



**Genuine Mary, Oil and Aluminum on Board, 13" x 9"** is based on the *Virgin of the Passion* (1579) from the Monastery of Saint Catherine. The *Virgin of the Passion* is also known as the *Virgin of Perpetual Help* and the *Virgin of the Thumb*. This is one of the first of my Icon series before I developed Pepsi as a symbol for Jesus and the New Testament and still done in my regular medium, oil instead of the traditional egg tempera.

Christian themes dominate my work. My philosophical studies have been focused for years on the foundations of a religion that has been one of the world's super powers. This is reflected in my recent paintings series that explores the role of Icons in both the traditional and contemporary sense. Icon painting is conventionally based on very strict guidelines. They are usually copies of original images that are believed to be sanctioned by God. An Icon's power and validity was directly related to its level of resemblance to the original image. I have developed a series of work to include traditional compositions and the egg tempera medium; however, I have replaced the often-used silver revetment, which originally served to protect the images (and later to help speed up mass production by allowing less painted areas), with aluminum from our own

## Kimberly Zsebe Socio-political iconography

contemporary consumer beverage icons.

In today's world, Coca-Cola might be said to be more successful in converting masses to their product than any religion in history has been in converting people to their faith. Coca-Cola claims that more than 50 billion of their beverages are consumed every day. It would appear that mass consumerism has replaced Mass for many of us. The long-term effects of this new "religion" are still not clear. There is very little in our lives that is not effected by popular culture's exaltation of youth and consumption. It is my intention that my work opens a dialogue and an awareness of the effects of the consumerism that has created our own modern-day commercial Icons which so many have come to rely on and that influence our own personal values.



Saint Maya Woodcut 24" x 16"



Saint Justine Woodcut 24" x 16"

## Sergio G. Villamizar

### Socio-political iconography

The Saint Series is a critical examination of political and cultural righteousness in contemporary America. The works were created by co-opting traditional, Western-European woodcutting techniques used for relief printing of Medieval and Byzantine religious tableaux to create pastiches of what the artist's calls "Saints." Each image combines strategically chosen socio-political iconography with historical and contemporary pop-culture imagery to fabricate a new patron saint of various, different American values. Each "Saint", surrounded by those symbols, affects, and trappings that they embody, puts into question the virtues placed on the aspect of American culture they represent.

My ideas come from the environment that surrounds me, posters, bill boards, magazines, television, the internet, books, dreams, etc. Saint Morpheia for instance is my reaction to reality shows like "the swan," "Doctor 90210," fashion magazines, billboards, etc. Why have we as a society become obsessed with our bodies? More and more people are dieting, joining gyms and submitting themselves to surgical procedures in an attempt to get closer to the elusive "ideal body." But who decides what is and is not desirable? Who decides what is and is not beautiful? What are the social and cultural repercussions of trying to live up to this ideal?





**Kimberly Zebe, Moses, Aaron and the Mountain, Egg Tempera and Aluminum on Board, 17"x11"** This painting has its source in the doors of the Chapel of St. John at Mount Sinai, another Monastery of Saint Catherine Icon. It includes a version

of the Annunciation. The boards of this series of Icons are all cutting boards. These common household items are transformed into something beyond themselves.



**Sergio Villamizar, Saint Petro, Woodcut, 24" x 16"** The hyena is associated with dark wisdom, being cowardly and greedy and symbolizes the foolishness of man's wisdom. The lion (Leo) is used as a symbol of power. In the Roman Empire, Christians were torn apart

and eaten by lions, an allegorical expression of the way in which the Roman Empire defeated and consumed enemies of the state. Centaurs are ruled by their instincts. They symbolize violent lust, adultery, vengeance, brutality, heretics, and the Devil.





**Kimberly Zebe, Crucifixion - Change the World, Oil and aluminum on board 12" x 8"** makes use of a limited edition Pepsi can which proclaims "give a year change the world" and asks "are

you ready to change the world?" along with other motivating phrases. The Icon has its bases in a 9th century Icon which is found in Athens at the Byzantine Museum.





**Sergio Villamizar, Saint Morpheus, Woodcut, 24" x 16"**  
The cat in this piece is associated with desire, pride and vanity.  
Other symbols are infinity and transformation.





Kimberly Zsebe, St. Michael One/Zero, Egg tempera and aluminum on board, 13" x 9" is based on a 19th century Russian icon. He is seen fighting a Demon as Babylon drowns. He carries the

book and a trumpet of Judgment. The words one and zero are representing this battle.



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**Sergio Villamizar, Warrior Saint, Woodcut, 24" x 16"**

The crow is the omen of death, associated with battle, a trickster. The symbol of radiation represents the threat of nuclear war. The skull represents death and mortality. The all-seeing eye of the

government, used on our dollar bill is reminiscent of the eye of Horus (Egyptian sun god) and was used by pagans to ward off evil. The pyramid signifies strength and duration.