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Movie review: 'Everything's Gone Green'

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"Everything's Gone Green" is a romantic comedy/social satire that, on a modest budget, manages to be hip, charming, funny and dressed to kill. This movie, in town for a weeklong run at the Gene Siskel Film Center, doles out laughs and love better than many of the higher-financed, more star-heavy comedies in general release.

One of its assets is its writer, Douglas Coupland, popularizer of the by now done-to-death phrase "Generation X." More pluses are the inventive visuals and lively pace of Paul Fox's direction as well as the hard-to-resist appeal of the movie's very attractive leads, sweetly slackerish Paulo Costanzo (of Matt LeBlanc's "Joey" series) as Ryan and, as Ming, Steph Song, a Saskatoon-born Asian-Canadian actress of dry wit and drop-dead looks. Another major selling point is its setting, Vancouver, a luscious-looking, airy city that often pops up in American productions disguised as one of our cities.

Coupland is zeroing in on morally challenged yuppies and focusing on the temptation of Ryan, a nice guy with a talent for photography, who gets a job with a lottery magazine, writing about and photographing the winners. Eventually, Ryan meets and falls hard for Ming, a movie set dresser who works on those U.S. runaway productions, and he gets pulled by Ming's rapacious boyfriend Bryce (JR Bourne) into a Japanese Mafia money-laundering scheme involving the lottery winners. Soon, Ryan is making tons of money, but his soul and his possible future with Ming (who's getting wise to Bryce) both lie in jeopardy.

Like many novelists turned screenwriters, Coupland gives this script more depth and ideas than usual, especially on themes of post-Gen X (or Gen-Y) greed and mendacity. He's also written some sexy boy-meets-girl, boy-fumbles-girl, boy-gets-girl scenes for Costanzo and Song, a crisply nasty villain part for Bourne and snappy supporting roles for everyone else--including Tom Butler and Susan Hogan as Ryan's parents, who evolve from suburban, lottery-happy blandness to running a marijuana "grow op" (or growing operation) in their house.

The movie fires off a lot of telling salvos at greed, corruption, romantic delusions, conspicuous consumption and the new multicultural, information-highway age. Not at the upper level of sex comedies and satires, "Green" is a good show, nicely made, with some laughs and substance. These days, that's worth something.

'Everything's Gone Green'

Time: 1:35. Runs Fri.-Thu. at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., 312-846-2800, siskelfilmcenter.org. **MPAA rating: R (for some language, sexual material and drug content).**