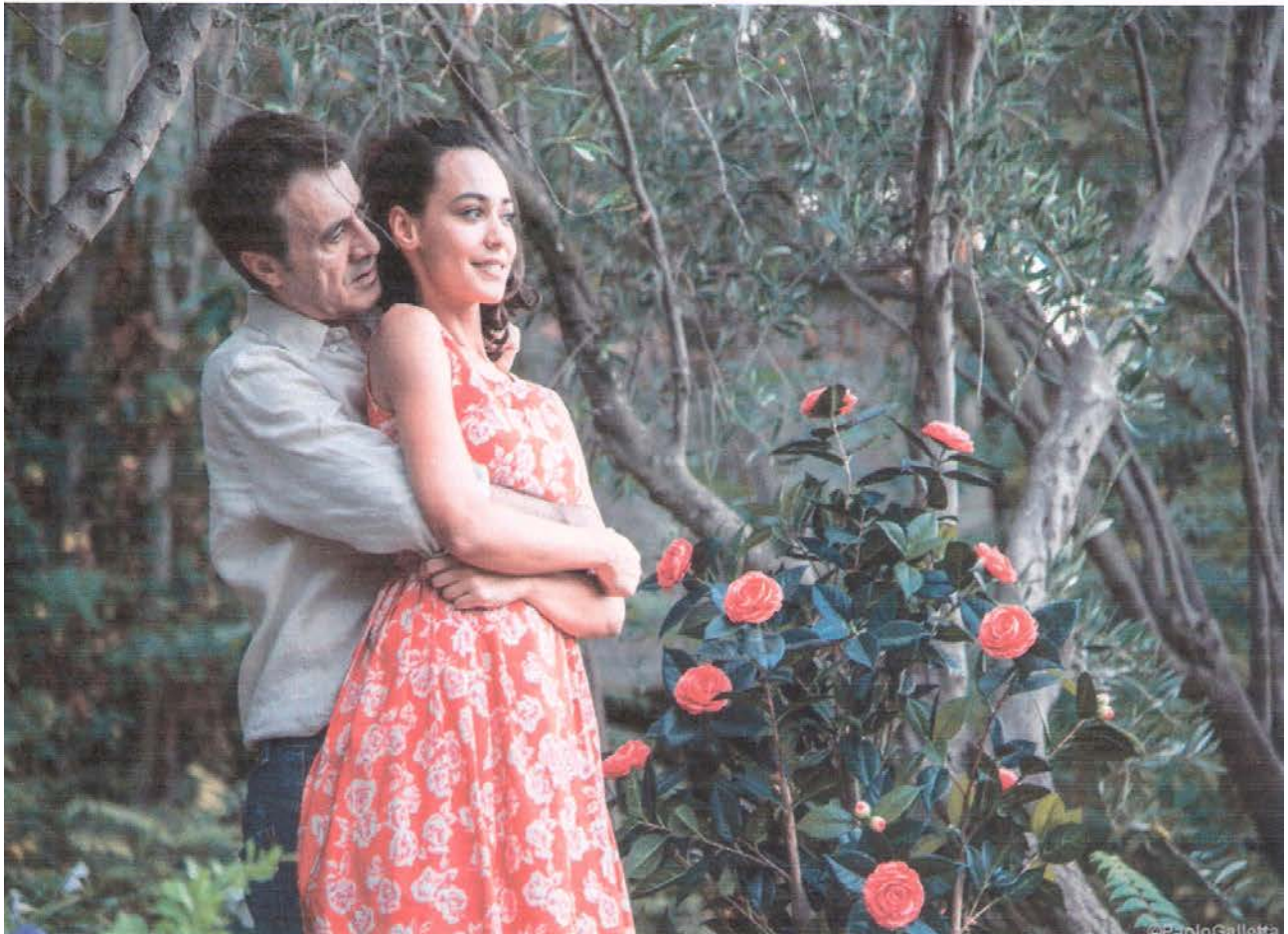


a Polittico production

a film by
Francesco Calogero

SECONDA PRIMAVERA SECOND SPRING

English version



SECOND SPRING

synopsis

Winter

While looking for new tenants for his seaside villa, which he himself designed in the late '80s, 50-year old Andrea meets Rosanna, a newly 40-year old, anesthesiologist at the local hospital, married to Riccardo, ten years younger than her. Riccardo is an aspiring writer, who is temporarily employed as a salesman at a local shoe store which is about to go out of business. During an eventful New Year's Eve, Andrea introduces Riccardo to a Maghreb restaurant owner - who is interested in restoring an attic apartment - and his lovely sister Hikma.

Spring

Andrea discovers that Hikma is pregnant with Riccardo's child, while she is struggling with her old-fashioned, fundamentalist brother's mentality. He offers to help the couple and let them stay in his villa; as it turns out, this generous offer is not only motivated by a sense of guilt, but also by the fact that Hikma reminds him of his wife, Sofia, who passed away in the villa four years earlier in unclear circumstances; as a result, from that very day, Andrea abandoned the villa opting for a city apartment.

Summer

The sea. Friends, parties, dinners outside. Life seems a dream to Hikma, who from her earliest years desired a life in the country. She fits perfectly in her element, the garden surrounding the villa. Riccardo, too, feels inspired by the moment and takes up his writing again. But Andrea is haunted relentlessly by his past, which he'd buried long ago, as he looks at Hikma, who dresses in Sofia's clothes without giving it a second thought, as he walks through the various corners of the garden, inspiring countless memories...

Autumn

The birth of Riccardo's and Hikma's daughter Eugenia – the same name Sofia desired to call her child - is the final blow for Rosanna, who has never fully recovered from having been abandoned by Riccardo. She looks at Andrea, painfully detached, recognizing in him a certain melancholy, resulting in the failure of having fully grieved the loss of his wife. Deeming Riccardo's artistic ambitions useless, Andrea helps him to find a new job,

disposing of waste products at the hospital. One day, by chance, Riccardo meets Rosanna at work, and agrees to have dinner...

Second Winter

Tensions intensify, and Riccardo makes up a working assignment in Africa to escape with Rosanna. Abandoned with her new baby and forced inside the villa during the harsh season, Hikma is emotionally distraught, but is sustained by Andrea's attention, who grows into romance, though he is reluctant to admit it. Andrea is able to break through his own indifference and melt the ice around his frozen heart, reviving a certain passion within him, while Hikma sees him as a father figure. Andrea confesses his sense of guilt for his inability to provide the emotional support Sofia had needed before dying, submerged by a flood, while she was pregnant.

Second Spring

Hikma is unaware of how much she is actually helping Andrea, while teaching him how to care for the immense garden which he had always delegated to his wife. The abundant nature surrounding him helps him immensely. But Andrea cannot be completely happy, not only for the age difference with Hikma, but because he fears that he can never fully win her heart. Just as he decides to take some significant steps, Riccardo enters the picture, returning to the villa after the understanding that his relationship with Rosanna could never be revived. Hikma also resolves her conflict with her brother after their mother dies. Hikma desires a secure future together with Riccardo, and moves into the newly renovated attic apartment. Andrea discovers the strength to step aside and cope with his own pain, in the knowledge that his relationship with Hikma has enabled him to take up his life again.

SECOND SPRING

short synopsis

While looking for new tenants for his seaside villa, surrounded by a big garden, Andrea Ricoli, a 50-years old architect, meets Rosanna, a newly 40-years old, anesthesiologist at the local hospital, and married to Riccardo, ten years younger than her: he's an aspiring writer,

temporarily employed as a salesman at a local shoe store. During an eventful New Year's Eve, Andrea introduces Riccardo to a Maghreb restaurant owner - who is interested in restoring an attic apartment - and his lovely sister Hikma. Months go by. Andrea discovers that Hikma is pregnant with Riccardo's child, while she's struggling with her old-fashioned, fundamentalist brother's mentality. He offers to help the couple and let them stay with him in his villa. Teaching him how to care for his garden, the young Hikma reminds Andrea of his wife Sofia, who passed away right there four years earlier, in unclear circumstances...

THE PLEASURE GARDEN

Director's Notes

*"There is a land of the living and a land of the dead
and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning"*

Thornton Wilder, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*

"When one accepts that death is a part of life, death is no longer feared and one is no longer afraid of mortality in any respect. But while the fear of death exists, one reacts to conclusion of a relationship and thus, of love, in the same way." These words, written by R.W. Fassbinder, create a bridge – a sort of symbolic image in this story – between the land of the living and the land of the dead, looking closely at the death of love in relationship with physical death. One of the key elements in *Second Spring* is undoubtedly the reciprocal consolation between Andrea, who has never been able to overcome the death of his wife Sofia, and Rosanna, emotionally challenged by the end of her relationship with her young husband, Riccardo.

Andrea is an open book. At a first glance, he seems very gentle, almost too submissive. His personality and creative temperament aren't enough to awaken in him vibrant emotions, even when they are called for. He spent his entire life accepting everything that came on his way, as if that was a part of some inescapable plan. And, paradoxically, as an architect, he is asked to modify pre-existing realities according to his whims, though with some limits. At 50, he is the same as he used to be, nothing has changed, for the most part. If, as they say in medieval theories of humours, phlegm comes over us in the last stages of life, Andrea embodied that stagnation, without the hope of a more passionate side, metaphorically Spring and Summer. Though, it is true that he has experienced the melancholy of Autumn, with the passing of his wife: moreover, eight months pregnant. An episode which he had accepted supinely, without a reaction, without searching for answers, without trying to shed light on unclear circumstances.

Then, the young Hikma arrives in his life: in the "secret garden" of his soul, he allows the unthinkable substitution. A classical situation, often seen in art, of perturbing images: *doppelgänger* and creatures without shadows, phantoms and diabolic possessions, identified in the past with melancholy. A vertigo, a woman who lives twice: Hikma – whose name means wisdom in Arabic, even tracing the

etymology of the Greek name Sofia - is tied to Andrea by invisible threads. She becomes a living part of his garden, a metaphor from the beginning of the world: lush and green while life is good, uninviting and hostile as events turn.

In Edgar Allan Poe's "The Domain of Arnheim" - which also inspired several of Magritte's well known paintings, quoted in the museum scene - a man suddenly becomes extremely wealthy and decides to dedicate his entire life to creating marvellous gardens, merely for the pleasure of being in constant contact with beauty, bound to a life of nature out in the open space and at the same time to the love of a woman, far removed from any other ambition. These were the four conditions he established as the key to true happiness: *four* being a "magic" number that re-occurs throughout the film.

It is as if Andrea, for the first time, stops living life accepting everything blankly, without question. He starts to understand how much his life is enriched by being able to get involved concretely and physically; this man who is used to relating to the world from a purely intellectual perspective – his antidote to the invisible and silent poison deep within his soul. Failing to recognize the depth of his feelings, without grasping fully what this sentiment he had always deemed impossible could bring to him. Andrea finds the strength within him to change the events. The fight itself is what enables him to find peace. He feels able, in the proper season, to reap what he has sowed. Violets, in particular, always regarded as a symbol of remembrance: they are in fact also called pansies, from the French "pensée", and in Shakespeare's *Dream* – explicitly mentioned in two scenes - "love in idleness", to imply the image of a lover who has no other employment than to think of his beloved. So they become for us a leitmotif, amplified by the recurrence of the color purple (the bridge, the table, the dress, the bathrobe), in many cultures associated with mourning rituals, but also referred to metamorphosis and erotic fascination.

In this sense, Hikma's influence, though genuine and involuntary, is decisive. She's a courageous woman, having grown up in a small, provincial town, close to nature. Wild and sensual, Hikma transforms the garden – for a long time Sofia's exclusive territory, and now abandoned to the wild – in a place of growth and healing. If a garden is still synonymous with suffering – always living, even in the mild season, in that state of "souffrance" well described by the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi – Andrea's garden opens up to Hikma's eyes as a theater of uncertainty and renunciation: but she manages to bring out his magical nature, to turn it into a reassuring dwelling. Having accomplished the feat, her maturation process can only be completed by abandoning the place of past happiness, without looking back. On the other hand, we have the character of Riccardo, clever and smart, who is going in the opposite direction from Andrea, from hard, physical, practical labour which leaves him dissatisfied towards creative endeavours that often results into nothing.

Arid, even violent, the representation of the world around the characters, outside the oasis of happiness depicted by the seaside villa: in a city - in this case Messina, but what is shown on the background is common to many Italian cities, especially in the South - irreparably injured by illegal development and subject to the infringements of building regulations, poisoned by cars and heavy vehicles. Meanwhile, the city grows poorer and increasingly more sterile: stores go out of business,

cinemas turn into supermarkets, museums are deserted. But Andrea's hard working path is bound to change in the ending: if for once true talent triumphs over dishonesty and abuse, this leaves hope for the arrival of a new season...

The decision to divide the film in chapters corresponding to the seasons, was not done merely to represent the changes within our lives over time as we age, but also to demonstrate the complexity of our interpretations of life's events as well. This is evident in New Year's Eve – which assumes a different meaning in the life of each of the characters. This night is described in a rather nervous, fragmented manner, as a reminiscence of the past – four times we see that night, each from different perspectives. Directly in contrast to the present, reflected in a more traditional style, with occasional daring plots, opening and closing each chapter according to each character's point of view, within each season. In the final section, the story continues as if it was told with two voices, emphasizing the contrasting views. On one hand, we've got Hikma, who with her breathlessness and anxiety embodies Springtime, on the other hand, we've got Andrea who is forced to face the challenge of a new life – in effect, his *Second Spring*.

FRANCESCO CALOGERO

Born on August 16, 1957 in Messina (Italy), he graduated in Law with a thesis on film rights, and worked in some art houses. After his long experience as a programme coordinator in the Taormina Intl. Film Festival, he became Artistic Director in many film exhibitions, dedicated to independent Italian cinema: among them, Messina Film Festival (1995-1999), Costalblea Film Festival (2003-2009), Valdarno Cinema Fedic (2006-2014). Since 1996 he conducted an assiduous didactic activity, holding courses and workshops in many Italian cities; for three years (2005-2008) he taught Cinema at the University of Messina.

He made his debut as film director shooting two amateur Super 8 films - the feature *La caviglia di Amelia* (Amelia's Ankle) and the short *Bionda per un giorno* (Blonde for a Day) - and some videos (among them *Lonesome*, produced by Salso Film&Tv Festival with Rai-Italian State Television). He directed in 1987 his first feature film in 16mm. *La gentilezza del tocco* (The Gentle Touch), premiered in San Sebastian, then shown in several festivals (Turin, San Francisco, Hong Kong, Sydney, Hamburg, Galway). Awarded as Best Independent Film of the Year in Bellaria, this film won the Laceno d'Oro in Avellino, then the Bronze Dolphin and the Fipresci Award in Troia (Portugal); nominated to the Italian Silver Ribbons, it won in 1988 the Sacher d'Oro for Best Debut Film (in the first edition of this prize, created by the Italian film director Nanni Moretti).

If possible even more "independent", the feature film *Visioni private* (Private Visions) - shot in 16 mm. together with Ninni Bruschetta and Donald Ranvaud during Taormina Film Festival 1988, and completed two years later - became an object of desire in the international circuit (Turin, Smoljan, Rotterdam, Valencia, Troia, Jerusalem and the Intl. Forum at the Berlinale) due to its unusual setting in a film festival milieu. Still together with the stage director Ninni Bruschetta, in 1988 he wrote the play *Il battello degli amanti* (The Lovers' Boat), and afterwards he adapted *I carabinieri*, by Beniamino Joppolo, performed in the Orestyadi (Gibellina) 1994, then in tour. In the same year Sellerio published *La gentilezza del tocco*, containing the screenplays of his three professional films, including *Nessuno* (Nobody), his first feature in 35 mm., shown in 1992 at EuropaCinema (Viareggio), Saint-Vincent's Grolle d'Oro and Annecy.

In November 1995 he made his debut as an opera director in Messina, staging Gaetano Donizetti's *Rita ou le mari battu*, followed two years later by Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, then

Norma (1998) and *La Sonnambula* (2003), both composed by Vincenzo Bellini. He also directed the film documentation for all five stagings.

In 1997 he returned to cinema directing *Cinque giorni di tempesta* (Five Stormy Days), premiered at the 54th Venice Film Festival, then shown in Los Angeles, Moscow, Luxembourg, Casablanca. The film was awarded with the Grand Prix in Annecy Film Festival, the Young European Cinema Award in Osaka and the Siae Award for Best Story (co-authors Giovanni and Sandro Veronesi); its protagonist Roberto De Francesco won the Sacher d'Oro 1998 as Best Italian Actor.

After *Metronotte* (Night Watch) – shown in 2000 at Mystfest (Cattolica), in competition at Annecy and Villerupt, then in several European cities – he made in 2002 his debut as a documentary director, shooting for the series “The Sacher Diaries” *L’implacabile tenente Rossi* (The Implacable Lieutenant Rossi), screened in a number of festivals after the world première in Locarno. Two years later he directed *In the Name of the Godfather* - shot on F. F. Coppola’s Sicilian sets, and screened in Taormina Film Festival - a preparatory work for the medium-length *Nella terra del Padrino* (In the Land of the Godfather), completed in 2012 with the support of Rai Cinema.

In 2013 he started with Mia Arfuso the production company *Polittico*, which made its debut with the documentary *Mise en Scène with Arthur Penn (A Conversation)* - shoot by the Iranian director Amir Naderi, co-produced by Alphaville Film and Rai show *Fuori Orario*, and shown during the 71st Venice Film Festival - while completing in January 2015 the feature film *Seconda primavera* (Second Spring), premiered in Italy at the 26th Trieste Film Festival.

SECOND SPRING

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Andrea Ricoli.....Claudio Botosso
Hikma Bouchri.....Desirée Noferini
Riccardo MinisiAngelo Campolo
Rosanna Salvago.....Anita Kravos
Nabil Bouchri.....Hedy Krissane
PiaTiziana Lodato
MicheleGianluca Cesale
VitoAntonio Alveario
Marina.....Monia Alfieri
Giacomo.....Livio Bisignano

with the friendly participation of Nino Frassica in the role of Giovanni Maggiari

CREW

Director: Francesco Calogero
Scriptwriter: Francesco Calogero
Director of Photography: Giulio Pietromarchi, A.I.C.

Editor: Mirco Garrone
Music Composer: Sandro Di Stefano
Production Designer: Antonio Virgilio
Costume Designer: Antonella Zito
Sound Designer: Federico Ricci
Assistant Director: Roberto Bonaventura

Producers: Mia Arfuso - Francesco Calogero
Production: Polittico, with the support of Sicily Film Commission

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+39.320.1937240 – politticosrl@gmail.com – www.polittico.it

Italy, 2015 – HD – 108' – color

TECHNICAL SPECS

Aspect ratio: 2.35:1
Camera: Red One Mysterium MX with Cooke S3 Primes
Sound mix: Dolby Digital
Laboratory: Laser S. Film (Rome)
Film format: Redcode Raw (4K)
Cinematographic process: Redcode Raw 4K to 2K
Printed film format: D-Cinema (DCP)
Principal photography: September 2013 (4 weeks)
Shooting location: Sicily (Messina and surroundings, Catania)