



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Honorary Degree Citations The degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, conferred on Dr. Douglas Coupland Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Mr. Chancellor, the finest artists combine acute powers of observation and insight. They are able to distill the essence of experience and they invite us to look at life anew. Douglas Coupland is such a talent, and we are the grateful beneficiaries of his incisive intellect, ironic wit, and boundless imagination.

He studied sculpture at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design and furthered his training in Japan and then Italy. Subsequently, he turned his artistic eye on the world around him and began to write articles on popular culture. In 1991, he burst into prominence with his now legendary novel, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, a book that captured the spirit of the times and gave voice to an entire generation of young people.

Since then, he has been both prolific and popular. His fiction, innovative in form and content, challenges readers with its ironic exploration of the most vexing issues of our times: for example, the satirical vision of a society obsessed with consumer culture in *Shampoo Planet*; the examination of human loneliness in *Eleanor Rigby*; the dissection of religious beliefs in *Hey Nostradamus!*; and the depiction of a society drowning in information in *jPod*. In these works, as in all his writing, he has proved a wise and witty critic of contemporary social trends.

An astute essayist, he has also contributed articles on popular culture to several prestigious publications, including the *New Republic* and *Art Forum*. He has written scripts for film and in 2004, he wrote and performed his theatrical work *September 10, 2001* at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. His *Souvenir of Canada* books gained instant popularity for their witty portrayal of what it means to be Canadian. In 2005, he published *Terry*, a sensitive tribute to Terry Fox, SFU's most famous alumnus.

The quality and scope of his writing would satisfy even the most demanding of authors, but Douglas Coupland is also a productive visual artist of great ingenuity. Over the years, he has worked on numerous projects from furniture design to thought-provoking sculptural installations and multimedia