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REFLECTIONS ON THE JUBILEE-SESSIONS
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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN MOTION

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A Dutch approach

Landscape architecture in the Netherlands stands firm. It has two strong legs. The first leg is the result of an explicitly artistic tradition, related to garden and park design. It is based on a set of shared stylistic concepts that connect Dutch practitioners to the international landscape architectural profession. It leans on a private sector of individuals and corporates that wants to see themselves reflected and find themselves respected in their daily environment. The second leg is much less apparent. It has a shorter history and a lower profile, part of which can be explained by the fact that it is linked to the ongoing process of the making and remaking of land, for which this country is so well-known. This landscape architecture serves a clear purpose. It unceasingly collaborates with others in the invention, the design and the execution of the grand civil works that through time have been carried out to actually construct and maintain a society, an ecology and an economy in our deltaic conditions. The landscape design and research practice that I am referring to responds predominantly to the public sector as a client and normally functions as a team player in a multidisciplinary setting. That makes its output hard to evaluate since it is not expected to show off. Nevertheless there is a growing demand for this type of skills and experience since the problem of a changing climate requires a full reset of the country's water management and energy production and consumption system. And we all realize that the answer to this challenge will modify the Dutch landscape substantially and therefore dramatically.

It was a great pleasure to be chairing three debate sessions about the vitality and the potentiality of this utilitarian Dutch approach in landscape architecture. The meetings were meticulously prepared by H+N+S Landscape Architects as an anniversary gift to themselves and to the landscape architectural community. The program provided an opportunity to discuss the characteristics of this specific tradition, its evolution and its present state. We wanted to see to what extent it needs adjustments to be ready to face the new age.

My personal view is that the nature of this cross-national and cross-cultural challenge in achieving a sustainable future for our children implies a critical revival of this landscape architectural position.

Eric Luiten

*Landscape Architect
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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN MOTION

Sometimes you think you frame a flow of thought; but then it turns out that the framing works as an immediate invitation to others to meddle the fine defined borders. The essay *Gardening the Delta* in which landscape architect Noël van Dooren sketches the contours of *A Dutch approach to landscape architecture* was the starting point of three afternoon sessions in honour of the 25th anniversary of the office of H+N+S Landscape Architects. Landscape architect Eric Luiten, State Advisor for 'Landscape & Water', acted as chairman. The results of these jubilee-sessions are brought together in this essay. To achieve a clear account of reflection the sequence of the contributions of the speakers is jumbled.



Ambience of the venue

Van Dooren presented four maxims in his essay as the main themes which encompass the approach: (1. Scale is a matter of design (the Dutch approach is about the regional scale); 2. If it performs it is beautiful (the Dutch approach chooses its starting point in the working of the landscape as a system); 3. Design is an invitation (the Dutch approach results in sets of conditions instead of fixed plans) and 4. Landscape is a process, a process is a landscape (about design as a research-tool ‘traveling’ along borders of different interests)). Van Dooren accompanied his maxims with the perspective of them being ‘a tentative definition of what I call [...] a Dutch approach to landscape architecture’¹.

Tentative indeed. Presenting this Dutch approach to a panel of eleven (inter)national experts from practice, research and policy-making in the field of landscape architecture makes flows of thought flow rapidly. The approach expanded in many different ways. And that was exactly what H+N+S hoped would happen. There was no wish to create consensus about the meaning and value of the approach during the three sessions. The aim was to deepen the concept and to adapt it to a next generation of relevant projects.

Background and content

It was the title of Van Dooren’s essay ‘A Dutch approach to landscape architecture’ that evoked the most heated discussions. Are we talking about “A Dutch Approach” or “a Dutch approach”? A difference of just two capital A’s leads to a radical difference in meaning. Even more emotion arose because of the use of the word Dutch. The word turned out to be misleading, as Van Dooren actually never claimed the approach to be uniquely Dutch. He wrote: ‘A Dutch approach does not point to a geographic category but to a way of working; something which may also be evident in the work of French and American landscape architects’². Van Dooren, for instance, considers the **Black Bay** project in Boston of Frederick Law Olmsted as one of the forerunners of a Dutch approach.

But still, the word Dutch was not used for nothing. There may be something rather Dutch about the Dutch approach. That idea triggered people to think about the typical Dutch circumstances in culture, politics and economics that made a Dutch approach bloom.

For Swiss landscape architect Christophe Girot ‘the way the Dutch deal with landscape is *fully* Dutch’. He stresses: ‘There’s an incredible act of memory in the Dutch landscape. The Dutch don’t have an ancient forest heritage like most other countries in Europe, but much more a geometric tradition. Not just a technical ground. It is much more complicated than that. Every square meter of dry soil is a result of people sweating for centuries to grow the biggest potatoes’. Which makes him react on the maxim *When it performs it is beautiful*: ‘One cannot separate beauty from the human effort behind it. There’s much pride. Landscape in the Netherlands is a civic myth, a non-hierarchical construct. It is imbued with a certain nostalgia and melancholia. The Dutch were looking at the landscape as high art. Indeed, in the Netherlands of the 17th Century a cultural, artistic revolution was going on. The Dutch painters created an optical illusion. There was a dialogue of the elements of the landscape and how it was created by a common culture, something that is inseparable from an aesthetic experience’. To illustrate his point: ‘The difference of ten centimeters of height in the Dutch landscape can be of great importance. It is that subtle’. And that is why the work of H+N+S is so specific to the Dutch culture. According to Girot you can’t translate this subtlety from one country to the other. ‘Design is an invitation: not a prediction’. Design is a constant interplay between a landscape, its culture and possible design solutions. In order to take a design assignment seriously you need to get to know all the nuances of the inviting party: the existing landscape and its culture.

The perspective can be stretched even further. Although Girot considers the Dutch approach a typical Dutch tradition, he also stresses the Dutch approach is not typical for the Dutch nor Dutch only. For ages cross-border intellectual exchange of ideas made knowledge and skills stronger. Girot reminds us of the fact that René Descartes lived in the Netherlands around the time the Beemster was realized. Wasn’t it this 17th Century French philosopher who described what he saw happening as: ‘God created earth, but the Dutch created Holland’, and by doing so forming a Dutch civic myth? The “creation” of Holland has a very long history. Looking back in time to the process of creation one can find the Dutch roots of the Dutch approach. Architectural historian Marinke Steenhuis goes as far back as 1515, illustrating that already at that time innovation

was an important principle when shaping the Dutch landscape. New land was created applying technological innovations like windmills. Steenhuis sketches a historic development in four phases, each with own characteristics. In stage one (1515 – 1815) the aim for the land-makers was to make a profit. Polders like *The Grootslag* in Enkhuizen, for example, were impressive landscapes. [ILL 1] Solving technical problems with innovation could be done in a beautiful way. Significant was the fact that landscaping got hand in hand with renewal of governance. As Henk Ovink mentioned: ‘The Dutch started voting with their feet already in the 1100’s’. In organizing water management and maintaining water safety a lot of parties were involved. In order to make choices the polder boards had to collaborate with each other: the start of democratic processes. Here the aspect of social engineering came in. The first maxim Van Dooren presented: *Scale is a matter of design* reverts back to technology, design and social engineering.

In the second stage of historical development (1815 – 1920) the idea of the makeable society came in: landscapes could serve as places where people got ‘improved’. This led to landscapes of utopia, power, repression and personal growth. The country became a machine of civil engineering (technocracy). Then in the third phase (1920 – 1975) the making of grand scale landscape plans, in which landscape characteristics were integrated in the design became fashionable. In the plans for Walcheren in Zeeland, for example, different societal claims – system knowledge and design power – came together. The State Forest Service (Staatsbosbeheer) became corporate designer of the Dutch landscape, making landscapes that integrated agricultural elements, heavy infrastructure such as highways, recreational areas,

1. Polder *Het Grootslag* and the city of Enkhuizen. Painter unknown.

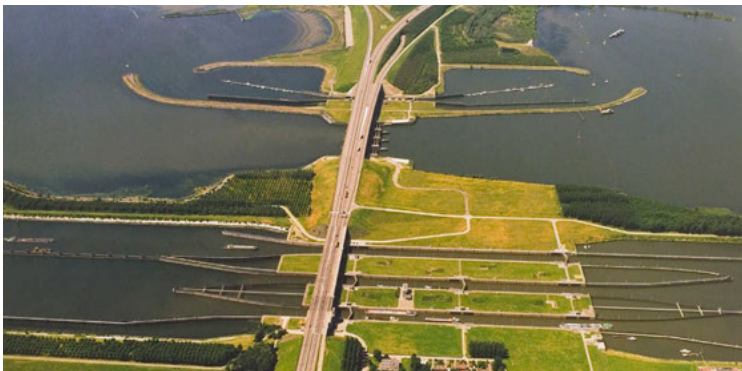
Collection: municipality Enkhuizen, 1606.



village woods and new landscape claims. It's also the phase in which the 'masterpiece' of the Dutch Approach – as Steenhuis qualified it – arose: the Delta Works. [ILL 2] 'In this project several assignments are put together at the same time'. Issues of safety, agriculture, nature, infrastructure, recreation and ecology are solved and put together in a cohesive plan. But soon afterwards, in the fourth stage (1975 – now), the free market came in and 'affected our brains'. These are the years in which the public interest got less important. But Steenhuis remains optimistic towards the future by stating that the 'public generosity is a keyword and can be realized both by the market as by the government – preferably in a joined collaboration'.

Steenhuis concludes the Dutch approach to be: 'a collective genius, an attitude established by generations of politicians, engineers/designers, researchers, policy-makers and artists. In using the Dutch approach we are standing on the shoulders of giants.' Steenhuis too, like Girot, stresses the Dutch approach is part of a family that is not only Dutch, but rather European. She mentions the French architect and urbanist Henri Prost who made regional urban studies of the Paris metropolitan area. And Patrick Abercrombie, the British urbanist who published *The Preservation of Rural England* (1926) which led to the formation of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and can be considered an example for preservation of many rural European landscapes.

2. Volkerak Locks, part of the Delta Works, qualified by Marinke Steenhuis as 'masterpiece' of a Dutch approach. Volkerak Locks can be seen in north-west direction with *Hellegatsplein* and a fragment of the forest *Vlakenhoek*. Regional Archive West-Brabant, Oudenbosch. Picture: Slagboom & Peters (1990).



Maybe one of the reasons why the Dutch approach rooted so well in the Dutch culture is because the Dutch tend to have an attitude of assimilation when being confronted with huge challenges in their landscape like flooding and sea level rise. The Dutch didn't fight the water, but turned a challenging situation into a chance. When Sijmons in 2007, in his former position as State Advisor for Landscape, was writing an advice about windmills in the Dutch landscape³, he used a study of philosopher Martijntje Smits. [ILL 3] She studied how societies are facing threatening situations and described four ways of dealing with monsters⁴. 1) Exile: to drive the monster away. 2) Adaptation: to soften the frightening character of the monster. 3) Embrace: channelling the monster. 4) Assimilation: changing the definition with which we call something a monster. The Dutch transformed water from 'monster' into a motive to develop their landscape in an innovative, safe and more beautiful way. This also implies a rather open perspective on challenges. It's where the word curiosity comes in. According to Sijmons this is an essential addition to the discussion about the Dutch approach: 'The element of curiosity led to expansion of our field'. Specifically for H+N+S curiosity led to a meandering road of research, from ecology and water management, to culture history and sustainable energy.

3. *Windturbines*, NL Architects (2007).



Next to the addition of the element of curiosity Henk Ovink wishes to bring in another missing key aspect: people. It might actually be essential in reviving a Dutch approach in a Dutch context. ‘Next to design and funding an institutional partners collaborating with community groups, activists and NGO’s is indispensable’. An example of a project that was backed by institutional capacity is the *Rebuild by Design* program, in which Dutch (in collaboration with US and other partners) teams performed in response to Hurricane Sandy’s devastation to generate implementable solutions for a more resilient US northeastern coastline. [ILL 4] ‘Here the alliance substituted the negotiation. A network of over 500 organizations developed over a period of nine months working on the region’s social, economic and environmental stresses. The innovative results were the direct result of real inclusive leadership and a ‘research by design’ driven approach’.

Looking at history it becomes clear that with the development of time and landscape the Dutch approach developed as well. Every situation where people work in the Dutch approach – be it in the past, or in the actual situation and in the Netherlands, or elsewhere in the world – leads to a subtle change of dealing with the maxims, resulting in different outcomes. The spirit of time generates changes in political, economical and cultural conditions. These highly influence the potential chances for success of a Dutch approach, meaning the Dutch approach is a flexible approach, able to adapt to a changing field of work.

4. Overview *Living with the Bay*, one of the winning projects of the Rebuild by Design Competition (2014-2015).

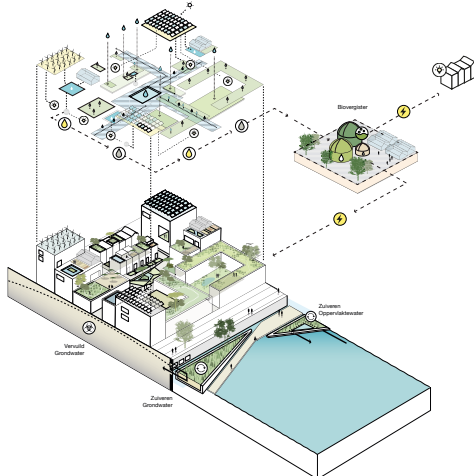
This project presents a collection of resiliency-building initiatives for communities on Nassau County’s South Shore. While the safety of residents during future extreme weather events is the main goal of these initiatives, each seeks to also enhance the quality of everyday life in non-emergency events. H+N+S Landscape Architects in collaboration with Interboro, Apex, Bosch Slabbers, Deltares, Palmhout, IMG Rebel, Center for Urban Pedagogy, David Rusk, NJIT Infrastructure Planning Program, Project Projects, RFA Investments and TU Delft.



A changing work field

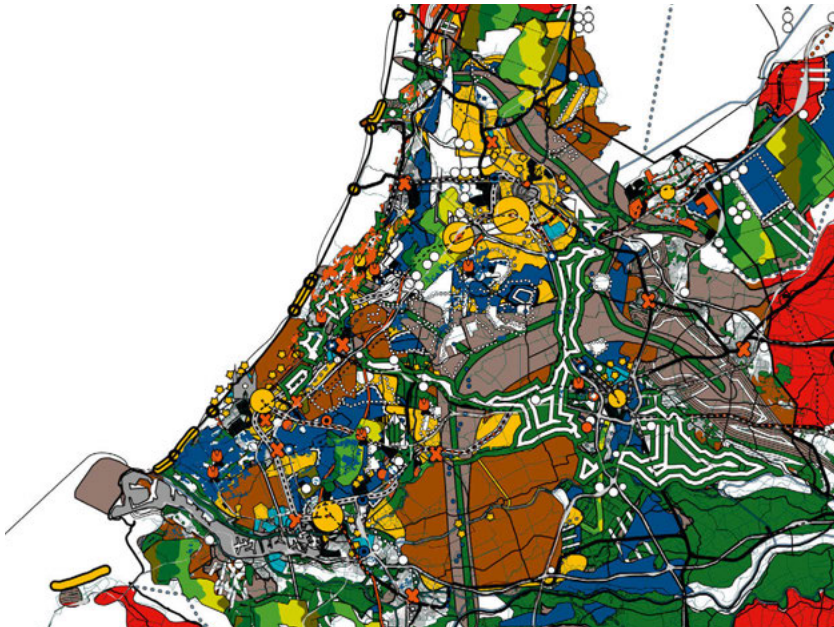
The receding government and economic crisis of the last 10 years shut down a never-ending steady flow of commissions. It forced offices to become more pro-active in acquiring commissions, getting the funding arranged, mostly by gathering a wide variety of partners. The project *Cityplot Buikslooterham* in Amsterdam-Noord illustrates a whole new way of organizing a design process. [ILL 5] The assignment is to transform a mono-functional former industrial area into a new part of the city with 550 houses and at least 4,000 m² of work units and a program for hospitality. The designers of DELVA Landscape Architects didn't make a standard masterplan. The completion of the plots in their plan is not fixed. The program and functions can change over time. The organization of the project is hybrid. Jens Jorritsma of DELVA sums up: 'Housing Corporation De Alliantie, the Amsterdam Water authorities and Waternet, Alliander energy network company and the City of Amsterdam all work together to make a plan stand'. The designers themselves played an important role in organizing the process-oriented project as well. They are more than guardians of the design process. They took a lot of initiatives and defined sub-commissions themselves before getting the partners in the project enthusiastic to come aboard. Offices have to think very strategic and be masters of timing: when to lobby, for what and with whom? Once more, design organizes the coherence in the planning process.

5. In the *Cityplot Buikslooterham* project, public, semi-public, collective and private spaces alternate on different levels and contribute to the creation of the circular city. DELVA Landscape Architects & Studionedots.



How different it was only ten to fifteen years ago, when the belief in future planning of the Netherlands on a national scale was still fully alive and kicking. At that time Paul Gerretsen was the leader of the team of Maxwan architects + urbanists in the *Deltametropool* project. [ILL 6] The purpose of this project, initiated in 2002–2003 by the former Government Architect Jo Coenen, was to design the West of the Netherlands as one metropolitan region. Different design teams were invited to make plans. Looking back, Gerretsen recognizes the manic character of this elaborate endeavor. With his team he selected and weighted all regional plans and ideas that dealt with the Deltametropool. The aim was to address jointly the common challenges in the work fields of water, traffic and transportation, recreation, economy, housing and administrative simplification of the different parts of the West. The maxims of the Dutch approach fit this project well: *Scale is a matter of design, If it performs it is beautiful, Design is an invitation and Landscape is a process, a process is a landscape*. It is not surprising that H+N+S was involved in this project by delivering the coach of the program: Dirk Sijmons.

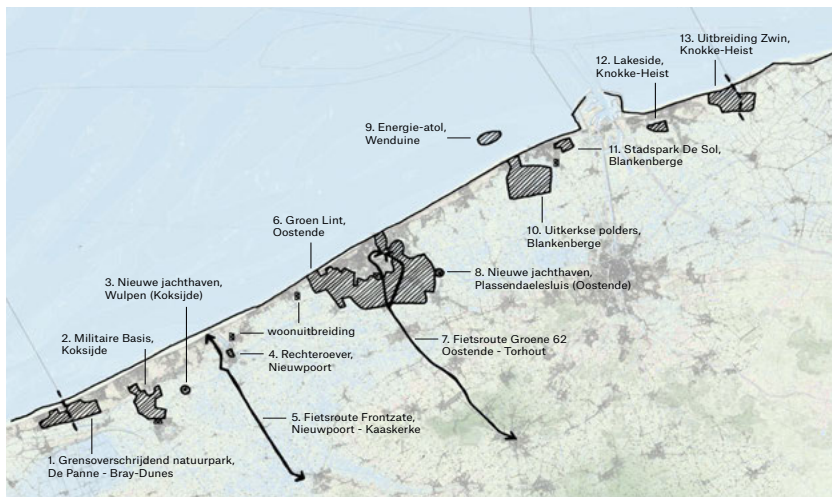
6. Target Deltametropool, Maxwan A+U (2003).



The *Deltametropool* project was a continuation of a political reality in which designing the grand scale was fully embraced by designers, policymakers and decision-makers. Organized from a central governmental level, ambitious Memorandums of Spatial Planning were made: in 1988 the Dutch state presented the fourth one. Nobody could apprehend at that time that it was only fourteen years later, in 2002, that the fifth Memorandum on Spatial planning would be the last one to be presented. It actually never got officially approved. Few people realized the apogee of central planning had passed by. ‘It was a time of naive optimism’, Gerretsen recalls. ‘The plans of the different design teams of the *Deltametropool* project were very conceptual as a result of their ‘manic belief in reason’. But politicians already turned their heads. The *Deltametropool* project failed because of ‘a lack of political urgency’. You could say the Dutch designers ended up in a “party” where the music still echoes, but the band has already left.

‘Waiting for the government to act is very Dutch’, Belgian Joachim Declerck states. The Dutch approach needs to be adapted as governments are no longer in the lead. Is there a future for the Dutch approach in projects that are initiated from a decentralized perspective? Declerck explains that in Belgium they failed to translate the Dutch approach. When working on a project for the Belgian coast together with – among others – H+N+S, he found no cohesion in government. [ILL 7] Following this experience, Declerck

7. ‘Family’ of projects in the coastal region Belgium. A cooperation between municipalities can be encouraged and facilitated by a Flemish Government. Architecture Workroom Brussels



pleads for a method in which synergies on a decentralized level are linked; and investments to certain problems as well. A kind of upscaling from bottom up. In doing so a ‘family of challenges’ arises, for instance on the level of the Bruxelles Canal Zone. [ILL 8] It leads to a situation in which it is much more easy to explain aims to the politicians involved. Why not combine this ‘Belgian approach’ with the Dutch approach? Declerck suggests. An important footnote can be added regarding this suggestion, though. The problem of working with a family of challenges is that they don’t take administrative borders into account. When you work on water safety programs for instance you have to look from a more central perspective as the river or the coast doesn’t take borders of municipalities or even provinces into account. Developing the Belgian coast will not work when it is organized by municipalities that are competing with each other. Safety in the worldwide Deltas requires public interventions and a bigger picture. Declerck argues: ‘It is precisely this cooperation between municipalities which may be encouraged and facilitated by a Flemish Government (and not imposed from general importance, as happens in the Netherlands)’.

8. By upscaling projects from bottom up a ‘family of challenges’ arises. Architecture Workroom Brussels.



In a way the enduring situation of a receding government and economic crisis led us to look more closely to the amenities of sites and users. The assignments to transform existing landscapes like industrial areas, airfields and harbors were high on the agenda. Lisa Diedrich refers to these transformation projects as important new ways of working. 'Transformation involves a change of something that is there, into something new. The existing area becomes quite important. Form is put into motion. The area transforms'. As an academic Diedrich is used to look for the exact words to describe new processes. 'There's a need for a reflective practitioner. Shaping worlds should lead to transforming words, which will lead to transformation of our worlds again. The interaction is necessary for the practitioner to make steps forward in thinking and making'. Diedrich borrowed the word 'journey-form'⁵ from the field of art to describe these processes. [ILL 9] She presents *Le plan-guide de l'île de Nantes* by architect, landscape architect and urban designer Alexandre Chemetoff as an emblematic example of the journey-form. [ILL 10] From 2000 onwards Chemetoff transformed an abandoned industrial area on an island in the Loire, opposite the centre of Nantes into a location for living, working and leisure. *Le plan-guide de l'île de Nantes* is an anti-master-plan. The evolutionary development took ten years and transformed the existing area in a slow way. Connecting these landscapes in

9. The term 'journey-form' originates from the discipline of art. This work of Rirkrit Tiravanija can be seen as a fine example of a journey-form. The Thai artist installed a soup kitchen in a gallery in New York. He arranged his exhibition as a cooking event. The whole process of cooking, eating with guests and the kitchen filled with kitchen tools and leftovers is part of the artwork. It leads to art which is 'precarious', as art critic Nicolas Bourriaud put it in his publication *The Radicant* (2009). Rirkrit Tiravanija. *Untitled (Who's afraid of...)* (2011). Art Basel 42, Basel (source: artnet 2011).



motion with the maxim *If it performs it's beautiful* requires a new way of experiencing landscapes. Elizabeth Meyer, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Virginia, developed the concept of 'The performance of appearance'. Meyer's aim is to add the idea of sustaining beauty to the sustainability agenda. 'Designed landscapes are considered from two perspectives: how they look and how they function ecologically. What is missing from this critical position is how appearance itself performs. Designed landscapes need to be constructed human experiences as much as ecosystems,' regenerated, through abundance, wonder, and beauty', she says⁶.

How appearance itself performs is a theme Thierry Kandjee brings in as well. The performance of a landscape's appearance provokes people to become more aware of how their actions affect the environment. Illustrated by the *Superkilen* project of TOPOTEK 1, BIG – Bjarke Ingels Group and Superflex in Copenhagen, Kandjee shows how the designers took ethnical and cultural diversity seriously by developing a space into a collection of icons that refer to sixty different nationalities. Palm trees from China are next to neon signs from Qatar.

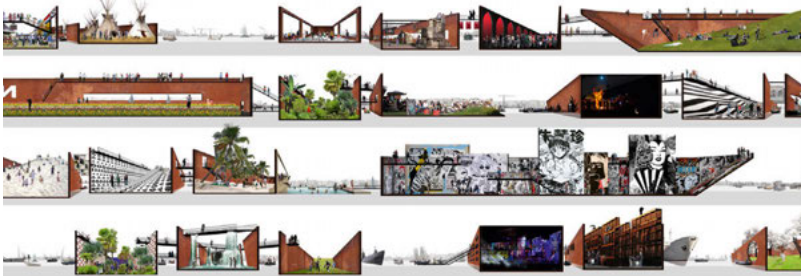
10. Le plan-guide de l'île de Nantes is an anti-masterplan. The evolutionary development took ten years and slowly transformed the existing area in a slow way. Alexandre Chemetoff (2000-2010).



But Kandjee is quite critical about these ‘Iconers’, as he calls them. ‘Since identity is evolving all the time, how can you speculate that identity can be something fixed in a landscape?’ Asking how the arrival of new migrants challenges the design of public space, he shows a project that responds better to this agenda. With the *New Amsterdam Park (N A P)* project the Dutch office for landscape architecture RAAAF (2009–2013) invited the audience to build their own identity. [ILL 11] RAAAF designed a temporary floating park consisting of a grid of large barges. Water streets and squares are situated in between the barges. Inside them different worlds can be shaped. Pathways connect them along the top edges. The idea is to invite specific subcultures to design some of the barges. The project questions ‘social cohesion’. ‘How is it possible for strangers – people from different subcultures – to become “trusted familiar strangers”?’⁷ is one of the questions for RAAAF to explore by shaping this project.

The work field has changed a lot in the last decades. But at the same time there are similarities with regard to challenges in our time and day and those 25 years ago when H+N+S started to work with their Dutch approach to landscape architecture. Sijmons describes four steps in the process H+N+S had to take to make their projects realized. It could be seen as a set of recommendations for designers to use the here and now in cases when the client is formed by a varied group of actors and is not so obviously interested in research and design anymore:

11. With project *The Cultural Practice: New Amsterdam Park. Landscape of affordances* project RAAAF and Atelier de Lyon designed a temporary floating park. The audience was invited to ‘fill’ the park by building their own identity. RAAAF in collaboration with Atelier de Lyon (2009–2013).



- Step 1** Identifying an interesting terrain that needs innovation and exploration;
- Step 2** Fully set up a network with the actors involved and try to get the research funded by interested parties or lobby for a direct commission in which the research question can be embedded;
- Step 3** Exploration, sometimes accompanied by in-dept participatory research into the sector in question. Asking yourself questions like: **What makes it tick? What are the problems and ambitions for that sector? Can either spatial or product design do anything to solve them? What are the essential spatial odds we have to entangle?**
- Step 4** Research by design into spatial and environmental expression.

These steps lead to a method which is not organized top-down , but more the other way around: from the bottom all the way up, to involve politics. The metabolism of the process is of huge importance in these methods. 'Let coherence emerge and don't try to organize it top-down,' as the Swiss landscape architect Günther Vogt puts it nicely.

Agenda

Which are the topics that should be dealt with in this new, more bottom-up-to-the-top way in the near future? Vogt likes to put the theme abandonment on the agenda. He explains that more and more landscapes for agricultural production are abandoned, like the Alps or the hinterland in Spain. ‘In the last ten years an area the size of France has been taken out of agricultural production in Europe⁸. And according to the United Nations one quarter of all agricultural areas worldwide now lie fallow⁹. Vogt shows the trend is accelerating: ‘By 2030 this is likely to be three to four per cent of the whole surface area of Europe. Putting it another way: ten times the size of Switzerland¹⁰. Reasons of this development are ‘the liberalization of the agricultural market and new methods of cultivation; more efficient, low-cost and intensive production of food. Also the urbanization or tertiarization adds to the problem. [ILL 12] More jobs became available in the service sector. Numbers of jobs in food production go down’. It leads to a disappearance of traditional land patterns and a return of nature or new wilderness and forest growth¹¹. [ILL 13] The large scale of this issue becomes immediately visible after seeing a map with all the (potentially) abandoned places in Europe coloured red. An illustration for one of the pleads Vogt makes: developing new ways of cartography to make things visible that we don’t see as a role for designers. Abandonment according to Vogt is neither good or bad, but: ‘We need to rethink landscape. Looking at the abandoned areas as a landscape instead of a collection of national parks might help to find ideas for a future completion’.

12. *Rethinking the built from the unbuilt: the transformation of the Alpine landscape (2015 - 20100).*

Map: Chair of Günther Vogt, Institute for Landscape Architecture, ETH Zurich. Data source: Urban Morphological Zones 2006: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/> (accessed 10.12.15).



Another urgent development that should have the attention of landscape architects is presented by Ovink. He makes clear that the maxim *Design is an invitation* is a very urgent matter. The Global Risks Report 2015 stated water as number one risk in the world¹². About 40% of the world population is in danger merely because of water, like floods, water shortage or disasters like hurricanes. [ILL 14] In foreign newspapers the Netherlands was considered as the salvation of the world. The news appeared in newspapers all over the world, except in the Netherlands. Water safety and management is day-to-day business; the Dutch tend to forget its urge and importance, also on a global scale. A Dutch approach could help to create resilient frames for regions worldwide. The connection to the Dutch approach is also made by the World Economic Forum's Risk Report. The reports showcase clearly that future risks (climate change, water crises, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, extreme weather events, natural catastrophes, man made environmental catastrophes, et cetera) are increasing in frequency and impact but at the same time show a clear and strong interdependency on a regional, most often urban scale. Both in their origin in as in their impacts. This increases the complexity of these risks and their impacts but it also positions a way forward. This is the scale where we (mankind) can adapt to and mitigate these risks. 'This is where (and why) planning and design matter! This is what sets the agenda: the connections and interdependencies scream for a comprehensive design driven planning approach, A Dutch Approach!'

13. Growth of the Protected Areas of Europe (1950 - 2012). Map: Chair of Günther Vogt, Institute for Landscape Architecture, ETH Zurich. Data source: IUCN and UNEP-WCMC (2015), The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) [On-line], February 2015, Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC. Available at: <http://www.protectedplanet.net> (accessed 10.12.15).



Adding quality to an in itself technical program is not self-evident. Henk Ovink points at the Delta program – a groundbreaking program to protect the Netherlands against flooding and ensure the availability of fresh water and make our cities ‘climate proof’. The Dutch parliament unanimously approved the Deltaprogram in the fall of 2014, setting the long-term horizon for the Delta program on 2050 (with an outlook towards 2100). But when the National budget was presented in September 2015 it turned out that funding for this program still only lasts until 2028. ‘Somebody forgot to implement the parliament’s debate and decision’, Ovink says ironically. Besides the problem with the budget there’s a second worry, about ‘quality’ as driver for the implementation. The Room for the River program was based – enforced by law – by the two principles that built The Netherlands in the ages we worked on its existence: ‘safety and quality’, The standard for implementation of the Deltaprogram is defined as: sober and efficient. This might not be contradictory but it is a clear missing link to the core value of our water culture, our Dutch Approach. And might suggest that we are facing a sectorial approach once again after a period in which coherence and combining qualities was the standard.

14. Disaster-induced (climate) displacement worldwide in 2012 from the International Displacement Monitoring Centre and Norwegian Refugee Council. Illustration: IDMC/NRC.



Wouter Vanstiphout points at another actual challenge: the ongoing streams of migrants entering the Netherlands. He shows that shelters for these people, strangely enough, are created mostly in the areas without opportunities for people to work or to receive an education: the East of the Netherlands. The maxim *Design is an invitation* sounds quite painful looking at this issue. Vanstiphout's motto for his position as a professor at Delft University is *design = politics = design*. Very similar to Van Dooren's fourth maxim *Landscape = process = landscape*. But where are the designers, institutions and politics using the Dutch approach to translate the migrant 'problem' into an opportunity to create human and durable solutions in the Netherlands? Vanstiphout puts his finger on the sore spot showing the Dutch approach should be taken more seriously in the Netherlands itself. The Netherlands is struggling with the Dutch approach. 'We are good in transporting the Dutch approach to political complex matters outside the Netherlands, but we feel less comfortable in using it in the Netherlands itself'. We may take care of water safety matters, but when matters become more politically sensitive we tend to externalize; we are looking at others to solve problems. Carefully he makes a first step towards defining a commission for designers related to the issue of sheltering migrants. Vanstiphout likes to explore the potential of sheltering people especially in the new towns like Zoetermeer and Spijkenisse. In these parts jobs and urban challenges can be found. New towns, for example, are struggling with an ageing population and have the ability to reboot by inviting migrants into their cities. In the discussion it brings the issue to a question if the Dutch approach has a moral dimension. Vanstiphout explains: 'Historically Dutch design has deep moral roots. But at the same time the Dutch were pragmatic as well. We tend to approach moral issues in an a-moral way'. For example: the moral idea that everybody should be healthy or that everybody should be welcome is a starting point for a design process that's rather pragmatic of character. The problem of our time is that there is a lack of social consensus about the moral issues. Sijmons warns us: 'We are very cocky, we still think we can solve problems with spatial solutions. We have to be very modest. First things first. For example, thinking of ways to help these people who are often traumatized. Exporting a Dutch approach requires translation and leads incontestably to adaptation of the approach. We lost the connection with social engineering'.

Epilogue

When overviewing the agenda, scale seems a common denominator. In relation to scale the word complexity pops up. Reflecting on the discussion and looking back at Noël van Dooren's four maxims, one can conclude that they are all relevant to conquer our current challenges like shaping food landscapes, energy landscapes, safe water environments, landscapes that deal with abandonment and immigrant settlements. These are often cross-border issues. Either they are national, international or inter-provincial challenges. Problems can only be solved by a network of different organizations that work closely together. A Dutch approach could provide all parties to regard the project as a coherent whole that should be dealt with on the basis of a single all-encompassing thought: *Scale is a matter of design*. The maxim *Landscape is a process*, a process is a landscape invites the landscape architect to be modest. Designing is teamwork and none of the members of the team, including the landscape architect, knows everything. But also with regard to very complex issues like settlement of migrants, the landscape architect could take the lead. He can explore the agenda, he can forge coalitions and focus on long-term development. All multidisciplinary expertise is necessary to be able to translate complexity in a functioning system: *If it performs it is beautiful*. The next generation of relevant plans is often characterized by a more open way of planning and developing. It seems the maxim *Design is an invitation* has been taken very seriously in the last decade. Thinking in fixed end results became out-dated. A design can put things in motion. But we should stay critical about which structural parts are needed to gain stability: start bottom-up, but sometimes it's necessary to go all the way to the top.

The aim of the symposium at H+N+S - to deepen the concept of a Dutch approach of landscape architecture - is definitely achieved. But we are not ready yet. A continuing changing field of work demands a continuing conversation about the concept and chances of a Dutch approach. Shaping words leads to shaping new worlds, and therefore we have to continue being reflective. A new generation of relevant projects that emerged in the last decade, a time that saw so many quick changes of political, economic and cultural conditions, are the proof of the pudding that a Dutch approach is flexible enough to stay alive when we keep up facing challenges of our hybrid, ambiguous and fast changing world. Sharing experiences, results and failures, reshaping ideas and strategies and helping each other in putting urgent matters on a political and cultural agenda are issues that should be addressed and dealt with by the field of landscape architecture in the coming years.

Footnotes

1. Dooren, N. van, (2015) *Gardening the Delta. A Dutch approach to landscape architecture* (Amersfoort: H+N+S Landscape Architects), 5.
2. Idem, 35.
3. Sijmons, D. (2007) *Windturbines in het Nederlandse landschap* (Den Haag: Rijksadviseur voor het Landschap).
4. Smits, M. (2002) *Monsterbezweering. De culturele domesticatie van nieuwe technologie* (Eindhoven: Technical University Eindhoven).
5. Bourriaud, N. (2009) *The Radicant* (New York: Lukas & Sternberg).
6. Meyer, E. (2008) 'Sustainable beauty. The performance of appearance. A manifesto in three parts' in: *Journal of Landscape Architecture* (Volume 3, Issue 1) 6-23.
7. Client of the project was Unsolicited RAAAF project. The project was supported by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). New Amsterdam Park (N A P) has never been executed. <http://www.raaaf.nl/en/projects/363>.
8. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2006) *The Role of Agriculture and Rural Development in Revitalizing Abandoned/Depopulated Areas* (Geneva: FAO), 2.
9. Campbell, J. E., et al. (2008) 'The Global Potential of Bioenergy on Abandoned Agriculture Lands' in: *Environmental science & technology* (Volume 42, Issue 15), 5791-5794.
10. Tucker, G. (2010) *Farmland Abandonment in the EU: an Assessment of Trends and Prospects* (Brussels: Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)), 4-22.
11. See: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2006) *The Role of Agriculture and Rural Development in Revitalizing Abandoned/Depopulated Areas* (Geneva: FAO), 2. Hatna, E., Bakker, M. M. (2011) 'Abandonment and Expansion of Arable Land in Europe' in: *Ecosystems*. (Volume 14, Issue 5), 728 - 731. Tucker, G. (2010) *Farmland Abandonment in the EU: an Assessment of Trends and Prospects* (Brussels: Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)), 4-22.
12. World Economic Forum (2015) *The World Economic Forum and the Global Risks 2015*. World Economic Forum is an annual survey of nearly 900 leaders in politics, business, and civic life about the world's most critical issues.

INTRODUCING THE SPEAKERS THE MODERATOR AND THE AUTHOR

Joachim Declerck, Architecture Workroom Brussels (AWB)

Joachim Declerck is founder and partner of AWB. Educated as an architect and urban designer at Ghent University (BE) and the Berlage Institute (NL), Declerck's activities focus on innovation within the disciplines of architecture and urban design, while exploring their role within the transformation of the built environment. From 2008 to 2011 Joachim Declerck was head of the professional development program at the Berlage Institute. Before taking this position, Declerck co-edited the Berlage Institute publication 'Brussels – A Manifesto' and was curator of the exhibition 'A Vision for Brussels.' Together with Vedran Mimica, he formed the curatorial team of the 3rd International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR), in 2007. He was also part of the curatorial team of the 5th IABR – Making City (2012).

Lisa Diedrich, Professor of Landscape Architecture, Agricultural University Alnarp, Sweden

Lisa Diedrich studied architecture and urbanism in Paris, Marseille and Stuttgart, science journalism in Berlin, and landscape architecture at the University of Copenhagen, where she received her doctoral degree. Since 1993, she has been running her own office

in Munich, working as consultant and critic, and since 2006 as editor-in-chief of the book series Landscape Architecture Europe (Fieldwork/ On Site/ In Touch) and of 'scape the international magazine for landscape architecture and urbanism. From 1993 to 2000 she was also an editor of Topos European Landscape Magazine. From 2000 to 2006 she worked as a personal consultant to Munich's chief architect at the city's public construction department. Since 2007 she has been dedicating her career to academia, teaching and researching in the field of contemporary European landscape architecture for universities in Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Great Britain, Norway, Denmark and Australia. Since 2012 she has been a professor of landscape architecture at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Alnarp/ Malmö.

Paul Gerretsen, Director of the Deltametropolis Association

Paul Gerretsen studied at the renowned Universities of TU Delft and ETH Zurich. After his education, he was employed at the Dutch National Spatial Planning Agency where he was involved in studies for the development of strategic regional planning. Since 2001, he has been teaching and lecturing at the Delft University of Technology and Munich Technical University. Paul started working at Maxwan, on both urban and regional planning projects in 2003. He was the team leader of the Barking Riverside Master Plan, and the regional Deltametropool project, a study on the future of the Randstad Holland region in The Netherlands, housing 7 million inhabitants. From 2005 to 2007, Paul Gerretsen was the Director of the South Wing Studio for Research and Design of the Province of Zuid-Holland. Since 2008, Paul has been the Director of the Deltametropolis Association (Vereniging Deltametropool), an association consisting of members from the government, social organisations, research centres, businesses and private individuals. The Deltametropolis Association acts as a platform and laboratory, focusing on the metropolitan development of The Netherlands.

Christophe Girot, Professor Chair of Landscape Architecture, ETH Zurich, Atelier Girot

Christophe Girot (Paris, 1957) has been Professor and Chair of Landscape Architecture at the Architecture Department of the ETH (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) in Zürich since 2001.

Before coming to the ETH he was Professor and Chair of Landscape Architecture at the Versailles School of Landscape Architecture (Ecole Nationale Supérieure du Paysage) in France from 1990 to 2000.

Christophe Girot is currently Principal Investigator at the Future Cities Laboratory in Singapore where he leads a team of 10 doctoral and postdoctoral researchers on a flood control project in the coastal metropolis of Jakarta in Indonesia. He holds a practice in Zürich with projects both in Europe and in Asia.

Jens Jorritsma, DELVA Landscape Architects / Urbanism

Jens Jorritsma is an urban designer and spatial planner. He obtained his Master of Science at the University of Groningen in 2012 and graduated from the Rotterdam Academy of Architecture. He worked successively for De Nijl Architects, VHP and De Urbanisten in Rotterdam.

Jens currently works at DELVA Landscape Architects in Amsterdam on various projects in the field of urban planning, landscape, sustainable systems and design research. He is also involved in 'Beyond Plan B', a research project where the relationship between economy and spatial planning is questioned. He also teaches regularly at the Academy of Architecture in Rotterdam.

Thierry Kandjee, TAKTYK (landscape+urbanism), Brussels/Paris

Thierry Kandjee, born 1973 in Tananarive (Madagascar), graduated as a landscape architect from ENSP Versailles in 1999, where he taught from 2004 to 2014. Practicing as a lecturer, editor and state adviser for the French state, he established TAKTYK [landscape + urbanism] in 2005 with the architect urbanist Sebastien Penfornis. In his PhD at RMIT University (2013), Dr. Thierry Kandjee investigated the public role of his practice, acting as a gardener urbanist, a conductor, orchestrator and enabler of complex transformation processes. Taktyk's projects range from the design of public space, city campus strategic planning, urban renewal, post industrial-agricultural scenarios to prospective studies in Europe and beyond. The wide range of responsibilities taken on by the office, and its broad engagements in very diverse areas has been recognised internationally with the French award for the young landscape architect (2006) and young urban planner (2010) the Topos Landscape Award 2012 and together with the practice Alive Architecture, the Belgium prize for the best public space achievement in Flanders & Brussels by Infopunt Publieke Ruimte in 2015.

Dirk Sijmons, H+N+S Landscape Architects/Technical University Delft

Prof. ir. Dirk Sijmons (1949) studied at the TU Delft and subsequently held various positions in the national government. In 1990 Sijmons was one of the three founders of H+N+S Landscape Architects. Dirk Sijmons received the Rotterdam–Maaskant award in 2002. Book publications include ‘Landkaartmos’ (2002), ‘A Plan That Works’ (2006) ‘=Landscape’ (1998) and ‘Landscape & Energy’ (2014). In 2004 Dirk Sijmons was appointed as State Landscape Architect of the Netherlands. In 2007 he received the Edgar Doncker Culture Prize. From 2008 until 2015, Sijmons was professor of Environmental Design at TU Delft. In 2014 he curated the 6th edition of the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam.

Henk Ovink, Special Envoy for International Water affairs

Henk Ovink served as a senior advisor to the American Federal Government and the former Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Taskforce instituted by President Obama. For the reconstruction of the New York and New Jersey region, he developed and led the ‘Rebuild by Design’ contest.

Henk Ovink has a long record of service in the business community, education and the government in the fields of spatial planning, water management and culture. Among others, he has served as Curator to the 5th International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, he is on the International Advisory Board of the city of Rotterdam, he teaches at Harvard GSD and he advises the Rockefeller Foundation regarding their approach to resilience and water safety.

Marinke Steenhuis, SteenhuisMeurs, (urban) transformation and spatial development

Marinke Steenhuis, PhD (1971) studied in Amsterdam. She has always combined the academic side of her work, which resulted in many publications on landscape architecture and urbanism, with research and advisory work for municipal authorities and market participants, in cooperation with her partner Paul Meurs. Marinke is an expert in the field of area identity.

Marinke’s strength lies in research and concept development in respect of the mentality (‘genre de vie’) and spatial identity of areas. By examining the different life cycles of a location by historical research, and applying her associative and scientific qualities, Marinke creates narratives, which help getting stagnant processes moving again.

**Wouter Vanstiphout, Professor Design as
Politics Technical University Delft, Crimson**

Wouter Vanstiphout graduated in 1991 in the History of Art and Architecture and Archaeology at the University of Groningen. Wouter Vanstiphout, Ewout Dorman, Annuska Pronkhorst, Michelle Provoost, Simone Rots and Cassandra Wilkins together form the research cooperative Crimson Architectural Historians. Crimson designs and researches urban environments, writes texts and books about urban environments, creates exhibitions and art projects, gives courses, develops policies and provides advice about urban environments. Vanstiphout gives lectures and is a guest lecturer at various educational institutes in the Netherlands and other countries. Since 2009, he has been professor of Design as Politics at TU Delft's faculty of Architecture.

Günther Vogt, Director of Vogt Landscape Architects, Zurich

Günther Vogt studied landscape architecture at the Interkantonales Technikum in Rapperswil in Switzerland. In 1987 he joined Stöckli, Kienast & Koepfel and became co-owner of Kienast Vogt Partner in 1995. Since 2000 he has been owner of Vogt Landscape Architects. Since 2005 he is Professor of Landscape Architecture at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, Department of Architecture. From 2007 until 2011 he was director of the Network City and Landscape (NSL) at the ETH. In 2010 VOGT Case Studio opened.

Eric Luiten, Landscape architect and planner

After graduating at Wageningen University Eric Luiten worked for the State Forestry Service and at H+N+S Landscape Architects. Since 1995 he is self-employed and works as landscape consultant on a strategic level. Between 1999 and 2004 he was responsible for the MSc-track in Landscape Architecture at the Amsterdam Architecture Academy and later on was appointed professor of Heritage and Spatial Design at the Faculty of Architecture at Delft University of Technology. Luiten also took the position of Provincial Advisor on Spatial Quality in Zuid-Holland and currently is Government Advisor on Landscape and Water.

Marieke Berkers, Architectural Historian

Marieke Berkers studied History of Art and Architecture and Archaeology at the Radboud University Nijmegen (MA). She's an academic researcher, writer, lecturer and curator of exhibitions. Berkers is a member of the Editorial Board of *Blauwe Kamer* and of *Yearbook Landscape Architecture and Urban Design*. As a researcher she cooperated in teams of VU University Amsterdam: researching the infrastructural developments of the Schiphol airport region, and University of Amsterdam: researching organic urban growth. As a lecturer Berkers teaches at the Academy of Architecture Amsterdam and Gerrit Rietveld Academy Amsterdam. Currently she's working on a collection of essays on infrastructure, landscape and oil.



Part of the exposition