

Document Citation

Title	Faaroedokument
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Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1970 Jan 14
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Fårödokument 1969 (Faro Document), Bergman, Ingmar, 1969

Faarøedokument (DOCUMENTARY—SWEDISH)

Stockholm, Dec. 31.

Produced and released by Cinematograph. Director and reporter, Ingmar Bergman; camera, Sven Nykvist. First showing, Swedish Broadcasting Co., Jan. 1, 1970. Running Time, 75 MINS.

For the second time Ingmar Bergman has not only directed a film but also produced it. About a year ago, he made "The Rites," which was shown on television in Scandinavia. This time he made his first documentary, which deals with the small island of Faarøe, which is located in the Baltic, just north of the island of Gotland.

The island of Faarøe has formed the setting of most of his features since "Through a Glass, Darkly." He not only moved there personally but it has become the headquarters of his film activities.

Fascinated by the potentials of the documentary and the tv screen, Bergman and his photographer, Sven Nykvist, started more than a year ago on a documentary. It is not primarily a film about the island as such but a depiction of the fates of the people who live on this small island and the problems they face as Swedish society as a whole is going through rapid changes.

Bergman, who narrates the film and handles all the interviews, has given a number of capsule portraits of people who have grown up on the island and known better times, when the island was more prosperous.

Today the island is inhabited by some 700 people. The elderly groups dominate as there are almost no jobs for younger persons. But, says Bergman, these elderly persons who have worked hard, ought to be given conditions that are more on a level with persons in urban areas.

The island is dying out. The school is going to close down. Many activities, such as fishing and sheep-herding, are no longer economical. Bergman feels that it is the duty of society as a whole to enable these people to continue to live on the island and still lift up their standard of living to a level more equal to the nation as a whole.

Bergman technique is straightforward. He interviews people at considerable length. Lets their faces remain on the screen a large part of the time and makes no attempt to cover up cuts but accepts jump-cuts.

Although Bergman's message may seem rather unrealistic, there are sequences of rare power when, e.g., Bergman cuts back and forth between the vicar and the church janitor who have been at odds as to whether the church should be remodeled.

Outside of Sweden or, perhaps, Scandinavia, Bergman's "Faarøe Document" is, of course, mostly a film for Bergman fans. The subject is too provincial for even persons interested in filmmaking as a whole.

Fred.