



James Culleton – B.F.A. Honours

[www.jamesculleton.com](http://www.jamesculleton.com)

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The first and foremost tool in my practice is drawing. I use drawing to sketch people, places, and ideas. In 2003 I began using blind contour drawing, a technique where my focus is maintained solely on the subject rather than looking down at the paper. Blind contour drawing is an excellent and quick technique for documenting personalities and movement quickly, allowing me to draw from a vast variety of subjects in a short amount of time.

The latest innovation in my artistic practice transforms these blind contour drawings into sculptures. This process begins with a blind contour sketch, followed by scanning it into a computer as a digital image, then importing the drawing into Graphite (a program that enables me to create vector based drawings), and finally sending the drawings to a CNC (computer numerical control) router which uses high-pressured water to cut my drawing out of steel or wood. What results is a sculpture that is a continuous and delicate line in the shape of the drawing.

Lately my drawings are focused on the places where art and music meet. I recently completed a large scale outdoor sculpture to be hung on the outside of the West End Cultural Centre that employs this new innovation in my work. The piece will be unveiled on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The sculpture is based on sketches that I had done from live performances at the West End as well as from the Manitoba Archives.

I exhibited the first of my sculptures in 2009 at an exhibition of blind contour drawings of live musical performances called *Lyrical Lines* at the Folk Exchange. This exhibit also included 'record boxes' where people could flip through my library of drawings like they were buying an album or CD.

At the end of 2008 my drawings focused on the rediscovery of my French Roots using blind contour drawing and a GPS, of which I published a book of the project. In the book *Contouring Quebec* I created a library of work sighting my genealogy and my French heritage.

In 2009 I had an exhibition of my latest oil paintings where I worked from photography to create majestic landscapes of trees, fire, and water. Also in 2009 I had a solo exhibit of my blind contour drawings and paintings called "Lignee" which tied the work to a lineage or personal history.

I collect these drawings of my environment and they become my personal nostalgia. Collecting represents the most rudimentary way to exercise control over the outer world: by laying things out, grouping them, handling them." I relentlessly draw my surroundings, enjoying the knowledge of this self pleasure, this self-knowing. It is "the joy of finding one's self that exists outside the world around us" (Baudrillard).