

## Clement Boland – Mowing the Lawn – Artist Statement

Recollect: remember (something); call to mind. Etymology: early 16th century (in the sense 'gather'): from Latin recollect- 'gathered back', from the verb recolligere, from re- 'back' + colligere 'collect'.

As the culmination of my third-year work, my piece 'Mowing the Lawn, or, The Discomfort of Things' expresses an attempt at recollection through re-collecting artefacts and ephemera related to my experiences as a soldier in Afghanistan and my subsequent PTSD. Trauma is known to impact the memory, and part of the process of healing for me has been exploring ways to construct narratives around this part of my life.

In this piece, the narrative is located in the act of sorting and sifting, shifting memories and experiences from the inside of my body out. This act is not primarily cathartic, but instead speaks both to the repetitive, ruminative nature of trauma and the chaotic nature of memory. In PTSD the mind represses traumatic material, but the body 'keeps the score', as trauma specialist Bessel Van De Kolk puts it. In using the physicality of curation to move traumatic material – in the form of ephemera – from within my memory out onto this huge surface I was both physically re-collecting and re-remembering, and also discovering if the shattered pieces of memory could be placed into some semblance of order.

On a larger scale, the work is rooted in my interest in the narrative shaping of history, and my experiences working in archival settings. The curator of exhibitions, like the writer of history, has enormous power to make stories from the raw matter of experience. In this work I allowed myself to be control of my own story. The final form of the piece might invite public exhibition, but for me the value of this art is located entirely in the private realm of my own reclamation of my history.

Due to Covid-19, the exhibition has not been able to go ahead as planned. This has meant a re-think of how to showcase the final piece. After some consideration, I decided to ask filmmaker [David Thomas](#) and photographer [Stuart Griffiths](#) to help me document my work. David filmed Stuart and I in conversation and the film, along with supporting sketchbooks and documentation here at [clementboland.com](http://clementboland.com) forms my final exhibition.