SHARON BUTLER
TWO COATS OF PAINT

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EMAIL: Mike Cloud's shopping list

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I recently received an announcement for "Bad Faith and Universal Technique," Mike Cloud's September solo show at Thomas Erben Gallery. Cloud, born in 1974 in Chicago, graduated from Yale MFA in 2003 and is an assistant professor at Brooklyn College. I have met him at the BC final critiques, where he has a gentle and insightful presence, offering resonant comments to each of the students as they presented their projects, but I've never seen any of his work. According to the press release:

> Cloud appropriates well known symbols to reexamine historical events or phenomena, exploring the perspective of survivors rather than winners or losers. His paintings break out of the expected format, taking on irregular shapes and sculptural qualities, sometimes leaving the wall and venturing out into the exhibition space.

I was struck by the image (posted above) included with the announcement. Titled *Shopping List*, Cloud's painting combines two big structures, shaped like Stars of David, with painterly markmaking that seems to reference landscape. The words inscribed denote everyday items that might be on a grocery list, such as milk, cabbage, ketchup, oranges, and honey. In the lower right corner, a small geometric abstraction painted with a rainbow of colors hangs from the main painting.

I'm curious about the rest of the work in the show. Does Cloud explore other forms of religious imagery? Do everyday elements continue to collide with the iconic? What other kinds of text fragments does he use? I'm intrigued--I can't wait to see more of Cloud's work at Erben in September.

"Mike Cloud: Bad Faith and Universal Technique," Thomas Erben, Chelsea, New York, NY. September 11 through October 18, 2014.