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## Antonia's Line

### Marleen Gorris

NETHERLANDS/BELGIUM/UNITED KINGDOM, 1995

93 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Stichting Bergen/Prime Time/Bard Entertainments/NPS Televisie**

Producer: **Hans De Weers, Antonino Lombardo, Judy Coughlan**

Screenplay: **Marleen Gorris**

Cinematographer: **Willy Stassen**

Editor: **Marina Bodbijn**

Production Designer: **Harry**

**Ammerlaan**

Sound: **Dirk Bombey**

Music: **Ilona Seckaz**

Principal Cast: **Willeke Van**

**Ammelrooy, Jan Decleir, Els Dottermans, Dora Van Der Groen, Marina De Graaf, Mil Seghers, Jan Steen, Veerle Van Overloop, Elsie De Brauw, Thyrza Ravesteijn**

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In a quiet farmhouse somewhere in the Dutch countryside, 90-year-old Antonia begins the last day of her life. Lying peacefully in bed she recalls the day, shortly after the end of the Second World War, when she returned to the village where she was born. We then follow Antonia's tumultuous life in the village over the next 50 years. With the story of Antonia's life come those of her daughter Danielle, granddaughter Theresa, and great-granddaughter Sarah – Antonia's line – as well as the helpers, soul-mates, acquaintances, lovers and neighbouring villagers whom Antonia has gathered into her family over the years.

As a portrait of rural life through the decades of the late 20th century, *Antonia's Line* is masterfully nuanced, both socially and cinematically. The decades pass in meticulous but unaffected detail: costumes, hairstyles, behaviour, political attitudes, slang and technology appear and disappear with fluid accuracy. Dark secrets, brutal violence, slapstick comedy and deep sentiments traverse the narrative with dramatic shifts as inexorable and surprising as the changing seasons. As in many Dutch films, the performances are among its great strengths; as in other Marleen Gorris films, the attention to the lives of ordinary women in relation to the social and political world renders them extraordinary and telling.

But unlike previous Gorris films, the women of *Antonia's Line* are positioned solidly and happily on top of the world. This is a film

of profound emotional and philosophical depth: it attends to the nature of human culture and the culture of human nature with wisdom, complexity, deep humanity and stirring beauty.

■ **Kay Armatage**

**Marleen Gorris** was born in 1950. She completed her groundbreaking first feature, *A Question of Silence*, in 1982, winning a slew of international awards. Her subsequent features have been just as successful at film festivals throughout Europe and North America. Filmography: *A Question of Silence* (82), *Broken Mirrors* (84), *The Last Island* (90), *Antonia's Line* (95).

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