

Kal Spelletich

# SFGATE

## Avant-garde artist leaving San Francisco warehouse looking for new space for robots

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An artist known for his flame-throwing sculptures at Burning Man and work in the machine art scene, says he is being evicted from his warehouse in San Francisco.

Kal Spelletich, the host of several local art events, has showcased his work internationally and locally for years, fashioning his creations in a San Francisco warehouse, renting the space for over 25 years. Now facing eviction, he is hoping to raise money for legal fees and moving costs, as well as looking for a place to store his robots and other art pieces.

"I ran my studio as an experimental art/live space that housed and supported over 100 other artists and activists," Spelletich wrote about the situation in a GoFundMe. "All with NO grants, no outside support, no gallery sales and no renting to tech businesses."

**BURNING MAN 2018: No fences around major burns at Burning Man event this year**

"It was the project that should have never worked: an artist supporting artists by sharing below market rent," Spelletich continued. "Yet the 25-year run of people, events, exhibits are a testament to art over commerce. Now, like virtually all other artists in San Francisco, I'm getting evicted."

Spelletich's art work has ranged from his flaming sculptures that were part of the early days of Burning Man in the 90s, to his more recent work with 16-foot robots that interact via electrical impulses of guests' brains.

"The early stuff was so apocalyptic and so intense, and my favorite thing about it was that all the materials were recycled," said artist Chris Johanson in 2013 of Burning Man and Spelletich's work. "It was all just Kal hanging out in his studio, figuring out new ways to make things be mechanical."

**BURNING MAN 2018: Human waste is beginning to be a big problem at Burning Man, authorities say**

Now, Spelletich said he is cleaning out years of art from the warehouse, choosing which robots he can "realistically save and store, and which aren't practical to keep."

Spelletich is looking to move within the next month, but beyond figuring out where to host his past work, Spelletich is also in the midst of creating new pieces. He has two upcoming solo shows in the works at Saint Mary's College Museum of Art and the Catharine Clark Gallery in San Francisco.

"It has been a gift to share my space with so many amazing people," Spelletich wrote. "I'm looking ahead to how I can keep doing this for the next 25 years."

Article link: <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Kal-Spelletich-artist-robots-machine-San-Francisco-13083457.php#photo-12667647>

