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## A Woman of Rumor

Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1954)

Also known as *The Crucified Woman*, this late work - made between *Sansho the Bailiff* and *The Crucified Lovers* - is set in a brothel, where the madam's daughter falls in love with a young doctor, who is also loved by the mother. Virtually unknown until now in this country (the film played five years ago at PFA in a print equipped only with French subtitles), *A Woman of Rumor* has been called the major find among the current Mizoguchi premieres by Andrew Sarris. The *Village Voice* critic goes on to write: "The film has the feeling of late Ford or Buñuel, of a director who has rummaged through all the styles of expression and arrived at the most subtly exquisite, minimalist ways of expressing his deepest, most complex sentiments. Mizoguchi, with the help of his closest collaborators, is working in congenial territory in depicting the traditions of a modern geisha house. The camera lingers lovingly on the women of the Izutsuya House of Kyoto and harshly on the boorish businessmen who patronize them. By shifting from the cultural and social indictments of *A Geisha* and *Street of Shame* to the moving story of a rebellious daughter who comes to appreciate her mother's role in running a public house, Mizoguchi adds an upbeat lilt to the thematic material that most fascinated him."

Written by Yoshikata Yoda, Masashige Narusawa. Photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Tomoemon Otani, Yoshiko Kuga, Eitaro Shindo. (83 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, mm, Print from Japan Film Library Council)