



Film

Tracking Shots

'Operation Homecoming'

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February 6th, 2007 3:29 PM

Though it exists neither to boost nor defy the war in Iraq, *Operation Homecoming* is not without political objective. Drawing inspiration from a project by the National Endowment for the Arts, this unique documentary experience is predicated on the notion that we have underestimated the intellect of our troops. Director Richard E. Robbins interviews men and women of the armed forces, intercutting their recollections of combat with arresting visual articulations of their personal literature. A three-dimensional comic elucidates an army specialist's kill-zone panic, and a collage of animated photographs slowly breaks down an officer's profound compassion for an old man who loses his son during a car bombing. Though the vignettes risk a certain degree of decadence, the firsthand contributions of memoirs, letters, poetry, and fiction from which the visual adaptations are constructed maintain a sense of legitimacy. These stories of heartache, confusion, and anger combine to form a gallery of art that illuminates the conundrums of warfare and testifies to the philosophical instincts of the American soldier.