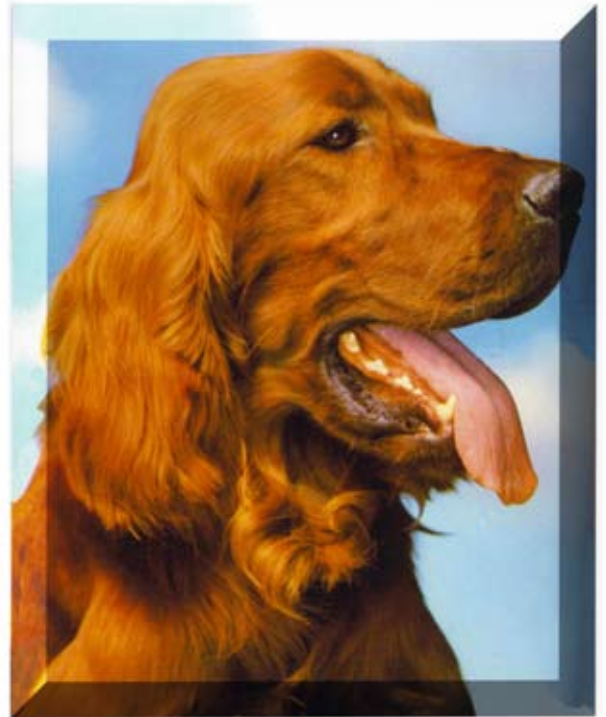




Uri Aran: Five Minutes Before South London Gallery exhibition review

This dreamlike show may be open-ended but it's full of memorable moments, with photographs, drawings and a video which hint at a story without ever coalescing into coherence

BEN LUKE



Untitled, 2013, part of Uri Aran's collection of drawings, photographs and videos

For the past two months, Jerusalem-born New Yorker Uri Aran has lived in a flat in the terraced house which is part of the South London Gallery. Over that time he's created the work shown here — photographs, drawings and a video which hint at a story without ever coalescing into coherence.

The video features a man sitting at a table spouting what sounds like a mixture of a psychologist's view of childhood and personal memories. Over a melancholic chamber music soundtrack, he keeps repeating lines such as "I can't remember the last time we had so much fun", indicating that he's rehearsing rather than reminiscing, and this ambiguity dominates the show. Whose are these memories? When we see footage of children ballet dancing or riding BMXs, how do they relate to the words this actor speaks?

And the questions keep coming. We wonder who the people are whose mugshots are blown up to huge scale and placed in a line on the wall, whether they're related to each other, or Aran himself, and why a dog and a horse are among them.

The portraits occasionally appear in the exhibition's best works, a series of drawings which fuse printed online images with delicate hand-drawn lines and shades of spray paint. Adding to the sense of a dreamlike loop, these drawings occasionally reappear superimposed over the video.

As one might expect from a short residency, there's a lovely improvised quality to this show, a sense of an artist at play, pushing and pulling his ideas. It may be open-ended but it's full of memorable moments.

Until February 23 (020 7703 6120, southlondongallery.org)