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ARTS » VISUAL ARTS

Happy trails for HPAC resident

Artist-in-residence Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford's exhibit, *Hall of Khan*, finds itself muddled in disparate media.

by Lauren Gurley - Apr 16, 2013 2:07 am CDT



PHOTO: COURTESY OF HYDE PARK ART CENTER

In *Hall of Khan*—a reference to the great Mongolian steppe horseman

Genghis Khan—Hulsebos-Spofford decided to take a stab at a contemporary warhorse monument. His abstract recreations of these statues, which are often just a fragmentary part of the monument like a saddle, are made of a smattering of materials including but not limited to foam, furniture, polystyrene, epoxy putty, plaster, wax, acrylic, boiled sugar, 90 percent dark chocolate, and dried pineapples. While Hulsebos-Spofford, a Vermont native, remains close to his fascination with all things equestrian throughout the show, the mix of media forms makes it feel at times disjointed and lacking in a specific aesthetic effect or artistic methodology. A massive wooden skeletal structure entitled "Hall," which towers high above the other pieces, is a scaled-down recreation of the Crystal Palace in London's Hyde Park, and a feat of construction, but has a hard time fitting in with the size and color scheme of the other pieces in the room.

What is most commendable about *Hall of Khan* is perhaps the way it brings the horse, a rarity in urban Chicago, to young children, and even adults, who have never touched or even seen live horses. In addition to the exhibition, HPAC will hold horse drawing classes as well as a high noon ride with Chicago's Broken Arrow Horseback Riding Club. Whether or not you share Hulsebos-Spofford's fascination with horses, *Hall of Khan* takes a daring and highly radical approach to history and art, and makes for an entertaining place to spend your Saturday afternoon.

Hall of Khan will be showing at the Hyde Park Art Center through July 28.

LAUREN GURLEY