SEA OF THOUGHT

I will create a website, a digital environment that functions as an infrastructure to share and activate my research on the relationship of the Netherlands to water and the (built) landscape. This takes the form of a poetic inquiry that takes various locations and events as points of departure. This project will be long term. For this year, I aim to build the skeleton of the website and a first utterance of content related to the following locations:

> Rotta: The Deluge and Dutch origin myth.
> Delfshaven: The Moon and the Merchant, the economy of the VOC
> Europort: Liquid land and market
> Eemshaven: data centres, the cloud and the smokescreen.

The poetic inquiry consists of two aspects that in large provide the content for the website; the thesis and radio show 'Dear Navigator'. The listed locations are at the heart of the thesis framework. For a further elaboration on the significance of these location I refer you to the thesis outline.

'Dear Navigator' is a radio show in collaboration with Cara Mayer Yepez and Good Times Bad Times Radio. With each episode we focus on a different physical location in Rotterdam, weaving together field-recordings, music, spoken word and discussions, to give rise to a sonic collage that speaks of memory, architecture, and political realities. We are currently developing the second episode on the Tweebosbuurt and Zalmhaventoren. The first episode focussed on the Maastunnel. The development of each episode takes about 1 or 2 months. Two of the episodes we will be developing over the course of this year focus on Delfshaven and the Europort.

Overview content:

The thesis and 'Dear Navigator' are both informed by a collage structure. This will hold for the digital environment I propose to build. The website will mix, hyperlink, content from different sources. Both showing, making available own research as well as the sources accessed in carrying out the research.

- **Writing**: speculative fiction as well as essayistic writing.

- **Imagery**:

  o Archival material

  accessed through Het Nieuwe Instituut, the Rotterdam City archive. I would also

be interested to explore different archival collections but retaining a Dutch connection.

- o Self-created imagery:
  footage shot on location, collages mixing archive materials such as for example old Dutch paintings, archaeological findings from the sites, images shot on location and stock images (For an example see *Appendix 1 & 2*). These collages, because of being digital, can be hyperlinked or hover triggered.

- **Sound:**

  - o Dear Navigator episodes Europort and Delfshaven

  - o Self-made recordings: poetic sound-performances, based on the research and field-recordings from the beforementioned locations.

  - o Samples from music and research material

STRUCTURE:

- Wiki structure

- Hosted on a Rasberry Pi.

How do you plan to make it?

For realizing the technical aspects of the website, I will make use of tools introduced to me by the Parallel Library Services Workshop hosted by Simon Brown at Varia. This workshop series I am partaking in, familiarizing digital tools for setting up a library, archive and (collaborative) annotation practices. This workshop spans till March.

November till April I will spend time researching for my thesis, 'Dear Navigator' and related topics. This will go hand in hand with collecting, collating, creating material for the sonic, written, and visual material of the website. Another red thread throughout most months will be developing, refining HTML and CSS skills.

More detailed month by month outline:

- **November + December:**

  - o Visit exhibition V2 Reasonable Doubt

  - o Visit Eemshaven in Gronigen, originally a place won from the water for agriculture, now this place generates 30-50% of energy for used in the Netherlands and consequently houses a large amount of the data centres.

- o Set up Rasberry Pi for self-hosting.

- **January**

    - o Visit the Maritime Museum

    - o Visit exhibition "No Linear Fucking Timing" at BAK

    - o Week residency Brussels Adele. Our outset is to produce a publication on the Eemshaven and its relationship between technology and the landscape, blending drawings, collages, and essayistic speculative fiction. This publication will generate possible content for the website.

    - o Create 'Dear Navigator' Episode 3: Europort.

    - o Settle on digital tools to use: etherpad2html / etheroff[1] / wiki.

- **February**

    - o Start developing the website structure.

    - o Start coding research into the website.

- **March**

    - o Start playing around with Javascript to explore the interactive options of the website especially with regards to including audio. For example, ScrollMagic.

    - o Development Dear Navigator Episode 4: Delfshaven.

    - o Continue working on the structure of the website but also slowly filling it up with content. Experiment with different forms.

    - o Coding research into the website.

- **April**

    - o Coding research into the website.

    - o Continue working on the structure of the website but also slowly filling it up with content. Experiment with different forms. Start settling on a direction to represent and spatially organise the content.

- **May**

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[1] Both drawing on source code provided by Open-Source Publishing (OSP) Brussels http://osp.kitchen

- o   Continue working on the content of the website

- **June**
  - o   Refine and finish the website

Why do you want to make it? + Relation to larger context

My motivation for this project has a lot to do with the fact that I wish history in general, but Dutch history specifically, would have been addressed and taught quite differently in school. The past informs the present. To uncover and critically assess this past I think is highly important as time is cyclical and historical patterns repeat themselves. The society we live in today is still very much formed on the same fundaments as 500 years ago. Nothing disappears, things only change shape.

The aspect of hyperlinking is important to me, as a way of organizing thought as well as sharing the employed research sources and tools. Additionally, it helps to connecting the stories of one place to that of another. While there are different forces at play in different places, some of the structures we find ourselves in are rather collective, global. Cross-referencing and looking for parallels for this reason can be very fruitful ground.

Why using the internet? Water and the internet are inextricably linked to one another. How the internet traces the sea floor, following the slave trade routes and old telegram lines, is rooted in memory. This is development and heritage, is at the core of some of the topics discussed on the website. I want to use the internet as a tool to reflect on this tension.

Who can help you and how?

The people from the Parallel Library Services can help me to figure out which digital tools exactly would work best to carry out this project. The interaction station / (digital) publication lab will be able to provide me with the necessary support to get the Rasberry Pi up and running as well as other technical questions with regards to coding.

I will be contacting OSP to help me out with some specific questions about the open-source code they provide.

Additionally, I will consult some people from XPUB for advice and small demonstrations if necessary.

Relation to previous practice

As mentioned before, this project draws heavily on Dear Navigator that as a project aims to uncover and recover stories about places in Rotterdam.

Last year, I focussed a lot on construction sites. I thought these places gave a glimpse of the city in motion. Uncovering the city as a palimpsest, a result of a constant process of writing and re-writing. While writing is erased, overwritten, or forgotten, it never really disappears. Over time different memories compete to come back to the surface. Where does a place start and where does it end? It stretches beyond merely the visible. This concept of the city as a palimpsest still very much underlies what I am doing with this project. Making the past writings (more) legible. This project in a way would function as a speculative recording device, for is writing history ever anything else?

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Footnotes

1. The first episode of 'Dear Navigator' concerning the Maastunnel, can be accessed through https://www.mixcloud.com/good_times_bad_times/dear-navigator-maastunnel/

2. The Parallel Library Services Workshop hosted by Simon Brown at Varia. https://pls.simonbrowne.biz/index.php?title=Parallel_Library_Services_Wiki

Appendix

1. Dear Navigator tracklist episode 1, consisting of 3 separate collages. These collages combine self-recorded footage alongside archive footage. Showing places as a palimpsest.
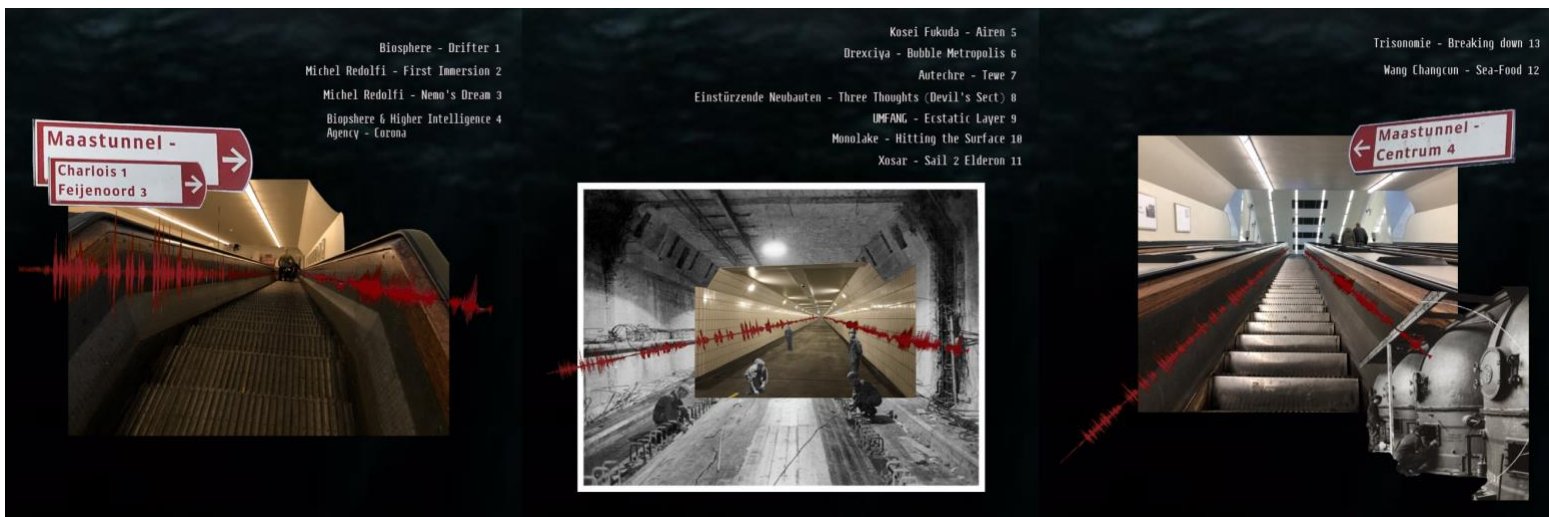
2. Neptune. I had a dream about Neptune that came out of the water, giving off a warning signal. That in fact the great flood was nearing.