festival audiences, he argues, not only perform the common aesthetic and political readings of the films they encounter, but also try to acquaint themselves with "back region knowledge" and discover patterns that will help them understand the unfamiliar images. The result is that new, global meanings are attributed to the films. I would argue that the same applies to the network of programmers that select films for the festivals. New global meanings are attributed to the films in the framing and labelling that is accomplished through programming, in particular in specialised and themed sections. "Discoveries" of new auteurs of new waves, therefore, are by definition acts of creation and not of reportage.

The notion of "discovery" becomes increasingly problematic with globalisation and the ample opportunity for transnational influence. The second set of new waves (Taiwan, West Africa, Spain, Ireland, Yugoslavia, New Zealand, Iran and China's Fifth Generation) emerged in the already globalised environment of the 1980s. The fifth generation of Chinese filmmakers, for example, not only stood out from their studio-assigned predecessors by moving to self-selected provincial studios in Xi'an, Guangxi or, for instance, secluded Mongolia to work more independently, but also because they took their inspiration from European art cinemas instead of the popular Chinese party tradition. As Dudley Andrew has pointed out, the canonisation of China's Fifth Generation at Western film festivals was a predictable consequence of that particular system, continuously searching for new trends to present to its international, though predominantly Western, audience. The European orientation and political position against the Cultural Revolution of the films of China's Fifth Generation made it a perfect (though temporary) favourite for the critically-engaged Western festival audience. When one considers that the output of the Wave comprised of no more than seven percents of the nation's annual production, the "discovery" of these films and filmmakers begins to show signs of a predisposed selection by Western outsiders. The situation is even more complex in the contemporary situation. Filmmakers become more and more transnational themselves. They travel abroad to pursue training and use the broader availability of films on television, video and DVD to complete their film education themselves. In addition, when developing film projects, these filmmakers have a wider choice between international locations and production partners. As the Danish Dogma movement has proved, it becomes less likely to conceive of new waves as local and autonomous eruptions that are unaffected by film-historical knowledge and elements of self-conscious performativity. The dogma of discovery, in short, had the side effect of making the ideas of "auteur" and "new wave" also available for clever marketing purposes.
4.3.2 Specialised Festivals and the Festival Circuit

Specialised and themed programming appeared on the film festival circuit for two major reasons in the late 1960s. The first reason resulted directly from the period of global political turmoil, which was a great inspiration for socially and politically committed filmmakers worldwide. The anti-governmental nature or at least anti-authoritarian inclination of most cinematic movements created the demand for independent platforms to accommodate the young, critical voices without censorship. Film festivals satisfied this demand and developed, in addition, the ambition to deploy careful programming to intervene directly in international political debates and participate in film culture. However, because freedom of speech was predominantly defended by Western ideologies and juridical systems, the unequal situation could occur in which Western film festivals took over the task of supporting (the visibility of) political cinemas from around the globe. The Pesaro Film Festival was among the first to show Latin American cinema in the 1960s and greatly contributed to the lively debates on local issues concerning the South American continent. This type of support could often not be facilitated by the troubled countries themselves. For instance, the Brazilian Mar del Plata Festival, that had received “A” status from the FIAPF in 1959 and would seem to have been the most appropriate international platform to present new national developments in the cinema, was suspended for 25 years from 1970 onwards. The period of military government and difficult economic situation in Brazil prohibited the festival from being reinstated. This meant that the revolutionary Brazilian Cinema Novo was highly unlikely to find either political support or sufficient funding within its national borders. At the same time, festival programmers in the West, who were looking for new ways to intervene directly in current debates and participate in film culture, embraced precisely these films. Political cinemas were in particular shown in the sections parallel to the established festivals (Quinzaine des Réalisateurs in Cannes and Forum des Jeunes Films in Berlin) and programmed by those festivals (old and new) that followed the Pesaro example: among others Locarno (Switzerland), Edinburgh (Scotland), Taormina, Sorrento and San Remo (Italy). Specialised film festivals were also founded to support the political emancipation of minority groups, such as the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Festival (1977), the oldest and largest festival devoted to gay and lesbian cinema. These Western film festivals shared the leftist ideologies that acknowledged the support of the various liberation and emancipation movements to be a worthy cause and, moreover, had the financial means to realise basic requirements such as screening facilities and film transport, as well as welcome extras like inviting filmmakers to attend the festivals, providing subtitles (e.g. Forum) or publishing documentation (e.g. the Pesaro papers and Edinburgh magazine). Another trend taken from Pesaro was the organisation of seminars, conferences and retrospectives. Many of the festivals that programmed specialised and themes sections shunned the traditional competition format, favouring open debates and critical analysis over jury deliberations and prestigious prizes. The intentions of the new
generation of festival programmers were both sincere and, in the case of presenting/supporting new, national political cinemas, the result of a somewhat belated colonial urge to explore ("discover") the cinematic hinterlands. The advantage for "Third World" filmmakers to screen their films first of all in the West, comprised of the extensive media exposure and the greater cultural recognition that would be conferred on them. The disadvantage was, as I argued in the previous section, that some of these filmmakers began to make films for an international (above all Western) audience and part of the original, local relevance of political cinemas or aesthetic new waves was lost.

The second reason why festivals turned to specialised programming, was the need for distinction. The number of film festivals increased and all of them instructed their programmers to go and scout "good" films for the festival to show. Because everybody was fishing in the same pond and established filmmakers preferred the major film festivals, newcomers on the festival circuit needed something else to be competitive. A specialisation would allow them to unify their programmes for the festival audience at home, while at the same time carving a niche in the global cultural agenda of cinema. This reason would continue to gain relevance, especially from the 1980s onwards, when global spread and professionalisation of the festival phenomenon coincided and specialisations were increasingly of a non-political nature, such as genre (e.g. the Brussels International Festival of Fantastic Film, founded in 1979), children's film (e.g. Lukas International Children's Film, founded in 1974 in Frankfurt) and documentary (e.g. International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam, founded in 1988). In Rotterdam the specialisation of the festival was not strategically planned, but the direct result of the taste preferences and cinephile passions of festival director Bals. The effect, however, was the same. The festival developed a clear image of what type of films and filmmakers it supported and could, by virtue of its consistent programming, acquire a competitive, nodal, position on the international film festival circuit. Rotterdam concentrated on new talent and auteurs from the art cinema and avant-garde, and displayed special attention for films from "the Third World," "the South" or "developing countries" – Bals himself favoured films from Asia and Russia. He would be able to dictate his taste and purchase films for Film International until 1987, when the Ministry of Culture decided to discontinue its structural subsidy. In 1987 Bals had to resign as director of Film International was in great debt, not in the least because of Bals' tendency to exceed budgets. In the period 1973-1987 Bals and Film International had collected 625 titles of which some had already been transferred to other distributors because of the insecure financial situation of the non-profit distributor. Among these acquisitions were films by Theo Angelopoulos (for example: MERES TOU 36), Raul Ruiz (among others: REGIME SANS PAIN, LA COLONIA PENAL, HET DAK VAN DE WALVIS, and L'EVEILLÉ DU PONT DE L'ALMA), Zhang Yimou (HONG GAO LIANG/RED SORGHUM) and Shuij Terayama (including: HET VLAKGOM, EEN VERTELLING OVER DE POKKEN and EEN VERTELLING OVER EEN DOOLHOF). In 1987 Bals had to resign as director of...
Film International. He was re-appointed as director of the foundation "Film Festival Rotterdam" and acted as advisor to the new foundation “International Art Film” that was to continue the distribution activities of Film International. Bals, however, felt that his life’s work had been taken from him and suffered from bouts of depression. He died unexpectedly on 13 July 1988. With his outspoken and controversial opinions, his striking appearance, and his bon-vivant lifestyle, Huub Bals had reminded some of Henry Langlois. Like Langlois, Bals continued to have a clear influence on the alternative film culture of the Netherlands in general and on the film festival in Rotterdam in particular, even after his death. His legacy would guide the festival when facing the demands of the rapidly changing environment on the festival circuit.

Before I elaborate on the changes brought about by the new festival audiences and technological developments, it is worth drawing specific attention to the emergence of specialised festival funds in the contemporary international film festival circuit, such as the Hubert Bals Fund. In 1988, just before his death, Bals founded a special fund to support talented filmmakers from developing countries, which was post-mortem re-named after the festival’s founding father. The Hubert Bals Fund supports filmmakers from developing countries whose films are formally innovative, shed new light on their countries of origin and/or contribute to the improvement of the local film industries. The financial grants are allotted twice a year in the areas of script or project development, post-production and distribution, because as the organisation explains “support in these areas has proven to be the most effective kind.” Many films made with support of the Hubert Bals Fund are programmed in Rotterdam and some are also selected for a DVD release with the festival’s own label “Tiger Releases.” Moreover, the interest in films supported by the Hubert Bals Funds outside of the IFFR has increased significantly over the years. Festival programmers regard the fund’s involvement as a good indicator of quality and hence pay special attention to its yearly harvest. The result is that, in recent years, increasingly more of the Hubert Bals Fund films are selected by the major festivals. The Hubert Bals Fund logo, for example, has appeared in Cannes, Venice, Locarno, San Sebastian, Pusan and Toronto in 2004 or 2005. An increasing number of these selected films, moreover, receive prestigious prizes. To name but a few; the winner of the Cannes 2003 Grand Jury Prize, UZAK (DISTANT) (Turkey: Nuri Bilge Ceylan 2002) received support for the Hubert Bals Fund as did KAMOSH PANI (SILENT WATERS) (Pakistan: Sagbiha Sumar, 2003) which was allotted the Golden Leopard in Locarno in 2003. The development points to an extension of what film festivals consider their core business, an extension from exhibition to production and distribution. It is important to assert that the relevance of such festival-related funds is not mainly the financial support provided. The total budgets tend to be modest and the limits per application relatively low (e.g. set on €10,000 for script development, €30,000 for post-production and €15,000 for distribution in Rotterdam). Although it is true that even such small amounts can make a significant difference in the realisation
of the, typically small budget, world cinema productions, the acceptance of an application is above all important as official recognition of the project's artistic value. Because such funds are affiliated with film festivals, they are widely acknowledged to have the necessary cultural expertise, which allows for informed decisions on the cultural value of the various projects. In effect, the emergence of the specialised festival funds resets the beginning of the process of cultural value addition before the actual festival events. Many film festivals nowadays look beyond the programming and evaluation of finished products and demand a say in which films are artistically interesting, before they are made; with these funds the festivals, in fact, influence which films will be realised and what (type of) films will be on the market for their and other festival programmers to choose from. This development adds a whole new layer of meaning to the label “festival film,” as these films are not only predominantly produced for the festival circuit, but also partially by (and with the cultural approval of) the festival circuit. Other festivals have followed in the fund’s successful footsteps, such as the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, which launched the Balkan Fund in 2003 to support script development in the region, and the World Cinema Fund in Berlin (2004). These funds combine the 1970s tradition of a politics of participation – the ideology that festivals can make a difference and should commit themselves to act for the benefit of venerable cinemas and filmmakers rather than merely select and present – with the 1990s embedding of art cinema in an increasingly professional economic system.

4.4 Cinephilia and the New Festival Audiences

The French New Wave stood at the beginning of the new film festival model, which was based on auteurs, new waves and the dogma of discovery. However, as Colin MacCabe argues, the politique des auteurs was not only concerned with establishing the primacy of the filmmaker-director, but also aimed at the creation of a new audience. The Cahiers critics developed passionate preferences for certain directors and consequently set out to legitimise these (popular) preferences in the public Cahiers discourse. This project would lead to the construction of a cinephile archetype that was to become central to a (elitist) mode of film reception in the 1960s. MacCabe writes:

[T]he project of the magazine's critics was very different [from the Bazinian project to liberate through education]. On the one hand, they were concerned, because of their particular battle with contemporary French cinema, to denigrate the role of the script and to promote the role of the director. At the same time, the audience they were in the process of creating, that of the omniscient cinéphile, was very distant from the universal audience that they postulated in their classical theory...What happened in '68 is that, Godard and
Cahiers both attempted in a moment of revolutionary enthusiasm to create the perfect audience.\textsuperscript{308}

Recognising the importance of the notion of “the perfect audience” in relation to the upheaval of 1968 in Cannes may help to frame some of the more reluctant reactions against the rapidly expanding number of festival visitors in the 1990s. It makes clear that the institutional reform of film festivals in the early 1970s is culturally not only related to the well-known normative re-consideration of filmmaking, but also to the emergence of new ideas on film reception. Festivals ceased to be showcases of national cinemas and became, on the one hand, launching paths for directorial talent (re-clustering around the figure of the “auteur” instead of the “national”’) and, on the other hand, by extending the normative tradition to film reception, alternative exhibition sites where “the perfect audience” would be able to watch films that were excluded from the available structures of commercial film distribution and exhibition. The norm imposed on “perfect” festival visitors was that of classical cinephilia, a rather elusive notion for which Susan Sontag and Paul Willemen would offer leading reflections in the mid 1990s. They respectively argued that these perfect spectators, for example, preferred to sit at the third row centre of intimate movie theatres and dedicate themselves to a social relationship to the screen, eagerly waiting for something to be revealed in these privileged moments in the dark.\textsuperscript{309} The cinephiles formed a select group of individuals that were bound together by shared taste preferences. Most of the new generation festival programmers of the late 1960s and 1970s belonged to the avant-garde of classical cinephiles. Bals even elevated taste preferences and political beliefs to key selection criteria when selecting the first volunteers for the film festival in Rotterdam. Monica Tegelaar for example, who would become his first assistant, was asked to complete a questionnaire that asked her among others: 1) “If circumstances forced you to have dinner with a young militant Black Panther, would you mind?” and 2) “What is the best film you have seen this year?” \textsuperscript{310} Naturally her choices would be thoroughly debated with Bals himself in the job interview that followed. In this section I will discuss how the classical cinephilia that dominated programming and public at the new specialised film festivals in the late 1960s and 1970s was affected by transformations on the festival circuit. First I will address the effects of video and digitisation on the rise of contemporary cinephilia. Then I discuss the influence of commercial exploitation of cinephile consumption on the film festival and, finally, I will turn to the debates concerning the new festival audiences of the IFFR.

4.4.1 Video, Digitisation and the Rise of Contemporary Cinephilia

For Willemen, one of the first to position cinephilia in the French cultural history and relate it specifically to the 1920s discourse on photogénie, the cinephiliac moment is located in the personal relationship of the viewer to the screen, when he/she discovers excess information – a gesture, body position,
look, mise-en-scène etc. that was or was not choreographed for the spectator to see – that touches his/her subjectivity. The immersion of the spectator in the cinema theatre is essential to Willemen’s understanding of cinephilia. In his seminal article on cinephilia, “Through the Glass Darkly: Cinephilia Reconsidered,” he specifically distinguishes between cinephilia and telephilia and expresses his concern with the influence of television that threatens cinema and film theory with extinction. The alleged “death of the cinema” would become a hot topic of international debate two years later, when Sontag published “The Decay of Cinema” in the New York Times Magazine on 25 February 1996. In the spirit of Willemen’s academic writing, she polemically argues that, with the decline in grandeur of the movie going experience, cinephilia has died as well. Central to the discussions that followed was the question of whether cinephilia had been killed by the new technologies such as video and Internet or, had merely been transformed. The online film journal Senses of Cinema dedicated a dossier to this debate entitled “Permanent Ghosts: Cinephilia in the Age of the Internet and Video” in 1999.

One of the main oppositions that is played out in this debate is “going out” versus “staying in.” Value judgements differ with regard to the question of which condition qualifies for the cinephilic practice. The younger generation tends to defend the technology of their home video and Internet education as a democratising tool that not only allows for a global, outer-urban public access to cinema culture, but also gives them the control over their beloved films. The critics of video and bootleg copies, on the other hand, lament the possibilities of fast-forwarding, freeze-framing and zapping through the sacred cinematic texts and uphold the superior technology and immersed experience of the theatre. Another recurring element in the debates was cinephilia’s relation to memory. Both Elsaesser and Willemen have alluded to the connection between cinephilia and necrophilia. Elsaesser described cinephilia as “the love that never dies,” the love that binds the present to the past in memory. Willemen, in his turn, explained the necrophile overtones in the cinephiliac moment with a similar observation, namely that cinephilia “relat[es]... something that is dead, past, but alive in memory.” Where Willemen feels cinema is threatened by the advance of new audiovisual technologies, for Elsaesser they merely transform the act of memory that is so central to cinephilia: “When we speak of the cinema today, we speak of cinema after television and after the video game, after the CD-ROM and the theme park.’ [...] Therefore, TV is not the impossibility of remembering the cinema, but just our moment and our way of remembering it.”

The argument I want to make here is a compressed version of the one that is put forward in the anthology Cinephilia: Movies, Love and Memory and it is therefore worth quoting the book’s project at length:

Together, these scholars point to an understanding of contemporary cinephilia as a practice that has branched out and embraces and uses technological developments while transforming the lessons of the first generation of cinephilia. Contemporary
cinephilia, like its classic predecessor, relates the present to the past, but memory is no longer exclusively cherished in private thought, face-to-face discussions and writings in books and magazines. It is cultivated by consumers, producers, and academics on multiple media channels: audience flock to festivals, rent videos in specialty stores and buy, download, or swap films on the internet; corporations repurpose (old) films as (instant) classics for the booming DVD market; and film scholars help to frame unclassified archival material that is presented at film festivals, in film museums, and at archives. Today's cinephilia is unabashedly consumerist (in the rapidly growing DVD market) and radically anti-capitalist (in its barely legal P2P transactions of films on the internet), often for the same people at different times. Because of its varied use of different technologies, communication channels, and exhibition formats, the contemporary way of remembering is far more accessible than the practice even was in the 1960s when it was limited to a handful of Western metropolises.317

Aside from documenting and analysing a period shift, this statement can also be seen as a reaction to Movie Mutations: The Changing Face of World Cinephilia edited by Jonathan Rosenbaum and Adrian Martin.318 On the one hand, Movie Mutations succeeds in convincingly describing the new world cinephilia moving beyond distinctions between “staying in” and “going out.” The contributors to the volume rightfully observe how cinephiles nowadays not only use the new home technologies of video, Internet and DVD, but also meet and interact at international forums such as international film festivals and museums. On the other hand, Rosenbaum and Martin also appear to miss the opportunity to move away from the classical cinephilia agenda of setting (normative) taste preferences: the book presents a line-up of the usual suspects of contemporary world cinema (art/avant-garde) favourites – Abbas Kiarostami, Tsai Ming-liang, John Cassavetes et al. Rosenbaum and Martin identify a body of critics and filmmakers that, independent from one another, have similar revelatory discoveries of filmmakers such as Raoul Ruiz and Ken Jacobs and, by doing so, present a globalised version of the Parisian elite that headed the cinephilia debates with their selection of favourites in the 1950s and 1960s. The influence of the multiplication of media channels and screening opportunities, however, is far greater than the series of exchanges edited by Rosenbaum and Martin suggest. The most crucial characteristics of contemporary cinephilia for me are its truly global nature and reach, and its popularisation in terms of practice. The boom in film festivals, art-houses, archives, video-stores, (online) film magazines, bootleg software and cinema groups has not only multiplied the number of cinephiles world-wide, but also diversified the types of cinephilia practices. The small number of film critics who travel to film festivals and lead the official public debates on the state of world cinema are now merely one community among many (local and global) communities that express their desire for cinema in writings, discussions and
repeated viewings. Soyoung Kim, for example, discusses a Korean version of cinephilia – cine-mania – that is a hybrid mix between the "quasi-mystical aspect" of classical cinephilia and local (consumerist) reactions to Korea's energetic project of globalisation. The internationally operating critics still hold authoritative positions thanks to their professional cultural status as well as breadth and depth of expertise, but can by no means exert the same influence over individual taste preferences as did the critics of Cahiers du Cinéma in the 1950s and 1960s. Thanks to new technologies, large parts of the cinematic heritage and current film production is widely available to contemporary cinephiles, who can just as easily satisfy their cravings for "revelatory moments" by immersing into a collection of Bollywood DVDs purchased on the internet as by closely following the regular screenings and performances of Ken Jacobs in the Manhattan district or, alternatively, with ten days of late-night cult screenings of Asian horror at the International Film Festival Rotterdam. It no longer matters whether they live in remote rural areas, towns or world cities because video, DVD, Internet and the ubiquitous festival phenomenon have made the specific object of their desire readily available for consumption. Despite my disagreement with lamentations on the terminal condition of the cinema, I do find it necessary to acknowledge that certain aspects of the developments, spurred by the advance of new technologies, may be cause for some modest concern. In the next paragraph I turn to one of these issues that is particularly relevant for film festivals and investigate what role festival play in the commercial exploitation of cinephilia by large media corporations.

4.4.2 Cinephilia and Commerce at Film Festivals: memory and the market
Video and digitisation not only changed the commercial film industries, but also affected film festivals. As I have shown in chapter two, the early 1980s was a decisive period in which the festival and film market in Cannes became the epicentre of bustling activity, new independents and commercial frenzy, all emanating from the video boom. The period of opportunities and change did not last long. Towards the end of the decade, the market consolidated and most independents went down in the shakeout. Those that did survive, like Miramax, became subsidiaries to multinational media corporations and started to apply the commercial marketing techniques to smaller art productions for niche markets. The period of open competition may have been relatively short but the effects of the larger transformations of the time were long-lasting on both the commercial markets and festival circuit. The funding models for commercial and art cinema went through a fundamental change as more and more weight was given to the international and ancillary markets. Moreover, Hollywood may initially have been caught by surprise by video and the independent success, once the initial shock had settled, the Empire struck back, taking measures to bind mass audiences to its products across the various outlets in a smart response to the emergence of the multimedia environment. Vinzenz Hediger identifies the developments as part of a larger movement from cinema to copyright industry:
The extension of the commercial life span of films is a crucial element of a larger development that is best characterized as the film industry’s shift from a theater or cinema industry to a copyright industry. In the classical era, the industry’s main investment was in real estate. [...] The economic well-being of the major film producers rested on their control of distribution and, most importantly, of the large theaters. In that sense, the film industry was a cinema industry. After the Paramount decree in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the studios shifted their focus from control of the market through real estate to control of the market through the copyrights of the films they produced. As a result, the blockbuster film, a brand product that promises revenues in a whole string of subsidiary markets, emerged as the new paradigm of film production and distribution, and film marketing consolidated into an activity of intensive and long-term exploitation of the copyright for artistic products. Quite naturally, as part of this shift from a cinema to a copyright industry, the studios also increasingly focused on the revenue they could generate by marketing old films to which they owned the copyrights.320

The shift from a cinema (theatre) to a copyright industry also affected film festivals. Julian Stringer writes:

The international film festival circuit now plays a significant role in the re-circulation and re-commodification of “old” and “classic” movies. Taking the form of revivals, retrospectives, special gala screenings, and archive-driven events, the contemporary exhibition of such historical artefacts provides a powerful means of extending cinephilia into the second century of cinema through a process what Grant MacCracken has identified as the “displaced meaning strategy.”321

With “displaced meaning strategy” Stringer refers to the process of labelling, classification and identification taking place at festivals world-wide. The re-framing and re-circling of “old” cultural products such as festival films secures, as Stinger argues, “the importance of some titles rather than others within the memory narratives of institutionalised culture.”322 The ramifications of these trends for cinephilia, as it is experienced at film festivals, are, however, not straightforward. The boom and global spread of film festivals have, on the one hand, as I argued, contributed to the diversification and multiplication of cinephiles world-wide. These spectators, nowadays, have access to a large supply of new, old and forgotten works at festivals. Especially in urban areas, cinephiles have a variety of international festivals, specialised film weeks, retrospectives and tributes at their disposal.
from which to choose their preferred objects of desire. This situation is a far cry from the impediments in access common from the 1950s through to the 1970s, when a central element of cinephilia was the effort required to pursue one’s passion: travelling to far away (and often run down) cinema theatres in order to catch one special screening. It was, no doubt, the exertion required for such a quest that made the experience all the more precious in the cinephile’s memory. The contemporary staging of “revivals, retrospectives, special gala screenings, and archive-driven events” at film festivals, on the contrary, is characterised by its being readily available. The audiences that flock to such special screenings expect to be witness of a (re-) discovery that the festival institution has carefully selected for them. It can therefore also be argued that the organisation of such events presupposes that the festival programmers have experienced the classical cinephiliac moment of revelation as a substitute for the audiences. What is left for the spectator, in this perspective, is a mere second-order cinephilia, presented on a plate, ready for consumption: a commodified mass cinephilia instead of privileged revelation.

It is important to underline that festival programming may emanate from cinephile interests – as was especially visible in the emergence of specialised festivals and themed programming in the 1970s – but ultimately revolves around different objectives. Both film festivals and individual cinephiles are highly concerned with revelatory moments (discoveries), authorial signatures (tributes and retrospectives) and discourses that define one’s relationship with the films (festival coverage and publications), but the festival form differs from the individual pleasure-seeking and desire-driven individual cinephile in its institutionalised nature. The cultural value added by festival selection and programming reaches beyond the level of personal preference and becomes more or less – according to the festival’s prestige in the international film festival circuit – globally acknowledged as evidence of quality. The process is similar to the way in which museums and art galleries add cultural capital to the artefacts they exhibit (see chapter three). Moreover, the shift from a cinema to copyright industry and subsequent industrial recognition of the potentially unlimited commercial exploitation of artistic products through new technologies has put serious strain on the independence of film festivals. For corporate organisations especially, commercial motivations are at play when they co-operate with festivals in the organisation of retrospectives, tributes and special events. Stringer mentions the example of the “Turner Classic Movies”-series in which the digital restoration of works from the recent past seems to be a comprehensive and commercial project to reclassify these works as must-see movie classics for entrepreneurial profits rather than out of cultural desire. But state film archives and institutes looking after the interest of private collections, which can be counted among the indispensable suppliers of films central to special festival events, also have their own agendas. Two recent examples of such “copyright censorship” concern the restored musical version of Max Ophüls LOLA MONTES (France/West Germany: 1955) and the lost, legendary first version of John Cassavetes’ SHADOWS (USA: 1957). Marcel Ophüls, son of the
acclaimed filmmaker, refused to give the festival in Cannes permission to show the Munich Archives’ restoration of LOLA MONTES, because he preferred the earlier French restoration. The Cassevetes heirs, in their turn, stepped in after the first screening of the lost Cassevetes at the 2004 IFFR and vetoed further public screenings. The growing market for DVD, in particular, is a strong incentive for corporate, private and state archives alike to re-examine the capital on their shelves. Film festivals are part of this cultural copyright industry because they are prime events to legitimise re-framed artefacts with the necessary cultural value. The centennial of the late Japanese master Yasujirō Ozu (1903-1963) in 2003 was occasion for the motion picture/theatre company Shochiku to present a series of commemorations, retrospectives and celebrations at the international film festivals in Berlin, Karlovy Vary, New York, Hong Kong and Istanbul. The company not only produced many of Ozu’s films, but also holds a video label and distribution system that benefited from the year-round attention for what Shochiku’s president Nobuyoshi Otani called “one of our nation’s most precious visual assets.”

In the present situation, film festivals have to negotiate between their independent programming (the project of institutionalised canonisation), forces of corporate commodification, and the task of offering broad opportunities of access and individual selection to a diverse, mass audience. Some festivals, in particular the bigger ones, are more susceptible to market forces. Cannes, Berlin, Venice and Toronto, for example, lend their event to global gala-premiers of high-concept movies like THE MATRIX: REVOLUTIONS and STAR WARS III: REVENGE OF THE SITH. Specialised festivals like Rotterdam, on the other hand, tend to be more wary of unabashedly commercial exploitation of their (media) format. The discussion in Rotterdam, therefore, did not concentrate on the presence of Hollywood (which the festival hardly does not have) or the professionalisation of its fundraising activities (see 4.5.3). The major cause of public concern in the late 1990s was the emergence of a mass audience.

4.4.3 Debating the New Festival Audiences in Rotterdam
The number of festival visitors in Rotterdam has increased exponentially over the years, especially in the 1990s. After having closed its first major sponsorship deal with a national quality newspaper, de Volkskrant, in 1982, the festival proudly set a record in visitors’ attendance the year after (44,680). By 1996, attendance had already exceeded 200,000 visits and the number would continue to grow rapidly, reaching 358,000 in 2005. The exponential increase after 1996 had been made possible due to the inauguration of a new location in 1997, the Pathé Multiplex on the central Schouwburgplein. The greater number of seats (circa 2,800) offered by the multiplex exceeded the total of the different venues that were used previously and, moreover, substituted their dispersion over the city centre with a convenient spatial concentration, one breath away from Rotterdam’s central train station. Festival director Sandra den Hamer emphasises, in addition, that the
consistent quality of the festival programme underlies the festival’s successful growth.\textsuperscript{327}

In the introduction to this chapter I described some of the critical reflections on the development towards a mass festival audience. Film critics in particular have articulated concern that the festival is becoming unwieldy as the growth in visitors also meant an increase in the number of films being screened. The counter hit 774 in 2005.\textsuperscript{328} One of the questions raised was whether this should be interpreted as a reversal of Bals’ dictum of “finding an audience for the film” into “finding films for the audience.” I want to emphasise that the specific rhetoric used in these reversals evokes the sentiments that also drove the cinephilia debates in the late 1990s and points to an appropriation of the festival debate for expressing central concerns about the larger transformations in film culture. The issue at stake in the “death of cinema” discourse was the disagreement between those who felt that the technological advance threatened cinema with extinction and those who considered the use of new media formats as a different (and potentially very rich) way of pursuing cinephile interests. The former feared that the multiplication of distribution channels and accompanying broadening of access to film culture would result in a loss of quality and that original cultural contexts would be misunderstood or misquoted. Extending these sentiments to the festival debate it becomes clear that the underlying fear of the expression “finding films for an audience” concerned a fear of “losing” the established spaces for the recognition and appreciation of marginalised film tastes to appropriation by the new audiences. The anxiety was based on the uncertainty whether the new festival audiences would influence programming in the future and devalue the festival’s original (classical) cinephile standards, because of different (and potentially more popular) taste preferences. The collage of the festival tiger drowning in popcorn, printed on the cover of a 2004 festival daily, offered a clear illustration of this sentiment: issuing forth a warning that popcorn munchers are about to overrule the serious cinephile interests of the Tiger Awards Competition. It should be investigated whether the fear about the mass audience causing a popularisation of the festival’s programming (marginalising marginalised tastes even more) can be substantiated. For this we have to start with the festival visitors themselves.

In my article “Drowning in Popcorn at The International Film Festival Rotterdam? The Festival as a Multiplex of Cinephilia” I present a preliminary taxonomy of the various cinephiles visiting Rotterdam.\textsuperscript{329} The six “archetypes” include three types whose main reason for visiting the festival is related to the films: 1) the lone list-maker, who “thoroughly prepares his/her festival visit” and primarily “follows his/her own taste” when selecting films; 2) the highlight seeker, who “also prepares his/her festival visit, but consciously considers and collects the tips of others in order not to miss the highlights of the festival,” and; 3) the specialist, who visits the festival because of a unique programme offered, for instance the Tiger Awards Competition. The other three archetypes can be clustered around “the festival” as main attraction of
their visit instead of the “films” central to the types described above. In contrast to the typical individualist planning of “film-cinephiles” the “festival-cinephiles” are more inclined to visit the festival in the company of friends or family. Among the “festival-cinephiles” I distinguish between: 4) *the leisure visitor*, for whom the “wish to visit the festival as leisure activity doesn’t include the willingness to sacrifice (a lot of) time and energy in early selection and reservation of films;” 5) *the social tourist*, for whom “the social element of a festival visit is central” and selection of films is usually entrusted to one person in the group; and 6) *the volunteer*, who works for the festival and obtains “an inside experience” as reward. These six “archetypes” are based on unstructured observations over several years of festival visits and therefore by no means offer a complete or undisputable analysis. However, in my opinion, no comprehensive empirical research is needed to make a justifiable point on the general development of the last three decades. My point is that, initially, when the festival was still small, the audience was limited to one type of festival visitor (the classical cinephile). When the number of visitors grew, variety was introduced. These observations are substantiated by the audience reception research of 2001, carried out by an independent research office by order of the IFFR, which shows a distinction between “old” and “new” visitors with regard to the question of the festival being (too) massive or not. Of the seasoned visitors (visiting the festival for five years or more, between 20 and 60 years old), significantly more people experience the festival as massive (82%, of which 33% evaluate this as slightly/very negative) than did the neophyte visitors (visiting the festival four years or less, 40 years old or younger) of whom 28% does not experience the festival as massive at all.\textsuperscript{330} The seasoned visitors most resemble the classical cinephile. Love for the cinema and a curious passion for new developments are vital to their visits. For the neophyte festival audiences, the festival can be about many things, such as the opportunity to immerse oneself in premieres and unreleased films, the encounter with filmmakers, the specialised knowledge at hand, the promise of discovering new talent, the atmosphere of expectations, the joined social experience of a popular event and/or the inside look. The empirical research confirms my distinction between “film-oriented” and “festival-oriented” cinephiles and specifies the dichotomy for “seasoned” versus “neophyte” visitors.\textsuperscript{331} The general “festivalisation” of the late 1990s is another reason for the growth of visitors’ attendance. The zeitgeist turned to a preference for large public events, in which – it must be reiterated – for some the occasion was of lesser importance than the social happening itself. This cultural tendency explains, for example, the success of the so-called “Volkskrant-dag” and “VPRO-dagen” at the IFFR.\textsuperscript{332} The films screened during the highly popular Volkskrant-dag are selected from among those with top-scores in the audience’s poll. This is, of course, not a very cinephile selection criteria, because, as Peranson, casually devaluing popular taste, comments: “the films at the bottom of the audience polls are generally the best.”\textsuperscript{333}
From the perspective of the film festival organisation the popularity of
the IFFR with a broad audience was the successful result of their efforts to
find that audience. Sandra den Hamer underlines that the key concern of
the festival has always been the filmmakers and the films. The search for a new
and broader audience was in line with Bals ideology of “finding an audience
for the film” because it was undertaken, the director argues, with the mission
to broaden the exposure of independent and wayward cinema to the general
public and thereby extend the possibilities for filmmakers. The preface to the
2001/2002 annual report proudly opens with a quotation by film critic Ronald
Ockhuysen: “The IFFR has mastered its growing pains of recent years. The
festival proves that it is possible to be popular as well as essentially wayward.
This proves there is a broad, cinephile public in the Netherlands, which is
overlooked the remaining year.” I agree with the festival organisation’s
reassurance that the broad public in Rotterdam has not fundamentally
affected its objective and that the festival rightfully developed alongside the
transformations on the festival circuit (“same content, different coat” in Den
Hamer’s catching terminology). Young and upcoming filmmakers are still
served very well at the festival. Moreover, the festival organisation,
professionals and (part of) the public are strongly dedicated to maintaining
this festival task. The strength of Rotterdam compared to the major festivals in
Cannes, Berlin and Venice is, in fact, precisely the co-existence of cutting edge
and uncompromised film programs with an open-minded mass audience.
Many of the new “festival” visitors are susceptible to the expert selections and
opinions that are made available to them at the festival. René van der Giessen,
head of programme co-ordination, observes how influential pre-festival
publications are and how careful the festival has to orchestrate this “buzz,”
the auditorium size and the time slots to “match” a film with an audience.
Nevertheless, the festival organisation also subscribes to the general
observation underlying the various critiques, namely that the growth has
caused some imbalance in the festival programming and for many people
(especially the new “inexperienced” visitors) it has become difficult to find
their way in the lavish supply of films. The festival has been developing
several education programmes to “familiarise” the broader public (in
particular schoolchildren and students) with artistic filmmaking for several
years. More specifically, the 2005 festival introduced three new sections to
substitute the former main programme that offered festival visitors little
guidance: “Cinema of the Future: Sturm und Drang” for the traditional focus
on young and innovative cinema; “Cinema of the World: Time & Tide” which
refers to the films made with critical looks; and “Maestros: Kings & Aces” for
the established filmmakers and great auteurs. In 2006 the unwieldiness of
the programme will furthermore be dealt with by cutting the number of films
from 774 to approximately 500, a step for which the festival had not been
ready a couple of years previously. The challenge for the festival will be to
keep audience’s numbers up with fewer films and to generate more visibility
for the filmmakers that made it through the selection.
4.5 Events, Economics and Exploding Cinema

The transformations on the festival circuit affected the way in which specialised film festivals operate. The small and intimate gatherings of like-minded cinephiles in the 1970s were put under pressure by the technological advances, the subsequent make-over of the film industry, and the global spread of the festival phenomenon in the 1980s. To this, in Rotterdam and at some other festivals, the rapid growth in visitors’ attendance was added. Under such conditions, film festivals continuously have to respond to change and adapt accordingly. They need to protect or reposition themselves within the expanding and dynamic festival circuit in order to compete and survive. With the spread of the phenomenon not every festival can be as successful in its adaptation. In Italy, for example, where every other city has its (Summer) festival for lack of a proper national art-house infrastructure, the added value of the events in an international context often remains minimal and festivals have great difficulty acquiring prints, let alone premiers. Premiers, professional services, cutting-edge (specialised and themed) programming and the possibility of discovering new talent, however, are exactly those elements that festivals need in order to become a node in the ubiquitous festival network. The major precondition for securing such matters nowadays is a well-oiled, professional organisation. If festivals could still get away with haphazard activities and last-minute decisions in the 1970s, the changing circumstances of the following decades would demand responsible economic management in addition to feasible objectives, that of course still needed to be firmly rooted in cinephile beliefs and/or political agendas (and not in strategies for commercial profitability). These demands meant that in the early 1990s the age of the programmer came to an end and the age of the festival director began. In this section I will elaborate on this shift, taking Bals’ successors in Rotterdam as my example. Special attention will be reserved for the festival’s “exploding cinema” programme that responds to the emergence of a multimedia environment and investigates the blurred borders between cinema and other arts. This will lead me to a discussion of the rise of “event culture” or “experience economy” in the 1990s in general. More people flock to the festival not only for the films themselves, but to watch them in “spectacular” exhibition. Festivals nowadays also offer commodified “experiences” that are popular in the present-day culture economy. The commodification, however, does not necessarily point to a high-low cultural divide, but can also be related to changes in regimes of perception brought about by the technological transformations. Finally, the professionalisation of the IFFR will be discussed in terms of funding, structural subsidies and sponsorship deals.

4.5.1 The Age of Festival Directors

After Bals’ sudden death his assistant Anne Head stepped in to lead the leaderless festival in 1988. The arrival of a new era (and the end of Film International’s distribution activities) was underlined by adopting a new
name: International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR). The directors that followed led the IFFR through the changing demands of both global and local developments. Marco Müller (1990-1992) organised two festivals and expanded the number of films and auditoriums. When he left to become the director of the festival in Locarno, Emile Fallaux took over his position. Fallaux (1992-1996) attracted secondary programmers and advisors to the festival. His most important measure was the introduction of the VPRO Tiger Awards Competition in 1995. Like all advocates of the new type of participating festivals, Bals never liked the idea of prizes. They constituted a discrepancy with his ambition to conceive of the festival as a non-hierarchical meeting place where filmmakers, press and audience could meet and discuss films passionately without the festival imposing a normative evaluation on the works presented. However, as I argued before, the global spread of festivals had changed the rules of the game. The introduction of an award was a competitive necessity in the 1990s. Competition programs and awards are the preferred subjects in media reports, because the premiers add newsworthiness to the regular programming. Festivals, in their turn, need this media attention to attract filmmakers, who will select the festival that can accommodate them best. The industry professionals that needed to advance their careers would, however, not be likely to attend festivals that did not offer fresh “products.” Festivals without prizes, therefore, would become caught in a downward spiral of losing the interest of these various interdependent professionals. In Rotterdam the competition programme was established for first and second feature filmmakers only. The award is allotted ex aequo to three directors. This format made the VPRO Tiger Award a successful negotiation between Bals’ legacy and the contemporary demand. On the one hand, the choice to concentrate on first and second features confirmed Bals’ support of young talents and innovative movements in the cinema. The young filmmakers are at the beginning of their careers and (still) willing to discuss their films in the familiar environment that the IFFR aspires to maintain (which is a far cry from the star-driven competition programmes in Cannes, Berlin and Venice.) On the other hand, the yearly allotment of a set of prizes for new talent does confirm the festival’s position on the international film festival circuit. It supports the festival image of serving the interests of these new talents and presenting the world with some of the great auteurs of tomorrow. The VPRO Tiger Awards Competition is central to the festival’s nodal function for upcoming filmmakers and wayward cinema.

Under the leadership of the next festival director, Simon Field (1996-2004), the festival continued to adapt to local and global demands. Locally, as discussed above, new audiences were sought and found. Globally, Field responded to the cinephilia debates by adding a new program section:

The International Film Festival Rotterdam still aims to convey the message that world cinema is sometimes a serious matter, but often also a delightful adventure. To add weight to this, in the past years the festival has tried to replace the pessimistic view of future in
culture from the last years of Bals, with a hunger for adventure. In addition to this, the dull printed matters were brightened up. The funeral announcement for Film was followed by the idea that something will grow on every grave, for instance the Exploding Cinema programme that focuses with increasing success on the culture of the moving image - outside the cinema.\textsuperscript{340}

The ambitious “Exploding Cinema” program received extra funding from the Fund for Dutch Cultural Television Productions (Stimuleringsfonds Nederlandse Cultureele Omroep-producties) in December 1997.\textsuperscript{341} The idea behind the new program section was to look at the future of cinema outside the traditional cinema theatre, because the developments, in particular digitisation, had blurred the borderlines between cinema and the other arts. Exploding Cinema zoomed in on this hybrid media condition and explored “the filmic” in, for example, music, architecture, and fine arts. Femke Wolting, head of programme coordination at the time, explained: “Cinema is een universele taal geworden die de visuele cultuur in zijn geheel beïnvloedt en die wordt gebruikt in zowel digitale media, de beeldende kunsten als in clubs en videogames. Exploding Cinema onderzoekt al die nieuwe vormen van cinematografie en kijkt naar het effect ervan op de cinema zoals wij die kennen.”\textsuperscript{XL} Under the umbrella of Exploding Cinema, the IFFR started to present installations, games, music/media events and exhibitions in other arts institutions in Rotterdam such as the Museum Boymans van Beuningen, the Dutch Architecture Institute (NAi) and the Centre for Fine Arts Witte de With.\textsuperscript{342} The program was in line with the festival’s focus on new talent, and merely added new platforms where they could present their increasingly hybrid media works. Exploding cinema can be seen as proof of the festival’s interactive participation with cinema culture at large. Whereas major festivals like Cannes, Berlin and Venice refrain from changing their “winning” formula too drastically, Rotterdam, as a specialised festival, can stay closer to current developments and act as minute barometer of recent trends.

Sandra den Hamer, who had co-operated with all previous directors (and had been co-director with Field since 2002) became the new director in 2004. Compared to the early years with Bals, the festival had come a long way. It had moved into visual culture, attracted new audiences and introduced a competition program. The success of the Hubert Bals Fund and the CineMart, moreover, had expanded the traditional festival services to new talent with involvement and support in the period before the completion of film projects (see chapter two for a discussion of this trend and the role of CineMart). The gradual expansion and broadening of festival activities over

\textsuperscript{XL} “Cinema has become a universal language that influences visual culture as a whole and is used in digital media, fine arts as well as clubs and video games. Exploding Cinema investigates all these new forms of cinematography and considers the effect they have on cinema as we know it.” Wolting, Femke. “Persinformatie Exploding Cinema 1999.” International Film Festival Rotterdam Website. January 1999, 22 November 2004. <http://amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-nl-9901/msg00034.html>. 
the years had changed the role of the festival director. Festivals increasingly needed professional management and directors who could provide vision and leadership that allowed for the different activities and programmes to connect. In this respect, Sandra den Hamer has remarked that the festival circuit recently witnessed a generation shift. If Gilles Jacobs in Cannes, Moritz de Hadeln in Berlin and Simon Field in Rotterdam were still inclined towards treating the festival as a one-man-show, which, in particular in the case of the former two, needed to be protected and shielded from other festivals, then the new generation of Thierry Frémaux, Dieter Kosslick and Den Hamer herself has fully embraced the model of co-operation, between the programmers within their respective organisations and between the various film festivals alike. In the age of festival directors networking skills have gained in importance. The director confers with his/her team of programmers, keeps in touch with professionals and has links with other (local/national) cultural institutions. In addition, he/she is a key figure in the contacts with policymakers and sponsors.

4.5.2 The Experience Economy

In the previous section on cinephilia, I explained that the growth in festival audiences can partially be attributed to the arrival of new types of visitors, for whom the context of the “festival” is at least as important as the films that are shown, if not a marginally more. At the same time I emphasised that cinephilia itself has undergone a transformation that runs parallel to the technological developments and subsequent make-over of the film industry; the result being a new generation of cinephiles who have a different relationship with cinema than their precursors, in the period of the 1950s through to the 1970s. I would like to elaborate on this a bit further. The arrival of a culture in which visiting (cultural) events constitutes an increasingly popular leisure activity has been related to the rise of the new experience economy and the life style of what Richard Florida calls “the creative class.” Elsaesser argues: “To cater for this new economic class, municipal or metropolitan authorities try to endow their city with the sense of being a site of permanent, ongoing events. Complementing the architecturally articulated urban space with a temporal dimension, the built city turns into, and is doubled by, the “programmed” – or programmable – city. In this endeavour, major temporary exhibitions and annual festivals are a key ingredient in structuring the seasonal succession of city events across the calendar year.” Elsaesser’s notion of the “programmable city” shows similarities with Latour’s online project of presenting Paris as “invisible city.” Both show that there are other defining aspects to urbanity, more dynamic and less pronounced, than the historic architectural landmarks commonly used to promote (and represent) cities. For Elsaesser, these are related to the needs of the creative class, which – being already comfortably settled in matters of housing and labour – are extended to experiences, diversion and intellectual challenge. Cities are more than willing to accommodate such needs with diverse exhibitions, events and festivals that provide a consistent flow of new
and up-to-date information. The mobility and diversity of flows are equally important to Latour, but where Elsaesser emphasises the content of flows (programming), Latour focuses on their material grounding (in networks). He turns, for example, to the Parisian subway system, the sewers, archives and signposting, and demonstrates how these invisible actors are vital to the management of daily city life. It is instructive to combine Latour’s reliance on material networks and non-human actors with Elsaesser’s attention for seasonal programming and content to explain the successful expansion of the festival in the 1990s, because festival programming can only flourish in a stable institutional network that, in the Latourian sense, is maintained above all by invisible interconnections. For the IFFR, the multiplex is one of the nodal actors that enabled the festival to grow and accommodate more visitors and more films. I will provide a close analysis of the multiplex-actor shortly.

Another perspective that can shed light on the development of “festivalisation” is Jonathan Crary’s argument on the change in regimes of perception. Crary persuasively argued that Western modernity forced individuals to manage “attention” from the mid-nineteenth century, because the forces of industrialisation fragmented people’s experience with a continuous stream of shocks and different sensory stimuli. Extending this line of thinking, it can be argued that the recent information revolution amplified the condition of shock and perpetual sensory overload, confirming the management of “attention” as a primary concern. Because as the supply of images, words and sounds becomes too overwhelming in our contemporary media societies, the mediation of information flows becomes more and more important. Festivals and other events are particular successful in attracting attention because they have concentrated their activities and present special “spectacular” exhibitions. In this way, events are very well equipped to “guide” people through the overload of sensations they encounter in daily life. The spectacular exhibition of film festivals is related to the unique festival atmosphere; packed rooms, “buzz,” Monday morning revelations, Q&A with filmmakers et cetera. Audiences also like to visit festivals because the institution promises a certain “quality guarantee” to the attention they will dedicate to the event, turning the visit into a worthwhile “experience” that can be recounted in social intercourse. Although it is beyond doubt true that festival visits are being used as bragging evidence of one’s cultural capital in conversations between friends, colleges and family, the focus on “attention,” “spectacle” and “experience” also offers ways of framing the popularity of contemporary festivals without being caught in high-low culture dichotomies.

The move to the multiplex in 1997, for example, cannot simply be taken as proof of a “dumbing down” or commercialisation. Taking place in a multiplex cinema does, however, have the metaphorical value of capturing some of the essential issues at stake in the transformations of the festival. The multiplex specifically links the film festival to the mass audience it attracts, while, at the same time, mass audiences point to the unavoidable professionalisation of the IFFR organisation that has occurred both in
response to the increased global competitive context, as well as due to the
growth and success of the festival itself. The festival schedule somewhat
resembles the logistics of the multiplex that it has temporarily taken over;
films are constantly beginning and festival visitors may come to the multiplex
without a clear idea of what they are going to see, as last-minute decisions are
facilitated by the concentration of cinema screens within one mega-theatre.
Furthermore, films from the various programmes are screened parallel to each
other in order to accommodate the tastes of a diverse audience. The most
popular films – or those expected to be – are programmed in the largest
cinema theatres (notably Pathé) and have the preferred timeslots of around 8
and 10.30 pm. to give as many people as possible the ability to include these
in their festival itinerary. Like the commercial management of the multiplex,
the festival carefully considers which theatres and timeslots are most suitable
to what films. Due to the short duration of the festival, the commercial dogma
of box office revenues in the opening weekend affecting a film's circulation
does not apply, in a strict sense, to the festival's films. The schedule and
numbers of screenings per film is set and limited beforehand. However, the
juggling with attendance figures (not exclusive to the IFFR) points to the
institutionalisation of the festival system that has to account for its mass
popularity and competitiveness by means of hard figures. Because the
invention of the multiplex is, moreover, tied to the rise of New Hollywood's
high-concept marketing strategies, the combination of festival and multiplex
indicates the key role festivals play in strategies to promote what Alisa Perron
calls “indie blockbusters – films that, on a smaller scale, replicate the
exploitation marketing and box-office performance of the major studio high-
concept event pictures.” Festivals are not only alternative exhibition sites
for films that cannot find theatrical distribution, but also events that help
build the profile of niche productions before release. At the level of the
contemporary global film market, exposure during festivals and preferably
awards, constitute world/art cinema's essential baggage for check-in. For
many traditional cinephiles these changes are the cause of some
disenchantment, a feeling evoked in particular by the festival's architectural
setting. Jonathan Rosenbaum, for example, writes:

In some respects, the Pathé suggests an airport or a train station
where crowds are periodically appearing and disappearing
between scheduled departures; in other respects, it recalls
superstores like Virgin or FNAC – or, in the US, bookstores like
Borders and Barnes & Nobles – that have become the capitalist
replacements for state-run arts centres or public libraries. The
disturbing aspect of these stores as replacements of this kind is the
further breakdown of any distinction between culture and
advertising which already characterises urban society in general.
But a positive aspect may also exist in terms of community and
collective emotion.
Despite the somewhat soulless atmosphere in the multiplex (a non-place), the festival is able to avoid its regular impersonal anonymity by creating a sense of community for the different type of film-lovers. Simply walking to your screening in Pathé will give you the sensation that you belong to the festival in-crowd by seeing all the other festival-goers rushing to their respective screenings in the main hall. And attending an evening screening in Pathé is sure to generate that specific festival magic that crosses all tastes via the sheer thrill of sharing the overcrowded room with an eagerly anticipating large audience. Regarding Rosenbaum’s criticism of blurring distinctions between culture and advertising, I want to argue in the following that, despite the fact that the IFFR has professionalised, also in terms of fundraising and sponsoring, this distinction is ultimately not violated.

4.5.3 Fundraising, Sponsoring and the City
The festival in Rotterdam has long depended on the structural subsidies it received from the Rotterdam municipality and Dutch government (the Minister of Education, Culture and Science). Additional sponsoring was only paid in kind (for instance by putting cars at the festival’s disposal or taking care of printed matter) until De Volkskrant became the festival’s main sponsor in 1982, receiving exposure in return. When the festival expanded in number of visitors and program size in the 1990s and the structural subsidies were not raised accordingly, fundraising and sponsoring activities needed to be intensified. Hester Barkey Wolf-Lambooij, head of fundraising and sponsoring, attests that the festival’s point of departure in acquisitions is not to “sell its soul” or “go on sale.” The most ideal partnership for her is the one in which co-operation is beneficial to both parties. Often these will revolve around content. De Volkskrant, for example, offers extensive film services (agenda, reviews, interviews and background articles) in its weekly Arts Supplement. The festival’s second main sponsor, the television and radio network VPRO, in its turn, also maintains a cinema profile and is known for broadcasting the better films (world cinema, auteur films, documentaries), including those that have been allotted a Tiger Award. In addition, the two companies co-operate with the cinema portal www.cinema.nl on which extensive film-related services can be found. One of the newer sponsors, the Internet provider Tiscali, continues this line of content-related partnerships by offering Tiger Releases via streaming video on the Internet to its broadband subscribers. Barkey Wolf-Lambooij, however, also points out that the process of acquisitions is dependent on the dynamics of the business world and that the decision to close a deal or not always has to be made for each case individually. The clash of interest between culture and advertising is a recurring point of consideration for the festival. Let me give two telling examples. The first concerns the admission of commercials to the cinema screen. The admittance of advertising on the screen used to be considered undesirable. A deal with Microsoft ended this tradition in 2005. The consideration that made the festival decide in favour of the commercials was a connection between the advertised product, the content of the commercial,
and the festival program; the ad for software that promised to enable young entrepreneurs to fulfil their dreams was only shown before “Cinema of the Future: Sturm und Drang”-films, the program section that has a similar objective within the cultural domain, seeking to help young talented filmmakers in their careers. For the second example, in contrast, a similar justification could not be found. A well-known producer of crisps had suggested a swap: visibility during the festival in return for exposure in their media campaign. Despite the high value of the media exposure, the festival decided against it. The most important reason was that the IFFR was already well-known with a large public and did not need the additional exposure. On the other hand, as event it had to be wary of “exposure inflation” during the festival, because the more companies are visible, the less effective the individual campaigns will be. These examples show that the IFFR does not open its doors to advertising without giving it a second thought, but that, on the other hand, the necessity of sponsoring did force the organisation to make the effort to please their (potential) sponsors more than they would have been inclined to do in the past.

The trend towards professionalisation in the cultural sector is a general one. The IFFR has stimulated its fundraising and sponsoring activities in particular by adapting to the business manners and making clear what services it has to offer. Culturally, the relevance of the festival has been undisputed for a long time. The most recent evaluation of the Board of Culture (advising the Ministry of Culture on the subsidies for the period 2005-2008) stated:

Nederland mag zich gelukkig prijzen met het International Film Festival Rotterdam. Met een programmering die aldoor wordt vernieuwd en nog immer compromisloos is, heeft het festival ook de afgelopen jaren zijn waarde voor het Nederlandse filmklimaat onomstotelijk bewezen.

In business circles, however, the image of the festival that dominated included the connotations “dusty, alternative and smoky, remote projection rooms.” To improve this image, the festival started to pursue visibility in financial and business publications (consider, for example, the interview with Den Hamer in Quote), intensify its networking, and featherbed potential business partners during the festival. Another factor that has facilitated fundraising is Den Hamer’s membership of the Economic Development Board Rotterdam. Founded with the indispensable support of the city of Rotterdam, the festival maintains a special relation to the city and vice versa. The festival has a positive effect on the perception of the city by its citizens as well as

XLI “The Netherlands can call itself lucky with the International Film Festival Rotterdam. Thanks to a programming that is constantly being renewed and still without compromises, the festival has once again proved its value to the Dutch film climate beyond any doubt.” As corresponded to the IFFR by the Raad van Cultuur. “International Film Festival Rotterdam.” Advies Cultuurnota 2005-2008.
those coming from outside.\textsuperscript{352} The event brings diversion and tourism to the city in the low season of late January and early February. The hotel and catering industry welcome the activity brought to the city in the notoriously difficult period after Christmas and New Year. The IFFR is to be credited for 4.5% more hotel bookings and, in addition, generates an economic spin-off in the city that is estimated to be triple what is spent on the festival.\textsuperscript{353} The IFFR, in short, is the municipality’s cultural showpiece.

This situation did not change when a new political movement won the municipal elections in 2001. For the former red bastion the overwhelming victory of Leefbaar Rotterdam was nothing less than a modern revolution. The regime change was related to the popular following of the right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn, who was to be murdered a couple of days before the national elections by a left environmental/animal rights activist. His party LPF (Lijst Pim Fortuyn) was highly successful nationwide, but the number of followers in Rotterdam in particular was disproportionately large. One of the reasons was that the city houses a large part of the nation’s immigrant (first, second and third generation) population. Unemployment, culture clashes and crime are high in the relatively poor metropolis and citizens were susceptible to the proposed policy of “zero-tolerance,” in particular in relation to the immigrants. A second reason was the fact that the charismatic Fortuyn set his headquarters in Rotterdam, where he lived in the city centre.\textsuperscript{354} Rotterdam, traditionally regarded and experienced as a “working city,” became the centre of a new political movement that consisted of primarily industrialists and other well-to-do businessmen who were dissatisfied with the slow, soft and bureaucratic government and aimed instead at a re-organised business model cabinet that would operate sharply and transparently. In the new City Council, “Culture” was accommodated with a representative of Leefbaar Rotterdam, who was completely inexperienced in matters of culture and whose party had it made clear it did not understand the necessity of subsidies. Local arts institutions and cultural workers feared worst-case scenarios; subsidies could be severely reduced and the financing of culture reinterpreted as a concern for private charity or corporate sponsoring alone. Nationally, the political shift did ratify the international trend towards favouring “cultural entrepreneurs” over autonomous artists. Artists and organisations are held more and more responsible for the acquisition of funding and generation of revenues, and have to justify their cultural relevance with, for example, public attendance figures and innovative products or programs. Although a wave of cuts has been imposed on the cultural sector, the IFFR has been largely exempted from the interventions and even received a modest increase of support from the Ministry of Culture after the positive advice of the Board of Culture in 2004 (see quotation above). Among the film festivals in the Netherlands it is the miscellaneous collection of smaller specialised (and relatively new) events that suffer most, such as the Arab Film Festival Rotterdam and “Africa in the Picture” in Amsterdam. The International Film Festival Rotterdam responded to the local political shift by persisting in its ideology: a firm belief in the importance of showing the
(inter)national audiences in Rotterdam films from around the globe. Its attention to unknown social struggles and appreciation of foreign aesthetics was in strict opposition to the climate of narrow-minded nationalism and Islamophobia that seemed to hold the Netherlands in a firm grip at the time. The new municipal government, however, did not interfere in the festival. They might not have been convinced of the festival’s cultural project, but at least recognised its economic relevance for the city. The municipality even went as far as to subsidise a new initiative, the Tiger Business Lounge, that was established in 2004 in order to involve local corporations and businessmen with the festival and create more opportunities to initiate new partnerships.

4.5 Conclusion

The International Film Festival Rotterdam has developed from a small, cinephile project into the largest cultural event of the Netherlands. Internationally, it can be placed at the crossroads of three major festival trends. The first concerns the post-1968, widespread adoption of a new festival model based, on the one hand, on auteurs and new waves, and, on the other, on the programming of specialised and themed sections. Initially, the festival reacted to a lack of attention for independent cinema. It was founded as part of Film International, the Dutch national distribution company that was to acquire films for the festival as well as the soon-to-be founded art-houses, and corresponded, moreover, with the international trend to conceive of the festival task as participatory: intervening in debates and supporting political movements. The ambition of the festival’s first idiosyncratic programmer was to support innovative films and talented young filmmakers and contribute to a climate of “committed participation in film culture.” His passionate vision created the consistent focus for the festival that was to survive new directors and new times: “art, avant-garde and auteurs.” In Rotterdam filmmakers and film lovers continue to meet in a familial setting that is characterised by an aversion to the glamour that dominates in Cannes, Berlin and Venice. A second festival trend, for which the IFFR is emblematic, is the shift in type of leadership. Whereas, in the 1970s, the new type of festival directors were primarily concerned with programming, the demands of changing circumstances forced later generations to develop more and more in the direction of professional cultural entrepreneurship. The growth of the international film festival circuit, technological developments and changes in film industry, forced the festival to react and adapt. In order to maintain a competitive position internationally, the IFFR, among others, inaugurated a competition for first and second feature directors in 1995, developed a successful support fund for productions from cinema-developing countries (Hubert Bals Fund), began a new type of film market (CineMart) and included a recurring program on cinema in the other arts (Exploding Cinema). Nationally, the festival survived by appealing to new audiences and complying with professional standards in projection facilities, fundraising
and sponsoring, as well as in marketing and communication. The growth of
the festival audience led to a third trend, in which Bals’ mission to “find an
audience for the films” was not completely reversed into “finding films for an
audience,” but, nonetheless, was adapted to include the popularity of the
festival event itself. To the classical cinephiles of the first day a whole new
range of cinephiles and film lovers was added, of whom some visited the
festival not primarily because of the selected films, but more in search of the
spectacle of the popular event or worthy cultural experiences. The IFFR
accommodates all these different types of visitors by offering a varied and
comprehensive programme while at the same time staying close to its original
cinephile principles. Films by established auteurs can be found alongside
young talent in the competition programme and films that attest to current
social or cinematographical trends in the themed section “Time and Tide.”
The festival, moreover, helped to promote the city of Rotterdam as cinema
capital of the Netherlands and continues to do so every year at the end of
January when the preparations for a new festival edition reach their climax of
bustling intensity.