

## Document Citation

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**Naked Spaces**  
**(WEST AFRICAN-U.S.-**  
**DOCU-COLOR)**

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*Variety*,  
7/11/85

Toronto, Sept. 7.

Produced by Jean-Paul Bourdier. Directed and written by Trinh T. Minh-ha. Camera (color), editor, Minh-ha; assistance, Bourdier. Reviewed at the Toronto Festival of Festivals (Varsity), Sept. 6, 1985. Running time: **134 MINS.**

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Avant-garde director Trinh T. Minh-ha is known for the clarity and elegance of her camerawork, which serves her tour of West Africa quite well. At a prohibitive length, she enters into the intimate domestic lives within the tribes of six African countries, documenting their architecture, rituals and peaceable village life. A narrative full of poetic pronouncements mourns the loss of traditions and argues that the word primitive is misapplied to tribal life.

The importance of the music to village life is translated to the film, where the hypnotic steady beat unifies the transitions from country to country, but also runs the risk of lulling the viewer into a complacent viewing of elegantly composed shots, which is not what the effort is all about. Minh-ha's desire to mobilize opinion so as to preserve the civilization she is documenting runs into her own romanticism with the primitive. Oblique and almost pretentious commentary such as, "Space has always reduced me to silence," must be granted a literary suspension of disbelief.

"Naked Spaces" will make the festival circuit, and beyond that, with the appropriate length imposed on pic, good television product for upscale art/travelog programming.—*Kaja*.

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