

Working Class Creatives presents

GLORY BOX

*Grace Clifford
Harley Roberts
Kelly Wu*

Thursday - Saturday
17th July – 2nd August 2025

The Shop, Kingly Street, London W1

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presents*

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*Show Dates:
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When we hear the words 'inherited' or 'collection' in the context of art, we often think of wealth, artefacts, or institutional value. For *Grace Clifford*, *Harley Roberts* and *Kelly Wu*, materials are gathered out of necessity, as a means of holding on, filling gaps, or processing experiences that aren't easily archived. *GLORY BOX*, questions what it means to inherit and collect, and how that accumulation complicates ideas of value when placed inside a commercial environment.

Each artist's materials come from making do; objects that arrive through circumstance rather than choice. Charged with histories, latent with feeling.

'Lack of privilege can itself be a privilege because you are left with no illusions and have to create your own with the materials available.' - *Roberts*

Clifford, *Roberts* and *Wu* share a generational instinct to hide, gather and repurpose.

GLORY BOX is Working Class Creatives' first exhibition situated within central London's commercial gallery scene. Operating on the periphery, the exhibition exists not as part of the main program, but as a storeroom, box bedroom, church, glory hole, factory: perched on the edge of the 'gallery world', where working-class survival and labour quietly persist amongst polished spectacle. The title implies thus 'in all its glory' but this isn't a debutante moment. Glory here is complicated. It's devotional; to grief, to language, to scrap metal and the things we carry in our bodies without intention.



These are artists who have inherited labour ingrained in their bodies and minds, who have chosen to direct it towards the gallery.

For **Grace Clifford** (b. 2000, Birmingham), who works underneath a factory in Sheffield, it's a legacy of dirt under her nails, metal in the blood; a haunting, generational rhythm of factory work.

Clifford presents '*Anthony Caro's Scrap Metal*'; rusted, layered, sharp-edged fragments of scrap metal from Anthony Caro's studio given to her during a residency at Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Frustrated with this gift, she held onto the metal like a maternal burden; a weight of someone else's legacy, reluctantly carried and cared for by *Clifford's* hands.

'Sometimes I feel so drawn to material that it wakes me up at night. I am compelled to seek material by a force I respect deeply and don't want to explain. I cannot believe it could be me... I think churches and factories are the same thing.'







Grace Clifford
Anthony Caro's Scrap Metal
2024
steel
various sizes

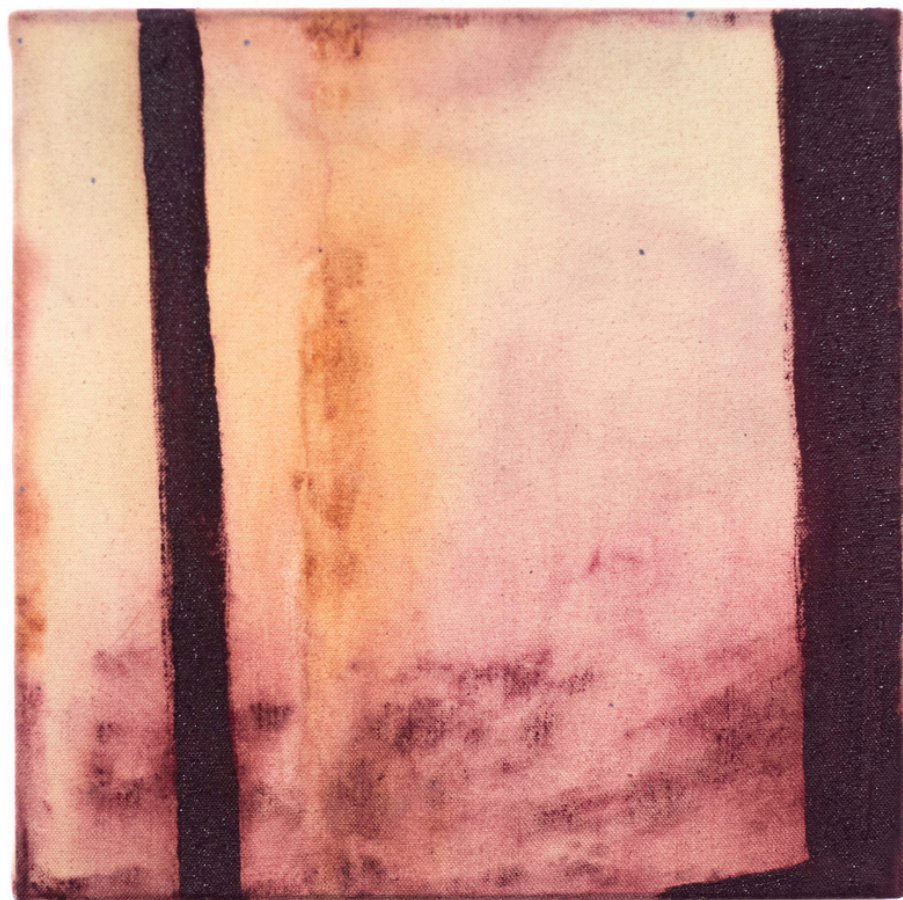


A slow rhythm underpins *GLORY BOX*, a beat that runs through each artist's practice as a low-frequency hum. It echoes the seductive loop of the Portishead song the show takes its name from, carrying into the improvisational paintings of **Harley Roberts** (b. 1995, Grimethorpe). A graduate of the Royal College of Art, *Roberts* describes painting as apparition, a way of haunting whilst still alive. *Meridian Moon* and *Tapestry of Impermanence* take on the layered quality of masks: oil and discarded materials from the artist's own life; built up, concealing and revealing in turn. They evoke what *Roberts* calls:

'the unseen-scenes between scenes, where memory and experience keep dissolving'

Haunted not by specific figures, but by the social and psychic aftermaths of things left unresolved.





Harley Roberts

Meridian Moon

2025

Oil on Canvas

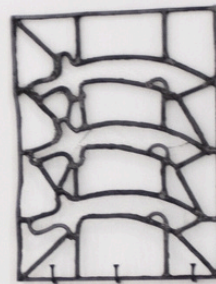
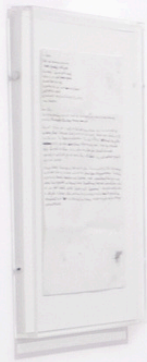
31.5 x 31.5 cm





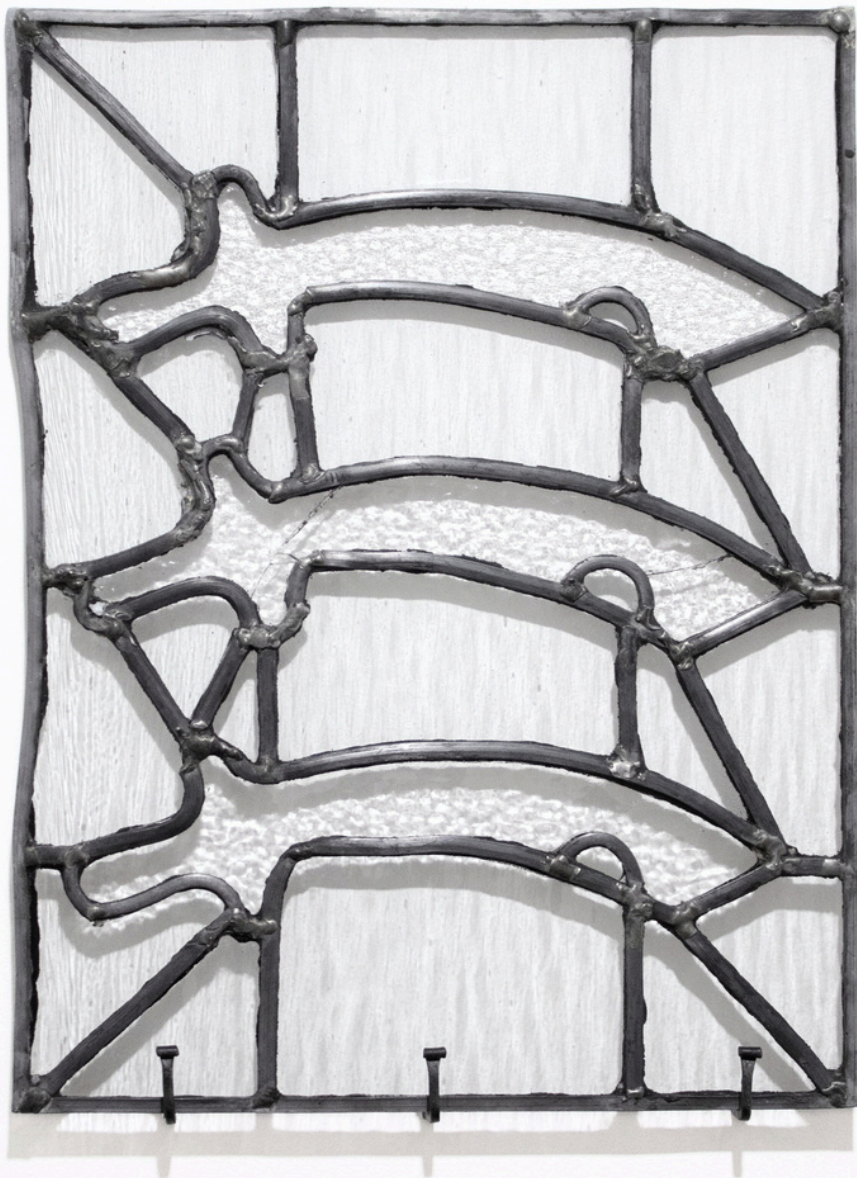
Harley Roberts
Tapestry of Impermanence
2025
Mixed Materials
36 x 30.5 cm





Kelly Wu (b. 2001, Chelmsford) presents *Palindrome*, three identical swords, depicting the Essex coat of arms. For *Wu*, they are a symbol of entrapment, shaped by nine childhood moves across Essex and a recent return to China after 15 years spent in the UK. Now working in a school, *Wu* reflects on the performance of assimilation across cultures and institutions. Their language is shaped by repetition, dislocation, and return; A choreography of packing and unpacking.

Tea Light White White Tea Light takes the form of a letter written by an old school friend, its falsified romance and flair evoking the differences that marked their formative years. *Slat of Sunlight*, *Base of My Door* comprises doorstops collected, often stolen from pubs, clubs, studios, and cultural institutions, including the Slade School of Fine Art and Antony Gormley's studio. With over seventy wedges amassed to date, *Wu* turns these small acts of theft into a personal archive, a metaphor for keeping doors from closing and making room to return.



Kelly Wu
Palindrome
2025
Glass, Lead, Solder, Cement
32 x 41 cm

In Dream
Black and endless separation
I share equally with you.
Why sleep? Give me your hand,
Promise me you will come again.
You and I are like high
Mountains and we can't ~~be~~ move closer
Just send me word
At midnight sometime through the doors.
Anna Akmatova

Dear Kelly,
This is me sending my own word at midnight, my word as mid-evening
sometime through the deep orange ~~sun~~ sun.

I'm just looking at a moth on the side of my window and I'm reminded of
an essay that Virginia Woolf wrote on this subject. I know you like her so I'll
send the book. The essay in particular. The death of Moth ~~reminds me of the~~
~~death~~ moth at once interesting, vigorous and frail days life presents
itself. The moth is this... it is embodying that you should describe
yourself as not even for it seems the moth lives the full extent of life's
joys and sorrows.

Perhaps lately I have spent too much time thinking about this life seeing
as to base hopes of societal interaction have been stopped away... I've been
re-reading Marcus Aurelius and Epicurus and consulting them for any
ideas they spawned in Ancient Greece. Something that did resonate with
me was from a book called 'Walking with Epicurus' - it's quite a silly book
as it's from a senior elder working out philosophically how to spend his
retirement but ~~he~~ he described one scene which is quite apt for today's
circumstances.

Kelly Wu
Tea Light White White Tea Light
2023
Ink on paper
29 x 39 cm

In dream
Black and enduring separation
I share equally with you.
Why weep? Give me your hand,
Promise me you will come again.
You and I are like high
Mountains and we can't move closer
Just send me word
At midnight, sometime through the stars.
Anna Akmatova

Dear Kelly,
This is me sending my own word at midn
sometime through the deep orange ~~pen~~ s
I'm just looking at a moth on the side of
an essay that Virginia Woolf wrote on it
and the book. The essay in particular 'Ch
~~ly~~ both at once arresting, vigor
itself. The moth is this... it is embracing
itself as nothing for it seems the
joys and sorrows.

Perhaps lately I have spent too much
as its bare bones of social interaction
researching Mar...

At midnight, sometime through the stars
Anna Akmatova

Dear Kelly,
This is me sending my own word at midn
sometime through the deep orange pen
I'm just looking at a moth on the side of
an essay that Virginia Woolf wrote on it
and the book. The essay in particular 'Ch
~~ly~~ both at once arresting, vigor
itself. The moth is this... it is embracing
itself as nothing for it seems the
joys and sorrows.

Perhaps lately I have spent too much
as its bare bones of social interaction
researching Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus
ideas they spouted in ancient times. But
me was from a book called 'Walking with
as its from a senior elder working in
refinement but ~~is~~ is devoted to
circumstances.





Kelly Wu
Slat of Sunlight, Base of My Door (Partial)
2024 - 25
Wooden Doorstops
36 x 8 x 8 cm



Full collection



Grace Clifford recalls hoarding, and hiding bottles she bought during the rise of reusable culture not out of defiance, but guilt. My eternal chalice consists of used plastic bottles and a small angel statue. Lined up in front of a window, the vessels shine under a devotional light. *Clifford* places her shame above the glory of Caro's legacy.









Grace Clifford
My Eternal Chalice

2024

plastic bottles, pistachio shells,
 lemon, various liquids, angel
 various sizes



A publication was made alongside GLORY BOX with a small text by each artist in relation to the themes of the exhibition.

I was not afforded the luxury of great expectations

Getting in

One leg over me

Getting out

i am baptised in water from the river Jordan because there was leftovers

Factory x 1000

Labour in vain

Horses skulls are natural amplifiers

Churches and Factories

Riddled with desire

The same reason I wake up at night is the same reason I wake up in the morning

Oxidisation

Hi [REDACTED] Just got home. I wanted to thank you again for earlier. It was even better than I was hoping for! Art's gain will be escorting's loss... xxx

Grace Clifford

My whole life, I have been addicted to the idea of death, and I know that now. Addicted in many ways separate from the junky and junk, but similarly at a far-away distance too close, where the need to think about death is not my own, like the rattle for vitamin H is not the addicts; the continuous knocking on the proverbial door, behind you, out of focus, loud enough for one to see it — an apparition, an ever approaching-disappearing — lack. Not death referring to the final curtain that eventually covers us all, but what it is like to die whilst still living. I believe my paintings aren't much more than that — a stretched view of an ever dissolving horizon, a concealed entrance to the bright-white-sleepless-night, witnessing the dead-still-standing and realising that this is (not) my life and I have known it all along. Something that is real, is something you cannot express at all, but the feeling is all you have left.

The vital concern is how, and where, one meets life — or death. It is no argument that life can be more dangerous than death, and death on the other hand can open up the path to life. It is against this paradoxical, stagnant flux when we realise that we are. Brilliantly alive.

I'm a self-made man but have made one vital error: my art is in the right place but my head is currently stuck up my arse.

Harley Roberts

I am [TICK BOX] [TICK BOX] [TICK BOX]. I wish I was a white wedding dove. Variety act, bilateral. Pertaining to *both sides*. Routine, semi-routine manual, or service occupation. Always accused of tricking someone or something. Lying in the mess I've made of it. And here, in this country, *faith is the crown of life*.

I use the word 'bilateral' a lot because I feel that at times I have belonged to two things at once. I am spinning on a blade upon the origin of the axes, Cartesian, dizzy, and responsive to everything. The slightest breeze can affect the accuracy of an uncalibrated clock.

I am a ballerina in the crooked box, dancing for those guys, and those guys, and those guys, and those guys...

WC (living quarters)

MC (learning quarters)

GB (thinking quarters)

CN (the face that has brought me so much trouble before).

I think that I am assimilating. Every time, I think that I am assimilating, that I am *finally* understanding England after being born here, spending every second here. But then some complexity or intervention arises, and I lose my understanding of what I desire and to what extent I am willing to pretend.

In my dreams, a Red Guard and a Reform voter meet and shake hands. I can't hear what they're talking about because the sound of the sea is too loud in my ears. I don't know which sea it is exactly, only that I'm facing *east*

Kelly Wu

Grace Clifford
Harley Roberts
Kelly Wu

GLORY BOX

Sadie Coles The Shop
62 Kingly Street W1
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Peoples reason for being artists wasnt because they
wanted to be but because they had to be, they had
this deep desire to become an artist even if they didnt
know what that fully entailed yet.

We are not trying to do anything crazy, just documenting a moment

I was gonna take the lyric from the song MOVE OVER AND
GIVE US SOME ROOM but that doesnt feel quite right
because I think it really is a negotiation, we all have to be in the
same room together

To curate is to care thats why we are so bothered about having shows.. Its not
just about putting some works on the wall and selling them. The formalities
aren't enough, theres got to be talk and conversation, and care. Theres got to
be a point to it all.

A balance of camouflaging

We talked before about how our shoes were always
polished and our homes spotless, about immigrant parents
too because its the same, its about fitting in and how you
appear to others.

Wanting so much to appear English, or appear upper class
carries on into our way of existing professionally or career
wise because we want to be taken seriously.

Doing it because we need to
We've been called to
The calling doesn't discriminate

HOW DID U MANAGE THAT?

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