

# Iconic End-users in M4H's Organic Area Development

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## Abstract

This paper presents the preliminary findings of a research project which was recently launched and which focuses on the organic redevelopment strategy of Rotterdam City Ports in the Merwe-Vierhavens area (M4H) and its particular context. An overview of the area and the roles of the actors involved is given from the perspective of a collaborative network. The development strategy focusses on the active facilitation of the (local) network with its market and social initiatives by Rotterdam City Ports. Special attention is given to the role of 'iconic end-users'—in this case, Studio Roosegaarde—in the area and their (expected) impact on the redevelopment of M4H. In doing so, the choice to assign experimental status to M4H within Rotterdam City Ports could make it a valuable lab for organic area development for the whole of Rotterdam.

## 1. Introduction

Urban area development has changed since the onset of the economic crisis. In Rotterdam, the municipality and the Port of Rotterdam Authority have joined forces to form Rotterdam City Ports, an organisation that is implementing a new approach to the redevelopment of the 'City Ports area'. This area consists of 1600 hectares of old seaports alongside the river Meuse. This approach, which may be defined as 'organic' or 'gradual' area development is being tested in the 'Merwe-Vierhavens' ('Merwe Four-harbours', in short 'M4H'), a part of the Rotterdam City Ports area. Rotterdam City Ports focuses on end-users and is developing a new role for itself with the aim of supporting the businesses present in the area as much as possible with a view to developing the area. There is no or only small input from real-estate developers and no large upfront investments. Instead a lot of attention is being given to strengthening the area's identity and image. In this process, a prominent role has been assigned to 'iconic end-users', who may act as 'area ambassadors'. The era of Rotterdam's large-scale urban waterfront development schemes, featuring iconic buildings, seems to have come to an end.

By means of this paper we aim to contribute to the development of new strategies for unprecedented synergy within port cities. We also wish to delve deeper into the two main themes of the Rotterdam workshop of the 51<sup>st</sup> ISOCARP congress, namely to link up the economic networks of the port and the city and to develop a new (waterfront) redevelopment strategy based on clean manufacturing and a new creative economy. We present the first findings of our evaluation of the strategy of Rotterdam City Ports for M4H and, more specifically, the introduction of an 'iconic end-user' in the area. The organisation and not the building it happens to use is regarded as an icon.



*Figure 1. A view from the Meuse towards the M4H area in Rotterdam. The yellow building in the centre is the office of Rotterdam City Ports*

In our research we build upon the recent literature on organic urban area development and transition provided by, amongst others, Rotmans (2011), Boelens & De Roo (2014), Peek (2012) and Buitelaar & Feenstra (2012). We have also provided a framework for describing the development of the roles of the actors involved in the area over time. We gathered our data through interviews with the main actors in the area studied, site visits, a survey of relevant policy documents and websites, and attendance of expert, network and other meetings in the area. In doing so, we made an assessment of the initial situation around the time that the iconic end-user, Studio Roosegaarde, opened up its business in the area in April 2015. The assessment is based mainly on four semi-structured interviews which address several questions relating to the process of setting up the business in the area, roles, networks and the company's development strategy. Two interviews were held with officials from the municipality and the Port of Rotterdam Authority on the policy aspects of the strategy for M4H. The two other interviews were held with so-called area ambassadors in M4H, the world famous Atelier van Lieshout, active in the area since 1995, and the newly introduced iconic end-user, Studio Roosegaarde.

Before we elaborate on their impact in part 5, a description of the area of study is given in part 2, an analytical framework for identifying the relevant actors is described in part 3 and the strategy of Rotterdam City Ports is explained in part 4. Finally, a conclusion is provided in part 6.

## **2. Study area: Merwe-Vierhavens (M4H) in Rotterdam City Ports**

Rotterdam City Ports is an area of 1600 hectares, comprising old seaports along the river Meuse, which are owned by the City of Rotterdam and the Port of Rotterdam Authority. Together they comprise the organisation, Rotterdam City Ports. Since the completion of the Second Meuse Harbour on the North Sea, large-scale transshipment activities and heavy industry are gradually leaving the city ports. Rotterdam City Ports is searching for new opportunities for the underused ports and industrial sites by accommodating new businesses and by having them take the lead in the area's development. Rotterdam City Ports has a global vision for the development of the areas, but does not have a blueprint. This vision was first set out in the City Ports Structural Vision 2030 of 2011, in which the development goals for the four sub areas are explained. Due to the recent economic crisis, the development goals and horizons have changed. For 100 hectares of the M4H area, the main drivers are to reconnect the harbour with the city, to stimulate clean manufacturing industry and to introduce housing after 2025. Earlier the year 2015 was mentioned. Clean-tech companies and companies with a focus on medical technology and food, in particular, are being sought for M4H. Rotterdam is an international frontrunner in these sectors with their growing demand for business space and amenities. Recently attention was also given to the design and creative industries in M4H. Special attention has also been given to the combination of high-tech and low-tech companies, ideally characterised by collaboration between highly educated professionals and craftsmen. The businesses targeted range from small start-ups to well-known innovative companies that can contribute to the desired profile of the area.



Figure 2: Position of M4H within Rotterdam and its connectivity (Stadshavens 2015, pp. 46)



Figure 3: Overview of M4H with important actors and landmarks (Stadshavens 2015, pp. 8)

In addition to the new developments, M4H is still one of the largest clusters of companies trading in perishables (e.g. fruits, vegetables and flowers) in the world. The area is used for storage, shipping and processing vegetables, fruits and juices. These businesses are expand rapidly and in time they will move to the Eem and Waal areas of the port of Rotterdam. In recent decades urban pioneers have settled in M4H and have set up their workshops and studios there. Adjacent to this area are the neighbourhood of Delfshaven and parts of the city of Schiedam. Originally built for harbour workers, the latter are now socially vulnerable areas with, amongst others, unemployment and health issues. In the long term (2040), Rotterdam City Ports would like to see M4H develop into a robust spacious area for living and working. No substantial residential development will take place until 2025. In 2025 a turning point in the development is foreseen. By then a lot of land lease contracts will expire and there will be more clarity about the demand for housing. Until 2025 Rotterdam

City Ports will rely on a process of incremental development of the M4H area. This will enable it to respond to new developments in the market. Entrepreneurs who join now will shape their own future working environment. Actors who add social, economic and physical value to the area will be supported by Rotterdam City Ports more than other actors, for instance by means of flexible and attractive lease contracts.



*Figure 4: Studio Roosegaarde in 'The Glass Building' within the M4H area*

In the next ten years, Rotterdam City Ports will give additional attention to five focus areas in M4H. These are the areas where the proposed developments are already apparent and that provide opportunities for further change. One of these areas is the centrally located 'Four Harbour Block' ('*Vierhavenblok*' in Dutch, in short '4HB'). In the past this was a notorious street prostitution zone, but it is now a place with high potential where one finds, amongst others, Studio Roosegaarde, Atelier Van Lieshout, the Food Garden and the grassroots initiative, Fair Design Square, of the 'Made in 4Havens' cooperative.

### **3. Paradigmatic perspective: acting within a Network**

The conditions for the area development process in the M4H area, and indeed in many other places, have changed substantially over the last decade. In response to this, we have observed a change in the development strategy applied by Rotterdam City Ports. Most of the organisational activities within processes of area development which we observed are directed towards the management or ordering of interorganisational relations. Against this background, if we understand organising to be a purposeful activity of creating order, our perspective on the present or emergent structure of intermediating actors provides the best insight into the fundamentals of the actual development strategy and helps us to explain changes and possible successes and failures. We have tried to explain the different perspectives using the study by Essers (2006) into the incommensurability of organisational paradigms. He distinguishes three fundamental organisational paradigms: integrationism, pluralism and isolationism (with reference to Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

Viewed from the integrational perspective, outside the organisation there is only chaos and this can only be organised by making the chaos part of the organisational unit itself, since within this paradigm there is no room for any form of order other than that provided by the organisation itself. Viewed from a pluralist perspective, organisations relate to each other in chains of collaborative processes, since they act on the belief that differences between organisations may be overcome through dialogue and mutual understanding. From an isolationist perspective, in essence organisations are incompatible and individuals choose autonomously whether to join an organisation or not. This resembles the interorganisational structure of a network, in which organisations are condensations and the degree of interconnectedness determines the boundaries of the organisation.

The—often implicit—perspective on the interorganisational structure of area development determines to a large extent the strategy chosen. In short, an integrational perspective corresponds with a grand blueprint executed by a single conglomerate of governmental organisations, while a pluralist view may result in a public-private enterprise working within a governance context. An isolationist perspective, on the other hand, will focus on the empowerment of local communities and may even end up with largely autarkic development of the area. We are all familiar with urban developments that can be categorised as one or the other of these types and we may also recognise certain periods in time in which one of these typical approaches to urban development was more predominant.

<b>Interorganisational perspective and structure</b>	<b>Integrational—Unit</b>	<b>Pluralist—Chain</b>	<b>Isolationist—Network</b>
<b>Entity</b>	Company / agency	Process	Community
<b>Goal</b>	Intra (internal)	Inter (in-between)	Extra (external)
<b>Production</b>	Central	Linear	Circular
<b>Result</b>	Output	Throughput	Input
<b>Performance</b>	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Optimal
<b>Geography</b>	Local	Global	Glocal
<b>Order</b>	Hierarchical	Sequential	Lateral
<b>Relations</b>	Control	Collaboration	Autonomy
<b>Design</b>	Blueprint	Co-design	Design patterns
<b>Synergy</b>	Excellence	Integration	Innovation
<b>Change</b>	Improvement	Transformation	Transition
<b>Policy</b>	Government	Governance	Empowerment

*Table 1: Organisational characteristics of development strategies corresponding with paradigmatic determinant view of interorganisational structure*

Table 1 explores the various organisational characteristics of development strategies based on the paradigmatically determined perspective of the interorganisational structure: being part of the organisational unit itself, being a possible (production) chain or being a network. Key to the shift between these typologies is the way the structure is organised or managed. Within the unit, the interorganisational structure is turned into an internal management issue that is dealt with on the basis of top-down hierarchy and control. In a chain, interorganisational structure is largely an external management issue with a focus on collaboration with suppliers, clients and co-producers in parallel production chains. Instead of having a predefined model of its own organisational structure or that of several (real-estate) development chains—based on either public, private or joint land development—in the network there are few predefined models for developing interorganisational structures. The design of an interorganisational structure is therefore defined by the levels of density and the degree of interconnectedness that is needed for the bottom-up organisation of the development involving the community, which becomes part of the development management task at hand.

We have interpreted the development strategy of Rotterdam City Ports in relation to M4H as a way of dealing with the challenges resulting from the—implicit—approach to the interorganisational structure from a network perspective. This approach breaks with the past, since the M4H area had been developed and managed previously in a way which closely resembled the ‘unit’ and ‘chain’ approaches. The Port of Rotterdam Authority was the single landowner and leased the plots to accommodate activities with a clear position within several global maritime logistic chains, such as the transshipment of fruit juices.

In 2007, the City of Rotterdam and the Port of Rotterdam Authority decided to transform the area together with other port areas close to the city centre. Ownership of some of the plots was transferred to the City of Rotterdam and designs were presented showing M4H as a new residential area. Here we may find evidence of a more ‘unit-based’ approach. These plans attracted little interest from traditional partners in the real-estate development chain,

like developers and investors, while the municipality's financial situation made it impossible to make large upfront investments. Since this relatively fast transformation from a port to a residential area through the well-known land and property development chain stranded, new pathways to development had to be explored. The Port of Rotterdam Authority and the municipality shifted towards more organic development of their property in order to develop it *'together with the market to become an urban testing ground where harbour and city and knowledge and skills come together and new living and working environments are made and (sustainable) added value is created for city and region'* (Stadshavens 2015, pp. 7).

We have interpreted the redevelopment of the M4H area not so much as a transformation, but rather as a transition. The traditional approaches, based on the pre-existing structures of the land and property development 'chain' and a strong and pro-active municipality, as the public 'unit', were able to bring about little change. For obvious reasons, the same applied to the 'chains' of the maritime sectors. For this reason, creating new structures, using the latent network of existing and potential users of the area and its surroundings, became an essential part of the redevelopment task of Rotterdam City Ports.

Rotmans (2011 pp. 69-71) already mentions the experimental character of Rotterdam City Ports' approach to development, in which icons are created that reflect the long-term vision on a small scale. Amongst others, he lists the following characteristics of this organic development concept:

- steering is done by a small unit, the cockpit;
- the cockpit is mainly a facilitator, connector and switchboard;
- 'the game' is played with frontrunners;
- learning and experimenting are the basis for organic development;
- iconic projects are necessary as visible results on a small scale;
- innovation space is essential (juridical, fiscal, organisational and mental space is needed);
- an ambitious long-term vision is formulated which guides the process; and
- the execution goes step by step with enough space for adjustment.

Early on, M4H was designated as an experimentation zone in the Rotterdam city ports because here the first land would become available for development. In 2009 an area plan, called 'Pioneering along the Meuse' (*Pionieren aan de Maas*), was drawn up and in 2011 an inspirational vision 'M4H from Desert to Goldmine' (*M4H, van woestijn naar goudmijn*) was presented. In the meantime, the City of Rotterdam and subsequently Rotterdam City Ports were experimenting with new area development strategies, like the 'Rotterdam City Initiative' (*Stadsinitiatief*) and the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR), which fuelled discussions on how to take urban development forward.

By the end of 2014, the summary of the development strategy 'Get Involved in M4H' (*'Ontwikkel mee in M4H'*) was published. This strategy is not so much a plan as an open invitation to all actors to contribute to transforming the area from a port to a sustainable and productive urban area. The open character of this invitation allowed for new structures of collaboration in the redevelopment of the area to emerge from latent networks. The formation and activation of these structures was consequently part of the development strategy and—from our perspective—resulted in this approach developing from mere transformation to transition. The complete version of the development strategy is now available in draft form. It still has to be discussed by the City Council and is expected to be passed in the second half of 2015.

#### **4. Development Strategy ‘Get Involved in M4H’**

Rotterdam City Ports, and more specifically its team for M4H, represents the interests of the City of Rotterdam and Port of Rotterdam Authority. It consequently seems to operate like a cockpit, as was mentioned above. Several recent actions by Rotterdam City Ports illustrate the way they approach the transition and explicitly address the task of developing new collaborative structures:

- putting forward a development strategy based on a flexible framework which is able to adapt to various scenarios and paces of development;
- stressing the importance of economic and social ambitions over physical change;
- investing in a clear and rooted brand for the area, as an area of opportunity and experiment for new economic sectors, such as clean manufacturing and the creative industry;
- hosting the *Keiletafel*, as a platform where entrepreneurs in the M4H area meet and new ideas and initiatives are shared;
- using iconic end-users as the area’s ambassadors and benefiting from their reputation and extended network.

We will now briefly explain these actions. In the next part we will explore the use of iconic end-users in the M4H area further with a special focus on the relocation of Studio Roosegaarde to the area.

##### **4.1 A strategy based on a flexible framework**

Putting forward the ‘Get Involved in M4H’ development strategy, based on a flexible framework which can be adapted to various scenarios and paces of development, is a fairly progressive achievement of Rotterdam City Ports. It means putting forward a plan which could be perceived as vague by the general public. Nevertheless the City Executive of Rotterdam have adopted it. The next step is to have it approved by the City council.

The local situation and its current use are the starting point for new developments in M4H (*Stadshavens*, 2015, pp 20, 68, 80). Rotterdam City Ports has set the general direction, but market initiatives still have to give substance to it. Rotterdam City Ports claims that this is the way the market will be involved in the development process. The longstanding wish to introduce a big company, like Siemens, has not been abandoned, but the way to achieve this has changed. The company itself has to become interested in the area, for instance through the activities of Studio Roosegaarde or through initiatives like the SuGuClub (see section 4.4).

In addition to moving along with the market and society, the development strategy (*ibid*, pp. 60) states that managing lease contracts and the zoning plan is a steering instrument in the development of M4H. To determine if an existing or new initiative fits within the future of M4H, these initiatives are assessed in terms of their contribution to social, physical and economic value creation in the area. Points can be scored in each of these three categories. On the basis of the total score, Rotterdam City Ports decides to deny, discuss or approve an initiative. In addition to this, initiatives adding most value are granted the most attractive contractual conditions, like longer rental periods, and are promised a role in shaping their future environment in the area.

How the future of M4H will look after 2025 is still unclear and is mostly determined by the future housing demand. The Rotterdam City Ports (*ibid.*, pp. 32, 33) has three general scenarios for the M4H area between 2025 and 2040, which sketch the development of housing and business in the area. Until 2025 flexibility within a robust spatial framework, including the existing monuments, is the key factor (*ibid.*, pp. 61, 62).

#### **4.2 The importance of economic and social ambitions**

By stressing the importance of economic and social ambitions over physical change, Rotterdam City Ports places the use of area and the end-user at the forefront of every development. Initiatives have to come from civil society. The initiative is taken mostly by businesses, but some NGO's, like the food bank, are also active and are supported in the area. In this way, actors are invited to come up with ideas and are encouraged to realise them themselves. Rotterdam City Ports only has small 'leverage budgets' to make things possible or to attract larger investments. There will be no servicing of land, provision of public spaces and other large upfront investments. Only small improvements to public space and infrastructure are foreseen (*Stadshavens 2015*, pp. 94). We think this preserves a 'do-it-yourself-atmosphere' in the area and might help to prevent actors sliding into a passive mode.

#### **4.3 Investing in a clear brand and opportunities for new economic sectors**

Investing in a clear and rooted brand for M4H, as an area of opportunity and experimentation for new economic sectors such as clean manufacturing and creative industry, is one of the most visible features of the development strategy. We observed strong and strategic branding at the level of the City, the City Ports, M4H and within M4H's sub areas with the aim of realising synergy between areas and businesses. This is done by strategically selecting users with regard to the short, mid and long-term vision for the area. Companies with a good fit in relation to the long-term vision are given contracts for longer periods. Other companies can be useful for some time in the development of the area, but not in the long term. These companies are admitted, but for a shorter period. Rotterdam City Ports' M4H area team rejects companies that do not fit. This requires open, clear and well documented decision making, as parties usually do not take no for an answer and often try to come back through other channels.

As an example, the project director of the City Ports mentioned they have conducted research into the strength of the 'City Ports' brand and its sub brands and that they now combine the M4H area with the famous RDM Campus as Rotterdam's Innovation District. The RDM campus is an area just across the Meuse River opposite M4H. It was formerly also made up of ports but is now the seat of Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences. It is a place where technical innovation has emerged and is actually being realised. Subsequently, the Cambridge Innovation Centre (CIC) will soon open in Rotterdam's Central District and start-ups in Smart Manufacturing will be directed to this Innovation District, as the city hopes to evoke the same beneficial effect the CIC had on Boston's port area.



*Figures 5 to 7: Clear manifestation of the 'brand M4H'*

All around M4H, in the public space and in its (online) publications, including the website 'inm4h.nl', we observe a very distinctive graphic design and the consistent use of the abbreviation 'M4H'. The website features regular updates of milestones and events. The website is supported by an active Facebook profile with the name 'inM4H' and one with the name 'Stadshavens Rotterdam'. These profiles regularly post news items and events and they are interlinked with important actors and initiatives in M4H, like Studio Roosegaarde, Atelier van Lieshout, SuGu Club (see section 4.4) and Made in 4Havens. Within the M4H area itself, innovative and interesting projects are clearly flagged with prominent information banners. In this way, they add to the image of the area as one of opportunity and experiment. Examples of this are 'Lab on the street' where sustainable road paving is tested and the restoration of the centre piece of the famous historical bridge from the city centre called the 'Hef' (see figure 8 and 9).

Rotterdam City Ports also supports 'The Fair Design Square', an initiative of the 'Made in 4Havens' cooperative that tries to help designers in M4H to upscale their production by providing production space, equipment and manual workers. For this a link is made to unemployed people in the surrounding neighbourhoods. The Fair Design Square and the cooperative are small (in terms of revenue), but active and connected within the area and its surrounding neighbourhoods.



Figures 8 and 9: Lab on the street and renovation of the 'Hef' in M4H

#### **4.4 Hosting the Keiletafel, a platform for entrepreneurs in M4H**

In December 2011, the 'Keile table' (*Keiletafel*) was set up. The name refers to the Keile Harbour and street in M4H. The table is a platform in the M4H area where (social) entrepreneurs meet and new ideas and initiatives are shared every three months. Every meeting is held at the location of a different entrepreneur or initiative in the M4H area. Rotterdam City Ports has a large part in organising these meetups. Officials from the municipality and Rotterdam City Ports are active on the platform and the private LinkedIn group consists of 38 members. The M4H team provides the entrepreneurs with the latest information on the development, gives them the opportunity to pitch their ideas or pose a question, and, for instance, it organises a speed-dating sessions for them to enable them to get to know one another. The idea behind this is that it should spark new opportunities for business and the area. A video report was made of the last three meetups and this was posted to YouTube (search for: Keiletafel Rotterdam) alongside other informative videos of the area.

Another example in the M4H area of a place where entrepreneurs meet up and exchange ideas is SuGuClub. SuGu refers to Startups and Grownups and helps to connect early stage growth companies (startups) with large and multinational companies (grown-ups) with a

passion for making. Its mission is to accelerate the development of the makers industry in Rotterdam, the Netherlands and Europe. They want to develop a cluster of innovative companies in the SuGu Warehouse in M4H. Their focus themes are: advanced manufacturing, bio-based plastics and circular design. SuGu is an initiative of Transmare, a developer and producer of (bio-based) plastics and 010Works, consultants who help creative industries and industrial makers with sustainable business formats.

#### **4.5 Using iconic end-users as the area's ambassadors**

In all its activities and publications the Rotterdam City Ports often makes a strong and direct link to entrepreneurs in the M4H area. Companies which Rotterdam City Ports perceives to be good examples of the branding of M4H or its innovative character are called 'area ambassadors'. Two of these, Studio Roosegaarde and Atelier van Lieshout, are regarded as world famous brands and consequently as iconic end-users. Studio Rosengarde creates interactive designs exploring the dynamic relation between people, technology and space. Atelier van Lieshout is a multidisciplinary firm that operates internationally in contemporary art, design and architecture. By collaborating with these iconic end-users the Rotterdam City Ports wishes to direct more (media) attention to M4H, to create a stronger image for the area and to benefit from the extended (worldwide) network of these users.

Lately Studio Roosgegaarde and its founder, Daan Roosegaarde, have gained a worldwide audience through their imaginative and innovative projects that draw frequent media attention. The Rotterdam City Ports and the M4H area team have put a lot of effort into accommodating Studio Roosegaarde in M4H. A vacant monumental but derelict property owned by the municipality called 'The glass building' (*Het Glazen Pand*) was renovated (in consultation with Studio Roosegaarde) and has been let to Studio Roosegaarde for ten years. Studio Roosegaarde can earn a discount on the rent if it adds to the development of M4H, as set out in a 'roadmap' and collaboration agreement. Studio Roosegaarde contributes a vast international network and adds to the attractiveness of the area to other businesses. In addition, Studio Roosegaarde will build some of its innovative projects in the area. The first project is the Smog Free Tower, the largest air-purifier in the world, which it developed in M4H, partly based on crowdfunding. The crowdfunding campaign started on the 23 July and aimed at raising 50,000 euros. On the 16 September the project closed and was backed by 1,577 funders and had raised an amount of 113,154 euros. In this time span the project's website was updated with 15 FAQ's, including one Q&A explaining the link to business partners like the Port of Rotterdam. This example shows how Studio Roosegaarde's projects are able to attract attention, which in this case partly included Rotterdam and M4H.

#### **5. Expected impact of an iconic end-user**

Based on our preliminary research and as described in part 4, we expect and partly already observe the following impact of the presence of the iconic end-user, Studio Roosegaarde, in the M4H area:

- publicity, as also agreed upon in the collaboration agreement;
- image effects;
- bringing along new large actors as potential partners (e.g. ENECO and Heijmans);
- providing local small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's) with work;
- enhancing the area with installations and designs;
- inspiring other end-users to act as area's ambassadors; and
- a boost for the local network and innovations coming out of it.

The publicity for Rotterdam and M4H related to Studio Roosegaarde is already increasing. For instance, the news about the smog-free tower has been picked up by a broad spectrum

of Dutch (and international) media and references have been made to Rotterdam. After the smog-free tower we expect more installations by Studio Roosegaarde will be built in M4H. Roosegaarde also won an assignment from the municipality for a redevelopment project in the area. In its media appearances, Daan Roosegaarde makes general references to Rotterdam. We expect that the abovementioned actions will continue to take place and in time will have a positive impact on the image of the M4H area.

Rotterdam City Ports mainly regards Studio Roosegaarde as a valuable and close connection to large companies, because of its extended network and ongoing projects with some of these companies. Recently the first of these companies signaled its interest in M4H.

In our interview with Studio Roosegaarde, the claim was made that 70% of their suppliers were local at their previous location and that they also wanted to build up such a position at M4H. Some contacts with local actors had already been made at the time of our interview and the intention to visit a '*Keiletafel* meeting' was mentioned. If this happens, the local network will attract more interest from local actors and might become denser, resulting in more and new collaborative relationships. Collaboration between various sectors is generally regarded as the place where innovation occurs. Other iconic end-user, Atelier van Lieshout, seems to have adopted a more active role in the area since Studio Roosegaarde moved into the area, for instance with articles highlighting its activities (in M4H).

## **6. Conclusion and discussion**

### **6.1 Conclusion**

With its organic development strategy for M4H Rotterdam City Ports seems to have created a sound basis for the development of the area, which connects the city to the ports, is socially inclusive and could become a lively and interesting mixed-use area. Within this development it is no longer the government and the traditional real-estate development chain that is determining the future through large development schemes, but the (local) network with its market and social initiatives, actively facilitated by Rotterdam City Ports. In doing so, the choice to assign experimental status to M4H within the city ports could make it a valuable lab for organic area development for the whole of Rotterdam.

Based on our preliminary findings, we conclude that by 'introducing' Studio Roosegaarde Rotterdam City Ports has strengthened the basis for stronger branding and quicker development of the area and the enrichment of the local network and its circle of influence (worldwide). This complements the existing efforts to strengthen the local networks by Rotterdam City Ports and conveys its vision for the development of M4H. In this respect we think that introducing Studio Roosegaarde may be regarded as the realisation of an iconic project which reflects the total vision for the city ports and M4H on a small scale.

### **6.2 Discussion**

This paper is the first result of our research activities in M4H. We have put forward our preliminary results based on desk research, interviews and frequent visits to the area. Furthermore, we have shared our thoughts on an analytical framework that should provide us with a deeper understanding of the evolution of and differences in urban-area development strategies. The current literature gives considerable attention to the changes that have occurred in urban development in recent years and, in particular, the shift towards more bottom-up, organic or cooperative change processes and the question whether this change should and can be continued now that the economy seems to have picked up. However, it has provided us with little basis for a firm analysis of these changes. We hope that we have found a theoretical basis for this in the organisational paradigms discussed above. We have translated these into three paradigmatic types of development strategy, as

was explained in part 3. Furthermore, we applied this—still very rough—framework into the strategy for Rotterdam City Ports and M4H.

In doing so, we have interpreted the current strategy in relation to M4H as a ‘network-based’ strategy and we have therefore opted to focus our limited research effort on the role of the iconic end-user as part of this strategy. From this perspective, the interorganisational structure is viewed as a network. The introduction of a new actor brings with it an extensive and additional set of connections and should have a distinct impact on the present network. Studio Roosegaarde is such an actor. Its recent relocation to M4H has provided us with an excellent opportunity to explore its impact. In our research we have not only attempted to assess this impact, but also to test the applicability of our paradigmatic framework. For this we hope to be able to expand our research activities in M4H and assess more sub-strategies of the ‘network-based’ development approach. Our aim will be to develop this approach further and to improve our own working environment, as our research centre is located at RDM Campus . . . just opposite M4H . . .

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## Photography

All photo's made by Michaël Meijer