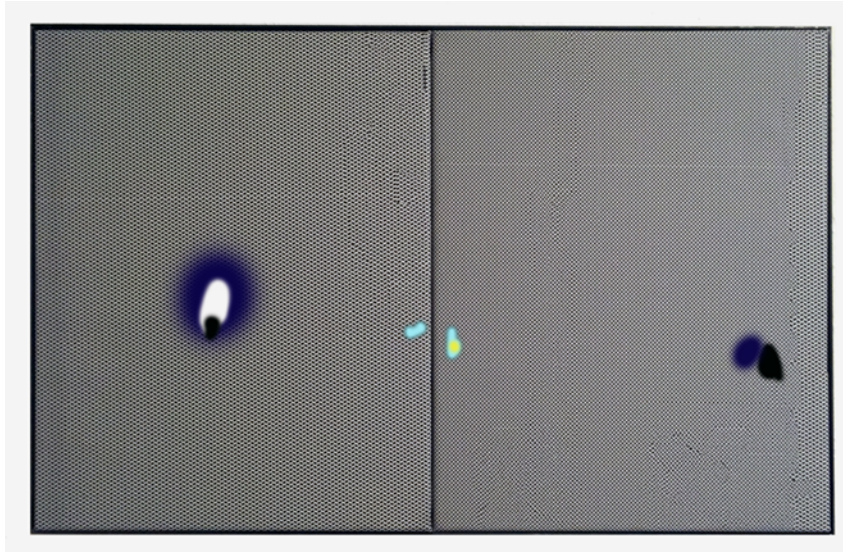


ARTILLERY

9/21/2016

“Jeff Zilm”

by Emily Nimptsch



Jeff Zilm, *Untitled Binary*, 2016, courtesy of the artist and Various Small Fires

VARIOUS SMALL FIRES:

JEFF ZILM

by Emily Nimptsch

Walking down the lengthy corridor from the street to Hollywood’s Various Small Fires Gallery for the opening reception of mixed media artist Jeff Zilm’s latest exhibition, “Relics of the Epoch,” a slightly alienating, yet familiar droning sound cascades down the hallway. Piquing one’s interest, it pulls the visitor towards the gallery’s entrance. It is there that one finds three readymade metal statues. Functioning as antennae, they transmit these tones featuring distorted samples of a late 1980s film soundtrack.

This theme of revisiting and editing the past continues inside the gallery itself. Zilm’s hypnotic, multilayered “emulated paintings” are actually altered digital files recovered from the artist’s Macintosh computer from the early 1990s. Sometimes the ghostly negative of the original image can be spotted in the work, and sometimes only metallic, chain link fence patterns are present. Like the hazy droning sound outside, these patterns might represent the fuzziness of memory or how we try to alter and erase parts of our histories.

These patterns are disorienting and seem to shift before one’s very eyes like an optical illusion. One starts to see shapes and images that may not really be there. Zilm created this intriguing effect using a large, technologically advanced UV printer, but the emotional heart of this show examines what it means to be obsolete. He uses these old computer programs, antennae, and the traditional canvas to question whether his memories themselves are outdated.

This isn’t the first time the Texas-based artist has used older technology in his work. In his most recent project, known as the “film painting” series, he altered black and white film reels. “Relics of the Epoch,” Zilm’s Los Angeles debut and his first show with Various Small Fires goes further, bringing in an auditory component to create a potent emotional experience.

Jeff Zilm, “Relics of the Epoch,” September 17 – October 22 at Various Small Fires, 812 North Highland Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90038. www.vsf.la