

Roman Selim Khereddine*Big House Narrow Grave*

April 22 – May 28, 2023

In the confined space of someone's living room, a pit bull is running tirelessly on a treadmill. As the machine whirs beneath its feet, the animal's body moves in a fluid motion. Its tongue lolls out of its mouth as it pants, and its eyes shine with a sense of purpose and determination.

There is a striking contrast between the old-fashioned interior with an ornate flower stand and a glass cabinet, and the minimalist design of the makeshift treadmill. And yet, the space, as a whole, has a kind of harmony between these two elements laying off each other in a surprising and thought-provoking way, creating a complex and layered narrative.

For his solo exhibition, Roman Selim Khereddine created a series of full color silk prints. They are arranged in a specific way that creates intervals, with brief pauses between each one as if in a stop-motion, with each image representing a single frame in a larger story. An audio piece is played in the background to accentuate the movement. As we hear the heavy and steady hum of the rhythmic thud of the treadmill's conveyor belt filling the space, we fall into the steady rhythm of the machine. At a certain point, the audio reaches its loudest moment, as if matching the climax of the story being told by the paintings. Then, we hear it slow down, perhaps indicating the dog's growing fatigue, broken by a person's voice clapping and shouting to encourage the dog to speed up. The energy immediately shifts. As if in response to the owner's encouragement, the belt starts moving faster as the dog surges forward with renewed determination.

Seeing the dog running tirelessly on the treadmill, we get reminded of the long history of cinema and photography, which has documented and explored our relationship with animals as well as machinery. It brings to mind French philosopher Paul Virilio's ideas about speed, technology, and how they shape our perception of reality. The speed of the dog's movement is marked by a blur of motion. Virilio would have seen this as the way in which technology, in this case, the treadmill, is accelerating the dog's movement and transforming its natural gait into something almost mechanical. The treadmill creates a mini-cinematic experience, with the dog's motion becoming a moving image.

The blur as the perception of speed is not just a measure of how fast we can go but a fundamental aspect of our time experience. The quicker we move, the more compressed our experience of time becomes, and the more we lose touch with the world around us. It's a poignant reminder of the power of technology to both enhance and distort our experience of the world. Thus, it's hard to ignore Virilio's philosophy of the dark side of technological progress. He argues that every technological advance brings a new form of danger and that our obsession with speed and efficiency has led us down a dangerous path.

The dog's repetitive movements, as it runs without ever getting anywhere, speak to the monotony and futility of human existence. And even though technology is often thought to represent progress and innovation, the machine is also an indication of the ways in which our lives have become increasingly domesticated and controlled. Like the dog, we often find ourselves caught in the rhythms and routines of technology, surrendering our individuality and agency to the cold, mechanical logic of machines.

With this new series and audio piece, Roman Selim Khereddine creates a multi-sensory experience that combines visual, auditory, and architectural elements to create a cohesive narrative. Each one enhances the other by creating an immersive experience where we, the audience, are no longer mere observers but participants in the story being told.

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1. *Untitled 1*, 2023
Full color silk screen print on canvas
35 3/8 x 51 1/8 in
90 x 130 cm
2. *Untitled 2*, 2023
Full color silk screen print on canvas
43 1/4 x 51 1/8 in
110 x 130 cm
3. *Untitled 3*, 2023
Full color silk screen print on canvas
35 3/8 x 51 1/8 in
90 x 130 cm
4. *Untitled 4*, 2023
Full color silk screen print on canvas
35 3/8 x 51 1/8 in
90 x 130 cm
5. *Untitled 5*, 2023
Full color silk screen print on canvas
35 3/8 x 51 1/8 in
90 x 130 cm
6. *Untitled 6*, 2023
3-color silk screen print on canvas, acrylic
43 1/4 x 51 1/8 in
110 x 130 cm
7. *Untitled 7*, 2023
Sound, 11' 03"

