

FILM ON FILM FOUNDATION presents...

**Franco  
Zeffirelli's**

# Endless

**starring Brooke Shields**



# Love

**Only  
\$8**



[www.filmonfilm.org](http://www.filmonfilm.org)

**4:00pm, Sunday, August 22, 2010  
PFA Theater, 2575 Bancroft Way, Berkeley**

The Film on Film Foundation ([www.filmonfilm.org](http://www.filmonfilm.org)), an organization dedicated to encouraging the exhibition of celluloid motion picture film in the manner it is meant to be screened, presents at the PFA Theater, on Sunday, August 22, the second program in its series *Film Maudit/Accursed Films*.

## Could Franco Zeffirelli's *Endless Love* (1981) be the Last Great American Melodrama?

In 1949, a Parisian ciné-club named *Objectif 49* held a festival in Biarritz dedicated to "Film Maudit", or "Accursed Cinema". A jury headed by **Jean Cocteau** led the proceedings with the express mission to reevaluate and redefine what was of value in cinematic art. A slate of ignored, unfairly maligned, and/or transgressive works were held up as representative of a new filmic vanguard. Films now long accepted as major works of world cinema such as **Vigo's** *Zéro de conduite* and *L'Atalante*, **Bresson's** *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, and **Visconti's** *Ossessione* were for the first time given their due. Cinematic and sexual radicalism were endorsed by Cocteau awarding the Poetic Film Prize to **Kenneth Anger's** *Fireworks*, the first serious acknowledgment of a budding genius.

Many of the great works of cinema spent their early years languishing in this uncherished category: **Welles's** *The Lady from Shanghai* and *Touch of Evil*, **Hawks's** *Bringing Up Baby*, and **Ophuls's** *Lola Montes* were greeted with scorn in their respective countries of origin upon release. **Cimino's** *Heaven's Gate* and **Antonioni's** *Zabriskie Point* are examples of films whose reputations have undergone radical revision in recent years. *Film Maudit/Accursed Films* is a new series presented by the Film on Film Foundation to revive the anti-conformist approach initiated by *Objectif 49's* Festival du Film Maudit, and propose for your reconsideration works we believe to be unfairly maligned and/or forgotten, such as **Franco Zeffirelli's** *Endless Love*.



A production centered around the sudden stardom of the fifteen-year-old **Brooke Shields**, and geared to the sensibilities of teenage girls, older women, and gay men, *Endless Love* is firmly poised on the terrain of the Melodrama sub-genre, the "women's picture". **Martin Hewitt** plays David, a high-school senior semi-abandoned by politicized parents, who falls in love both with younger teen-Goddess Jade (Shields), and her seductive, tight-knit, seemingly libertine family. Jade's parents (**Don Murray** and **Shirley Knight**) and brother (**James Spader** in one of his first roles) provide the familial intimacy for which David's always longed, but the intensity of Jade and David's blatant passion forces a network of incestuous tensions to the surface, and David is banned from the family. Cut to the quick, the still-immature David is inspired to foolhardy faux-

heroics: while Jade's folks throw one of their wild, teen-centric parties, David starts a small fire on the porch of their ramshackle house. Thinking it'll be easy to put out, and that he'll save the day and be taken back into the fold, the ensuing conflagration pushes David into a realm of criminality, mental distress, and outsider-status beyond his wildest nightmares. Through it all, past any point of rational perspective, David will not give up his all-consuming love for Jade--a self-defining love on the grand scale, authentically Endless.

A protege of the greatest of operatic film directors, **Luchino Visconti**, Franco Zeffirelli had spent as much of his career involved in theater and opera production as filmmaking. Famous for his previous assay in the territory of beautiful young-love gone-awry, the International hit adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), Zeffirelli rarely found sympathy with serious critics, who found his work too soft, sentimentalized, and pop. *Endless Love* proved no exception, its modest box-office success only confirming him as an artistic lightweight. A tiny minority of genre-sympathetic auteurist critics disagreed, however, believing that for once Zeffirelli's flamboyant, operatic stylizations had struck pay-dirt in being melded with the florid emotionalism of the American "women's picture". In their view, Zeffirelli's Queer, Italianate sensibilities brought a startlingly fresh and deep perspective to unhinged Family Romance and teenage American love, and provided a transgressively sympathetic portrait of male heterosexual passion pursued into the jaws of despair and madness. For this minority it was a major work of that despised and dying genre, the unrepentant Melodrama. Zeffirelli's collaborators were also noticed--his cast was a mix of fresh faces (including **Tom Cruise** in his first screen appearance), and a superb roster of stage and screen veterans. *Endless Love's* lush, glowing cinematography was arguably the best in the career of the brilliant, future Academy Award-winner **David Watkin**.



After almost thirty years, *Endless Love* has all but been forgotten. In the interim, the film Melodrama has been reassessed by critics, and come to be seen as a key cinema genre, most famously displayed by the celebration of the 50's films of **Douglas Sirk**. Could enough time have passed for Melodramas of the 70's and 80's to receive their due? Is *Endless Love* the last major work of the classical Hollywood cycle? On August 22nd, YOU have the chance to participate in the rediscovery and reevaluation of an important work of cinema!

Based on **Scott Spencer's** National Book Award-nominated novel!

1981 35mm Color 116 min. **Not on DVD!**

Please note: We are renting the venue. This is not a PFA program and thus does not appear in their publicity. For more information please visit [www.filmonfilm.org](http://www.filmonfilm.org)

