

JASMINE TRINCA
ROMANA MAGGIORA VERGANO
ADRIANO GIANNINI
AND VALERIA BRUNI TEDESCHI

tiff



**MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2026
Official Selection**

Le Pacte

THE SPIRAL

[illegible]

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A person is walking away from the camera down a long, narrow hallway. The hallway has a tiled floor and walls with a horizontal band of lighter material. The ceiling has recessed lighting. The person is wearing a dark coat and skirt. The hallway leads to a brighter area at the end.

ORIGINAL TITLE L'ESTRANEA
INTERNATIONAL TITLE THE SPIRAL
GENRE DRAMA, PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER
LANGUAGE ITALIAN
PRODUCTION YEAR 2026
COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION ITALY
COPRODUCTION FRANCE, BELGIUM

FORMAT 1.85.1
SOUND 5.1
RUNNING TIME 115 MIN

LOGLINE

A woman suddenly shows up at her daughter's house to tell her the truth about their family, marked by a pact made many years ago with a stranger. A secret kept for too long, which now comes back to claim its price.

SYNOPSIS

On a stormy night in Rome, Anna arrives at her daughter Alice's apartment with a devastating confession: their entire family history is built on a lie.

Twenty years earlier, after a horrific accident that nearly cost Alice her leg, Anna claims she made a pact with a mysterious Stranger to save her.

But the miracle came at a price. What she believed was a single desperate bargain has in fact unleashed a spiraling chain reaction, a domino effect of increasingly dark events that have haunted their lives ever since.

Now, the Stranger has come to collect. And Anna is convinced that only Alice can break the spiral and set things right. But at what cost?



A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a light-colored trench coat, is seated and looking upwards and to the right. She is holding a lit cigarette in her right hand, and a wisp of smoke is visible. The background is dimly lit with several lit candles, creating a warm, atmospheric glow. The overall tone is cinematic and moody.

CAST

ANNA	JASMINE TRINCA
ALICE	ROMANA MAGGIORA VERGANO
WALTER	ADRIANO GIANNINI
THE STRANGER	VALERIA BRUNI TEDESCHI
ALICE 7 Y.O.	GABRIELLA TELEGAFO
ALICE 13 Y.O.	MARIANDREA CESARI
TOBIA	ANDREA GENOVESE
TOBIA 13 Y.O.	ALESSANDRO CARBONARA
TOBIA 17 Y.O.	ANDREA ROSSINI
LIDIA MARIANI	MARINA LIMOSANI

CREW

DIRECTOR
SCREENPLAY
ORIGINAL SCORE
EDITING
CINEMATOGRAPHY
PRODUCTION DESIGN
COSTUME DESIGNER
MAKE-UP
HAIR
PROSTHETIC MAKE-UP
PROSTHETIC DESIGN
SOUND
SOUND EFFECTS
MIX
VISUAL EFFECTS
SPECIAL EFFECTS
CASTING
FIRST A.D
ADMINISTRATOR
LINE PRODUCER
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

PRODUCED BY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
CO-PRODUCTION

ITALIAN DISTRIBUTION
INTERNATIONAL SALES

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PAOLO STRIPPOLI AND SALVATORE DE CHIRICO
ROB
FEDERICO PALMERINI
CRISTIANO DI NICOLA
MARCELLO DI CARLO
SUSANNA MASTROIANNI
VINCENZA LAMPARELLI
PABLO CABELLO
OLIVIER AFONSO
DENISE BOCCACCI AND ANDREA LEANZA
QUENTIN COLLETTE
MARC BASTIEN
FRANCO PISCOPO
GIUSEPPE SQUILLACI, JULIEN VANDEVELDE, SANDER JANSENS, LAURELINE SILAN
PAOLO GALLIANO
ANNA PENNELLA AND STEFANIA RODA'
TIZIANO GRASSO
EMANUELA VALENTE
FABIO LOMBARDELLI
MARINA MARZOTTO

PROPAGANDA ITALIA AND RAI CINEMA
DINAMO FILM
KAZAK PRODUCTIONS (FR), TARANTULA (BE)

01 DISTRIBUTION
LE PACTE



A CONVERSATION WITH WRITER-DIRECTOR PAOLO STRIPPOLI

Was there a specific origin or eureka moment for *The Spiral*?

I'm fascinated by the relationship between parents and children — every relationship between parent and child is a glimpse of the larger contemporary society, and I think you can tell any kind of story using the lens of this relationship. Also, in a Western conception, there's the idea of living through your children, or controlling them, which is fascinating because of course children are their own people.

Describe the Colonna Family within the socioeconomic context of Bari, Italy in 1999, when an early chapter of the story plays out. What's going on with this family in this particular place at this moment in time?

They are the perfect family. They are beautiful and they fit perfectly into the society around them, but their perfection comes at a price, which is constantly being in control of how they act and appear in the world. They fear losing that perfection. This particular time, near the turn of the century, was a period of economic and industrial growth in Italy, so the Colonnas, who run a successful retail operation, are the perfect people to represent what a city like Bari and its people aspired to be in 1999. Everyone likes them, because they are reassuring, and they come to represent that specific moment in time — the new millennium taking root in an old town. These are not bad people, but Anna in particular is fighting as much as she can to preserve the

carefully cultivated perfection on display for the world to see.

Describe structuring this movie, vacillating between present and past, across four distinct, novelistic chapters.

I wanted the viewer to experience this film as a spiral, and the chapters helped organize the spiral structure inside the story. We needed those four chapters because they emphasize each character, and this is the story of a family — mother, father, daughter, son. Every chapter focuses on a deal Anna, the mother, makes with the enigmatic character known as the Stranger, and every chapter focuses on the consequences of the deals on specific family members. The very structure of the film is a spiral — every chapter is another loop of the spiral, and you can see the loop getting smaller and tighter.

We see Walter Colonna's boorish paternity on display but this story is very much centered on Anna, and her unique style of motherhood. Why did you focus on Anna?

Walter is very harsh, but breaks much more easily than Anna, who fights until the end to get what she wants. And while Walter's style of parenthood is just as toxic as Anna's, I try not to judge my characters — because this isn't a toxicity that comes from them being mean people, they're simply overbearing. It's a reflection of what the society wants from

them, and what they want for their children. Both parents want their children to fit into society in the same way they do as adults, but Anna is stronger than Walter, and more subtle in her aims. If Walter was the main character, the story would never arrive at its apocalyptic moment because he breaks too easily — whereas Anna fights in order to keep control until she unleashes an apocalypse.

Jasmine Trinca embodies Anna Colonna fully — and ferociously — in *The Spiral*. Why was she the right actor for the role?

I wrote the role with Jasmine in mind because she's a great actress, but there is a specific reason why I wanted her to play Anna, and it's because the character is so ferocious. It's hard to empathize with Anna sometimes, but Jasmine has a rare empathic quality to her acting — she has incredible emotional intelligence. When you talk to her, or watch her performances, you see this sweetness inside of her, and I wanted her to recreate that with Anna because I knew the audience wouldn't see her as a mean or angry person — rather someone who had become a victim of herself, and her own patterns. Jasmine helped bring warmth and heart to Anna Colonna, even when she's experiencing pain and suffering. Like mine, Jasmine's approach was never to judge Anna. She put her emotional intelligence directly inside the character.

Your visual strategy abounds in spiral motifs, but to what extent is Anna's psychology a spiral in its own right? Her patterns are important to this story...

Anna's big problem is that she thinks she has the power to make things real or not real just by accepting them, and while this is a smaller element inside the bigger story, it's what she does throughout the entire story — she makes deals to reverse the effects of bad things that happen. But even if

Anna accepted things in life as they happened, everything would have probably gotten worse before things got any better.

Describe how your camerawork in the movie comes to reflect Anna's (and by extension the Colonna family's) reality.

I had only one guideline while making this movie, and I tried to apply this to each of the different chapters of the story even when the script comes to feel campy or violent; I wanted to film this movie in a very elegant way because when horror creeps into the Colonnas's lives, they fight even harder to be elegant, beautiful, and perfect. Of course, this only results in the horror and violence that befalls them becoming even harsher. I wanted to create a clash between the elegance of the family and the violent, upsetting things that happen to them.

Discuss cultivating the unique tone for this movie — while the material is heavy, and increasingly dark, it's not afraid of being mordantly funny.

It's how life is, really, funny and cruel at the same time. There are highs and lows, victories and defeats, the sacred and profane. *THE SPIRAL* is a story of conflict and contrasts, and the tone of the movie needed to reflect that. There's a lot of darkness in the movie, and you want to laugh at the darkness sometimes, so it was a relief to settle on this tone.

Rome is your primary setting, aside from the flashback scenes in Bari. Was there a symbolic factor in setting the movie in Rome?

Rome, of course, is the Eternal City, and it's just as eternal as the human condition of chaos. This is the philosophical answer, but for most of my life I lived near Bari, until I was

19, and then I moved to Rome to study cinema. Alice, who studies costume design in Rome, is partly based on myself, because I always try to write about what I know — I'm part Alice and part Anna. Alice as a young woman is attending the same national school of cinema I attended in Rome, so the setting, her sexuality, and her course of studies, all resemble elements of my life.

Why did you want to cast the great Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi in the enigmatic role of *The Stranger*?

I think I would have been lost if I didn't have Valeria in the role. In the first draft of the script, the Stranger was a much darker character, and her scenes with Anna were much bleaker. But I understood that if I really wanted to be cruel, I had to use a different approach in these scenes — because I never saw it as a straightforward horror movie. Once Valeria entered my mind, I knew she had to be the Stranger, and I wrote the screenplay on spec specifically with her in mind. She can be quite funny as an actor while still exercising severity in her words and demeanor. She knows how to convey cruelty, but she's also naturally elegant. She also knew how to nail the psychosexual demands of this character.

Your previous feature, *The Holy Boy*, about a child with the ability to neutralize the pain of others, premiered out of competition at Venice in 2025. Before that, *Flowing* introduced a mysterious vapor that forces those who inhale it to confront their suppressed emotions. How does *The Spiral* fit into your growing body of work?

I see *The Holy Boy*, *Flowing* and *The Spiral* as part of what I like to call the Rain Trilogy because of the constant bad weather in all three works. But the common denominator among them is the theme of losing control, and fighting for

control, and how the impossibility of controlling our lives affects our mental health. Each of these stories also focuses on a relationship between parent and child.

You don't seem interested in overt horror or jump scares — is it safe to say that psychological horror is your sweet spot?

Yes, it's the fear of losing control, which terrifies me as a storyteller, and a human being. It also terrifies me as a director — I need to maintain control over my set, in a gentle way, of course, but if I lose control, I'm not doing my job, so it terrifies me. We all have demons inside, and if those demons take over, it's the end. This is why I like to use the horror lens, or the genre lens, in my work, because I can give body to these demons, and make them real on-screen. It's a kind of exorcism for me because I can place the demons outside of myself.



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Born in Corato, Bari, in 1993. He graduated in Directing from the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome after earning a degree in Arts and Performing Arts at La Sapienza University.

In 2019 he won the Franco Solinas Award for Best Story with *L'angelo infelice*, written with Jacopo del Giudice and Milo Tissone. In 2020, he co-directed the Netflix original film *A Classic Horror Story* with Roberto De Feo, winning the Best Director award at the 67th Taormina Film Fest. In 2022, his second feature film, the psychological horror *Flowing*, was released and presented in competition at international festivals, including Sitges Film Festival, Austin Fantastic Fest, and Alice nella Città. His third film, *The Holy Boy*, hit theaters in 2025 and was presented at the Venice International Film Festival, receiving significant praise from both critics and audiences. His latest film, *The Spiral*, will be released in autumn 2026.

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

A Classic Horror Story (2021, co-directed with Roberto De Feo)

Flowing (2022)

The Holy Boy (2025)

The Spiral (2026)



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