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# Naked Spaces: Living is Round

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134 minutes • color • 16mm • 1985 • Sale: \$1,900 Rental: \$200



Directed, Photographed and Written by Trinh T. Minh-ha. Produced by Jean Paul Bourdier. With the voices of Barbara Christian, Linda Peckham and Trinh T. Minh-ha.

In **NAKED SPACES** Trinh T. Minh-ha examines the culture of remote villages, and especially that of women, in six West African countries: Senegal, Mauritania, Togo, Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin. The film has been widely acclaimed but it has been the center of controversy for it challenges firmly established traditions of the anthropological film. Indeed, Trinh Minh-ha's approach to the film is much closer to that of the American avant-garde cinema than it is to conventional ethnographic filmmaking.

J. Hoberman in the *Village Voice* wrote: "NAKED SPACES ventures into postmodern ethnography. The film effortlessly attests to the rich variety of West Africa's indigenous architecture. Trinh Minh-ha documents adobe cities and stilt-set river towns, villages nested in the rocks and settlements splayed out across the bush, turreted straw houses and domelike huts. Each dwelling has its own blend of environmental logic and

irrational splendor - simultaneously a tool, a sanctuary and a work of art.

"Fittingly, considering her subject matter, Minh-ha's images are as unpretentious as home movies - exhibiting the same gorgeous overexposures, casual jump cuts, and, at times jarring incompleteness. There are times in **NAKED SPACES** when representation decomposes into isolated details and pure sensation. More than a mosaic of impressions, however, the film is nonlinear, decentered and deliberately unsettling. **NAKED SPACES** sets out to challenge and criticize - not to mention derange - the conventions of ethnographic film.

Trinh T. Minh-ha has herself written about the use of narration in the film: "In **NAKED SPACES** three modes of narration-exposition are explored through three women's voices. Each voice speaks for a different cultural heritage, a

different linguistic logic, and a different way of releasing information. The relationship between words and images is, as intended, an uncomfortable one. There is a bass voice that remains close to the villager's sayings and African writer's works; a high voice that informs according to Western Logic, quotes Western writers and is often self-reflexive; a middle voice that speaks in the first person and relates personal feelings or anecdotes during field work. The three form a multiple oneness that situates the filmmakers' subjectivity."

**NAKED SPACES** has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Museum of Modern Art (Cineprobe), the Flaherty Film Seminar, the Toronto Festival of Festivals, the San Francisco International Film Festival, Athens International Film Festival ("Best Documentary"), Edinburgh International Film Festival and many other festivals and showcases.