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URI ARAN

Geraniums

Rivington Arms

4 East Second Street, East Village

Through Sunday

After seven years Rivington Arms, a pioneer in the Lower East Side/East Village gallery scene, is closing its doors. Its final show introduces the work of Uri Aran, which has a future of its own.

Like many members of his generation, Mr. Aran turns arbitrariness into a fine art. He does so without sticking to any one approach or medium, although there's a tropical quality, alternately fake and real, implicit in the coconuts, azure oceans and exotic fish that figure in some works.

A found sculpture involves a cheap old desk tipped on its side; the newly drilled holes in its bottom are intermittently plugged with chocolate chip cookies. A mechanized plastic scroll of tropical fish customary to coffee shops (except it lacks any pretense of a frame) is positioned so that it turns the tipped desk into an ocean-bound cave. The title of the piece is "Letter, policeman, ambulance, firetruck, crosswalk, stop sign, the butcher, the baker, schoolteacher," which implies an elaborate script, or a random enumeration of street life.

But arbitrariness can also involve rigorous fabrication, as [Robert Gober](#) has proved. In "Purpose," a metal pedestal has been outfitted with a burnerlike circle of oil-lamp wicks; they could surround the little box of fish food at its center with a ring of fire, except that only two or three are lighted at once. A drawing, a photograph and three related monoprints make you consider Mr. Aran's admiration for William Wegman, Bruce Nauman and [Jasper Johns](#). In a short video in the back room, what begins as a random recitation escalates into a slightly creepy manipulation; it may send you back to the other works here with renewed curiosity. **ROBERTA SMITH**