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The Role of the Festival

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Publication date

2019

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

A Critical History of Media Art in the Netherlands

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Citation for published version (APA):

Huisman, S., & van Mechelen, M. (2019). The Role of the Festival. In S. Huisman, & M. van Mechelen (Eds.), *A Critical History of Media Art in the Netherlands: Platforms, Policies, Technologies*. (pp. 37-47, 49-62). Jap Sam Books.

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3. THE ROLE OF THE FESTIVAL

STAGE AND PLATFORM FOR MEDIA ART

The history of media art in the Netherlands is the history of festivals, definitely in the period that marks the start of this book. An inventory taken in the late 1990s at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Museum Ludwig in Cologne and the Centre pour l'image contemporaine Saint-Gervais Geneva, shows that most media art festivals date back to the 1980s. A number of examples of festivals that still exist today are the *Ars Electronica Festival* in Linz, founded in 1986, the *European Media Arts Festival (EMAF)* Osnabrück, for which the foundations were already laid in 1981, and *transmediale* in Berlin, established in 1988.³⁶ The three best known from that time in the Netherlands are the *World Wide Video Festival (WWVF)* (The Hague 1982), *AVE* (Arnhem 1985) and *IMPAKT* (originally *IMPAKT*) (Utrecht 1988), which is the only one of the three that still exists. The importance of media art festivals cannot be underestimated.³⁷ At the same time, the function and nature of the festivals have changed over time. The question is what the importance of the video and media art festivals initially was and how we can broadly summarise their later developments.

A first conclusion is quickly made: the festivals and not the museums are the most important stages for media art, both in the 1980s, and later. In addition, we must not forget that in some cases the festivals are a branch of the media art institutions. For the artists, they are the key to international networks and at the same time function, on a modest scale, as testing grounds for technological developments. All of this shows that the festivals are more than a mere stage. A number of new accents are added later on as well. Education and audience reach are two of them. Once the government discovers the new media, the focus on education and knowledge transfer increases. Another new accent is a quality that is traditionally attributed to festivals, but which was considered a polluted term for a long time in and around the media art festival scene: namely, entertainment. This accent makes it more likely that the festivals will come to be associated

³⁶ Noortje Smit, 'Zien en gezien worden: De functie van drie festivals voor audiovisuele kunst', master's thesis (University of Amsterdam, 2001).

³⁷ In 1988, the *International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA)* is also established within the cultural sector, and will later, like the *International Film Festival in Rotterdam*, also include video art in its programming.

with *low culture* rather than *high art*, or that the dividing line between them becomes vague, even non-existent. The old functions of the media art festivals, however, do not disappear. The network function is retained, but is less dependent on the actual festival moment. One festival that has created a new type of ‘art and technology festival’ is STRP, founded in 2005 in Eindhoven. It tries to cater to a new, young audience with an extensive programme for schools and other target groups. It presents itself as a festival of total experience, and is at its launch aptly called the ‘Disneyland of Electronics’ in the press.³⁸ It offers interviews, lectures and workshops; it presents to the public the pioneers of media art, and at the same time brings its audience into contact with the idols of their time, from DJs and VJs – among them big names like Peter Greenaway – to representatives of robotics (Fred Abels and Mirjam Langemeijer, Driessens & Verstappen, Zoro Feigl and others), *live cinema* (Telcosystems, Eboman, Bas van Koolwijk, Martijn van Boven and others) and artists known for their interactive works, such as Marnix de Nijs and Edwin van der Heide. Interactivity was always seen as an important aspect of media art, and STRP is now fully exploiting it to activate its audience and provide it with a unique experience. At the same time, we can see a completely different trend at other festivals: the media art festival as a platform for social themes, related to contemporary developments in bio- and information technology, a particular area of attention for *Sonic Acts*, *IMPAKT*, *DEAF* and *GGOBOT*, among others.

THE 1980S: THE FIRST MAJOR FESTIVALS

The Why

Looking back to the 1980s, there are three factors that led to the creation of media art festivals. The first is related to issues already discussed extensively in the second chapter: the attitude of the government and, consequently, the uncertain position of media art in the 1980s. Two other factors are of a much more general nature and are important on an international level: first, the changed relationship between contemporary art and media art, and second, the developments within video and media art itself. The first, the changed relationship between media art and other contemporary arts in the Netherlands is well illustrated in the analysis of the profile of two magazines: *Museumjournaal* and *Metropolis M*. *Museumjournaal* was known in the 1970s as the magazine that paid a great deal of attention to performance and video art, which was somewhat remarkable, since the museums that financed this magazine did not themselves show much interest in these new media. Its profile changes in 1980 with the appointment of a new editor-in-chief, Paul Groot. He turns it into an important mouthpiece of postmodernism – both with regards to its art forms and its theory. He follows, albeit with a critical eye, what museums in the Netherlands and abroad are turning their attention to: various forms of new painting and new sculpture, causing

³⁸ Alfred Bos, ‘STRP Festival: Disneyland van de electronica; “kunst maakt technologie inzichtelijk”’, *DJBroadcast* 2006.

³⁹ Abroad it is also referred to as: *Neue Wilden* or *Transavantgardia*. This development was already signalled by Achille Bonito Oliva in the late 1970s; an important exhibition was *New Spirit in Painting* from 1981. See also Geurt Imanse,

‘Nieuwe schilderkunst – een bibliografie’, *Metropolis M* 3, no.5 (1982): 19–24; and Geurt Imanse, ‘Recente ontwikkelingen: de terugkeer van figuratie ... en abstractie’, in *De Nederlandse identiteit in de kunst na 1945*, Geurt Imanse, ed. (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1984), 199–224.

Museumjournaal to pay less attention to new media.³⁹ Groot remains editor-in-chief for almost the entire decade. One year before his appointment in 1980, art history students from Utrecht University set up a new magazine, *Metropolis M*. From the outset, the magazine is mainly geared to painting and sculpture. It is clear that the young editors and authors have no problem with the fact that these are older media; the mostly expressive form in which the media present themselves is new. Yet this ‘craving for images’, as the German art historian Wolfgang Faust calls it at the time, does not exclude an interest in low culture phenomena. It is striking that *Metropolis M* asks Paul Groot to write about media art and, for example, the World Wide Video Festival, precisely in his capacity as media art expert. He is closely involved with *Rabotnik TV* that emerged from the pirate PKP/*Rabotnik* and has ties with *Mediamatic* (Groningen 1983).⁴⁰ What does this say? Does it say something about the compatibility of a postmodern worldview on the one hand and a living counterculture on the other?⁴¹ Or rather something about the appeal of a subculture that every right-minded young person should be interested in and of which media art as a contemporary phenomenon is naturally part of? Both seem to apply.

Those who come into contact with the new artists’ environments, such as the likes of *W139* and *Aorta*, will recognise what Amanda Wasielewski writes in her dissertation on Dutch subcultures in the 1980s: ‘the Nieuwe Wilden painters were interested in creating an ‘image flow’ – cracking into and occupying the ‘dead’ field of painting. These artists used painting as a platform for a frantic outpouring of imagery, processing pop culture and television through a filter of raw, unpolished materials.’⁴² (See also the contributions of Angela M. Bartholomew and Marina Turco in this volume.) Media art plays a role in these developments, yet simultaneously part of media art, namely video art, is withdrawing from it. In the same period, the 1980s, both artists and curators are arguing for the protection of video art. *De Appel*, which has reluctantly become an important institution for video and media art in the 1970s, decides in the early 1980s to set up a new organisation together with the *Vereniging van Videokunstenaren* (Association of Video Artists), established for that very purpose.⁴³ This institution, the aforementioned *Time Based Arts* (Amsterdam 1983), will be successfully managed for years by Aart van Barneveld.⁴⁴ One factor, which has already been highlighted in the previous chapter, undoubtedly plays an important role: the adherence to the term ‘video art’ which in practice already meant more than the mere use of magnetic tape. In retrospect, it is surprising that the term ‘time-based arts’ was chosen since when Elsa Stansfield and Madelon Hooykaas introduced the term in 1980 as a course name at the Jan van Eyk Academy in Maastricht, it already implied much more than video art; it also included performance art, for instance. Whatever the case may be, with the divestment of video art, *De Appel* effectively creates a division within the *time-based* media. All in all, the term ‘video art’ has had a longer life than one might have expected

⁴⁰ Paul Groot, ‘All That’s Fit to Transmit’, *Mediamatic* 2, no.3 (1988); see mediamatic.net/en/page/196477/rabotnik-tv.

⁴¹ This compatibility can be seen as a general characteristic of postmodernism. Yet the image of separate worlds has prevailed in the Netherlands for a long time. This is corrected by Amanda Wasielewski in *Between the Cracks: From Squatting to Tactical*

Media Art in the Netherlands 1979–1993, PhD diss. (The City University of New York, 2019).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴³ Van Mechelen 2006 (see note 4), 85 and 275 et seq.; see also Rob Perrée, ‘Van Agora tot MonteVideo’, in *The Magnetic Era* (see note 1), 51–77; here 51 et seq.

based on the developments at that time. To this day, it is used as a container term. In the beginning of the 1980s, it would certainly not have surprised anyone that the first major media art festival to be established in the Netherlands was called World Wide Video Festival.

The third factor is the development of the media art field itself. Reference to Pierre Bourdieu has already been made earlier in the context of the definition of 'field'. In line with, but also as a variation on, his definition, this concerns not only an aesthetic terrain with its forms of expression that are recognisable to both public and producers, but also an environment with a specific socio-cultural dynamic. The latter must be seen in a very broad perspective. It encompasses the dynamics of the club scene that will become part of the festivals in later years, but before the festival emerged it was all about the rapid evolution of technological exchanges, often with the help of larger and smaller tech companies, ranging from Sony – in the Netherlands Brandsteder Electronics – to the Brit Jack Moore's Video Heads. The latter in particular is essential for the role that the festivals play and the development of media art. Although Nam June Paik served as an example for many Dutch artists in the way he collaborated with engineers and large companies, culminating in his use of satellite technology in 1977 at Documenta 6, the Sonsbeek exhibition organisation is already using production studios like Meatball in as early as 1971. The 1971 Sonsbeek exhibition was not an ordinary sculpture exhibition, but an activity with video workshops led by Nam June Paik, Eric Siegel and Joepat, among others. This is one example, yet there are many more that make it clear to those interested in video or television art that the experimentation and communication that surround it requires a new platform.⁴⁵ The history of two 'galleries', De Appel founded in 1975 by Wies Smals, and MonteVideo in 1978 by René Coelho, also the founder of The New Electric TV (1968), shows that they aimed to take on this role, even though De Appel was initially set up for environments, situation art and performances.⁴⁶ For De Appel, this all changed with the creation of Time Based Arts in 1983.

The media art field itself required a new platform, stable enough to remain visible to both public and artists, and flexible enough to be able to keep up with the apparently rapid technological developments. According to Noortje Smit, the World Wide Video Festival, which is the first to be established, assumed that role; it closely follows the development of electronic media. In its presentation, it also uses the latest the market has to offer at the time of the festival.⁴⁷ The WWVF, for example, uses LCD projectors and screens instead of monitors to display video art. Although technical aspects had until then been regarded as subordinate to the content of video art, it cannot be denied that, given the value that is assigned to interactivity at this and other festivals, the introduction and use of the CD-ROM and CD-i was also furthered by artists. Assisted by companies such as Creative Disk from 's-Hertogenbosch, which introduced the ARTBOX – a collection of interactive programmes in the field of art and culture – in premiere at the 1995 AVE

⁴⁴ Time Based Arts was united in 1993 with MonteVideo, a gallery founded in 1978 by a former VARA television programme maker, René Coelho. See also Terreehorst 1991 (see note 2), 36 et seq., and chapter 2.

⁴⁵ For this reason, various festivals will be held in Arnhem in the following decades. See Marga van Mechelen, 'Sonsbeek

na Sonsbeek', in *Als de kunst erom vraagt: De Sonsbeektentoonstellingen van 1971, 1986 en 1993*, Jeroen Boomgaard, Marga van Mechelen and Miriam van Rijsingen, eds. (Amsterdam and Arnhem: Stichting Tentoonstellingsinitiatieven en Gemeenschap Beeldende Kunstenaars, 2001), 13–87.

Festival. Other applications of the computer follow a similar evolution. With some exaggeration it could be said that computer-related art is reinvented at the festivals in around 1987. In Arnhem, home of the AVE Festival, insiders must have been familiar with the computer art of Peter Struycken, who was at the time associated with the Academy of Visual Arts in the city, yet his legacy is not continued, neither here nor elsewhere. In those years, the privileged ties with the visual arts become looser and the developments within the professional field more important. This trend is not only evident at the AVE Festival but also at the WWVF in the late 1990s. These are just a few of the achievements. But across the board, the festivals succeed in doing what the museums generally fail to do: use the best possible technology, honour the presentation requirements and conditions and, as such, do justice to the concept of the work. The question is to what extent the other functions that festivals are increasingly assuming could be foreseen and to what extent they could count as a factor.

World Wide Video Festival

The World Wide Video Festival is founded in 1982 by Tom van Vliet at a time when video art has fully matured. This is emphasised several times at the time, and also long afterwards (see Marga van Mechelen's contribution in this volume). Video art has developed its own visual language and no longer wants to lean on other media. In addition museums are already well on their way to building a collection of artists' video tapes, even if they hardly play a role as permanent screening places, with the exception of the video stairs in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam initiated by Dorine Mignot in 1981 (see the contribution by Domeniek Ruyters in this volume). Yet the festival also starts at a moment when it is too early to be able to oversee or respond to all the consequences of the approaching information and network society and the radical changes that come with postmodernism. Five years later, the word 'video' may well have been deleted.

The World Wide Video Festival does not simply emerge in one day. Director Tom van Vliet has earned his spurs in the field of video art and is known as the founder of a centre that already bore the name World Wide Video and was housed in the Kijkhuis. This centre is home to a collection he built of videos by mostly American artists. It also develops a large number of activities, ranging from distribution, production, presentation to reflection in the form of lectures and debates with a broad audience of interested parties. The first edition of the festival, which also takes place in The Hague, is small and short-lived, but big names such as Nam June Paik, Dara Birnbaum, Stansfield/Hooykaas and Nan Hoover are already on the programme. Michel Cardena, a video artist of the first hour and educator of generations of artists at the AKI (Academy of Art and Design) in Enschede, presents a video installation in an education bus standing in front of the town hall in The Hague. The second edition a year later is of a different order with over one hundred video works, tapes, installations and video performances, spread over four locations

⁴⁶ Van Mechelen 2006 (see note 4). It should be noted that the Lijnbaancentrum in Rotterdam and the Agora Studio in Maastricht also played a pivotal role in those years.

⁴⁷ Smit 2001 (see note 36).

in The Hague. The size of the festival remains the same up to 1993, the year it moves from the Kijkhuis (and other locations) to Theater aan 't Spui; with more than 200 productions on the programme. Four years later, it moves again, now to Amsterdam and from that time on it strengthens its cooperation with other institutions and festivals including NIMk, MonteVideo/Time Based Arts, Mediamatic, the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Melkweg, W139 and Sonic Acts. Important other changes in the more than twenty years that the festival has existed – the last edition took place in 2004 – include the introduction of competitions, something that was initially strongly opposed, and reluctantly and relatively late, the introduction of a thematic set-up. More related to the medium is the space that is offered to interactivity, especially around the introduction of the CD-ROM and CD-i and other computer-related art. Finally, it chooses to participate in the Amsterdam club culture that revolves around a number of remarkable VJs (more about this in Marina Turco's contribution in this volume). These changes cannot only be seen as a reflection of the times or a keeping up with the times, but also as a loosening of the necessary role that the festival had to play in the 1980s, if video art was to get a stage, or keep it.

AVE

From the start, the World Wide Video Festival has, as the title suggests, an international scope. This also applies to the AVE Festival that was established in Arnhem in 1985. There is, however, one big difference. While the WWVF could rely on an already existing network and invite well-known names, the AVE tried, with the help of scouts – including (former) students of the Arnhem art academy, to chart the most recent developments internationally from which they sourced the programme of every new edition.⁴⁸ The annual festival is a festival 'by and for' students and recently graduated artists. AVE stands for Audiovisual Experimental Festival and is the initiative of a teacher at the academy, who sets it up in collaboration with the local film house and the De Gele Rijder gallery, which is affiliated with the Gelderland artists' organisation GBK. Many more local and national organisations will soon become involved. The festival as such is, with regard to the use of audiovisual means, more broadly oriented than the World Wide Video Festival. In addition, it also turns its focus to exchange, not only between art students and artists in Western Europe, but also beyond. Much attention goes to the Eastern Bloc, which only increases after the fall of the Iron Curtain. There is collaboration with Rommy Albers and Mediamatic editor Geert-Jan Strengholt, which results in the programme component Found Footage, which consists of material selected during Strengholt's scouting trip through the United States. In addition, lectures are provided about the domain of experimental film that is underexposed in the Netherlands and about the interaction between film and experimental music. 'Experimental video' is also a fixed category. As such, the AVE aligns itself with a trend that can also be observed elsewhere, for example at the European Media Arts Festival (EMAF) in Osnabrück. The last edition of 1995 is much

⁴⁸ Ibid.

smaller in scale, due to the fact that a number of funds have withheld their support. Still, 35 countries are represented. The programme no longer consists of 600 film and video productions, but still includes a respectable 300 presentations, as well as 40 installations and 25 performances. Up to 2001, several attempts are made to restart the festival, but they are not very successful.

IMPAKT Festival

IMPAKT, the third major festival to be established in the 1980s, has its roots in the Utrecht cultural centre EKKO and the student association SSR. This centre had a number of different departments, including one for video and film.⁴⁹ Arjon Dunnewind, whose name is connected with IMPAKT to this day, is a coordinator in the film department, but his interests lie more in audiovisual disciplines. The concept of the festival offers the departments that operate fairly autonomously the possibility to cooperate, with the ultimate aim of reaping the rewards of this initiative outside the festival as well. This immediately lays the foundation for the profile of IMPAKT as it will become known, named after the first festival: IM PAKT. A dynamic platform for multiple art disciplines geared towards a broad audience, in which content and capturing the audience's attention are more important than the choice for the one or other medium. The subtitle 'Festival of Experimental and Related Arts', which remains unchanged until 1996, expresses not only its broad but also quite ambitious profile. In comparison with the WWVF and AVE, the programming of the festival is more quantitatively modest and also 'more educational' through, among other things, the presentation of classic films upon which the experimental film developed further. From 1990, the music programme component falls under the responsibility of Roland Speklé, while the two-person programme management remains maintained, even when the festival becomes more independent and is turned into a foundation in 1992 with the financial support of the municipality of Utrecht. The thematic set-up makes it possible for the festival to present a programme that includes both videos and films. As a rule, IMPAKT works with an open call; regular programmer Dunnewind, together with a constantly changing team assess the entries, after which a selection is made. Equally important is the added value offered by a festival in which the public can discover parallel developments but also differences between art disciplines. When it is decided in 1996 to change the subtitle to 'Festival for Audiovisual Arts' (from 2000 onwards it is called the 'Festival for Media Art'), this is not based on the desire to follow a different course, but rather on the need to make it even more clear to the public what the festival stands for: bringing together different disciplines that fall under the audiovisual denominator. Also important is the twofold presentation of a thematic, connecting programme that incorporates historical videos and films and a programme with more room for recent and innovative video and film productions, known as the Panorama Programme, which will continue to exist until 2015. From 2008,

⁴⁹ Ibid.

the programming engages with one overarching theme. One year later, the festival starts to work with external curators. In comparison with the World Wide Video Festival and certainly with AVE, the festival follows technological developments only to a lesser degree. For a long time, there has been only limited attention to CD-ROMs and Internet-related work. However, this will be more than made up for later.

IMPAKT never sought to fulfil the springboard function that AVE had. Nor the role of the World Wide Video Festival as a meeting place for creators, producers, distributors and the public, or the self-chosen limitation to one medium. Inasmuch as there is discussion about whether the audiovisual programme belongs to the arts or rather embodies an independent field, it is conducted in an entirely open manner with the public. IMPAKT opts for multidisciplinary, a choice that will be adopted by other later festivals, albeit usually in a different form. It is mainly the social themes such as Artificial Empathy in 2014 and Algorithmic Structures in 2018 that give IMPAKT its distinctive identity. A major change takes place in 2018 when IMPAKT is given a fixed location and starts presenting an annual programme in what is called the IMPAKT Center for Media Culture.

The three aforementioned festivals survive the 1980s without government funding. They each have an international network and sometimes, but by no means always, manifest themselves nationally as competitors. Together, they also form a network that can be used to serve each other's needs, for example for selection committees or when there is a need for material and technical support. Now, a few decades later, it can be said that even after the introduction of the Internet that went on to function as a communication medium and a stage, the festivals have not become any less important. Remarkable is a second wave of festivals in the mid-1990s that is marked by the emergence of Next 5 Minutes in 1993, followed one year later by Sonic Acts and Dutch Electronic Art Festival (DEAF), and another year later the precursor of 5 Days Off, 10 Days Of Techno. A decade later, three more festivals will follow: GOGBOT in 2004 and in 2005 STRP and TodaysArt. FIBER Festival and TEC ART are last to have emerged until now.

A SECOND WAVE: DEAF, NEXT 5 MINUTES, SONIC ACTS, 5 DAYS OFF

The festivals, no matter how long they exist and in spite of their roots, manifest themselves as autonomous organisations. They are not always keen on being called institutions, and rather prefer the term 'platform'. That is somewhat different for the first *Manifestatie voor de Instabiele Media* (Manifestation for the Instable Media) in 1987 that later develops into DEAF, a large festival that takes place for the first time in 1994 in Rotterdam. It is the main offshoot of V2_, which at that time already has a long history of activities in the field of what has henceforth been referred to as 'unstable' media.⁵⁰ We already mentioned V2_ because of the pioneering role it is assigned to play by the government in the mid-1990s. The niche of V2_ has become increasingly more topical and urgent over time, thanks

⁵⁰ V2_ is forced to separate DEAF from the organisation after the cutbacks under Zijlstra. DEAF becomes independent and has two more editions (in 2012 and 2014). V2_ is currently working on a comeback.

in part to Next 5 Minutes, an international conference and festival for Tactical Media linked to V2_, which takes place irregularly between 1993 and 2003 and which presents politically charged topics (see also David Garcia's contribution in this volume). More on the background of V2_ and the later developments of the institute in the next chapter.

The striking thing about the new festivals, which started in the mid-1990s, is the central role of music (see Dick Rijken's contribution in this volume). This applies to Sonic Acts, 5 Days Off, and later also to GOGBOT, STRP, TodaysArt and FIBER Festival. Yet what is most characteristic is the multi and transdisciplinarity within the field of digital media itself. Sonic Acts presents itself as a thematic festival with a focus on contemporary and historical developments, where art, technology, music and science are brought together (see the contribution of Lucas van der Velden and Arie Altena in this volume). The programme consists of concerts, performances, exhibitions, projections, lectures and workshops. Over the years, the focus shifts increasingly to education and knowledge transfer. In short, 5 Days Off calls itself an electronic music festival, but has also presented editions such as 5 Days Off Media, in which the boundaries are shifted towards media art and visual culture. Its origins lie in a festival that lasted ten days and took place in Ghent, Belgium, until 2014. In its initial years, it mainly brings techno and dance music. Through collaboration with venues such as Paradiso, the Melkweg and Sonic Acts, its scope is increasingly expanded. In the meantime, the festival has taken place more than fifteen times, always in the nightlife centre of Amsterdam.

BORN IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: TODAYSART, STRP, GOGBOT, TEC ART AND FIBER FESTIVAL

The differences that exist between all the festivals are not easy to understand from their profiles alone, but should, above all, be *experienced*. Differences in the nature of the music played, the share of each individual discipline, the nature of the transdisciplinary projects, their public accessibility, who one meets there, all this is part of that experience. The reviews in the press about the different editions of the festivals, often with comparisons between them, give a good picture of their different identities. Many festivals deal with research, but the differences between them with respect to this topic are also considerable. If we consider the festivals that have emerged in the new millennium, it is striking that TodaysArt presents itself not only as a festival but also as a network organisation that focusses on cross-disciplinary art forms, on contemporary visual arts and performing arts, against the backdrop of contemporary culture. STRP has already been discussed. Yet what has not been pointed out, but plays an underlying role in most of the festivals, is the relationship with the city where the festival takes place. STRP in particular is a festival that, just like AVE and IMPAKT in the 1980s, is strongly linked to its place of origin and its urban culture. In Eindhoven, it is 'technology'; STRP stands for

Strijp-S, the place where the electronics company Philips originated. At STRP, one can see 'what a marriage between art and technology yields.'⁵¹ What is also striking is that neither Today'sArt nor STRP feel the need to specialise. Just like Sonic Acts, their scope is kept as broad as possible. It is clear that the festival draws on an arsenal of local and international artists and other participants – a fact that has not changed since the 1980s. Yet if Today'sArt is geared towards informing the public and promoting innovation and creativity, STRP rather presents itself as a festival of total experience, of co-existence of more in-depth presentations on the one hand and grand spectacles on the other, for an audience of both laymen and connoisseurs.

GOGBOT, which was established shortly before STRP in 2004 by visual artist and urban designer Kees de Groot, is based in Enschede. The producer of the festival is PLANETART, which also has the relatively young festival TEC ART in Rotterdam under its wing. The striking name GOGBOT refers to Vincent van Gogh and gogo ('a bit crazy'), while 'bot' indicates a predilection for robotics. This predilection did not disappear and has, now that the subject has become much more topical, come to occupy an important place in the edition of 2018.⁵² In addition, GOGBOT has presented a lot of international electronic music since its inception. Here too, the emphasis is on technology, fuelled by a collaboration with the University of Twente, better known as the technical university, and the Saxion University of Applied Sciences. Since 2014, TEC ART – Festival for Creative Technology coincides with Art Rotterdam at varying locations, including at Worm and V2_.

Most festivals see it as their task to contribute to the development of media art outside of the festival days or, as stated before, to provide a platform for current issues surrounding technology and society. This often implies the facilitation of projects or the initiation of research (see also Arie Altena's contribution in this volume). Sonic Acts, Today'sArt but also Baltan Laboratories, founded by STRP, have developed strongly in that direction, while FIBER Festival, which had its first edition in 2011, shows more similarities with the way 5 Days Off started: a stage for audiovisual performances, live/DJ sets etc. Entertainment for sure, but not only for a young audience of enthusiasts, it's also for the creators of digital culture.

IFFR: AN OLD NEW PLATFORM

In comparison with these festivals, the role played by the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) (founded in 1972) is small. Yet it cannot be left unmentioned because in many forms it has provided a platform for video artists, or artists who work on the boundaries of the visual arts and film. In the mid-1990s, Emile Fallaux asked Femke Wolting, later together with Bruno Felix, co-founder of *Submarine*, to set up a programme in which the 'cinematic' is expressed through several artistic disciplines. This programme, presenting video installations, video games, Internet-related work and music videos, and including

⁵¹ 'Communicatie en publiciteitsplan' (Communication and Publicity Plan) (Eindhoven: STRP Festival, 2007), 2.

⁵² In 2018, the *Robot Love* exhibition organised by Stichting Niet Normaal takes place in Eindhoven; in those same months, there is a striking amount of attention in the media for the significance of the robot in industry and healthcare.

many internationally known names, continues under Simon Field, who became the director of the festival in 1996. It is noticeable that the dividing lines between film and other arts start to fade around that time, partly as a result of the digital projection possibilities and perhaps the lesser fear of mixing art and popular culture. Later, visual artists are chosen as 'Filmmaker in Focus' and, together with business director Janneke Staarink and art historian Rutger Wolfson, the director of the festival from 2007 to 2015, they introduce new programme components such as Size Matters aimed at the application of screens of varying sizes in public spaces. Additionally, there is Signals, a section with programmes that concentrate on the growing overlap between monitor and film screen, that presents the blending of disciplines. Dutch artists who have made use of these stages within the festival include: Persijn Broersen & Margit Lukács, Fiona Tan, Roy Villevoeye & Jan Dietvorst, Guido van der Werve, Metahaven, Yael Bartana and Melanie Bonajo. Although these initiatives of IFFR were not always greeted with great enthusiasm in the film world – with the exception of Exploding Cinema – it is clear that IFFR does respond to developments that also play a role elsewhere in the context of the visual arts.

The underlying reasons for the wave of festivals in the mid-1980s have been clearly described. There was an urgent need to create a proper stage and platform since the government and traditional institutions did far too little for the media arts. Ten years later, the tide has turned and the festivals that emerge enjoy a much more favourable climate. The willingness to develop the new e-culture together with the government and more established institutions, while opening up the rather specialised field of digital media, is crucial. Yet it is harder to explain the third wave on the basis of negative or positive motivations. Perhaps the best starting point is the finding stated in the first lines of the *Beleidsplan STRP 2009* (STRP Policy Plan 2009): namely the observation that there are signs that the acceptance of media and digital art in contemporary art is (finally) a reality in 2008. It refers, as one of the telling signs, to the *Deep Screen* (2008) exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. *Deep Screen – Art in Digital Culture: Voorstel tot Gemeentelijke Kunstaankopen 2008* (Deep Screen – Art in Digital Culture: Proposal for Municipal Art Acquisitions 2008), took place at Post CS, the temporary location of the Stedelijk Museum in the period of the expansion of the museum on Museumplein.⁵³ The guest curator was Andreas Broeckmann, project manager at V2_ until 2000. What does this reference to *Deep Screen* imply? Does it imply that media art needs sanctioning by the museum? That the museum has become a stage, equivalent to the festival? In what follows, the relation of video and media art to mass media will be discussed, first to television and later to the Internet. We will elaborate on the 'digital divide' of media art and artworld art and how this division explains the position of media art within and beyond institutional frameworks as well as the necessity of specialised media art institutions.

⁵³ Work is shown by Mark Bain, Persijn Broersen & Margit Lukács, Erwin Driessens & Maria Verstappen, JODI, Gabriel Lester, Nathaniel Mellors, Geert Mul, Marnix de Nijs & Edwin van der Heide, Gert-Jan Prins, Remko Scha & Arthur Elsenaar, Jochem van der Spek and Jasmijn Visser, among others.

The One Minutes

The One Minutes (TOM) started in 1998 on the initiative of Jos Houweling, head of the audiovisual department of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and dean of the Sandberg Instituut in Amsterdam, as an international competition of videos with a maximum of 60 seconds. The collection of more than 10,000 videos is now part of Beeld en Geluid, The Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision. In 2002 the foundation started The One Minutes Jr, a new competition and a comprehensive programme with workshops, in close cooperation with the European Cultural Foundation and UNICEF, to give a voice to young people living in disadvantaged circumstances. The One Minutes were very successful in China, where in 2008 the World One Minutes took place with 800 videos from 90 countries.

◀ Left

Helmut Dick DE/NL, 1969
Het koffiezetapparaat [Coffee Machine]
1999, video

▶ Right

Nina Yuen US, 1981
They All Look Like the Same Boy
2013, video

Sanny Overbeeke NL, 1952
Niebla
2004, video

Jos Houweling NL, 1943
Bond voor het vloeken [League for Swearing]
2013, video
Translation: 'I could draw his blood'



World Wide Video Festival

▲ Top

Jan van Nuenen NL, 1978
SET-4
2003, video collage, found footage, animation, colour, sound, 3'50''

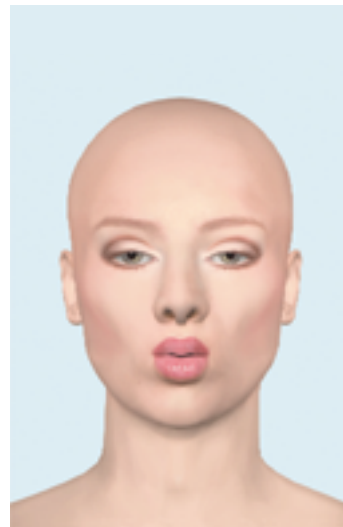
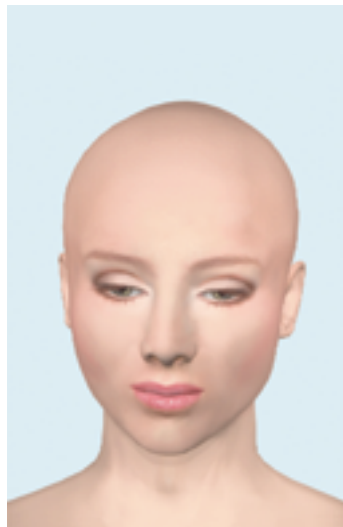
Noisy composition for table tennis, volleyball and jumping board. The images are mixed, overlapped and superimposed into loops. It was screened during the World Wide Video Festival 2004.



▼ Bottom

Kirsten Geisler DE/NL, 1949
Dream of Beauty 2.0
1999, interactive 3D computer animation and telephone

The virtual ideal image of women, first investigated and formulated by Geisler, is projected on a larger than life scale. The viewer can communicate with her via telephone. *Dream of Beauty 2.0* was on view at World Wide Video Festival 1999.



AVE

▲ Top

Yvonne Oerlemans NL, 1945–2012
Metamorphosis in Nature
1992, video, 6'53''

The short scenes in this film are announced by a title that changes the perception of the picture. It ascribes object, symbols or philosophical ideas to the picture.

▼ Bottom

Jeroen Eisinga NL, 1966
40-44-PG
1993, film still from 35mm film, colour, sound, 3'01'' (originally made with a tube camera on U-Matic low band)

A performance recorded on film in which the artist tries to avoid a Volkswagen Beetle blindfolded was repeated one year later as an illegal action during the AVE Festival in the entertainment area of Arnhem.



IMPAKT

▲ Top

Mark Bain NL, 1966
Transient Vehicle
1999, subsonic sound installation
for a sea container with oscillators

Subsonic vibration frequencies that make audible buildings and objects, in this case a sea container. This installation was set up on Stadhuisplein in Utrecht, as part of the X-site programme of the IMPAKT Festival 1999.

▼ Bottom

Foundland
Lauren Alexander ZA/NL, 1983
Ghalia Elsrakbi SY/NL, 1978
STRUGGLE! and Fabricated Enemies
2011, multimedia installation with videos, photos, drawings and table tennis balls

Installation view during IMPAKT Festival 2011. On the eve of the civil war in Syria, the installation demonstrates the resistance against dictator Bashar al-Assad, both on the Internet and in public space in Syria.



DEAF

▲ Top

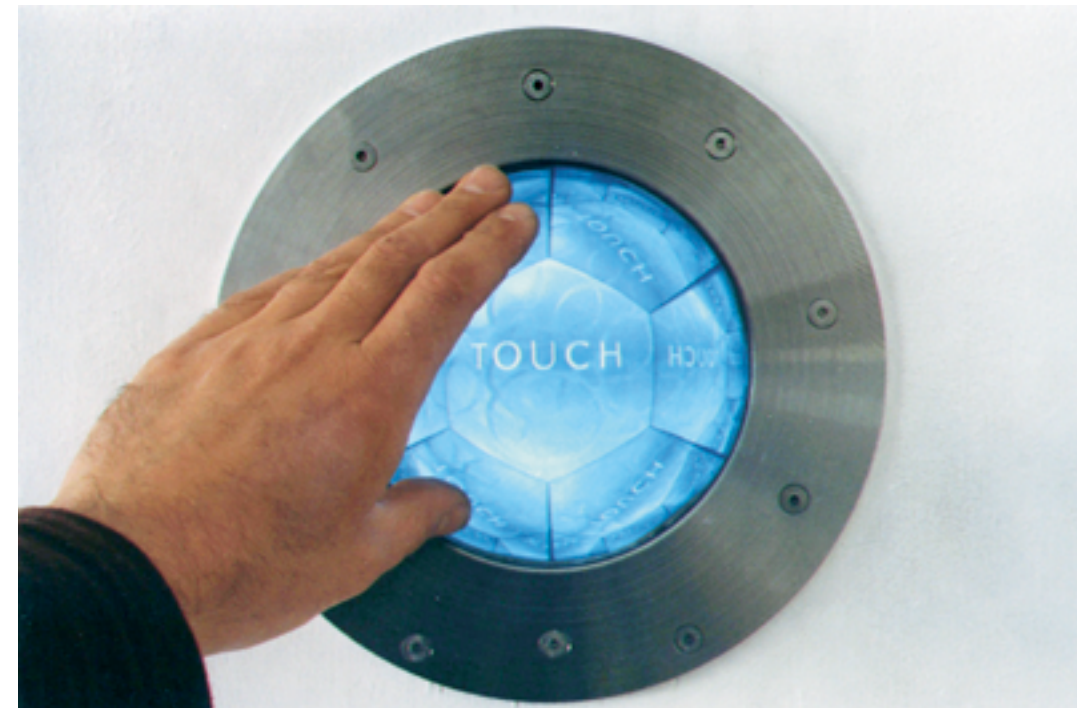
Arno Coenen NL, 1972
The Last Road Trip
1996, video installation and soundscape

Visual diary of an eight-month journey taken by Coenen through the US. In the installation, images are projected onto windscreens of a Chevy truck. With a soundscape by DJ Dione (Solid Rocket Boosters).

▼ Bottom

Jaap de Jonge NL, 1956
Crystal Ball
1996, interactive video installation,
colour, sound

Installation view of a rotatable glass ball in a wall that presents kaleidoscopic images of live video broadcasts. The viewer is invited to touch the crystal ball by the words 'Touch Me' on the ball. The television images are projected onto the ball, manipulated by mirrors and mixed with computer generated animation.



Sonic Acts

▼ Left page

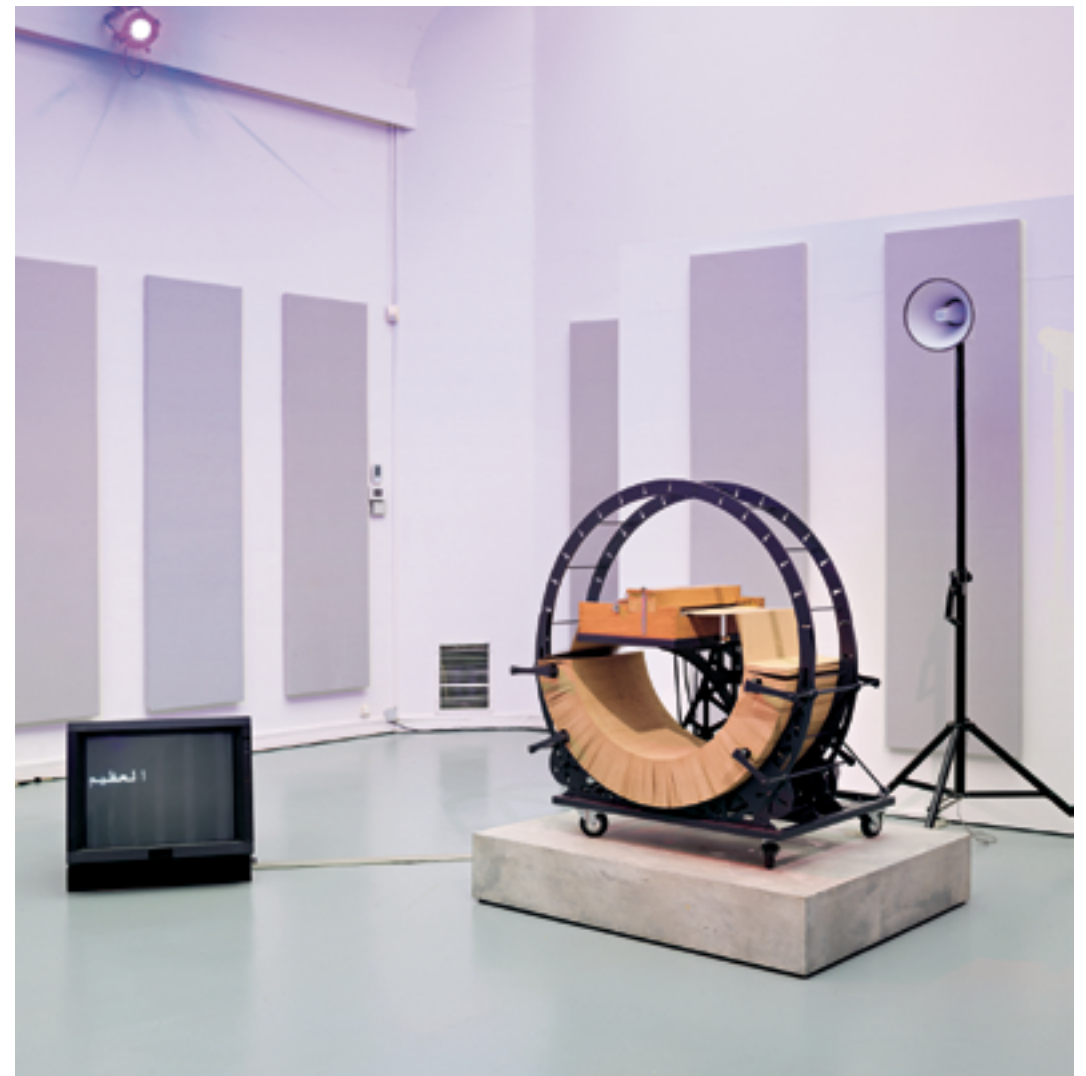
Justin Bennett UK/NL, 1964
Vilgiskoddeoyvinyarvi: Wolf Lake on the Mountains
2015, research project and multimedia installation

The Vilgiskoddeoyvinyarvi: Wolf Lake on the Mountains is a research project centred around The Kola Super-Deep Borehole (KSD), the deepest man-made hole on Earth. The project began during a residency of Dark Ecology in Norway and Russia in 2015. A three-channel audiovisual installation of it was shown at the 2017 Sonic Acts Festival.

► Right page

Rana Hamadeh LB/NL, 1983
André Castro PT/NL, 1983
Étude #1: On Recitation
2019, composition-in-progress with organ book, organ book machine, Disklavier, Sony cube monitor and horn speakers

Installation view *HEREAFTER*, Sonic Acts exhibition 2019. Central are segments from Koranic scripture; *qur'ān*—an Arabic word—can be translated as 'recitation' and 'that which holds the potentiality of recitability'. This inspires a score that posits itself as the index and the administrator of 'all potential discourse'. Commissioned by Sonic Acts.



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Staalplaat Soundsystem NL/DE
Zeero
 2015, installation

Zeero is a large-scale organ of four steel tubes with a length of 24 metres and a diameter of 1 metre. Hot air balloon burners are used to create the sound: a very low tone. For this occasion, Staalplaat Soundsystem consisted of Geert-Jan Hobijn, Radboud Mens, Anthony Blokdijk and Bastiaan Maris. Commissioned by Today'sArt. Source: staalplaat.org



▼ Bottom

Philip Vermeulen NL, 1986
Physical Rhythm Machine/Boem BOem
 2016–2017, wood, metal, curtains, heavy-duty shooters, tennis balls, computer

Installation view at Royal Academy of Art The Hague during Today'sArt 2017. The installation *Physical Rhythm Machine/Boem BOem* is an immersive visceral acoustic instrument consisting of two heavy-duty shooters that are shooting balls 15 metres through the air with a speed up to 150 km/h. The work was developed during the 2016 Summer Sessions of V2_.



STRP

▲ Top

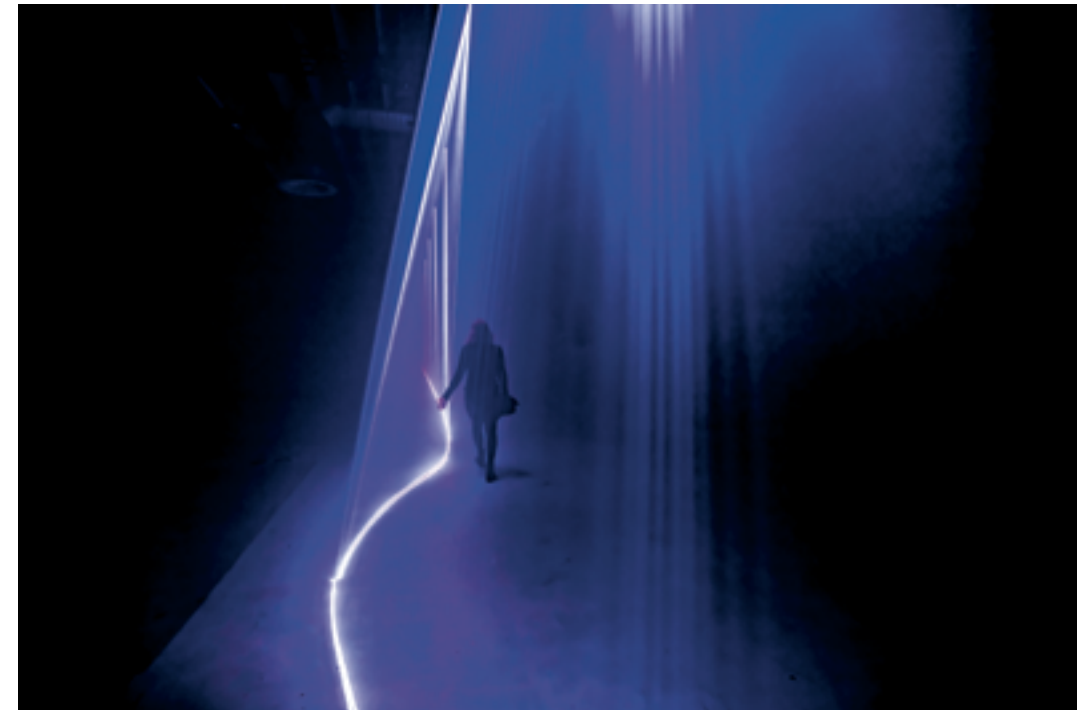
Sonia Cillari IT, 1970
If You Are Close to Me
 2007, interactive performance in bioelectromagnetic responsive environment

Core element of the interactive performance is a sensor floor on which a performer is standing, functioning as a human antenna when coming close to or being touched by a member of the audience. The movements are registered as electromagnetic activity and define the graphics on the screens. *If You Are Close to Me* premiered at STRP 2007.

▼ Bottom

Salvador Breed NL, 1985
Nick Verstand NL, 1984
Between Mind and Matter
 2019, installation with laser light

A moving string of laser light and sound-scape, which the visitor can walk through upon entering the festival location. *Between Mind and Matter* was commissioned by STRP for the 2019 edition.



Gogbot

▲ Top

Freerk Wieringa NL, 1978

Machina Ludens
2011–2012, steel, computer-controlled
electric motors, sensors, 160x160x300 cm

The *Machina Ludens* plays a game and similarly seeks to protect it; it responds to the viewer's (unwanted) behaviour with childish behaviour, or even anger, and makes itself big in the process. Here, modern technology contrasts with a steely appearance that is reminiscent of medieval armour. It was on view at GOGBOT 2012.

▼ Bottom

Matthias Oostrik NL, 1980

PLPLPL.PL
2016–now, audience-driven
surveillance machine

Installation view of this self-learning machine on the occasion of GOGBOT 2018. Earlier presentations a.o. in 2016 at V2, the Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal (House of Representatives of the Netherlands) and in 2017 in Foam Amsterdam.



TEC ART

▲ Top

Daniela de Paulis IT/NL, 1969

COGITO in Space
2014–2019, G.tec Nautilus 32 channels
EEG cap (top) and still of the sequence
with the Blue Marble image (bottom)

Using a VR headset, participants can view the Earth from space while their brain activity is sent into space. A live video streaming from the radio telescope in Dwingeloo and a short documentary were part of the exhibition at TEC ART 2018.

▼ Bottom

Joris Strijbos NL, 1981

Daan Johan NL, 1981
Phyllotaxis
2017–ongoing, photo installation,
kinetic light machines

Phyllotaxis explores the audiovisual possibilities of self-constructed feedback systems by means of kinetic light machines and modular synthesizers. The work can be presented both as an audiovisual installation and as a live performance. On TEC ART 2018 it was presented as an installation.



FIBER Festival

▲ Top

Gabey Tjon a Tham NL, 1988
)))) Repetition at My Distance
2012, kinetic light-sound installation

Installation view at the Royal Academy of Art The Hague (first installation in 2012). *)))) Repetition at My Distance* was launched at NIMk during *(Im)possible World*, an exhibition by FIBER and shown at Today'sArt (organised in collaboration with FIBER).

▼ Bottom

Nikki Hock NL, 1988
Loma Doom NL, 1973
INFINITE PLANES
2019, AV performance with real-time projection, haze, custom strobes and sound

INFINITE PLANES is an AV performance by the multidisciplinary artist Nikki Hock and curator and DJ Loma Doom. The performance was part of FIBER X The Rest is Noise at Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, Amsterdam in 2019.



IFFR

▲ Top

Martijn Veldhoen NL, 1962
Public Spaces
2006, video, colour, sound, 11'04"

Public Spaces reflects on the influence of mobile communication systems on our perception of public space. For this work, Veldhoen uses a combination of 3D animation and live video. The context of the International Film Festival Rotterdam made Veldhoen develop his work more towards documentary film.

▼ Bottom

Persijn Broersen NL, 1974
Margit Lukács NL, 1973
Establishing Eden
2016, HD video, colour, sound, 10'00"

Broersen and Lukács recreated the establishing shots from blockbusters like *Lord of the Rings*, that have been used to capture and confiscate New Zealand to present it as a New Eden. The work was nominated for a Tiger Award (Competition for Short Films) and in 2017 it was presented in a viewing module in the main hall of Rotterdam Central Station, organised by IFFR and Art Rotterdam.



IDFA

Renzo Martens NL, 1973
Episode III (Enjoy Poverty)
2008, video, colour, sound, 90'00"

Episode III, also known as *Enjoy Poverty*, is a registration of Renzo Martens' activities in the Congo and part of series of documentary films. *Episode III* was first shown at the Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam and as the opening film of the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam in 2008.

