



Maison Tropicale
A documentary by
Manthia Diawara



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2008, Mali, 58mn

SYNOPSIS

Mireille Ngatsé had lived for several years in the Maison Tropicale in Brazzaville. It was designed by Jean Prouvé, the famous French constructor and architect. Ms. Ngatsé describes the aluminum house as comfortable, even though it had no electricity or running water. She loved the fresh air and the light coming in through the round blue windows. One day, four men came from France to Brazzaville, and took the Maisons Tropicales away in containers. Today, Mireille Ngatsé sees her house in a catalogue, and reads about it as it is being exhibited around the world as a precious art object. Manthia Diawara's documentary is a complement to Ângela Ferreira's artistic project on the Maison Tropicale by Jean Prouvé, which was shown at the Venice Biennale. The film brings to life the hidden stories and memories of those left behind in Africa when the Maisons Tropicales were removed. It is a postcolonial excavation into African identity, art and the notion of cultural patrimony.

Manthia Diawara's Bio

A native of Mali, Manthia Diawara collaborated with Ngugi wa Thiong'o in making the documentary film *Sembene Ousmane: The Making of the African Cinema*. Most recently he directed *Edouard Glissant, Maison Tropicale, Who's Afraid of Ngugi?*, *Bamako Sigi-kan*, *Conakry Kas*, *Diaspora Conversations* and *In Search of Africa*. Director of NYU's Institute of Afro-American Affairs and Director of the Africana Studies Program, he is the author of *We Won't Budge: An African Exile in the World* (2003), *Black-American Cinema: Aesthetics and Spectatorship* (1993), *African Cinema: Politics and Culture* (1992), and *In Search of Africa* (1998). He has published widely on the topic of film and literature of the Black Diaspora.



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545 8th Ave., 10th Fl, New York, NY 10018

(212) 947-9277 ext. 17, distribution@twon.org, www.twn.org