



**TOP AND BOTTOM:**  
*Hall of Khan*, installation views, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, 2013

**CENTER LEFT:**  
*Mr. Ed's Mouth*, 2013, ballpoint pen on paper, push pins, foam, board, 15.5 x 13.5 x 1 inches

**CENTER RIGHT:**  
*Tablet 3*, 2013, foam, reclaimed wood, hardware, plaster, wax, paint, boiled sugar, red food coloring, pigment, 28 x 18 x 6 inches

**Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford** (b. 1983, Vermont) approaches his practice as a conduit into many worlds, intervening in spheres of activism, art discourse, education, science fiction fandom, and equine technology. Recently he attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and received an MFA from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a BFA from Bard College in New York. He is a Fulbright grantee and the recipient of numerous awards, including an Illinois Arts Council Project Grant, a CAAP grant, and a grant from the Propeller Fund. He teaches Sculpture at DePaul University and the Chicago High School for the Arts. The Chicago-based artist produced the work for *Hall of Khan* during a year-long residency at Hyde Park Art Center, where he was a member of the inaugural Jackman Class.

*Hall of Khan* is generously supported in part by the Harpo Foundation; a Community Arts Assistant Program grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; an Artist Project Grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; and with special assistance from Palos Hills Riding Stables/New Traditions Riding Academy.

The artist thanks Veronica Vegna, J. Christopher Hammes, Lucas Hulsebos-Spofford, Manuela Londono, Kate Lorenz, Megha Ralapati, Aaliya Sims, Paul Smith, Martha Thompson-Hoyt, Shane Ward, and Kiki Wilson for their assistance with the project.

### Program of related events:

#### Exhibition Reception & Performance\*

Sunday, April 14, 3-5pm

#### Open Art Lab\*

Monday, May 13, 10:30am-2:30pm

#### Conversation with the Artist: Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford

Thursday, May 23, 6pm

#### High Noon Ride and Closing Picnic featuring the Broken Arrow Horseback Riding Club

Saturday, July 27, 11am-2pm

\*1-2 live horses will be present in the gallery during this time.

**Hyde Park Art Center** is a unique resource that advances contemporary visual art in Chicago by connecting artists and communities in unexpected ways. As an open forum for exploring the artistic process, the Art Center fosters creativity through making, learning about, seeing, and discussing art—all under one roof.

Hyde Park Art Center's **Exhibitions program** is a laboratory for artists looking to push the boundaries of their practice and whose work makes meaningful contributions to today's social and political discourse. By enabling underrepresented artists to be entrepreneurial in their work and giving them the broad exposure they deserve, the Art Center ensures that groundbreaking contemporary art gets made—and seen—in Chicago.

**The Residency** at Hyde Park Art Center positions Chicago as a worldwide destination for the arts by bringing local and global artists together to work side by side in our studios, deepening engagement between local and international contemporary art practices.

#### GALLERY 1 HOURS:

Monday – Thursday: 10am – 8pm

Friday – Saturday: 10am – 5pm

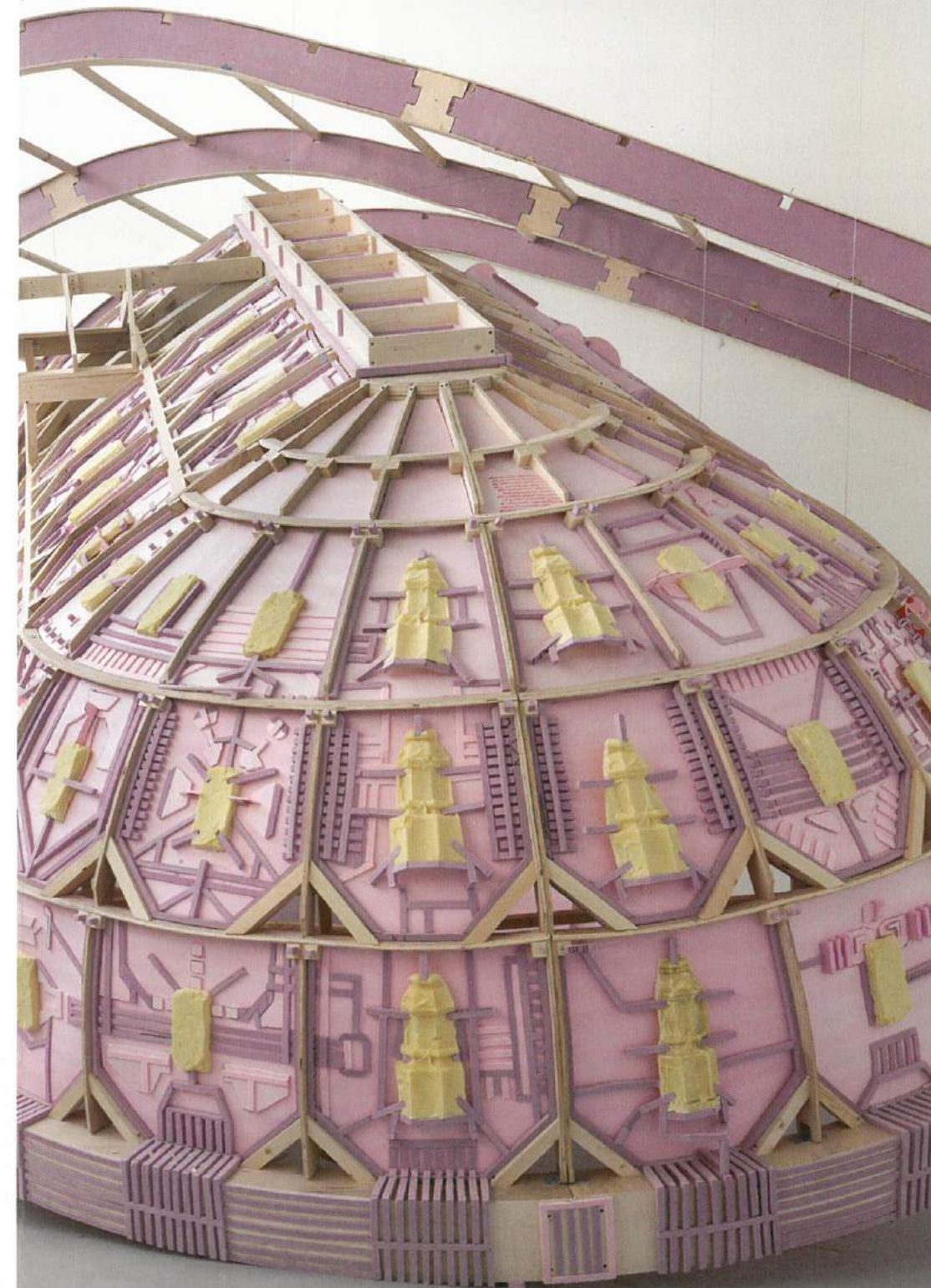
Sunday: 12pm – 5pm

### Hyde ParkARTCENTER

5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 [www.hydeparkart.org](http://www.hydeparkart.org)

The Art Center is funded in part by: the Alphawood Foundation; Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Arts; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; Field Foundation of Illinois; Harper Court Arts Council; Harpo Foundation; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Irving Harris Foundation; Joyce Foundation; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; National Endowment for the Arts; Polk Bros. Foundation; Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust; and the generosity of its members and people like you. Exhibitions are always free and open to the public.

Edited by Brook Rosini • Designed by the JNL graphic design • All images courtesy of Tom Van Eynde



## Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford: *Hall of Khan*

Gallery 1  
April 14 – July 28, 2013

[hydeparkart.org](http://hydeparkart.org)

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**Everything has a story.** But depending on its narrator, the same story can be told in many different ways: It might incorporate new characters, move to a different historical time, or change its meaning entirely. What if you could stand at the nexus of all those stories' intersections, and see them all at once, in all their intricate variety? Would you even care anymore how the story ends? Or would you be more fascinated by the subtle shifts in character, the myriad changes in meaning, the labyrinthine twists and turns the tale takes? Artist Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford is convinced it would be the latter, and he's certain he can ensnare you in his vision of (his)-story, visualized and boldly realized in the exhibition *Hall of Khan*.

For Jeremiah, broadening the narrative scope allows similarities to arise between disconnected histories, people, places, and beliefs that transcend coincidence, revealing a deeper, stranger, or perhaps even ridiculous connection between historic events. By plucking them from their place in time, the artist dis-locates them both temporally and spatially, and can then re-temporalize and re-locate them to discover spontaneous synchronicities. The overlaps in past events—both personal and universal—mark the beginning of a story worth exploring in sculpture, drawing, photography, and installation.

The concept for *Hall of Khan* began with Jeremiah's study of the ubiquitous style of war monument going back as far as 6th century AD. The equestrian statue depicting a person on a horse has been a celebratory symbol of territorial conquest and cultural domination throughout history. In this exhibition, the artist calls both the form and purpose of the equestrian monument into question. What is the story that is being memorialized—and monumentalized—through these sculptures, and why do all societies seem to celebrate war? Jeremiah states, "Monuments are really power structures that could be oppressive or progressive. Representation [in public sculpture] can be subverted so easily; there is more hope in abstraction." Just as the Avant-Garde responded to representational painting with impressionism, Jeremiah aims to abstract and enliven the equestrian statue as we know it to create an updated monument better suited to the dislocated contemporary experience that characterizes postmodernity.

The postmodern experience is recognized as one in which the grand narratives of a culture's shared history and values—handed down through the ages by socially sanctioned means and institutions—have broken down and fragmented. These narratives no longer resonate in the postmodern age, because of the revelation that every story changes based on the perspective from which it is told. The history of Genghis Khan as told by his own army is different from the one told by cultures he conquered. In the face of this new reality, there is no way to verify the absolute or truthful version of history, calling into question the validity of every story. Becoming unmoored from history and disconnected from truth in this way might simply be considered paralyzing or terrifying. But Jeremiah's artwork presents a liberated interpretation of this uneasy, disconnected state of being, creating playful and otherwise impossible interplays between disparate, discrete historical events, ideas, timelines, and people.

The public monument itself has a complex history, as it has been a target for reinvention and critique in contemporary art. Jeremiah's thoughts on the monument continue from minimal and conceptual art practices that began in the 1960s. In particular, a minimal artwork that reconsiders the relevance of the monument, *Die* (1958), by Tony Smith, presents a six-foot-squared steel cube that heightens the viewer's experience of the awkward size and bodily scale of monuments in public space.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Jeremiah explores the non-monumental approach to his reinventions of the equestrian statue by using a humble scale and non-precious material, while celebrating personal realizations alongside historically significant accomplishments to reconsider how we value human achievement.

Jeremiah approaches sculpture as three dimensional collage in space. Rarely does he sketch his sculptures before making them. He builds the work directly with materials he selects for their cultural significance and visual qualities, to create a new composition that combines those histories referenced into a hybridized object. Multiple references blend into one object and place the artwork outside the realm of any particular time or place, giving it a futuristic quality.

Suspended in the center of the gallery and framed by oblong arches<sup>2</sup>, *Hall* appears like a hovering spaceship or architectural relic. The skeletal structure replicates a scaled-down version of The Crystal Palace, originally constructed for the first World's Fair, which took place in Hyde Park, London (1851), and championed



Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford  
*Hall of Khan*, installation view  
Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago,  
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England as the leader of the Industrial Revolution. Pink polystyrene foam panels (usually used for building insulation) and wood form a lightweight covering to create what the artist imagines would represent the next and third (fictional) World's Fair in Hyde Park, Chicago, celebrating the plastic revolution of the future. Sculptural relief drawings on the exterior of *Hall* feature crude circuitry mixed with urethane foam bricks cast from the Economics building at the University of Chicago and surrounding South Side residential buildings. The decorative splicing of contemporary and ancient technologies with symbols of affluence and poverty present a speed bump in the path for future American world domination.

*Stall*, a traditional-looking horse stable, contrasts with the synthetic, sci-fi *Hall*. Together, the two structures lay out the broad spectrum of technological advancement humankind has made over the centuries. Horses have been a major transportation, labor, and military force for civilizations, while advances in technology and building materials have ensured continued progress and security. During the run of the exhibition, horses will be included in the installation as living sculptures on which to mount urethane foam sculptures made in response to actual monuments memorializing figures such as Archimedes, Genghis Khan, and Joan of Arc. Other sculptures include the artist's tribute to the film *White Men Can't Jump* and iconic fashion label Polo Ralph Lauren, both of which spurred the artist's own realizations about race and class structures in the US. There is also an homage to Italo Calvino for writing *Invisible Cities* (1978), a seminal text considering responsible urban design. These abstracted plastic forms placed astride a live horse in the stable (during monthly events listed on the reverse) or on sculpted saddle stands in the gallery replace bronze sculptures of historical riders whose lives and legends have shaped history through the present day.

The significance of story is emphasized in the series of wall mounted foam panels titled *Tablets 1-6*. The work is inspired by the *Tablets of Gilgamesh* (2750-2500 BC), thought to be the oldest written story. Stamped in clay, the twelve part epic tells of the conflicts between urban and rural societies in the efforts to build civilization and progress. *Tablets 1-6* presents patterning on each panel, which functions as the story, offering the decorative swirls and protruding parts cast from a western saddle for narrative interpretation. The porous, marrow-like textures and meaty fragments frozen in shiny, colored plastic suggest a fascinating premonition of the challenges society faces.

Modern research techniques, including internet search results and digital photography, are included in the exhibition, representing current communication methods shaping history. The ballpoint pen drawings pinned on styrene board panels formally present an informal archive of Jeremiah's Google searches investigating topics like "equine technology," "horse/military," and "statue vandalism," for example. The documentation—and fabrication—of culture via the Internet instantaneously allows anyone to share their story with the world. Some of the images come from *memes*, or a virtual image with a (usually humorous) statement or idea superimposed on it that goes viral, spreading rapidly from person to person and becoming a cultural phenomenon. As one of the most recent shorthand forms of storytelling, the meme oddly mimics the eclectic and comical melding of forms and histories that Jeremiah accomplishes through his artwork.

Monuments create a physical placeholder in the world for those happenings in history and culture that society deems important. Yet importance is subjective and the next generation may champion a revised history and celebrate a different outcome. Fascinated by the possibility of creating new stories out of old ones, Jeremiah creates a large installation of fragments for the viewer to connect, determining narratives. Traditional documentary formats—from the clay tablet, bust, monument, and architecture to photography and the Internet—are all fodder for Jeremiah's practice and offer recognizable platforms for historical revision.

Allison Peters Quinn  
Director of Exhibition and Residency Programs

1. Further discussion on the topic can be found in *Art and Objecthood* by Michael Fried (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 156.

2. The form is borrowed from the Almere Sheep stable in the Netherlands, sustainably designed by 70F architecture (2007).