

Film Notes

By Chris Baker

Ange

2025 | 97mins

Director: Tony Gatlif

Starring: Suzanne Aubert, Arthur H.

French-Algerian ('Pied-Noir') filmmaker Tony Gatlif is a near-unique voice in world cinema — arguably, his perspective is comparable only to that of Serbian filmmaker Emir Kusturica. Gatlif's 50-year career has resulted in some 20 features, all of which exclusively focussed on trans-national Roma culture. Most are scripted fictions which often include incidental quasi-documentary elements (particularly the virtuosic performance of vivid Roma music) and many feature central characters who live nomadic lifestyles either with a clear objective in mind or because they are fleeing an intolerable situation.

Protagonist Ange is a typical Gatlif character, although according to the filmmaker 'I haven't yet written a man like him. He's new to me' (Press Pack, 2025). What is familiar about Ange is his propensity for living entirely in the moment, a worldview that has led to his neglect of an old debt, his negation of former loves and even to his denying paternity of his daughter Solea (Suzanne Aubert).

Although Gatlif spent a long time scripting the film, he delivers a loosely-plotted piece with a rambling narrative in which the identity, character and motivations of Ange are only gradually revealed.

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Plus **Whatever Happened to Molly Doyle?**

Ava Bounds | 4mins

Ava Bounds (Winner, IMDb New Filmmaker 2021) makes absurdist dramas that explore the depths of humanity through its eccentricities. Bounds states 'I'm fascinated by life in all its messy brilliance — its highs, lows, and even how it all ends. My style embraces the absurd while uncovering deeper truths. Molly Doyle, my great-great-aunt from County Kerry, Ireland, lived in Castlemaine around 1900. She sounded like the kind of character I'd love to meet one day — who knows, maybe I will'.

While beautifully composed, the film has an improvisatory quality which sits well with the rebellious nature and spontaneity of its characters. 'I wanted to capture everything that could happen to us. Without making a documentary, of course. To seize what life offered.' (Press Pack, 2025). An example of this is the hailstorm which broke suddenly during filming and which suggested flamenco rhythms — 'Tap, tap, tap — magnificent rhythms... That hail storm came as a gift. Unexpected. It was magnificent.' (Press Pack, 2025). Music infuses the film in a manner unmistakably Gatlifian!

Ange was filmed in the Catalan-speaking department of Pyrénées-Orientales bordering Spain. The director found inspiration in haunting landscapes and features such as the river Verdoube at Tautavel, where some of the earliest human remains in Europe have been discovered and where Ange splashes rhythms with his hands, and a 2000-year-old juniper tree in the village of Opoul, lovingly photographed to the accompaniment of a flamenco guitar.



Excellent

Fair

Poor

What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

Please add any further comments here

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Ange (+Whatever Happened to Molly Doyle?)

Did You Know?

- Suzanne Aubert, originally studied philosophy and political science before turning to performing. She is also a vegetable farmer.
- Amongst the items that Ange unearths as he literally digs up his past is a copy of the 1976 album ‘Persecución’ by flamenco guitarist Juan Peña Fernández and a vhs tape of ‘The Fire Horses’ (1964) by Armenian director Sergei Paradjanov — a film so obscure that it is not listed on IMDb, although Paradjanov’s subsequent masterpiece *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (1965) was screened at the very first Bath Film Festival in 1991!
- True to the notion of ‘living in the moment’, Tony Gatlif despises flashbacks and rarely uses them — only one such occurs in *Ange*.

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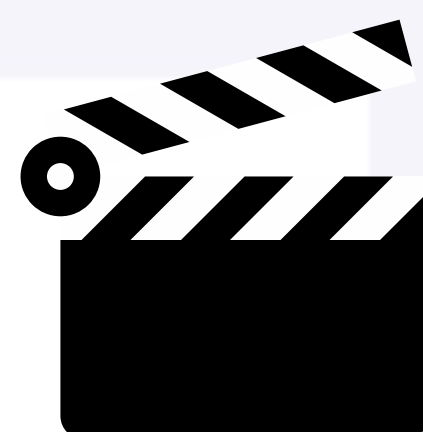
Continue Your Journey...

If you enjoyed this film, you might like:



Vengo (2000)

Set against the tensions of two families locked in a power struggle, flamenco dancing is explored.



Once (2007)

An Irish romantic-musical drama following two Irish musicians.

‘This joyful journey, through music, posters, and flamenco costumes, is both chaotic and meticulously crafted, much like many of Tony Gatlif's films. It makes you want to dance, to feel free.’

-Jean-Baptiste Morain, 2025



Excellent

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Poor

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