Networking for innovation

The role of iconic occupiers in the development of the Rotterdam Innovation District

ERES Delft
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Rotterdam’s iconic buildings
Iconic innovator
Iconic occupier as area ambassador
Research question and content

• We presume that ‘iconic’ occupiers contribute to urban area development as they help to reposition the area, adding to the network of actors involved, enhancing the area and inspiring and activating others
• We base this hypothesis on interviews with (institutional) actors on potential impact of relocation of ‘iconic’ occupier Studio Roosegaarde to the area in 2015 and desk-research

• What is the role of iconic occupiers in the development of Merwe-Vierhavens (M4H) area?

• Methods and materials
• Analytic framework
• Timeline 2015 – 2017
• Assessment of impact Studio Roosegaarde and AVL
• Conclusion and next steps
Methods and materials: casestudy

- Longitudinal approach (start January 2015)
- Interviews (4 in 2015 and 3 in 2017)
- Document and policy analysis

‘Reflective practitioner’:  
- Observations and visiting events in the area  
- Attending all ‘Keiletafel’ and various other meetings  
- Building a network in the area  
- Advising on innovation ecosystems  
- 4 Bachelor graduate research projects at shareholders  
- Opening a Student Hub in the area (January 2017) and various other educational activities with local share and stakeholders

- Several publications (incl. ISOCARP 2015, IAVP 2016)
Analytic framework: 3 levels of analysis

Context

Network

Field
1) Field: themes, geographies and focus

City Ports
Rotterdam

Area development
Innovation
Inclusiveness

Vierhavenblok (4HB)
RID / Makersdistrict (Merwe-Vierhavens M4H)
City Ports
Rotterdam

Metropolitan region
Rotterdam-Den Haag

Area development
Innovation
Inclusiveness

© Port of Rotterdam
Merwe-Vierhavens (M4H) and Vierhavenblok (4HB)
2) Network: interactions, ‘iconic’ and institutional actors
2) Network: knowledge institutions
2) Network: SME’s and start-ups
3) Context: DESTEP and contextual geographies

- Young and ethnic diverse population (620,000 inhabitants; 166 origins)
- High share of households < social minimum
- Lower GDP growth to Dutch cities (port: fossil depended economy)
- High unemployment rate 13.9%
- Hit hard by crisis (2009-2014: employment 5% down)
- Mismatch in regional labour market: large pool of job seekers vs. shortage of technical skilled workers
- More pollution and congestion i.r.t. most Dutch regions
3) Context: DESTEP and contextual geographies

To overcome these economic, social, and environmental challenges, Rotterdam wants a more sustainable and resilient society and economy:

• Province of Zuid-Holland capitalises to little on public R&D investments (€2.8 billion, thanks strong public knowledge institutions) due to small number of yet successful innovation-driven companies

• OECD (2013) advised to invest in innovation ecosystem, skills and support of SME’s and startups

• The region responded by establishing the MRDH metropolitan region (collaboration of 23 local authorities), that work a “Roadmap to the Next Economy” (2016) with Jeremy Rifkin and the start of regional investment agency Innovation Quarter (2014)
Innovation in Rotterdam’s City Ports
Development strategy City Ports organization:

- Focus on end-user, (local) networks & Area ambassadors
- No blue print but ‘gaming rules’ -> 3x added value
- Sturdy area for working and living (after 2025)
Innovation: Rotterdam Innovation District
Innovation: Ecosystem of interaction environments
Area development: Makers District

Merwehaven: Housing

Makers District

Vierhavens: Juices
Timeline 2015 - 2017

- **2015**: Relocation
- **2016**: Smog Free Tower
- **2017**: Ownership

**Studio Roosegaarde**

**Atelier Van Lieshout (AVL)**

**AVL Mundo**

**Smog Free Tower**

**Partner Heijmans**

**Mundo**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publicity for Rotterdam and M4H (through network)</td>
<td>Boosts in April and September 2015 and frequent media attention 2015 - 2016 2017: low/basic level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image effects (correct image of the area is known and the area is more attractiveness for new companies)</td>
<td>Contribution to innovative brand for M4H / RID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing along new large actors as potential partners (and access to international network)</td>
<td>Some clear links were made. Important clients visiting the bureau / site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing local small and medium-sized enterprises (SME’s) with work</td>
<td>No substantial collaboration mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing the area with installations and designs</td>
<td>Temporarily: Smog Free Tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring other end-users to act as area’s ambassadors</td>
<td>May have inspired AVL to communicate it’s ideas / plans more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A boost for the local network and innovations coming out of it</td>
<td>No involvement in the platforms for M4H and 4HB</td>
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</table>
Atelier van Lieshout / AVL Mundo
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Possible impacts (based on SR)</th>
<th>Effects 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publicity for Rotterdam and M4H (through network)</td>
<td>Constant basic level. Boost may come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image effects (correct image of the area is known and the area is more attractiveness for new companies)</td>
<td>Big contribution to creative image for 4HB (and M4H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing along new large actors as potential partners (and access to international network)</td>
<td>Collaboration with Heijmans. Important clients visiting the bureau / site Expo 2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing local small and medium-sized enterprises (SME’s) with work</td>
<td>Some explicit (future) collaborations reported. Involved with RUAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing the area with installations and designs</td>
<td>Constant: Artwork in 4HB. Planned: 2 new iconic buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring other end-users to act as area’s ambassadors</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A boost for the local network and innovations coming out of it</td>
<td>Quite involved in platforms for M4H and 4HB. Organizer of big events</td>
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Reflections organic development concept

Rotmans (2011) mentions the characteristics of an organic development concept which is needed to guide a long term transition process which needs to stay ‘fresh’ with many stakeholders in complex networks:

- Steering is done by a small unit, the cockpit;
- **The cockpit is not the director but mainly a facilitator, connector and switch board**;
- ‘The game’ is played with frontrunners;
- **Learning and experimenting are the basis for organic development**;
- **Iconic projects are necessary as visible results on a small scale**;
- Innovation space is essential. Juridical, fiscal, organizational and mental space is needed;
- An ambitious long term vision is formulated which guides the process;
- **The execution goes step by step with enough space for adjustment**
## Conclusion

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<th>Atelier van Lieshout</th>
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<td>+</td>
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Discussion and next steps

• Iconic occupiers deliver ‘iconic’ moments
• Hubs, like ECE (incubator in Science Tower) and Keilewerf (communal building for Makers), are also mentioned as ‘iconic’ platforms

Theme ‘Area development’:
• Organic development strategy need a more sturdy framework and public investments
• Is this strategy ‘boom-proof’?

Next steps:
• Research ‘the network’ as central phenomenon
• Evaluate the involvement of RUAS in the area
• Include the theme of ‘Inclusiveness’
Thank you!