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Naked Spaces

Trinh T. Minh-ha

West Africa/USA 1985, 134 minutes

Producer: Jean-Paul Bourdier

Screenplay: Trinh T. Minh-ha

Cinematography: Trinh T. Minh-ha

Editor: Trinh T. Minh-ha

Sound: Trinh T. Minh-ha

Principal Cast: Barbara Christian, Linda Peckham, Trinh T. Minh-ha

Print Source: Trinh T. Minh-ha/Bourdier, 1614 Sixth St., Berkeley, California 94710.

Toronto '85

This long, poetic documentary is the second film from material gathered almost single-handedly in Senegal by expatriate Vietnamese Trinh Minh-ha. After three years of teaching music at the Conservatory in Dakar, she was moved to make films against the spirit of Western scientific observation, information, analysis. Rather than the omniscient, de-personalized voice of most ethnographic films, she has offered "anti-anthropological" reflection, poetic meditation. The single narrative voice of culture and authority is here replaced by the voices of three women, each representing another way of "documenting". One is closer to the personal, reciting haiku-like phrases; another is more direct, as it were the voice of the people responding to the material conditions of life; the third presents information, but in snatches, fragments inserted into the variously orchestrated mosaic of music, sounds, voices, and silence.

"Living Is Round", the subtitle of *Naked Spaces*, indicates its poetic sense of the interrelationship between people and their living spaces. Breathtaking in their tactile beauty, the images seem to be edited by an almost intuitively associational process, unified by geographical source and by the rhythms of their repetition. The force of the images is amplified alternatively by the voices and the words they speak, or by the silences which punctuate the track like another voice inviting us simply to look, and look again. A film about living with sound, light, colour, and space.

Kay Armatage

FILMOGRAPHY: *Reassemblage* (82), *Naked Spaces* (85).