

NAT EVANS
EVEN MORE JUMPING MUSIC

In 1973, choreographer Laura Dean, known for her repetitive geometric unison dance works, made an exercise based in rhythmic jumping and shouting called Jumping Dance. Jumping Dance was then adapted in different iterations by a number of experimental music ensembles and performed regularly at concerts and site-specific events around the world through the end of the 20th century. Even More Jumping Music is a new iteration of Dean's original work, recomposed and adapted by Nat Evans as a participatory event.

NAT EVANS
GUIDED MEDITATION OBSTACLE COURSE

Simultaneously rooted in the southern midwest tradition of telling tall tales as well as Zen koans and Tibetan meditation visualizations, Guided Meditation Obstacle Course is an opportunity for people to use their imaginations to traverse a landscape through spoken text and sound. Nat Evans will lead the event.

MARIO LEMAFI
THE ENERGIZED SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH

energy! energy equated as youth!
few siestas, no bags, just T!
quantify it, and the source is birth!
scale it, and the fringes are 32oz. away from someone else!
i am interested in the means used to fashion and maintain productive authenticity.
ubiquitous in Western society, energy drinks are elixirs to access the 'Other' - someone, something that outperforms bodies-
that MUST outperform, otherwise...
may chemistry prevent our obsolescence.
may AI have mercy on our sport and fun.
in daily life, queer transhuman narratives take place in lieu of a world in the throes of rapid political, environmental, technological, cultural shifts.
and still, we manage to have a good time!
the series of energy drinks produced for Maximum Fun are a consequence of these considerations.
bottle surface, body depth.
at the turn of the century, the energized shall inherit the Earth.

*There once was a man named Evel
Who jumped o'er things for the people
Though his bones did break, please do not forsake
The explorative jumps of Knievel*



Henry

ELIZABETH SPAVENTO

MAXIMUM FUN: A NEW SINCERITY EVENT

The New Sincerity is essentially an anti-ironist movement and was first coined to describe the Austin, Texas music scene in the late 1980s. It quickly expanded its borders to include literature and art that might otherwise be described as “emo” (see Devendra Banhart, Fabrice Samyn, and Jonathan Franzen for details). Jesse Thorn, who is credited with popularizing the New Sincerity, penned an online manifesto on the topic in 2006 and succinctly explains what the movement is all about:

What is the New Sincerity? Think of it as irony and sincerity combined like Voltron, to form a new movement of astonishing power. Or think of it as the absence of irony and sincerity, where less is (obviously) more. If those strain the brain, just think of Evel Knievel.

Yes, that’s right. Evel Knievel: someone who is incredibly sincere about his role in life (jumping over things) and who also serves as an ironic emblem to a generation consumed with a fear of missing out and penchant for romanticizing nostalgia. Sure, Knievel’s cultural relevancy can be debated, but there’s something about his personae that deserves unpacking. To millennials he represents a kind of carefree carelessness that can only be experienced brazenly and with a certain confidence that says, “yes, I am comfortable wearing this red, white, and blue track suit in public.” Equal parts insouciant and absorbed, Evel Knievel embodies the spirit of maximum fun. His willingness and dedication to perform incredible leaps over shark-filled tanks and death-defying stunts over natural historic landmasses is, on one hand totally banal—the kind of one-upmanship that adolescent boys channel when challenging each other to take shots all of the hot sauces in the cafeteria mixed together during lunch. The kind of behavior that as an adult could easily become the basis for psychological examination, let alone be deemed as merely ironic or (worse, possibly) uncool. On the other hand, his willingness to risk his life time and time again, to fail publicly on cable television while millions watch and to spend countless months recovering from injuries typically found in patients suffering from skydiving accidents is incredibly sincere. Noble, even. The fact that Evel Knievel made a career for himself confronting his own death indicates that he is a deeply self-aware individual. A trailblazer in his own right, he combined irony and sincerity with such grace that it took us years to come up with a phrase to describe what he was doing. Evel was YOLO-ing long before it became an ethos that defined a generation. Before it was even an abbreviation!

So why now? Why all of a sudden are Evel Knievel and the New Sincerity relevant to our time and place? We are taking notice because millennials in the early aughts were no longer in protest of anything. Instead, they bought their protest from Urban Outfitters. And in 2006 when Jesse Thorn wrote the Manifesto for the New Sincerity and the modern hipster was coming into its own, milquetoast counterculture was totally acceptable. Irony reigned king! And still does, to a certain extent. But, almost ten years later things have changed, and the demand for sincerity is becoming harder to ignore.

Where millennials once set out to engage in an invincible party mode that had been set from stun to destroy, they now come face to face with the undeniable fact that their planet is in peril. As social programs designed to support individuals in need have been slowly chipped away by the Boomers’ generation and corporate identity took precedent over supportive communities, millennials are now facing challenges unprecedented. To whom do they ration water? How do they save the bees? Or create renewable energy sources that still allow them to upload their Instagram pics to Facebook? Millennials no longer have the luxury of time. These threats are immanent, if not already upon our beautifully interconnected global society. But, how do millennials face these problems that seem so daunting, so pervasive, so incredibly insurmountable? And can we really trust a generation of shoe gazing, selfies-stick wielding dilettantes to do the job?

In this light, the New Sincerity can be viewed as a guiding ethos for how the millennial generation will deal with the world that humankind inherited: politically polluted, full of trash, economically bloated, starving for innovation and technologically overloaded. Partly ironic but mostly sincere, millennials will approach these issues confidently and likely while wearing the latest Internet fashion trends (#healthgoth). Though they consistently underperform in academic subjects like mathematics compared to other world nations, the American millennial generation consistently outperforms their global counterparts in one area: self-confidence. Because, at the end of the day when things are looking bleak confidence will keep their spirits from being crushed under the weight of all that seems wrong with the world.

The New Sincerity millennial is the anti-hipster, a kind of post-apocalyptic inner hippie in which survivors are called to reimagine entire systems, to restructure the very framework of value (hence the “new” sincerity) whose efforts are aimed at redistributing wealth and power. While this is admittedly an idealized version of how this ethos could play out in the future, it does garner buy-in from a generation that seeks, underneath it all, authentic connection.

This authentic connection is already happening within the arts. Take Theaster Gates’ Rebuild Foundation in Chicago, a nonprofit organization that incites movements of community revitalization that are culture based, artist led, and neighborhood driven. Or, Robert Montgomery’s haunting, spiritual artworks that use the language of advertising to help us consider better uses of our temporary existence. There are fragments of irony that still remain in these movements, but if you listen closely you can hear the sincerity softly in the background. Call it what you will—social practice, activist art or the New Sincerity—the truth is that artists like Gates and Montgomery are shaping the physical and conceptual spaces in their communities. And yes, like many activist movements in contemporary American society, some projects only gain interest that lasts as long as a tweet has characters before capitulating to its own brand or hashtag in the internet-based economies of social media. Yet, despite being reduced to a hashtag, not all is completely lost. Activist movements do raise awareness, even if it is just to those who are paying attention, and their earnest sincerity is what keeps them relevant. You just might have to dress them up like Evel Knievel first to get some attention.