

## Interview with Josiah McNeil, ARTiculation Speaker 2016, West Midlands

### Why did you take part in ARTiculation?

The main reason I decided to participate was to develop my confidence in public speaking. I recognise it as something I am anxious of doing, yet an essential skill to develop. I wanted to push my own boundaries and comfort zone, all whilst meeting like-minded people and discussing the topic I enjoy more than anything - art!

### What do you think the value is in a programme such as ARTiculation?

There are just so many but, firstly and most obviously, the platform to develop your ability to *articulate* an artwork of personal significance. As a participant, you are guided to consider how content, structure, and delivery shapes meaning and how to make such intangible matter accessible to an unknown audience. And there, to me, is the key value of ARTiculation. It is dedicated to making art a shared experience, that art is to be inclusive and diversified.

### Why should other students take part in ARTiculation?

I have recommended it to many of my friends since participating, and the reason has always been it is a rare opportunity to speak publically within a gallery. Before participating, galleries and the 'art world' felt very distant to the insular bubble of A-Level Art. It broke down that wall, curing my *schwellenangst* if you like, and led to further opportunities and ventures with like-minded individuals.

On the day of participating I was invited along to Ikon Youth Programme by staff at the gallery, and that in particular has played such a monumental role in both my artistic and professional development. Further transformative experiences have ensued, including placements at Ikon Gallery and Barber Institute of Fine Art, and speaking at the Association for Art Historian's Conference at the National Gallery.

ARTiculation helps you get that foot into a door that otherwise felt impenetrable!

### Has ARTiculation had any impact on you personally or academically?

ARTiculation has been a transformative experience for me both personally **and** academically. Whilst the initial presentation fades out of significance, the sense of inclusion and comradery within the alumni itself has remained a lasting bond I have greatly valued.

As someone who is interested but cautious towards art, this sustained inclusion has demystified the art world (to an extent) and reminded me that there is a place for my thoughts and opinions on art.

The succession of platforms to discuss and learn about art since participating, and the confidence that has come with this, has played a pivotal role in my gaining a place to study Fine Art at Oxford University. I like to see ARTiculation as a stepping stone, and one I am most grateful for!