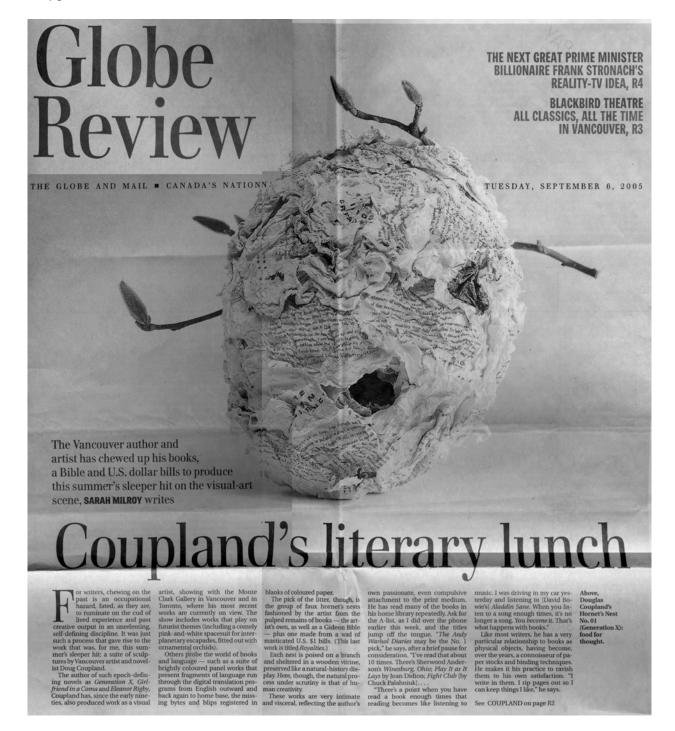
THE GLOBE & MAIL, by Sarah Milroy September 6, 2005, pgs. R1-R2



## 'You chew the pages one at a time'

COUPLAND from page R1

"What am I supposed to do, sell them, on eBay? They're my books—I'll do what I want."
In his most recent work, this principle is carried to extremes. The idea of making the nests came from contact with his cousin,

ing if that would be possible," he adds. He was fascinated, too, by the involuntary nature of the in-sects' industriousness, and their sects' industriousness, and their gripping biological compulsion to create. "The wasps, the hornets — they can't not make the nests, you know. They have to." Quickly, he honed his procedure.

"You take the book, and you re-move the pages and soak them in a Tupperware container and then you chew the pages one at a time. I always did it when I was watching TV." Each nest took about a week of

chewing. Some of the pages had to be chewed two or three times, de-

pending on the durability of the paper, the money even more. ("Those bills are really built to last.") And what about the impact on his health of all that ink, not to last.") And what about the impact on his health of all that ink, not to mention the printing chemicals and paper bleaches? "Well, you do stop salivating for a few days afterward," he admitted, reassuring me that he soaked the used \$1 bills in an antiseptic before getting under way— just to be safe.

With the heavy noshing out of the way, Coupland then moves into construction mode, laying the flattened layers of paste out into "demi-lune shapes, overlapping them one on top of the other, as you can see," and leaving them to dry.

Most of the works in the Toronto show involved revisiting his own previous literary output: Girlfriend in a Coma, Generation X, God Hates Japan, Life After God. His Gideon Bible piece was the anomaly. "I think it's there because of the fact that I spend so much time in least a love of the looks." In books."

"I think it's there because of the fact that I spend so much time in hotel rooms thanks to books," he says, referring to his endless cycles of book tours, "and the Gideon's Bible is always there. For me, it's a metaphor for travel. And that one was easier, too," he adds, fondly. "The paper was thinner." So far he has made six nests, but there may be more to come.

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Currently, he is eyeing the manuscript of his forthcoming book in the series of his forthcoming book in the series of his forthcoming book in the series of the series of his forthcoming how the series of the series of his forthcoming a tour de force, so monumental it may give rise to a new form, perhaps harking back to the pulp bricks made by Vancouver sculptor Liz Magor in the 1970s. "It will involve, I think, some other product of regurgitation," Coupland muses." I just don't know yet."

The project could also serve as a ritual farewell to the book itself, and the pleasures of its making. "When I spend time with young writers, they often talk about launch parties for their novels, and I always say: Save your money for the marketing budget; launch parties are a waste of time. What you need to do is have a 'book's over' party. You gather your friends together at your house and you have a good dinner and some good wine and then you burn a copy of the book. Otherwise, when is it over? With the publication of the paper-back? The Norwegian paperback? Otherwise, it is just perpetually with you. You can never let it go."