

# **RADIO ISLAND**

## **A Meditation on Japan**



By

**VAN MCELWEE**

In Buddhist architecture, the pagoda symbolizes Nirvana, the state of enlightenment. In *Radio Island* this metaphor is expanded to include the entire built environment and the whole of ordinary consciousness. Mutating images of ancient and modern Japanese structures develop within a complex electronic score of radio signals and data transmission. Unusual editing techniques weave these images and sounds into a dense field of improvisation. The resulting texture becomes the raw material for totally new forms. Through a sea of noise, *Radio Island* charts a course from architecture to music; from the referential to the absolute.

12 minutes, stereo. 1997.

### **INSTALLATION**

*Radio Island* is also designed as an installation for a single monitor or as a *pagoda* of vertically stacked monitors, each displaying the same source (premiered at The Kitchen in 1998).

An exhibit of **video stills** from *Radio Island* is also available for exhibition.

Van McElwee's body of work includes over thirty tapes and installations and has received numerous grants and awards, including the American Film Institute Independent Filmmaking Award, The National Endowment for the Arts Independent Production Fund (seven time recipient), and a travel grant from the Government of India. McElwee's work has been exhibited extensively worldwide and is represented by The Kitchen in New York, Trabant Gallery in Vienna, and Heure Exquise! in France. McElwee is Professor of Media and Video Area Head at Webster University, St. Louis.

***“Radio Island takes the architecture of pagodas and broadcast towers, drawing staccato analogies between these transmitters of enlightenment.”***

**Steve Seid, Curator, University Art Museum, Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, California.**

***“In Radio Island, McElwee enlightens while he tightens.”***

**Marieke Van Hal, The Worldwide Video Festival, Amsterdam.**

***“Power lines become like organic branches and pagodas pulsate with an inner life.”***

**TL Reid, Afterimage.**

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