

LIFE AFTER PLANNING A MASTERCLASS ON VISUAL IDENTITIES OF ZUIDAS AMSTERDAM

De Vrije Universiteit, het Sandberg Instituut en het Virtueel Museum Zuidas zijn belangrijke kennis- en kunstinstellingen op de Zuidas, maar werken doorgaans afzonderlijk aan projecten en onderzoeken.

Om de samenwerking en uitwisseling tussen deze belangrijke instellingen op de Zuidas te stimuleren, heeft het VMZ i.s.m. de VU en Sandberg Instituut een speciale Zuidas Masterclass editie georganiseerd in het programma van de VRIJE RUIMTEN ZUIDAS Artists In Residence.

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INTRODUCTION

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Translation by Jane Bemont

The VU University, the Sandberg Institute and the Virtual Museum Zuidas are important knowledge and art institutes in the Zuidas, but they usually work separately on projects and research. In order to stimulate collaboration and exchange between these important institutes in the Zuidas, the VMZ worked with the VU and the Sandberg Institute in organizing a special Master Class on the Zuidas in the Zuidas Free Spaces Artists in Residence¹.

For this edition of the Zuidas Free Spaces AIR Master Class, seven students from the VU, seven students from the design department of the Sandberg Institute and two international designers were invited to think about the Zuidas urban expansion area through the medium of graphic design. Under the leadership of Alan Smart, an architect and designer from New York and guest lecturer at the Sandberg Institute, and Wouter Davidts, professor of Modern Art History at the VU, the students conducted their research for a period of three months.

The designers and students were asked to create a concept for the visual identity of the Zuidas in general, or for one of the various institutes that populate this area. This led to extremely diverse projects and results, showing that the Zuidas has a much greater variety and stratification than one would expect from the area at first sight. Reflecting on the Zuidas from the Ice Age to the distant future, the Master Class participants came up with a combination of theoretical considerations and unique practical proposals.

The results have been bundled in this publication, which will serve as a source of inspiration and a discussion paper for a symposium in the Kunstkapel on the visual identity and/or identities of the Zuidas. The symposium will be held for insiders and interested parties, for laypersons and professionals, for everyone who is involved or interested in the development of the Zuidas and is open to imaginative ideas.

I would like to extend my thanks to Wouter Davidts, professor of Modern Art History at the VU University and to Annelys de Vet, head of the Design department at the Sandberg Institute, without whose support this project would not have been possible, to Alan Smart as the booster of this publication, to Femke Herregraven and Irene Janze, to the 'book team' comprised of Noor van Eekelen, Guido Giglio and Stefan Schäfer, and to all the other master students who participated in this Master Class edition of the Zuidas Free Spaces AIR: Nikki Brörman, Konstantina Christodoulou, Door de Flines, Roel Griffioen, Joana Meroz, Seungyong Moon, Ruben Pater, Ilinca Trif, Yuri Veenman, Stefaan Vervoort and Jesse van Winden.

¹ The Zuidas Free Spaces AIR is a project and think tank of the Virtual Museum Zuidas held in the former Sint Nicolaas Monastery in the Zuidas, where the VMZ has two floors at its disposal for artist in residencies. In collaboration with its partner institutes, the Zuidas Free Spaces AIR invites artists and art scholars to stay here together in order to do independent research on the Zuidas, on the spot. The



photo by Ron Zijlstra

results of this project - well-founded visions, inventive and alternative perspectives and artworks or proposals created for a specific place and context - are presented in the KunstKapel and in a publication. The Zuidas Free Spaces AIR makes an explicit relation between art, urban design and the public domain. With contributions from the world of art, the Zuidas Free Spaces AIR offers an opening for debate and for further development of the relations with involved neighbourhood residents, users and policymakers in order to collectively create a Zuidas with different neighbourhoods and atmospheres, a history and identity of its own, a human dimension and space for everybody.

A VIEW OF THE GENERAL OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS WITHIN WHICH THE VU FINDS ITSELF *A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM*

Jesse van Winden

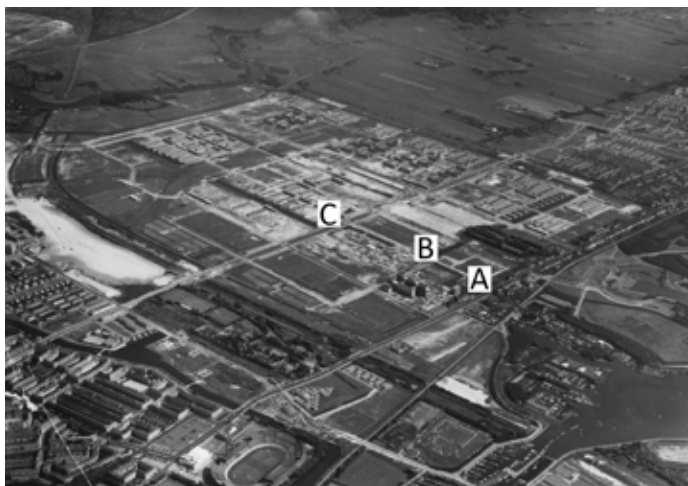
Ambition.....
Autonomy.....
Dreams.....
Education.....
History.....
Maakbaarheid.....
Planning.....
Space.....
Utopia.....
Vision.....

Before the Vrije Universiteit's iconic main building was officially opened by Queen Juliana in 1973, the university used to have an ever-changing number of locations, always about, but sometimes far over twenty, spread all over the city of Amsterdam.¹ From the very beginning, the lack of a stable base and a steady growth of the student population caused the university a constant shortage of space.² When from the Second World War onwards many faculties, the hospital and the central library continuously requested larger housing, the university's board of directors decided to meet a longstanding desire. To acquire a vast location of its own, with sufficient space for all faculties, a library, a hospital and a student campus, which was to be realized in or in the direct vicinity of Amsterdam. Many plots and locations were up for consideration, most of them in the southern part of the city where seemed to be the largest amount of unbuilt space. When the first plot-the later hospital area-on the soil of the present location along De Boelelaan was acquired in 1953, a lot of obstacles had to be passed, including a reluctant city council and financial problems. The university was, until well in the 1960's, a privately funded institution based on Reformed Christian principles, and subsidies for new buildings where needed in addition to the donations of the members of the VU association and the church. The anticipated soils for the other buildings would be acquired later on, which clearly was the main reason for a slow start of the materialization of the ostensibly enormous university campus. What the directors did not know by that time was that even the plans most ambitious to their capacities weren't sufficient for the upcoming tidal wave of students and societal change.

In 1953, the newly employed architects A. Rothuizen and J.H. Groenewegen (who passed away in 1959 and consequently didn't live to see the hospital in operation) were asked to make a plan for the future campus area, even though it would take until 1959 until all anticipated plots were acquired. They were supposed to make a model, but most probably only a spatial development plan was formed (fig), in which areas were calculated for a hospital (A), the Faculty of Medicine (B) and the main building and Faculties of Exact Sciences (C). The photograph being from 1960 or 1961, the urban scheme was changed a number of times until the definitive urban development plan as shown here was conceived 1960 in cooperation with B. Merkelbach, the municipal architect in chief. Since the shortage of space was allegedly most poignant at the former hospital at Valeriusplein 9 in the Oud-Zuid district, the

1 The annual students' guides usually came with a city map where the university's locations where marked.

2 Unless notes otherwise, the information in this article was taken from the minutes of the meetings by the Board of Directors of the Vrije Universiteit, available for inspection at the VU Archief Bureau, Oud archief. The Building Commission and the various committees for distinct projects apparently had meetings of their own, but minutes are usually not included, and weren't found elsewhere.



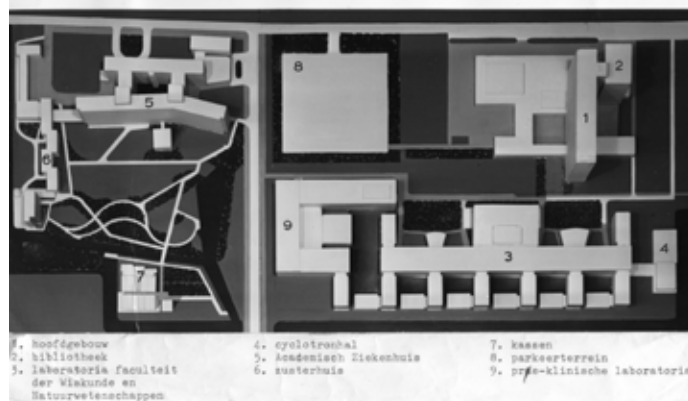
img 1a



img 1b



img 3



img 4

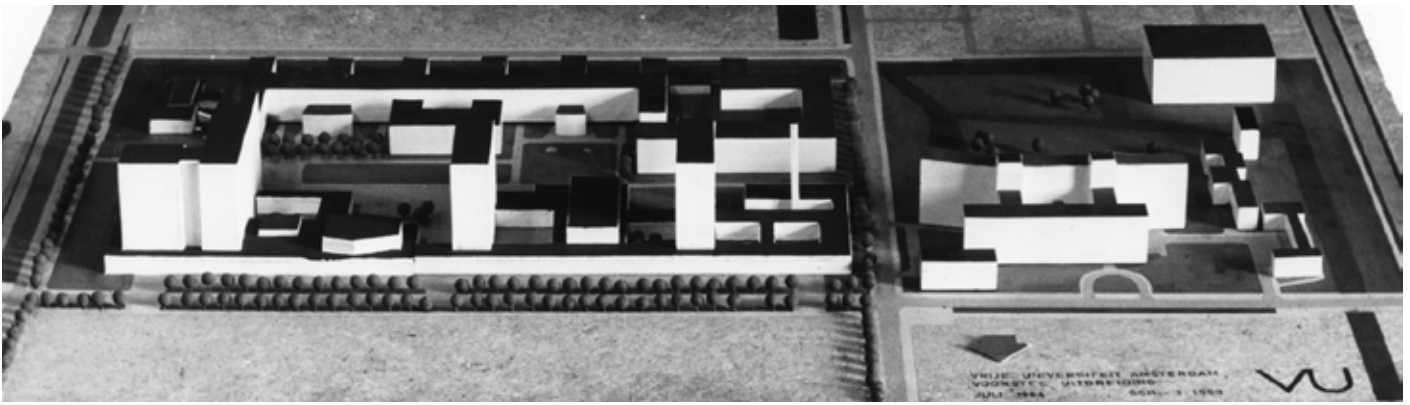
first building to be planned was a new hospital. The university's board of directors and the Building Commission were only commissioning the construction of the hospital until 1957, when the conveyance of the other plots were in the offing, and after the construction of the hospital had started in 1956. This being mainly a formal issue over which many a struggle with both municipal and national governments had to be carried out, the slow planning of the complex could be partly blamed on the little visionary nature of the university's building commission, but also on an obstructive attitude of the authorities. The reasons for the latter remain obscure, but the fact that the VU was the second university in town, next to the already established Universiteit van Amsterdam which was municipal, might have been a decisive factor.

When the construction of the sober, functionalist hospital by Rothuizen and Groenewegen had started [fig], the Directors decided that the next projects to be planned would be the Science and Chemistry faculties and the Faculty of Medicine. A commission was formed in which the architects, H.T. Zwiers and F. Dicke, some

professors and one director were seated, in coexistence with the Building Commission, from 1957 presided by the influential engineer C.A. Doets. The construction of the equally austere Science and Chemistry buildings commenced in 1960. In the design of these buildings a visionary feature was accounted for, namely the anticipation of a possible raising of the buildings with two stories on the principally realized five. This topping up was executed step by step from the 1970's onwards. The same goes for the building of the Faculty of Medicine, by the same architects, which was executed from 1964 until 1966, where a two-story raise found place in 1987.³

The year 1960 also marked the moment when the architect for the main building was selected in the person of Chr. Nielsen. The faculties of humanities, economics, social sciences, the central library, a restaurant and the administrative offices would be installed here.

³ A. Tervoort, M. Völlmar, P. Schneiders, D. Th. Kuiper, *Wetenschap en Samenleving. Groei en ontwikkeling van de VU-familie in beeld*, Dienst Communicatie, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2008, p. 138.



img 5

Nielsen was a relatively unknown architect, but the directors agreed to invite him for a design proposal after strong recommendation of the Rijksgebouwendienst [Government Building Department] and the cognizance of his Reformed conviction, a feature that was very important to the university's principles.⁴ His proposal consisted of two high rise buildings for the faculties and the library respectively, surrounded by a lower rise structure for the restaurant and management administration offices [fig]. Nielsen stressed the importance of an open space in the center of the campus, where he projected nothing less than a botanical garden with a car parking inside.⁵ More subtly, the inner square was also supposed to be functional in making the various architectural styles of the different buildings less contrasting [in actuality, the aesthetical features of the first buildings on the campus would be rather well attuned].

The most extraordinary circumstance of the fundamental change of the Vrije Universiteit evolving during this period was the spectacular explosion of the student population. Just over 2000 in 1955 and almost 11.000 in 1971, the number of students was more than doubled between 1965 and 1971. In the middle of those years, the promising new main building was only just under construction. No wonder the university's directors virtually begged the architects [Chr. Nielsen was assisted by Architectengroep 69 from 1969 onwards] to make sure the first twelve floors could be occupied well before 1973. The architects actually succeeded in this by delivering the floors gradually from 1970 onwards.⁶ In 1963 however, three illustrative reasons *against* an accelerated development process of the main building had been formulated. First, the government's subsidies policy would be altered, and waiting a little longer could provide a larger budget. Second, since the government's

funds were very limited, it was doubted whether it would support an accelerated development process. Third, the university allegedly couldn't manage too many projects at the same time, thus the ongoing projects were to be finished first. Every time an updated design was finished, it had to meet the approval of the Department of Education, which could easily take six months. Since the Department was also needed for financing aid, the disapproval of plans because of excessive costs was a recurrent problem.

An apparently unaccredited proposal from 1964 shows a forward-thinking but ambitious plan: two more high rise buildings surrounded by a vast low rise body, providing the De Boelelaan boulevard with a long uninterrupted two floor façade, which would arise on a previously open area between an already projected power supply station and the main building [fig].⁷ This would provide a sheer infinite amount of space, solving immediate lodging problems for upcoming studies like psychology and social sciences, with which little account was taken in the early phase of the design process. Although a lot of open space formerly projected to be used for car parking would be lost [which in any case would prove to be another obstinate space problem], the actual reason for the rejection of this plan was coincident with its level of ambition: the university's central administration already had a lot of trouble obtaining all necessary governmental permissions and financing of the existing plans to take the risk of this-to the capacities of the university-megalomaniac but otherwise probably very adequate plan. Even without this proposal executed, the main building would on occupation be the largest building in Amsterdam in terms of floor space: 90.000 square meters. In the model, the chimney visible just right of the center was designed for a waste processing *cum* power supply facility, which was executed

⁴ Another architect invited was Zanstra, whose proposed design [also 1961] was received with less appraisal.

⁵ Chr. Nielsen, 'Toelichting bij het voorstel voor hoofdvorm en situering van het hoofdgebouw' [Elaboration on the proposal for main features and situation of the main building], March 1961. The text is available for inspection at VU Archiefbureau, Oud archief.

⁶ *Wetenschap en Samenleving*, work cited (note 3), p. 141.

⁷ While the model has been lost and no documentation seems to be available, the remaining picture of the model doesn't say the name of the conceivers but only the date, July 1964. According to the directors' minutes of October 1964 however, Doets requested Nielsen to make a new urban scheme taking into account a building for a polyclinic department. This scheme seems to have been lost. In this light though, it is possible that Nielsen also conceived the July 1964 model.



img 6

gradually from 1967 until 1977.⁸

After the hospital was occupied in 1963 and the Faculties of Exact Sciences came in use in 1964, a start was made with the building of the student housing complex, Uilenstede, in 1964. Although the original idea was to have student lodging on the campus, not enough soil could be obtained, so a relatively nearby terrain was opted for in Amstelveen, outside the present-day Zuidas. The first lodgings were completed in 1966 by architect L. De Jonge. At the same time the building for the Faculty of Medicine was executed, and was occupied in 1967. As suggested by the 1963 statement on the disadvantages of constructing the main building as early as possible, the moment when the other large scale building projects were in their final phase, marked the moment when the construction of the main building was finally initiated. In the meanwhile though, another building, this one temporary, was erected. Because of its provisory nature it was called Provisorium, and would allegedly provide space for the university's central administration until the main building was finished. In fact, due to the ongoing shortage of space, it was only demolished in 2002, to make place for the building of the Opleidingsinstituut voor Zorg en Welzijn [healthcare education]. In its protracted lifespan, the Provisorium provided lodging for a large number of faculties and services. The building however was only two stories high and contained two large inner courts [fig], and consequently was taking a lot of room while not providing so much floor space.

In addition, it obstructed a rather large area which could be used much more efficiently. The Building Commission was aware of this problem already in 1965, yet the shortage of space was apparently so poignant that they did decide to construct it anyway, at the location where a needed building was projected in several plans. In a 1966 plan it was not included, however [figs]. The scale of the forthcoming explosion of the student population had clearly not yet settled in the minds of the university's directors. While the development plans initially anticipated to be completed in 1981, in 1968 the shortage of space urged the board of directors and the building committee to aim for a completion of the main building and the hospital's Polyclinical Department within five to six years.

Also in 1968 a report on the growth and spatial development of the university was written by Doets.⁹ It contains analyses of the development progress, prognoses of student numbers per faculty and indications of anticipated floor space per building, which caused an alarming situation. Decided then, was that not all Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences faculties could be lodged in the main building, and that there would be a condensing policy. This consisted of stimulating (or forcing) teachers and students to cooperate and increasingly share rooms and space. A national guideline was known to be 6 square meters per

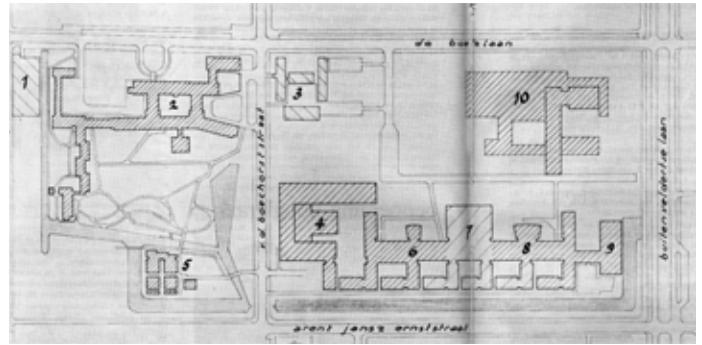
⁸ *Wetenschap en Samenleving*, work cited [note 3], p. 139.

⁹ 'Inzake de groei en de ruimtelijke ontwikkeling van de Vrije Universiteit'. The report would have a number of follow-ups which are available for inspection at the VU Archief Bureau, Oud archief.

student. The space in the main building was often around or under this guideline, about four to six square meters. Compared to the contemporary situation at Leiden university this situation was not too alarming, though: Leiden humanities students had to study on 2,5 square meters on average. The scientific students needed much more space: 25 square meters per student.

Another occurrence of fundamental change during this period, were the radical changes in society that were reflected in the VU's composition and outlook.¹⁰ While until 1965 a vast majority of the students was of Reformed conviction, as fitted the traditionalist Reformed principles on which the university was founded in 1880, in 1970 the amount of Christian and atheist students was more or less equal, and in 1975 there were twice as many atheist students. Also striking is the fact that the amount of Reformed students not only decreased relatively, but in absolute numbers as well. The Christian character of this once very uniform university was disappearing rapidly, and to the administration probably completely unexpected. The ongoing demographic processes were of course a reflection of global societal changes, as where the radicalizing political stances a lot of students started to take. From 1969 onwards, the university's directors' and administration's meetings were frequently disturbed and protested against, and several buildings were occupied a great number of times to enforce changes in the university's political structure. Whereas the traditional grassroots support of the university was probably quite concerned about the future of 'their' university, in 1972 political reforms were eventually implemented. Nevertheless, it took until well into the 1970's before members of communist parties, for example, were accepted in the university's management.

Clearly the new university complex with the large main building was a great solution to problems sheer unsolvable if the university would still have operated from myriad old buildings in the city center. The execution of these plans came almost too late, though. When compared to the equally problematic housing situation at the other Amsterdam university, Gemeente Universiteit [the present-day Universiteit van Amsterdam], it could be said that aiming to relocate all faculties and services to the new location and giving up the old ones may have been a mistake. In the 1950's and 1960's, renowned functionalist architect N.J.J. Gawronski designed the new UvA complex of Roeterseiland, with buildings comparable in total size to the VU's main building.¹¹ Different faculties would be lodged here, but



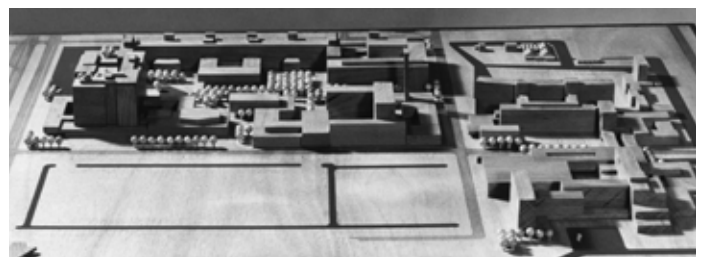
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img 7b



img 8



img 9

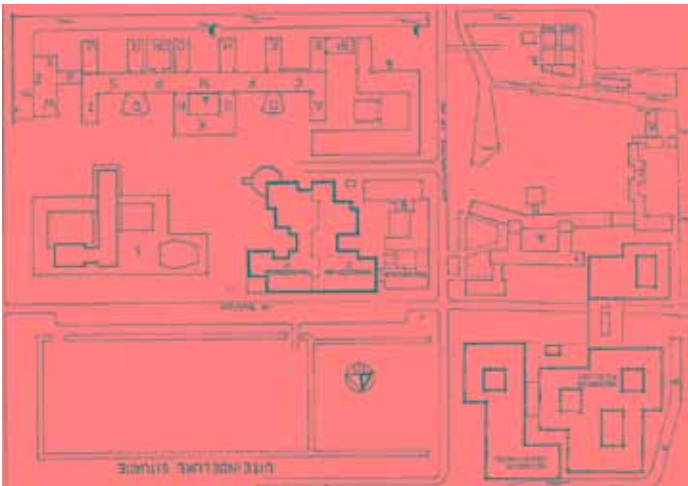
- ¹⁰ Information in this paragraph is based on *Wetenschap en Samenleving*, work cited [note 3], pp. 74-75.
- ¹¹ Gemeente Amsterdam/Afdeling Ruimtelijk Beleid, 'Welstandscriteria Roeterseiland', digitally published report, February 2008. <http://www.bestuur.centrum.amsterdam.nl/Bestuursarchief/2008/Commissie%20BW/Stukken/BWST20080403RoeterseilandCriteria.pdf>. Accessed: 12 January 2011.



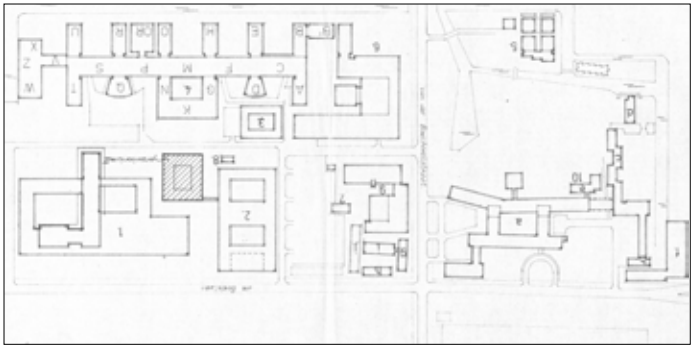
img 10a



img 10b



img 11a



img 11b



img 12a



img 12b

without the rest of the university moving out of the old city centre. The created space was thus really additional space, not replacing space as the VU's new area was meant to be. In reality many departments couldn't be moved to the campus until the late 1970's. The departments of Pedagogy and Social Sciences were the last parts of the university that were moved from old buildings in the city to the campus in 1988 and 1995, respectively.¹²

The Provisorium would not be the only temporary VU building. Apart of myriad barracks spread all over the area, from the temporary Polyclinical barracks next to the hospital, to the barracks for construction purposes all the way along De Boelelaan, in 1968 the Psychologicum was built. This was smaller than the Provisorium, but it used much of the space left in between the former and the buildings of the Faculties of Science. It remains unclear whether Doets and the directors thought the Psychologicum could be demolished as soon as the main building was finished, but in fact it wasn't removed until 1990. The same goes for a third temporary building, the Dentorium, where appropriately the Faculty of Dentistry was lodged from 1974. Also this building was located in the ever more crowded core square of the campus, in between the Provisorium and the main building. The initially park-like open square as conceived by Nielsen was turned into a space packed with buildings, sheds and cars, and surrounded by relatively high buildings. The spatial consequences must have been disastrous for the psychological experience of the campus [fig].

From 1970 onwards, when it became all the more obvious that many old buildings would remain much needed, new plans were forged about every two years [figs]. Visible here is not only the recurrent fourth building for the Faculties of Social Sciences and Psychology, just as the still not realized Polyclinical Department, but also, adjacent to that, an own building for the Faculty of Dentistry. These plots, however, had been in use as sports fields for a long time and were apparently very hard to obtain. While a building for a Polyclinical Department, designed by Architectengroep 69, was completed in 1984 on the area right opposite of the hospital, it was already spoken of in 1964, and projected consequently where it would appear only after twenty years. There had been sports fields, as there are still now in front of the main building, which was one of the reasons for constant delay, the other problem being the difficult relationship with the city council. By the end of the 1970's, a permanent building constructed on the corner of De Boelelaan and Van Boechorststraat, called Transitorium 1.¹³ The follow-ups Transitorium 2 and 3, a reincarnation of the old plan for a building for the Faculty of Social Sciences, were never executed. Not only a lack of financial means and struggles with various governments, but

also the obstructing physical structure of the indispensable Provisorium were reason for the fact that the necessary buildings were never constructed, even though various designs and plans were produced until well in the 1970's. This way, the university was pretty much stuck without elbowroom, with a constant pressure of shortage of educational space and lack of financial means.¹⁴ Or, as a report from the construction management put it in 1974: "This is not a view of a strategic construction policy, more it is a view of the general operational problems within which the VU finds itself."¹⁵

When all buildings of the Scientific Faculties were raised two stories over the course of the decade, some freedom of movement was created. In 1984, the Faculty of Dentistry was merged with the same faculty of the University of Amsterdam into Academisch Centrum Tandheelkunde Amsterdam (ACTA), with a shared building at a different location. This meant that the frustrating attempts at obtaining the space opposite of the hospital was reduced: the building for the Polyclinical Department was after twenty years of anticipation successfully delivered in 1984 [fig], and the Faculty of Dentistry didn't need a building anymore. When the building of the Faculty of Medicine was also raised two stories in 1987, in terms of space a rather workable situation was finally realized.

The two smaller temporary buildings, the Psychologicum and the Dentorium, were taken down in 1990. The expansion of the student population, although still considerable, was now much less radical and certainly less unexpected than in the 1960's. For once, the spatial circumstances seemed to be stable and convenient, because only in 2000 new

14 In 1973 a building stop for new projects was enforced by the University's administration, allegedly because of a lack of funds. See: 'Inzake de groei en de ruimtelijke ontwikkeling van de Vrije Universiteit, 1974'. Available for inspection at the VU Archiefbureau, Oud archief.

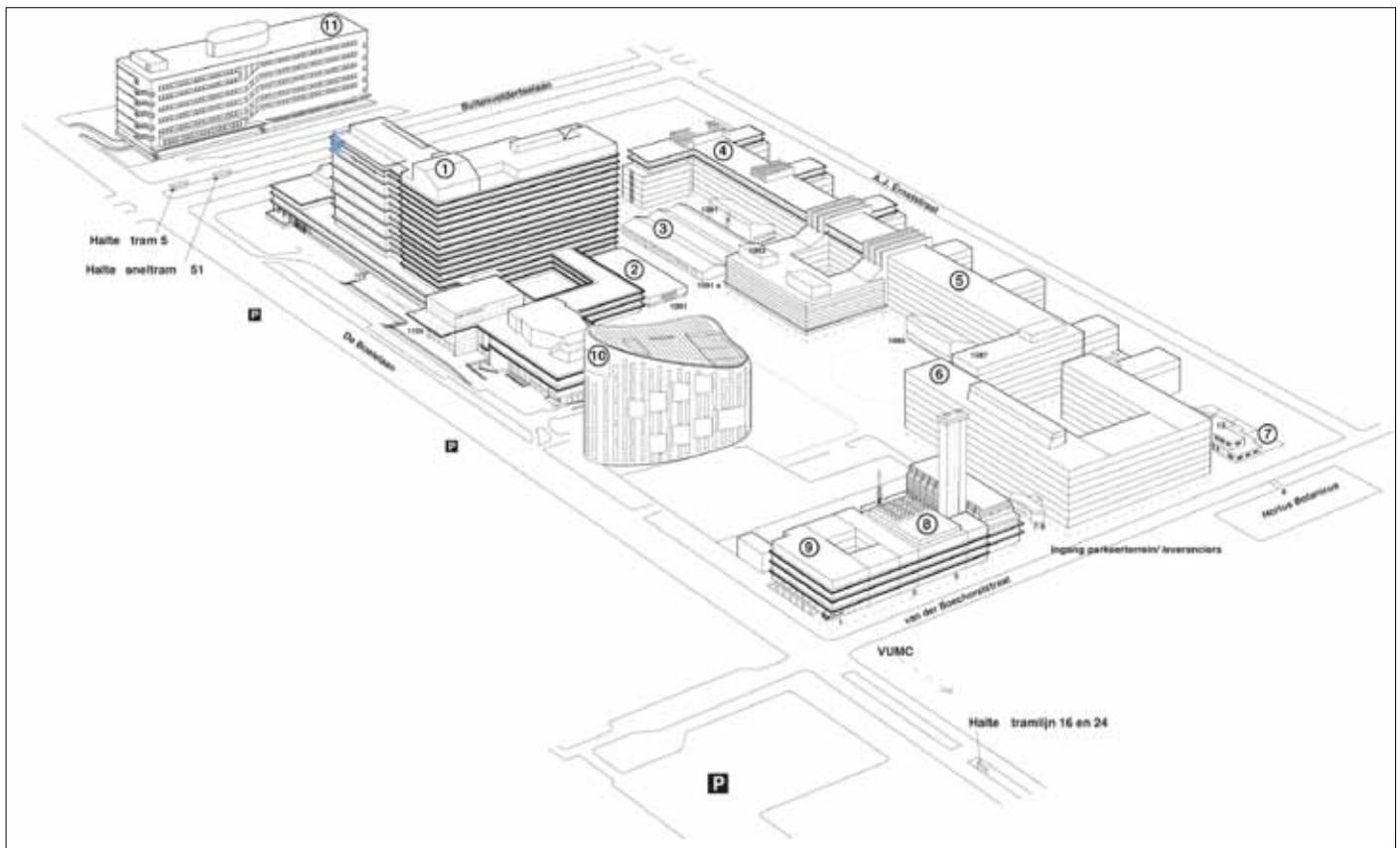
15 'Inzake de groei en de ruimtelijke ontwikkeling van de Vrije Universiteit, 1974'



img 13

12 *Wetenschap en Samenleving*, work cited [note 3], p. 141. The Faculty of Social Sciences was housed in 'Metropolitan', a rented building next to the campus area.

13 *Wetenschap en Samenleving*, work cited [note 3], pp. 142-143.



img 14

construction activity was put forward. This time, one of the main buildings inner courts, the 'Filosofenhof' (Philosopher's Court) was the location of a temporary building, which is actually still there, depriving the former piazzetta of its charm and semipublic function. Also in 2000, the entrance of the main building was given an update, giving it a more contemporary look, but compromising some of the building's original plain straightforwardness. In 2003, after the Provisorium was demolished, an Amstelveen building called Embargohal was opted for as examination location.¹⁶ It didn't take long before protest arose over the distance and the temperature of the hall. Then, another two temporary buildings were constructed in between the main building and the Science Faculties' buildings, TenT and BelleVUe, for exams and offices respectively. In 2004 the construction of the remarkably styled Opleidingsinstituut voor Zorg en Welzijn had started on the site of the Provisorium, the same place where the building for Social Sciences had been planned during the 1960's and 1970's. It was occupied in 2006, but the two contemporary buildings were still needed and are there until now. Apparently, to have different permanent buildings for different departments is more important than having a spatially coherent and open campus, which could at this point rather easily have been realized by finally constructing an oversize building.

The space now taken by the Opleidingsinstituut voor Zorg en Welzijn is juxtaposed by a lawn exactly its size. A final ironic twist to this story is the fact that the Benthem Crouwel-designed new building for ACTA (the department of Dentistry, since 1984 a VU/ UvA merger), was opened in 2010 on the exact spot where the VU tried to develop a building for its own Dentistry department obstinately from 1970 until 1984. From early 2011, a new relatively low-four story-building, Initium, will lodge the overpopulated Faculty of Law. It was built at the former location of a small park at the back of the main building, next to the easternmost part of the building for the Scientific Faculties.

It seems awkward that even nowadays, with a well-informed, powerful and experienced university administration, the lessons to be learnt from the elongated building crisis in the foundational years of the VU campus aren't immediately recognizable. Many buildings stand close to one another, some of them not very efficient in creating floor space because of their relatively low rise; temporary buildings partly obstructing the central square; the general impression that many decisions haven't been thought over with a thorough understanding of future interests; the continuous lacking of a long-term vision, or any kind of solid, well-anticipated master plan. One could argue that the Vrije Universiteit is still an institution that honors its traditions, be they squalid and amateurish, or spontaneous and relievingly disordered.

16 *Wetenschap en Samenleving*, work cited (note 3), p. 143.

CARIBBEAN MIRAGE LIVING IN A BLINDSPOT OF FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE

Femke Herregraven

Capital.....
Identity.....
International.....
International.....
Livability.....
Local.....
Myth.....
Network.....
Planning.....
Virtual.....



The identity of Zuidas will not depend on its hardware but on its software. It will not be shaped by towers, buildings, squares or restaurants, but by users, networks and interaction. Zuidas aims to become an international economic top location where residence and commerce come together.¹ Imagine this place. To which networks is Zuidas connected? What will its community be like? Who are the neighbors? What is living in Zuidas like?

I propose something close to living in the Caribbean. Walking around in Zuidas today doesn't quite match the idea of being on a tropical island, but don't be deceived by what you see. In the financial world, a Caribbean island means something else than sun, palm trees and beaches. There, it equals the flow of capital, attractive tax regimes and financial services. A dive into the Caymans often means two things: either you're going for scuba diving, or you're going for offshore business. Golden sands is what the small Caribbean jurisdictions became famous for. Being a key node in the global economy, doing low-profile business and providing financial services is what shapes their identity. Brand experts, designers or pr-managers did not construct it, nor will they shape Zuidas' identity. Sketching out the software of Zuidas gives a glimpse into the future.

THE DUTCH SANDWICH

Zuidas is well embedded in the network of offshore finance. As the economic center of the Netherlands it has an important role in global financial transactions and functions as valuable node in tax planning.² Like the Caribbean islands, the Netherlands has a very attractive investment climate for multinationals. It benefits from a combination of the dutch trading tradition and modern financial and legal services. Together with a professional workforce, a stable infrastructure, an open culture and political stability, this results into a strong position on the global stage.

¹ Zuidas Vision 2009, Projectbureau Zuidas

² Tax planning is used for the reduction of tax liabilities and the freeing-up of cash flows for other purposes

The Zuidas business district is the embodiment of this international profile. However, the strongest motivation for multinationals to locate themselves in Zuidas is probably the Dutch corporate tax law. The Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency writes that “the Dutch tax system has a number of features that may be very beneficial in international tax planning. [...] The Dutch ruling practice, which provides clarity and certainty on tax assessments in advance, can be obtained on future transactions, investments or corporate structures.”³ Some taxes on interest and royalties can be reduced to 0 percent they say. In addition, Curado Trust Group, based in Curacao, emphasizes the extensive Dutch tax treaty network with more than sixty countries and especially the Kingdom Tax Arrangement with the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.⁴ This arrangement gives a 100 percent participation exemption on profits from resident and Dutch-resident companies. Today many international companies have chosen Zuidas as home base for their holding, royalty and finance companies.⁵ This makes them part of the Zuidas software and identity. Google, Akzo Nobel and Tata are already widely used to promote Zuidas, and to boost the international character further: fifty new international companies should be relocated to Zuidas by 2015.

takes part in international tax planning by the following example. Earnings that Google makes in Europe, the Middle East or Africa are collected by Google Ireland. Since Ireland taxes corporate profits at 12,5 percent, Google chooses to escape that tax and transfer the earnings to Bermuda. As it is difficult to send money from Ireland directly to Bermuda without incurring a large tax hit, the payment makes a detour through the Netherlands where Google takes advantage of the generous Dutch tax laws. The Dutch subsidiary, Google Netherlands Holding B.V., eventually passes on about 99.8 percent the collected earnings to Bermuda.⁷ Through this legal construction Google was able to save \$3.1 billion in taxes in the last three years. Since the Netherlands functions as a stop between two other countries this strategy is called the Dutch Sandwich. “The sandwich leaves no tax behind to taste”, said Richard Murphy of the Tax Justice Network.⁸



“Why invest in Holland?”

RWE, SABIC, SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS, SARA LEE, SCANIA, SEKISUI, SIE, SYSTEMS, COCA-COLA ENTERPRISES, COMPOUND FEED ENGINEERING, CO, GYONG MOTOR COMPANY, STARBUCKS, STRATAGENE, SUN MICROSYSTEMS, ORIGIN, BASF, BLAST RADIUS, BOSCH, BOSTON SCIENTIFIC, BOEING, BP, SERVICES, TEIJIN, TIMBERLAND, TOMMY HILFGER, TROPICAL BEVERAGE I, ER, ABENGOA, ADIDAS, AKER KVAERNER, AMGEN, ABBOTT, ASTELLAS, LU.

Promotional video investment in the Netherlands by The Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency.

Driven by tax benefits, these future relocations will create a deeper connection between Zuidas and offshore financial centers. The Norwegian government reported in 2010 that: “the Netherlands is probably the largest and most popular pass-through state in the world today. [...] Since the Netherlands does not permit the same level of secrecy as tax havens, the Dutch holding company system is often combined with the use of companies in tax havens. The Netherlands is, therefore, a popular registration location because it confers legitimacy and also has an extensive network of tax treaties.”⁶ It becomes visible how Zuidas

Amsterdam trust offices promoting the tax advantages in the Netherlands for foreign companies.

The question is how many multinationals would be located in Zuidas if it weren't for the favorable Dutch tax regime. Their main motivation is probably reducing taxes as Google showed. The Zuidas software – and subsequently its identity – is dependent on these international tax planning strategies. As they stimulate connections to tax havens, Zuidas is stitched deeper into the network of offshore finance. Although blue seas and golden sands are still difficult to find in Zuidas, other traces of this interconnection can be found.

THE OFFSHORE INTERFACE

Zuidas aims to become a high-end location, with high-end facilities and high-end users. Zuidas will be a symbol of high-end lifestyle. Within this lifestyle, discretion might be even more important than quality or exclusivity.

³ www.nfia.com

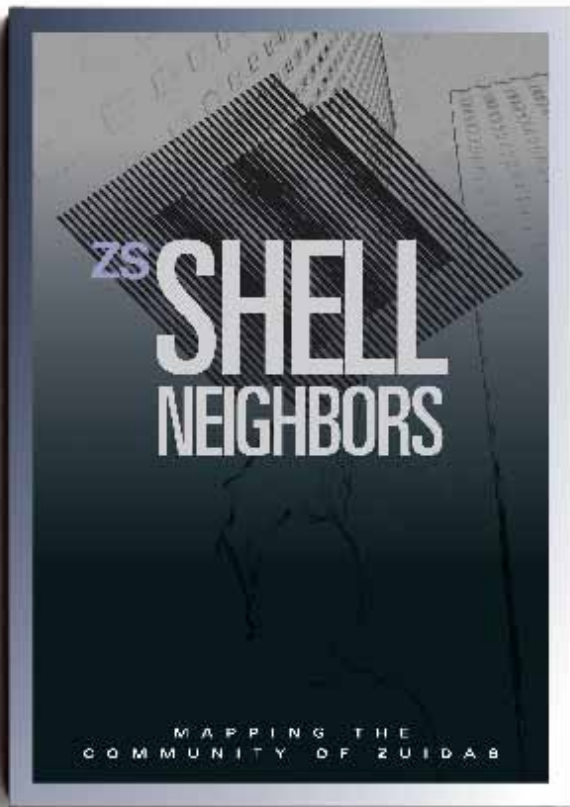
⁴ www.curado.nl

⁵ Out of 400 companies 200 have a foreign parent company according to Projectbureau Zuidas in 2010

⁶ Tax havens and development, report from the Danish Government Commission on Capital Flight from Poor Countries, 2010

⁷ Google 2.4% Rate Shows How \$60 Billion Lost to Tax Loopholes, Jesse Drucker, October 21st 2010

⁸ Google 2.4% Rate Shows How \$60 Billion Lost to Tax Loopholes, Jesse Drucker, October 21st 2010



Small booklet mapping out the neighbors in Zuidas.

While walking through the business district in Zuidas you feel a veil of discretion everywhere. In the office buildings, the living towers, the restaurants and in public space; anonymity is all around. Even representational signs like logo's, nameplates and mailboxes are difficult to find, only a few iconic landmarks represent a company or brand. Imagine living in Zuidas: who would your [corporate] neighbors be? Well, if you would be living in the Strawinskylaan for example, your neighbors would be Agip Oil Ecuador B.V., Eni Iran B.V., Diamond Gas Iraq B.V., CAML Mongolia B.V. and Soldeasa Kazakhstan B.V., to name a few. The database of the Chamber of Commerce shows which other neighbors are located in your street, yet also gives a clue of how Zuidas is embedded in offshore finance. Out of the hundreds of holdings located in Zuidas many will have an office, but a large group will be a shell corporation. In december 2010 De Nederlandse Bank (DNB) reports that in the Netherlands shell corporations are used on a massive scale for international transactions between subsidiaries of foreign multinationals. "In 2009 the Netherlands had around 11.500 Special Financial Institutions (SFI's), subsidiaries of multinationals, that have no or hardly any physical presence with offices or employees and are almost exclusively used for channeling capital. Their hardly visual presence of SFI's in the Netherlands contrast strongly with their large static influence on gross figures



Email addresses of the Citco trust office make their network and scope of business visible

concerning the Dutch payment assessment and external position of our country.”⁹ Important in the report is the reference to the visual presence of shell corporations. In Zuidas their presence is discreet, to say the least. Yet their absence creates side effects, and these are not hard to find.

Zuidas is home to several trust offices and will likely be home to more in the future. A trust office provides shell companies with ‘substance’ such as administrative bookkeeping, a post address, local staff and a CEO. The trust’s office and staff becomes effectively the client’s office and staff. It is often claimed that foreign companies create employment in the Netherlands, but Van Bearle Trust informs their client that due to the tight Dutch labor market, hiring personnel is difficult. They mention ‘things to keep in mind’ when setting up an operation in the Netherlands: “if a Dutch or foreign company wants to start employing personnel here in the Netherlands, it should be considered that employment law here is very strict, so that it is difficult to fire personnel, which make this an expensive and lengthy matter. [...] If a foreign employee starts working for a group company here and becomes a resident here as well, it has to be kept in mind that the Dutch tax and social security rates are very high, up to 52%.”¹⁰ In order to promote their own services, these trust offices discourage foreign investors to start set up a physical company. Also in Zuidas hundreds of foreign companies are ‘lying on shelves’. While managing these companies, trust offices keep a low-profile, only things like email addresses give an impression of their scope of business. Yet their role is crucial in connecting onshore centers to offshore centers: in 2009 alone, the amount 90 billion euro of income was channeled through the Netherlands. The largest amount came in from Luxembourg, the most important destination were offshore countries.¹¹ The discreet services of reducing corporate taxes is what Dutch tax planners are known for. “They are going for the high-end stuff and don’t want to be seen as shady like some Caribbean haven”¹², stated an investment banker from New York. In Zuidas, allure means to be charming and staying under the radar at the same time. Having a high-end lifestyle while staying low-profile is probably the best way to describe it. The Dutch want to be noticed, but not too much, as the the following affair describes. On the 5th of March 2009 Obama announced in a press conference new plans to eliminate the advantages that multinational receive by channeling capital through tax havens. The additional report qualified the Netherlands as a tax haven along with Bermuda and Ireland. Wouter Bos and Jan Kees De Jager tried to restore the damaged profile of the Netherlands in a press conference: “We were totally surprised by this announcement. We

didn’t know anything about it and we are not happy with it. We have a fully transparent policy and we hope that in the future we won’t be mentioned again on these kind of lists in between Ireland and Bermuda.”¹³ The following day the Netherlands was removed from the report after lobbying of the Dutch Embassy.



The Uglan House on the Cayman Islands is claimed to house 18.000 shell corporations. On its website they have a myth and facts section, which tries to demystify the reputation of tax shelter.

CARIBBEAN COLLAPSE

This was not the first time the Netherlands was accused of being a tax haven. The Dutch government has always declined these allegations. If the Netherlands is a tax haven is a delicate matter: according to the official standards it’s not. Jaap Zwemmer, a professor in tax law, confirmed that the issue is politically sensitive. “There is a fear in The Hague of being labeled a tax haven internationally. So everything should be as low-profile as possible.”¹⁴ Especially with the economic crisis, offshore financial centers have been under heavy attack. With governments losing hundreds of billions dollars every year in unpaid tax, the G20 announced to crack down on tax havens. Famous for their bank secrecy, tax evasion and capital flight, it’s uncertain how much longer these ‘islands’ can survive. Up till now measures didn’t have any effect,¹⁵ but under pressure for more transparency Caribbean tax havens could fall into decline. These shifts in the offshore financial world could have major impact on Zuidas. Before going further into this, it is important to show why small jurisdictions like Bermuda, the Cayman Island and the British Virgin Islands became tax havens in the first place.

¹³ www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILU_NdawfsQ

¹⁴ Nederland een belastingparadijs voor multinationals, Artjan Grotenhuis, NRC Handelsblad, oktober 19th 2009

¹⁵ Like for example the Tax Information Exchange Agreement. This agreement only forces secrecy jurisdictions to provide account information to another country when there is already proof of tax evasion.

⁹ DNB Statistic Bulletin december 2010

¹⁰ www.vanbearle.nl

¹¹ DNB Statistic Bulletin december 2010

¹² The Netherlands, the New Tax Shelter Hot Spot, Lynnley Browning, The New York Times, February 4th 2007



The network of submarine cables constructed by Cable and Wireless. Around 1900.



Collected stamps from Caribbean islands that shows the relation between their modern communications and their colonial history.

Most of the Caribbean offshore financial centers were part of the former British Empire, also known as the City of London. Bill Maurer, cultural anthropologist, writes that: "late-nineteenth-century colonial officials in the Caribbean, together with promoters of cable-connections, crafted a politics and technology of Empire as a universal vision and god's-eye - or ear - perspective on the peoples of the world."¹⁶ Telecommunications corporate giant Cable and Wireless provided the British Empire with a system of global communication and command. By constructing a complex network of submarine cables between the different colonies of the Crown, the company laid the basis for the offshore finance of today. "The places that became key nodes in the cable network,

¹⁶ Islands in the Net: Rewiring Technological and Financial Circuits in the "Offshore" Caribbean, Bill Maurer, Society of comparative Study of Society and History, 2001

peculiarly stitched into the Caribbean basin by their connections to the "outside" [...], would later become key site for the transfer and translation on information, especially financial information."¹⁷

The rise of offshore financial centers coincided with the competitive deregulation of markets from the 1970s and the 1990s. With liberalizing changes in the world's economies, capital became more flexible and moved to the places with the lowest resistance. By making flows of international finance more efficient, these offshore financial centers made the world's economies more interconnected.¹⁸ This is represented in the domino effect of economic meltdown and crisis in the last years. Offshore financial centers are blamed for the financial meltdown; hidden capital, debts and complex conduits circuits are impossible to detect with the current bank secrecy. What will happen to these Caribbean economies when the pressure for transparency increases?

Like the Caribbean software, also Zuidas' software is reliant on offshore finance as shown before. Therefore, shifts in global capital flows will also have consequences for the Zuidas identity. With some imagination two Zuidas scenario's can be sketched out. In the first one, the mission of the G20 to fight tax havens has been very successful. More transparency caused Caribbean offshore financial centers to collapse. As these small jurisdiction were mostly build on financial and legal services; bankruptcy, unemployment and empty real estate followed. Zuidas, as a link between the onshore and offshore financial world, loost its international position. The district is now filled with tourist attractions, self help initiatives, cultural mansions and functions as a filming location for soaps and movies. This scenario, the Stuffed animal, represents Zuidas' identity in a world without tax evasion where the responsibilities, that come with making money, are taken. I believe however, it be will be the opposite.

ZS RI6

The G20 has not succeeded in stopping bank secrecy, but their mission has caused a lot of damage to the reputation of Caribbean tax havens. Banks, multinationals and URI's - ultra rich individuals - no longer wanted to be directly linked to shady tropical islands, and searched for places that could make this link for them. It turned out that Europe had some of these valuable places. Especially the Benelux countries had managed to maintain their favorable tax ruling under the global pressure for transparency. These western democracies caught the attention of offshore financiers:

¹⁷ Islands in the Net: Rewiring Technological and Financial Circuits in the "Offshore" Caribbean, Bill Maurer, Society of comparative Study of Society and History, 2001

¹⁸ Tax havens at the core of the Greek crisis, Tax Justice Network, november 26th 2010

they facilitated new legitimate reroutes for capital without doing harm to ones reputation. The Benelux soon embraced this new profile, as small countries they had always been eager to play an important role in the world's economy. The Benelux became the new Caribbean with Zuidas as its financial capital.

In this scenario, Zuidas has become known as ZS Rig. The Benelux tax planning boom turned Zuidas into an urban island isolated from Amsterdam. Some have said it is an extension of Schiphol's tax free zone, but ZS Rig is much more than that. It is now the most popular spot in Europe for rerouting capital and this changed the old Amsterdam neighborhood a lot. Old office buildings gradually turned into tax planning farms in order to keep up with the large demand for tax constructions. A financial embassy was established to house corporate ambassadors who keep their foreign companies informed on new tax planning strategies. ZS Rig even enjoys a special tax ruling which makes it a local tax haven, similar to Dutch trailer parks. Hundreds of trust offices from Amsterdam, the Hague and Rotterdam relocated to ZS Rig to benefit from this special tax zone. This resulted into a proliferation of financial and legal services and competition exploded. Soon after, the decision came to establish four cooperatives, so that each worker would have its fair share. Now each cooperative is housed in one of the tax planning farms, which means that thousands of financial architects and trust engineers work and live together under the same roof.

In this scenario, each human interaction is based on the rerouting of capital. Offshore locations, special tax zones, financial architects and tax planning cooperatives make up the software of Zuidas. People, houses, signs and vocabularies are influenced by the global flows of capital that pass ZS Rig for a brief invisible moment. Visual identity cooperatives are the only proof of the absent community of ZS Rig. Its identity is maybe nothing more than a mirage.



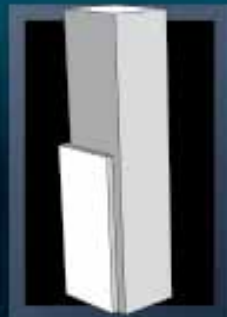
ZS RIG

T A X P L A N N E R S
Z R R I G
T R U S T E N G I N E E R S
N E T H E R L A N D S

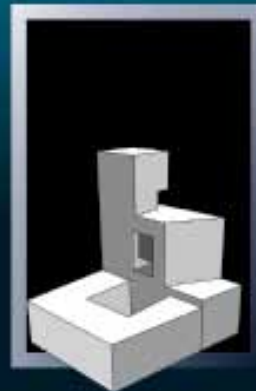
TAX PLANNING FARMS ON ZS RIG



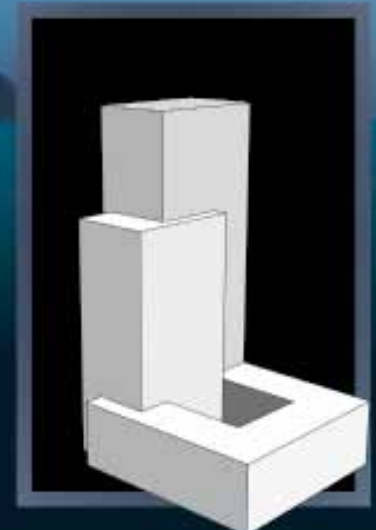
TUBING
FARM



SNORKEL
FARM

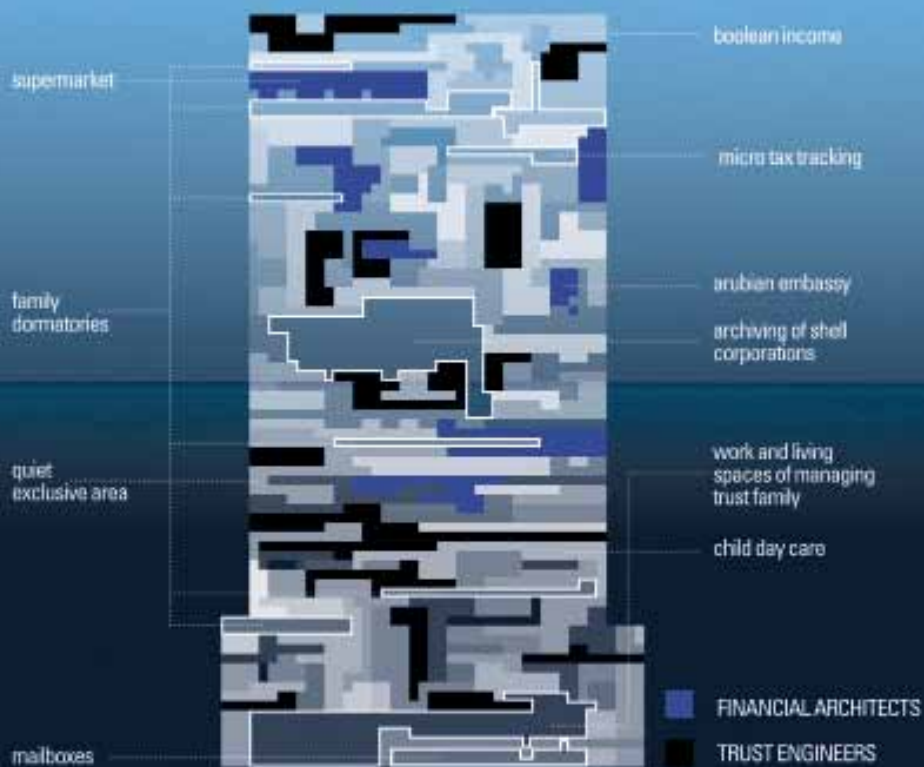


SHUFFLING
FARM



SHELL
FARM

THE TUBING TAX PLANNING FARM



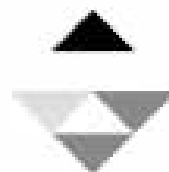
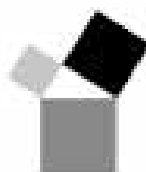
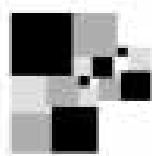
2018-2019 SHELLS 100
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SHELLS MEMBERS

ANT TRUST

TRUST ENGINEERS

TAX PLANNING COOPERATIVES OF ZS RIG

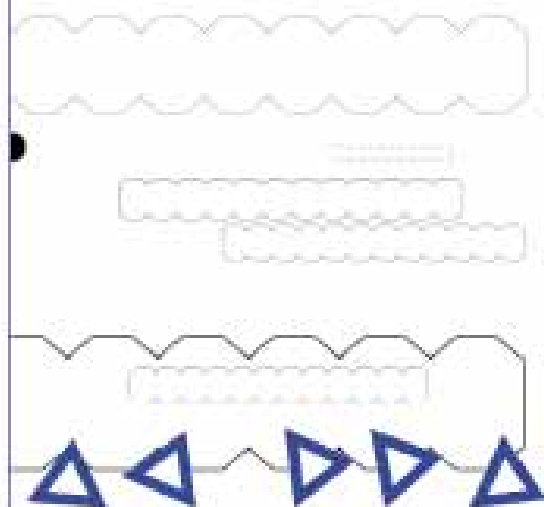


CO—OP TUBING
ZS RIG



Albacross Corporate Services B.V.
Alliance Management B.V.
Allied Corporate Management B.V.
Allied Corporate Services B.V.
Alter Domus Nederland B.V.
Amicorp Netherlands B.V.
Amstelcamp B.V.
Westpole B.V.
Amsterdamisch Trustee's Kantoor B.V.
ATC Corporate Services (Netherlands) B.V.
Amtrust B.V.
ANT Custody B.V.
ANT Management (Netherlands) B.V.
ANT Managers B.V.
ANT Securitisation Services B.V.
Trustkantoor Gestor B.V.
Bomee B.V.
Forum VAT Rep B.V.
Karmes B.V.
Stichting Newton
Vermeer Financial & Corporate Services B.V.
Apollo Corporate Services B.V.
Arcadius Management BV
Vreerijk Management B.V.
ATC Administratie- en Trustkantoor Confinance B.V.
ATC Corporate Services (Netherlands) B.V.
ATC Administratie- en Trustkantoor Confinance B.V.
ATC Financial Services B.V.
ATC Investments B.V.
ATC Management B.V.
Atrika B.V.
RCS Management B.V.

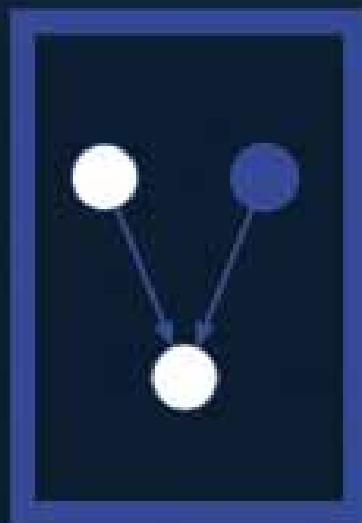
CO—OP SHUFFLING
ZS RIG



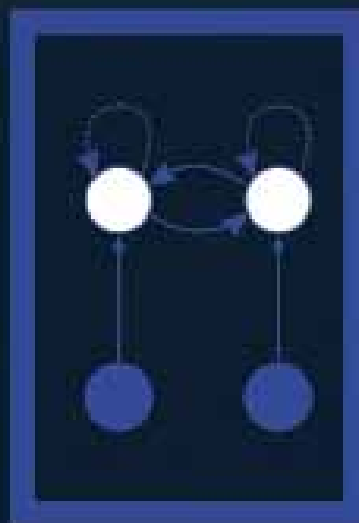
CO—OP SHELL
ZS RIG



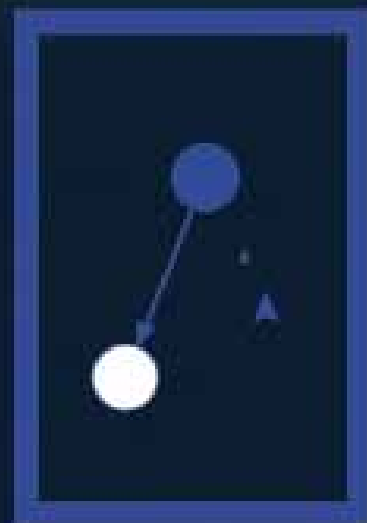
ERSON MINING NOROCCO O.V.
 GUSTAV MAHLERPLEIN 102
 TRATIGORA CANIBERAN MINING O.V.
 GUSTAV MAHLERPLEIN 102
 ERSON MINING NOROCCO O.V.
 GUSTAV MAHLERPLEIN 102
 POWER OIL & GAS INVESTMENTS O.V.
 STRAWINSKYLAAN 3105
 MILITARY OIL & GAS O.V.
 STRAWINSKYLAAN 1725
 GEMINI OIL & GAS HOLDINGS
 STRAWINSKYLAAN 411
 AGIP OIL ECUADOR O.V.
 STRAWINSKYLAAN 1725
 GOLF OIL BENELUX O.V.
 STRAWINSKYLAAN 3105
 ISTITA OIL O.V.
 GUSTAV MAHLERPLEIN 102
 POWER OIL & GAS INVESTMENTS O.V.
 STRAWINSKYLAAN 3105
 ENI OIL HOLDINGS O.V.
 STRAWINSKYLAAN 1727
 POLISH OIL AND GAS COMPANY LIBYA B.V.
 ZUIDPLEIN 36 WTC TR H FL8
 PHOENIX OIL LIBYA O.V.
 CLAUDE DEBUSSYLAAN 24
 KKCG OIL & GAS O.V.
 STRAWINSKYLAAN 927
 MOI PAKISTAN OIL AND GAS CO. O.V.
 HEMONYSTRAAT 11



REROUTE A

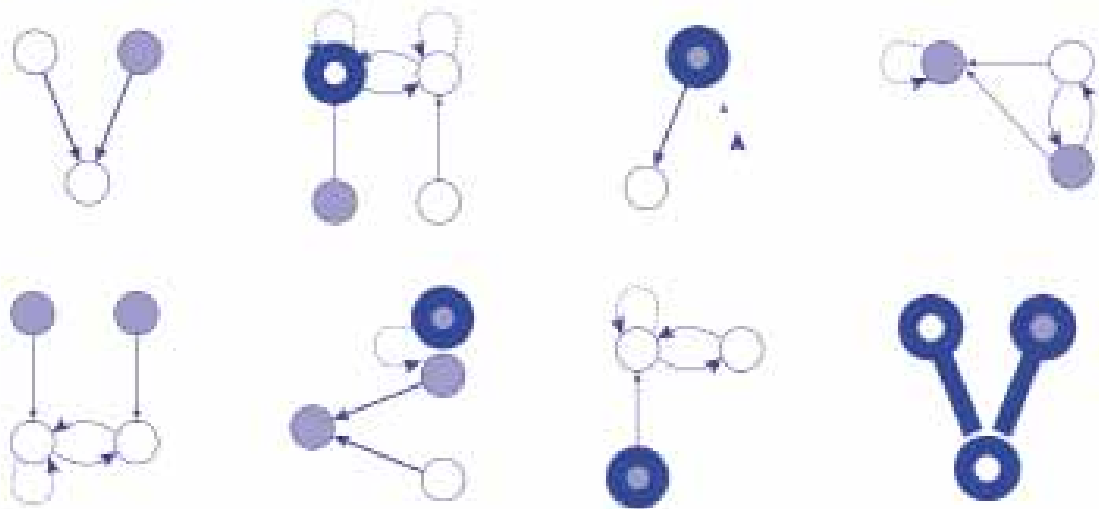


REROUTE B



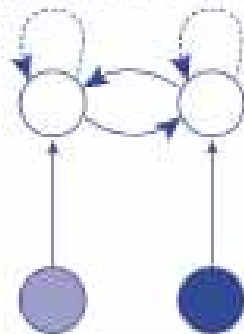
REROUTE C

FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE



COOPERATIVE IDENTITY

UNION MINING HOLDING B.V.
 INDUSTRIAL CARTRIDGE WORKS B.V.
 UNION MINING HOLDING B.V.
 GUSTAV MAHLERPLEIN 103



CLAUDE DE RUYSSELAAN 1267

Google B.V.

TATA B.V.

Nike Holding



UNION MINING HOLDING B.V.
 UNION MINING HOLDING B.V.
 UNION MINING HOLDING B.V.
 INDUSTRIAL CARTRIDGE WORKS B.V.
 ISTERDA B.V.
 ISTERDA B.V.
 GUSTAV MAHLERPLEIN 103

BENCH POLITICS WHERE PUBLIC OBJECTS MEET VISION

Nikki Broormann

Context.....
Environment.....
Livability.....
Maakbaarheid.....
Perception.....
Public.....
Vision.....

It's 12.30pm sharp. Like every weekday, you walk across the square from your office building to get some food in a to-go shop. The sun is out, or at least it is not raining. You sit down on a bench, eat your baguette, smoke your long desired cigarette and take out your phone to check what time it is. By now you are already too late for your next meeting.

Livability is more than statistics on living space, crime, recreational areas or offices, and making sure those are up to par. Like the American philosopher Landon Winner said:

*'the issues that divide or unite people in society are settled not only in the institutions and practices of politics proper, but also, and less obviously, in tangible arrangements of steel and concrete, wires and semi-conductors, nuts and bolts.'*¹

Objects (or the absence thereof) and their arrangement in our environment is what for a large part makes up the feeling we get when being in a place.

Politics are the arrangement of power and authority in human associations as well as the activities that take place within those arrangements. Objects around us can make us feel welcome and safe. They can invite us to stay somewhere, to shop, to meet people, to work, think or just rest. In short:

Objects can have power and authority over our relation to people, activities and our selves, and therefore objects can have politics.

One of those powerful objects in public space is a bench. We sit on them to meet people, to think, to rest or even work at times.




Benches have power over your body by the way you can sit on them. Photo courtesy of www.flickr.com/photos/dmpop




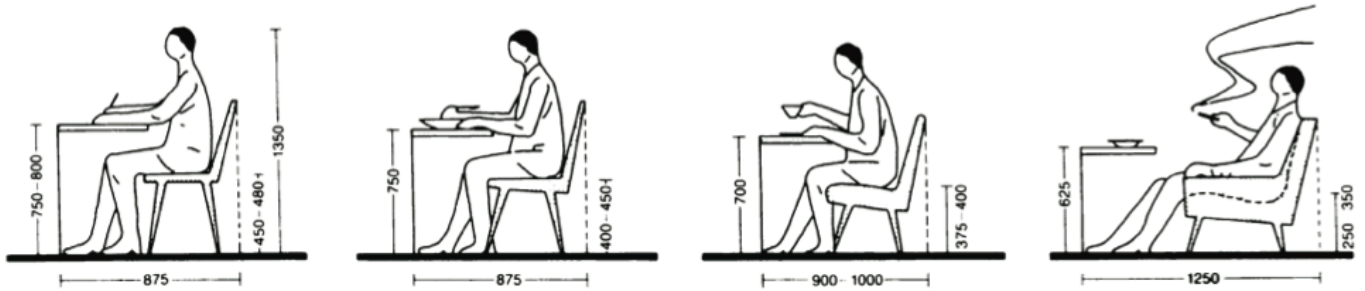
¹ L. Winner, *Do Artifacts Have Politics?* University of Chicago Press, 1986, p. 19



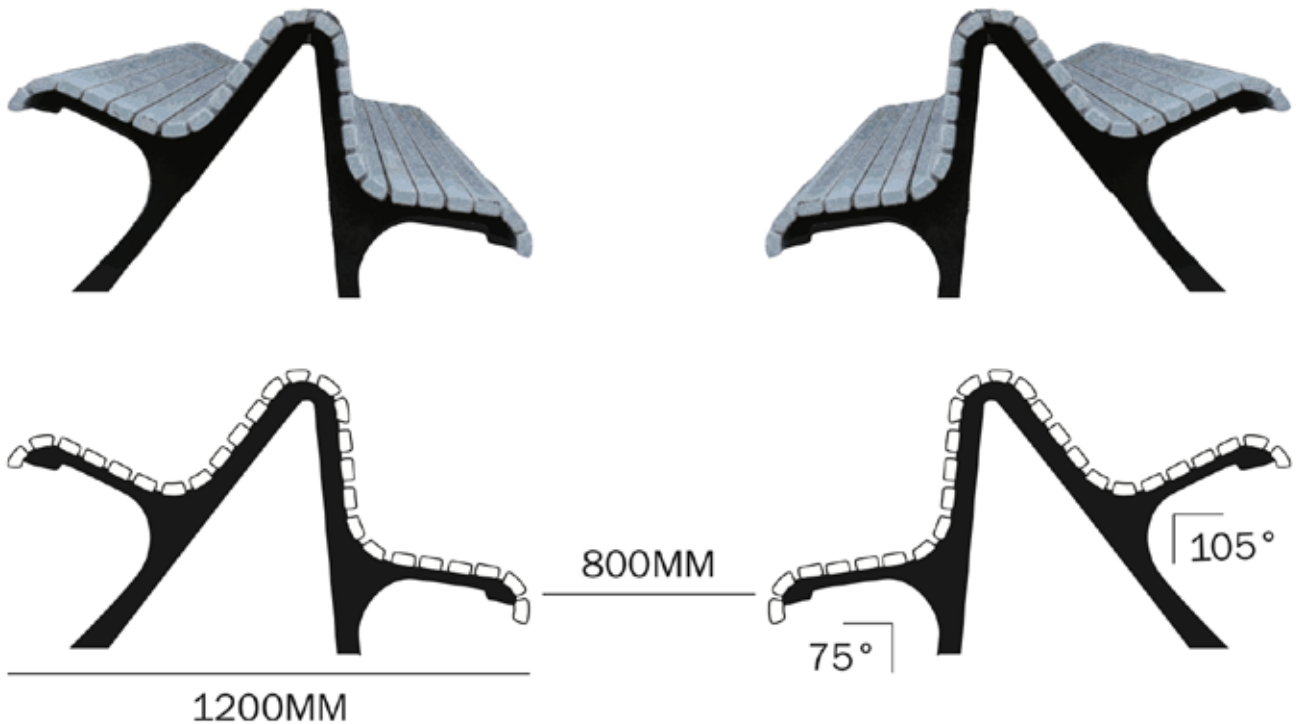
Benches have power over interaction by how close you are to others. 



Benches have power over your view by what you face. Photo by www.AdamBartos.com 



Neufert chairs



Vision bench

We can use these political aspects of benches to create a certain feel of an environment related to the vision of a place.



In *Architect's Data* Neufert has standardized the required measurements of objects. When it comes to sitting objects, he has made a distinction between four kinds of chairs based on their shape and how much room they need: a work chair, a sitting and dining room chair, a small easy chair and an arm chair.

When observing the form, placement and view of the Zuidas benches, we² saw that they are mainly shaped like an easy chair, placed far nor close together and rarely face each other, while often facing roads or buildings.

'The vision of the Zuidas is to be responsible and efficient; to maximize through high density

*and intense use the scarcity of public space, by stimulating interaction and a sustainable mix of functions, aimed at the top of offices, services and living.'*³

Having observed the benches of the Zuidas, they do not seem to use their politics to the advantage of the Zuidas by having the shape, placement and view of benches match its vision.

I therefore propose that:

'Vision benches' meet the requirements of high density and intense use, stimulate interaction, have a sustainable mix of functions, and are aimed at the top.

The bench will be shaped like the current signature bench of the Zuidas, the double canapé, yet will be tilted at a 15 degree angle.

² Noor van Eekelen, fellow student at the Sandberg Institute, was part of the project at this stage and help with the observations and analysis.

³ As can be read in the Zuidas Vision 2009, available on <http://zuidas.nl/visie>

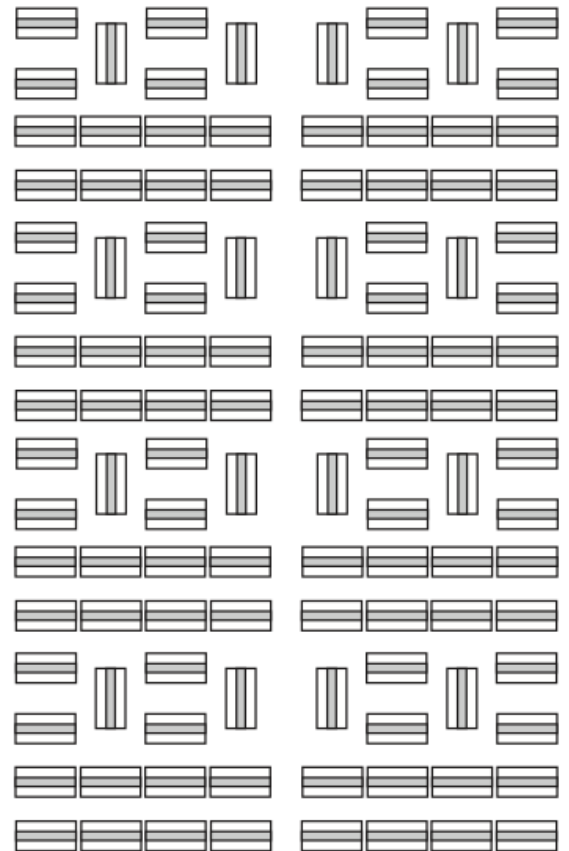
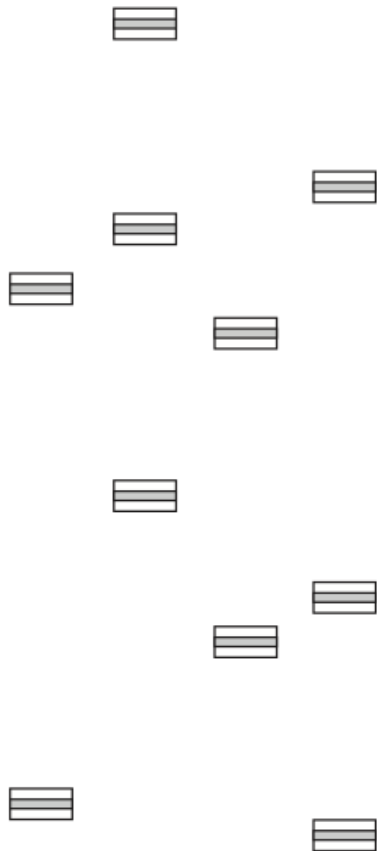


The current placement of the benches is very spacious, like you can see on the left. This **is** a top view of the benches on the Mahlerplein. To maximize the use of scarce space, the benches would be placed around 800mm apart, based on Neufert standards. To stimulate interaction, these closely placed benches will also all face each other. On the right we can see what this would look like on the Mahlerplein.

The tilted double canapé arranged as described above would use bench politics to encourage livability in the Zuidas region as set out in its vision: *efficient, sustainable and aimed at the top*.

It's 12.30pm sharp. Like every weekday, you walk across the square from your office building to get some food in a to-go shop. The sun is out, or at least it is not raining. You climb up on a bench, look up at the top of the office building and start to be inspired as well as feeling ambitious. You impress your colleagues and boss at your next meeting. The guy behind you was feeling lazy, so he half sat on the downward sloping part of the bench. Instead of taking more time than he should during his break, sitting comfortably and smoking his cigarettes, he chooses go back to his office to be the first at his next meeting.

This tilt will give the bench a sustainable mix of functions: while the side of the bench that is tilted upward will now give the user a view on the top of the Zuidas buildings, the downward tilted side will be uncomfortable to sit on for more than 5-10 minutes and thus encourage people to be efficient in their actions.



Benches Mahlerplein



THE ICE AND THE REAL ESTATE ON THE ZUIDAS FROM THE LOGOLENGTH RESEARCH ZUIDAS

Irene Janze

Environment.....
History.....
Local.....
Public.....
Space.....
Sign.....

INTRODUCTION

The Zuidas is usually described as corporate and anonymous, a place without Amsterdam roots that could easily be picked up and put down elsewhere in the world.

But is this correct? Does this view do justice to the Zuidas? The project logolength is an artistic, mathematical research project that maps the Zuidas in a particular manner.

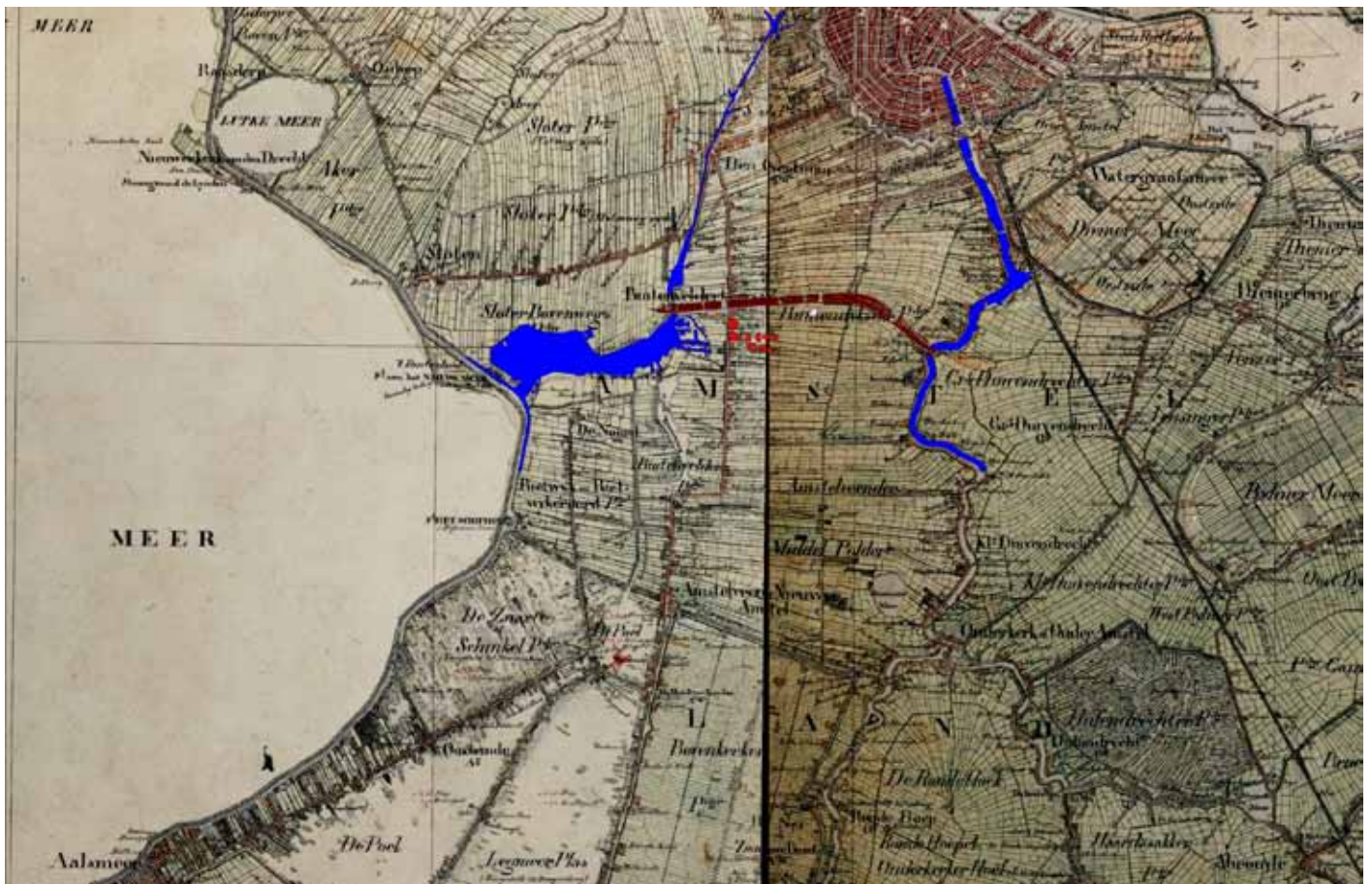
Logos brand the Zuidas. They link the (business) owners to the towers. A logo provides for an image. You can measure the height of the logo, or judge her strength or radiance.



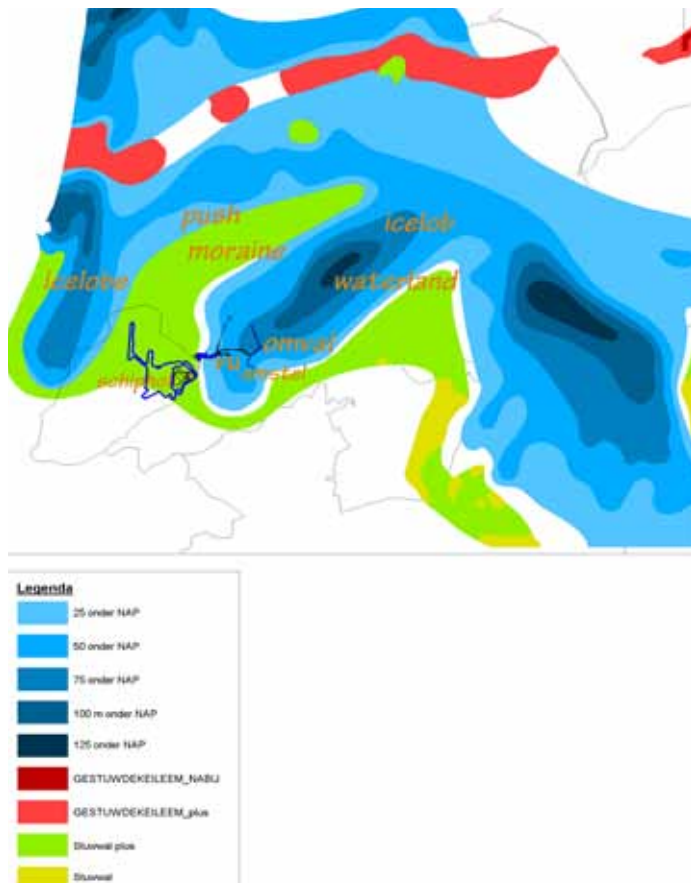
img 1 The measuring of the logolength



fig. 2 Height meter



img 4 Polder map. Subtitle: VU and the Zuidas drawn on the military map of ca. 1848. Adaptation by J. Fokkema



img 5 Map of ice lobes

Maybe you think the logo is pretty, ugly, tough or boring and therefore condemn its location as well. One can also measure the content of a logo, by dissecting the logo into its stories. Did you know that the South-axis (Zuidas) was once a salt-axis? He immigrated from a place close to Paramaribo and expresses himself here in the 'k' of the AkzoNobel logo.

And what to think of gold diggers in Mongolia? They already knew 10.000 years ago that dinosaurs became birds. You can read about them in the logolength research of the VU logo: the griffin.²

The logos on the Zuidas refer to other times and distant places. They can dig and fly and take us to the stars, salt lakes, carrot juice, industries, glaciers, gold, oil, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Nauman or Damasio.

Perhaps your judgement about the logos will alter after reading the stories. They disclose different characteristics of the place where the logos dwell.

1 The K stands for Koninklijke Zout Maatschappij [Royal Salt Company].

2 See www.logolengte.nl

READ ALONG WITH WHAT THE GRIFFIN SAYS ABOUT THE ZUIDAS

Although the designers' of the VU logo did not know of his existence, the griffin hangs on the lot where the farm of farmer Griffin once stood.

Jan Griffioen (Griffin, 1841-1922), born in Kockengen, worked as a farmer servant along the Amstelveense weg. He was dark and handsome, and married Maria Verburg, the beautiful daughter of his neighbor. Jan married in the Zorgmeer farm, which was located next to the VU campus, on the Amstelveense weg 619, close to where the current math- and natural science building stands. His son Jan Griffioen jr. in his turn married the girl next door, Maria van Barneveld, the daughter of Aagje Streefkerk. The Streefkerk family lived on a nearby farm called "Kent u Zelve" (Know thy Self), on the spot where the current VU hospital was built. The 'good looks' of the Jans and their family name root the logo. The griffin takes us back to the history of the polder, to the 'family album' of the location.

The Griffin family held cattle. The meadows came about by draining the reclaimed and excavated peat: the Amstelveen (the Amstelpeat).

The peat grew continuously on the swamp areas between Amstelveen and Waterland and reached up to 10 meters above sea level. This was partly due to the shelter of the sandbanks that ran parallel along the North Sea shore. Yet something different also occurred.

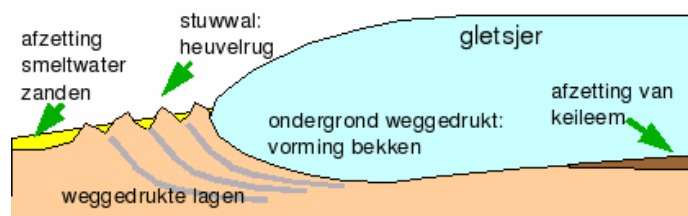
Roughly 150.000 years ago, in the Salien, the ice slid over the weak soil of what later would be referred to as the Netherlands, and fanned out in lobes shaped like eggs.

When the ice retreated during the warm spell that followed, a basin remained that got filled with clay and sand. The deepest part of the ice basin lies right by Waterland and its edge near the VU.

That big basin of clay and sand was great grounds for the peat to settle and pile up. This 'negative' shape in the underground caused a 'positive' outcome in the landscape.

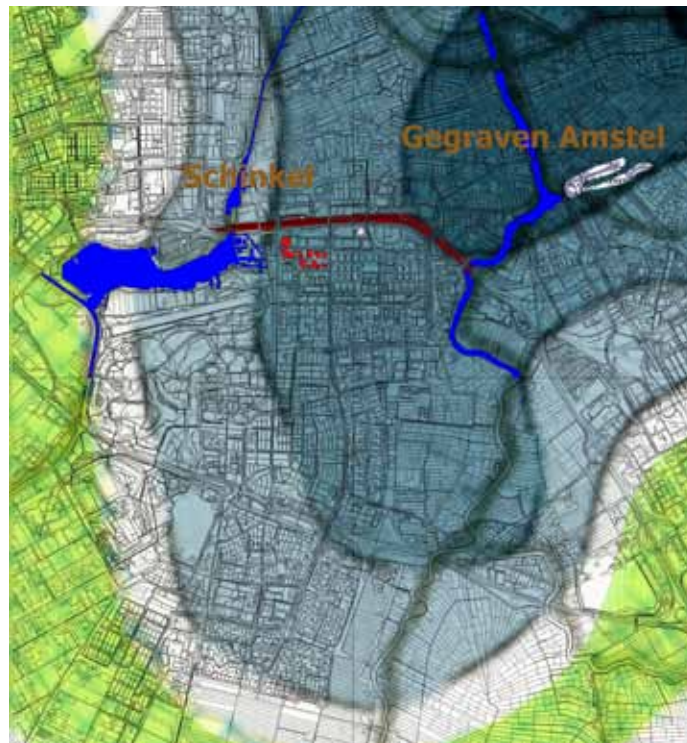
The highest part of the peat dome was located between the current Schinkel/ Kostverlorenvaart and the Amstel. The Schinkel and Kostverlorenvaart lodge where, in the year 1000, the Grote Hollandse Waterkering was: a high, long strip of peat that stretched to the Twiske in Amsterdam North. The peat formed a natural dam and sheltered against the West Winds.

East of the Hollandse Waterkering the water running down from the peat-sponges formed over time a stream that became the Amstel. The contours of the Schinkel/Kostverlorenvaart and the Amstel still tell the outlines and shape of the glacier underneath the surface (see fig. 7). This becomes even more apparent when we



img 6 Image cross-section.

Source: www.falw.vu/~huik/ijstijd.html



img 7 Map of ice basin. GIS adaptation J. Fokkema

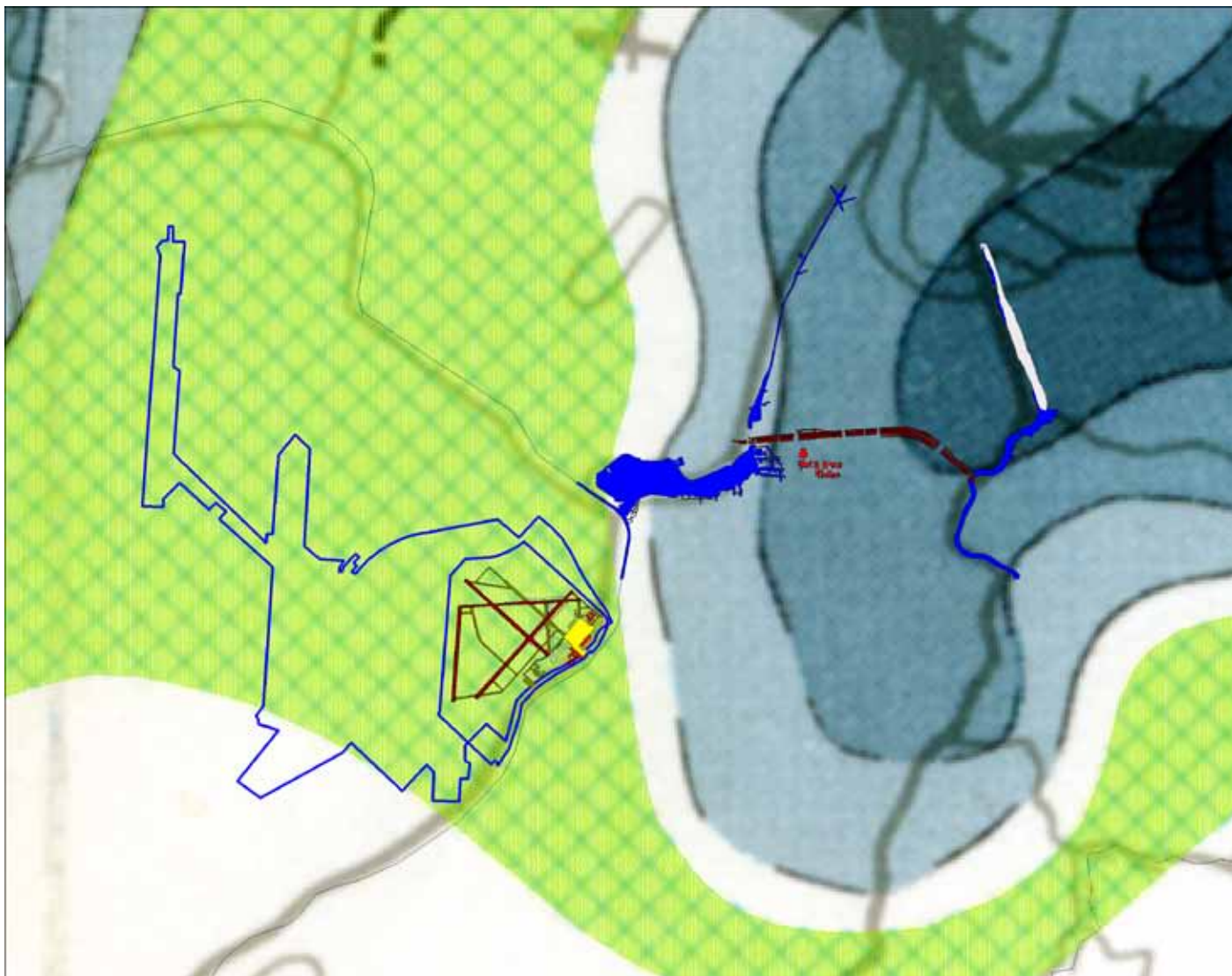
consider the fact that the Amstel has been dug from the Omval on.³ Originally the Zuid-Amstel (South-Amstel) started as two little streams in a forerunner of the Watergraafsmeer and ran south.

The peat moor could be reached on foot. On the peat a fine maze of streets materialized with exits roads to the west and south. It enacted a lucrative moneymaking living - and working space with the Dam as trade center.⁴

The area located at the east side of the Amstel developed completely different, because of the difference in the foundation. Where at the west side the peat could flourish because of the underground - the glacier-, the east side lacked a nourishing foundation. This lack of grip on the soil allowed the (inland) sea Almere, later known as Zuiderzee, to wash away the bog, resulting in floating islands. The islands could only be reached by boat.

³ Bont, C. de, *Vergeten land: Ontginning, bewoning en waterbeheer in de West-Nederlandse veengebieden (800-1350)*, pp. 484-530, phd. Wageningen, Alterra, 2008

⁴ Available from the Atlas Amsterdam, Dijkstra, Reitsma, Rommerts; Toth, 1999



img 8 Expansion of Schiphol Airport on the ice ridge (push moraine)

On the swampy, difficult to achieve land the east side of the city expanded in smaller residential areas. The eastern part of the city got a peripheral character. In the area north of 't IJ the peat was not piled up or sheltered enough either, causing the sea to wash away entire pieces of land.

The rich trade part of Amsterdam has therefore been located in the NE/SW for centuries now, running roughly from the Kostverlorenkade and the Amstel to the Dam, following the old patches of ice.

The push moraine⁵ next to the ice lobes pushed the ground up. The Haarlemmermeer and the Bijlmermeer lie on top of the ice ridge of Amsterdam. They started as little water pools on higher peat patches or sand.⁶ West of the Hollandse Waterkering the propelling southwest wind created a lot of damage and blew pieces of peat away. The Haarlemmermeer was born, a place where it tended to be very spooky. Especially at one particular storm hole where the ships

would run wild and hit shallow grounds, the so-called 'shipshell'; the later Schiphol. The old salt marsh landscape, from the time that the area was still 'Waddensea', lies close under the current surface and still shimmers through the fields as creeks when you fly over them in fall or winter. The sandy and salty soils of the drained Haarlemmermeer turned out to be less suited for farming. The ground was eventually dug out and used for the raising of farm - to building land in the neighboring polder, the land of Jan Griffin on the boggy outwash plain.

By the persistent southwest wind, the Haarlemmermeerpolder became an excellent spot for airplane traffic. Schiphol expanded in a little less than a century from a small military airbase in 1916 in an international airport. In 2003 the fifth lane (the Polderbaan) was opened to enforce the 'hubfunction'. The international airport together with the A10 highway and railway over the dike, from 1988 on

5 stuwwal
6 meerstallen

7 More information on the expansion and history of Schiphol can be found on www.urbannebula.nl

called the Zuidas⁸, has formed a great location for international, service businesses.

The infrastructure on the Zuidas reflects the polder landscapes as can clearly be seen in img 4.

So that explains its direction and his slightly bent shape.

What remains is the question whether the Zuidas is randomly located in the rich trade part of Amsterdam.

The A10 and the VU are drawn in on the geological map of the Rijks Geologische Dienst (Royal Geological Service) of 1986. The cross structure on the map stands for the boulder clay from the glacier. That is the gravel, clay and rocks that remain after the ice withdrew. Boulder clay is used to build our dikes from.

Just for aesthetic purposes we⁹ have also drawn the boulder clay in on the altitude map of Amsterdam.

What turns out to be the case? The most expansive piece of land in the Netherlands, the Zuidas, borders the boulder clay in the soil: the footprint of the glacier. It is the locus of the terminal moraine! The edge of the ice depression offers a great place for high buildings, for after all the poles that Amsterdam is built on rest on the layers of sand in the ground. At the edges of the lobe these layers are closer to the surface than at the Dam, let alone Waterland where poles of over a 100 meters have to be used!¹⁰

That's how the Amsterdam glacier dictates deep in the ground, along with the ever chilly and persistent west wind, it has to be said, the organization at the surface. Profitable soils and profitable real estate produce each other!¹¹

And the griffin? It marks high in the sky the end of the line, the point of return for the ice sheet.

FROM APPEARANCE AND CONTENT TO A WEIGHED AVERAGE.

To value this story and hence the logo we developed the logolength. We want to be able to express the logo in a number and compare it with other logos. What is the length of each logo?

The strength, height and content of the logo are being measured and weighed. How does that work? We will stick to our example. The logo brings us through the fields of farmer Griffin to the Ice Age.

The place and time at which a story takes place are being brought together in the logolength formula:

$$ll = lh + lv + lf$$

$$\text{logolength} = \text{logoheight} + \text{logospeed} + \text{logostrength}$$

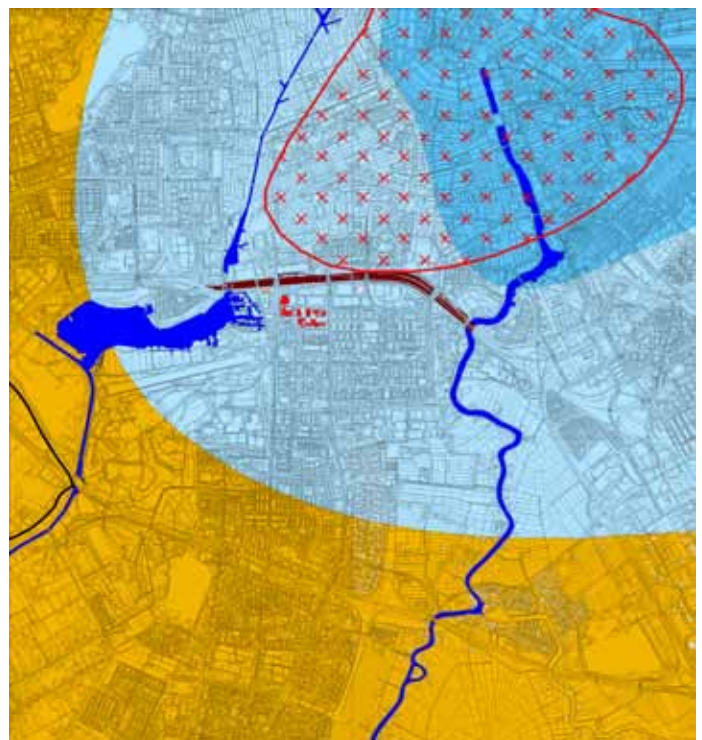
or in symbols:

$$ll = lh + \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \left(\left(\frac{(\log S_i) - \log S}{2 \log S} \right) + \frac{\log(t_i + t_c)}{2 \log T} \right) g_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n \text{abs}(g_i)} \right) LH + \left(\left(\text{abs } lv < a \left(\frac{(lw - \delta)}{S} \right) LH \right) \left(\text{abs } lv \geq a \left(\frac{(lw - \delta)}{S} \right) LH \right) \right)$$

- designed by the mathematician B. Gietema - and calculated in meters. This happens through switching years to length and by taking the distance of where the event happened in as spatial correction factor. The older the story, the longer its length. The longer the distance, the bigger the correction factor. When history takes place at the Zuidas the factor is 0.

$$lv = \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \left(\left(\frac{(\log S_i) - \log S}{2 \log S} \right) + \frac{\log(t_i + t_c)}{2 \log T} \right) g_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n \text{abs}(g_i)} \right) LH \quad (\text{logosnelheid})$$

A logo consists of several stories. The speed of the stories are added up, and their average multiplied with the LH; the average logoheight of the Zuidas, which is 52,5 meters. The logospeed (lv) in the formula of the griffin comes down to 30 meters. This is added to how high the logo is placed above the pavement of the Zuidas, which makes for the logoheight (lh). Without a correction for the height of the surface compared to the NAP, we measured the griffin with our logoheight meter at 35



img 9 Boulder clay map

⁸ According to Tess Broekmans: Godin van de Zuidas, p. 109 the term Zuidas is first used in 1988.

⁹ 'We' is Jaap Fokkema of GIS, Faculteit der Letteren, VU and Irene Janze, Buro Jan-ZE.

¹⁰ Source: Prof Jan Smit, VU, personal communication

¹¹ This way a piece of land during a time of international, servicing industry gets pulled up from a muddy, swampy and windy 'frayed fringe'.

meters. The basis logolength of the VU logo, the griffin, comes down to 65 meters, but that's not the end of things.

To every story from the logo a weight can be assigned by the public on a digital 'logolength chart' on the site of logolengte.nl, a design by E. Kraakman.

The third value, the logostrength [lf] is also being calculated from a public evaluation of the logo.

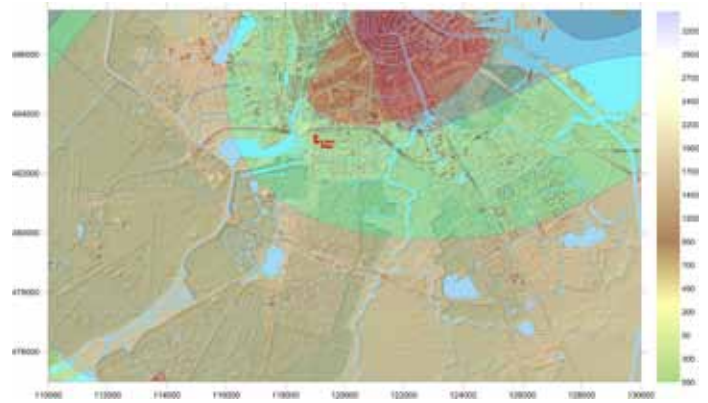
$$\text{als } lw < 6 \text{ dan } lw = \left(\frac{(lw - 6)}{5} \right) LH \quad (\text{logokracht als } lw < 6)$$

$$\text{als } lw \geq 6 \text{ dan } lw = \left(\frac{(lw - 5)}{5} \right) LH \quad (\text{logokracht als } lw \geq 6)$$

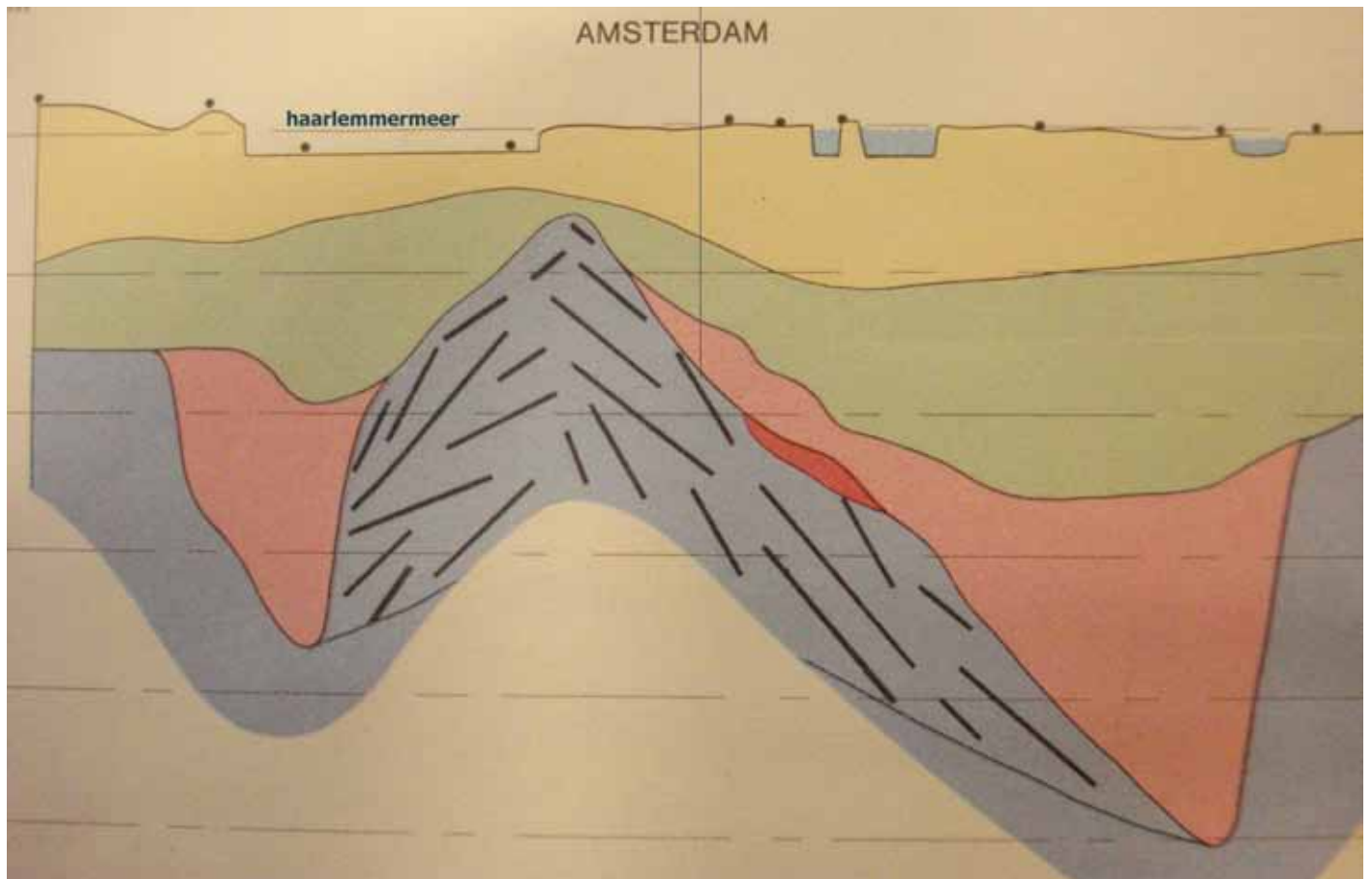
Through the logolength chart, the public can assign a grade to the logo.

The last two values vary from person to person. The public-logolenth is being calculated 'on the fly', expressed in logolength meters and is as a bar directly visible in the chart.

Through a database we can register the public logolengths. Do you, as a company, want to know how long your logolength is? Contact Buro [jan-ZE](http://www.burojanze.nl), www.burojanze.nl and have your logo measured.



img 10 altitude map



img 11 Cross-section griffin on boulder clay

vaste parameters: gemiddelde logohoogte Zuidas (m) 50
maximale afstand op aarde (km) 20 000
langst geleden gebeurtenis (jaren) 4 000 000 000

variabele parameters: naam logo VU Amsterdam
logohoogte (m) 35



gebeurtenis	legenda							
	si	ti	te	gi	tc	sr	tr	gr
familienaam Griffioen	35	400	2010	1	0	0.64	0.27	0.46
Mongolie botten	6 800	65 000 000	2010	1	0	0.11	0.81	0.46
ijstijd	0	100 000	2010	1	0	1	0.52	0.76
				3			logosnelheid	28

logowaardering 5

logokracht -10

logolengte (logometer) 53



It's been a great adventure to find people who'd be prepared to share what they think, how the company views their location, what the joys, frustrations and challenges are. And I'd like to thank all those who cooperated and also those who didn't. It's been an honour to experience all of it.

What is the connection between the artwork and the interviews?

Boekel de Nerée, Lawyers

Legal thriller authors made very clear that lawyers need 'billable hours', so the expensive watches seemed appropriate to their trade.

RAI, Events

RAI means Rotterdam Auto Industry, a major car event in the Netherlands and in the RAI.

Broersma Makelaardij, Living

Design furniture and lots of space = home at the Zuidas.

Grand Café Bright City, Networking

Finding treasure is the object of all those involved in networking.

VU University, Studying, Young people; this connection will not be difficult.

Koetjes & Kalfjes, Eating

This connection is easy: lots of lovely food. This company is proud of having the male/female balance truly 50/50, reason to give them two pages: one male and one female.

With thanks to Dorje Design for the artwork to accompany these interviews.



EATING

Organisation: Restaurant *Koetjes en kalfjes*
At this location since: 2008
Interview with: Yossi Adjedj, owner
People involved: 16 employees
Square meters: 400 m2

I was looking for a restaurant and in this vicinity were two possibilities, one in the building *New Amsterdam* and this one. The potentiality of the Zuidas is big and the ambitions are big as well. However, cooperation to make this area more interesting from Projectbureau or the Gemeente is low to non-existent. I'd like to put some life into this area but all they can say is how much it is going to cost me. And I do not understand why they are killing this area. The Gemeente would like it to be like Silicon Valley, but there is no creativity here, just suits: lawyers, bankers and tax discount consultants.

Visibility

In order for *Koetjes and Kalfjes* to become more visible, there should be more people that actually *want* to be here. There are about 20,000 people here per day and a lot more in Buitenveldert and not even half a percent comes to us. It would be different with a theatre, a cinema, a major tourist attraction, a museum, some liveliness. There is no culture, no shops or hairdresser, no reason for people to stay here. The City Centre has a problem: parking. Buitenveldert has a problem: no good



restaurants. Here we have free parking Saturday and Sunday and weekdays as per 19:00. Still, no one wants to be here at those times because it is boring. It is way too quiet, silent.

The dream

I'd like to see a 3 day jazz festival here, free for everyone. Or take the benches out from Zuidplein in November and build a skating area with a big Xmas tree. Some stalls around it, have a Christmas fair, with Gluhwein, soup stalls and waffles and add some fun into this grey monotony. Plus build a big theatre in the cornfield area and sell the seats to the companies at the Zuidas. And still sell tickets, just like in the Arena.

'Do not make this area too expensive, too exclusive, make it interesting, good and simple, middle class.'

General contentment regarding the visibility of the restaurant *Koetjes en Kalfjes* at this location (1 being the lowest possible score and 10 the ultimate highest): 3/10

LAWYERS

Organisation: Boekel de Nerée

At this location since: 2005 (earlier location was also on the Zuidas, as per 1989)

Interview with: Marion van Beurden-Vogelvang, Facility Manager

People involved: 300 employees; approximately 5,000 visitors per year

Square meters: 11,000 m2

At the end of the eighties Boekel de Nerée moved to the Atrium at the Zuidas for reasons of practicality (public transport and parking facilities) and price. When the office needed to expand, all sort of locations were seriously looked at, also outside of the Zuidas. Where would the fit with our company and culture be most neatly? This office space appeared to be the prime location and since we were the first center in the entire premises, we could organize our separate entry and restaurant and such.

Visibility

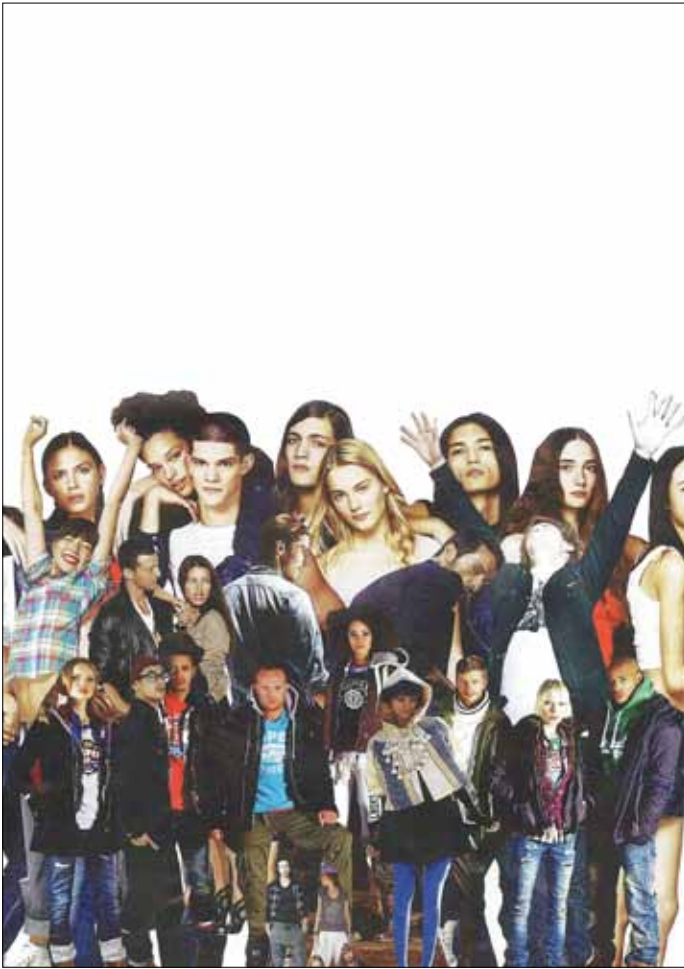
We have a big logo/name on top of the building, very visible from the platform in the railway station and the highway, we have a name over the entry and a foil name on the glass wall of the ground floor. We have permission for all of this, but the designs have gone through a number of versions before we were allowed to put them up, resulting in a five month gap between the moment we settled here and were visible in this office.

The dream

The railway station could be improved a lot. And the character of this area would benefit from a certain type of non-business attraction, the population is a bit monotonous now. I would like to see for instance Japanese tourists on an architecture tour, visiting the inner city as well as the Zuidas for photo shoots. This hasn't been done as far as I know. I would love many more art-related business, that would also open up this area a bit more than just during office hours. Think of art shops, galleries, museums, specialty shops like antiques and such, this would attract high-end tourism. And do not forget how much art-interest there is in the offices too.

'Security is always an issue for us. For example, as soon as a major event like an *Uitmarkt* would be organized here, we would have to have extra security at the door.'

General contentment regarding the visibility of Boekel de Nerée at this location (1 being the lowest possible score and 10 the ultimate highest): 8/10



planned to be built within the near future. The landmark architecture helps us to fit in with the rest of the Zuidas. All this taken together, the visibility of the VU should be okay but I think it could be a whole lot better. On ground level there is still too much confusion about where we are and how to enter the buildings.

The dream

The vicinity of the campus could be much improved. There is little liveliness, there are few shops and all the facilities for eating and drinking around the railway station are way too expensive for students. Specialty shops and bars, cafés and clubs for students, small ventures, a lot of variety would make a big difference in making the area more interesting.

‘The Zuidas paradox: to have internationally oriented businesses around gives great possibilities for our students and has big expensive consequences for the organization.’

General contentment regarding the visibility of the VU University at this location (1 being the lowest possible score and 10 the ultimate highest): 4/10

STUDYING

Organisation: VU University

At this location since: 1963

Interview with: Els van Haasen, Manager Services Facility Campus Organisation

People involved: over 4,000 employees; 22,000 students per year (figure grows every year)

Square meters: 342,692 m²

Choosing this location back in the fifties was because the ground was inexpensive and here was plenty of space to expand. Fifty years of rapid development later the result is that this is the University at one of the most expensive locations in the country. A rather paradoxical situation, since there are great possibilities; the Zuidas companies can offer international contacts and apprenticeships for students as well as joint research projects. However, the high costs of a AAA location are a big disadvantage for a university, never the richest of organizations.

Visibility

The visibility of the VU organization at this location is enhanced by a metro and streetcar station with ‘VU’ in the name. There are very small way finding signs near the railway station, big logo’s on top of the main building and we have a number of flags. We have also a number of noteworthy architectural structures, the new red building by Jeanne Dekkers (‘The Red Potato’) and the building by Benthem Crouwel [ACTA] and a number of new projects,



LIVING

Organisation: Broersma Real Estate

At this location since: 2008

Interview with: Kees Kemp, Estate Agent and Surveyor

People involved: 15 employees

Square meters (sold and for sale): 18,000 m²
[81 apartments, varying from 86 till 350 m²]

The original owner of the Symphony residences decided to sell the building and we were asked to assess the possibilities, after which we were commissioned to execute our plan. Selling these residences means being a pioneer in an area that was 'business only' recently. This makes selling here different from other residential areas like the Beethovenstraat area or the City Centre. It is remarkable how the City Council communicates the ambition to create housing in this part of the Zuidas, yet due to the crisis all new developments in this area have been stopped. So absolutely no action is undertaken to make the area liveable.

Visibility

The Symphony Residences could be made visible in two ways: eight different posters in abri's that composed together the word SYMPHONY, every letter one poster. This was artfully done and displayed for 6 weeks on the Zuidplein, where the residences are. No other display location was allowed. The second way to create visibility was 'SYMPHONY RESIDENCIES' over the entrance of the building. It is now almost one year since this was agreed upon and still none

of our suggested designs have been accepted. Projectbureau Zuidas is very strict and formal with regard to advertising on buildings on the Zuidas.

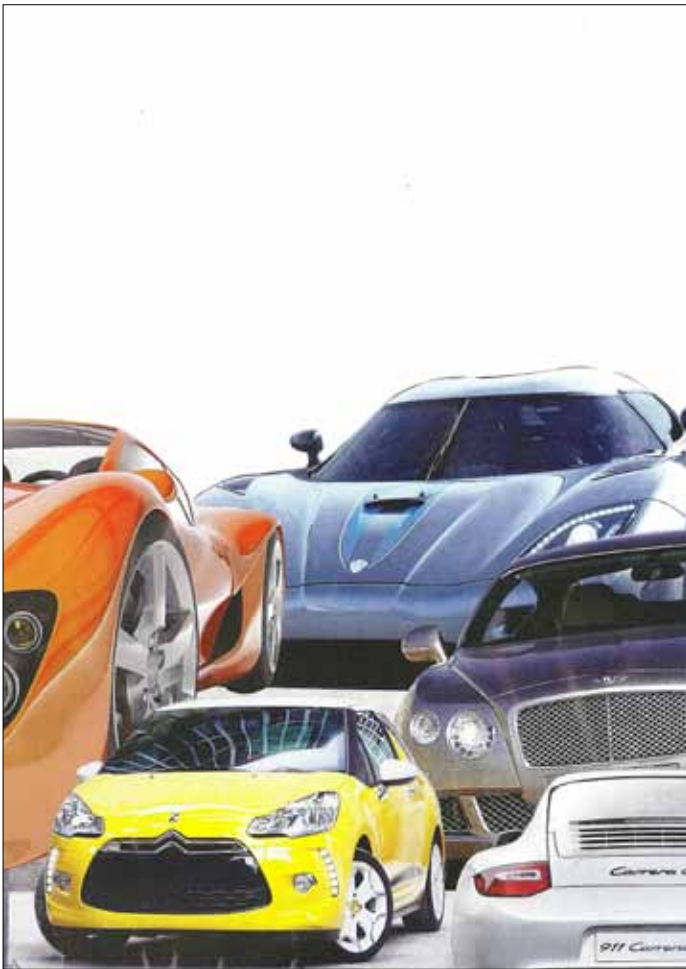
The dream

Creating a liveable area needs more than just apartments; it needs 24 /7 activities for social security. So that would be the dream. A hotel is to be opened this year, that will help.

The professionals buying these apartments are working hard, they travel much: efficiency, convenience and preferential treatment is important. They are often couples of which one is Dutch and the other from Singapore, NYC, London, etc. If they cannot get what they need here, they move to another continent. Amsterdam has an international ambition, it wants to attract high class international employees and those people do not choose De Pijp to live in. The Zuidas (Symphony and New Amsterdam) is offering what they seek by easy access to the airport and good restaurants. A lot of stores, culture and recreation should be added soon.

'It is a big mistake not to have something cultural and shopping in the area. This area needs a famous museum or another big tourist attraction.'

General contentment regarding the visibility of the Symphony Residences at this location [1 being the lowest possible score and 10 the ultimate highest]: 5/10



station, logo's on all the buildings and 72 flags. There is a large pole with different ads on it and RAI (the old logo) on top, very much a sign of the sixties and this pole has a monumental status. The new building by Benthem Crouwel (Elicium, 2009) forms an impulse that helps the RAI to fit in with the rest of the Zuidas. In short, the visibility of the Amsterdam RAI at this location is quite excellent.

The dream

There could be a lot more liveliness in the plinth; specialty shops (cigar shop, hairdresser, this type of venture). Not just restaurants and pubs, more of that diminishes the liveability of a neighbourhood after a certain number. We would love to be able to have an 800 room convention hotel at our fair grounds, that would open up towards Beatrix park and create a more direct link with the rest of the Zuidas. And I would welcome a big tourist attraction and museum.

'One Euro spent in the Amsterdam RAI means 5 Euros spent in the rest of Amsterdam (hotels, canal trips, gifts, food etc). That is our impact.'

General contentment regarding the visibility of the Amsterdam RAI at this location (1 being the lowest possible score and 10 the ultimate highest): 8/10

EVENTS

Organisation: Amsterdam RAI

At this location since: 1961

Interview with: Johan Tensen, Manager Corporate Communications

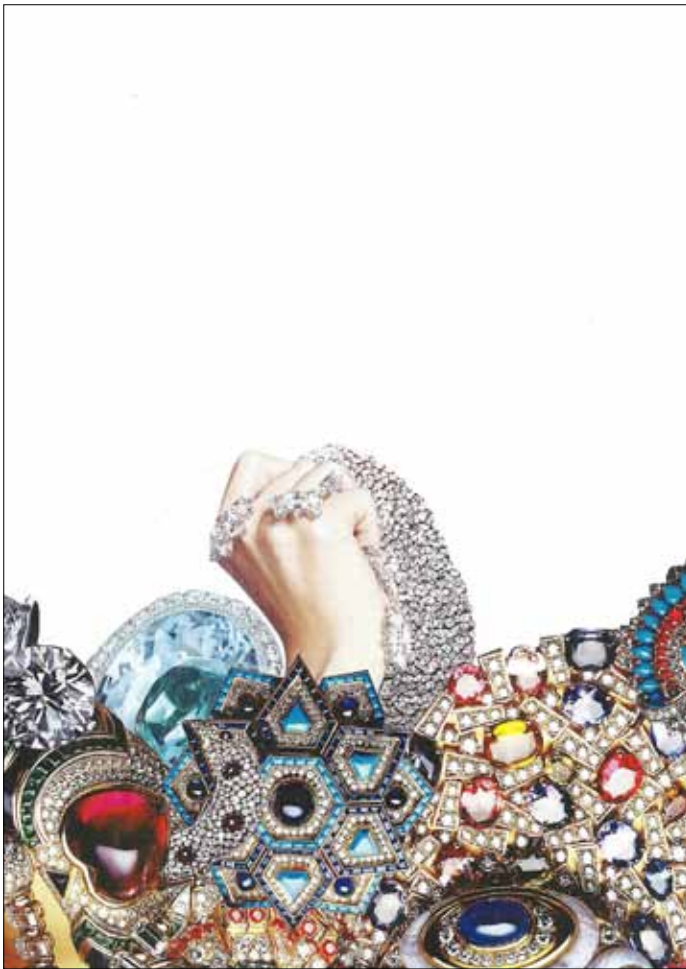
People involved: 500 employees; 10,000 freelance; 1,000 suppliers; 10,000 customers, 2,000,000 visitors per year

Square meters: 87,000 m2

This location was at the very edge of Amsterdam at the time of the planning and yet inside the planned A10 highway. It is still possible to walk to the inner city in 20 minutes and there is a water connection to the canal system. A special VIP treatment is: step on board right at the front of your hotel on one of the canals (or the Amstel) and sail to the RAI-grounds. Everybody who has done that, is thrilled. Part of the logistics around supply for the events is also done by boat, there are warehouses outside of Amsterdam that connect to the RAI per waterway. This is done to relieve the highways surrounding the area.

Visibility

The visibility of the RAI at this location is enhanced by a railway station named 'RAI' and lots of regular way finding signs on the highways as well as in the city. There are very small way finding signs near the railway



NETWORKING

Organisation: Grand Café Bright City

At this location since: 2009

Interview with: Douglas E.C. Grobbe, managing director BU Special Project, ABNAMRO

People involved: 2 employees full time, 10 part-time and freelance; approximately 16,000 guests per year

Square meters: 1,200 m²

The Zuidas has been developed at high speed up until 18 months ago. New buildings were built, businesses came into the Zuidas and what do these companies have in common, apart from their location? Not a lot. An idea for a pub cum restaurant was conceived to bridge that gap: a platform to present what is happening, a place to meet and exchange ideas, an opportunity to find new talent and for science to link with commerce. So this is what we are; 15 other founding partners thought this to be a good idea and we organize events and master classes to get people to meet one another and generally have a good time together.

Visibility

We work in close cooperation with the VU University to bridge the gap they perceived with the corporate world. The corporations on the other hand had a different question as they want very much to get a more diverse population;

the 15 to 20% multi cultural population at the VU University, how do we get this same mixture in the Zuidas to work and stay here? At Bright City we made a connection with various student organizations, national as well as international and we take care we are visible in that realm and in the University especially, flyers, websites et cetera. Furthermore, we'd like to have a number of awnings on street level with the names of the founding partners, we would like to present them in a more visible way as well.

The dream

The offering in the area is boring: there is eating and drinking and more eating and drinking, that is what the Zuidas has for everyone. The ideal would be much more interesting. A big cultural institution like a famous museum, a cinema, theatre and a big tourist attraction, I'd love to see it today rather than tomorrow. Times Square is what I would like to see here, the same magnet pull towards big groups of people, and the same professional presentation that can be individualized.

'How to enthuse people that suffer from too much information anyway to come and witness an event or master class in our venue? This is our permanent challenge.'

General contentment regarding the visibility of Grand Café Bright City at this location (1 being the lowest possible score and 10 the ultimate highest): 7/10

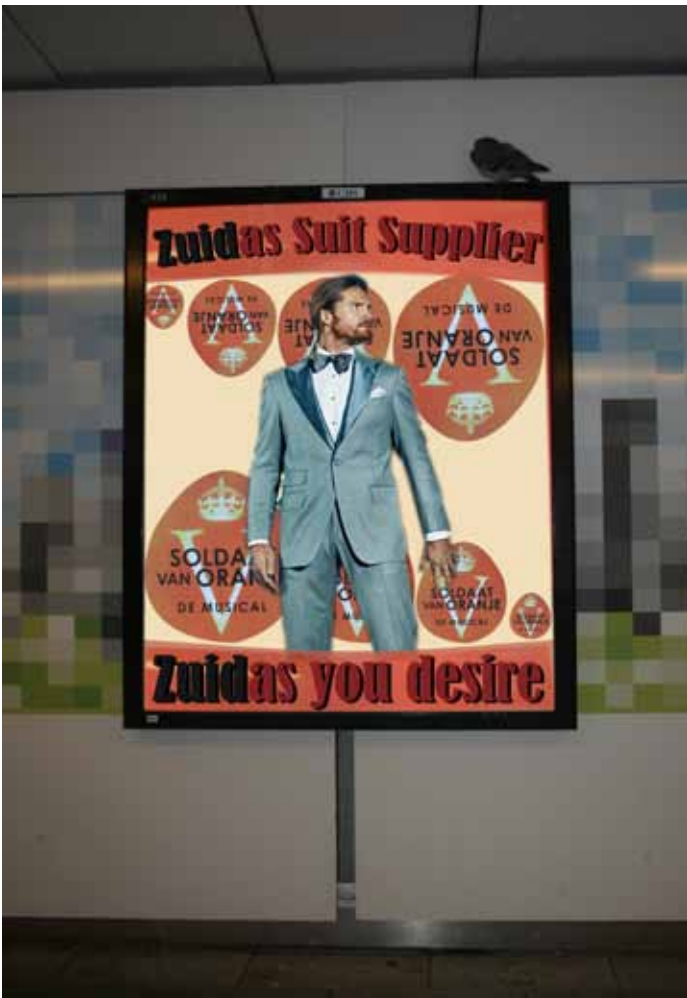
INTERNSHIP: MUSEUM OF VISUAL ARTS ZUIDAS

Ilinca Trif

Capital.....
Identity.....
Livability.....
Local.....
Myth.....

The Zuidas is one of the most important and influential area in Amsterdam. Institutions like APG, ABN Amro and ING developed their headquarters there. Also many other important firms occupy the Zuidas such as lawyer, insurance and advertisement companies. Walking around the Zuidas a person first notices the tall and intimidating corporate buildings, each one built more impressive than the other. Even though it is abundant in corporate architecture, it has a scarcity in public art. I am proposing a project that I believe will resolve this issue. I will be collecting photos taken of the few advertisement posters located around the Zuidas and remodel them into new adverts for a suit supplier company. I will try to make it clearer for the public to notice that there is art in the Zuidas, by remodelling the advertisement posters in an artistic way. I have chosen a suit supplier company theme because I am criticizing the lack of of fashion choices that people working at the Zuidas have. It is possible to find art at the Zuidas but because of the mundane lifestyle that people have they no longer notice it. Approaching the liveability issues that exists at the Zuidas in this manner it will make the public be more aware of the Zuidas artistic prospective. I believe that by introducing more public art around the Zuidas, this could turn it into a more pleasant region to live in.







ZUIDAS

Konstantina
Christodoulou

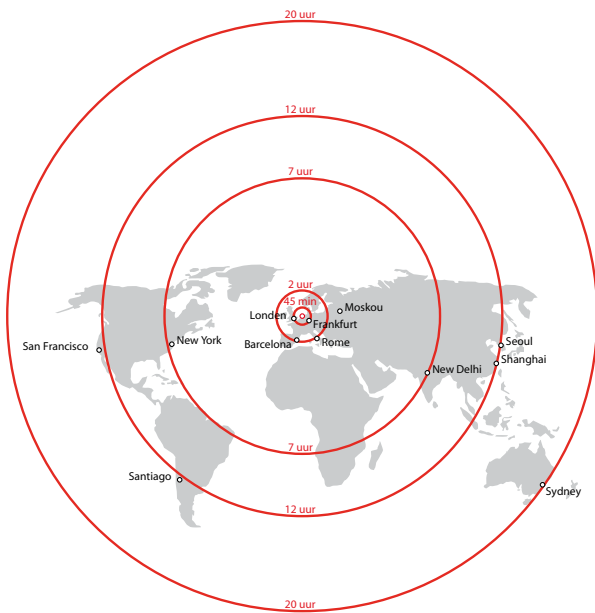
Identity.....
International.....
Local.....
Public.....
Vision.....

As much Zoidas	Zoidas a principle	Zoidask
As Zoidas possible	Inasmuch Zoidas	Zoidaspect
As Zoidas you like	Zoidas I am	Zoidaspiration
So Zoidas you wish	Zoidas a whole	Zoidassess
Zoidas it is	Much Zoidas	Zoidassist
Zoidas if	Zoidas it goes	Zoidassistant
Zoidas soon as	As Zoidas	Zoidassociation
Zoidas I propose	Zoidas follows	Zoidas example
Zoidas a rule	Zoidas I said	Zoidas fast
Zoidas you already know	Zoidas it is	As smart Zoidas
Zoidas follows	Zoidas again	Also known Zoidas
Zoidas natural	Zoidas you said	Doing business Zoidas
Zoidas it were	Zoidas life	Think Zoidas I think
Zoidas long as	Zoidas of now	Zoidas you did
Zoidas of now	Zoidas per usual	Zoidas it seems
Zoidas regards	Zoidas the saying goes	Zoidas I suggest
Zoidas thought	Zoidas time goes by	Zoidas I think
Zoidas usual	Zoidas time goes on	Zoidas the best
Zoidas well	Zoidas requested	Zoidas I was told
Zoidas yet	Zoidas before	Zoidas such
Just Zoidas	Zoidas well	Zoidas from
So Zoidas to	Zoidas who	Zoidas for
Zoidas a game	Zoidas yet	Zoidas best one can
Zoidas a reminder	Zoidas you desire	Zoidas big as life
Zoidas beautiful	Zoidascend	Zoidas for instance
Zoidas a matter of fact	Zoidascertain	Zoidas sometimes
Zoidas a proof	Zoidastounded	Zoidas of right



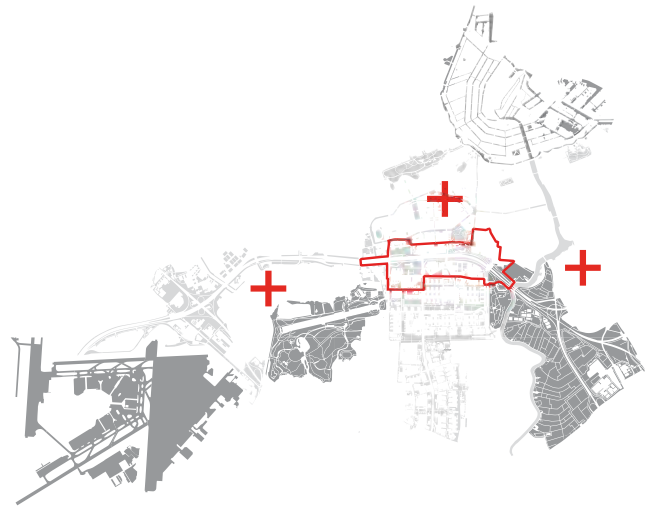
Doing business in The Netherlands?

Zuidas fast



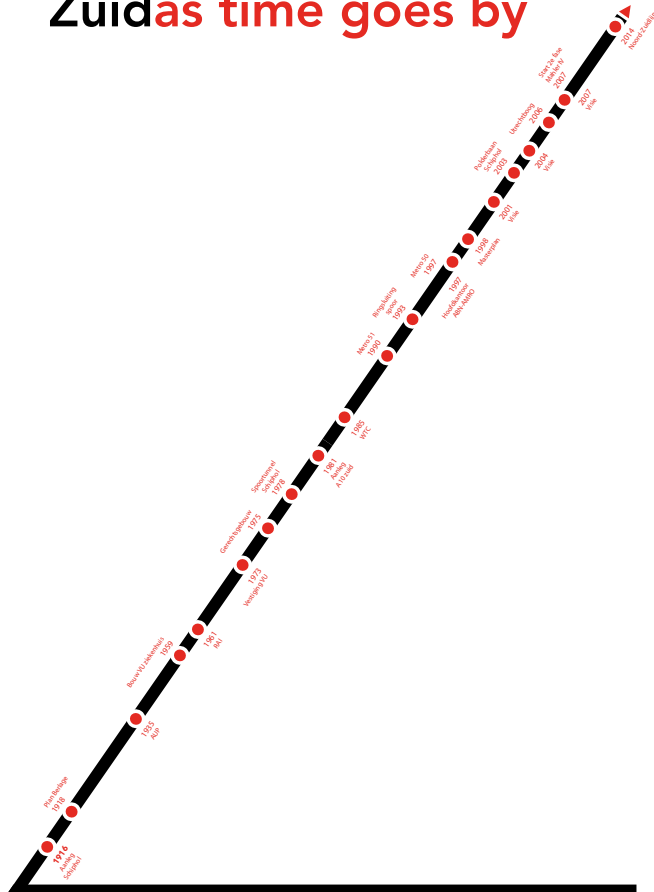
www.zuidas.nl

Zuidas a whole



www.zuidas.nl

Zuidas time goes by



Zuidaspirations

THE 15 ACTIONS

1. 50 Internationals
2. Upgrading Amsterdam Zuid Station
3. Five new kiosks
4. Thousand new housing units
5. Upgrade Mahlerplein
6. New, vital functions in existing buildings
7. Adaptable buildings
8. Venue for major public events
9. Promoting social interaction
10. Arts and cultural events
11. Green and recreational areas
12. Beatrixpark
13. Construction site management
14. Street-level partnership
15. Start digging A10 before 2015

Zuidas you wish

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AMENITIES

Whether you want to play football, take your child to a crèche, enjoy a drink at a pavement café, visit the theatre or even spend some time on the beach, it will all be possible in Zuidas with its wide range of cultural amenities, shops, bars and restaurants, sports facilities, educational institutes, etc.

Art and culture are essential features of Zuidas. There's the Kunstkapel to visit, while many surprising artworks are on show throughout the district. The new Joop van den Ende theatre, specializing in stage musicals, is bound to attract large audiences and visitors will be able to spend the night at nearby hotel.

Zuidas already has many lively cafés and restaurants clustered around Zuidplein, Mahlerplein, Mahlerlaan and Claude de Debussylaan, not forgetting the World Trade Center. They offer something for everyone and are seen as 'the place to be'. There will no doubt be many more exciting places to eat and drink once the theatre in Kop Zuidas/RAI and the exclusive shopping street in Ravel have taken shape. Zuidas already offers a number of shops around station Zuid, Zuidplein and in the WTC, with a florist, hairdresser's, supermarket, bookstore and bank, to name but a few.

Zuidas offers countless opportunities for sport and leisure. There are the playing fields of Amsterdamsche Football Club (AFC) and Sportclub Buitenveldert (SCB), while the ground floors of many buildings provide an excellent location for future fitness and health clubs. Joggers can take to the footpaths of Beatrixpark, Amstelpark and the Amsterdamse Bos, where horse riding and rowing (on the Bosbaan) are also extremely popular pastimes. You can even play golf in Zuidas! Golf Republic in the Eurocenter building is Amsterdam's first ever indoor golf facility, with simulators allowing you to tackle over fifty world-renowned courses. If all this exertion is too much for you, just chill out and relax on the nearby (artificial) beach.

Large-scale amenities include the RAI conference centre, VU University and its leading academic teaching hospital, VUmc. They help to cement the position of Zuidas as a vibrant international centre of commerce and research.

Zuidas natural

GREENERY AND WATER

A responsible development includes 'red, green and blue'. Alongside the red of the bricks, there must be the green of trees and grass, and the blue of water. Canals, trees, parks, gardens, lakes and ponds can make even a densely-built area like Zuidas extremely attractive. If due attention is devoted to 'blue' and 'green', Zuidas will indeed become Amsterdam's top location for international commerce and a high-quality residential environment. But water and greenery have another purpose: they contribute to good water management in such a dense, paved district.

The buildings (existing and planned) and open spaces in Zuidas lead to compaction of the subsoil. To ensure that rainwater is absorbed, stored and transported away, there must be adequate surface water as well. Two canals – the Irenegracht and the new De Boelegracht – will form the backbone of the water management system for Zuidas. Lakes, ponds, water features and 'green roofs' also have an important part to play and have been included in the plans.

In addition to the canals, large basins under the pitches of Buitenveldert Sports Club (Knowledge Quarter) and AFC (Ravel) will provide additional water storage capacity in the event of particularly heavy rainfall. Improved water management in Amstelpark and the Gijsbrecht van Aemstelpark will ensure that the polders (dikes) around Zuidas continue to provide adequate defence against flooding. This is important, since to the south of the A10, Zuidas lies around 0.70 metres below sea level, while to the north it is 0.70 metres above sea level.

Zuidas devotes considerable attention to greenery and public areas. Small parks, gardens, squares and roof terraces can be seen everywhere. In Mahler4, for example, some 30% of the available roofspace has been given over to roof gardens, with plants and shrubs which not only attract butterflies and birds but serve to regulate the run-off of rainwater. The balance between urbanization and green space is particularly evident in the plans for Beethoven, Ravel and Vivaldi. Beatrixpark and the planned Amaliapark will provide additional green space to the Zuidas.

Many people think that Zuidas is all about concrete and business. Nothing could be further from the truth: there are some beautiful little oases of greenery where you can escape the hustle and bustle of the city. Beatrixpark is particularly welcoming, while the Amstelscheeg and the Amsterdam Bos woodlands are within a few minutes walk.

Zuidas life

LIVING

Zuidas lies between two established and very popular residential districts, Oud-Zuid and Buitenveldert. Some 130,000 people live within a two-kilometre radius. Their average disposable income is the highest in Amsterdam. Museumplein, the cultural heart of Amsterdam is just a stone's throw away. Just beyond that is the historic city centre with its world famous canals.

Zuidas is in the centre of one of the world's great cities but also abuts a semi-rural area of outstanding ecological value. This, together with its good accessibility and comprehensive amenities, makes Zuidas a top international location for both commercial and residential users.

Residents have already moved into Vivaldi, Mahler4/Gershwin and Kop Zuidas, and the district will eventually provide 9,000 homes of varying types and sizes: flats, maisonettes, penthouses, lofts, studios and lower-priced houses. Some homes will enjoy a waterside location alongside the new De Boelegracht canal.

Zuidas offers all the amenities traditionally associated with urban living. The large retail concentrations of Gelderlandplein and Beethovenstraat are within minutes and the district will eventually have its own exclusive shops, lively bars, excellent restaurants, interesting museums and even a theatre. If the excitement gets too much, peace and tranquillity are close at hand in Beatrixpark, Amstelpark, Amsterdamse Bos and the Nieuwe Meer lake.

The first homes to be completed are in Vivaldi and Mahler4/Gershwin. The Eurocenter in Vivaldi welcomed its first residents in 2006. The New Amsterdam apartment building in Mahler4 was completed in 2008. Its facilities include a fitness centre with sauna and swimming pool. The apartments in Luminuz (Kop Zuidas) were also completed in 2008. Apartments in the Miles Building (Gershwin) came onto the market in 2009, followed by those in Amsterdam Symphony. Summer 2010, the apartments of Django Building were completed. Zuidas is thus gradually taking form as a complete urban centre in its own right.

LEARNING FROM THE ZUIDAS VIA LAS VEGAS AND NEW YORK

Roel Griffioen

Capital.....
Critical.....
Identity.....
Perception.....
Space.....
Sign.....
Urbanity.....
Utopia.....

Your gaze scans the streets as if they were written pages: the city says everything you must think, makes you repeat her discourse... However the city may really be, beneath this thick coating of signs, whatever it may contain or conceal, you leave ... without having discovered it.

Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities¹

The first scene of the video piece 'In Place of Capital' (2009) by Zachary Formwalt is intriguing but also somewhat bewildering. A camera is zoomed in closely on a detail of the façade of a building (see img. 1). It starts moving along the abstract patterns of glass and steel. Unable to find a grip, the eye of the camera slowly glides over the flat surfaces, revealing nothing of what is behind them. The sun reflecting in the windows takes away the transparency of the glass, transforming it into another solid surface. Suddenly a cut is made and the focus of the camera is on the façade of another building, with different colors and a slightly different rhythm but just as slick and abstract, and the same ritual is repeated.

I would say that 'In Place of Capital' is about the *place* (although the title is misleading in this respect) and the *face* of capitalism. The video displays the quest of the artist to find representations of money, market and power in architecture and the cityscape.² In our age, capital has lost both a clearly defined location and a clearly defined image, so the opening scene seems to suggest. The camera shots could be taken in any first class financial district in the world. The zoom and the carefully chosen angle reduce the building to a façade, to an 'outside' possibly concealing an 'inside' that is invisible and unknown to the outsider. This displacement of the images and the generic character of the buildings depicted, reinforce the idea that there is no such thing as the 'place' of capital; that in fact capital has taken the fluid form of (digital) flows, invisible and untraceable from the outside. Maybe the bank officer of the unnamed hedge fund is right when he tells the artist: 'I'm not sure you are ever going to capture the 'movement' of capital markets, because there is not much to see.'

Is there indeed nothing to see? On first sight 'In Place of Capital' could be shot anywhere, but closer examination learns that the portrayed buildings are the office towers Viñoly, Ito and ABN Amro-headquarters, all located on the Mahlerplein in the Zuidas-district in Amsterdam. Apparently the curtain walls of these buildings do have certain characteristics

¹ I. Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, New York 1974, p. 14

² In the video, Formwalt also studies nineteenth-century photographs of the Royal Stock Exchange, London, and the seventeenth century painting 'Gezicht op de Gouden Bocht van de Herengracht in Amsterdam' [View on the Golden Bend in the Herengracht, Amsterdam] by Gerrit Berckheyde. What connects these images is that they visualize places where capital has materialized in architecture. This is a paradox is that capital itself is liquid, always on the move.



that make them identifiable even when they are abstracted by the camerawork. Zoomed out, these buildings do not have neutral appearances at all. On the contrary, all three have very particular sculptural forms. Still, the questions posed by Formwalt in his video remain valid: what is the relation between the exteriors of these buildings and happens inside of them? What functions do the façades have, other than covering the structure? And what is relation between the exteriors and the specific location of these and similar office buildings on the Zuidas? In this paper, I want to shed some light on these questions and put forward some possible methods and ideas for further study of the architecture and urbanism in the Zuidas. I want to look at the Zuidas through the concepts and strategies formulated in a classic publication about an equally classic city: 'Learning from Las Vegas' by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour. 'Delirious New York' by Rem Koolhaas - yet another classic book on a classic city - forms another important voice in this essay. However different as the outlook and ideology of these books might be, I think both can transcend the image they have gradually accrued, as somewhat outdated manifesto's with only historical value, and in fact provide us with helpful tools to understand a complex cityscape like the Zuidas. Topics I want to touch upon are architectural symbolism and semiotics, and the connection between speed, space and communication. Just like Zachary Formwalt and the authors of Learning from Las Vegas, I start with the assumption that ultimately all buildings 'express' or 'represent' something, even when this representation is not consciously transmitted. Perhaps when we gaze at the abstract façades of the Zuidas we should silently echo the words of the architectural historian Piera Scuri: "If we begin with the assumptions that churches are the expression of religious power and castles of aristocratic power, and that architecture is the expression of the society that creates it, then it follows that skyscrapers must be considered to express the power of multinational corporations."³

DIRECTIONAL SPACE			
	SPACE · SCALE	SPEED	SYMBOL <small>sign: symbol: bldg: ratio</small>
EASTERN BAZAAR		3 MPH	
MEDIEVAL STREET		3 MPH	
MAIN STREET		3 MPH 20 MPH	W
COMMERCIAL STRIP		30 MPH	W
THE STRIP		30 MPH	W
SHOPPING CENTER		3 MPH 30 MPH	W

LAS VEGAS

'Learning from Las Vegas' by the architects Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steve Izenour was published in 1972 and republished in a strongly altered version in 1977. The book consists of two parts (the 1972 version had third part, a round-up of the major projects of their firm). The first part - 'A significance for A&P Parking Lots, or Learning from Las Vegas' - is a study of Las Vegas and has developed out of a student workshop given by the authors at Yale in the late sixties. The second section can best be described as a critical essay, and carries the peculiar name 'Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, or The Decorated Shed'.

These two parts mark the double program of the book. The first has the character of proper - albeit highly experimental - research. It tries to formulate a new perspective on urbanity, or rather: the hyper-style urbanity of Las Vegas. Its methodology of understanding the city as a nexus of signs, symbols, speed and space may have its flaws but has lost nothing of its freshness. At the core is an investigation into the notorious 'Strip', the main axis of gambling activity in the city. Using a variety of illustrations - maps, photos, video-stills, sketches and diagrams - the authors perform a visual arthroscopy on the Strip, showing the workings of this oxymoronic landscape of casino's, vast parking lots, advertisements, street lights and gas stations. As mentioned, the second part takes the form of a polemical essay. It is an attack on the presumed hypocrisy of the modernism of the fifties and sixties, which feigns functionality, but in fact celebrates form and expressiveness. Modernism denounced ornament, but through a historical perversion it now produces buildings that are themselves huge ornaments. Rather than modernist 'Heroic & Original' architecture, the authors propagate 'Ugly & Ordinary' architecture: simple buildings that serve the needs of the people - including the immaterial need for decoration and symbolism.

SPEED

As a polemic against modernism, 'Learning from Las Vegas' feels a bit outdated. The battle that took place in American architectural discourse between modernists and postmodernists is long

³ Cited in: P.E. Geyh, 'From Cities of Things to Cities of Signs: Urban Spaces and Urban Subjects in "Sister Carrie" and "Manhattan Transfer"', *Twentieth Century Literature* 52 (2006) 4, pp. 413-442 [n.24]



finished. It is beyond its avowed role as a manifesto that the book is still very relevant in our times. One of the major lessons to learn from 'Learning from Las Vegas' is that speed and communication are two forces that are continuously changing the face of the city. The authors show this by juxtaposing different historical situations, from the bazaar to the shopping mall (img. 2). In the middle-eastern bazaar and the medieval street, communication took place through proximity. It's the oral persuasion of the merchant and the smell and feel of the merchandise displayed along the narrow aisles that will convince the customer, rather than text (signs) or visuals (symbols, logo's). It is with the introduction of the car that commercial communication needed to radically change, and invent new methods and media. On Main Street - the archetypical central commercial street in an American town - a division appears between the media directed at pedestrians (shop-window displays along the side walks) and the media directed at motorists on the road between the side walks (exterior signs).⁴

A few stages later there is Las Vegas, redefining the rules of speed, communication and architecture once again. Las Vegas was especially appealing to Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour because in it they recognized an extraordinary condensed and exaggerated version of the all-American city. The combination of a city built exclusively for motorized transportation and the legalization of gambling resulted in a strange urban landscape, sprawl: This landscape was dominated not by buildings, but by signs. In the words of the authors: 'The commercial persuasion of roadside eclecticism provokes bold impact in the vast and complex setting of a new landscape of big spaces, high speeds, and complex programs.'⁵

CITY OF SIGNS

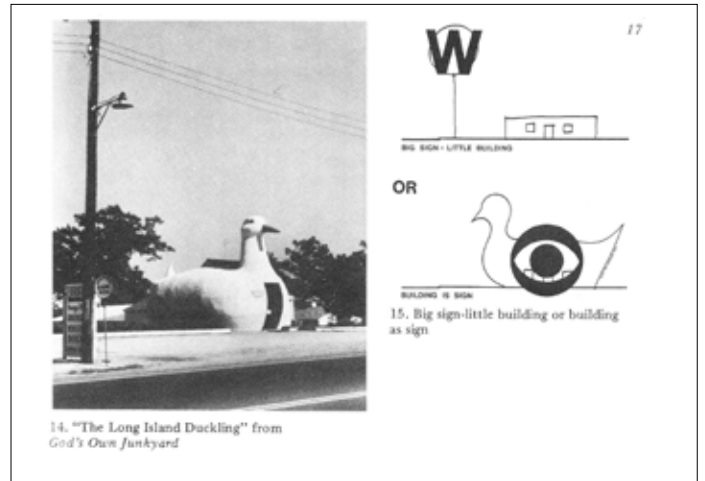
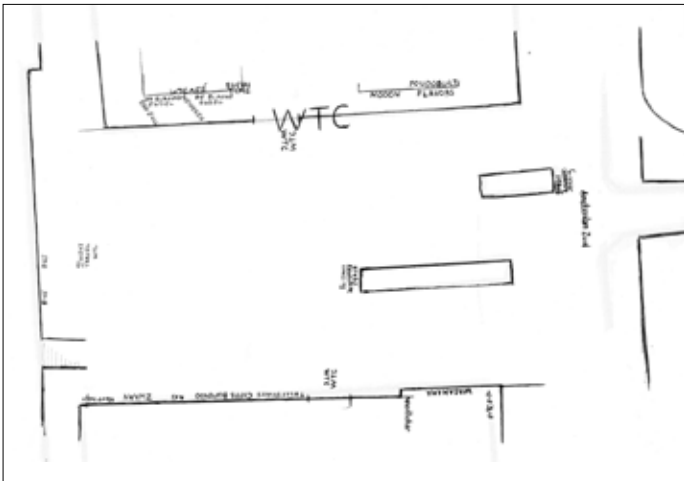
The twentieth-century city has been called 'the city of signs'.⁶ In case of Las Vegas there can be no doubt about the appropriateness of this statement. The spine of the Las Vegas is the 'Strip'. Alongside this broad motorway gargantuan casinos were erected, often directly bordering the desert. These casinos used huge roadside signs to lure the motorists in (see img. 3). In one of the many marvelous illustrations in 'Learning from Las Vegas' - in line with the subject, the book is as much a visual as a textual exercise - all the commercial signs that are visible from a small part of the Strip are mapped, correlating with how they are perceived and read from the motorway. The map shows a hustle-bustle of words, all inflected towards the direction they will have maximum visual effect on the motorists.

How can we use Las Vegas to look at the Zuidas? Is the Zuidas a 'city of signs'? One would imagine it is. A reason to think that signs have a decisive function in the Zuidas cityscape is that, like Vegas, it seems to be organized around a central spine: the axis of rail- and highways that is cutting the district in two. If we assume that high speed needs big signs (the classic 'Learning from Las Vegas'-formula), there is reason to suspect that alongside this axis forests of signs would have emerged. The

⁶ It has been said that the emergence of the so-called city of signs marks a historical break from its earlier incarnation, the city of things. The industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century was a system based on the production and distribution of mass-produced consumer goods - things. In the twentieth century the triumph of mass-production spurred the development of marketing devices to generate demand for the consumer goods, thus setting about a second phase of capitalism: a capitalism of signs. The city of signs is flooded with images and texts - road signs, graffiti, posters, political slogans, and most notably: advertisements. It wasn't until the late sixties that the influence of signs on the cityscape became a proper topic of research in urbanism and architecture. In the seventies tools from linguistics and semiotics were adopted in architectural theory to get more grip on the workings of the city of signs. Although in the work of Venturi and Scott Brown semiotics play only a small role, their basic assumption is similar. Both view architecture as a medium and also look at the incarnation of other media in architecture.

⁴ R. Venturi, D. Scott Brown, S. Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, Cambridge, Massachusetts / London 1977, p. 9

⁵ Ibid., p. 8



14. "The Long Island Duckling" from God's Own Junkyard

Zuidas is after all a commercial area, like Las Vegas. In traditional capitalism, the commercial interests are often communicated through signs. Signs are used to navigate the consumers towards the products. Yet in a financial area like the Zuidas the products - loans, stocks, insurances, investment products etc. - are abstract and invisible. There is, to echo the words of the bank officer in Formwalt's film, nothing to see. Costumers still have to be lured in, like in the case of Vegas' casinos, but this game is no longer visible. If we repeat the method of img. 3 and map all the signs visible from the axis, we come to conclusion that the Zuidas (as a physical place) is not a city of signs (img 4).

Before moving on, it is perhaps good to perform the same experiment on ground level (img. 5). Unlike Las Vegas, which is outfitted for car-use only, in the Zuidas two different speeds exist: the high speed of trains, metro's and cars on the central axis and the pedestrian speed in the core-area of the Zuidas around the train station, on the two squares and in the streets between the office blocks. Could it be that the Zuidas is closer to the bazaar - and the medieval street -types of communication

than to Las Vegas? Indeed, if we make a round-up of the signs you can take in when walking on the Zuidplein, we find quite a lot of them, all equipped in size and typography to inform and seduce pedestrians. The signs are quite timid compared to the Strip or even, closer to home, the Damrak in the center of Amsterdam. No flashing neon or moving images here. The signs and symbols of the restaurants and bars on the east side of the square are not even placed on the façade, but on the second façade, the walls behind the curtain wall, visible through the glass. On the other hand, one could argue that because of the transparency of the plinth the whole lower façade functions like an advertisement, saying: leisure area. Just like in the bazaar (see img. 2) in this pedestrian area the border between street and building, outside and inside, public space and private space is dissolved, at least visually. Visibility and proximity are crucial to this area: seeing somebody enjoying a coffee or a sandwich behind a glass wall is a more effective advertisement than a sign saying 'coffee and sandwiches'.

What is striking is that only few of the signs actually relate to the financial business that is central to the Zuidas; the rest belong to facilitating companies like restaurants and shops, or are used for orientation (signs for busses, trains and bicycle parking). The scarcity of signs is probably caused by the self-image maintained by the financial sector of being chic and serious, while signs may have the connotation of cheap business.

DECORATED SHED V.S DUCK

If the Zuidas is not the city of signs in the sense of ads, billboards and textual messages, let's consider the possibility that the environment itself can be seen as a text and the buildings as signs. 'Learning from Las Vegas' is perhaps most famous for introducing a distinction between two types of buildings: the 'duck' and the 'decorated shed' (img. 6). Both categories are presented in the first part of the book - the study of Las Vegas - but further refined in the second section. Basically, a decorated shed is a generic, conventional building with symbols applied on it, while in the case of the duck the structure is the symbol itself. In other words, the distinction has to do with the modes of communication used: a decorated shed communicates through external media, for instance textual signs or applied ornament on the façade. A duck is the medium itself; it is architecture parlante, architecture that 'speaks' through its form. The 'duck' takes its name from the Big Duck in Flanders, Long Island, a classic example of American folly-like roadside architecture. This little cement structure in the shape of a duck was built in the 1930s to attract the attention of passing vehicles (an early example of architecture anticipating speed?). The building, which belonged to a duck farm, functioned as a roadside shop to sell duck products and a billboard at the same time.

In the second part of the book the 'duck'-concept takes on a central role in the attack of postwar [American] modernism. The main point of criticism of modernism is that it has lost the critical substance it possessed in the twenties and thirties and is reduced to being merely a fancy form of formalism. Before the war, in what is dubbed the 'heroic phase' of modernism, avant-garde architects strived to create an honest architecture that expressed program and structure, in line with the credo that form follows function. After the war this changed. Program became subordinate to the rhetoric of appearance - the 'image', one could say. The 'honest' exterior in contemporary architecture, the authors of 'Learning from Las Vegas' argue, is an empty shell. Rejecting ornament, modernism now produced building-size decorative objects.

These buildings are 'ducks', sure enough; they are 'buildings as articulated sculptures' to

paraphrase Venturi.⁷ Yet there is an important difference to the Long Island Big Duck. The Big Duck shows a semantic correlation between the container (a duck-shaped building) and the contained (a shop belonging to a duck farm), while in the case of modernist ducks the container bears no semantic relation to the contained. Consequently, I think there is distinction between a 'speaking' duck (like the Big Duck) and 'deceptive' duck. The speaking duck can actually be understood as a 'sign', both in the meaning of a display of a message and in the linguistic definition of a signifier. A deceptive duck may seem to speak as well, but the words that it utters have no meaning, don't refer to things, concepts or phenomena. A

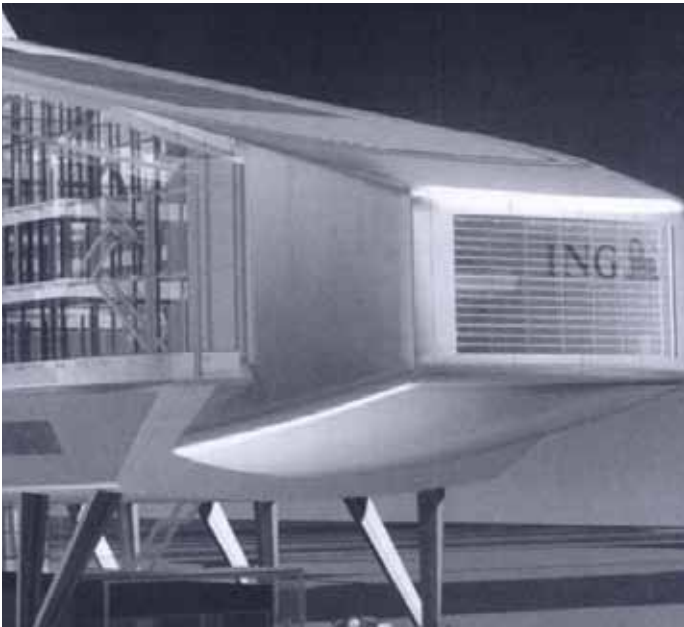


deceptive duck is a blank billboard.

DUCKS AND SHEDS AT THE ZUIDAS

If we want to grasp the complicated ways in which sheds and ducks communicate, and how sometimes ducks can be sheds and vice versa, it is helpful to look at two prime examples in the western part of the Zuidas area: the Vrije Universiteit (VU) Cancer Center by MVRDV and the ING House by Meyer en Van Schooten architecten. The temporary Cancer Center of the VU hospital is a decorated shed par excellence (img. 7). The VU has one of Europe's most distinguished cancer centers. Awaiting the realization of a new building, the VU asked MVRDV to design temporary housing. The structure consists of stapled prefabricated building units. It fully uses the possibilities of its location right next to highway. Since the center is one of trump cards of the VU hospital, the temporary building is used as a billboard (it is even on stilts, like a billboard). On the side facing the highway the building units function as dots that form letters that together spell out CCA, using the complete façade as a sign. On the short façade big white letters that can be seen from miles say VUmc. Recently the long façade was also equipped with a huge and brightly lighted sign saying Cancer Center Amsterdam VUmc, thus

7 R. Venturi, *Iconography and Electronics Upon a Generic Architecture: A View from the Drafting Room*, Cambridge, Massachusetts / London 1998, p. 125



creating maximum impact at night. Possibly the building is not only a shed, but could also be understood as a 'speaking duck': the modular construction system with cells could be an - unconscious - reference to the cell structure of cancer.

Next to Cancer Center is its antipode, the ING House by Meyer en Van Schooten architecten (img. 8). The ING House profits equally from its location alongside the highway, but in a completely different manner. It is a archetypical duck, attracting the attention of passing motorists through its unusual but elegant shape. Just like the Cancer Center the building stands on high columns that elevate it above the slope of the highway, increasing its visibility even further. If it is a billboard, what does it say? There have been attempts to 'read' this building, most notably by architectural historian Kari Joormakka, who called this building "a dramatic expression of motion." Even the shape is reminiscent of cars, thus establishing a metaphorical relation to the highway, says Joormakka. However, it is added that "[t]his approach also has some limitations and problems that were already recognized by [the early twentieth-century architect Erich] Mendelsohn, [who observed that] the shape of a steam ship is based on the requirements of real, not metaphorical motion, and remarks: "It would, then, be a complete misunderstanding of the essence of architecture to wish to apply these laws of motion in architecture.""⁸ In other words, why should a building surrounded by moving vehicles take on the same form?

A building like the ING House is a prime example of the renaissance of 'Heroic & Original' architecture at the Zuidas, or what generally called 'iconic' architecture. Quite a few of the recent towers in the area are designed by the firms of so-called 'starchitects'. The power of their trademark names have been fully exploited by the developers by naming the



buildings after their designers: Viñoly, Ito, Foster, SOM, Graves, Erick van Egeraat, UN Studio. Blocks by less famous architects get more generic names, like Amsterdam Symphony, New Amsterdam (both by Architecten Cie.) and Django (KCAP). Of course, this is a branding strategy. Like the buildings themselves, the names of celebrated designers function as business cards or logo's - or, indeed, signs.

There are two kinds of office blocks at the Zuidas: flagship buildings, for instance regional or global headquarters (ING and ABN Amro), and office buildings that are inhabited by several different companies. The buildings themselves - whether they host one company or are a shell to cover a gathering of companies - are almost all to some extent 'iconic', although headquarters are generally more tuned towards a corporate representation through striking architecture (take for instance the ING House). Yet on the other hand, a tall office tower is always to a certain extent a 'decorated shed'. For reasons of orientation, efficiency and cost reduction, the internal organization of an office tower has to be as straightforward as possible. For developers the credo is: copy the same office floor as often as possible. High-rise projects leave little room for the architect to experiment, or in any case a lot less than in smaller commissions, like private houses or pavilions. One could defend the argument that with high-rise commissions, 'architecture' [design] migrated out of the 'architecture' [structure] and became something on the surface: applied ornament (see img. 9).

Within the borders of being a shed, a building needs to look as duck-like as possible. Differently phrased we can say that some - if not most - office towers at the Zuidas are sheds trying to be ducks. A striking example is the Van Egeraat-tower. This building has a wild façade full of irregularities, and a heavy looking 'crown' seemingly defying gravity. The crown is an illusory ornament made of a light-weight material called polyester concrete. The black top of fake stone refers to the name of the law

⁸ K. Joormakka, *Flying Dutchmen: Motion in Architecture*, Basel 2002, pp. 11-13



firm using the building: De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek. Draped over the lower parts of the façades are letters that together form the first article in the Constitution. Here a tension arises between the straightforwardness of the symbolism and the suggestion of complexity in the design. The applied symbolic ornament - typical for the decorated shed - is deliberately obscured as a superficial suggestion of structural complexity - typical for the duck.

REGULATED DIVERSITY

How do the buildings on the Zuidas relate to each other? At the heart of the Zuidas, the area surrounding the station, almost all the buildings are iconic. Buildings can only be iconic when they differ from their neighbors, consequently all the buildings in this area are singular. In terms of urban planning, the Zuidas is the child an unlikely pair of parents: Manhattan as described by Rem Koolhaas and the medieval town as celebrated by New Urbanism. From New Urbanism the Zuidas took the ideal of a compact mixed-use city, designed with old typologies like piazzas and narrow 'medieval' street configurations. From Manhattan it inherited the ideal of a juxtaposition of buildings with different heights and in different styles, held together in a grid [img. 10]. It is because the grid allowed the proximity of opposites that New York could become what Koolhaas calls "a mosaic of episodes ... that contest each other."⁹ So on the Zuidas the heavy looking eight-storey high neo-baroque Graves-building is enclosed by the theatrically and blatantly dressed tower by Erick van Egeraat and the neo-modernist perpendicular Rafael Viñoly-tower with its dramatically sloping fire escape stairs. Of course these buildings do not actually represent different 'episodes' - they are designed and built almost simultaneously - but the diverseness is nevertheless intended to

impart the suggestion of organic development. That this diverseness is alien to Amsterdam's planning tradition of the twentieth century does not seem to matter. The scale, of course, is different to the New York scale. The Zuidas is a Madurodam version of Manhattan, a dwarfed 'Delirious New York', crammed into one small strip of high-rise [that is obviously very low in comparison with the 'real' Manhattan].

Currently the buildings flanking the axis all profit from the visibility. An icon relies on a quick impression, an image, a shape, a form. The positioning towards the bundle of highways and railways ensures an audience and a certain distance from the icons, to perceive them as such. But if everything goes according to plan, the existing elevated axis of highways and railways will be replaced in a few years by an underground axis. New buildings will be constructed on top of it. It will be interesting to see if the buildings surrounding the Amsterdam Zuid-station survive as 'icons' when these plans go through. Will they have to fight for attention? Will they cancel each other out?

THE AUTOMONUMENT

Before we conclude, let's return briefly to the resemblance between the ING House and a car. Although the similarity is striking, I'm not convinced that the building is meant to 'represent' a car. The ING House could equally resemble a old-fashioned vacuum cleaner, a shoe or a - more convincing in the Dutch context - a skate. The symbolic meaning communicated through a building design like this one is purposely made more ambiguous. "The more nicknames our building gets, the better," one of the project architects of the Van Egeraat tower said in a lecture. This ambiguity in contemporary iconic buildings is what Charles Jencks in 2005 called "multiply coded enigmatic signs."¹⁰ Because they don't refer to anything concrete, iconic buildings support multiple interpretations and yet remain fundamentally enigmatic.

The ING House is, like many other buildings in the Zuidas, is a deceptive duck: it seems to speak, it seems to represent something, but ultimately it is mute. In his polemic description of the skyscraper craze in New York between the two World Wars, Koolhaas notes that this is typical for a certain kind of monumentality: 'Automonumentality': "Beyond a certain critical mass each structure becomes a monument, or at least raises that expectation through its size alone, even if the sum or the nature of the individual activities it accommodates do not deserve a monumental expression."¹¹ Size does matter, when it comes to the monumentality of

⁹ R. Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, Rotterdam 1994, p. 21. Also see p. 97

¹⁰ Cited in a report of a discussion between Charles Jencks and Peter Eisenman at Columbia University, October 26, 2005: M. Currey, 'The New Iconic Building?', *Metropolis Magazine*, <http://www.metropolismag.com/story/20051118/the-new-iconic-building> [consulted on 06-01-2011]. See also: C. Jencks, *The Iconic Building: The Power of Enigma*, London 2005

¹¹ R. Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, Rotterdam 1994, p. 100

buildings; function does not. The Automomument - a building that owes its monumentality to its size, can no longer represent. "This category of monument presents a radical, morally traumatic break with the conventions of symbolism. Its physical manifestation does not represent an abstract ideal, an institution of exceptional importance, a three-dimensional, readable articulation of a social hierarchy, a memorial; it merely is itself and through sheer volume cannot avoid being a symbol - an empty one, available for meaning as a billboard is for advertisement. It is a solipsism, celebrating only the fact of its disproportionate existence, the shamelessness of its own process of creation."¹²

According to Koolhaas, it is this discrepancy between container and contained [the words are his] that is the main 'symptom of Automonumentality'. Koolhaas compares this break with a lobotomy, a surgical intervention in the brain 'to relieve some mental disorders by disconnecting thought processes from emotions.' Separating the exterior from the interior is the architectural equivalent. "In this way the Monolith spares the outside world the agonies of the continuous changes raging inside it."¹³

At the Zuidas many buildings are essentially decorated sheds acting as deceptive ducks, with façades that are the main carriers of meaning, but disclosing unclear and often conflicting messages. In the end, the façade is indeed a flat surface, obscuring the agonies of the many transactions, business deals and stock price changes happening inside the building. Ironically, that is exactly what the public accuses the financial world of in the aftermath of the credit crunch: that it is opaque and produces products that are deliberately made abstract and over-complicated. Ultimately the nonrepresentational façades in the movie of Zachary Formwalt do seem to represent something: a business that creates non-representational products.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p. 11

SURPLUS

Ruben Pater

Autonomy.....
Capital.....
Environment.....
Everyday.....
Gezellig.....
Identity.....
Informal.....
Local.....

At the beginning of the industrial revolution, economist Adam Smith discussed the notion of value as a paradox. He wondered how something useful like water can have such a little value, when a useless commodity like diamond has great value. Since then the notion of value has been discussed by economics.

Karl Marx later introduced the notion of surplus value. He proposed the idea that the price of a product should be equal to the price of its materials and labor combined. Instead capitalist paid laborers not the value equal to the value added by their labor, but just enough to keep them alive. The profit that was made by the capitalists on the laborers value is what Marx called the surplus value.

As a global financial centre, the Zuidas is a space where value is everything. Having the highest realestate price in the Netherlands, return value is essential to any planning decision. It is not suprising that elements with little financial revenue like parks, playground and open water, are lacking at the Zuidas.

Despite its high price, many spaces at the Zuidas are empty due to the financial crisis and fluctuating markets, leaving expensive places without purpose. This project is a way of using this space temporarily in supplying a common need. Using surplus materials, spaces and people to fill voids left by the free market.

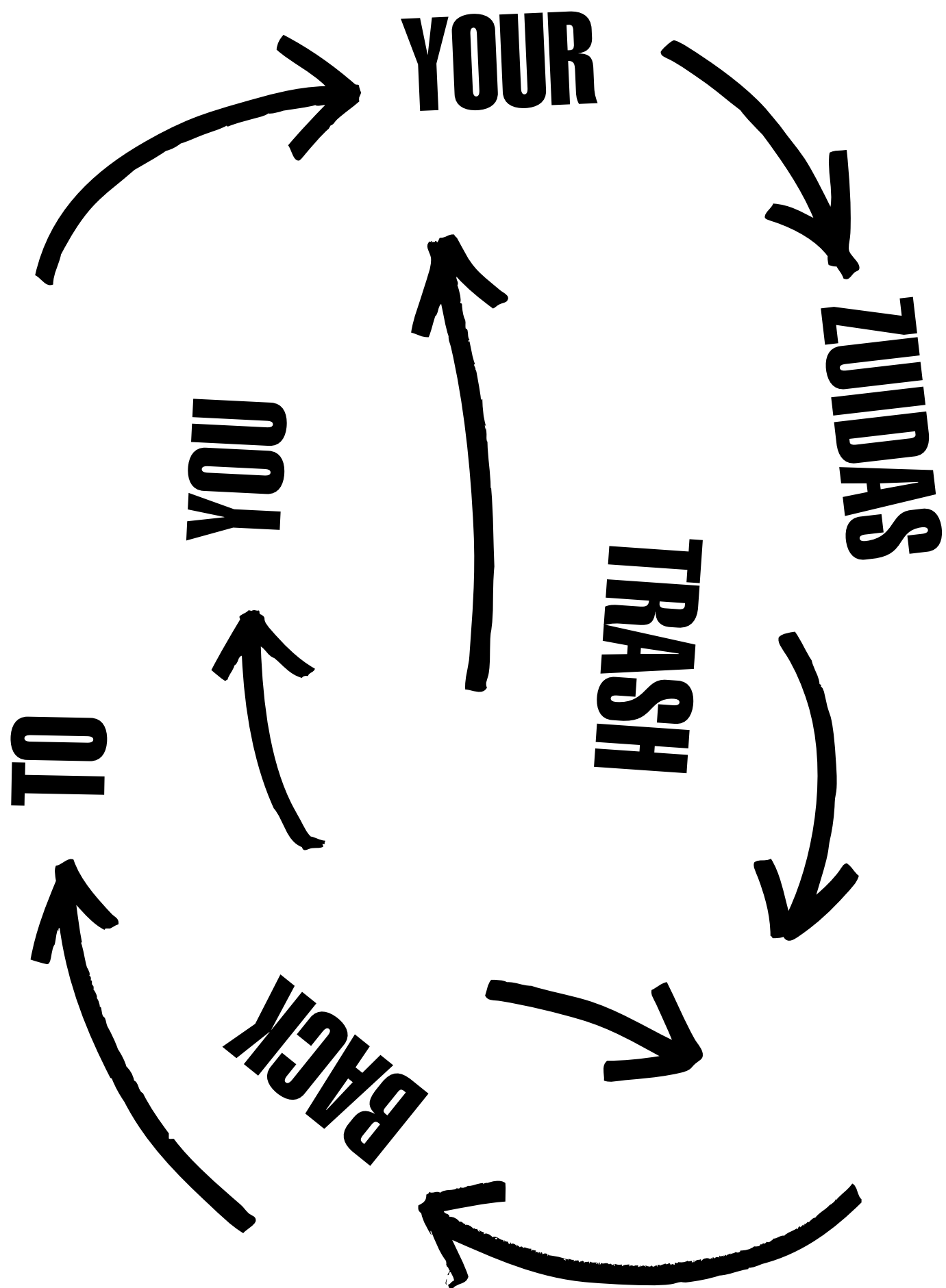
SURPLUS is a temporary bar which pops-up in empty office spaces at the Zuidas where food and drinks are free. Discarded materials, objects and foods from neighboring businesses are collected, remixed and constitute the bars inventory. This way excess materials can be re-used and create a space for social interaction and meeting other Zuidas inhabitants and workers, without barriers of income or social class. A recycle loop is set up in coordination with facility managers and restaurants at the Zuidas to create an alternative waste economy. SURPLUS is an art project that unites artists, business owners land inhabitants of the Zuidas in an informal and positive way using surplus commodities of the Zuidas economy.

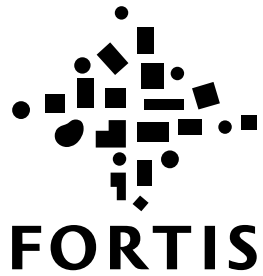
**SURPLUS BAR
SURPLUS FOOD
SURPLUS SOUNDS
SURPLUS FURNITURE
SURPLUS DRINKS
SURPLUS CARD
SURPLUS VIDEO
SURPLUS WORKER**





Surplus material found at the Akzo Nobel headquarters,
january 2011.





Postbank



stadsdeel ZuiderAmstel

**LIVING
CITY**

These logo's have been part of the Zuidas media landscape and have become obsolete through corporate identity restyling or takeovers. Remnants of this marketing and design waste can still be found in the Zuidas environment.

**SURPLUS, AS
THE AMOUNT BY
WHICH THE VALUE
OF THE PRODUCT
EXCEEDS THE
VALUE OF ITS
CONSTITUENT
ELEMENTS.**

— KARL MARX DAS KAPITAL

WASTE

=

TASTE

INTO THE FAÇADE

Yuri Veerman

Ambition.....
Context.....
Perception:::::::::::::::::::::
Real.....
Virtual.....

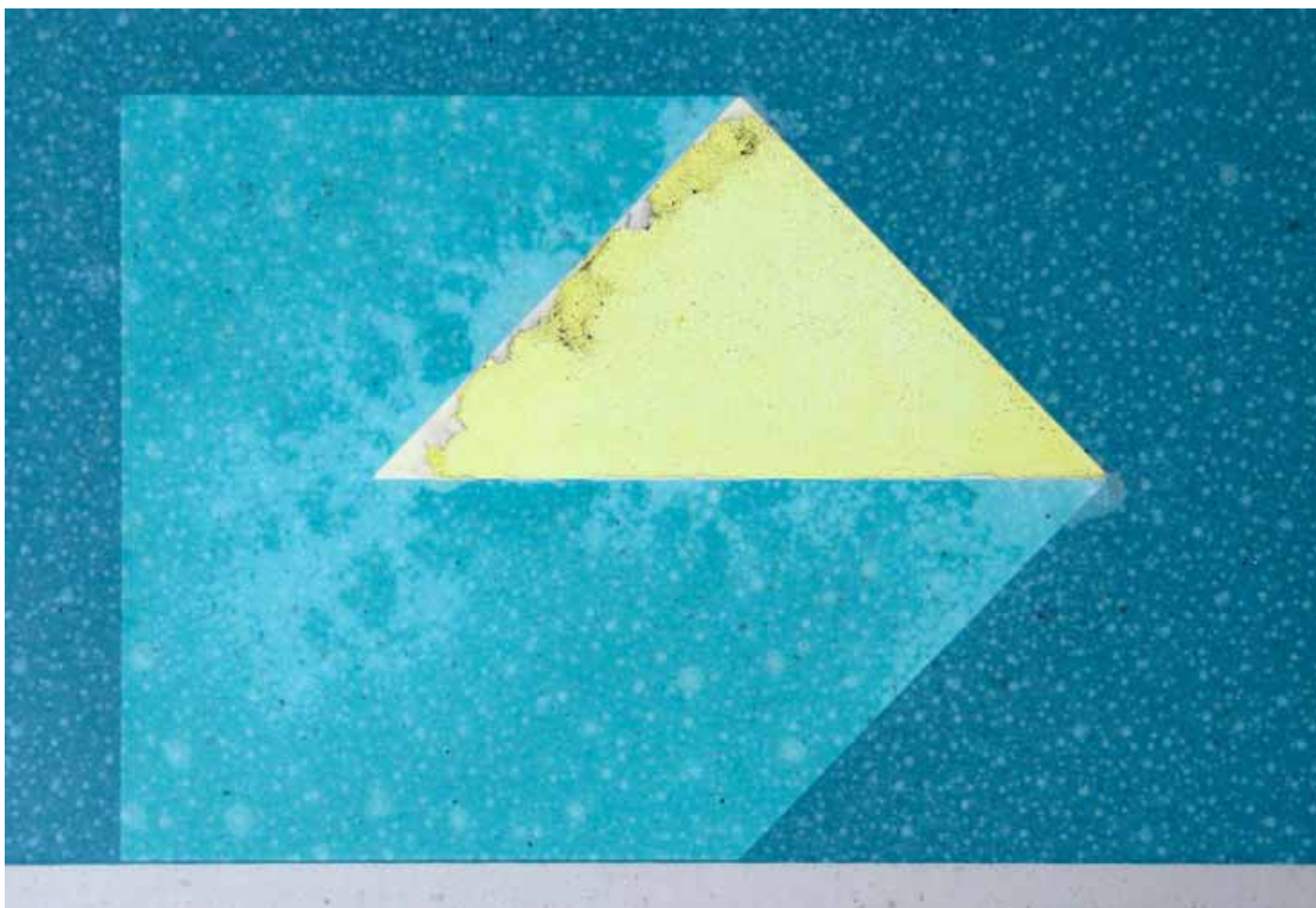
It's mainly outside, when you walk outside through the Zuidas. It's mainly façade, passing through. Impressive façade I must say. Big I-shaped blocks that say 'I'. Although these buildings are officially not skyscrapers, they're quite tall for Dutch standards.

The simplest buildings are my favourites, the ones that are basically a window times a thousand. As if one window, as a single cell organism reproduced itself until it became a building. And after that, that building reproduced itself into a slightly modified building, changing pattern, but remaining it's repetitiveness and unity. The buildings may alter, but they have to stay within the family of their block. A block consisting of buildings, consisting of windows. In between the buildings there is space to move, from one door to another, there are objects to rest while moving, and there are necessities installed to make the place look like an actual place. We see spaces that identify themselves as a bar, a gym or a lunchroom. Each space functioning in the way it identifies itself.

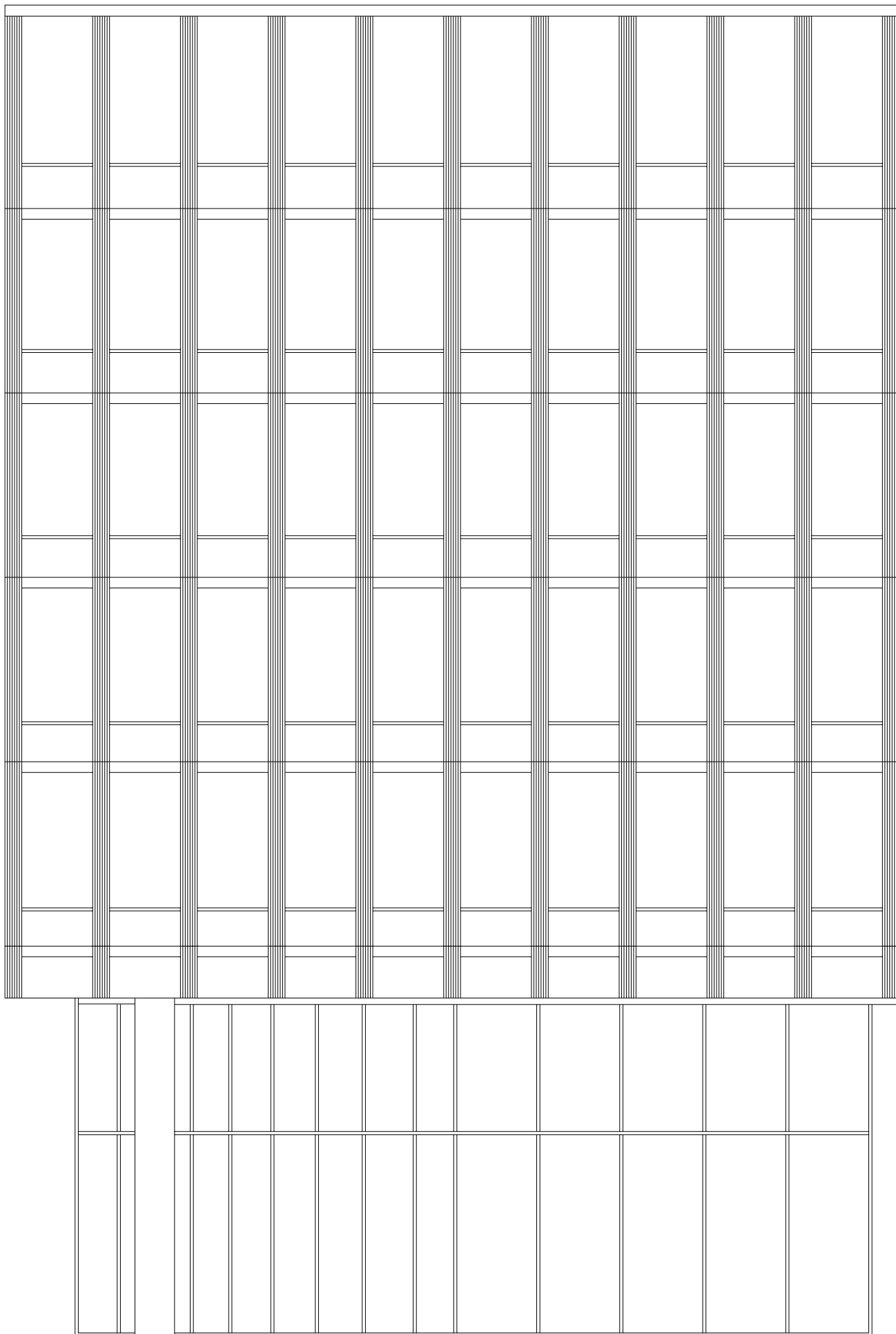
I scan the surface of the Zuidas. On the pavement, in between the bricks are cigarette butts. A lot of them. There is an occasional weed, fighting it's way up. There is some rubbish on the streets, but not a lot, it's mainly gum, butts and cigarette packages. The windows are richer, holding traces of raindrops, bird poo, layers of dust, smudges of someones fingers or hands, pieces of glue from signs that have been removed. But all these irregularities are too small to notice from a distance.

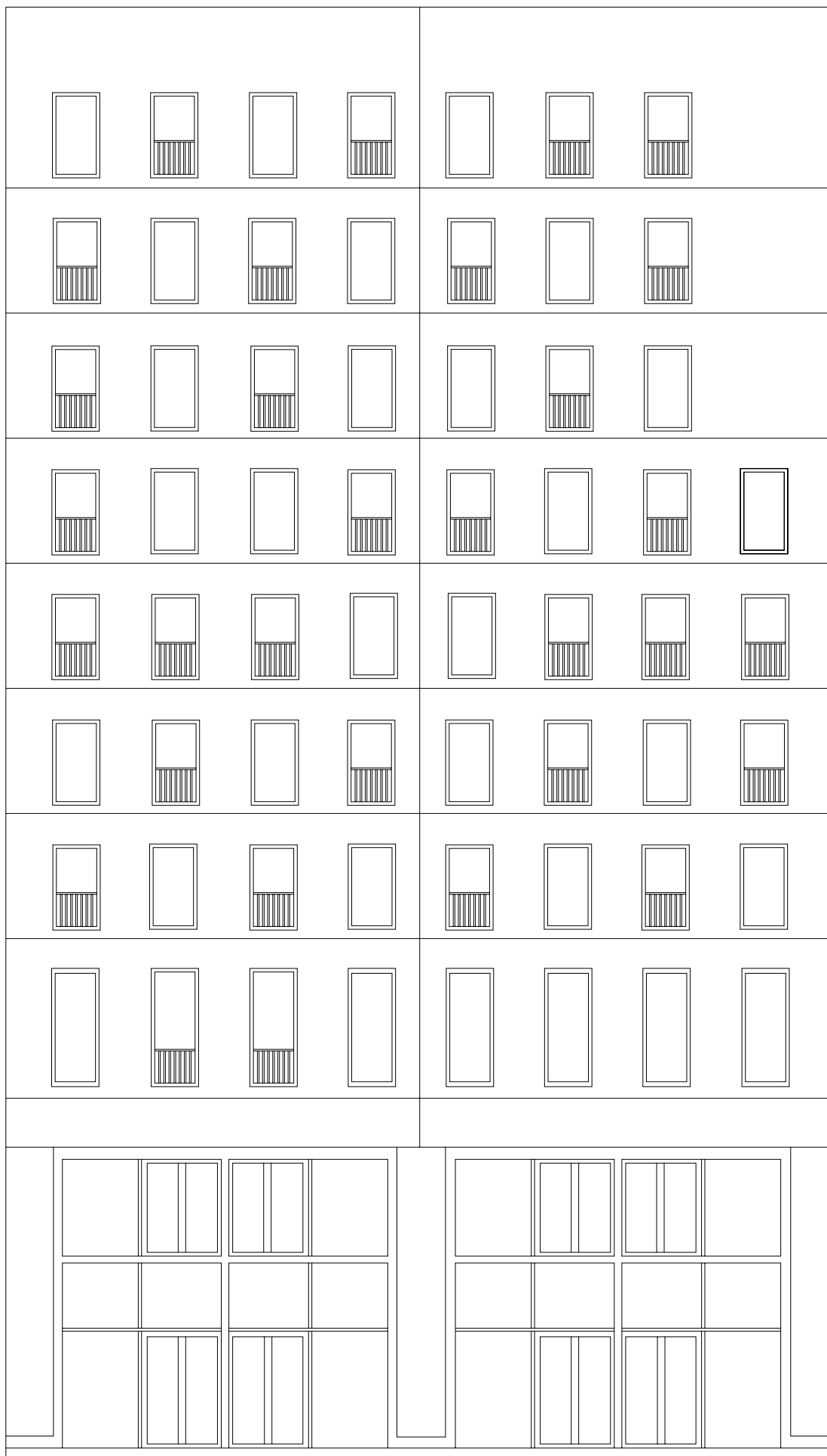
In this area of grids, the building -the unit times a thousand- does it's job representing what it contains by shielding it's containments. It functions by making certain that the outside deals with a well designed representation, instead of that which the design is said to represent. While the content of these glass containers maybe in constant flux, the container along with it's title, holds it's shape. At night, lights inside the container reveal activity, or presence at least, but this -along with the image of moving silhouettes- is as much as the representation is willing to represent.

What designers and architects can not do (because it is not part of the brief), time and space do for them. After their design leaves the realm of sketches, models, predictions and presentations, a layer of space and time is instantly applied onto the surface of the corporate structure, giving the one dimensional representation the depth it lacks. It is the dirt on the window and the weed between the pavement that welcomes the design into the real world of the public sphere.



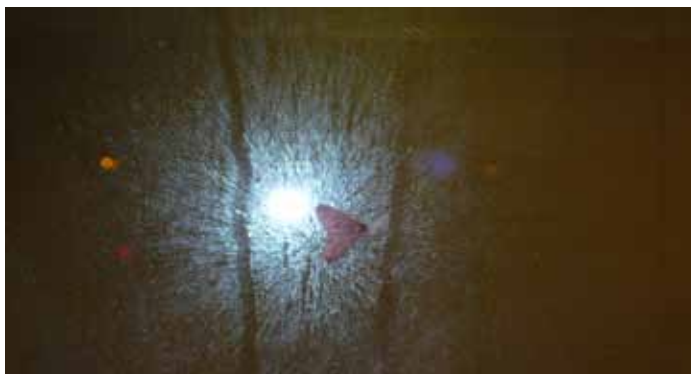
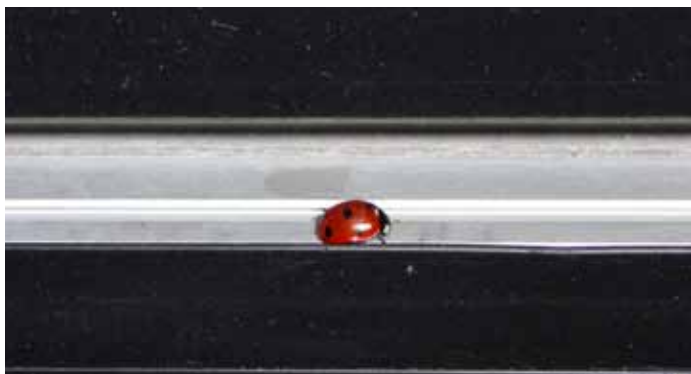
Shell and ABN AMRO after space and time.







Order restored / chaos revisited (Zuidas and other locations)





Boekel de Nérée. Pencil on paper. 100 x 70 cm

THE DOUBLE PROMISE OF VIRTUALITY ON THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF CULTURE IN THE CASE OF VIRTUEEL MUSEUM ZUIDAS

Stefaan Vervoort
Joana Meroz

Autonomy.....
Context.....
Critical.....
Culture.....
Institution.....
Museum.....
Perception.....
Private.....
Public.....
Virtual.....

THERE IS NO SUCH A THING AS A FREE LUNCH

When the Amsterdam municipality and private parties first formulated in 2001 the development plans for what is now called the Zuidas, a key role was ascribed to the visual arts. From the very first the involved parties believed that art would be essential for the economic development of the new district. As a result, two years later, the Virtual Museum Zuidas (VMZ) was set up. The programme of this institution was envisioned as unfolding into two main activities: the central one being "co-constructing with architecture," which eyes the incorporation of permanent artworks in urban design, architecture and public space; and the second one being the "auxiliary projects," whose goal is to boost the Zuidas' attractiveness and enlivening the residential/work district during the construction phase by the combination of architecture, urban planning, design and visual art. In this dual form, the tasks of art according to the Virtual Museum Zuidas are:

- to improve the standard of quality of life and to promote energy and vigour
- to construct a new identity for the district
- to create an agreeable atmosphere suited to the tastes and inclinations of the inhabitants
- to enhance the area's national and international distinction and to make it more appealing for businesses to settle in the area
- to facilitate the "a high degree of function-mixing"
- to find the right balance between global and local, multifaceted and yet made for people.

It is difficult to ignore a nagging, albeit vague feeling that something is problematic in this list of scenarios. Two possibilities seem to present themselves: either one is inclined to view this job-description for art suspiciously, as if it were intended for a branding campaign rather than for a cultural programme; or one takes a pragmatic approach, realizing that art too must be placed within the context of our service-driven, post-Fordist, neoliberal political economy. The first option reveals an assumption that art must be *autonomous*. This in fact means nothing more than the belief that, art, in order for it to be art, must necessarily be kept in a realm separate from the messy, greedy, material transactions of daily life. As such, this art 'functions' when it provides an alternative to the everyday life. This implies that art objects should not be confused with the other mundane objects populating our world, such as design or buildings—in short, with any other object with a clear social function. If this can be labelled an 'idealist' position, the latter option betrays a so-called 'pragmatic' stance. It figures that we live in an advanced capitalist society in which nothing comes or is given for free. It asks: who is paying for that autonomous piece of art and who will

benefit from it? What is the added value that art brings that other [cheaper] goods and services are unable to provide? Following from this market-driven logic, it concludes that art must somehow be able to 'pay up' its expense: it must be able to 'deliver' a measurable, calculable social benefit. This position holds that art must be *heteronomous* in order to be justifiable.

Discussions involving culture, and moreover the 'point', 'use' or 'necessity' of art, have never been simple or straight-forward. This just seems to be part of the game. It is also well-known that often deliberations about present circumstances seem to have a short-sighted historical perspective, seeing whatever it is that happens 'now' as much more urgent and complex than whatever came before. Having said that, it is difficult to not try to make a case for the precariousness in which art finds itself today, squeezed as it is between two positions that do not leave it a lot other space for developing and being, perhaps, 'something else' that is neither autonomous nor heteronomous. This exact concern is being raised by a countless number of publications and institutions. Particularly since the widespread rise of Right Wing politics, the main concern has little to do with whether something is art or not, but rather regards *how* and *whether* art should be justified at all.

Between these two equally abstract notions regarding the social function of art and culture, institutions such as the VMZ operate daily, taking concrete decisions that blur, enact-or altogether bypass-any clear standpoints on the social function of art. The VMZ can at first seem like an easy target for criticism, particularly when it fuses ideological with pragmatic arguments into visionary contentions such as that art creates a "typical Amsterdam flavour, original, rooted in local and regional culture, self-willed, impossible to copy, enduring, experimental, innovative" (Vision text 2007). While it is tempting to dismiss this mission statement as populist, it also epitomises the fact that institutional practices too need to conform to pressures from the outside, and that they can only operate critically from within a neoliberal logic. As economic theory has taught us long ago, "there's no such thing as a free lunch."

Yet the question remains: which argument can defend culture from the aforementioned external pressures? To find an answer, we need to address the relation between art and society afresh, meaning, from both the autonomous and the heteronomous perspectives. These questions are as old as art itself, yet nevertheless, they lay at the core of the VMZ's functioning. This essay will contextualise the foundation of the VMZ in a broader cultural framework, and discern how the VMZ too negotiates the role of culture within a rising socio-economic network, here more specifically, that of the Amsterdam Zuidas.

Seen in retrospect, the foundation and communication of the Virtual Museum is very much a product of its time. The VMZ was constituted parallel to the abundant art critical debates on the public nature of art institutions, and thrived on coinciding artistic and curatorial initiatives of the last decade. For one, it arose in the wake of the relational and societal turn in art practices of the mid to late 1990s. Following Nicolas Bourriaud, this form of cultural production would indeed take as its horizon "the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space", yet it would equally reach far beyond the selective range of artistry he once labelled relational aesthetics.¹ Contemporary art sought to generally reclaim its social agency in the age of capitalism, fed up with the ongoing commodification voiding the critical power of the artwork on the one hand, and with the often hermetic self-reflexivity of institutional critique on the other. It did so by aiming its critical arrows at society at large rather than at the art institution, and by nestling its activities increasingly in strands of research and theoreticism. Artistic production now materialised in historical fact-finding or social interpellations in-situ, and the artist, once a solemn manufacturer of painterly and sculptural goods, mutated into what Andrea Fraser called 'a post-Fordist service provider.'² Liam Gillick's discussion platforms, Thomas Hirschhorn's monuments for philosophy and Jorge Pardo's library decorations all exemplify such an artistry, accommodating knowledge production under various guises and forms. As a consequence, public education surreptitiously came to exceed aesthetic experience as the fundamental condition for a political work of art, and discourse and allegory - once that implicit surplus of postmodern cultural production - served overtly as its social legitimisation. It thus strikes as no surprise that the abovementioned artists furiously engage in art critical polemics, seen as that theoretical output validates their artistic practice - not to mention culture at large. As such, relational art dually instrumentalises an *artistic transparency*. On the one hand, it rescues the critical artwork from nullification through interactivity and readability; on the other, it legitimises art within a capitalist society through the argument of public education.

Secondly, and in alignment with the increased relational sociability in art, various freelance curators sought to shirk their independent position for reattachment to a single institution. The independent exhibition maker, which had been the curatorial norm

1 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Dijon, Les Presses Du Reel, 1998, p. 14.

2 Andrea Fraser, 'What's intangible, transitory, mediating, participatory, and rendered in the public sphere?', in: Andrea Fraser, *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 2005, p. 1.

from Harald Szeemann in the late 1970s to Hans Ulrich Obrist in the 1990s, was reoriented in favour of a fresh and experimental institutionalism. Various European institutions broadened traditional exhibition production through residency schemes, lectures and conferences, to some extent incorporating the legacy of relational aesthetics to mutate the institution from the inside. Maria Lind's Kunstverein Munich, Catherine David's Witte de With in Rotterdam, and Charles Esche's Rooseum in Malmo all are examples of what art critic Alex Farquharson coined 'new institutionalism': art centres validating social engagements as their core occupation.³ Workshops and group discussions activated staff, artists and audience in a participatory and dialogical engagement, making up institutional identity from marginal functions. Very much like relational art practices, these institutions too had³ a double goal. On the one hand, they aimed to reactivate their role as a public site, after the largely sovereign and even hermetic institutional practices of the 1980s - think Rudi Fuchs or Jan Hoet. On the other, they sought to legitimise their operativity under the socio-political pressures of today's cultural industries, as art galleries and fairs too incorporate the presentation of art. Consequently, the institutions held the promise of creating alternative forms of publicness to the by now dissolved bourgeois social sphere. Following Farquharson once more, new institutionalism "side-steps the problem of the white cube altogether" by relating not too architecture, but too a "competing public in the plural" or a "collective autonomy writ large."⁴ It foresaw in an enclosed public environment that could counter the shrinking welfare state, the erosion of social bond and the global hegemony of neoliberal economics from a position⁵ juxtaposed to everyday reality. The followed strategy thus could be termed *institutional opacity*, which again has ideological as well as pragmatic features in the guises of counter-publicness and societal legitimisation.

One needs only to skip through a recent number of Open magazine to see the myriad of voices following in a similar logic as Farquharson - preaching eagerly such terms as 'counter-publics' (Sheik), 'ideological intimacy' (Tuinen), 'autonomous public art' (Boomgaard), or 'institutional opacity' (Möntmann). However, a sound note of warning is equally in place here. Similar to Farquharson's warning that 'the danger is that the institution becomes a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk* ultimately authored not by artists but by curators,' we must see to it that new institutionalism walks the talk.⁵ And here, the majority of projects would appear to fall short of their intentions, the pragmatic side often overtaking the ideological one. Art historian Sven Lütticken

cunningly grasped this evolution, as he retroactively commented on his own claim for a 'secret publicity' art sphere:

"Since Max Weber, many authors have elaborated on the autonomy of different social spheres and disciplines as a constituting element of modern society-and, as Harold Rosenberg argued in the 1950s, each of these social sectors tends to develop a purist streak, developing "its procedures in terms of its own possibilities without reference to the needs of any other profession or of society as a whole." Sadly, his words seem all too applicable to many New Institutional projects. There is a faux-Habermasian idealism at play, the institution positing itself as an uncorrupted *Öffentlichkeit* [publicness] in which people from different academic backgrounds can gather; however, a lack of precision often leads to a simple juxtaposition rather than dialogue or confrontation, and the publicness boils down to a convivial simulation of debate and discourse. In this way, New Institutionalism is ultimately complicit with relational art, operating as its discursive double."⁶

THE DOUBLE PROMISE OF VIRTUALITY

In the wake of relational practices and New Institutionalism, the currents of artistic transparency and institutional opacity not only have come to dominate current debate, but form the ideological germ from which has sprung the Virtual Museum. For as it puts into practice artistic research and institutional idiosyncrasy, the VMZ forms not just another offshoot of New Institutionalism, but constitutionally embodies it, both in structure as in terminology. Firstly, for artists, the inclusion of the term 'virtual' in the museum's title holds strong ideological connotations, even though rooted in a somewhat sloganistic interpretation of "an artistic climate [in] an age of cultural-commercial theme parks." As the museum 'without walls' promises little to no mediation, the arena of cultural action integrally coincides with that of the public realm, and artists can freely create "new forms of publicness" through social engagement. And, whereas the public interventions obviously quite literally enact on their surroundings, the projects grouped under the six-month residence programme of Free Spaces are cleverly endowed with similar social agency. Although the artists operate from studios located in the same building as the ZVM itself - the former St. Nicolaas Cloister edging the Zuidas - the idea still holds that having them live and work 'on location' will stimulate "social involvement" and further "the human dimension" of art. Giving artists "hardly any themes or requirements" except to develop "fine new critical insights and different, unexpected approaches and perspectives," the Free Spaces

3 See: Alex Farquharson, 'Bureaux de change', in: *Frieze*, issue 101, September 2006, [http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/bureaux_de_change/].

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Sven Lütticken, 'Once more on publicness: a postscript to Secret Publicity', in: *Filip*, 12, 2010, [<http://allip.ca/content/once-more-on-publicness-a-postscript-to-secret-publicity/>].

brief proclaims to foresee the artists in a maximum of sovereignty, and to impede them as little as possible. Nevertheless, as is apparent from the artistic outcomes spanning from Lieven De Boeck's land ownership to Bik van der Pol's quest for four-leaf clovers, the context of the Zuidas is imposed as a subject of work. Artists are free to research whatever they please - as long as it involves their working environment in one way or another. As such, the cultural production only metaphorically springs unmediated from the nexus of artist and society; in reality, the institutional commissioner stealthily stands in-between.

Secondly, on an institutional level, the notion of virtuality implies a resistance to material sedimentation or concrete pinpointing that equally rings ideological. Here, the museum inscribes itself in the register of the ephemeral, not in its artistic output nor in its institutional establishment - see the material artworks and museum architecture - but in its mode of operation. Occupying "the entire Zuidas [as] a lively and changing museum," the material formation of the VMZ coincides with the Zuidas or is non-existent at all, its cultural activities disclosed solely to an intimate club of admirers. Only those who have mapped the artworks or browsed the museum's website know where artworks are to be recognised as such, and it is this digital consensus that forms the institutional realm. Accordingly, the claims of 'counter-publicness' and 'ideological intimacy' in Open magazine would here come into practice, seen as the notion of virtuality hulls the VMZ in the aforementioned opacity. However, while the motivations for such an institutional formation may lay in the resistance to a dominant social logic, as in the logic of Farquharson, its precariousness equally shows in the VMZ. Here, it is epitomised by the 'co-constructing with architecture' programme, the Virtual Museum's chief and most valued activity. Artists are invited at the planning stage of city sectors, buildings and public squares under the premises for them to "improve the liveability, liveliness and character of the location" with "structural interventions". More importantly though, the particular commissioning ensures that the fate of the artworks are "inextricably and permanently connected to the city," so as that they "only lose their function and agency when the Zuidas is demolished." While this assertion integrates artworks in architecture and public space, dubiously echoing the social commitment of the Gesamtkunstwerk in Berlage's Plan Zuid (South Plan), it grounds the institution in the material realm of the Zuidas as well. Here, the social functioning of the public artwork depends on its physical bearers rather than its institutional legitimisation, transforming the latter's cultural authority to that of the built environment. Engaged public artworks are recognised as such - as long as they are embedded into architecture. Aligning institutional powers with those of architecture, it could be argued that the museum mutates from virtual to material, and

its status from opaque to perfectly clear. As the Virtual Museum undermines itself in the justification of committed art through architecture, here too the institutional opacity t'hus appears but a metaphor, and the promise of virtuality again turns out a disillusion.⁷

YOU CANNOT HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO

Thus, we come full circle and seem to be left with one of two options when arguing for the 'necessity' of art. The first argues that art is necessary because it offers an escape from the marketplace of daily life. This is the option in which art functions as autonomous, opaque and secret; in other words, in opposition to and separate from life. The second option sees art as necessary when it functions in *terms of* daily life: when art provides a particular type of service, just like a school or hospitals provide services. In this option, the autonomy of art—which simply means the awareness that an object is 'different' from the objects of daily life and is therefore inaccessible—must dissolve and art must become heteronomous, which means that it must become transparent to the point that it blends into its surroundings and as such is able to properly provide its social services. Before tackling whether or not art even should be justified and how to go about it, it is important to realize that at the core of both arguments lie beliefs regarding what the autonomy of art means. One of the fundamental characteristics of these beliefs is that autonomy and heteronomy, opacity and transparency will remain forever irreconcilable: you cannot have your cake and eat it too. Rather than trying to argue for one or the other side, it is also possible to consider that it is the assumption that autonomy and heteronomy are antithetical that locks the thinking about the relationship between art and society into a vicious circularity. So we must question whether it is not the premise on which this assumption is based on that is problematic, simply supporting a commonplace yet ultimately sterile notion of autonomy.

Our dominant notion of autonomy today still lives in the shadows of the legacy from Marx and the critical theorists—famously among whom Theodor W. Adorno. In order to grasp Adorno's notion of autonomy, it is necessary to contextualize it in terms of the burgeoning consumer capitalist economy of the first half of the twentieth century. This era saw the rise of a consumer society filled with consumer goods equally available to anyone. This 'equal' access to goods—which in principle meant that everyone had the same 'right' to the same things, irrespective of one's social background—was bannered as a proof of democracy: everyone has equal 'freedom' to acquire the same things. Now, Adorno argued that this notion of autonomy was just a defence of free-market capitalism since it sought to "justify an arrangement in

⁷ 7 All the quotes surrounding the Virtual Museum originate from: Virtual Museum Zuidas, Vision, 2001, 2007.

which people are entitled to whatever they have not stolen [and] can do with it what they like [so long as those doings do not coerce others].”⁸ Moreover, Adorno saw art just as complicit in this scheme as any other consumer good. Seeking to disassociate the notion of autonomy from that of political-economic logic, Adorno attempted to dislodge any claim to ‘function’ that might be imposed on art. Thus, the hallmark of autonomous art became the impossibility to instrumentalize it in any way; indeed, according to Adorno, the most significant social function of autonomous art was precisely to not have one. This results in the notion that autonomy is antithetical to the market of everyday life. It is from these premises that it becomes possible to argue about the necessity of art: either as autonomous (as championed by Adorno) or as heteronomous (which simply entails flipping the argument, as we saw in the previous section).

the convolutions and apparent contradictions between art and society. And yet, it might provide us with better tools for thinking about, analysing, and evaluating, the concrete and virtual daily practices of institutions such as Virtual Museum Zuidas.

Philosopher Jacques Rancière devoted a substantial portion of his oeuvre precisely to the question of how to avoid locking the notion of autonomy in a vicious circle, as he suggested Adorno had done. To this end, he developed a conceptual frame that breaks down any opposition between the market-driven logic of everyday life and autonomy. For Rancière, autonomy happens in the moment when a person, or group of people, rises up against a particular injustice done onto them by the dominant social order. For example: when minorities openly demonstrate, demanding equal treatment. According to Rancière, what happens is that those people become, in the act of demonstration of their equality, autonomous from the status quo. However, this also means that autonomy comes about *only, and always, in relation to their social context*. In this framework, although subjects and society are in seeming opposition, in fact they are completely dependent on each other for having any meaning at all. There is thus no opposition between autonomous or heteronomous art, since the Rancièrian notion of autonomy itself is completely bound up with society.

If we attempt to answer the question posed in the beginning of the essay, “Which argument can defend culture from external pressures?” from these new premises, we would first need to modify the question to “Which argument can defend culture when we no longer see it in opposition to any ‘external’ pressures?” To be clear, to propose that ‘we’ as a society did that would amount to a pipe dream, as it would imply wishing for a large-scale political and economic change which is simply not only well beyond the scope of our considerations here, but also is missing the point. What we are interested in is thinking about the necessity of art once we leave behind the apparent contradictions between autonomy and heteronomy, opacity and transparency. Such a vision certainly seems greyer, more vague and less risqué than the thrill of exposing

8 Todd May, *The Political Thought of Jacques Rancière. Creating Equality*, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008, p. 17.

THE ZUIDAS 'VIRTUAL SPACE'

Seungyong Moon

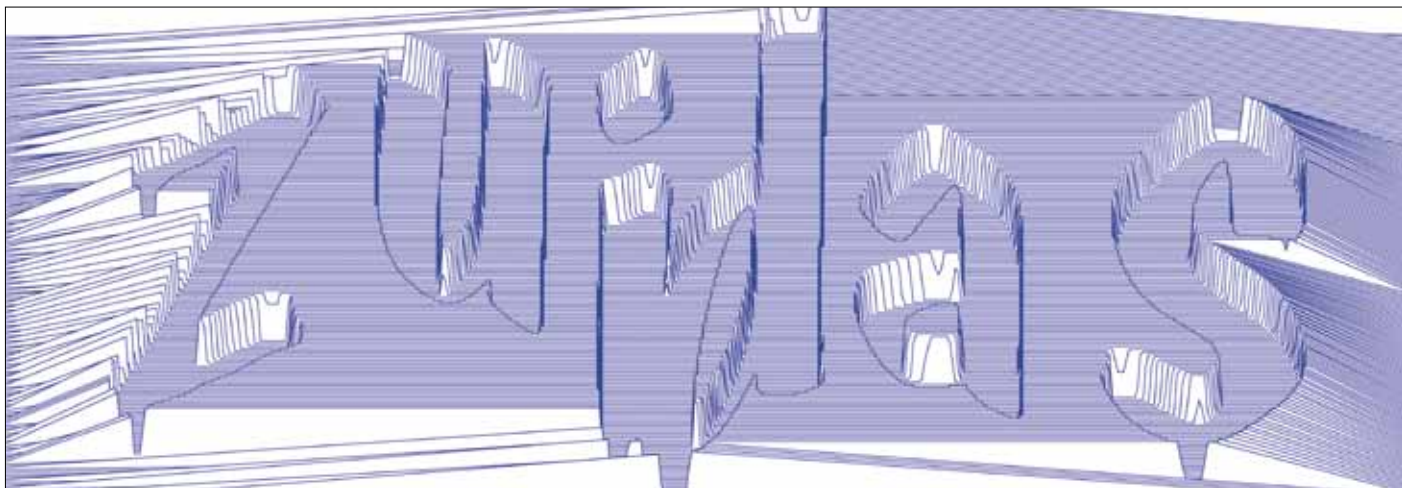
Virtual:.....

Space:.....

Since I researched about the Zuidas, I could find some articles through many mediums. Unsurprisingly, I was able to get some news which admire The Zuidas as a large, rapidly developing business district in the city of Amsterdam. And also some politicians and people believed that The Zuidas is a combination of working, living and entertainment; a place where international companies, expatriates and internationally oriented inhabitants of Amsterdam feel at home. However, The more I researched, the more I was able to find a lot of news that have somewhat negative opinions on The Zuidas. For these different reasons, my curiosity was growing and I wanted to figure out what it is going on now.

As time goes by, The Zuidas seems to be getting further away from its own plan. For instance, people hardly live and visit there and on Sunday, every store is also closed because almost no one lives in the Zuidas. In addition, there are many buildings which are empty until now. Given this situation, for me, it seems to be a disjunction between the space and citizens or the master plan of the Zuidas and the present. Also I think that The Zuidas seems more perfect when it was made with its blueprint because it is also somewhat dysfunctional until now.

With this curiosity about The Zuidas, I would like to borrow Steven Holtzman's point of view. He once said in his book Digital Mosaics, the difference between the digital world and the analog world is 'Discontinuity' and 'Continuity'. With his point of view, I thought The Zuidas is closer to the digital world with its discontinuity and disjunction between the public and the space. For this reason, I would like to define The Zuidas as a virtual space carefully and I also wanted to depict The Zuidas as a segmented space.



VIRTUAL SPACE

THE ZUIDAS CAME INTO BEING (MORE OR LESS SPONTANEOUSLY, UNPLANNED, AT FIRST) IN THE LATE NINETEEN-NINETIES, AND IS STILL IN THE PROCESS OF BEING BUILT. IN THAT PROCESS THE ZUIDAS IS BOTH 'PRESENT', 'ACTUAL' AND 'NOT-YET'.

BY DANIEL VAN DER VELDEN

THE TRAUMA AND TRAGEDY OF THE ZUIDAS IS THAT THE REAL POTENTIALITY OF A RADICAL CO-EXISTENCE OF ECONOMICS AND PUBLIC SPACE IS NOT PLAYED OUT TO THE EXTREME, BUT FROZEN IN A SACRED CONSENSUS OF 'PARTNERS', WHERE THE SCARY CONSEQUENCES OF AN URBAN HETERO-TOPIA OF BUSINESS AND FINANCE ARE PREVENTED FROM THEIR FULL ACTUALIZATION.

BY DANIEL VAN DER VELDEN

SUCCESS IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE ZUIDAS. WE WONDER WHETHER THE SMELL OF SUCCESS CAN BE FOUND IN PUBLIC SPACE, WHICH, IDEALLY, IS A DOMAIN WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET, EXERCISE POLITICAL INFLUENCE AND SPEAK FREELY ABOUT SOCIAL ISSUES. DOES SUCH A SPACE EXIST IN THE ZUIDAS OR IS IT AN OSTENSIBLE, VIRTUAL SPACE?

BY BIK VAN DER POL

IT IS DIFFICULT TO FEEL ANY ATTACHMENT WITH ZUIDAS. THE BUILDINGS ARE PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO PLEASE THE EYE, NOT TO PROTECT YOU AND MAKE YOU FEEL AT HOME.

BY Yael DAVIDS

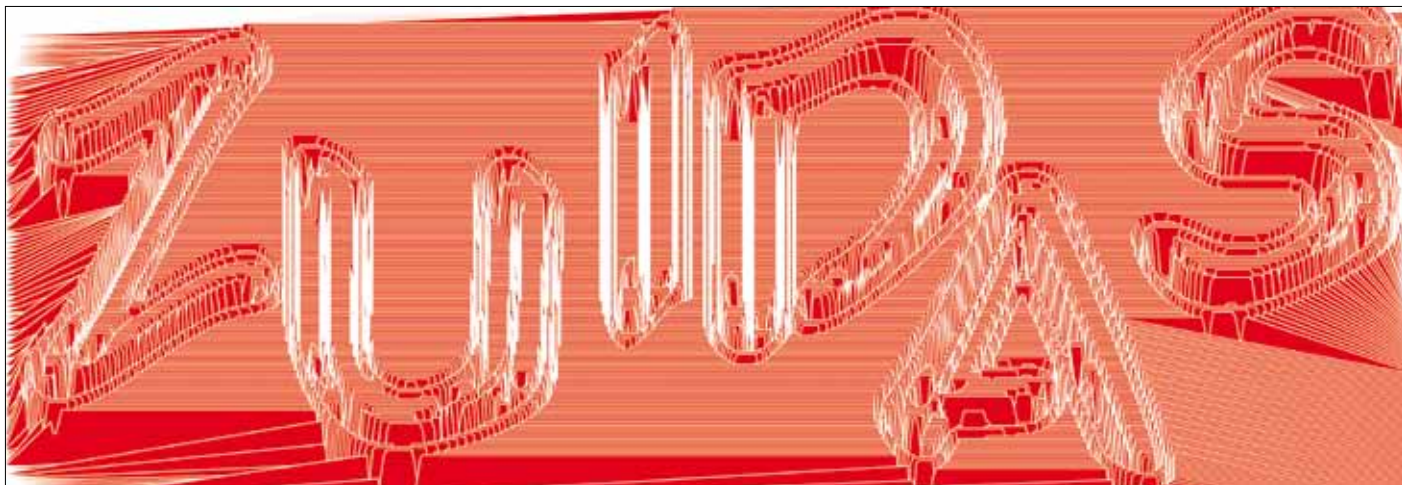
ZUIDAS

VIRTUAL SPACE

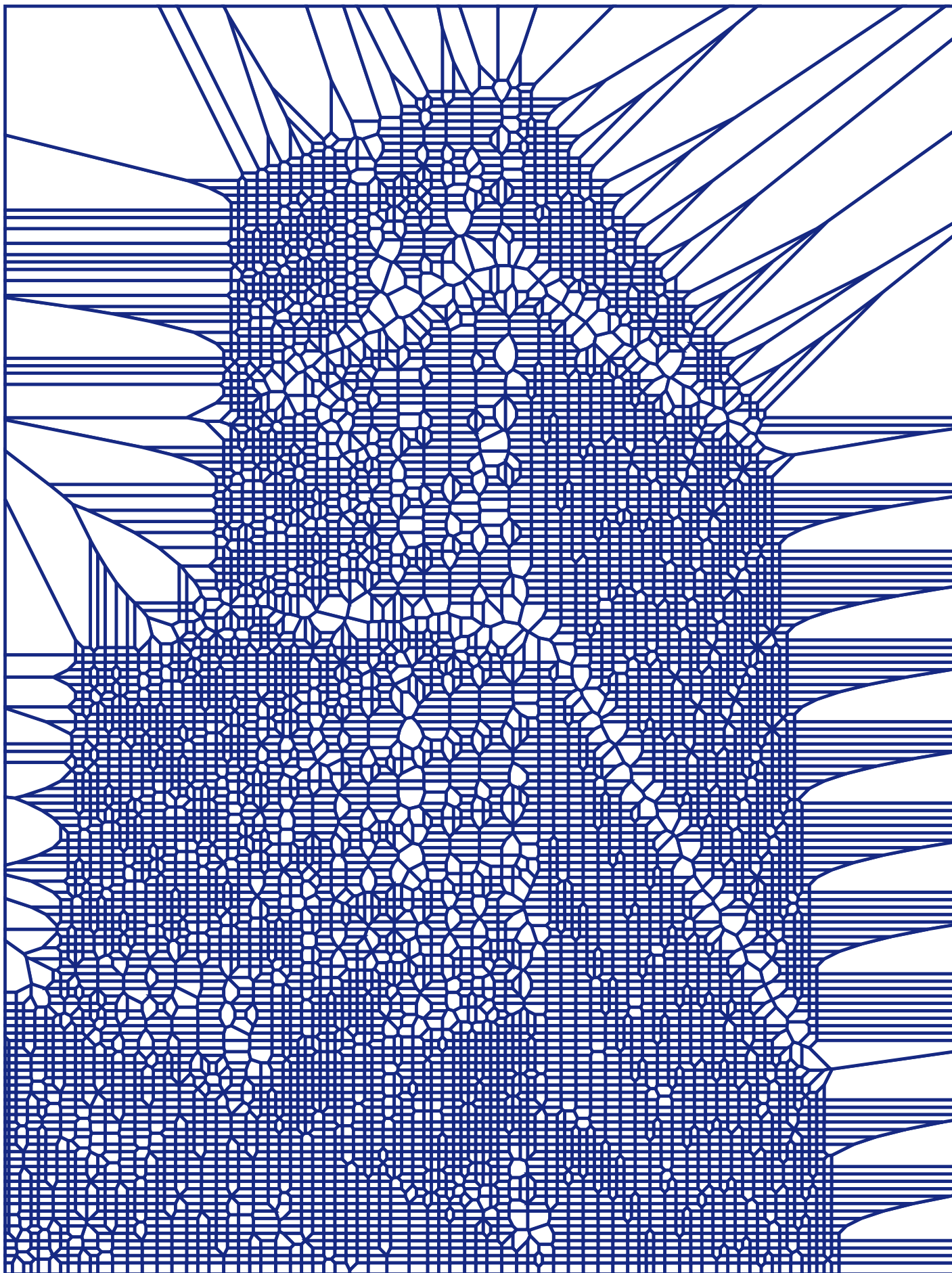
The Zuidas Is Both 'Present',

'Actual' And 'Not-yet'.

ZUIDAS







REPRESENTING THE INNERFACE *A CASE STUDY FOR A UTOPIAN ATTRACTION*

Stefan Schäfer

Critical.....
Identity.....
Maakbaarheid.....
Myth.....
Real.....
Utopia.....
Vision.....

While reading the "Vision Zuidas" document I came across terms like Livability, Sustainability, Mobility, Accessibility, Responsibility, Makeability [maakbaarheid], Network, Re-use, Management, clear Identity, Top-location, Icon. Next to the textual description my vision was formed by the photos and 3d images. This combination created the feeling of a clean, conflictless future for Zuidas.

I also read then about the ICT tunnel that regulates the gas- and water supply, the electrical power supply temperature and telecommunication. The tunnel is mentioned as a complex, special and important regulation system. Through the tunnel, all the different parts of Zuidas are connected. Each building is regulated from this tunnel and he is responsible for the whole data exchange in Zuidas. At this moment the tunnel underneath the Mahler area was finished.

There was this small 3d image of two men, working in this tunnel. The image was combining the upperground and with the underground. The physical upperground of Zuidas, the surface, matches with the clean images shown in the "Vision Zuidas". I was wondering how the physical underground, the Innerface, would look like then and if it would match with the small image shown in the document.

And then I was told to see robots. In a naive way my mind immediately started to come up with images of how this tunnel would look like: robots and technological finesse created an almost science fiction scenario in the underground. From this moment on I expected some great Spaceability.

After visiting a few websites of companies who took part in creating and building the tunnel I had quite a big amount of no more existing phone numbers and email addresses. But finally I reached the right person.

We made an appointment for thursday 2nd of december, 8 o'clock in the morning, sharp.



At the office



Preparing to get in



The magic happens



The entrance



The way to the underground



Access



First impression, control room



Control room, kind of a robot



Intersection



Control room, the computer



A taste of Spaceability



The pipes



Used pipes



Unused pipes



Dust alarm siren



Overused pipes



Reuse of coffeecups: to cover the dust alarm while sweeping

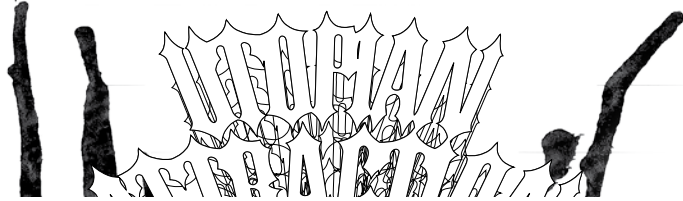


For documentation



Back to the surface

Visiting the ICT tunnel had shown me that it is the primary construction element of Zuidas. Binding all parts of the surface, the tunnel operates as the spine of Zuidas with the pipelines and cables as its marrow. At the same time it also features the fragility of a spine. A blackout or a defect cable for instance would cause a paralysed Zuidas. This let me think different about the "Vision Zuidas" and its clear, conflictless future as it has been presented. I reflected on the vocabulary of "Vision Zuidas" based on my visit to the Innerface.



Makeupbility: An enduring process that covers the actual surface with an attractive layer, appearing in the physical space as well as in form of an imaginary character.



Invisibility: In contrast to Makeupbility and its covered surfaces, Invisibility includes the parts that are physically separated from the surface. They can be connected to the surface through urban camouflage.



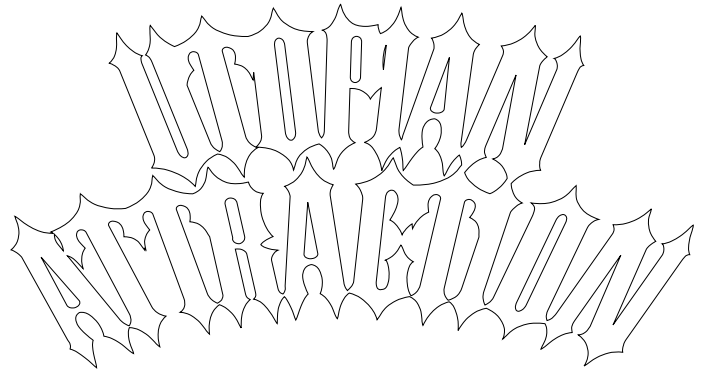
Innerface: Consists of the sum of the parts belonging to Invisibility. It functions as an organic infrastructure, in this case underground.

Fragility

Fragility: The constant condition of the Innerface.



Zuicidas: The big meltdown caused by Zuidas itself and the last step to a utopian attraction.



Utopian Attraction: These terms give a different view of Zuidas. What would happen if a blackout happened or a cable was cut? Referring to philosopher Slavoj Žižek, to keep reality as we are used to alive, a complex machinery has to function. The ICT tunnel of Zuidas can be seen as such. It has to function to keep Zuidas operating. People working, living, studying in Zuidas are taking this system as a matter of course or maybe don't even know about it. According to Žižek we don't live in an instantaneous reality, but already in a matrix. We are used to and following our daily routines without knowing about or attending to that such a trivial thing like a blackout would change the matrix. Žižek sees herein the fragility of our social structure. A thing as a blackout is referred to him the only opportunity for utopian thinking because of a peoples' lack of utopian imagination:

"To survive these people have to be utopian. Not in the sense of an impossible paradise, but realistic and radical. They have to improvise and create a new way of living"

According to that Zuidas can be seen as a case study of the fragility of economic and social structures and thus becomes a utopian attraction.¹

¹ Slavoj Žižek, ein Portrait [deutsch] (4/5)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkDn2_7Wo2I&feature=related



RETELLING THE [HI]STORY OF THE ZUIDAS

Guido Giglio

Capital.....
Identity.....
International.....
International.....
Livability.....
Local.....
Myth.....
Network.....
Planning.....
Virtual.....

The starting point of this project was a screenplay for a graphic novel, part fiction, part reality, that would re-tell the [hi]story of the Zuidas. It connected the determinant events of its development with the shifting social, political and economic scenario of the past 20 years, both in holland and abroad.

The aim was to experiment with a different process of design, a descriptive, parametric based design, trying to explore and discover its possibilities and limitations, a still unknown language and medium to myself.

The further development of this process and method would possibly lead to a sequence of steps or stages usually concatenated on the production process of a video based media. A complex and ambitious project in its own proposal, it soon revealed the demand of a disproportionate amount of time and effort, given the framework and the deadlines it was to meet.

On the final moments of the 1st decade of the new millennium, the meltdown of the financial system meets the inevitable outcome of an enterprise like the Zuidas: an urban project that catastrophically fails to be a city, remaining solely as a commercial enterprise and a real estate enterprise that catastrophically fails as itself because it faces the complex dynamics of a city.

Rooted since the late 1990s (which apparently coincides with the startup of the construction of the Zuidas), the crisis lights the fuse to the powder keg. Social upheavals explode all over europe. The pigs are the first to go into social chaos. Their large state debt and social spending qualifies them as potential weak links in the chain of events. The attempt to "fix" these issues only pours even more gas on the fire. Every increasing parcels of society engage into self-organized movements.

Sooner than expected, Northern Europe is also dragged into social mayhem. Countries known for their stability, organization and social control are caught into an ever bigger twister. In a short time the main state institutions are placed into check by different forms of parallel organizations.

In each and every place the masses find themselves confronted with the most urgent issues of everyday life, work, transportation, housing, etc. Sooner than expected, only a few years after its debut, the euro is dropped as the common currency and whatever was left from the euro zone falls like a house of cards.

At the same pace the masses see their life being torn apart by the ever deepening capitalist agony, they also find a way of struggling against it.

In holland, especially in the ever crowded cities like amsterdam, the housing issue is one of the most tangible issues to be tackled. Confronted with the fact that this issue should never be "solved" (as long as real estate profit lays

above the necessity for housing] the people strike back.

Based on the long tradition of squatting movements and self-organization, dwellers of the major cities, especially in Amsterdam, are able to reorganize themselves in a short time, gathering together in the few spaces the resistance could still hold on to.

Now, other long lasting Dutch traditions reveal their social value. The systematic organization of databases, combined with graphic design skills and a technologically savvy population are then the basis for the creation of a unified system for cataloguing and pinpointing future squatting locations.

The system can be fed by anyone, it can hold details for squatting brigades such as how to break in [presence of guards, locks, alarms, necessary manpower], number of possible occupants, floor plan layout, utilities, etc., It can be accessed online [mobile devices friendly], GPS geo-tagged, etc.

Finally, it is also combined with an offline communication system, visible at street level. This visible offline system is rooted in the orange unused bike tags that were used by the municipality to warn old-bike owners that their bike would be taken to a municipal bike-yard.

Thus, the offline system uses the well known city sign of the X's as the basis of a universal tagging of empty buildings. This is the point when our script meets the location of the *zuidas*, a district of useless expensive empty real estate.

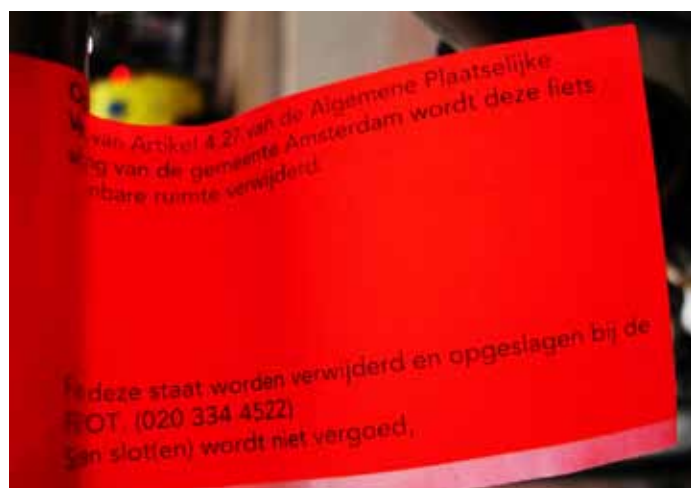
"A machine which does not serve the purposes of labour, is useless. In addition, it falls a prey to the destructive influence of natural forces. Iron rusts and wood rots. Yarn with which we neither weave nor knit, is cotton wasted. Living labour must seize upon these things and rouse them from their death-sleep, change them from mere possible use-values into real and effective ones. Bathed in the fire of labour, appropriated as part and parcel of labour's organism, and, as it were, made alive for the performance of their functions in the process, they are in truth consumed, but consumed with a purpose, as elementary constituents of new use-values, of new products, ever ready as means of subsistence for individual consumption, or as means of production for some new labour-process." [Marx, 1863]

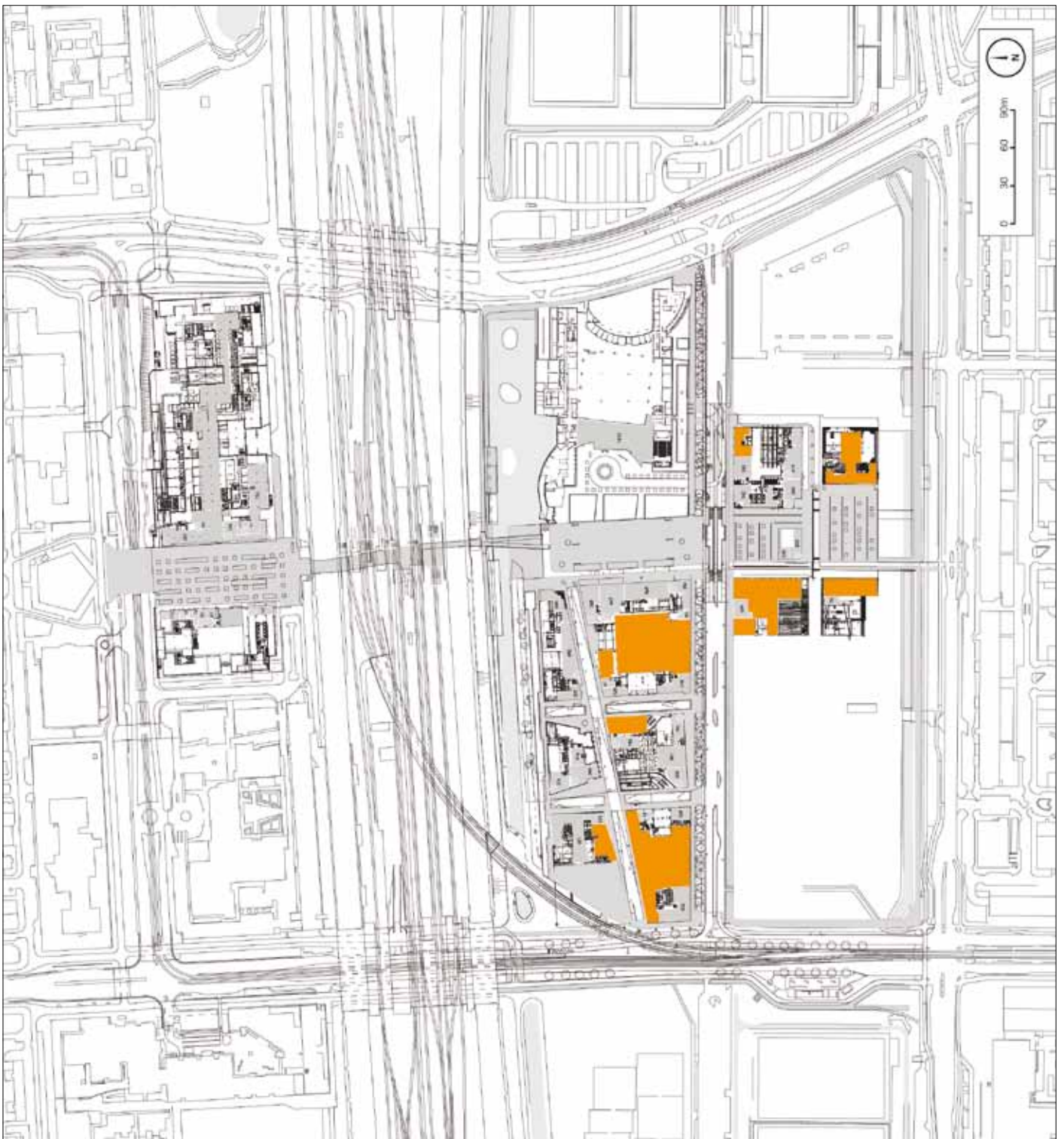
This is the point where this project is now, an essay of a possible fictional/real creation of a tool for transforming the *zuidas* into a district where people could actually live, not just because they were part of a long demographic study to determine the least amount of social housing that should be constructed, but because their living labour was able to rouse these empty buildings from their death-sleep, changing them from mere possible use-values into real and effective ones.

*"Like Prometheus, having stolen fire from heaven, begins to build houses and to settle upon the earth, so philosophy, expanded to be the whole world, turns against the world of appearance".
[Marx, 1839]*

Marx, Karl. [1867]. *Das Kapital*. Available: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch07.htm>. Last accessed 20th Jan 2011.

Marx, Karl. [1839]. *Notebook on Epicurean Philosophy*. Available: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1839/notebook/ch06.htm>. Last accessed 20th Jan 2011.





[previous page]

“A machine which does not serve the purposes of labour, is useless. In addition, it falls a prey to the destructive influence of natural forces. Iron rusts and wood rots.”

[top]

In orange: Zuidas ground floors that do not serve its purposes.

[next page]

Action on the unused spaces of the Zuidas.

The banner reads:

Will this building still be used?

