

## Jonny Green speaking with Head of Art Histories Tom Groves about his time as Artist in Residence 2017

*TG: What was it that lead you to apply for the residency here at the Art School?*

JG: This is the first residency I have ever actually applied for, so I was quite surprised when I was invited to take it up. My reasoning for applying was to shake things up for myself artistically. It's quite easy to disappear down a creative rabbit hole when you are spending every day in the studio on your own. I figured that working in a busy environment like here at the school would take me out of my comfort zone. CGLAS appealed to me specifically because of its focus on making. The fine art department is located in the same building as the traditional crafts department, and I feel the opportunity for cross-pollination is very exciting. The timing was perfect for me professionally and personally, I had recently moved out of London and was feeling quite isolated, so the residency provided me with a perfect compromise.

*TG: What have you been working on this year?*

JG: One thing I felt sure about when starting on the residency was that I wanted to make work that was outside of my usual practice. I'm known as a painter but my main focus has been on sculpture. Earlier in the year I had been re-reading *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* by Wilhelm Reich and had started exploring ideas of totalitarianism. My habitual use of humour to diffuse whatever is frightening seems to have found free-reign in the latest works. I was surprised at how much the new sculptures I made related to my previous paintings. My aesthetic sensibilities transferred very naturally.

*TG: I can see that you have really enjoyed the experience of being part of a creative community. How specifically has this fed into your practice?*

JG: I can't emphasize how much the use of the school's expertise and facilities has helped me. It's been a wonderful opportunity for me to broaden my practice, particularly the staff in the print room and the casting room - so helpful and generous with their time. I also spent some time learning how to do glass casting, which is something I can't imagine I would ever have gotten-round to without the residency.

*TG: Can you tell me a bit about your experience here on the residency? What has it been like to be part of the art school?*

JG: The residency is a very public and visible thing within the art school. The studios we were given are on the ground floor on either side of the main thoroughfare, so everybody that comes and goes in the building can see into our studios. The consequence of this is that I became integrated into the life of the art school very quickly. The studios made us very accessible to the students, so for me at least, there was a great deal of conversation with the students about their art. Needless to say, constant exposure to the ideas of other artists is a very good thing indeed; it forces you to question your own assumptions and ideas. My

normal studio routine is much more solitary. One thing that surprised me is how much I enjoyed the mentoring I did with a small group of students and will be looking to continue this, perhaps through teaching or lecturing when I finish the residency.

Until I started the residency, I didn't realize that places like this still existed. It is in some ways an old fashioned art school, and I mean that in the most positive way. The staff to student ratio is really wonderful and this means the students are much more nurtured and challenged than the norm.

*TG: If at all, how has being on the residency changed your work? What do you feel about these shifts or changes?*

JG: My work has changed in quite a big way I think. I feel that the point of a residency like this is to try new things, which is exactly how I approached it. I think the main thing I will take away with me is that I don't need to be beholden to my own artistic lineage. I have, to a certain extent, thrown out the rulebook.

The logo for City&Guilds of London Art School is a red square containing the text "City&Guilds of London Art School" in white, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in three lines: "City&Guilds" on the top line, "of London" on the middle line, and "Art School" on the bottom line.

City&Guilds  
of London  
Art School