



Writer and artist Douglas Coupland unveils his new public art project, Interpretations of Calgary, Alberta in the 21st Century, in the lobby of the Calgary condominium Mark on 10th on Friday. *ANDY MAXWELL MAWJI*

NOTE TO READERS

ARTIST TARGETS PASSERSBY WITH COLOURFUL NEW WORK

New York Times puzzle is here to stay

Don't panic, puzzle fans. The New York Times daily crossword isn't going anywhere.

Some outraged crossword puzzlers contacted the Calgary Herald newsroom Friday.

They wanted to know whether we were dropping the New York Times puzzle.

Why? The answers to the clues in the Friday crossword spelled out the following: "Due to budget cuts the New York Times crossword puzzle will end tomorrow."

Not true. In fact, the puzzle answers were an April Fool's joke.

The puzzle that stirred the controversy was first published in the New York Times on April 1.

But because the syndicated version of the puzzle appears about a month later in other newspapers, Calgary Herald readers got it Friday.

Apologies for any anxiety that ensued from the false alarm.

You can once again find the New York Times crossword and other puzzles on pages G14 of today's newspaper.



ERIC VOLMERS

It was four long years ago that Douglas Coupland first envisioned the concept: an eye-catching series of coloured targets on the wall of the lobby of a luxury condominium complex in Calgary's Design District.

Each target would represent something that personified Calgary in some way, whether it be a wild rose, a snowy owl, a bonspiel or hockey.

The installation was finally unveiled on Friday, with the renowned Vancouver-based artist and author on hand to talk to media in the lobby of the luxury \$100-million condo project. Large-scale art installations are nothing new for Coupland, but he admits that seeing the project in full, multicolour glory as opposed to drawings or through SketchUp 3-D models was somewhat surreal even for him.

"I've looked at the renderings and SketchUp files so often now that there's this sense of actual disbelief that it actually exists," says Coupland on Friday morning. "I think architects must get that all the time. It worked beautifully. I just want to eat them. They are kind of delicious."

It's called Interpretation of Calgary, Alberta in the 21st Century and towers above the concierge desk in the lobby of the 35-sto-

rey, \$100-million condo project. The unveiling also marked the completion of the condo project's construction, which means more than 450 Calgarians who live in the 274 luxury suites will soon be making their way past Coupland's installation on a daily basis.

The fact that the building is called MARK was a good jumping off point for Coupland, who once said he saw the individual aluminum targets as representing "little kabooms of colour" in Calgary's urban landscape. The 4.9-metre high and 4.1-metre wide installation is his first large-scale art project in Alberta.

Using what Coupland calls "the chocolate-box map" that labels what each of the 20 circles represents — which also includes golden rod, burrowing owl and fireweed — Coupland says he hopes the residents form a long-term relationship with the piece.

"I just want people to be able to walk through every day and maybe fixate on one, and say 'What's that one there? A burrowing owl? Is that the stellers jay? What's that?' They will build up a relationship I hope with colours and the forms."

While Coupland first arrived in the public spotlight as the author of iconic, era-defining novels such as 1991's Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture and 1994's Life After God, he is also a graduate of the Emily Carr University of Art and Design, where he focused on sculpture in the early 1980s.

In the past decade, his profile in the art world has climbed steadily thanks to a number of large-

scale public works, including the Canadian Fallen Firefighters Memorial, 2012 in Ottawa, The Red Canoe in Canoe Landing Park in Toronto and the Digital Orca at the Jack Poole Plaza in Vancouver.

Recently, he teamed up with Quebec-based fashion retailer Simons for a crowdsourced art project called 3DCanada, which involved the artist visiting seven Canadian cities and scanning customers at Simons stores. Those scans are then put through 3-D printers to create busts of the participants.

He also constructed a seven-foot "self-portrait" of his head at the Vancouver Art Gallery entitled Gumhead, which invited spectators to apply their chewed gum to the sculpture.

MARK on 10th developers Qualex-Landmark took a hands-

off approach to Interpretation of Calgary, Alberta in the 21st Century, basically giving him a blank wall and vague theme of representing Calgary as the only guidance. Still, Coupland said private commissions are different than gallery works.

"It's (like) fiction versus non-fiction and different parts of the brain," he says. "Obviously I write fiction, but then I love writing non-fiction. Non-fiction is always tethered to or grounded to some reality in the world, whether it's a topic like drugs or ecology or whatever, whereas stuff you do on your own just is what it is. I think that really applies to visual art too. It's art that is grounded in a specific place and a time and a theme. So in my head, I've got four jobs: private art, public art, fiction and non-fiction."

Parham Mahboubi, vice-president of planning and marketing for Qualex-Landmark, said while it was a private commission and in the lobby of private residences, he says he hopes it benefits the community in general. The open concept of the lobby — the windows were covered as the piece was installed — ensures that the artwork can be seen by passersby.

"It's not just for the residents, who really appreciate having amazing artwork in their building," he said. "It's also for the neighbourhood. This is considered the Beltline's emerging Design District, so we felt this was a very appropriate addition to the neighbourhood and promoting the whole notion of art in the Beltline."

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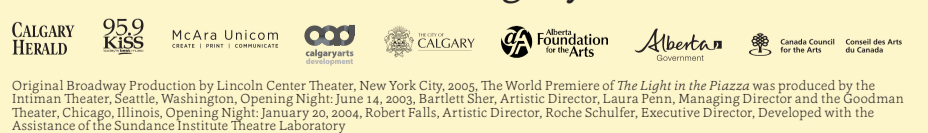
Book by Craig Lucas
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