

## **MANDEM**

### *The Patron Saint of Stone*

The "Medical Trials of the Saints" series (which includes photography, printmaking, and painting) takes religious/mythical memes from art history and re-imagines them in a posthuman context. These images are designed to be simultaneously beautiful and horrific, to both compel and repel, and in so doing to reflect the complexity of our relationships with our environments, our faiths, and ourselves. Each piece represents work both in the studio and in the library, with dedicated research into the syncretic/memetic history of the saints, deities, or archetypes represented.

The photographs of the series (including *The Patron Saint of Stone*) are designed to be in visual dialog with the photo collage and watercolor techniques developed and shared by Victorian women (half a century before male surrealists and Dada artists appropriated collage and cut-up for their own uses, and a hundred years before 20th century photographers such as Uelsmann adapted the method for darkroom printing). Our photographs are created in a digital darkroom, then hand-colored with digital watercolor techniques, remixing aesthetic elements of this 19th century women's craft with contemporary visual and cultural concerns. In particular this work serve as self-portraits of the artist as a child: their surrealistic elements reference medical trauma, regeneration, and the power of make-believe.