



## Uri Aran: Five Minutes Before



Exhibition view of 'Five Minutes Before' at the South London Gallery

Photo: Andy Keate. Image courtesy the artist, mother's tankstation, Dublin, Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York and Sadie Coles HQ, London

### Time Out says

Mon Dec 2 2013

It's hard to know what Uri Aran's art is about, exactly – which is partly the point. All you can say about the work of this New York-based Israeli artist, who spent last summer as artist in residence at South London Gallery, is that it deals with forms of culture. Not high culture or low culture specifically, just culture in general, as a sort of expression of what it means to be human. So, in the main video projection, there's footage of a girls' school ballet performance, some boys hanging out at a BMX park, and a strange animated sequence featuring passport photos, while a male interviewee intermittently reminisces about childhood and family, and what it means to grow up and become more culturally acclimatised. Throughout, the film frequently refers to its own making, its own status as a cultural construct, with the interviewee being fed lines by the off-screen artist or discussing how he's going to sit for the camera.

This sense of self-referencing also extends to a smart sculptural piece consisting of a chaotically laden artist's trolley and shelves. There are paints, photographs, and artist's tools, bits of found, interesting junk, some doodly try-outs on paper – the materials of art-making, themselves made into an engrossing work of art. It's a shame that Aran's 'finished' work is less engaging. His mixed-media prints combine abstract colours, internet imagery and passport photos into a jittery, undefined mishmash – as if indecipherability were itself a kind of virtue.

Passport photos crop up again as a series of seven blown-up images. In amongst the anonymous mugshots are portraits of a horse and a dog – nods towards nature that, amid such self-aware artifacts of human culture, seem almost wistful.

- Gabriel Coxhead