The Zuidas in Amsterdam

The Zuidas ('South Axis') is a recent city development area situated in the south of Amsterdam. Except for the Free University (VU) and the art academy at its west, the Zuidas consist mainly out of towers of lucrative, international businesses. Logos connects the owners to the towers and provide for a strong image about the place. In general the assumption is that this district is corporate and anonymous, a place without Amsterdam roots that could easily be picked up and put down elsewhere in the world.

the Zuidas seen from the laboratory

Logo Length 'Zuidas'

The research:
In the artistic, mathematical research project 'Logolength Zuidas' logos are unfolded in stories and translated in an art landscape.

Through the stories and art images the logos and Zuidas gets different properties. The aim is to change the general vision on the logos and the place where they dwell.

The calculation:
A mathematical formula expresses all the information in a number: the 'Logolength'. The formula consists out of three components: the logo-height (the distance from the figurative to the ground), the logo-speed (logos refer to events/histories that took place at a certain place in time. The time is converted into a number and the place is incorporated into a spatial correction factor) and the logo-force (the public figure: the impact factor of the logo). . $LL = lh + lv + lf$

$$ll = lh + \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}\left(\left(\frac{(\log S) - \log s_i}{2\log S}\right) + \frac{\log(t_i + t_{c_i})}{2\log T}\right)g_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} abs(g_i)}\right)LH + \left(\left(als\ lw < 6\left|\left(\frac{(lw-6)}{5}\right)LH\right|\right)\left|\left(als\ lw \geq 6\left|\left(\frac{(lw-5)}{5}\right)LH\right|\right)\right)$$

The logolength-ratings:

The public can vote for the stories and images that the 'Logolength' produces. Moreover they can submit stories themselves. So the public can influence the length of the logos. A database registers the votes and the variation is calculated on the fly. Through a database we measure the variation in lengths.

The art intervention

a/ An old house on the Zuid-as is transformed into an art installation: the logolength laboratory.
b/ A light installation on top of the building operates as a beacon and depicts the ratings

visitors in the logolength laboratory

In the following paper one of the narratives dissected out of the Griffin, the logo of the Free University is presented. The narrative roots the logo. Geological history blends with human history and the Zuidas is reconfigured in a geomorphological place. It shows that how 'globalization' materializes, is closely related to geological actors - wind, rivers, ice and subterranean substances.

Irene Janze,

artistic research, artistic theorist.

Buro *jan*-ZE is a hub of varying form and composition pursuing the question: "how long is a thought." Through artistic research and art interventions it focuses on the performative dimension of the public space

The Ice and the Real Estate on the Zuidas

READ ALONG WITH WHAT THE GRIFFIN, THE LOGO OF THE FREE UNIVERSITY ON THE ZUIDAS, HAS TO SAY:

The Griffin

John and Maria Griffin [1]

Although the designers of the logo were not aware of it when they designed the griffin, the logo of the Free University (VU) in 1989, the griffin is situated right on the spot where the dark and handsome John Griffin was a farmer servant in 1900. Jan Griffioen, this is how he is called in Dutch, (1841-1922 born in Kockengen), worked as a farmer servant near the Amstelveense road. He was dark and handsome, and married Maria Verburg, the beautiful daughter of his neighbor. Jan married in the Zorgmeer farm, which was located next to the VU campus, on the Amstelveense road 619, close to where the current science building stands. His father in law lived at - and owned - the neighboring farm named " Know Thy Self". On that spot now stands the Free University Hospital. Its facade hosts another ' Griffin logo.'

John Griffin farmed the green meadows. He held cattle to produce milk. The grasslands took shape through draining of peat, situated between the Schinkel - and Amstel River. The 'Schinkel' marks a high, long strip of peat that stretched all the way from the South to the North in Amsterdam. The peat formed a natural dam that gave shelter at its east against the propelling West Winds. It gave rise to a condensed dome of peat at its east side. The peat grew 10 meter above sea level and one could move about on foot. A maze of small streets materialized with exit roads to the west and south. The water running down from the peat-sponges formed over time a stream that became the river Amstel.

East of the 'Amstel' the area consisted out of peat marshes. At its east side the sea washed away the peat, resulting in a landscape of floating islands. As a consequence that area could only be reached by boot. Men and cows were put on a boot and dropped on the bog.

West of the 'Schinkel' the peat could hardly flourish and the propelling southwest wind created a lot of damage and blew pieces of the peat marches away. The Haarlemmermeer emerged, a lake where it tended to be very spooky. The differences in the peat landscapes still shimmer trough in the urban development. Excavated and reclaimed different polder landscapes arose. The east side of Amsterdam consisted out of small polders that developed into marginal small island-like, cheap residential areas.
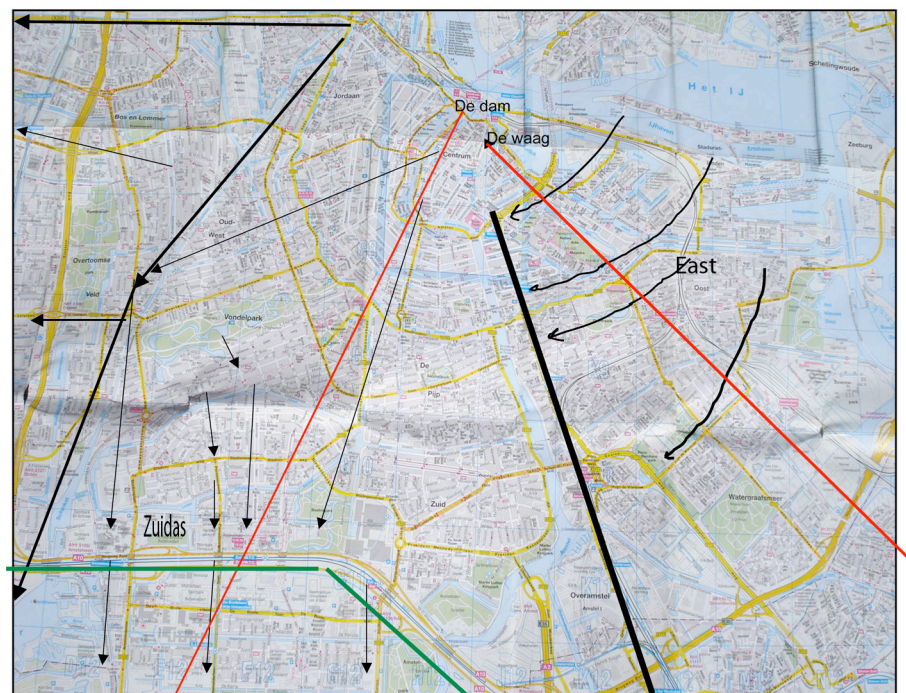
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[1] Thanks to the courtesy of Sander Griffioen, descendant of Jan Griffioen

The
Zuidas
on the
militar
y map
of
1848 [2]
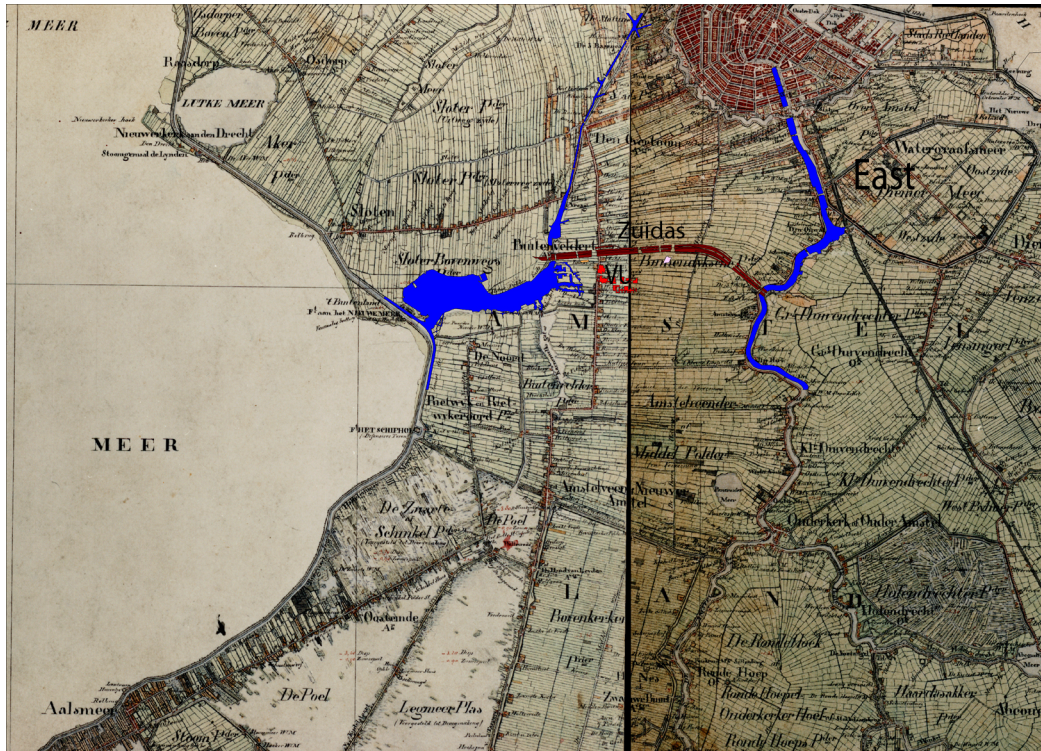
There are no big main roads and the streets are running dead end to the 'Amstel' and Wiboutstreet, that runs along the 'Amstel.'

[2] GIS Maps are drawn by Jaap Fokkema, Faculty of Arts, VU

The sandy and salty soils of the drained Haarlemmermeer polder turned out to be less suited for farming. However, by the persistent southwest wind, the polder became an excellent spot for airplane traffic. The airport Schiphol expanded in a little less than a century from a small military airbase in 1916 in an international airport.

In the area of the Griffin, between the Schinkel and the Amstel one condensed polder emerged. On it a fine network of streets and roads running to the southwest and the west of Amsterdam developed, producing a lucrative moneymaking living and working space.[3]
The rich trade part of Amsterdam has therefore been located in the NE/SW for centuries now, running roughly in between the Schinkel and the Amstel.

It is easy to understand that this advantage in infrastructure, and the historical lucrative living and trade area with nice, big houses together with a nearby airport is the best place for international services. Formerly cows grazed on the Zuidas that produced milk, now international transactions and money are harvested. The beautiful high rises are in fact *money farms*.

Why did this difference in peat landscapes with in their wake the difference in city development occur? After all we are talking about short distances of a few miles.

The 'top ten' of 2005 drawn on the ' ice basin' map of the geological survey of 1978.
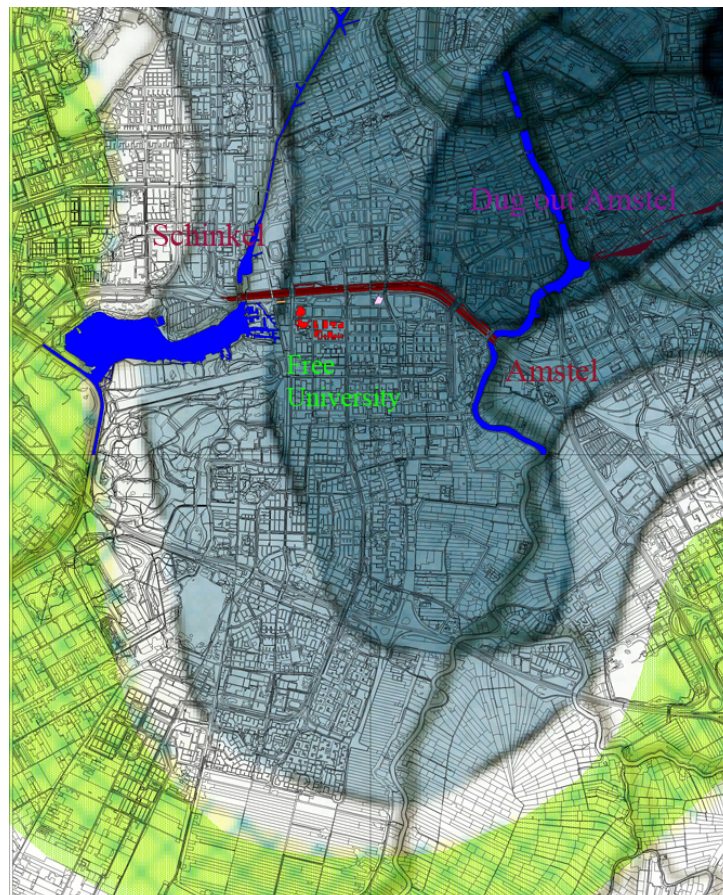
[3] The Atlas Amsterdam, Dijkstra, Reitsma, Rommerts; Toth, 1999

A long, long time ago, 150000 years, ice slid over the weak soil and fanned out in lobes shaped like tongues. Using GIS the Zuidas, University buildings (in red), the Schinkel - and Amstel Rivers were drawn on the ice basin map of the geological survey of 1978.

The contours of the Schinkel and the Amstel still tell the outlines and shape of the glacier basin underneath the surface. This becomes even more apparent when we consider the fact that the Amstel has been dug out. [4] Originally the Amstel started as two little streams in Amsterdam east and ran south. The Free University and the Griffin are at the edge of the ice basin. When the ice withdrew, a lagoon emerged that got filled by clay deposits and small layers of Eolic sands in the warmer and colder spells that followed.

The boulder clay drawn on the altitude map of Amsterdam
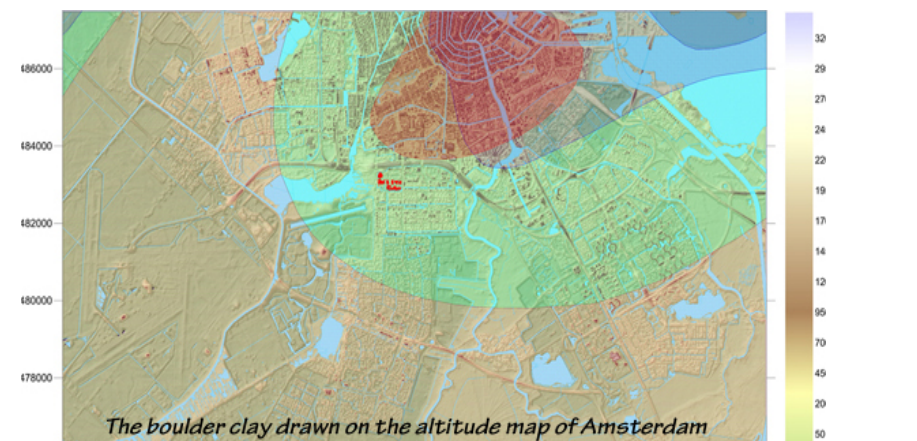
The griffin and the Zuidas are on a very specific spot! Using GIS again the geological ice map of 1986 was drawn on the altitude map of Amsterdam. The most expensive piece of land in the Netherlands, the Zuidas, borders the boulder clay in the soil: the footprint of the glacier. It is the locus of the terminal moraine!

The clay basin on the boulder clay was great ground for the peat to settle and pile up. The negative shape in the underground enacted a positive form in the landscape at
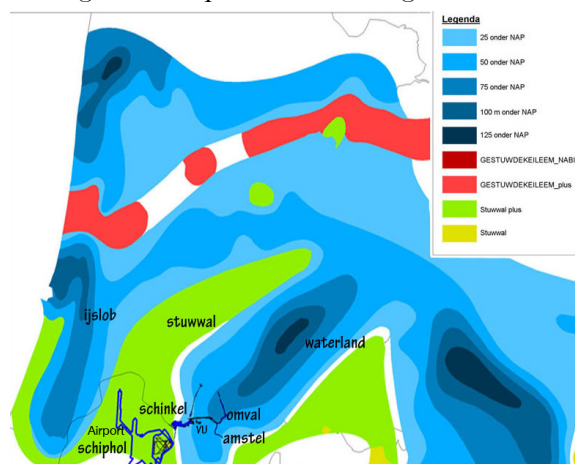
the airport on the push moraine

the surface: a dome of peat/ the so-called peat at the Amstel: in Dutch this is called Amstelveen, which is the name of the township there. The tongue shaped rich trade part of Amsterdam has followed the old trace of the ice. West of the Schinkel, the ice ridge pushes the

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  Bont, C. de, Vergeten land: Ontginning, bewoning en waterbeheer in de West-Nederlandse veengebieden (800- 1350), pp. 484-530, phd.Wageningen, Alterra, 2008

subterranean up. The old salt marsh landscape lies close under the current surface. The illustration shows the airport on the ice pushed ridge.

Let us summarize here; we have the international Schiphol airport on the ice pushed ridge and the great infrastructure and lucrative moneymaking living and working area on the high-raised bog on the glacial basin. It was only a matter of time- about 150 000 years- for an international business district to rise to the occasion. The Zuidas was born.

Now what about its shape? The Zuidas was originally designed as a kind of city wall, a dike with a kept free zone for traffic (in 1938). We can see on the next slide that the
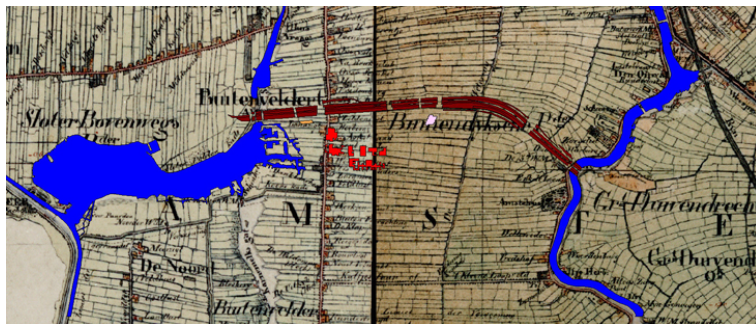
dike follows the east/west orientation of the polder structure, its lots and ditches.
It explains for its east /west orientation and slightly bend shape at the east.

The ice created great circumstances for the peat to grow, that transformed over years in a lucrative, open area with a great infrastructure: a polder landscape with dikes, ditches and meadows, which in turn created the long shape and position of the Zuidas. The ice pushed ridge together with the west winds produced an international airport and with that the maximum height of the buildings on the Zuidas. Because of the planes the towers are not allowed to be higher than 105 meters (in altitude).

That's how the Amsterdam glacier produced deep in the ground, along with the ever chilly and persistent west wind the materialization on the surface. Profitable soils and profitable real estate produce each other! The business towers are just money farms!

So don't be mistaken by the wings of the griffin. The griffin is rooted deep into subterranean and history of the Zuidas.