



**GREAT
SCOT!**

**JAMES MCAVOY:
A VERY**

not for girls.

guys

**Anthony
Hopkins**
joins the
wolf pack

Who's

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ADAM WALLACAVAGE



V I R T U A L I N S A N I T Y

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO concentrate: There's a guy in chalky face paint and a pot-leaf-printed T-shirt who has—literally—a blue tooth, rewriting the U.S. Constitution, replacing *God with the Internet*. Suddenly, a girl marinated in self-tanner is squawking, “My personal, really concise pussy is creating a very inner monologue that I’m not going to share with you as I become dynamic.” What just happened?

No, you aren’t having a bad trip. The above is a scene (or two) from Ryan Trecartin’s hallucinatory video-art piece “Re/Search Wait’S,” a visual and verbal collage co-opted from the wellspring that is the Internet. Think of it as Theater of the Absurd for the YouTube generation. “I think we are reinventing the human species,” says the artist, who’s sitting on a pink couch in the belly of the “Wait’S” installation—a colorful mise-en-scène that he constructed to “frame” the film—at the Fabric Workshop and Museum in his hometown of Philadelphia. “The new technologies for accessing information might have seemed excessive in the ‘80s,” he says. “But it isn’t the ‘80s anymore.”

Trecartin collapses the aesthetics of the last decade into a schizophrenic, post-apocalyptic party. Should he find something inspiring on reality TV, he’ll splice in a pop song, a scientific lecture, maybe an advertising campaign—so that watching his work is like patching into your TV, radio, and computer at once. “My process of reference is one of absorption; I do a lot of digesting of cultural content and momentum,” he says. “I’m most inspired when somebody translates a piece of culture to me. Especially if they’re drunk. I was at a party where everyone was talking about *Jersey Shore*; it was hilarious how people were mimicking it. I tend to fictionalize the vibra-

tions between media, participation, and response.”

Trecartin’s film scripts sound like a lesson in Existentialism 2.0. Characters muse, “Am I over-existing, or am I over-existing?” Scenes are constructed like songs—with choruses and call-and-response vocals—evidence of the role music plays in his work. (Trecartin spent some childhood years at a performing-arts school, where he played the piano and saxophone; he later attended RISD.) “When you remember a movie, you talk about what happened.... But it was the sound that made you feel like that’s what was happening,” says Trecartin, who uses sound design “as a tool to enhance the language and bring it to that complicated place where people are questioning rather than getting.” He goes as far as to re-pitch voices, obscuring the characters’ already ambiguous genders. “As we move toward other realities, gender becomes less of something you subscribe to and more of something you create; getting off is more of a conceptual than physical thing,” he says. “A character’s personality is their sex organ.”

The artist’s first feature-length film, “I-Be Area”—in which characters’ personalities jostle with their online avatars—is part of the Guggenheim’s permanent collection. His work, however, is not confined to the gallery. Trecartin uploads all his videos to his YouTube page, WianTreetin. “My audience isn’t just an art-world audience,” he says. “I want it to see my work and respond to it... ‘cause I make it for people.”



Any Ever runs March 25–May 26 at the
Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery,
Toronto.
elizabethdeegallery.com