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What Douglas Coupland Really Wants



The author of "Generation X" and "Microserfs" sits down, collects himself and begins sputtering as if he's just come out of a trance and is struggling to dissect the pop nuggets he's just discovered. Coupland is at SXSW to promote the U.S. film premier of "Everything's Gone Green," from his first screenplay, a project that took seven years to complete.

Rare as it is these days, Coupland was sole screenwriter the whole way on this film. Every word in the script is his, and he says that he came out of the whole thing less cynical than when he undertook it; a shocker but an encouraging one at that. After rambling through the usual list of complaints about aging, the 45-year-old writer revealed that his so-called "sensory loss" is pushing him further into the visual realms of film and art.

This is good news for his fans because the Paul Fox-directed movie, opening nationwide April 20, succeeds in distilling what we love most about Coupland, similar to the way that "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" perfectly captured the chaotic thought process of Michel Gondry. Though fans of Coupland novels such as "Girlfriend in a Coma" and "All Families Are Psychotic" may find this very un-novel-like treatment a little too thin on the usual psychological depths.

Coupland, one of the true road warriors of the book tour circuit, came armed with sage writerly advice. The best advice he'll ever give: "Eat lots of chocolate." The dark stuff, it always cures him of writer's block. Hinting that allowing your mind to free-roam through disordered territory may be the key to capturing creativity, he reasoned, "Everyone is autistic to some degree, and should harness it. He confessed that many of his characters were distillations of about six people whom he'd met. Topping his required reading list for learning to write dialogue is John O'Hara's "Appointment in Samsara" and "Butterfied 8."

That's about the best creative advice you could hope for from an SXSW panel. But what does Coupland really want? Well, he would like \$100,000 to execute his dream art piece, an anatomically true cast aluminum sculpture of Swedish bombshell Ann-Margaret's face and body, which he would coat with ceramic baked beans.

Posted by Todd Jatras 2:01:29 AM