



Willeke van Ammelrooy (left) and Jan Decleir
in Marleen Gorris' *Antonia's Line*

OFF OF THE SCREEN BACK TO THE CLOSET?

Despite the inclusion of lesbians and gay men in mainstream movies, this year's queer-themed cinema pales in comparison to the visibility explosion of 1995

by Rupert Kinnard

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Toward the end of each of the past three years, I've enjoyed summing up the year in cinema within the pages of *Just Out*. As a self-proclaimed film buff I relish examining the sexual politics, racial depictions and queer content of each year's bounty of motion pictures. This was a difficult year for me on many levels, and I ended up not attending as many movies as I have in the past, but going over the ones I did attend, I realize I saw enough to conclude (unlike many critics at the end of the year) that 1996 wasn't a bad year for good movies.

In past years I have grouped movies into three categories: the good (my favorites), the bad (I could hardly believe I sat through them) and the ugly (good, but disturbing in ways that made it difficult to wholly recommend them). The point has been to suggest what may or may not serve as good movies to rent when they appear on the shelves of your favorite video rental palace. However, this year you're on your own as far as the bad or the ugly. I don't feel confident that I've seen enough to go beyond simply exploring my favorite movies of the year and examining a few trends and milestones in film for 1996.

I feel that critics who dismiss 1996 as a bad year for film are ignoring a number of inventive and sensitive smaller pictures that weren't huge, overly promoted "blockbusters." Even though a number of those squeaky-clean, huge Hollywood hits were genuinely entertaining—*Independence Day*, *Mission: Impossible*, *First Wives Club*, *That Thing You Do!* and *Twister*—none of them would make my list of favorites.

For my money, 1996's best moments in film were found in the following titles: *Antonia's Line*, *Beautiful Thing*, *Bound*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Fargo*, *Get on the Bus*, *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored*, *The Birdcage*, *The Celluloid Closet* and *Welcome to the Dollhouse*.

And the honorable mentions: *Courage Under Fire*, *It's My Party*, *Lone Star*, *Primal Fear*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Stonewall*, *The Mirror Has Two Faces* and *Trainspotting*.

One of the most frustrating facts to come to grips with is how few people were attracted to

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