

# CULTURE MONSTER

ALL THE ARTS, ALL THE TIME

## Obama photo exhibition coming to L.A.

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"Barack Obama: The Freshman" is a photographic exhibition that's coming to L.A. — the city where, 29 years ago, a 20-year-old aspiring photographer asked a fellow Occidental College student to pose for a session because, well, she thought he looked pretty cool.

And then he grew up to be president. Who knew?

Lisa Jack, who grew up to be a clinical psychologist and an assistant professor of psychology at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, will have her much-belated debut solo show as a photographer May 28–July 18 at [M+B Gallery](#) in West Hollywood. On display: the 36 images of Obama she captured on a single roll of film.

According to the gallery's news release announcing the show, "she secretly hoped that Barry would ask her out afterward. He did not...."

No hard feelings. Shannon Richardson, the M+B director, says the president should still feel free to come to the opening or check out the show when he can.

Richardson was taken with the nine images from Jack's 1980 shoot that [first became public in Time magazine's](#) Dec. 29 "Person of the Year" cover spread on Obama, under the headline, "Obama: The College Years." She soon contacted the Minnesotan, who earned her doctorate at USC, and offered Jack a chance to realize a dream deferred.

Jack had been reminded of the long-ago photo session as Obama's presidential run gained momentum. She got her old files out of storage and found the negatives. She held onto them until after last fall's election, not wanting anybody to hold Obama's insouciant cigarette-puffing under a big Panama hat against him. Or his afro, which looks sort of Michael Jacksonish, circa "Off the Wall."

Now, for the first time, Jack will print the images and hang them on a wall. Obama fans and collectors will be able to purchase them as limited-edition gelatin-silver prints. The size of the edition, and the price, haven't been decided yet. (Another reason, Mr. President, to get this economy thing taken care of soon.)

Whether Obama will be the most famous personage ever to have his picture hung in the 5-year-old gallery could be a matter of some debate. One of M+B's most popular shows, Richardson said, was last spring's exhibition of photographs by Howard Bingham, chronicling Muhammad Ali's momentous 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle" bout in Zaire with George Foreman.

— Mike Boehm

*Photos: Barack Obama as an Occidental College freshman in 1980. Credit: © Lisa Jack/Getty Images*

