

all of this. If we're being realistic, we're all fucked; we may as well have some joy in whatever these troublesome times are." Being an artist on the brink of fame, while living in a world on the brink of collapse, is nothing new. If anything, it's great ground for new fodder. For the time being, it's not a question of straddling politically correct lines, it's about whether there's an "in" at all: "There are definitely things that aren't funny. Like I don't think #MeToo is funny, there is no 'in' ... We're actually at a point where everything is problematic."

As far as the virus of most memes go, Raven is patient zero. Ask how he navigates this cycle, and he is candid in response: "I'm not silly, I see how absurd this all is. It's absurd, but it's where we're at. Life is just the most bizarre series of stuff. And then you die. One of the early lines of my book is, 'Everything is a distraction from death'—because it is." Realistic about our capricious desire for self-improvement—for one reason or another, he's been to that hotpod yoga class, taken that mindfulness session—he states: "We listen to podcasts that change our lives...and then we are completely the same when we wake up the next day."

Raven's best branding work is himself: the architect of his own making, the meme lord becoming a meme in turn. As we experience it, Instagram is an unlikely home for satire—it's for airbrushing ourselves into oblivion, posting vacation shots with all the grittiness of a *Sex and the City* film poster or pushing our own portfolios. Raven uses it as a rolling ball of absurdity, tipping into the role of provocateur as well as humorist, a two-sided coin he seems comfortable balancing upon. The agenda, if any, behind a Raven Smith project, column, or post, is, after all, a simple one: "That's my dream; that we're all in this bath together, having a gab...how great!"

1. What does the word "taste" mean to you?

I have to feel something for the things I'm surrounded by. My taste is for things with meaning.

2. Do you have a motto that you live by?

Not really. When I'm meant to be writing and I get distracted, I have a tendency to coach myself, like: "Keep typing you fucking idiot."

3. What was the last thing that made you laugh?

I keep watching fail videos.

4. What are your favorite qualities in a human being?

Looking forward, not back.

5. Who is your hero?

My cat and my mum, in that order.

6. What is your biggest flaw?

I'm a really good listener, but most of the time I don't.

7. What is your best quality?

Seeing the absurdity of all things.

8. What would your last meal on earth be?

I'm not bothered, but please don't let my husband cook it.

9. What does success mean to you?

It's constantly changing. I never feel successful; I'm always onto the next thing.

10. If you had the power to change anything in the world, what would you change?

Obvious things like hungry kids and war.

