



Tracking Shots

## 'The World According to Shorts'

film

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A fixture on the local moviegoing circuit since 2000, the annual "The World According to Shorts" has provided one of the few regular outlets for the commercially problematic short-film format. This year's Cinema Village program is something of a best-of, compiling six films from past incarnations and pointedly showcasing the series' range, both geographical and formal. Among the best of the best is *La Perra*, an erotic Chilean satire about a bored upper-class couple who keep each other aroused with larcenous fantasies about their innocent new maid. The overall mode is reminiscent of Buñuel, even including a nod to the master's trademark foot fetishism. Comedy of a decidedly grimmer sort, *United We Stand* imagines Norway's once dominant Labor Party as a group of old men singing the "Internationale" in unison after inadvertently getting stuck in a marsh.

The World According to Shorts  
New Yorker  
Opens July 21, Cinema Village

Some of the entries gain immeasurably from context: Coming on the heels of the arid *Antichrist*, a nearly half-hour-long Polish film about a group of boys playing out masochistic scenarios in a barren wasteland, the gentle naturalism of the Brazilian *The Old Woman's Step* comes as an earthy delight. An elderly woman sells a chicken at market to buy a birthday gift for her fisherman grandson; like its protagonist, the film moves slowly but radiates a quiet generosity of spirit.

The tripartite *We Have Decided Not to Die* (from Australia) reaches nakedly for transcendence, but more genuinely visionary is the German closer, *Ring of Fire*, a mock epic black-and-white animation that finds a pair of cowboys apparently lost in a desert of sexually charged western imagery. It's provocative, mystifying, original, and, as if to prove the vitality of the short form, utterly unimaginable at feature length.