

ARTFORUM

Zurich

Uri Aran

KUNSTHALLE ZÜRICH
Limmatstrasse 270
February 2–March 24



View of "Uri Aran," 2013.

Uri Aran's solo exhibition "Here, Here and Here" tells a story of struggles to construct compelling, coherent, and relatable narratives. Using assemblage, video, and drawing, Aran shows bits of evidence that imply potential plots, though what he really demonstrates are failures to communicate.

The aspiring raconteurs in *Chimpanzee*, 2012, Aran's twenty-five-minute video, tell fragments of anecdotes. Talking to the camera alone or in pairs, Aran's attractive adult actors sound like kids telling tales. But their rambling, breathless stories of climbing trees, liking or disliking their neighbors, and other familiar elements of life seem strange and strained by their awkward, overexcited delivery. Their stories never reach definite conclusions, but Aran's actors delight in telling them.

Two installations that physically present objects also seen in the video give little support to the stories. Inside cardboard boxes presented on pedestals for easy inspection are arrangements of artificial grapes, passport photos, pizza boxes, and other commonplace items. The objects and references that Aran selects for special attention are banal, but appear sentimental. These are artifacts from "you had to have been there" stories. Thick pools of resin allude to glue binding them together, but their relationship remains obscure. Even when they are seen again as constructed sculptures on a ledge in the gallery's final room, or hung on the walls, their meaning is mysterious.

All this work points back toward *Chimpanzee*, and amid all the uncertainty, Aran succeeds in generating empathy for that video's mealy-mouthed characters. He makes art out of awkwardness: By drawing attention to challenges in expressing experience, he turns self-consciousness into nascent self-awareness.

— Ana Finel Honigman