



**ARTIST**

Barry Anderson

**TITLE**

Always Becoming Something (1)

**DATE**

2007

**DIMENSIONS**

**MEDIUM**

Video Art

**IMAGE NOTES**

single-channel high-definition video

**CATALOGUE NUMBER**

2008.002

**CURRENT LOCATION**

Digital Archive/Video Box

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**BARRY ANDERSON**

**BORN**

1969

**BIRTHPLACE**

Greenville, TX

**GENDER**

Male

**CITIZENSHIP**

United States

**CULTURAL HERITAGE**

European-American

**LIGHT WORK RELATIONSHIP**

Artist-in-Residence, 2006

Main Gallery, 2009

Other, 2009

Anderson's exhibition in the Main Gallery also includes work throughout Syracuse on billboards, projected onto buildings and in store windows. Other, 2008

Light Work commissions the video/music composition, Genome of the Soul, between Barry Anderson and Syracuse composer Andrew Waggoner.

## LIGHT WORK PUBLICATIONS

Contact Sheet 142  
Contact Sheet 153

## BIOGRAPHY

For a more recent CV or bio please visit the artist's website, <http://www.barryanderson.com>

Video artist Barry Anderson wasted no time to start shooting new video footage for his next project as soon as he arrived in Syracuse. Most of his work has been video and audio installations, but more recently, he also incorporates still photography with moving images. These are the projects he pursued while at Light Work. Barry's work addresses our cultural need to escape the onslaught of media input through isolated fantasy worlds. By slowing or re-interpreting space and time, he strives to identify the existence of introspective spaces within the everyday, proposing that we don't need to retreat, but to re-envision, re-think what is already around us. Barry Anderson was born in Greenville, TX. He holds an MFA from Indiana University. His work has been shown throughout the country, as well as in Thailand, South America, Cuba and the UK. Recent exhibitions venues include the Schopf Gallery on Lake in Chicago, Gallery 210 at the University of Missouri St. Louis, Hotcakes Gallery in Milwaukee, and the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Toronto. He lives in Kansas City.

## ESSAYS

The young men and women who occupy the spare, virtual realm of Barry Anderson's single-channel video 'Always Becoming Something' are waiting. Perhaps they anticipate personal revelation, or at the very least, a shift in identity. Though they appear to be in this quest together, nobody moves beyond the bubble of personal space. Enconced in private thoughts as they stand around, shift their weight, fidget, or look off into the distance, these eighteen- to thirty-year-olds pass us by as if on a continuous conveyor belt, in a slow, steady horizontal flow. Figures appear, float offscreen, then reappear. In this virtual territory, nobody talks, yet everyone looks, though not really at one another. It is as though Anderson has netted a random sampling of users from MySpace.com and turned the interface inside out, so that what we see are not carefully crafted online personas but the unassuming, slightly anxious human presences behind their construction. Stripped of the blogs and amateur snapshots with which such online identities are often crafted, Anderson's figures are left with themselves in a virtual holding pen; and we are left to watch them as they contemplate who it is they hope to become. By looking, Anderson seems to suggest, we are also plugged in—we are in their extended network, as they are in ours. Anderson's piece hits on one of the central ambiguities of contemporary existence—whether life in the global village facilitates broader and deeper human connections, or exacerbates the sense of alienation and dislocation that have long characterized modern malaise. These questions hover throughout the video, which is as much about waiting as it is about becoming; as much about immobility as it is about perpetual motion; as much about contingency as it is about being trapped, immutable, in a psycho-social and technological no-man's land. Such paradoxes are, in large part, a result of Anderson's creative process. Having filmed each model separately in a studio, Anderson then montaged the figures to occupy a shared virtual space. The same figures come and go, appearing at times blurred and at a distance, and at others, almost invasively close, such that we see many different perspectives, though never all at once. This fragmentation brings us closer to knowing these subjects in visual terms, while also frustrating the ability to put all the pieces together in one time and place. As such, Anderson's aesthetic operates in much the same way that chat-room conversations and other internet-mediated relations function. Capable of facilitating intensely personal, even confessional, communications in bursts and starts, while allowing users to retreat from conversations and confrontations at any point, the internet encourages the sort of speaking from the heart that cements friendships while removing the need for personal accountability. In Anderson's piece, people stand and float, suspended in a perpetual state of becoming. The fact that Anderson's models are of an age between adolescence and adulthood—a demographic largely constructed through internet consumer research—further emphasizes the nebulous, mutable state of their existence. As a video artist, Anderson comes to the medium at a point in its history when recording and editing no longer imply linearity or start-stop operations. Where many earlier video artists saw video as an alternative to the relative clarity of film, and often employed it as a means for revealing “real time,” or critiquing mass media, Anderson instead embraces the nonlinear structure and high definition of digital filmmaking to encourage aesthetic confusions between art and commerce, document and fiction. Though Anderson's work bears the technical sheen of a commercial aimed at young consumers, its lack of sound and narrative leaves the figures at once liberated and lost; plunked into a space with no definitive entrance or exit. The philosophical questions Anderson asks are decidedly open-ended. We are unsure whether the space he depicts reveals an existential void, a black hole in the interstices of metadata, or a spiritual conundrum exacerbated by the times in which we live. More often than not, Anderson's metaphysical musings—of one's place and purpose in the world—are hopeful visions, tinged perhaps with a bit of melancholy, but steeped in an enchantment of the unassuming and a revelation in the overlooked. April M. Watson (c) 2007 April M. Watson lives in Kansas City, MO, where she is associate curator of photography at The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art. Barry Anderson was born into small-town Texas among near-epic forests, tall tales, and quirky (and sugary) 1970s childrens' TV programming. As comfortable with HR Pufnstuf as he is with the journeys of literary and artistic heroes, his lens gives us access to the wonder, mystery, and even humor of a world fringed with darkness. Anderson's work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions throughout the country, as well as in Thailand, South America, Russia, and the UK. Recent exhibition venues include the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park, KS; Milo Gallery in Los Angeles, CA; White Flag Projects in St. Louis, MO; Marty Walker Gallery in Dallas, TX; Salina Art Center in Salina, KS; Schopf Gallery on Lake in Chicago, IL; Dam Stuhltrager in Brooklyn, NY; and the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Toronto, Canada. Anderson currently lives in Kansas City. He participated in Light Work's Artist-in-Residence Program in 2006. Anderson was born in Greenville, TX. He holds an MFA from Indiana University Bloomington and a BFA from the University of Texas at Austin. Barry Anderson lives in Kansas City, MO. He participated in Light Work's Artist-in-Residence program in October 2006. Light Work staged a major exhibition with Anderson in 2009. The city-wide exhibition "Intermissions" included over twelve venues and seventeen billboards. Details can be viewed at <http://www.lightwork.org/exhibitions/past/anderson.html> Anderson's installations, single-channel work, and still photography can be seen on his website at <http://barryanderson.com>.