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**John Fudge: *The Gospel According to Trouble***

Opening Reception: Friday, October 9, 6-8p

On view October 9 – November 21, 2026

RULE Gallery, 204 E. San Antonio St., Marfa, Texas / Wednesday–Saturday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.

**Marfa, TX** — RULE Gallery is pleased to present *John Fudge: The Gospel According to Trouble*, a solo exhibition of paintings by John Fudge (1940–1999), opening at RULE Gallery on Friday, October 9, with an opening reception from 6-8p. The exhibition will be on view through November 21.

Presenting works from across Fudge's career, *The Gospel According to Trouble* centers an essential and still underrecognized figure in late twentieth-century American painting. Working from Colorado, Fudge developed a precise and deeply idiosyncratic form of narrative figuration that drew from Pop, realism, comics, mythology, religion, commercial culture, and art history while resisting easy placement within any single movement.

Fudge emerged from the University of Colorado Boulder in the 1960s, a period of experimentation that helped shape the direction of contemporary art in the region. His work belongs to that history, but it also exceeds it. Across decades, he built paintings from the charged visual languages of American life: cartoons, pulp, popular songs, war imagery, domestic scenes, movie culture, and art historical references. Rendered with remarkable control, these images become allegories of belief, desire, humor, and human misrecognition.

While Fudge's work has often been described in relation to surrealism, Jane Fudge, art and film critic and retired assistant curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Denver Art Museum, understood his process as something more deliberate. Rather than fusing unrelated images into a single dreamlike whole, she wrote that his paintings worked through "the accumulation, sorting, and classifying" of images, assigning them new and mutable meanings. His paintings carry the clarity of illustration, the timing of a joke, and the open structure of allegory.

The exhibition title reflects the dry humor and moral pressure that run through Fudge's work. His paintings suggest a world in which history does not stay in the past, belief is never neutral, and comedy remains a serious form of knowledge. Nothing is simply absurd. The joke opens the door, but it rarely gets the last word.

Fudge's late interest in the Church of the SubGenius and J.R. "Bob" Dobbs extended a set of questions already present throughout his career. How do images generate belief? How are myths built, sold, repeated, and undone? For Fudge, the sacred and the ridiculous were not opposites. They were part of the same American theater.

**About:** John Richard Fudge (1940–1999) was born in Des Moines, Iowa, and raised in Denver, Colorado. He earned his BFA in Painting in 1963 and MFA in 1966 from the University of Colorado Boulder. Fudge held teaching positions at the University of Colorado Boulder, the University of Arizona, and the University of Colorado Denver, where he taught from 1970 to 1991. His work has been exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Denver Art Museum, Corcoran Gallery, Walker Street Gallery, OK Harris Annex, Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities, Boulder Center for the Visual Arts, and RULE Gallery, among others. He received a Western States Arts Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship in 1976 and a National Endowment for the Arts Artist's Fellowship in 1985. His work is held in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Denver Art Museum, the Kirkland Museum, Washington State Arts Commission, University of Colorado Boulder, and the Weatherspoon Art Museum, among others.