

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
LOIS LAMBERT GALLERY

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"Gimme" Edition of 3, plus AP
Chris Eckert
polychrome metal, microelectronics
10" x 5" x 9"



"MACHINE MUSE": Dave Quick, Jim Jenkins, Chris Eckert, David Brokaw, Kyle Chew, Brian Evans, Therese Lahaie, Karl Lautman, and Mark Upson

November 16, 2013 through January 5, 2014
Opening reception Saturday, November 16, 2013 6 - 9 PM

Lois Lambert Gallery presents an exhibition of kinetic works by nine artists, Dave Quick, Jim Jenkins, Chris Eckert, David Brokaw, Kyle Chew, Brian Evans, Therese Lahaie, Karl Lautman and Mark Upson.

In the early twentieth century, three-dimensional moving sculpture, also known as Kinetic Art, found its home in the Dada movement, dealing with themes such as technology, motion and rhythm within the social context of a changing society. Kinetic Art ebbed and flowed in the following decades and then had a major resurgence in the 1950s with the exhibition "Le Mouvement" at the Denise René Gallery in Paris. This event propelled Kinetic Art into the canon of modern art history. The artists represented in the exhibition included Yaacov Agam, Pol Bury, Alexander Calder, Marcel Duchamp, Jean Tinguely, and Victor Vasarely.

"Machine Muse" at the Lois Lambert Gallery is a collaboration of perspectives and styles from the best of contemporary kinetic artists.

Dave Quick uses assemblage of found objects to create narratives that focus on our relationship with our machines, our media, and other aspects of life in a technologically careening world. The question that pervades his work: man the tool user or tool the man user? One of his works, **"Homage to Busby Berkeley"** is a wall mounted altar of sorts that pays homage to cinema director Busby Berkeley, whose 1930s "extravaganza" spectacles were arguably the first major use of film as a dominantly visual experience. Spanning nearly three decades, original elements of this installation were built for the exhibition concurrent with the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. Other elements have been added over the years—the most recent of which was 2012. The viewer pushes a button and an array of twelve white plastic bulls begin a minute-long synchronized performance. Neon lighting simulates the black and white film of the 1930s. The work engages the viewer with kinetics of extravaganza, but also takes literally the "cattle call" of semi-nude showgirls who were in the mainstay of Berkeley's entertainment.

Quick received his MFA from UCLA, is a founding board member of the Museum of Neon Art, has exhibited and curated at the Museum of Neon Art and the Annenberg Beach House and was commissioned by Santa Monica Cultural Affairs to create an installation at the inaugural GLOW festival in Santa Monica in 2008. His work is also housed in numerous private collections including that of Tom Patchett, Chuck and Judy Goodstein, Scott Becker, Giuseppe Spadaccini and the Yosemite Museum, among others.

Jim Jenkins **"Jacaranda"** incorporates metals, motors, and LED's to create an otherwise natural scene of a tree with moving birds—a scene Jenkins observed from his studio window. He was taken by how a small creature could land on the tip of a branch and set the entire limb in motion by its own diminutive gyrations. The resulting shadows that are cast seem at once both familiar and foreign, the cacophonously beautiful hum of the birds, both lively and cold, and the sway of the branches, both organic and calculated. Rife with juxtapositions, "Jacaranda" is not only visually captivating, but also opens up a dialogue about the times in which we live.

Jenkins received his MFA from Syracuse University and has exhibited at The Mechanical Art & Design Museum (MAD) in Stratford Upon Avon (where he is also part of their collection), the Caretta Shiodome in Tokyo and the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, among others. He also had the inaugural solo exhibition at the Museum of Neon Art in Los Angeles, has an outdoor sculpture in the Southwest Aviation Complex collection at the Van Nuys Airport and co-authored the book Motion Motion: Kinetic Art with Dave Quick. He currently lives and works in California and heads the sculpture program at California State University, Fullerton.

Chris Eckert's "**Party Gift**," "**ToDo**," "**Think Machine**," and "**Gimme**" are modest in size, but mighty in their approach. A nervously searching blue eye emerges from a red box with the Communist Party insignia and the image of Chairman Mao's smiling face front and center in "**Party Gift**". Sometimes the eye is trapped inside the box, sometimes it peers out—watching. It is simultaneously a hostage, an observer and a witness. In "**ToDo**," a numerically controlled machine, developed collaboratively by Eckert and Martin Fox, frantically and arbitrarily writes an endless list of chores—chores which are actually those of the artist and were programmed to appear in his handwriting, but never repeat in the same order. This piece speaks to the day-to-day tasks by which we run our lives and which seem to constantly grow and appear before us again and again. "**Think Machine**" depicts a mechanized hand, disconnected from its body, rhythmically tapping the wooden surface—automated contemplation. And finally, "**Gimme**" is a mechanical panhandler that follows the viewer around the room endlessly requesting donations, inspired by the many encounters with homeless people on his morning jogs. Eckert originally worked as a mechanical engineer in Silicon Valley, designing and building factory automation, and was fascinated by the inner workings of the machine. Transitioning into the artistic realm was not without its challenges. "For me, the *why* (in kinetic art-making) has always been some internal struggle. I explore this in my art and the resulting sculpture remains as a record."

Eckert received his MFA in sculpture from San Jose State University, received the Artist Laureate award at the 2012 Silicon Valley Arts Council, and is housed in numerous private collections nationwide. He has exhibited internationally, including at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, the Ars Electronica Center in Austria and the Gewerbemuseum in Switzerland, among others.

David Brokaw's work encourages conversations about the ways humans choose to augment their existence with technology and the resulting social and evolutionary implications. He employs physics, his own sense of humor and pop culture references in his quest to achieve this. "**Over the Top**," the name of a Sylvester Stallone film and the title of this piece is a mixed media kinetic work that incorporates found objects once owned by Stallone and is based on a scene where his character is driving a truck and lifting weights at the same time. "**DJ Fame Game**" bridges sound, technology, and celebrity and was originally comprised of five separate pieces representing: Kenny G, Courtney Love, Tommy Lee, and Flea. Brokaw examines the power of television and social media to alter the way in which we perceive celebrities. Even though he does not know these people in reality, he feels like he already has a relationship with them through these digital interactions. The role of the DJ booth is to choose when each character will play and in this sense, is a performer in its own right. All of these figures were chosen for their eccentricity and Brokaw explores how a hypothetical collaboration would turn out if these characters were to come together in real life.

Brokaw received his M.F.A with emphasis on sculpture from California State University, Fullerton and has exhibited at the Museum of Neon Art, the dA Center for the Arts, the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, and the Gayle and Ed Roski MFA Gallery at the University of Southern California, among others. He also was awarded the Dale Hallberg scholarship and the sculpture commission for Tim Burton's traveling retrospective show.

Kyle Chew breathes life into domestic objects that otherwise would not have a voice, with absurdity and humor. Since childhood, his curiosity with taking things apart and learning how they work has never left him. "**Number One Table**" and "**Number Two Table**" are seemingly mundane objects infused with subtle whimsy. Chew wanted to investigate the ideas of becoming more domesticated, but with a twist. Two tables are electronically manipulated—their outstretched legs, imparted with a personality usually reserved for animals and humans.

Chew received his M.F.A from California State University, Fullerton, has exhibited at the Museum of Neon Art and the Laguna Art Museum, among others and has been awarded multiple grants and awards, including the Dale Hallberg Scholarship.

Brian Evans is masterful in his ability to infuse otherwise inert objects with seemingly life-like behavior. In "**Nomes**," four small grey forms 3d printed in resin, oscillate in a systematic manner. Through individual yet regularly timed behavior, a sense of community is created as the forms sync periodically as a group. "**Wirbel**," an apparatus comprised of, among other materials, six small propellers that spin at a variable rate, causes the connected aluminum arms that extend from the wall to sway erratically like a blowing breeze. The piece uses wind speed data collected from Santa Monica, California over a two-month period. "**Radiolaria**," made from laser sintered nylon and custom electronics, depicts five autonomous spheres that roll in random directions and durations. Each is bestowed with an individual personality.

Evans received his M.F.A in Art with an Emphasis in Sculpture from California State University, Long Beach and has exhibited at the Center for Visual Art in Denver, the Art Gallery at Barnsdall Art Park in Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles Center for Digital Art, among others. He currently works as an Assistant Professor at Metropolitan State University of Denver.

Therese Lahaie's work comes from and embodies the spirit of three of her series entitled *The Kinetic Tea House*, *Nocturne and Scoured Mirrors*. "**Chabana Whisk**" from the first of these series, alludes to the Japanese art of flower arrangement for the tea ceremony, something which she experienced in her travels to Japan. Accompanied

by a geisha, Lahaie was captivated by the grace, sensuality and reverie of the whole ritual. The sound of the whisk stirring the tea is an important sensory experience in this tradition. It is never supposed to touch the bottom of the cup, only get incredibly close to it, as if playfully teasing. This idea inspired the gentle meeting of the two brushes in her piece, a kiss of sorts. As this happens, the golden colored brush slowly removes the red clay slip that adorns the platform on which the piece stands, layer by layer, inspired by the material of these Japanese teacups. **“Nocturne”** uses the reflective and refractive characteristics of glass and a projected light to create shadows that expand and contract. These slow, repetitive movements have a hypnotic power and a poetic cadence, influenced in part by J.M. Whistler's dusk time paintings. **“Scoured Mirrors”** depicts a slow motorized mirror that has been partially abraded to reveal the various under-layers of silver, pigment and transparency. The continually shifting, fragmentary reflections evoke private meditations on landscape, horizon lines and global forms and spaces.

Lahaie received her B.F.A in glass sculpture at the Massachusetts College of Art and has exhibited nationwide and internationally, including at the M.I.T. Compton Gallery in Boston, the California Craft Museum, and the Glazenhuis (Glass House) in Belgium, among others. She has also had work placed in museum collections, such as the Crocker Art Museum, has had work commissioned for numerous public installations, and received the prestigious Djerassi Resident Artist Fellowship from 2006-2010.

Karl Lautman's work explores the tension between what we want or expect machines to do and what the machines themselves “want” to do, which he calls “McTension”. Despite the engineering process, there is always an unpredictable element to these pieces, and that is what makes them so intriguing. The pressing of a button in **“Ouroborus”** begins a chain reaction of falling dominos—a familiar series of movements we recognize from our childhood. Half way through, however, as if by some sort of magic, the dominoes begin standing up again, begging us to question what we already think we know. This work took second place in the 2004 International Kinetic Art Competition. **“Who's On First”** depicts the chatter of two relays, going through the comedy duo Abbott & Costello's famous routine in Morse code. **“Art Makes and Impact,”** made from a DC motor, aluminum, batteries, resin and high-density foam releases a spring-loaded miniature bust of Michelangelo's “David,” causing it to repeatedly smash into a piece of foam. The contrast of using arguably one of the most quintessential works of art history, and infusing it with a modern twist, again, invites a compelling discourse.

Lautman received his M.B.A from the University of Chicago and had a successful career in the high-technology field, working for companies like Intel, Motorola and Oracle before pursuing sculpture. He still finds himself working in both worlds. He has work housed at the Franklin Institute Science Museum in Philadelphia and Power Integrations in San Jose and has exhibited at the esteemed Annemarie Garden, a sculpture garden and exhibition space in Solomons, Maryland among other institutions.

Mark Upson finds poetry in machines. Metaphor and symbolism courses through his work, creating a paradox between the emotion of humanity and the vacancy of machinery. His work combines found and fabricated objects that require the viewer's participation to turn them on. **“Pumpjack”** was influenced by the oil rigs surrounding the Colorado landscape. It explores the contrast Upson experienced between being enthralled by the movements of oil extraction and the nightmare of their global impact on contemporary society. It was important for Upson to directly involve the viewer in this piece, so that they could experience what he did. Cranking the machine, pumps oil through the hourglass, a haunting reminder that time is running out for this antiquated resource and perhaps, life as we know it. **“The Ties That Bind Us”** was completed after a stay with Upson's wife's large extended family. Inspired by the many generations of family ties he witnessed on this trip, this piece relies on the inner wheels to guide a large ring through the driving mechanism, resulting in a pleasing circular motion and a gentle mechanical sound. **“Hay, Corn, Grass”** was an attempt to animate Upson's great grandfathers scythe. Here, modern technology had rid this tool of its original mechanics and its character, in an attempt to refine it. The scythe gently sways with the viewer's help and is returned to the initial, graceful state. **“Engine #5 Short Track”** is the fifth piece of an on-going series of small sculptures that are quick to build and fun exercises in simple movements. Upson's objective is to explore materials and build small-wheeled engines. The title refers to the limited distance it can travel because of its gearing.

Upson received his MFA in sculpture from California State University, Fullerton and has exhibited at the Irvine Fine Arts Center and the Huntington Beach Art Center, among others. He has also been awarded the Art School Associates Trust Fund Award as well as the Dale Hallberg Scholarship, has been commissioned for public installations in Colorado and won first place in competitions at the National Arts Program in Portland, Maine and at the “Twisting the Edge” exhibit in Pomona, California.