

# Kal Spelletich

## *Intention Machines*

April 11, 2015 – May 30, 2015

Join us for an opening with the artist  
on Saturday, April 11  
from 5:00-7:00 pm



Kal Spelletich

*Les Blank*

2015

Robot, clothing, rug, electronics, steel

Height: 1' x 10", Width: 1' x 7", Length: 7' x 5"

**San Francisco, CA:** Catharine Clark Gallery is pleased to announce our first solo exhibition of work by Kal Spelletich. On view April 11 – May 30, 2015, *Kal Spelletich: Intention Machines* features approximately seven robotic sculptures, each representing an actual person influential in Spelletich's life and artistic career. Several photographs of the sun, which Spelletich took with a digital camera modified with various apparatuses, will also be presented as part of the exhibit. A video documentary and paraphernalia from the production of Jo Harvey Allen's performance *Hally Lou* (1983) will exhibit concurrently in our dedicated media room. Kal Spelletich will be present for the exhibition opening on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> 2015, from 5 – 7 pm.

In his capacities as an artist, Zen philosopher, ardent activist, inventor and musician, Kal Spelletich has spent his creative career exploring the powerful possibilities of combining art and mysticism with the rigors of science and technology. Spelletich is well known for his mechanized, fire-ensconcing robotic art, but his latest work leans away from pyrotechnics and towards a spiritual vein. *Intention Machines* features seven headless robots—avatars of friends, mentors and heroes who have profoundly influenced the artist's life. Each robot is titled for its namesake, and wears unwashed work clothes previously owned and worn by the person embodied by the work. Emory Douglas, who worked as the Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party in the 1960s, as well as poet and artist Lawrence Ferlinghetti are among those represented by Spelletich's machines. His mechanical models genuflect, clasp hands in prayer and whirl like Sufi dervishes.

Viewers activate the robots by touching an interface sensor that enables the machine to ‘read’ the viewer, and react with a responsive gesture. Sensors on the robots are programmed to detect a variety of inputs: proximity, touch, force, breath-alcohol content, polygraph metrics, and ambient sound. Responses are spontaneous and unique—the robots have no stored memory. Each of the photographs in the exhibit relates to the same individuals personified by the robotic sculptures. Spelletich took the photographs with a digital camera modified by a child’s magnifying glass and lenses cannibalized from old slide projectors in an attempt to view the sun in a way one cannot with the naked eye. Spelletich’s process is very much rooted in his desire to pay homage to his mentors. The work titled after Martha Wilson was taken while Spelletich was conjuring her presence during a partial solar eclipse.

Several special collaborative events will take place as part of Spelletich’s exhibit. On Saturday, May 2, from 7 – 10 pm, Art Market San Francisco will co-host an after-party at Catharine Clark Gallery in conjunction with the art fair festivities at Fort Mason. Kal Spelletich will join with artist-musicians Scott Hewicker, Alicia McCarthy and Paul Kos for a night of DJ’d music and cocktails poured by Spelletich’s robots. On Thursday, May 14, from 5 – 7 pm, Spelletich and Alistair Shanks, a Buddhist chaplain who has worked with the Zen Hospice Project and in the San Francisco County Jail system, will give a talk entitled, “Robots and Mystical Transformations: Can Technology Help Address Spiritual Questions and Crises?” An electric array of music DJ’d by Shanks and Spelletich will follow. On Saturday, May 23 from 3 – 5 pm, Spelletich’s robots will perform music for visitors at the gallery. Chris Johanson, the Bay Area painter, street artist, and namesake of several works in the exhibit, will make a special guest appearance at the turntables.

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Kal Spelletich | *Intention Machines*

April 11 – May 30, 2015

**Saturday, April 11** : Opening reception with the artist      5:00 - 7:00 pm

*This event is free and open to the public.*

Media inquiries contact Allison Stockman: [marketing@cclarkgallery.com](mailto:marketing@cclarkgallery.com)



*Martha Wilson (2015), digital print.*

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**Kal Spelletich:** Born and raised in Davenport, Iowa, Kal Spelletich received his undergraduate degree at the University of Iowa, and an M.F.A. from The University of Texas at Austin, both in the field of Media Art. For 25 years, Spelletich has been exploring the interface of humans and robots, using technology to reconnect people with intense, real-life experiences. His work is interactive, requiring participants to enter or operate his pieces, often against their instincts of self-preservation. He probes the boundaries between fear, control and exhilaration by giving his audience the opportunity to operate fascinating and often dangerous machinery. In 1988, Spelletich founded *Seemen*, his interactive machine art performance collective. Since then, he has performed, exhibited and lectured worldwide, collaborating with scientists, musicians, politicians and actors on various projects. Spelletich’s work has been included in numerous museum and gallery exhibitions over the past two decades, including the de Young Museum, SFMOMA, Exploratorium and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA; California Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Art and History, Santa Cruz, CA; Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA; and Headlands Center for the Arts, Marin, CA. He has also exhibited internationally in Namibia, Germany, Croatia and Austria. Kal Spelletich lives and works in San Francisco, California.