



# HIGHWAY NL

a film by Ben van Lieshout  
produced by SNG film

## *logline*

Highway NL is a poetic and biting road movie about the intriguing and fascinating world on and off the highway. A cinematographic ode to the ever-growing highway infrastructure in the Netherlands. Or is it an indictment of its all-embracing proliferation?

## *informatie:*

M.: [info@sngfilm.nl](mailto:info@sngfilm.nl)  
T.: 020 686 7837

# HIGHWAY NL

*producer:*

SNG Film

Digna Sinke

Van Hallstraat 52 - 1051 HH Amsterdam - The Netherlands

T: +31 20 686 78 37

M: [info@sngfilm.nl](mailto:info@sngfilm.nl)

W: [www.sngfilm.nl](http://www.sngfilm.nl)



# HIGHWAY NL

## *synopsis*

The highway in the Netherlands has a total length of almost 2500 kilometres. There is almost no other country with such an enormous highway density.

In this documentary the monumentality, but also the apparent everydayness of our highway is shown. The highway is actually a poorly known arena for a wide range of activities. What does this monumental and almost perfect network say about us?



# HIGHWAY NL

## ***director's statement***

*"Every Dutch person who wants to talk about the present, past and future of his country should be obliged to make a field trip at least once a year within its borders... independently, with a route of his choice, if necessary on government costs, with only the instruction to look."*

*H.J.A. Hofland*

I would like to view the words of Hofland as my mission: looking at and reflecting on a fascinating universe that increasingly determines the appearance of the Netherlands. HIGHWAY NL is a kind of road movie where I use a camper as an independently operating vehicle. The camper becomes a characteristic, easily identifiable entity that guides the viewer through the film.

As a filmmaker I look more at what is or presents itself and not at what I might want to see. During my study sociology at the University of Utrecht, for a long time I studied and later worked as a research assistant in the 'Building and Habitation' department. This is also reflected in my great interest in the built environment. My filmic approach, more focused on phenomena than purely on personal human-interest stories, also comes from this.

The question arises as to whether we can ever see the fabricated side of the highway landscape in a way other than compassionate or mildly ironic. Can we, like Peter Delpout wondered in his essay book 'Plea to Linger' view the artificial Netherlands without painterly references, 'without the gaze of our collective memory of a picturesque and rustic Netherlands', without the view of how our landscape has been depicted for centuries; will we ever succeed in seeing the beauty of the planned, the landscaped, the orderedness of our infrastructure. It is a question that is becoming more and more compelling as the highway changes from a utility project to a project in which the highway landscape manifests itself as a destination in its own right.

SNG Film presents

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with support from  
Netherlands Film Fund  
Netherlands Film Fund Production Incentive  
Creative Industries Fund NL: Architecture Programme  
Fonds 21

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a film by  
Ben van Lieshout

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HIGHWAY NL

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screenplay & direction  
Ben van Lieshout

camera  
Stef Tijdink  
Ben van Lieshout

sound  
Erik Langhout

production manager  
Annelotte Verhaagen

general assistance  
Dick Holman  
Tatyana Yassievich  
Arda Nederveen

grip  
Dirk Nijland  
Sebastiaan de Rooij

editing  
Jan Ketelaars

sound editing  
Andel Rongen

sound design / mix  
Marc Lizier  
Paul Gies

soundscapes & music  
Harry de Wit



image post-production  
Loods Lux & Lumen

titles  
Amos Mulder

grading  
Reinier van Brummelen

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Melle Smets

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Caravanspecialist - Fam. De Bruijn Frans, Leida en Ziva, Carel Eilers, City Skydive -  
Bas Driessen, DSV Road - Willem Helmes, Hans van Oort, HCR 't Heuveltje, Hugo  
Jansen en Loran van Weele, Joost Truckshop Meer - Claudia & Jacqueline, Kniphoeck -  
Rob Hoeck, Pathé Leidsche Rijn - Coen Hoozemans, Patrick van Es, Ray Lumens en  
Gerrie, Restaurant A15 Opheusden - Huiberta Hendriks, Restaurant De Goudreinet –  
fam. Vonk, Rijkswaterstaat – medewerkers Verkeerscentrale Midden-Nederland,  
Gertske de Bruijn, Marah Michel, Mirjam Roling, Imce Hofman, Arno Theebe, Rene  
Libeton, Lammert Postma, Tankstation Schipper, Truckparking Rotterdam - Ton Barten,  
Truckwash Hazeldonk - Henk en John van Merriënboer, Wasserij G. van der Kleij -  
Daan van der Kleij

Paul van den Wildenberg  
Peter Delpout  
Herman de Wit  
Saskia Diesing

Serge van Lieshout

Suzanne van Voorst

insurance  
AON

accounting  
Maria Koevoets

office production  
Sjoerd Rijkeboer

producer  
Digna Sinke

distributor  
Rieks Hadders / Mokum Filmdistributie

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(logos)

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# BEN VAN LIESHOUT

## *biography*

Ben van Lieshout (1951, The Netherlands) is an independent, award-winning director, producer and screenwriter. He directed short films, documentaries and feature films. He is also a lecturer at the Utrecht School of the Arts.

## *filmography (selection)*

- 1983 HET LICHT VAN CADIZ (The light of Cadiz) 87 min. 16mm drama  
(Filmmuseum)
- 1991 PASSAGIERS (Passengers) 86 min. 16mm b&w drama  
(Filmmuseum)
- 1997 DE VERSTEKELING (The Stowaway) (Encore loin de la mer)  
(Blinder Passagier) 90 min. 35mm drama VPRO (Filmmuseum)
- 1999 DE ZONE (The Zone) 18min. 35mm (Filmbank)
- 2001 WINKELHART / NIGHT AT THE MALL 18 min. 35mm (Filmbank)
- 2002 REIS NAAR HET PARADIJS (Trip to Paradise) 50 min. video (HUMAN)
- 2003 LAPJE GROND (Allotment) (Lopin de terre) 24 min. 35mm (Filmbank)
- 2003 WEEK 19 - observations from Rotterdam 132 min. video  
(in collaboration with several directors) TV Rijnmond
- 2004 PETERSBURG PLACES AND PAINTINGS 72 min. HDcam  
(Filmmuseum / EYE)
- 2006 LOCATIE TUSSENLAND 40 min. video
- 2007 DE MUZE / THE MUSE drama 73 min. 35mm / HD / 1.4K / digibeta  
(Filmmuseum)
- 2009 A KRONSTADT TALE drama 90 min
- 2012 INVENTARIS VAN HET MOEDERLAND (75 min DCP/HDcam)  
(Mokum Filmdistributie)
- 2015 SKETCHES OF SIBERIA (74 min DCP) (Mokum Filmdistributie)

The films by Ben van Lieshout have in total been selected 185 times for national and international festivals, amongst others NFF Utrecht, IFF Rotterdam, IDFA, Karlovy Vary, Montreal, Chicago, Cork, Marseille, Bergamo, Mannheim-Heidelberg, Oberhausen, Kassel, Berlin, Paris, Barcelona, Kolkata, Moscow, Brussels, Gent, London, Vancouver, Cairo, Cleveland, Québec, Mumbai, Sao Paulo, Hongkong, Tampere, Istanbul, Leeds





selection of recent films:

- 2018 **TANZANIA TRANSIT**, a documentary by Jeroen van Velzen, in co-production with EO / IKONdocs, 59 and 75 min.  
Tribeca Film Festival, New York 2018: \*Best Cinematography in a Documentary Feature
- 2016 **ONE LIFE IS NOT ENOUGH (IK WIL GELUKKIG ZIJN)**, a documentary by Annette Apon, 70 min., with Johanna ter Steege
- 2016 **EN AMONT DU FLEUVE**, a feature film by Marion Hänsel, in co-production with Man's Films Productions, with Olivier Gourmet, Sergi Lopez, John Lynch
- 2014 **GEORGICA**, a documentary by Katelijne Schrama, in co-production with BOS television, 70 min.  
Filmfestival „Der neue Heimatfilm“, Freistadt 2015: \*best documentary
- 2014 **AFTER THE TONE**, an experimental feature film by Digna Sinke, 85 min.
- 2012 **DREAM & DEED**, a documentary by Annette Apon, 54 and 74 min.
- 2012 **WAVUMBA, they who smell of fish**, a documentary by Jeroen van Velzen, in co-production with Buddhist Broadcasting Foundation, 59 and 80 min.  
Tribeca Film Festival, New York 2012: \*Best New Documentary Director  
Festival International du Film Insulaire, île de Groix 2013: \*Coup de coeur  
International Documentary Film Festival Flahertiana, Perm 2013: \*Silver Nanook Award for "Original Artistic Solution"  
Sichuan TV Festival 2014: \*Golden Panda Awards for Documentary: Certificate for Best Photography
- 2011 **AN ANGEL IN DOEL**, a documentary by Tom Fassaert, in coproduction with CinéTé, 76 min.  
FORUM Berlinale 2011: \*Special mention  
competition Netherlands Film Festival 2011: \*nomination best documentary and best editing  
doclisboa 2011: \*International Competition Universities award  
Ânû-rû âboro documentary film festival, New Caledonia 2012: \*Grand Prix
- 2010 **WISTFUL WILDERNESS**, a documentary by Digna Sinke, 88 min. HDcam and digibeta  
Festival International du Film d'Environnement, Paris 2010 : \*prize best documentary  
Filmfestival „Der neue Heimatfilm“, Freistadt 2011: \*prize best documentary  
Filmfest Eberswalde 2012: \*nomination best documentary
- 2008 **BLACK EYES**, a documentary by Jan Bosdriesz, 100 min, in coproduction with NPS
- 2005 **L'AMI HOLLANDAIS, Jef Last & André Gide**, a documentary by Pieter Jan Smit, digibeta & 35 mm french version, 72 min., tv-version 55 min.  
competition Netherlands Film Festival 2006: \*nomination best editor
- 2005 **CROSSING MY LIPS**, by Janica Draisma. Short documentary. HD / digibeta, 14 min.  
Netherlands Film Festival 2005: \*nomination Golden Calf
- 2005 **ON THE WESTERSCHELDE** by Anne Van de putte. Short film in the framework of Poems from the Sea, 35 mm & digibeta, 10 min.

- 2005 **SPRING SONG** by Erik de Bruyn. Short film in the framework of Poems from the Sea, 35 mm & digibeta, 10 min.  
Netherlands Film Festival 2005: \*nomination NPS short 2005
- 2005 **BRESKENS** by Ate de Jong. Short film in the framework of Poems from the Sea, digibeta, 8 min.
- 2005 **DOMBURG** by Jan Wouter van Reijen. Short film in the framework of Poems from the Sea, digibeta, 10 min.
- 2005 **PASSERS-BY** by Jos de Putter. Short film in the framework of Poems from the Sea, 35mm & digibeta, 7 min.
- 2005 **VEERE** by David Lammers. Short film in the framework of Poems from the Sea, 35mm & digibeta, 10 min.  
International Film Festival Rotterdam 2005: \*Tiger Cub Award
- 2004 **DREAMHOUSE** by Jan Wouter van Reijen. Experimental documentary, digibeta, 79 min.
- 2004 **REIMERSWAAL** by Clara van Gool. Short film in the framework of Poems from the Sea, 35mm & digibeta, 8 min.  
Dance On Camera Festival New York 2005: \*nominated for the Juryprize
- 2003 **SUMMERSEA** by Kees Hin. Short film in the framework of Poems from the Sea, digibeta, 18 min.
- 2003 **MATCH** by Jef Nassenstein. Animationfilm, 35mm, 4 min  
Competition 60.Mostra internazionale d'arte cinematografica Venezia 2003
- 2002 **IN JAPANESE RAPIDS** by Louis van Gasteren. Documentary in co-production with Euro Television Productions and NPS television, 35mm, 86 min.
- 2002 **POLONAISE** by Nicole van Kilsdonk. Telefilm, digibeta, 90 min.  
In co-production with KRO television  
Montreal International Festival New Cinema New Media 2002: \*Nomination Press Award Netherlands Film Festival 2002
- 2001 **TIENGEMETEN** by Digna Sinke. Documentary in co-production with NPS, 77 min, digibeta
- 2000 **THE SEA THAT THINKS** by Gert de Graaff. Experimental documentary, 35mm, 100 min. In co-production with Theorema Films  
International Documentary Festival Amsterdam 2000: \*Joris Ivens Award 2000  
Berlinale Internationale Filmfestspiele 2001  
Teplice Art Fiction 2001: \*Golden Key Award for Best Camera. \*Special F.I.C.C. Jury Award  
Dahlonaga Film Festival 2001: \*Experimental Feature DIFF Award  
Rhode Island Film Festival 2001: \*Grand Prix Best Experimental Feature  
Winecountry International Film Festival 2001: \*Best Feature Film Award  
European Film Awards, Berlin 2001: \*Nomination European Discovery 2001 Fassbinder Award