



Mike Cloud

**Paintings
are always
objects
within
a system
of objects**

The Myth
of Education



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THE MYTH

Mike Cloud The Myth of Education



About the Artist

Mike Cloud is a New York-based painter whose work examines the conditions of painting in its contemporary life among countless reproductions, symbols and descriptions. Cloud earned his MFA from Yale University School of Art and a BFA from the University of Illinois-Chicago. A selection of exhibitions include: *Special Project: Mike Cloud* at P.S.1, NY; *Agreement and Subjectivity* at Max Protech, NY; *Jesse Chapman / Mike Cloud* at Marianne Boesky Gallery, NY and *Bad Faith and Universal Technique* at Thomas Erben Gallery, NY. His work has been included in group exhibitions such as *Frequency* at the Studio Museum in Harlem, NY; at Apexart, NY and Honor Fraser Gallery, CA. Cloud's works and writing have been featured in the *New York Times*, *Art in America*, *Art Review* and in the painting survey *Painting Abstraction* by Bob Nickas, published by Phaidon Press. He has been awarded the inaugural Chiaro Award from the Headlands Center for the Arts, CA; a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship and residencies at the Meulenstein Art Centre in the Netherlands as well as the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program in New York. Cloud has lectured extensively on his work and issues of contemporary art theory at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, NJ; The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, MA; Yale University, CT; Cooper Union, NY; Bard College, NY and The University of Illinois- Chicago, IL, among others. He is currently an assistant professor at Brooklyn College/ CUNY in New York.

Mike Cloud: The Myth of Education is presented by Logan Center Exhibitions and curated by Yesomi Umolu, Exhibitions Curator.

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1 Pink Rectangle 2017

2 Removed Individual 2013

3 Yellow Square 2017



Logan Center Gallery
Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts
915 E 60th St
Chicago IL 60637

Tues - Sat
9am - 9pm
Sun
11am - 9pm
Mon
Closed

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#mythofeducation



Opening Reception

**Friday
January 26**

Logan Center Gallery

6:00 pm



The Myth of Education

Brooklyn-based artist Mike Cloud makes monumental paintings that explore ideas of abstraction in art while exposing the multiple meanings embedded in the familiar signs and symbols of our time. Gestural, colorful, and uncompromising in their artistic intent, Cloud's paintings often comprise of a mash-up of thick paint and patchworks of collaged materials and language culled from photo books, newspapers, and other ephemera of daily life. Cloud sees paintings as objects within a system of objects, and describes his own paintings as a "kind of microcosmic system of objects (toys, mazes, symbols, and painting materials), which although familiar within their own contexts, might combine into an overarching system of familiarities that create a kind of transparency of their own." In coalescing a myriad of elements and source material, Cloud's highly charged works create new and surprising associations between image, text, color, and form.

For his exhibition at the Logan Center Gallery, Cloud has created large-scale, multi-layered paintings on his signature shaped canvases, newspaper collages and handmade collage quilts to form a singular installation. In *The Myth of Education*, the artist foregrounds his interest in drawing out the full potential of the medium of painting. Cloud is equally as attentive to the creative possibilities of the painted surface as he is to that of the painting's support structure including the stretcher bars and hanging medium. To this end, his expressive gestures populate the extremities of his paintings and beyond. The idea of reaching towards the edges of an object is a distinctive quality in Cloud's work. With this approach also comes a desire to subvert the traditional relationship between a painting, the two-dimensional plane of the wall, and the three dimensions of the gallery. Consequently, sitting on the floor and leaning against the wall, Cloud's massive geometric abstractions dare to occupy unexpected spaces and take on sculptural qualities.

In 2013 Cloud began producing paintings on shaped canvases collaged together from multiple canvases. The work *Removed Individual* (2013) is one of the earliest examples of its kind and illustrates the artist's first use of the six-pointed star

motif. In *Removed Individual*, as with subsequent paintings in the series, Cloud heavily populates the canvas with fragments of text, pattern, and color. In his suite of new paintings, shown for the first time in this exhibition, Cloud's canvases are now largely devoid of language and images. All that remains are a pared down color palette and small flourishes of pattern and graphic silhouettes. Here Cloud attempts to approach abstraction as fully as possible, distilling his works to pure painterly form and expression. However, the graphic motifs that Cloud selects for his canvases and those that are embedded within them—whether squares, arrows or diamonds are by no means innocuous and are in themselves rife with multiple meanings and associations. Given the ubiquity of these forms, they cannot be seen solely as scaffolding for the artist's painterly gestures but rather must be understood as part of the subject of the work. By returning to these forms through repetition and subtle variation across a number of works, Cloud continues to tease out their full creative potential and meaning.

Other graphic motifs such as the cloud form and the starburst appear in the artist's newspaper collages, which are made up of clippings from various New York dailies. Whereas one might expect to see these motifs used as speech bubbles in a newspaper comic strip—usually denoting a thought or an action—Cloud deploys these forms in his works to remove existing information. These motifs take the place of photographs that had once been printed on the newspaper spreads. Through this process, Cloud establishes an equivalence between image and graphic symbol, and thereby demonstrates their shared function in communicating specific sentiments and/or events. Seen alongside fragments of existing text covering current affairs from the extraordinary to the mundane, these motifs take on new valence.

Throughout his career, Cloud has been steadfast in his interrogation of the politics and language of abstract painting. Cloud's project rests on his impulse to deconstruct and reveal the contrivances of abstract painting—from its materials (painting, canvas and stretcher bars) to its representational conventions and symbolic content. Paired with the artist's cannibalization of everyday artifacts and their contents, this project extends to consider the structural underpinnings and symbolism inherent in our broader social fabric. Ultimately, Cloud's work demonstrates the indiscriminate ways in which meaning is made and unmade in the world.

— Yesomi Umolu,
Logan Center Exhibitions Curator

RELATED PROGRAMMING

Opening Reception and Artist Tour

**Friday
January 26
6:00 pm** Logan Center Gallery

Please join us for a reception to celebrate the opening of *Mike Cloud: The Myth of Education*. The artist will give a tour of the exhibition at 6:30pm.

Painting, Offense and Judgement

**Thursday
February 15
6:00pm** Gray Center Lab 929 E 60 St

Artist Mike Cloud is joined by Taylor Renee Aldridge (Assistant Curator, Detroit Institute of Arts and Co-founder, *ARTS.BLACK*) and Alexander Provan (Editor, *Triple Canopy*) to discuss how notions of offense and aesthetic judgment are deployed and reinforced in contemporary painting and art discourse. Moderated by Yesomi Umolu.

Painter, Hero, Star

**Thursday
March 1
6:00pm** Gray Center Lab 929 E 60 St

Reflecting on the phenomenon of the "art star" versus the "art hero", artists Mike Cloud and Oscar Murillo consider the artist's role within contemporary society, and the conditions for success and survival in their individual practices. Moderated by Yesomi Umolu.

All events are free and open to the public



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