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GOOD VALLEY STORIES

A FILM BY **JOSÉ LUIS GUERIN**



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Spain, France / 2025 / Color and B&W / 122'

On the outskirts of Barcelona, Vallbona is an enclave bordered by a river, railway tracks, and a highway. Antonio, the son of Catalan workers, has been growing flowers here for nearly 90 years. He's been joined by Makome, Norma, Tatiana, coming from everywhere... To the rhythm of music, forbidden swims, and budding romances, a poetic form of resistance emerges against the urban, social, and identity conflicts of the world.

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INTERVIEW WITH JOSE LUIS GUERIN

BY JAVIER GUERRA

How did the first ideas for *Stories of the Good Valley* come about?

The film starts by walking and observing. First I observe with the Super-8 camera, almost without intervening, from an observational logic.

In Vallbona we found unpaved streets, outskirts mixed with blocks of flats, clothes hanging out to dry, kids playing or bathing in the stream. These were scenes that took me back to the sixties or seventies, precisely the time when I started filming in Super-8.

For me, investigating a space is very suggestive. I have the impression that it can be read through the signs that inhabit it. When I arrived in Vallbona, with the little camera, I felt like I was discovering virgin territory. I walked attentive to traces and clues: stones in an outskirt, cracks in the pavement... Everything seemed to contain stories. I think the script is somehow contained in the space, and that filming is interpreting it.

Later, with the casting, the mediation of words appears, where I discover a series of memories and imaginaries which, confronted with what was observed, will give rise to the film. In any case, it's by analyzing these interviews that make up the casting that the project of making a feature film takes shape.

So it makes sense to begin the research in that format...

Digital images, to begin with, always feel banal to me. On the other hand, ritualizing the work with the small craft of Super-8 connects me in a different way with the space and with reality. It's a different kind of involvement. At the same time, the very Super-8 B/W format conveys the feeling of timelessness in which the neighborhood exists.

Super-8 today manifests itself as the past. That's how we perceive it, compared with the present of the digital image. It's like the visual memory of "archive images."

Now I'd like to focus on the part of the casting you did in Vallbona. How did that come about?

It's a fragmented, isolated neighborhood, and it wasn't easy to organize a casting. But that's where everything was born: the characters, the motifs, the themes.

In the first edits, I wanted the spectator to be aware that everything that unfolded in the film had already been stated in these initial conversations. Like a composition of developments and variations of these interviews.

The film has a very collective, very choral dimension. How did this develop with the characters?

In choosing the characters, of course, there's the consideration of the eloquence they have as such. The taste for the character that beats in certain people: their way of speaking, of looking, of moving. And at the same time, the presences selected had to embody the social and human morphology of the neighborhood.

That has been my central concern: to project a fair gaze on this community. To be fair with the juxtaposition of memories that make up this place: the connection to the land of traditional peasantry, the working-class memory of the first migrants from the south, who built their houses and which today is declining; the blocks with no memory of their own; the new memories arriving from other parts of the world...

Regarding the creative process, what place does artisanal work, the elaboration during a shoot, have for you?

I only understand my work through artisanal ethics: deciding every frame, every cut, every sound. From there comes my taste for cinema, for its writing, and my way of relating to the world.

Each film is a singular organism with its own particular logic and ethics, which must be discovered. There are no rules you can apply from one film to another; they reveal themselves in each case, in the process of working itself. That's why I try to shoot in discontinuity, alternating phases of filming and editing that help me to discover the identity of the film.

How did you work with the visual and sound resources to show both the personal and the collective in representing the neighborhood?

The demand to penetrate particular gazes and imaginaries, as the proper way of understanding the neighborhood, led us to favor forms that linked the passage between the individual and the collective. The reflections in the windows, or the depth of field, play a crucial role there, as does the sound editing that relates the different stories.

José Luis Guerin

This excerpt is part of the “Shooting Diary” currently being developed by Javier Guerra
(assistant director of Stories of the Good Valley).

September 2025







JOSÉ LUIS GUERIN

1983	Los motivos de Berta
1986	Souvenir
1990	Innisfree
1997	Tren de sombras (le espectro de Le Thuit)
2000	En construcción
2007	Unas fotos en la ciudad de Sylvia
2007	En la ciudad de Sylvia
2010	Guest
2010	Dos cartas a Ana
2011	Correspondencias Jonas Mekas - J.L. Guerin
2011	Recuerdos de una mañana
2015	Le Saphir de Saint Louis
2015	La academia de las musas
2019	De una isla
2025	Good Valley Stories

José Luis Guerin, as a director and screenwriter, has combined fiction and documentary, blurring the boundaries between the two genres.

José Luis Guerin has presented his film in festivals such as Venice (Official Selection), Cannes (Un Certain Regard, Directors' Fortnight), Berlin (Forum), San Sebastián (Official Competition), and several times in Locarno, Rotterdam, and Tokyo. He is perhaps one most acclaimed by the critics and most popular the Spanish filmmakers at international festivals. He had retrospectives at festivals and major cultural centers such as the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris) and the Harvard Film Institute.

GOOD VALLEY STORIES

A Spanish-French coproduction : Los Ilusos Films, Perspective Films, 3CAT, Orfeo Iluso AIE.

Director & Screenwriter : José Luis Guerin

Producers : Javier Lafuente, Jonás Trueba, Gaëlle Jones, José Luis Guerin

Cinematography : Alicia Almiñana

Sound : Maximiliano Martínez

Art director : Clara Serrano

Editing : José Luis Guerin

Original music : Anahit Simonian

Operator : Rubén Seca

Assistant director : Javier Guerra

Executive director : Alba Lombardía

Colorist : David Avecilla

Sound Editing & Supervising : Pablo Rivas Leyva

Mixing : Mikaël Barre

International sales : Shellac



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INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATION



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