BRUG, DE (1928)

*De Brug* (*The Bridge*) is a black-and-white short silent film by Joris Ivens about the Koningshavenbrug in Rotterdam, a railroad lift bridge built between 1925 and 1927 also known as *De Hef* (*The Lift*). As icon of the Dutch avant-garde, it constituted Ivens’ international recognition as a filmmaker. A lyrical and abstract study, the film presents the bridge as a masterpiece of modern engineering and shows the motion of, on and around the steel construction, including all kinds of modern traffic. A train stops when the bridge lifts up, allowing ships to pass underneath on the river Maas. Ivens explores the bridge from multiple perspectives using extreme high and low angles, thus emphasizing a modern perception of fragmentation and re-composition. In a self-reflexive way, he demonstrates this perception being the rationale of cinema by integrating images of his 35mm Kinamo camera and himself at the beginning of the film. Shot against the background of Rotterdam’s skyline in a dynamic composition, the bridge becomes a product of cinema, itself both product and producer of modernity. Ivens’ film celebrates the aesthetic of the machine in its encounter of two pieces of modern technology: *The Lift* and the film camera.

Further reading:

- Gunning, T. (2002) ‘Joris Ivens. Filmmaker of the Twentieth Century, of the Netherlands and the World’, in André Stufkens (ed), *Cinema without Borders. The Catalog of the Joris Ivens North American Tour 2002*, Nijmegen: European Foundation Joris Ivens, 18-27.

- Ivens, J. (1969) *The Camera and I*, Berlin: Seven Seas Publishers.

- Paalman, F. (2011) *Cinematic Rotterdam. The Times and Tides of a Modern City*, Rotterdam: 010 Publishers.

- Stufkens, A. (1999) ‘The Song of Movement: Joris Ivens’s First Films and the Cycle of the Avant-Garde’, in Kees Bakker (ed), *Joris Ivens and the Documentary Context*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 46-71.

- Waugh, T. (1981) *Joris Ivens and the Evolution of the Radical Documentary 1926-1946,* PhD Dissertation, Columbia University.

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Copyright: Marceline Loridan-Ivens (Ivens’ widow)

Restoration and preservation: EYE Film Institute Netherlands (amongst others)

Notes on restoration and preservation: Film prints of *The Bridge* are spread across film archives around the world, including various versions of the film. However EYE Film Institute Netherlands (Netherlands Filmmuseum at the time) restored *The Bridge* in 1994/1995 using original nitrate elements from the Filmmuseum collection, MoMa, the Danish Film Institute and the Cinémathèque Française. The Joris Ivens DVD box set (European Foundation Joris Ivens, JUST Entertainment/ARTE/Facets, 2008) contains another, slightly different version that was reconstructed particularly for the DVD box. There are no film prints or higher quality digital copies of this version (only DVD and Digi-Beta).

Weblinks for further information:

European Foundation Joris Ivens: <http://www.ivens.nl>

EYE Film Institute Netherlands: <http://www.eyefilm.nl>