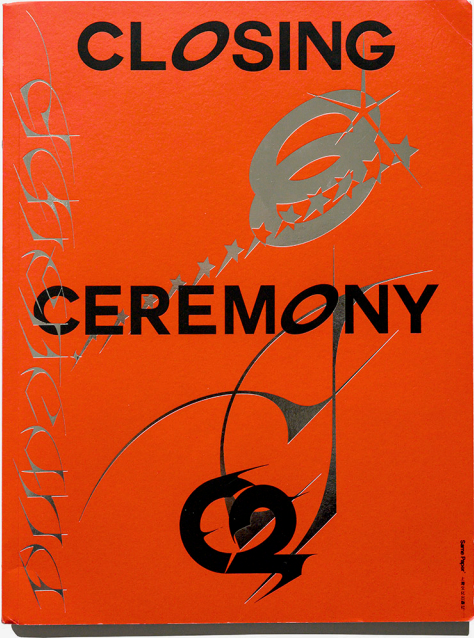


CLOSING CEREMONY

The graphic design features a vibrant orange background. On the left, a vertical line of stylized, overlapping musical notes or leaves runs down the page. In the center, a large, stylized musical note is depicted, with a trail of small stars leading from its upper right portion towards the center. The title 'CLOSING CEREMONY' is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with 'CLOSING' positioned above 'CEREMONY'. The overall aesthetic is modern and artistic, combining musical motifs with abstract elements.



A New Nothing is an online project space that facilitates image-based conversations between artists. Ben Alper and I created the project in late 2014, because we were interested in how we might promote impulsive and intuitive artistic play in public for others, and because we wanted a way to stay personally and intellectually connected in spite of the physical distance that separates us. Though we both met and became close while living in New York City, Ben left for North Carolina in 2012 and never looked back!

Much like written or spoken language, each conversation on the site possesses its own unique cadence, effect and pace. Some develop rapidly and energetically, while others evolve more slowly and methodically. Once an artist is chosen for inclusion on the site, they invite their own conversational partner and begin a visual back and forth, responding to images as they are posted.

The images, and the relationships they are intended to create, make for conversations that are as diverse in subject and scope as all of the conversations you might overhear on an airplane full of 200 people who vaguely know each other. And, due to the fact that the conversations evolve in real time, there are often references, more or less overt, more or less emotive, and more or less rhetorical, that deal with the parallel evolution of a socio-political landscape that relies heavily on the networked distribution and social exploitation of images that stand-in for newly created, altered, or augmented American values, classes, myths, tribes, stereotypes, and ideals.

In other words, photographers and artists who spend their time looking at the world around them are ever more sensitive to the way a place might be embedded in its objects, in the body language and expressions of people, and, maybe most of all, in the preponderance of surfaces in seemingly insignificant spaces that reveal a great deal about the contemporary archeology of this thing we call America.

And if we are going to talk about spirit, you can read something of America's spirit in these images: a kind of heartache in the call and response of these seven conversational excerpts. There are clear, if disposable, American monuments to simple violence (guns, fire, waste, negligence, and death), historical erasure, and petty cruelty (tabloid tear-downs, churches that need iron bars to keep people out, and the destruction of property just so you can feel like you have a voice). In this particular case, the eyes that record our contemporary landscape in these ways are critically, and necessarily, jaundiced.

It is maybe in Katie Kline and Ariel Goldberg's conversation that we find the most light and hope. But even here, the aspirations of our American spirit are shown to be in a state requiring some patching, some repair, some self-deprecating humor, more glitter, and a return to a kind of wonder instead of a deepening, crushing cynicism and resignation to our own individual defeats. In that conversation, there is more possibility and fewer problems. We can find in a simple search of surfaces the reflection of something akin to an American Spirit.

Nat Ward

Image collected from A New Nothing website anewnothing.com Nat Ward, photographer and founder of A New Nothing, has been and works in New York.

^a Matthew Genitempo & Virginia Wilcox Katie Kline & Ariel Goldberg
^b Ben Alper & Nat Ward Adam Bellefeuille & Brian McSwain
^c Molly Matalon & Daniel Shea Emilie Askey & Aaron Tuner

PHOTO POKER

Matthew Genitempo
Virginia Wilcox



MG 4/4/8

Ariel Goldberg
Katie Kline



AG 9/22/8



KK 1/31/8



MG 6/3/8



AG 2/1/8



MG 2/2/8



KK 2/4/8



MG 7/8/8



AG 2/1/8



VW 8/5/8



KC 2/7/18

**Ben Alper
Nat Ward**



SA 8/14/14



NW 11/22/14

**Adam Bellefeuil
Brian McSwain**



AB 12/1/17



SA 8/25/14



SA 12/1/18



NW 12/5/14



AB 1/5/18



SA 12/1/14



SA 1/27/18



NW 11/8/15



AB 1/29/18



SA 2/2/18

**Molly Matalon
Daniel Shea**



Emile Askey
Aaron Tuner



EA 4/23/17



MM 7/6/18



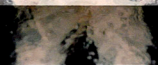
DS 7/20/18



AT 2/10/17



MM 7/20/18



EA 7/7/17



DS 8/6/18



AT 7/20/17



MM 8/18/18



EA 7/20/17



DS 8/18/18



AT 7/20/17