

ART

BY SHARON MIZOTA

A technological past revisited

Since everything in it dates from 2008 or earlier, Erlea Maneros Zabala's exhibition at Redling Fine Art is aptly titled "Past Work." Contrasting with knee-jerk presentations of "New Work," the title is also a reflection of the artist's interest in fading technologies.

The centerpiece of the show is a wall of large photocopies, enlargements of the blown-out, black and white images produced by microfilm machines. Remember microfilm? Now largely obsolete, it has been used to preserve newspapers and other documents for more than a century. Many of these sources are now archived online instead.

On the cusp of this transition, Zabala took microfilm images of Los Angeles Times pages and stripped them of everything that appeared in the online version. What was left is a grid of black rectangles, punctuated by ghostly, disconnected images.

These pictures speak to the impoverishment of on-line experience, but are also castoffs of a new information age. Zabala's austere works are too taciturn to be sentimental — but they do feel like snapshots of a moment of loss.

Other works highlight the apparatus of the microfilm reader itself: empty screens full of scuffs and scratches from years of sliding and scraping. These images are ghostly too, impressions of a mechanical precursor to our disembodied electronic scrolling. Yet lest we get nostalgic, on the opposite wall are photos Zabala snapped off a computer monitor. They bear a different kind of evidence: dust on the screen, and the uniquely digital texture of pixelation. They already seem quaint.

Redling Fine Art, 6757 Santa Monica Blvd., (323) 230-7415, through April 27. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.redlingfineart.com

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