



*Into Eternity* © Magic Hour Films

## INTO ETERNITY A FILM FOR THE FUTURE

This 2009 award-winning documentary, written, directed, and narrated by Michael Madsen, provides a profound, insightful perspective on the consequences of the nuclear waste being created every day around our planet from nuclear power plants that will *far* out-last our civilization and *all* of recorded human history. The film is about building the world's first underground storage site for a fraction of this waste at a place called Onkalo in Finland – where the site must remain untouched and unopened for 100,000 years – and offers *very* potent means to see and think about this situation in new ways. Among the questions raised, consider the following:

- *How far ahead can we burden the earth and future generations by turning on the lights?*
- *The film reflects much of the discussion on how to create markers on the surface to warn future generations of the danger below. . . . And even if future generations were to somehow understand the warning, would they heed it?*

—from Maria Gilardin in her Time of Useful Consciousness Radio broadcast (see annotated transcription, [Onkalo - Into Eternity](#)); and in the film, Michael Madsen speaking to an audience far, far into the future:

- *Onkalo must last one hundred thousand years. . . . If we succeed, Onkalo will most likely be the longest lasting remains of our civilization. If you, sometime far into the future, find this, what will it tell you about us?*
- *A hundred thousand years is beyond our understanding and imagination. Our history is so short in comparison. How is it with you? How far into the future will your way of life have consequences?*
- *My civilization depends on energy as no civilization before us. Energy is the main currency for us. Is it the same for you? Does your way of life also depend on unlimited energy?*
- *We already have enormous amounts of nuclear waste all over the world. If this waste spills out into nature it'll cause death and destruction. Large areas will become uninhabitable for a long, long time. Did that happen? Are there forbidden zones with no life in your time?*
- *Our law states that we must inform you about Onkalo. Maybe you will need to enter if we overlooked something or if repairs are required. Were our calculations and assumptions accurate? Did we make mistakes? Is that why you are here?*

[In a July 2011 interview with Dr. Helen Caldicott](#), Madsen identifies one of the paradoxes inherent in this technology which we all must face for the sake of ourselves and the future:

As I always say about this film, nuclear energy stands on the shoulders of almost all the scientific knowledge that we have about the universe. It is really the powers of the universe that we are harvesting.

So much knowledge is fused together in this technology. In that sense it's the *hallmark* of human civilization. But the flip side is the waste which has this time span built in to it which I believe is beyond what we can really understand.

So on the one hand it's based on deep understanding in a scientific respect. But it also has this very, very difficult time span for us even to relate to. Then if we cannot relate to it – if we cannot understand it or grasp it – it's suddenly impossible to act responsibly.



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