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Image created in Edmonton, Alberta

Artist At Work

Semi-Finalist

The neurodiversity and disability rights movements recognize that there are multiple ways of being, thinking, and perceiving in the world. Thanks to the development of Contemporary Disability Arts since the 1980s, disabled and neurodivergent artists have been creating and sharing their diverse perspectives and lived experiences of disability. James Doran (pictured here) is a neurodivergent artist in his early thirties, living in Edmonton, Alberta. James was diagnosed as being mentally disabled before he was two years old, and diagnosed with autism at the age of four. James' mother, Margaret, first introduced him to drawing when he was a child, prone to aggressive outbursts and tantrums. The act of drawing captured his interest, and quickly became a way for him to explore his fascinations. According to his parents, the repeating lines and shapes in James' art are often meant to represent spatial and architectural forms, like skyscrapers, stairs, and elevators. Even though he seldom speaks, James communicates his unique perspective of the world through his art, and has even had his drawings exhibited in Disability Arts venues across the country.