

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT:

Manuel Venegas

mvenegas@mcachicago.org

Saadia Pervaiz

sypervaiz@mcachicago.org



Mike Cloud (b. 1974, Chicago, IL; lives in Chicago), *Poison Arrows South Africa*, 2026. Acrylic on canvas, hinges, pegs, rope, and watercolor tape; 48 × 47 × 75 in. (121.9 × 119.4 × 190.5 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York. Photo: Colleen Keihm.

MCA Chicago announces *Chicago Works* | *Mike Cloud: Worldless Obstruction*, opening May 2026

CHICAGO- The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is excited to announce a solo exhibition by Mike Cloud (b. 1974, Chicago; lives in Chicago) for its latest [Chicago Works](#) presentation, titled *Chicago Works* | *Mike Cloud: Worldless Obstruction*. Opening on May 2, 2026, in the MCA's Turner Gallery and closing on February 7, 2027, the exhibition presents a series of newly commissioned works that continue Cloud's experimentation with abstraction, symbolic language and the sculptural dimensions of painting.

Cloud challenges historical framings of abstract painting as pure and apolitical, approaching his works instead as products of their political contexts and the capitalist systems through which they circulate. Crudely constructed from wooden stretcher bars, thickly layered in painted signs, and protruding into three-dimensional space, Cloud's sculptural paintings are objects, rather than pristine surfaces, that possess a deliberately improvisational and, in his words, "unschooled" aesthetic. The artist sources his subjects from online news outlets, often alluding to contemporary stories of suffering and tragedy through his enigmatic visual vocabulary, developed over two decades. Forms resembling snowflakes, rainbows, four-leaf clovers, hearts and hands densely cluster across his canvases, which are stapled to configurations of stretcher bars that hover

between abstract structures and recognizable shapes.

The new paintings made specifically for this exhibition extend these strategies while foregrounding three recent developments in Cloud's practice: emojis, an "X"-shaped painting, and the protrusion of his works off the wall and on to the floor of the gallery. Through the use of hinges, the paintings become modular, endowed with the capacity to be folded, installed upright, and exhibited in multiple configurations. Cloud's work embodies the slipperiness of symbols, the malleability of meaning, and the potential for freedom within ambiguity.

Cloud will be in conversation with exhibition curator Nolan Jimbo on May 2, 2026, in the Edlis Neeson Theater.

Mike Cloud is the 27th artist to participate in [Chicago Works](#), a solo exhibition series at the MCA that features artists who are shaping contemporary art in the city and beyond.

Chicago Works | Mike Cloud: Worldless Obstruction is organized by Nolan Jimbo, Assistant Curator.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mike Cloud was born and raised in Chicago. He earned a BFA from the University of Illinois Chicago (2001) and an MFA from Yale University (2003). He is currently Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Art, Theory, and Practice at Northwestern University.

Cloud's solo exhibitions include *Circle Chat*, Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago (2025); *Called Ahead*, Fahrenheit Madrid (2024); *The Myth of Education*, Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, University of Chicago (2018); *Bad Faith and Universal Technique*, Thomas Erben Gallery, New York (2014); *Systems*, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln (2006); and *Special Project: Mike Cloud*, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York (2005). He has also participated in group exhibitions at Artists Space, New York; Xavier Hufkens, Brussels; Good Weather, Chicago; White Columns, New York; and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York. Cloud received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2024, the Richard Pousette-Dart Award from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts' in 2023, and the Jules Guerin Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome in 2023.

At the MCA, Cloud previously participated in the group exhibition, *The Long Dream* (2020), and his work, *Cycle and Stable* (2015), resides in the museum's collection. His work is also held in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York.

SUPPORT

Generous support for *Chicago Works | Mike Cloud: Worldless Obstruction* is provided by the Sandra and Jack Guthman Chicago Works Exhibition Fund.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The MCA interweaves exhibitions, performances, collections, and educational programs while providing a place for audiences to contemplate and discuss contemporary art in pursuit of a creative and diverse future. The MCA believes in the values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) as a platform to enact structural change. The museum is generously supported by its Board of Trustees; individual and corporate members; private and corporate foundations, including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and government agencies. The MCA is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

[The MCA is located at 220 E. Chicago Avenue](#) is open 10 am to 5 pm Wednesday to Sunday and Tuesdays from 10 am to 9 pm. Tuesday evenings (5-9 pm) are free for Illinois residents. The museum is closed on Mondays. Admission is free for all youth 18 and under, members of the military and veterans, and MCA members. Free admission for anyone 18 and under is generously provided by the Lefkowsky Free 18 & Under Fund. Find more information about MCA's exhibitions, programs, and special events at mcachicago.org or [312.280.2660](tel:312.280.2660).



facebook.com/mcachicago

IG: [@mcachicago](https://instagram.com/mcachicago)

X: [@mcachicago](https://twitter.com/mcachicago)