Cinematic City Field Trip
Amsterdam, 2013-11-19
12.45 – 1.15 pm
In *Cinema and the City* (Mark Shiel & Tony Fitzmaurice, eds.; Blackwell: 2001), Mark Shiel distinguishes four categorical levels to observe and to conceptualise the relationship between cinema and the city:

**Theme, Form, Thinking, and Industry.**

Each has its own academic history, as well as different theoretical and methodological implications.

This quadrangular distinction serves as a matrix to understand a range of studies dealing with cinema and the city.
Thematically, the cinema has, since its inception, been constantly fascinated with the representation of the distinctive spaces, lifestyles, and human conditions of the city...

Formally, the cinema has long had a striking and distinctive ability to capture and express the spatial complexity, diversity, and social dynamism of the city through *mise-en-scène, location filming, lighting, cinematography,* and *editing*...

... thinkers from Walter Benjamin – confronted by the shocking novelties of *modernity,* mass society, manufacture, and mechanical reproduction – to Jean Baudrillard – mesmerized by the ominous glamour of *postmodernity,* individualism, consumption, and electronic reproduction – have recognized and observed the curious and telling correlation between the mobility and visual and aural sensations of the city and the mobility and visual and aural sensations of the cinema.

Industrially, cinema has long played an important role in the cultural economies of cities all over the world in the *production, distribution, and exhibition* of motion pictures, and in the cultural geographies of certain cities particularly marked by cinema (from Los Angeles to Paris to Bombay) whose built environment and civic identity are both significantly constituted by film industry and films.

Shiel, pp1-2
The distinction between Theme, Form, Thinking, and Industry is subjected to an empirical experiment.

As part of the MA research seminar on the Cinematic City, Department of Media Studies, at the University of Amsterdam, a group of students has made a field trip of half an hour around the university complex (see next slide), on a Tuesday afternoon in November 2013. All kinds of observations related to film/media have been noted down in order to find out to what extent they fit the quadrangular distinction and how the ‘cinematic city’ could be defined.

The observations have been discussed in class; on the basis of these observations (additional) pictures have been made (by FP) the next day at the same time.

participants:

Dora Kótai, Cindy Krassen, Spring van der Linden, Floris Paalman (instructor), Storm Patterson, Bastiaan Roebert, Marta San Vicente Feduchi
The following slides show a selection of observations that deal directly with the relationship between film/media and the city.

Note that the category of ‘theme’ (representation) is first and foremost based on screen heuristics, and that media representations of the city can only indirectly be observed in the city itself.
theme (representation): location from *Rain* (1929, Joris Ivens & Mannus Franken)
theme/form/thinking (?): sign ‘no street musicians’
form: in-shop cctv, visitors can see themselves
theme (representation)
tourism
international image Amsterdam:
seeds + Heineken

form
in-shop cctv, visitors see themselves
collage image (4 cameras/screens)
form/thinking
boat tour: ‘cinematic experience’
city as spectacle as museum
mediatisation

industry (exhibition)
screen (UvA Library collection)

UvA research seminar Cinematic City
Heineken horse cart

**theme**
imaginary old Amsterdam

**thinking**

city as spectacle, commercialization, commodification, nostalgia, reenactment

**industry (marketting)**
ad for and part of ‘Heineken experience’, multi media campaign; Heineken as media sponsor
1. poster with Robbie Williams

theme (representation)
city life = 24/7 (non-stop)

industry
media marketing (radio)

2. woman with cell phone

industry
media user

3. mirrors on background

theme/form
‘montage’ of Amsterdam architecture <-> film
theme: urban life style (shorts/ads on in-shop screen)
form: lenses = mediation
thinking: optics, visual hegemony
industry: in-shop screen exhibition
Kalverstraat/Muntplein

**thinking**
commodification
commercialization
leisure economy
historical layers

**industry**
Free Record Shop: DVD sales
theme (iconic sounds)

bells of De Munt tower (1 pm)
bells of the tram
bells of bikes
alarm of police car [not in picture]
industry (exhibition)
sex cinema
form (left): cctv – visitors can see themselves
industry: merchandise of The Voice
Reguliersbreestraat

thinking
Elsaesser’s *Hollywood Op Straat*

industry (exhibition)
centre of entertainment
history of cinemagoing in Amsterdam
historical layers
industry (exhibition): Theater Tuschinski (1921, arch. Hijman de Jong) – restored
Cineac (1934 newsreel theatre, architect Jan Duiker), now a casino

thinking
urban transformation
leisure city
preservation of a modernist icon
(architecture & film)

industry
changing business
film sponsorship (NRC)
theme (representation)
archetypical film images

industry (exhibition)
Cinema
IDFA location: international exchange
thinking
CCTV: surveillance, big brother
public domain, mediated space

industry
surveillance practices, media & control

industry (services)
preparing for IDFA
theme/form/thinking/industry
IDFA flag + statue + nightwatch sculpture at Rembrandtplein: square to represent Amsterdam by art representing art representing Amsterdam = intertextuality, hyperreality, simulacrum, city as spectacle, festivalization, genius
theme/thinking/industry
flag = index for public tv-screening (inside the pub) of match by the national football team

vis-a-vis

multicultural/international identity of Amsterdam (city as global hub)
form/thinking
image /space layers

industry (exhibition, marketing)
top: screen
bottom: film poster (Diana)
theme (representation)
ad for Samsung Galaxy Note 3, showing the map of Amsterdam, theme of tourism (global urban hubs), with reference to Google Maps (navigation through media)

industry (exhibition)
public screen, with ad for private screen (Samsung)
thinking
poster with ‘sprocket holes’: self-reference
media < > sports < > commodities

industry (exhibition): poster with tv-screen

Theme
Ajax to represent Amsterdam

thinking
football < > media, city for entertainment

industry (exhibition)
Ajax Experience = media images of Ajax’ matches
industry (marketing)
poster for Eye
industry: services (car) + exhibition (screens)
UvA research seminar Cinematic City

thinking
dérive (situationists), flanerie (Benjamin), participant observation, self-reflection, experiment ...
hand drawn stickers with the text ‘mov’ (seen in different streets)

thinking
mov as reference to QuickTime files?
comment on media/digital representation?
thinking

bric-a-brac shop, with an anti-cctv sign
theme
urban culture

thinking
media landscape, convergence

industry (marketing)
reference to www with music videos
thinking/industry (discussion)
comedy theatre, talk shows during IDFA

theme
poster: IDFA presenting the cinematic city

industry (marketing)
IDFA poster (showing a ‘cinematic city’)

Poster showing a cinematic city and the IDFA event.
theme/thinking
storage space turned into office/commercial space;
ever changing city;
urban transformation/renewal (analogy city films)

thinking
language: a so-called “director’s chair”
**Theme**
Dutch windows: iconic imagery (representing the Netherlands)

**Form (window metaphor)**
showcasing: optical analogy; film as ‘a window on the world’

**Thinking**
poster = protest against ‘media city’, commercialization,

**info from website** <www.nosoho.nl>

**Géén hotel/restaurant/club op de Raamgracht**
De gebouwen Raamgracht 4-8 dreigen te worden verkocht aan Aedes Real Estate, die de gebouwen gaat verhuren aan SOHO House. SOHO House is een internationale keten die hotel – restaurants exploiteren die ook een club hebben voor ‘sensitieve, interessante mensen werkzaam in de film, media- en creatieve industrie’. Bezoekers, taxi’s en leveranciers zullen de Raamgracht, de Groenburgwal en de omliggende straten overnemen. De uitstraling van SOHO House zal bepalend zijn voor de buurt.
thinking/industry
film book shop Cine Qua Non

theme (representation)
Typical Amsterdam café

industry (marketing)
sticker ad for cinema Kriterion
industry (marketing)
ad for KPN
(network for fast data transmission > downloading films)

theme (representation)
Amsterdam canal picture hot spot