



ARTFORUM

Enej Gala

A PLUS A

Centro Espositivo Sloveno San Marco 3073

June 13, 2015–September 20, 2015

A large window in this space opens onto a small Venetian street, from which even the most distracted pedestrians stop to look at Enej Gala's large sculpture inside, titled *Hyrach*, 2015. This solo show's installation evokes hayloft structures used in the artist's native Slovenia for drying grass and other forage crops. Normally these are built from a series of dry poles braced by horizontal planks, but in this case the artist has used a variety of materials to fashion his—including silicone and oil paint—so that the structure in question looks like a three-dimensional painting. Throughout the exhibition, Gala is seeking a dialogue with the contemporary Slovene writer Aleš Šteger, inspired by the poems in the latter's *Knjiga reči* (*The Book of Things*) (2005) to work between word and image to investigate how knowledge and wisdom; irony and shrewdness; and superstition or naïveté have been passed down over the course of history through both stories and visual art.

As the show unfolds through numerous installations, including sculptures that sometimes have the appearance of animals, Gala never abandons his connection to nature or his relationship to the pagan symbols that characterize his native cultural heritage. This young artist displays firm knowledge and surprising perspicacity in the way he incorporates many artistic references from Bruegel to *art brut*. The numerous paintings displayed here include a diptych, *If there is land . . . there is home*, 2015, where there are lines that bring to mind a forest and a swamp but which, on closer examination, appear to be more like fragile and unstable boundaries.

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.



View of "Enej Gala," 2015.

— Marco Tagliafierro