

# Big Baby Jesus

RUDOLF BUDJA  
THE GALLERY

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John Alexander, Ross Bleckner, Thomas Houseago, Yung Jake, Brad Kahlhamer, Joe Lewis, Charles McGill, Angelbert Metoyer and Keith Sonnier

## Curated by Tripoli Gallery & Abril Ariztizabal

*Freedom of expression should belong to everyone, yet history reveals a path far from linear. Society breathes through cycles as a body of tension and release, contraction and expansion shaped by time and place. At its core lies the figure of Baby Jesus — once an embodiment of divine presence, now a mirror reflecting how belief and image intertwine with authority.*

*Big Baby Jesus honors togetherness in a world shifting from segmentation to liberation. Rather than dwell on separation, the exhibition celebrates the continuity of impulse that connects prehistoric mark-making to the contemporary canvas: the desire to make the invisible visible. From the first marks carved into stone to the spiritual fetishes carved in wood and metal across the African continent, to the frescoed ceilings of the Renaissance; from the political murals of the 20th century to the conceptual gestures of contemporary art, artists have always wrestled with the same forces — devotion and dissent, instinct and order, freedom and form.*

*The exhibition reflects on these turning points, times when expression shifted beyond commission and freed from the structures that sought to contain it. Big Baby Jesus is ultimately a call to remembrance: that all creative expression exists along a single continuum; an unbroken lineage of human need to record, to transform, to believe.*

*When we look back through history, we see how close we remain to our origins and yet, how far we've drifted from them. Information functions as a revelatory force, and in its disclosure, it becomes unifying. Human interconnectedness, collective consciousness, is stronger than inherited ideological constructs and precedes division.*

*It has come to our priorities to highlight, celebrate and encourage where we come from, one primal system based on beliefs. There is a simple truth that anchors the curatorial approach: we each know something, but not everything. What we say may be right, yet not complete. The exhibition invites awareness rather than certainty, curiosity rather than conclusion — suggesting that understanding is a shared, evolving act.*

*Tribal art is the beginning of everything. The artists in Big Baby Jesus reclaim that primal energy, channeling ritual, instinct, and repetition through contemporary forms. Together, they resist passive acceptance of narratives that have been written for them and they reveal that art, in every era, is an act of communion — between self, community, and cosmos.*

*This hidden impulse that stems from Tribal times and expressed through Contemporary mediums, should not be seen merely as escape or nostalgia for the past, but as an inquiry into how ancient and contemporary impulses coexist and inform each other. Instinct and intellect, the primal and the modern, still converge in the creative act, reminding us that progress and origin are never separate. Baby Jesus aims to depict how belief, image, and history are shaped by those who control their telling, and how art can reopen space for multiple truths to coexist.*

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**John Alexander's** politically charged imagery of figures in societal control, critiques our current state of affairs. John continues to fuse naturalism, expressionism, and satirical surrealism throughout his work, bringing his diverse subjects together through a sustained inquiry to enact change.

**Yung Jake,** is a creative and multimedia artist with a focus on defying the limits between art, design, music and direction. Through this hybrid language, he shares a different experience on how contemporary imagery is made, shared, and conceived.

**Joe Lewis** is a non-media-specific artist, his work unfolds through projects that probe the layered terrains of perception, time, and memory. Lewis approaches each subject as a living system; exploring its textures until form, image, and sound begin to speak back.

**Charles McGill** transformed the golf bag, a symbol of sport, privilege, exclusion, and power, into sculptural and conceptual instruments of protest. Trained as a figurative painter, he merged sculpture, performance, and assemblage to confront race, class, and social inequity.

**Angelbert Metoyer's** multi-disciplinary practice recalls archetypal memories that catalyze new forms. Referencing ancient and modern history and philosophies from across cultures, his work navigates the space between science and mysticism, exploring historic and mythological human evolution.

**Ross Bleckner's** paintings navigate the space between the cosmic and the cellular. Emerging during the AIDS crisis, his spectral imagery extends a respectful remembrance for lives lost. Through blurred faces, dissolving forms, and luminous eyes, Bleckner evokes the persistence of spirit beyond the body. His work meditates on fragility, transformation, and transcendence.

**Keith Sonnier** redefined sculpture in the late 1960s by merging neon, latex, and glass into a new language of light and space. Rooted in memories of glowing juke-joint signs in Louisiana and shaped by his New York surroundings, Sonnier's sculptures allow the viewer to navigate space through shifting fields of light. The essential premise is that light functions as volume that takes up space, not merely as a reflection or illumination. His wood works bridge technological luminosity with ancient craft, linking tribal influences to modern media and primal impulse.

**Thomas Houseago** brings a vanguard approach to sculpture's oldest subject, the human body. Houseago utilizes bronze in an ongoing dialogue with the past, revisiting the history of figurative sculpture through the circumstances of his present. Drawing upon mythology, African tribal art, cartoon imagery, Italian Mannerism and science fiction, he reframes the classical figure.