

'Running the Rat Race'

By

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INT. MIND SEQUENCE:

Black screen fade into - A puppet's face appears, surrounded by stacks of printers drawers, curiosities and trinkets. A hinge, bracketing the puppets face to his head creaks open, revealing a fleshy black cavern, which we enter.

INT. ARTISTS STUDIO - PAINTING SEQUENCE

Black screen fade into - An Artist paints away in his attic studio. The studio is dark and damp, the faint sound of trickling water against the textured walls echoes around the room. His studio is cluttered with artists tools, artworks, goldfish bowls, nets, mannequins, glasses filled with false teeth, mouse traps, cages and venetian devil masks which gives the space a fetish like quality. A small mouse emerges in the room from a small hole within the wall.

Central to the room, Fresnel screens and large painted eyeballs hang from chains, forming a circular space in which the artist stands, painting on a large easel, spotlighted by a studio lamp. Above his head, flies a small cloud, which contrasts the mound of sand he stands on, where black glass balls roll by his feet. Behind him, lies a covered cabinet, and a piece of meat pinned to a dartboard with a dart. The mouse scurries around the room, looking for food.

The artist wears Brown Bauhaus-esque trousers and boots made from bandages and red coil neckpiece. His skin is crackled, and he wears heavy butterfly-like makeup around his eyes.

The artist gently moves his feet and a black glass ball rolls away, towards the dustsheet. The artist places his paintbrush down and pulls off the dustsheet from a cabinet filled with human heads, trinkets and materials. The heads converse with one another, the sound of echoed muttering resonates around the room. The mouse continues scuttling. The artist picks up a tube of red paint and walks back towards his painting. He squeezes the tube onto a palette and begins to mix the pigments together with a brush.

A brown envelope falls from the ceiling, dangling on brown twine next to where he paints.

Confused, the artist places the palette down and picks up the envelope and opens it, which rapidly unravels, revealing a utility bill, requesting a large sum. The mouse becomes restless, tail wiggling and hunting for food.

A small patch of blood seeps through the paper from the artists left hand. The artist looks at his hand, revealing a mark of stigmata, which gently wriggles.

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A pause... the artist looks up towards the ceiling.

A single drop of blood falls from his hand and lands, dribbling onto the sand below his feet. He drops the bill to the ground.

Money notes wriggle out from the stigmata marks within the artist's hands, which fall to the floor.

Collectively, in a worm-like motion, the notes open up and crawl through the cracks within the floorboards. On his knees, the artist grabs one note, which tugs and tears against him, crawling back into the crack.

Cutaway to the cabinet, where the human heads continue their muttering. The mouse continues hunting.

All the money gone, the artist stands up and takes a step backwards, tripping on a glass ball, knocking over a table full of his materials. A glass paint jar and box of tools smash on impact with the floorboards.

Abruptly, the camera begins to rotate around the set, a needle scratches into a record and the artists possessions, in stop-motion begin to move, creating a fast rhythm. The window suddenly opens. The meat wriggles itself free from the dart. The dart falls, piercing itself into the floorboards. The artists belongings rattle, pots of paints and fish bowls spill. The mouse begins to run faster.

Camera still tracking, the artist attempts to stabilize the paint pots. The glass fish bowl falls from the table and smashes. The artist reacts. His possessions move rapidly and begin to jump out the window. The artist stuffs his hands with his paintings. Carrying too much, he drops the paintings, which slide along the floor towards the window. The cloud and sand begin to move and the dartboard rolls against the floor.

There is a montage of imagery. Fishing nets falling, whip pans through glass, nails coming loose from walls, meat wriggling, feet tapping, glass smashing, fish jump against the floor, blood dribbles against the sand, the meat bleeds, spikes hammered through sketchbooks, hands clench, the dangling eyes blink, black balls moving, cabinet undressing, tin toys dancing, heads laughing, paintings flying out of window, a mousetrap with a block of cheese, the mouse's feet moving rapidly, tail wriggling.

The camera continues tracking. The artist stretches to reach his drawings, which tug and tear, flying out of the window. The remnants of sand and glass balls leave through the window. The meat crawls up the wall and jumps out of the

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window. The cloud flies out of the window, out of his reach. We see close-ups of the mouse's feet running rapidly.

White paint begins to fall and dribble against the walls.

The artist's trousers tie to the easel and begin to unravel. The artist's makeup peels away and his hair is gelled back.

A montage of corporate imagery rushes on the screen, paper being stapled, keyboards typing, paper printed, pencils sharpening. Paperwork and bills unfold, falling from the ceiling by twine. The cabinet rapidly fills itself with paperwork and documents. The room is empty and almost fully painted white. We see the mousetrap and the mouse running.

The door opens. Black and white tiles enter, covering the floor. A roll-top desk, chair, set of drawers are wheeled in. The roll-top desk opens, revealing a computer underneath. White fabric screens fall, blocking the windows and covering both sides of the room.

Naked, the artist's feet are tied together and he falls into a chair. Images of the mouse running and mousetrap rapidly montage across the screen. The artist's legs are clothed in striped formal trousers. His feet are covered in black socks and formal black shoes, with tied laces. His arms, clothed in a white shirt and waistcoat, buttons done up. He stands, wearing a full suit and pince-nez spectacles.

Rope and handcuffs emerge through the door. The mouse runs. The artist's hands are tied with handcuffs, his feet tied to the chair legs. The mouse spots the cheese and runs towards the mouse trap. The door closes. CRACK. The mouse trap snaps. The artist suddenly opens his eyes, which have clouded over.

The rhythm and tracking comes to a sudden halt.

The artist abruptly stops typing, sharpening and stapling and looks around. The cabinet has been filled completely with paperwork. The heads look from side to side.

We see a final wide shot of the room, which has transformed into an office. Envelopes and bills hang from the ceiling. Surrounded by paperwork, the artist continues typing on a computer, chained up and handcuffed to the desk.

The mouse stands in the corner of the room by his hole. He stands, cheese in hands, safe and happily nibbling away....

Fade to black