

SLANT

FILM



L'Origine de la Tendresse and Other Tales
by [Rob Humanick](#)
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Though this eighth annual compilation to be released by the World According to Shorts is subject to the usual limitations inherent in any feature-length experience assembled from several independent creative sources, such randomness also proves its greatest attribute, if one is willing to go along with the film's casual appeal. Carefully assembled so as to avoid the pitfalls that come from overreaching one's grasp, *L'Origine de la Tendresse and Other Tales* proves a delectably satisfying round of hor'dourves, sampling various styles and subjects without attempting the contrivance of establishing a singular unifying theme. Appropriately, the selection begins with Guillaume Martinez's flirtatious *Pen-Pusher*, in which two subway passengers exchange notes via underlining key words in their respective reading materials, hinting at greater intimacy to come. Such is a simple but effective means of communication, implicitly foreshadowing this feature-length playlist's playful relationship with the audience.

Strongest among the six selections is, perhaps incidentally, the titular *L'Origine de la Tendresse*, an altogether suffocating non-story of one single woman's efforts to find meaning amid her joyless occupation as a museum guard and seemingly irrelevant existence in society. Originally made in 1999, Alain-Paul Mallard's film employs off-center, tightly framed compositions that deny the viewer a sense of place in which to take root, emulating the emotional void of central figure Elise's (Isabelle Nanty) own existence; even scenes that would suggest a release, such as when Elise visits a park and fondles a leaf between her toes, only add to the mounting stranglehold. Also notable is Alice Winocour's amusing *Kitchen*, a sketch-like comedy in which a woman finds herself unable to prepare two living lobsters for dinner, suggesting the infamous crustacean sequence from *Annie Hall* writ large with added dementia.

The remainder of these samplings are expectedly scattershot: Jeanne Paturle and Cécile Rousset's politically-themed *One Voice, One Vote* sets opposing viewpoints to animated doodles that suggest democratic thought in action, Felipe Canales's *My Mother, Story of an Immigration* collages archival photographs with her own narrated recollections of family history, and Olivier Bourbeillon channels Errol Morris in the documentary *The Last Day*, concerning the three remaining workers at what was once a huge military factory in Brest. My suspicion is that each of these films would play more interestingly when seen individually as opposed to in the mix, though experiments such as this are nevertheless critical in helping us to understand how context shapes and transforms any given viewing experience. A perfectly suitable diversion, this collection can't help but be less interesting as a singular film than it is as a suggestion of what may be a newfound presence in our increasingly media-on-the-go world: the iFilm.

Director(s): Various Artists. **Screenplay:** Guillaume Martinez, Felipe Canales, Jeanne Paturle, Cécile Rousset, Olivier Bourbeillon, Alain-Paul Mallard and Alice Winocour. **Cast:** Benjamin Bellecour, Gaëlle Brunet, Régis Desfeux, Régis Iacono, Lucienne Troka, Farida Hamak, Arnaud Delaitre, Martine Toulotte, Isabelle Nanty, Elsa Lévy, Eugène Berthier, Arnaud Carbonnier, Canis Crevillen, Bernard Nissile and Elina Löwensohn. **Distributor:** The World According to Shorts. **Runtime:** 97 min. **Rating:** NR. **Year:** 2008.