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# Flash Art

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## Uri Aran

*Installation view: Five Minutes Before,* South London Gallery, London, 2013. *Courtesy of Artist; mother's tankstation, Dublin; Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York; and Sadie Coles HQ, London*  
Photography by Andy Keate

## Uri Aran

South London Gallery / London

Now at his second major solo institutional outing in little more than a year, Uri Aran has provided plenty of evidence on why his work was such a good fit for the 2013 Venice Biennale theme, "The Encyclopedic Palace." His inclination to experiment with a large number of media is not so much the result of technical versatility but rather the only possible way to contain the enormous vocabulary of references he adopts — an array of images and objects that rely heavily on the concept of association, putting the viewer in a position to reflect on the mental encyclopedia each of us carries and how this can generate unexpected narratives depending on factors such as memory and contextualization. While the principle in itself is hardly a novelty in art, in Aran's case it is deliberately put front and center, with the aim of addressing the filing system individuals tend to develop in response to the possibilities and limits dictated by a determinate structure. Such organizational processes, which stem from sentiments of anxiety and control, are ultimately what the artist himself faces when called to deal with the exhibition space. This in turn becomes the main entry point to a universe that, despite a sparse familiarity, follows a personal logic too impregnable for straightforward empathy.

"Five Minutes Later," the exhibition at the South London Gallery, is the result of a three-month residency. Its centerpiece is a video partially shot in the gallery's apartment — a journey to the unexpected, where images of Aran's own drawings are punctuated with archival ballet footage, digital animations and a man seemingly engaged in a soul-searching session. The music supports this domestic drama, but the actor's delivery is almost too mechanical, casting doubt on the veracity of the moment. Similarly, a group of six enlarged thumbnail portraits on the wall is conspicuous for the unforeseen presence of a dog and a horse. Tempting as it is to take it as a statement about animal rights, when viewed in relationship with the rest of the exhibition, the work suggests a deeper degree of ambiguity that questions the very notion of symbolism and reinforces Aran's project overall.

by Michele Robecchi