

URI ARAN

Born Jerusalem, Israel, 1977



All This Is Yours (detail), 2009
Mixed media
25" x 42" x 42"

Uri Aran's practice makes room for sentimentality even as it skews and empties it out. While critical of the manipulative and desire-inducing nature of popular culture and the commodities that propel it, the work does not proceed by way of familiar strategies of detached ironic commentary. Rather, it tends toward a more expansive vision, one that is unafraid to lay itself bare in approaching the domestic and the affective. In the manner of such artists as Bruce Nauman and Gedi Sibony, Aran's practice benefits from a productive procrastination. He begins with the body in a studio surrounded by things, and makes use of familiar objects, from detritus to mementos, to bring the everyday into tension with the highly gestural,

moving fluently between mediums and building meaning through accumulation.

The simple means of *A To Q*, 2010, for example, typifies Aran's approach. We see the screen of his laptop on which is playing a low-resolution YouTube video of Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos's eight-cello chamber music piece, *Bachianas Brasileiras n. 1 - Prelúdio (Modinha)*. However, the viewer's attention to the grandiosity of the music and the intensity of the cellists' concentration gradually gives way to an awareness of a silhouette on the surface of the screen. Aran is capturing the action on his iPhone. As the shot pulls back to reveal the artist's studio reflected in the background, Aran's voice, in a monotone recites the letters of the alphabet, each accompanied by an object from his desk held up between himself and the screen. Including pen, towel, Sharpie, a book about horses, a copy of Microsoft Word, and headphones, the stand-in objects are visually and aurally framed by the overt emotion of Villa-Lobo's music. The clash of the soundtrack and estranged signifiers that results from such proximity creates a dialectical pleasure that can only be achieved by allowing singular systems to

exist in parallel. The progressive force of the music is accompanied by the onward march of the alphabet through to the letter Q, setting up what seems to be a familiar procedural challenge: the alphabet ends in Z, so no doubt the artist will reach this zenith before the music ends? Attempting to imbue rational systems with otherworldly impressions, the incompleteness of the video lends it a defining bathos.

—Bartholomew Ryan