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Yoshishige
Yoshida's

EROS +
MASSACRE

7pm, Sunday
September 16
\$7
PFA Theater
2575 Bancroft Way
Berkeley



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FILM ON FILM FOUNDATION

The Film on Film Foundation (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 Pacific Film Archive Theater the second of its on-going series "Radical Strategies": Yoshishige Yoshida's revolutionary Japanese New Wave masterpiece "Eros plus Massacre".



In 1959 two cinematic movements, twin colossi of 20th century artistic reinvention, were born across the world from each other. While the exploits of the French New Wave are widely known in the U.S., the simultaneous adventures of the **Japanese New Wave** have only begun to be revealed on these shores. Oshima, Masumura, Hani, Imamura, Suzuki and others dealt with issues of contemporary alienation, youth rebellion, the post-war legacy, sexual freedom, the role of women, the plight of the Japanese individual caught between the attractions of left and right-wing collectivized factions, etc. Perhaps no group of filmmakers has ever so rigorously confronted the issues of their society in such a head-on manner. Given that this was occurring in the midst of 1960's political tumult and media explosion, it was inevitable that the results would take the form of convulsive frenzy, culminating in **Yoshishige Yoshida's** 1970 masterpiece, "**Eros plus Massacre**", until now all but unseen in the U.S.

In a radically **Brechtian** style, "**Eros**" relates the "true" story of 1910's and 20's legendary anarchist **Sakae Osugi**, the most famous radical agitator of his time, as well as the founder of Japan's first school dedicated to teaching Esperanto, the language invented in the cause of Utopian world reconciliation. This wildly popular firebrand (described as "a kind of politicized **Mick Jagger**-in-his-prime") was the mastermind behind the Rice Riots, which brought approximately 10 million Japanese to the edge of rebellion in what's been called "the greatest uprising in modern Japanese history". His services to humanity were rewarded with the #1 slot on the military police (the **Kempeitai**)'s death-list. After a May Day speech in Paris proved so rousing it led to his arrest and deportation back to Japan, the Kempeitai had their chance. Following the Great Kanto Earthquake, under the pretext of quelling potential anarchist uprisings, Osugi, his lover Noe Ito, and his six-year-old nephew were arrested and murdered. This became known as the "Amakasu Incident" (the later exploits of Lieutenant Amakasu, the officer in charge of these activities, were portrayed by **Riyuchi Sakamoto** in **Bernardo Bertolucci's** "The Last Emperor").

Rather than focussing on the grand stage of politics, however, Yoshida's stylistically playful work centers on the intimate politics between Osugi, his wife, and his two lovers. Refusing to respect conventional narrative constraints, the film charges across barriers of time and genre, interweaving Osugi's story with one of latter-day students embarked on a research project into the anarchist's ideas regarding free love. Through these colliding quests of self-discovery, "**Eros**" humorously delves into the question of whether unlimited passion can be the source of ultimate human liberation....

A film of epic proportions, "**Eros**" features some of the most famously beautiful black-and-white cinematography in the history of cinema.

"Masterpiece... The finest cinematic reflection I've seen on histrionic death." -Noël Burch

"Masterpiece." -Tadao Sato

Not on video!

B+W 35mm cinemascope 167 min.

Japanese w/ English subtitles

Print courtesy of the Japan Foundation

