

Mike Cloud

Quiltmaking & Over Production of Opposites

May 6 – June 5, 2010

Opening reception May 8, 2010, 6 – 8 pm

Max Protetch Gallery is pleased to announce *Quiltmaking & Over-Production of Opposites*, an exhibition of new work by Mike Cloud. This will be Cloud's fourth exhibition with the gallery, and it will feature a series of two-sided works on paper that combine collage, text, sewing, and printmaking. Over the course of his career, Cloud has consistently experimented with these and other techniques in order to investigate and question the constituent elements of painting. In these new works, he has synthesized the approaches into works on paper that also display his penchant for mathematical formulas and self-imposed compositional limits.

Each piece is made up of several 'squares' of paper that have been quilted together; these 'squares' are in fact pages that have been removed from copies of Annie Liebovitz's *A Photographer's Life*, a book that Cloud has used to make collages in the past. One of Cloud's systematic decisions has been to make collages using exclusively books of photographs by white, female photographers. Each square in turn is made up of four copies of one leaf from the book; seen from both sides of the resulting work, all four images printed on a single leaf are visible. While the attached squares are affixed to a surrounding piece of canvas with needle and thread, the quilting within each work is in fact done by means of acrylic paint, which works as a kind of glue.

Cloud has cut out the focal point of each image, as if to remove the *raison d'être* of the photograph and emphasize its materiality in the greater scheme of his composition. Some of these holes give way to the back of the leaves to which they are attached, and some of them line up with other holes so that the work becomes transparent. In the blank areas around the photographs, Cloud has painted Liebovitz's name in various shapes and sizes, depending upon the parameters of the negative spaces. Finally, Cloud has also incorporated pieces of Color-Aid paper into the compositions, cutting them and arranging them in geometric patterns; these patterns are also emphasized by the presence of the paint that Cloud uses to glue them together.

For all their systematic and procedural rigor, these quilted works on paper also display a forceful, even rough, approach to craftsmanship. By combining the varied aspects of his work to date, Cloud seems to create a spectrum, a map, of both physical and conceptual processes. In this regard, the fact that these works are intended to be viewed from both sides, i.e. that they have neither front nor back, takes on metaphorical significance. Cloud investigates not only why images are made, or how visual information can be communicated, but the underlying drives, both tangible and spiritual, that result in cultural artifacts.

Mike Cloud has been the subject of a solo exhibition at P.S. 1, New York. His work was included in Bob Nickas' *Painting Abstraction*, published by Phaidon Press in 2009; has