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Douglas Coupland's brain: get inside at Vancouver Art Gallery show

'Everywhere is anywhere is everything is anything' runs May 31 to Sept 1, 2014

By Margaret Gallagher, CBC News Posted: May 30, 2014 6:48 AM PT



It's not often you get a chance to walk through someone's brain or stick gum on a person's face — especially someone as renowned as **Douglas Coupland**, but a new exhibit at the **Vancouver Art Gallery** invites audiences to do just that.

Everywhere is anywhere is anything is everything is comprised of over 100 works by Coupland, on display from May 30 to Sept. 1, 2014.

Coupland shot to international fame with his 1991 novel *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*. The seminal slacker tale helped define a generation and added terms like "McJob" and "Generation X" to the vernacular.

Coupland has built on that literary success, continuing to publish novels, non-fiction books, screenplays, and articles.

Prior to his writing career, there was Coupland the artist. He graduated from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design (now a university) in 1984 and studied further in Japan and Italy.

In 2000 he resumed his art practice with gallery shows and public art installations.

Insights of a cultural critic

"I think Doug is seen as a cultural critic," says Daina Augaitus, chief curator of the Vancouver Art Gallery.

"He does provide his insights...about the place that we inhabit and the kinds of people that we are and the relationships we have. He brings perspective to the country that we are, the Canadians that we are and, but also the the utopias that we might aspire to."

The show fills 10,000 square feet, and includes a utopian/dystopian world built of Lego, a look at 9/11 through the filter of smart phone technology, and a room filled with precisely arranged objects that represent Coupland's brain, collected over the years.

"I'm kind of a packrat," admits Coupland. "I would even go so far as to say 'hoarder' in training."

"But I do think when you collect anything over a period of time, and then you stand back and look at it, you're going to learn something that you didn't quite know before. Which is part of the joy of it."

Gumhead sculpture invites interaction

The public can also experience the joy of sticking gum on a two-metre high sculpture of Coupland's head, located outside the gallery.

"I spent a decade doing all these big projects outdoor across Canada, and having to deal with defacement is simply part of my job description, says Coupland, who has worked with gum as an art form before.

"Gumhead is a way of releasing 10 years of anxiety about worrying about gum, spraypaint...you name it...people will do anything in public."

Coupland says it's also a way for the public to feel like they are part of process.

"I'm curious to see how people will deface it," laughs Coupland. "Are they going to put in snot? Devil horns? Who knows? We'll see..."

Coupland hopes that walk through the show will encourage people to embrace our accelerated culture.

"We've absorbed alot very quickly. Instead of being overwhelmed by it, try to rejoice in it.

"In a lot of ways, the world has never been as interesting."

-Gallagher, Margaret. "Douglas Coupland's brain: get inside at Vancouver Art Gallery show", *CBC News*, May 30, 2014.