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## Watch the interactive lamps of Lumens flicker

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Walking through the Lumens exhibit at Gallery 51 is a bit eerie. It's like walking through a haunted house still rank with dead souls. You move past the eclectic arrangements of lamps and their bulbs flash on and off with your movements. Some will turn on from across the room. Some may look you in the eyes.

It's not Herman Melville's ghost playing tricks on you, but rather, someone moving through the same display set up in Adams. Lumens is the fascinating exhibit conceived by the artists Matthew Belanger, Sean Riley and Ven Voisey.

"Networked Realities: (re)Connecting the Adames" is the full title of this community project that strives to bring the people of the Berkshires together through lamp light. Walking past a lamp in the MCLA Gallery 51 Annex in North Adams will turn on a lamp standing at the Greylock Arts in Adams. In that moment the two towns are connected with your presence as the binding force. Each lamp has been reconstructed with proximity sensors and arduino microcontrollers that bounce your presence over to the opposing gallery. It's almost like traveling through space on beams of light but it happens so fast that you're not even aware of the adventure.

You can also participate online. The lamps all have their own personal biography written by its previous owner and every time you click to read it that lamp will physically light up in its gallery. Some of the biographies trace back many years to the turn of the century identifying it's every stop along the way and some are short and concise. A lamp airbrushed with a football helmet and the New England Patriots logo "was taken directly from the street front window of Jeepers Creepers."

These lamps have been collected from various places throughout the Berkshires. Some have been donated, some were found in trash heaps, some have been sent as memoriums for loved ones and some were hand made.

There's the snake lamp from Persnickety Toys that was jerry-rigged to shine. There's Bob S. Bury's homemade lamp that spent the last fifty years lounging on a desktop in Connecticut. There's the antique baseball boy lamp that came from a garage sale in Illinois. There's the almighty globe lamp. There's the lamp made to fool you into thinking a log fire is burning in the corner of the room. There's the lamp left over from a drug addict's apartment in New York City. There's the red rectangular safelight used for darkrooms. There's the lamp that once lit a map of America every night as a family in New Jersey sat down for diner. Animal lamps, psychedelic lamps, primary-shaped lamps, oriental lamps, lamps upon lamps all magically constructed to remind us that we're not alone. Existence is universal.

Lumens is free and open to the public at Greylock Arts in Adams, Tuesday through Saturday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. and at the MCLA Gallery 51 Annex in North Adams, Wednesday through Sunday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Also experience it online at http://www.turbulence.org/works/newadams/lumens. The exhibit will conclude October 31.



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