

DE NIEUWE DANCE TOREN. MET 120 HOTELKAMERS

HET OOGAPPELJE (EYE)

PONTJE NAAR NOORD IS STEEDS VAKER VOL

CENTRAAL STATION

DE BUENKORF

KLUWEN FIETSEN

SELFIE

CHINESE MASSAGE

RUGPUN VAN DE RUGZAK. ER ZIJN ± 300 MASSAGE-ZAAKJES

DAMSTRAAT

SOMMIG AMSTERDAMMERS FIETSEN HIER ALSOF HET EEN HINDERBAAN IS

OP 28 DECEMBER WERD DE KALVERSTRAAT AFGESLOTEN OMDAT DE MENSEN VAST STONDEN. (OOK OMDAT MENSEN DIKKER WORDEN IS HET SNELLER VOL.)

GRASS-HOPPER

WARMOESELSTRAAT

REDEWATER DISTRICT

TOET!

DRIVEND FLATGEBOUK

270.000 PASSAGIEREN

135 ZEECRUISESCHEPEN BEZOCHTEN AMSTERDAM IN 2014

BESTEDEN GEMIDDELD 100 EURO PER DAG.

VAN WIE IS DEZE STAD? VAN DE BEWONERS DIE KLAGEN OVER DE DRUKTE? OF VAN DE BEZOEKERS DIE DEZE STAD VOOR EEN GROOT DEEL BETALEN?

JOHN (28) ZIET EEN CITYTRIP ALS EEN FILM WAAR JE EEN KAARTJE VOOR KOOPT.

HET SCHEEPVAARTHUIS UIT 1914 IS NU EEN GRAND HOTEL. CREATIEVE BROEDPLAATSEN LEVEREN VAAK NIET GENOEG OP.

DE FAMILIE GUPTA UIT MUMBAI VINDT AMSTERDAM HELEMAAL NIET TE DRUK. (WEL EEN BEETJE KOUD)

SPREIDINGSBELEID ER MOGEN ALLEEN NOG NIEUWE HOTELS BUITEN HET CENTRUM GEOPEND WORDEN.

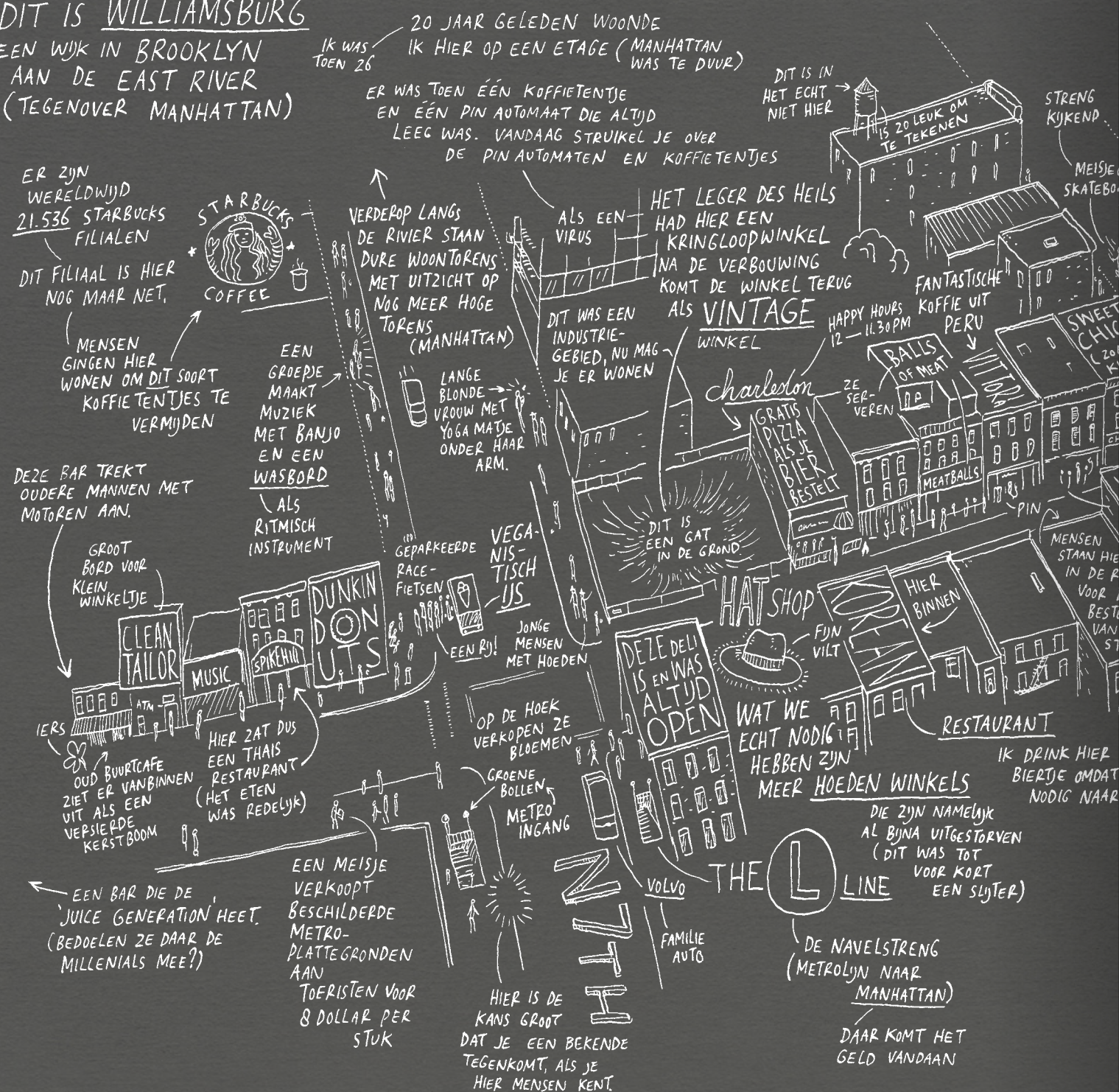
SPREIDINGSBELEID
ER MOGEN ALLEEN NOG
NIEUWE HOTELS
BUITEN HET
CENTRUM GEOPEND
WORDEN.

BEDFORD, AVE., BROOKLYN, 2015

Gentrification is a worldwide phenomenon. New York is typically a city where you hear people in the subway tell each other that they have been 'gentrified out' of the neighbourhood. Brooklyn is particularly popular, and as a consequence the prices of housing in neighborhoods like Bushwick and Bedford Stuyvesant have

doubled in the past four years. Nevertheless, Brooklyn is still the poorest borough of New York and a quarter of all the families are on food stamps. Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg is almost as expensive as Manhattan. How ironic – and typical – that hip cafés for laptop nomads in Amsterdam proudly bear names like Bedford and Brooklyn...

DIT IS WILLIAMSBURG EEN WIJK IN BROOKLYN AAN DE EAST RIVER (TEGENOVER MANHATTAN)



PREFACE

Amsterdam proudly calls itself 'the city of architecture'. That is not just from the past couple years. It is the result of the efforts of many, based on a Rotterdam mentality that goes back far back.

One of the major figures who contributed to this during the postwar years is the Rotterdam architect Hugh Maaskant. Forty years ago, a year before his death, Maaskant set up the Foundation Rotterdam-Maaskant. Being a no-nonsense Rotterdammer, his work focused mainly on the rational and functional aspects of architecture. With the founding of the Maaskant Prize, however, it was no longer about architecture as such, but rather about reflection on the built environment. He was hoping to create more awareness of the importance of architectural, urbanist and landscape design. For the bi-yearly Maaskant Prize, people or institutions are eligible that succeed in conveying the value and significance of the built environment to a broad public in an inspiring manner.

Tracy Metz is the winner of the Maaskant Prize 2016, based on the findings of an independent jury. In her work, Tracy regards the largely urbanized landscape of the Netherlands with curiosity and wonderment. She looks not only at the landscape, but also at people's relationship to it. The changes in leisure and mobility are related to the quality and significance of the built environment. Her reflections on our built and natural surroundings reach the public in a number of ways. By publishing articles, writing books and participating actively in debates she creates a public domain in which others are emphatically invited to join the conversation. The yearning for 'progress', so characteristic of Maaskant's work, also characterizes the work of Tracy Metz. She continually opens new and challenging paths to tell her stories on the built environment to a broad audience.

It is typical of Tracy Metz that she views this prize as an occasion to reflect on the state of architecture, urbanism and landscape now. She is always holding a mirror up to the Netherlands. And that is exactly what Hugh Maaskant had in mind when he founded this prize.

Ahmed Aboutaleb

Chairman of the board

Foundation Rotterdam-Maaskant

It is a great honor to receive the Maaskant Prize for my work over the past thirty years. That honor is all the greater given that I was born and raised in another country – the United States – and that I am entirely self-taught in the professional fields for which the prize is awarded: architecture, urban design and landscape. The day I received my Dutch passport was special, but being awarded this prize feels like true confirmation that I have put down roots in the Netherlands (even though I still can't sing the national anthem by heart). Moreover, if I am not mistaken I am the first journalist, the first foreign-born person and only the second woman to receive this prize.

To mark this special occasion, I have written this essay and developed a multimedia project: www.tracyinnederland.nl.

Tracy Metz



THE DARK SIDE OF URBAN SUCCESS

This, then, is the moment to reflect on developments that I have followed over the past thirty years and have described in newspapers, magazines, books, sometimes on radio and television, as guest researcher and a member of various commissions, and – for the past four years – in my live talkshow and digital magazine *Stadsleven* ('City Life'). But this is also a moment to look into the future.

My interest in architecture and urbanism was awakened by the enormous contrast between the place I came from and the place I ended up in. Los Angeles is a city that is spread out like peanut butter over a huge surface, so spread out that you can't go anywhere without a car. As a result there is almost nobody on the streets, and even worse: if you are walking on the street, that must mean that you don't have a car so you must be poor and therefore suspect and maybe even dangerous. Amsterdam, I discovered when I landed here after buying the cheapest ticket to Europe after college, is dense and compact. People are constantly running into acquaintances, you can walk almost everywhere and you have the choice of walking, biking, taking public transportation – or the car.

This was, in brief, an entirely different kind of urban life. It was in Europe that I stumbled upon the 'ballet' of street life which Jane Jacobs described so lyrically in *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), "... an intricate ballet in which the individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole". Dutch people tend to find her ideas about her beloved Greenwich Village a bit romantic – it was already rapidly gentrifying in her day – but in Amsterdam I saw that vibrancy which she championed in her own city, New York. I didn't know I was looking for it until I found it – and when I did, I loved it – and still do.

The contrast between the two cities made me realize how big the impact is of the physical constellation of the place where you live on the kind of life that you live there. The sheer amount of space in America had made it possible to leave everything behind and

ride off into the sunset to start all over again – new is better. In the Netherlands, much of the space has been won from the sea by backbreaking labor – and that precious space must not be wasted.

Living in a different country, in a different culture made me realize that our surroundings are an expression of the underlying cultural values "Architects, pay attention!" says the Danish nestor of urban design Jan Gehl at a symposium in the Netherlands last year. "First we shape our cities, but then they shape us." The way we deal with our surroundings is a reflection of the way we deal with each other.

Many cities, and in the Netherlands Amsterdam in particular, have made a great leap forward in just a few years' time. There has not been a greater shift of population to the cities since the Industrial Revolution. New inhabitants, tourists, businesses – the city has gone into high gear. That whirlwind success is also a burden, certainly in a small country like the Netherlands that is not yet accustomed to the powerplay of big players out to gain a foothold in the city. The country is just climbing out of the worst financial crisis since the Second World War, and now this most recent success is threatening to create new crises: on the housing market and in the city's relation to tourism, to the big tech companies and to foreign investors. The new challenges for the world's successful cities lie in managing an excess of success.

In this essay I will first describe this turnaround, and then delve into its repercussions on the city. And finally I will reflect on this new model of urban development that has sprouted in the meantime, the movement of the so-called grassroots 'citymakers'. Out of the huge hole into which government and capital fell during the crisis arose a new group of citizens with ideas, initiative and enthusiasm who were able to realize their wishes and ideals, ranging from a community garden and a pocket park to the scale of an entire city district. In a country where urban and spatial planning have traditionally been the domain of the government, this is a valuable and special thing. Now we will need to maintain that new sense of ownership – 'us' instead of 'them' – and to lift it above the purely local level by underlaying it, rather

than overlaying it, with the power of the market. *Never waste a good crisis.*

ARE CITIES TOO SUCCESSFUL?

On the edges of the Netherlands the themes are decline, ageing and a waning population. It is very difficult to make and keep northeast Groningen and southern Limburg attractive and liveable while the population grows older and the young people depart for the city. In his book *De Antistad (The Anti-City)* Maurice Hermans talks about the need to 'grow smaller' – in other words, to pare the city down to size. In the town of Heerlen in Limburg, where he grew up and still lives, the housing stock is being *downsized* to better fit the decreasing population. When there is another demolition of outdated apartments in Heerlen, it is an occasion for a party.

In popular cities like Utrecht and Amsterdam, where I live, the opposite is the case. Rotterdam is growing again, The Hague too (but then in adjacent municipalities). It's quite possible that the next euro crisis is on its way, but the cities are doing well. Quite well. Maybe too well. Everyone wants to live in the city, which seems to be sucking the surroundings dry, only to then burst at the seams. Students from within the Netherlands and from elsewhere, starters who are launching their career here and hope to find a partner, expats and laptop nomads, active empty-nesters who have had it with the boring suburb and the maintenance of the garden and come in search of vibrant city life, the wealthy and the superrich who own a second, third, fourth pied à terre. And, in overwhelming numbers, tourists.

There are now powerful forces at work on the city, greater than Amsterdam and the Netherlands are accustomed to. We are experiencing both scarcity and abundance. A scarcity of housing: except for the well-established and the wealthy no one can hardly find a house, let alone afford it. A scarcity of space: the streets are choked by the hordes of tourists, which for the foreseeable future will only get bigger. On the other side, there are the big players with deep pockets, such as Airbnb which feel urbanites perceive to be taking over the city. Enormous sums have been paid for new luxury hotels in characteristic buildings that play an important role in

the cityscape. The money of foreign investors who are eager to buy housing is sloshing against the baseboards – there is more money out there in the market than there are real estate 'products' to be bought.

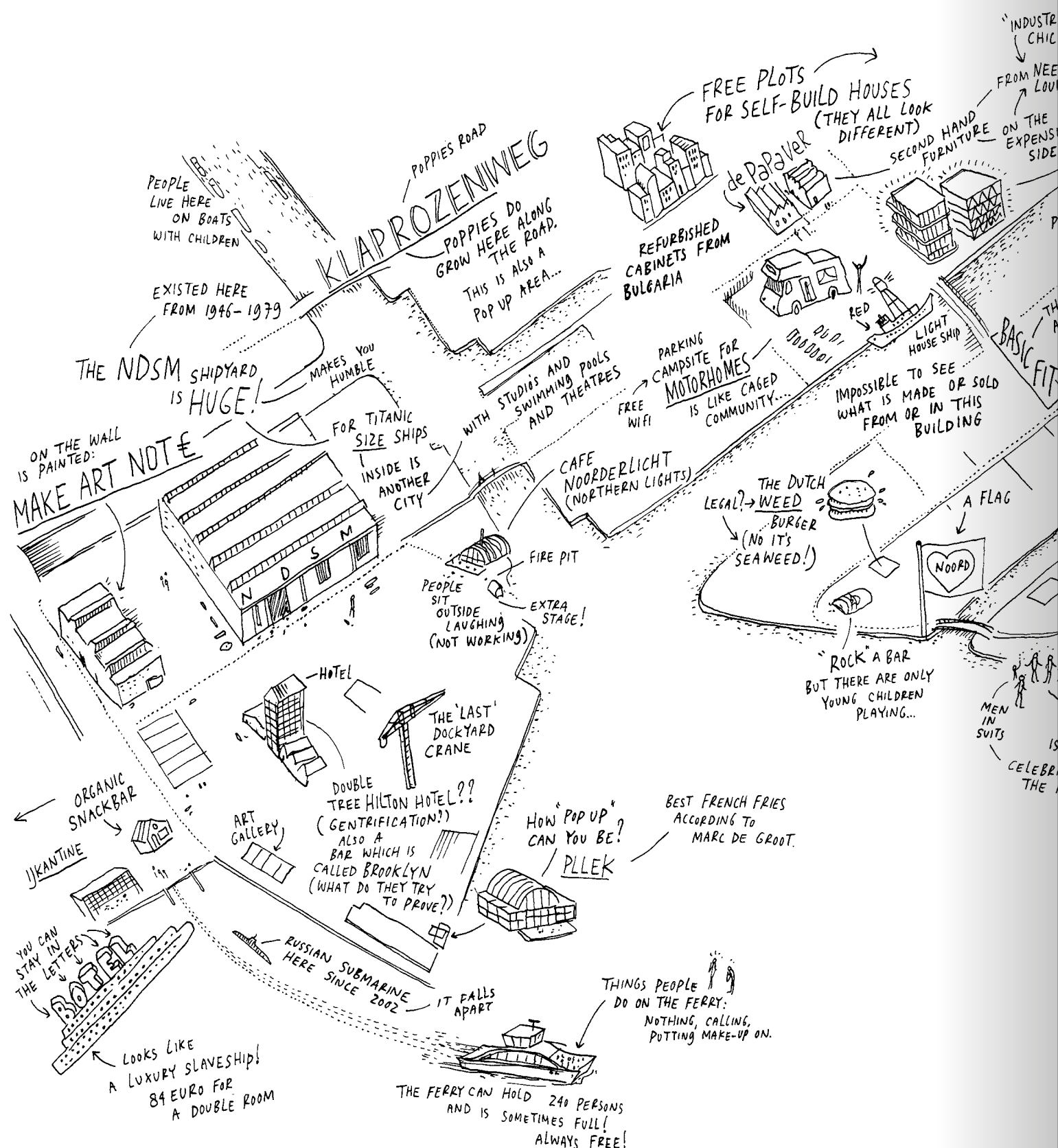
The other big players in today's cities are the tech companies, offering digital novelties and entire systems with which every city can call itself *smart*. Who doesn't want to be smart nowadays? But behind all the sensors and gps-services and wifi masts and control rooms lies a deeper question: what conditions do you lay down for the tech boys to avoid being dragged along by the rapid pace of change? Technology must serve the city and its citizens, who are hesitant to pay for this seemingly frictionless digital convenience with their data.

From Heerlen or Appingedam these may look like luxury problems, but the pressure on the city and its government, its streets and its social fabric is growing. Amsterdam, a city of not even a million inhabitants, has discovered that to its surprise that it's playing in the big league. Of course it's flattering to be in continual demand, but this powerplay and its consequences have taken the city by surprise.

Don't get me wrong, it is not a priori bad for the city that there are big interests circling overhead on the lookout for opportunities where they can let their money land. If we're smart, even shrewd, we as a city can profit from this. But then we must be in control, and not standing by looking on as powerless bystanders. Those deep pockets must serve not only their owners and stakeholders in Silicon Valley or pension funds in Germany or the royal house of Qatar, but also the city, here. Otherwise this will be the dark side or our success.

DRIED UP

In Amsterdam – forgive me, this just happens to be the place where I live and also the most extreme example in the Netherlands – the housing market has 'dried up'. The capital traditionally had a high percentage of low- and middle-income housing – in 1995 that was almost 60 percent, by now it is just over 40 – and homeownership was relatively low. During the crisis nothing was built. Due to the scarcity of homes for sale, the prices have



Essay: The Dark Side of Urban Success by Tracy Metz, Maaskant Prize 2016
Drawing: Jan Rothuizen

gone up this year alone by 22 percent. Starters can hardly buy a house without help from their parents or an inheritance. Rental houses between w700 and 1200 euro's a month are next to impossible to find, and in order to pay a higher rent you have to look for a roommate, or two. Even if you have the capital to buy a place, you often miss out because there are so many other candidates who are willing to pay 5, or 10, or 20 thousand over and above the asking price. If you still need to get financing for your mortgage approved, you are already out of the game. And if you don't have money, and haven't been registered with a housing association from birth, you'll have to wait at least eight years for an apartment in the social housing sector.

Meanwhile, foreign investors have discovered that housing in the Netherlands is an attractive investment. There is a perpetual shortage and the Dutch are pretty reliable when it comes to paying rent. In my talkshow 'CityLife' Bob van der Zande, who is the municipality's contact person with these investors, that since the past two or three years he has been meeting with all kinds of parties: small family businesses, institutional investors, a stage fund of the royal family of Qatar. "The market is becoming more international and they see a stable investment in a market where there is demand," he says. "There is more money around than there is real estate to invest in. That means that we can demand more of them. Foreign investors are also less likely to be scared off by a neighborhood with a bad reputation."

In the 'attention neighborhood' Kanalen-eiland in Utrecht, that fund from Qatar has bought 500 apartments to renovate them – and bring them back on the market at rents that take them out of the social housing sector. (A Dutch investor would probably have done the same). The same fund bought the same number of apartments in poorer neighborhoods in Amsterdam, and is getting 12 percent return in investment. That's an achievement – but, I ask myself, if they can do it, why can't we do it ourselves?

Push is coming to shove not only on the housing market, but also literally, on the street. In the weekends the popular area of the Nine Streets between the canals is packed with people; Rembrandt Square and

Thorbecke Square are so busy that cycling is forbidden on the weekends. Moveable fences and polite but muscular 'hosts' make sure the message comes across. Now that the rest of the world has discovered the charm of *urban cycling*, in large part thanks to the Netherlands, hordes of tourists on bikes create havoc in traffic. And then I haven't even mentioned the rikshaws and the cargo bikes, the beer bikes for groups and the horses and carriages, the segways and the scooters.

As a precaution against panicking crowds, the police have already temporarily closed off Amsterdam's main pedestrian shopping street, the Kalverstraat, twice. The numbers of visitors are staggering: 50,000 in 2012, 62,000 in 2013, 73,000 in 2014. The organization of shopowners is convinced that too many people are loitering without a purpose in the Kalverstraat; people who would like to shop, can't, because they are being propelled forward by the masses. This statement provoked wry reactions on Twitter, such as 'Forbidden not to shop'. 'You're walking on a public street but don't intend to buy an expensive handbag? Then you are loitering and should disappear.' The masses of people that the Amsterdammers like to complain about are not only tourists, but their number are impressive: in 2000 4.5 million, in 2014 9 million, in 2025 23 million are expected... in a city of less than a million inhabitants. 'Tourist' has become a swearword. The city's marketing agency does its best to spread the visitors out, not just across the various parts of Amsterdam but also over Amsterdam Beach (coastal town of Zandvoort), Amsterdam Castle (Muiderslot Castle), New Land (Almere) and Old Holland (the open air tourist village Zaanse Schans and the fishing town of Volendam). Amsterdam's mayor Van der Laan invites them to spend the night elsewhere, for example in Rotterdam. The newest twist is that Amsterdam is offered to Amsterdammers as a touristic product. I recently found a folder in the mail announcing 'Mokum in Meppel', Mokum being the nickname for Amsterdam and Meppel a town in the east of the Netherlands. For €79.50 you could get an evening all-in, including the bus to Meppel and back, to have traditional Amsterdam food and drink, such as a drink called a 'pikketanussie' and herring with pickles, a dance show and a sing-along. Why would an Amsterdammer

THE WAY WE DEAL WITH OUR SURROUNDINGS IS A REFLECTED TRAIL WITH EACH OTHER

TRACY METZ

Essay: *The Dark Side of Urban Success* by Tracy Metz,
Maaskant Prize 2016
Drawing: Jan Rothuizen

FIETSEN HIER ALSOF HET EEN
HINDERISBAAN IS

spend 80 euro to go to Meppel to experience 'Amsterdam'? I don't know, but I'll bet the bus will be packed.

In a small city like Amsterdam you quickly feel the pressure of such large numbers of tourists, and especially the groups – also the groups coming off the cruise ships, where they eat and drink rather than in the city. But the most urgent complaints are now directed at Airbnb. At best inhabitants feel that they are the actors on the stage of the visitors' vacation; at worst they are driven crazy by the pot-smoking and vomiting and shouting and loud music at all hours of the night. And what makes it really unbearable is that it is your own neighbors who are doing this to you. You can blame the city for not keeping a grip on the transgressors, but it starts with your neighbors.

NEW LIFE IN OLD BUILDINGS

The pressure on the city also has a *bright side*. If they weren't so many people desperately searching for a place to live, then the colossal office building of the City Administration Office along the A10 ring road, which stood empty for ten years, would never have been transformed into some three hundred studios and starter units. All these people shop in the neighborhood, drink coffee, walk and bike around – in brief, they bring new vibrancy and also new income to the neighborhood.

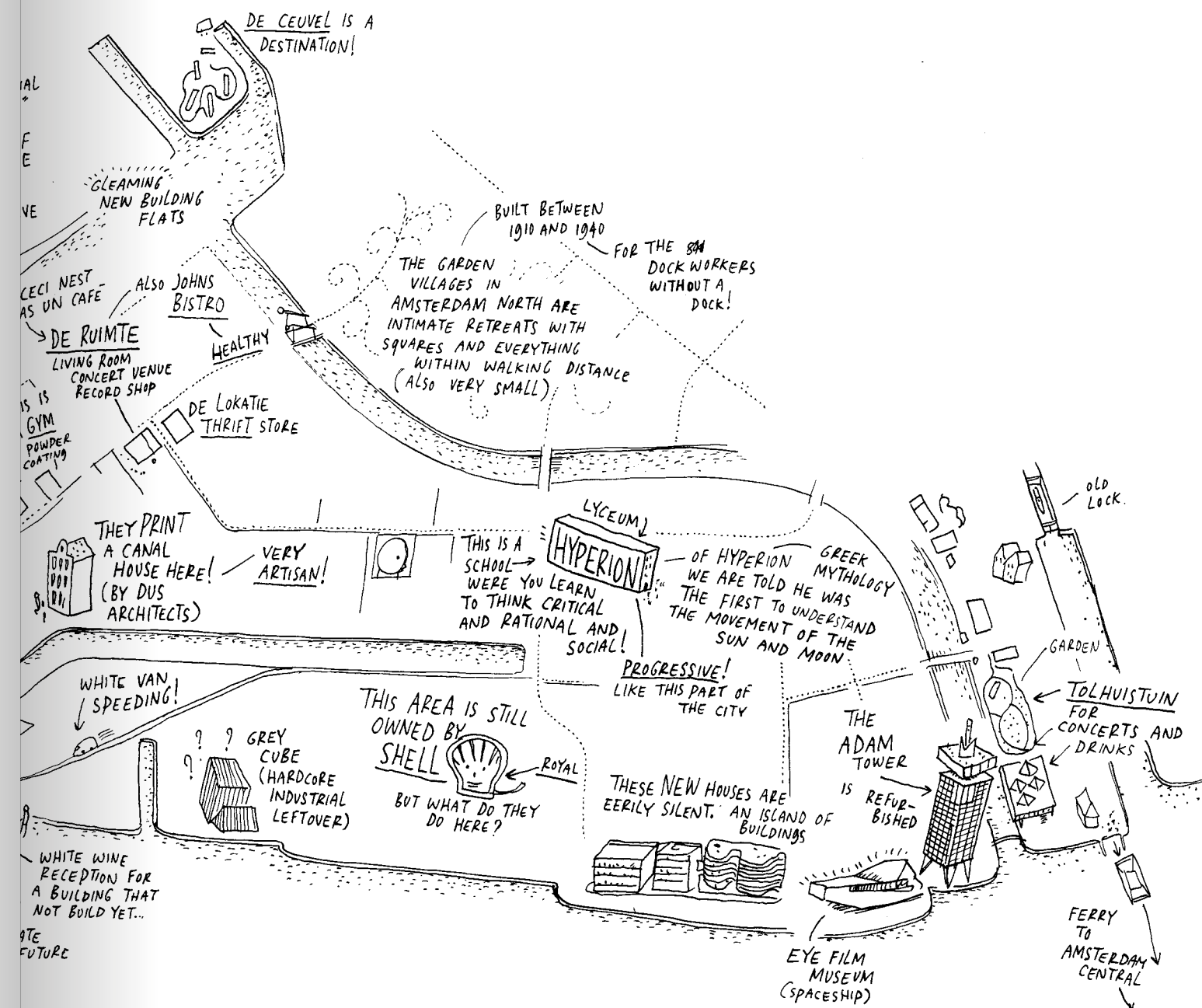
That also goes for the building where I started my career as a journalist, the office tower of the newspaper Het Parool, which has started a new life as a Studenthotel. The apartment building Kleiburg in the once infamous Bijlmermeer, a modernist experiment on a huge scale in the southeast of Amsterdam, stood empty for years, until a group of developers got together and marketed it as a DIY project, the so-called Klushuis.nl. It now contains over 500 apartments. If there were not a whole group of like-minded people trying to figure out what their contribution to the circular economy can be, then Rotterdam's public swimming pool Tropicana would not have been turned into a collective building under the name Blue City – and Rotterdam would have lost a beloved icon. The pressure on the market – i.e. demand – also leads to innovation. The

Amsterdam Prize for New Building was awarded this year to Villa Mokum, a new type of housing for starters and students with rental and for-sale apartments around a collective central garden. And on the top floor of the big Metropool building on the traffic artery called Weesperstraat, Zoku has landed, a new prototype of living in between a hotel and an apartment. In the rooms, designed by interior architects Concrete, the most important piece of furniture is not the bed, but the table; in the public areas people mingle easily, also those who are new to Amsterdam. And the once hard surface of the roof is now a garden where you can sit outside and which catches rainwater. New problems create new solutions.

GENTRIFICATION = DIVERSITY

Jane Jacobs said it as long ago as the sixties: "New ideas must use old buildings." New uses bring new life and generate income for the neighborhood – but are at the same time part of that controversial process called *gentrification*, derived from *gentry*, the upper middle class. Gentrification, like tourism, has become an expletive. In a market-driven society like the US, that is understandable. The consequences are disastrous for the existing inhabitants: the rents go up and they are forced out of their houses, shops and workplaces. In the Netherlands that process is less dramatic: people are not thrown out on the street from one day to the next, there is a system of rent subsidy and we still have housing associations that build low- and middle-income housing. Gentrification is visible mainly in the form of cute and expensive shops and coffee bars with wifi, where the demographic shift to young, white and well-educated, often with a stroller, is very apparent.

But here too, gentrification is an increasing source of controversy. For the digital magazine of my talkshow Stadsleven, the head planner of Amsterdam Jos Gadet summed up the advantages: "Gentrification means that people, often private individuals, are investing in the quality of the city. It creates jobs, the neighborhood is better able to speak up for itself, it creates jobs, real estate values rise and therefore the city's tax revenues, and there is a bigger market for more amenities." He finished his blog with a quote



NORTH AMSTERDAM, 2016

A place where they 3D print canal houses, where a luxury hotel resembles a slave ship, right next to the build-your-own houses and a former shipyard where creative types now have their offices in old houseboats and with a terrace which is a great place on a sum-

mer evening... North Amsterdam is a place where there is room to experiment and which young people are now making their own, based on their ideals. From a former industrial area to hip & happening, but the motto is still the same: roll up your sleeves and get to work!

from former mayor of New York Bloomberg: “Gentrifiers pay the bills!”

Urban geographer Wouter van Gent of the University of Amsterdam wrote an angry reaction. “The municipality is at the service of the economy and the planners built the kind of city that is attractive for themselves, the professional middle class... The city government said that it recognizes the importance of a mixed city, but in fact chooses to further the processes of exclusion.” To my mind, Van Gent’s most convincing argument is a different one, an emotional one: many Amsterdammers no longer feel at home on their own street and their own city. And if you see the same hip coffee bars and concept stores everywhere, the individual characters of the various neighborhoods disappear – until the fashion has passed and the next new thing appears.

To my surprise, no one talks about the fact that gentrification has been government policy for years. The mixing of the different groups of the population has been a Dutch ideal for a very long time. Social housing has traditionally been built on attractive locations in the city, based on the idealistic – or perhaps ideological – conviction that it is good for us to live amongst all sorts of different people. The idea behind the government push in 2007 to upgrade forty problematic neighborhoods in the Netherlands, the so-called ‘Vogelaar’ neighborhoods named after the then minister of Housing, was that it would be an improvement to add inhabitants with more income and education (and maybe another ethnic background, although no one ever said that out loud). Part of this policy – the only part that had any effect, according to the Social and Cultural Planning Office – was the large-scale demolition of postwar apartment buildings and the construction of for-sale housing. That was also the recipe for the upgrade of the Bijlmermeer. Compared to that, you could say that the current process of gentrification is more gradual, less outspoken, but also less crude.

Richard Florida launched the concept in 2005 that the world has become ‘spiky’. People want to congregate in places where things are happening – work, sex, exchange of ideas. Cities are spikes. Within a spike,

people divide themselves up along various lines – ethnicity, education, age, and increasingly: lifestyle.

People who live in a spike have more in common with people in other spikes, even if they are on the other side of the globe and therefore rarely meet in person, than with some of their fellow citydwellers. The well-educated thirty-something in the east of Amsterdam can live next to a folksy local, they greet each other on the stairs but other than that they never meet. They each have their own paths and places, one goes to the hip coffee bar and the other to the community center and the local pub. They are ‘familiar strangers’ to each other – and that is enough. This social structure is much less rigid than in the era when everything was organized along the lines of religion. Catholics went to Catholic schools and bought meat from the Catholic butcher, Protestants idem ditto. Gentrification, on the other hand, makes a neighborhood more diverse – even if people slide past one another like oil and vinegar.

NATION STATE OR CITY STATE

Having lived here for a while, I have discovered that megapolis Los Angeles en mini-country of the Netherlands have more in common than I thought: it just depends what scale you’re looking at. The metropolitan region of Greater Los Angeles – in professional terms the *Combined Statistical Area* – has a population (17.3 million) comparable to that of the Netherlands (16.8 million). L.A. is a agglomeration of various towns that have grown together into one sea of roads and houses, with a scattering of highrises in downtown.

I was reminded of this issue of scale when I recently heard Holland’s Government architect Floris Alkemade describe the Netherlands as a thinly populated city rather than a densely populated country. Indeed, just like Los Angeles which has no center, the Netherlands does not have one unequivocal metropolis which is the center of the monarchy and political power, as does Paris. We have a ‘G4’, the big four – everybody get a piece of the cake, very Dutch. Just like Los Angeles, Holland is a fine-meshed network of small center, where it is often impossible to say where the city stops and the country-

side begins. The design office Schie 2.0 showed this clearly in 1996 with a map of the ‘Randstad’, the urban network in the west of the country, on which all the towns and cities were written in the same size letters. The typography made the hierarchy between them disappear: all of a sudden a country town on the edge of the city like Abcoude has the same significance as Amsterdam’s Financial district or the suburb of Pijnacker.

So are the Netherlands actually not a nation state, but a city state, comparable to Singapore or, God forbid, Monaco? With the provinces as neighborhoods? The timing is not bad: a lot of people feel that the city now has more legitimacy than the national government. Mayors love to hear that, of course: the American political scientist Benjamin Barber appeals to an eager audience with his concept for a Global Parliament of Mayors.

Cities are now trying to strengthen their financial position vis à vis their national governments. The new mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has asked the London School of Economics to make recommendations on how London, economic motor of the UK, can keep a larger portion of the tax revenue that is generated there. Because now – just as in the Netherlands – that money ‘disappears’ into the national coffers. It is worth noting that this idea already came up under Khan’s Conservative predecessor, Boris Johnson, while Khan is a member of Labour. Apparently the city’s interests prevail over those of party politics.

And during the Habitat III meeting last fall in Quito, the mayors of Madrid, Barcelona and Paris published a joint manifesto in which they decry the responsibilities the cities have to bear – for infrastructure, housing, and emergency demands such as accommodating refugees – and the resources they receive from above. Their solution: cities should receive no less than a quarter of all national tax revenue. In other words: give the city more of the money back that it generates. Curious what peripheral communities in the Netherlands like Heerlen en Appingedam will think of this idea.

NEW COLLECTIVITY

A profound crisis can have advantages. When the regular process of urban design,

development and construction fell flat, citizens stood up and started designing the city, especially their own neighborhood, themselves. It turned out to be a fertile vacuum in which the whole traditional system of urban design was recast in a different, less predictable light. That is quite confusing for municipal governments: just as the national government is decentralizing and giving cities a bigger role in spatial planning, citizens are stepping up and demanding more say in the design and use of the city. ‘Happy agitators’, publicist Frans Soeterbroek called them in his essay in the book *Het nieuwe stadmaken: Van gedreven pionieren naar gelijk speelveld* (*The new citymaking: From inspired pioneers to a level playing field*) published by Trancity*Valiz.

One of the first moments that Amsterdam confronted this shift of power head-on was the publication in 2011 of a digital map called ‘Wasteland’. It showed all the empty building spots in the city, including the name and phone number of the civil servant who was responsible for it. Anyone could submit an idea for a location. Within the city government a lot of people were dead set against this – they were not eager to have everyone see which big constructions plans had dropped dead in their tracks because of the crisis. But the map did appear online, and in retrospect this was one of the first moment that you say the dialogue start between local government and citizens. It was the start of a new form of co-ownership.

Now you see new forms of collectivity springing up everywhere. One of my favorites is the Bankjescollectief, the BenchesCollective. Two young Amsterdammers, Jesse Jorg and Cathelijn de Reede, saw that their street would be a lot more pleasant if there were a bench where people could sit and maybe chat. They not only put a bench in front of their own house, but they also set up a website where everyone can register their own bench and ‘open it up’ as an open air café. There are now some 900 benches on the site, where on several weekends in spring and summer you can meet your neighbors, drink a beer, take salsa lessons or learn to knit, or dream up new plans for the neighborhood together.

In addition to a private initiative like this there is also the website www.parkomdehoek.nl

('Park around the corner') by the city together with the Pocket Park Foundation. Anybody can suggest a paved area in the city that you would like to see transformed into a pocket park. The city will help with building materials and permits, on condition that that you have assembled a group of like-minded helpers and that the group is prepared to manage and maintain the park. The first one opened in the fall of 2016, on the corner of the Ruysch Street and the traffic artery called the Wibautstraat.

Another initiative I'm fond of is the yearly Parking Day in September, that blew over from the US and has now spread all over the world. Just take a parking space and transform it into a café, a park, whatever you like. It is striking to see how the transformation of just a few square feet of asphalt opens up a world of possibilities in your mind. As the self-driving car becomes a conceivable reality, Parking Day become more realistic: what are we going to do with all the space in the city when the streets are no longer filled with parked cars?

The new citymaking is scaling up. In the north of Amsterdam, an alternative 'office park' has been created on a disused ship-ping yard called De Ceudel. A group of energetic young people have pulled derelict houseboats up onto the land and redone them as workspace. From all sorts of discarded materials they also built a café, which is now one of the hotspots in this increasingly popular area of the city. Not far from there, the former industrial area of Buiksloterham is being remade by a group of driven individuals in the first circular neighborhood with a 'no waste' economy. In Rotterdam, architects Kristian Koreman and Elma van Boxel of ZUS Architects devoted years of effort to bringing new life to an abandoned office building called the Schieblock. As if that were not enough, they went further and connected it to the surroundings buildings, over the train tracks, with an elevated bridge called the Luchtsingel – one of the first examples of urban development by crowd-funding. And to the east of the new town of Almere, the neighborhood Oosterwold is now being built. The inhabitants may, and must, do everything themselves: the city has drawn up some basic rules and leaves it to the new residents to choose a plot, build their houses and even build the roads.

The magic formula 'Do-It-Yourself' will impact existing institutions. All over the country people are starting cooperatives for health, energy and housing. These will in turn have an impact on the existing social arrangements. Will city planning departments still be drawing up masterplans in the future? Will there at some point no longer be energy providers because we generate all our own energy?

WHO DECIDES?

The scariest example of the dark side of urban success is London, where entire neighborhoods have been taken over by expensive pied à terres and where the city has become one big building site thanks to the new wave of *supersized* residential towers and offices. In an article in the *Financial Times* architecture critic Edwin Heathcote discusses his fear that this bright and shiny new city will have nothing to do with the people who live and work there. "Walking through its fast-changing streets," he writes, "there is a sense that the new is inevitably bigger than the old; glassier, shinier, but rarely better." He quotes the American critic Lewis Mumford: 'The chief function of the city is to convert power into form, energy into culture.' But in today's London, Heathcote wonders, "the chief function would seem to be to convert space into money. Is that ambition enough?"

In these times of feverish investment on the one hand and the growing scarcity and inequality on the other, the citystate of the Netherlands will have to delve into its own conscience. If we don't want to be just a city like London, that only converts space into money – what then? What kind of city, and therefore society, do we want the successful city of Amsterdam to be? And who decides?

Just the act of posing the question 'Who decides?' is a break with the past in the Netherlands, maybe even a revolutionary act. Here it was always quite clear who decided: government created the overarching masterplan for the spatial planning of the country, then provinces created regional visions and cities implemented them through zoning, together with housing corporations, investors and developers who did the work (and earned the revenue). Not any more.

AMSTERDAM TOURIST TOWN 2015

Amsterdam is one of the most visited cities in Europe, and every year a million more visitors come. Their numbers are expected to double in the next ten years. Amazing though the statistics

are, they don't prepare you for the actual experience of the presence of so many tourists in the city. The announcements in Chinese in the department store De Bijenkorf, the continual rrrrrrattling of suitcase wheels, their fixed routes through the city, and the endless identical cheese shops. Whose city is this?

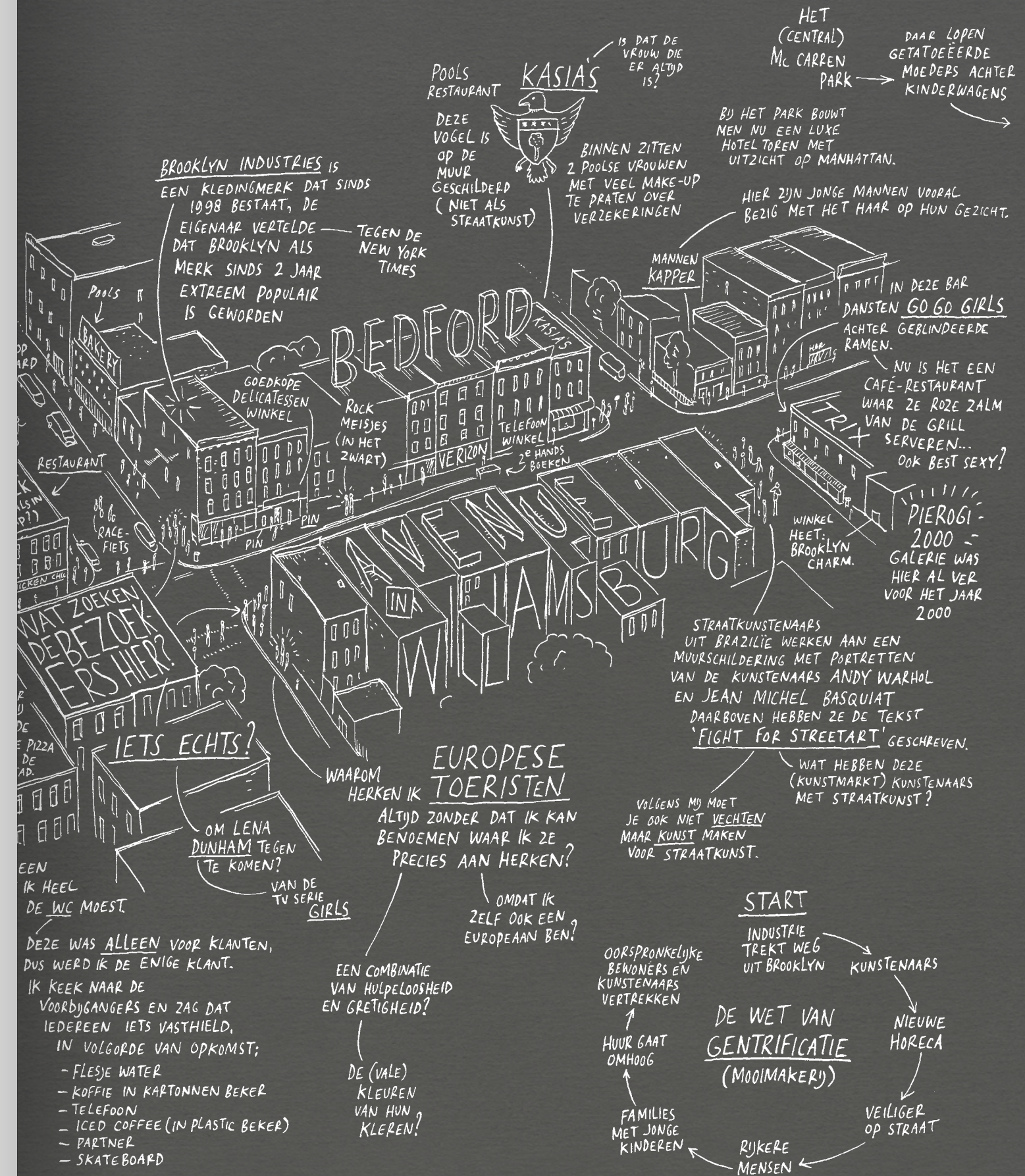


The question now is: how do we connect these two worlds? The impatient, somewhat anarchistic, strong-willed but informal approach of the 'citymakers' does not automatically overlap with the bureaucratic step-by-step path of government or with the spreadsheet-driven method of the financial world. The 'happy agitator' has a whole different definition of 'return on investment' than the CFO of a pension fund in some other country.

As we climb up out of the crisis, we discover that our cities are moving forward along two parallel tracks: the smooth neo-liberal highway where big money decides, and the small-scale unpaved road of Do-It-Yourself planning fueled large amounts of initiative and persistence by the 'citymakers'. Many fear that we will return to *business as usual*: a city dictated by government and financed by investors from all over the world and developers.

But there is no way back. Or rather, we should not want to go back. This is our next leap forward: the invention of a model of urbanism in which the newly won sense of ownership by people *who give a damn* will be propelled forward by the traditional parties. I think we can do it.

Tracy Metz
Rotterdam, 4 November 2016



COLOPHON

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← ZANDVOORT HEET NU:
'AMSTERDAM BEACH'
(KLINT DICHTERBY
VOOR TOERISTEN)

SS
ists,
scarcity
city.

EEN ENKELE REIS
VAN SCHIPHOL NAAR
AMSTERDAM C.S
IS HET MEEST
VERKOCHTE
KAARTJE IN
NEDERLAND



special occasion Metz also developed the multimedia project Tracy in Nederland, in collaboration with artist Jan Rothuizen, multimedia agency Submarine, podcast makers De Kostgangers and many others: www.tracyinnederland.nl