Gregory Kalliche
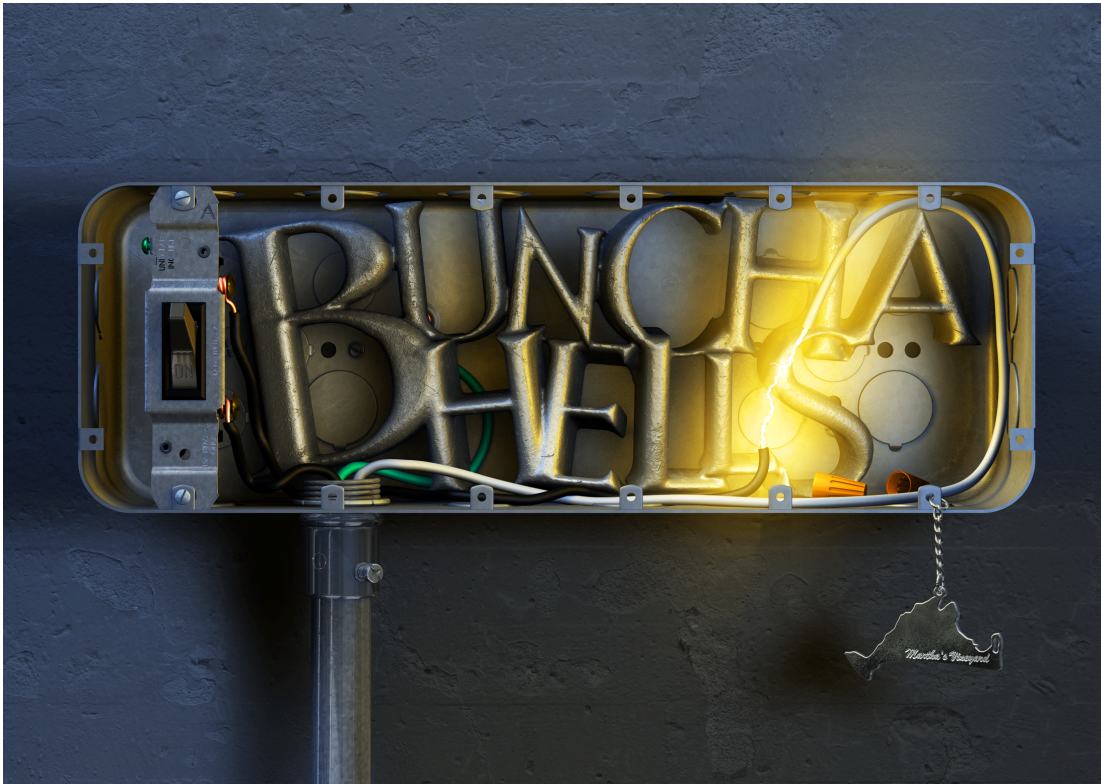*Buncha Hells*

September 3 – October 9, 2022
Opening reception: Saturday September 3, 4-7 pm

Winter Street Gallery is pleased to present *Buncha Hells*, a site-responsive installation by New York-based artist Gregory Kalliche. Featuring a single-channel video accompanied by a synchronized lighting program, Kalliche animates the histories, symbols, and effects of electricity. CGI animated depictions of Nikola Tesla's Egg of Columbus, slithering eels, and dancing northern lights are a few of the various representations that the artist brings to life within the electrifying world of *Buncha Hells.* Through this uncanny imagery, he reminds us of the omnipresence of electricity. Articulating electricity's literal role within the mechanics of his installation, Kalliche taps into and expands the gallery's own electrical system, leveraging a network of conduits alongside a sophisticated lighting scheme. Developed over two years, this acutely choreographed presentation foregrounds sensory experience, wherein audio and video cues coalesce as Kalliche's animation flows into real space. On view from September 3 through October 9, 2022, the exhibition is accompanied by a text by Elizaveta Shneyderman, which follows below.

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Nowhere is the leaky relation between visualization and its comprehension more explicitly evident than in animation. As a representation and study of the "in-betweenness" of matter, animation is a temporal project—not the art of drawings that move but the art of movements that are drawn. As a field of study, animation is an inquiry constituted around the moments of transfer between life and the inanimate. And as a precursor to the newer expressions of modelled and rigged computer-generated

flesh, it is the culmination of imaging strategies and histories which produce the aesthetic effects that we frequently and unconsciously watch in the world.

Cartoons take this notion of in-betweenness further: we understand the cartoon world order to be profoundly exaggerated and unachievable. To be destroyed and remain intact—this is the fundamental credo of the phantasmatic, cartoon universe. What cartoons depict, then, are visualizations of an impossible plasticity—the freewheeling byproducts of synthetic realism, stuck between a logic of realism and the impossibility of its depiction. Consider cartoon electrocution: to base the visual off of the "real" occurrence would be uneventful, as an electrocuted body would simply seize up, with no visible current. The cartoon-logic version, consequently, animates bones flashing through skin in stark contrast, against a black-and-white silhouette. The x-ray vision afforded to a viewer when a character is electrocuted in a cartoon universe reinforces the limitless potential of the undying body which cartoons depict.

Gregory Kalliche's animated video *Buncha Hells* takes the metaphor even further: if, for cartoons, some of the cultural cache rests in depictions of impossible phenomena or exaggerations of the familiar, what is their contemporaneous, CG equivalent? Taking its visual cues from the history of electrical visualization, *Buncha Hells* puts the whole gamut on display: from early and dramatic exhibits of scientific protocols to the cartoon-logic protoplasms of imagined fantasy. Tesla's Egg of Columbus, an egg-shaped copper device used by Nikola Tesla in the 1893 World's Fair to showcase alternating current, is reenacted— backlit by an exaggerated torrent of electrical sparks powering the egg's revolutions. The prepackaged awe and wonder which fantastical electrical displays afford us is restaged into playful, elastic abstractions. A pickle becomes electrified as a salty conductor; a squirming electric eel fires in a switch box, and two well-placed conductive pins in a pair of severed frog legs demonstrate bioelectricity via cartoon logic. The products of this electrical-visual technoculture become forms of manipulation whose singular histories of innovation and research highlight the transductive relationship between technical culture and human proficiency.

But the exciting fantasy of technological determinism is tempered with an uneasiness in the work. Through the video's editing, sequencing and sound design, the subject matter is pressurized and put on edge, revealing that even in its most ordered sense, electricity as a force can overcome its means of control. *Buncha Hells* visualizes the subconsciously-embedded arrogance in the idea that electricity is something to be manipulated and managed. It also is a testament to the fact that knowledge is not singular, but instead a veritable kismet of representations, manipulations, and perceptions. To focus our attention is to privilege a singular vantage point among the endless exchanges, pictorial conventions, and non-experiential modes one can use to understand or describe a particular subject.

From the imperfect flow of electrons to the organizational logic in which they exist, digital media and computer-generated imagery cannot hide or transpose the mechanisms that constitute them. Here sits the genealogy of visualization, offering what storytelling offers to cartoons: a push-and-pull between fact and fiction, where realism is an admixture of both what resembles the real and an irreality which produces "realistic" effects. By combining the representational with the more-than-representational, Kalliche offers visualization as a consequence of an altered and amalgamated human vision.

– Elizaveta Shneyderman