Details of date, time, GPS location and uploader scroll across the screen in a list of provenances to the ‘truth’ of images. Interspersed with these empirical texts are opening lines of accounts from civilian and military bloggers who describe their experiences of conflict. Longer extracts of these letters-to-an-unknown-public, read by different voices, form the soundtrack, resulting in a three-tiered narrative structure that communicates most loudly between the information flows.
A Short Film about War is a narrative documentary artwork made entirely from information found on the worldwide web. In ten minutes this two-screen movie takes viewers around the world to a variety of war zones as seen through the collective eyes of the online photo sharing community Flickr, and as witnessed by a variety of military and civilian bloggers.

See the film at animateprojects.org

A Short Film about War was developed with help from New Media Scotland and Alt-w.

Script by Jon Thomson, Alison Craighead & Steve Rushton.
Essay by Lisa Le Feuvre.

Double culpability/double subjectivity:
Thomson and Craighead's
A Short Film about War

Lisa Le Feuvre
Thomson and Craighead's A Short Film about War uses the structural language of documentary film, working with material relating to conflict gathered during 2007 and 2008 from publicly accessible archives on the Internet, proposing a means of describing war from pre-existing images and descriptions. War is a contention of power relations, asserted through both actions, and transmission of those actions; as communication technologies evolve so does the representation of war.

Thomson and Craighead’s film studies the ways in which the dissemination of war has shifted as the user-generated realm of the Internet extends information sources out from institutions to individuals. The unfurling of less unified reporting structures offers no less subjectivity than those from mainstream and official channels.

A Short Film about War begins to the left with images of Atlanta airport. To the right, image details are logged, followed by a blog that spirals out into the voiceover. The writer announces his desire to express the intertwining of his hatred for the army and his separation from his wife. The confessional is a personal therapeutic solution to one man’s grief, but the concerns are of a global political nature.

The images pull out to a bird’s eye view of the globe, sourced from Google Earth, returning to rest on a street-stall in Ramallah. The possibilities of hovering above the globe creates fictional possession of knowledge, replicating the desires for visual control that led industrial revolution urban centres to construct panoramic viewing structures. [3] A useless monument to the power of technology, Google Earth is infinitely fascinating.
This ten-minute double-screen projection interrogates the impossibilities and resistances of the representation of war in the complex technologically driven networks that form contemporary communication. The left-hand screen shows a collection of images from Flickr, uploaded by individuals who choose to preserve and spread evidence of a particular personal and political present. The right-hand screen logs the source of these images: Istanbul, Nepal, Santa Monica, Texas, Baghdad, Ramallah, Walt Disney World.