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N A K E D S P A C E S

Living Is Round

Produced by Jean-Paul Bourdier

Directed, photographed, written by Trinh T. Minh-ha

Edited by Trinh T. Minh-ha / Assistant Jean-Paul Bourdier

With the voices of Barbara Christian, Linda Peckham and Trinh T. Minh-ha
134 minute 16mm color film, 1985 (West Africa - USA)

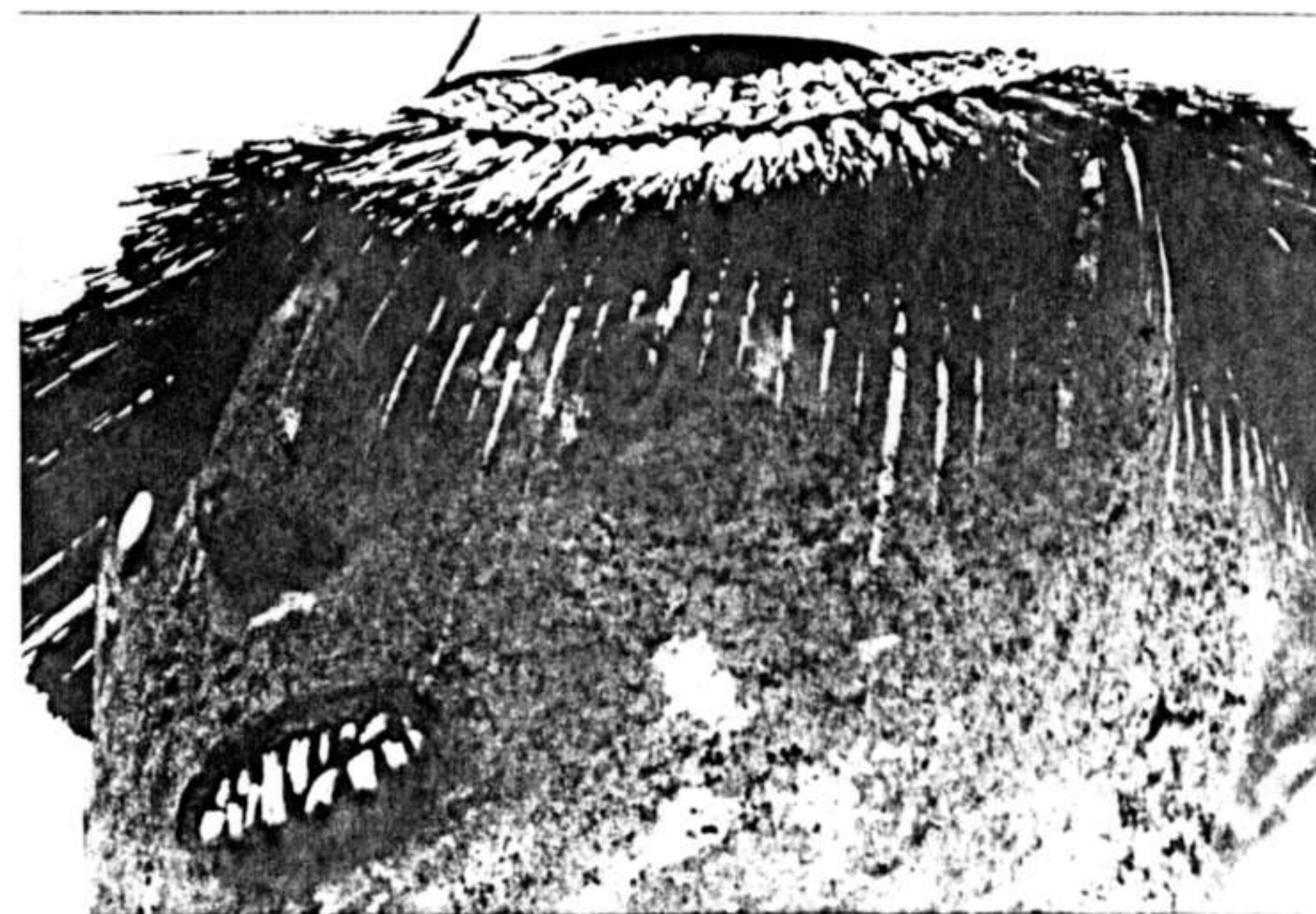
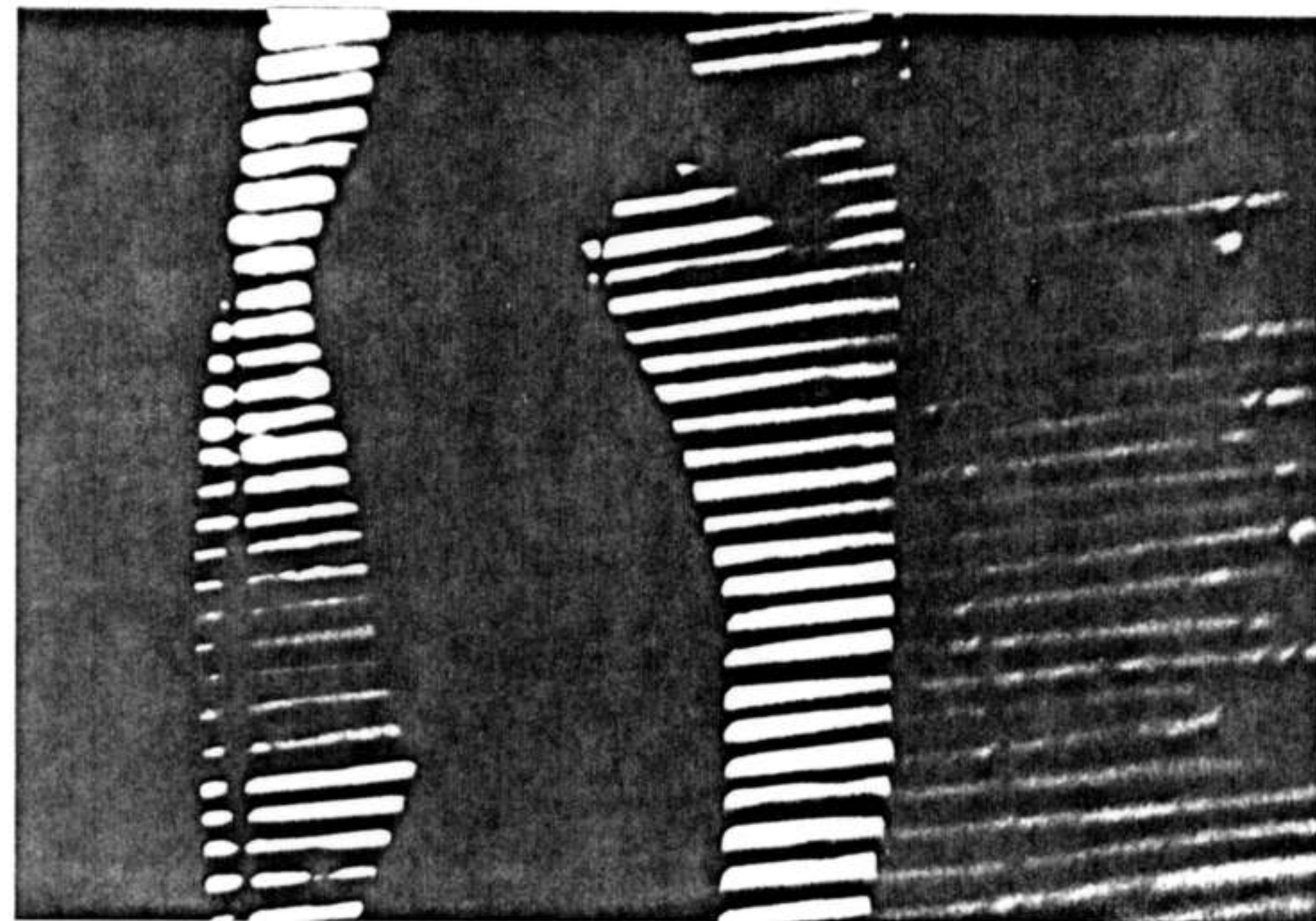
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SYNOPSIS

"Naked Spaces" was shot in the rural environment of six countries of West Africa (Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo, Benin and Senegal). Throughout the course of the film, viewers are led to some of the most inaccessible parts of the continent; they are taken into the intimate realm of people's homes, into the ritual dynamics of daily activities as well as those ceremonies pertaining to funerals, farming and initiation (included among those activities is a spectacular dance of a social puberty ceremony that occurs every 20 years and gathers participants from over a dozen Joola villages in Senegal).

The film is a reflection on the interaction of people and their living spaces. By showing the startling richness and integrity of a disappearing indigenous architecture belonging to cultures in rapid transition (thereby countering the widespread conception of the primitive African hut), the film offers a poetics of space that brings forth the oneness of building and living. It also restores the Difference of a world that science has filed away under headings such as 'instinct', 'superstition,' 'supernatural,' and that remains inaccessible to a fact-oriented eye. Every house in this film is at the same time a tool, a sanctuary, and a work of art. It is a fertility-inducing site as well as a means to protect life; and, it is built so as to reflect the harmonious position of the dweller in the universe.

Note: the film is also an attempt at challenging the codes of documentary and ethnographic film language. Its documentary practice resists all binary oppositions such as objectivity/subjectivity, universal/personal, science/art, documentary/fiction. Three women's voice-overs are used to suggest a multiple oneness (each voice follows a distinct discursive mode but all three interact with one another). While images, music and text are closely related, they do not serve to illustrate or to explain each other. Their relationship is a sliding and critical one whose purpose is to unsettle fixed associations of meaning and to introduce a question into what seems self-evident.



Still(s) from NAKED SPACES - Living Is Round

by Trinh T. Minh-ha

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