

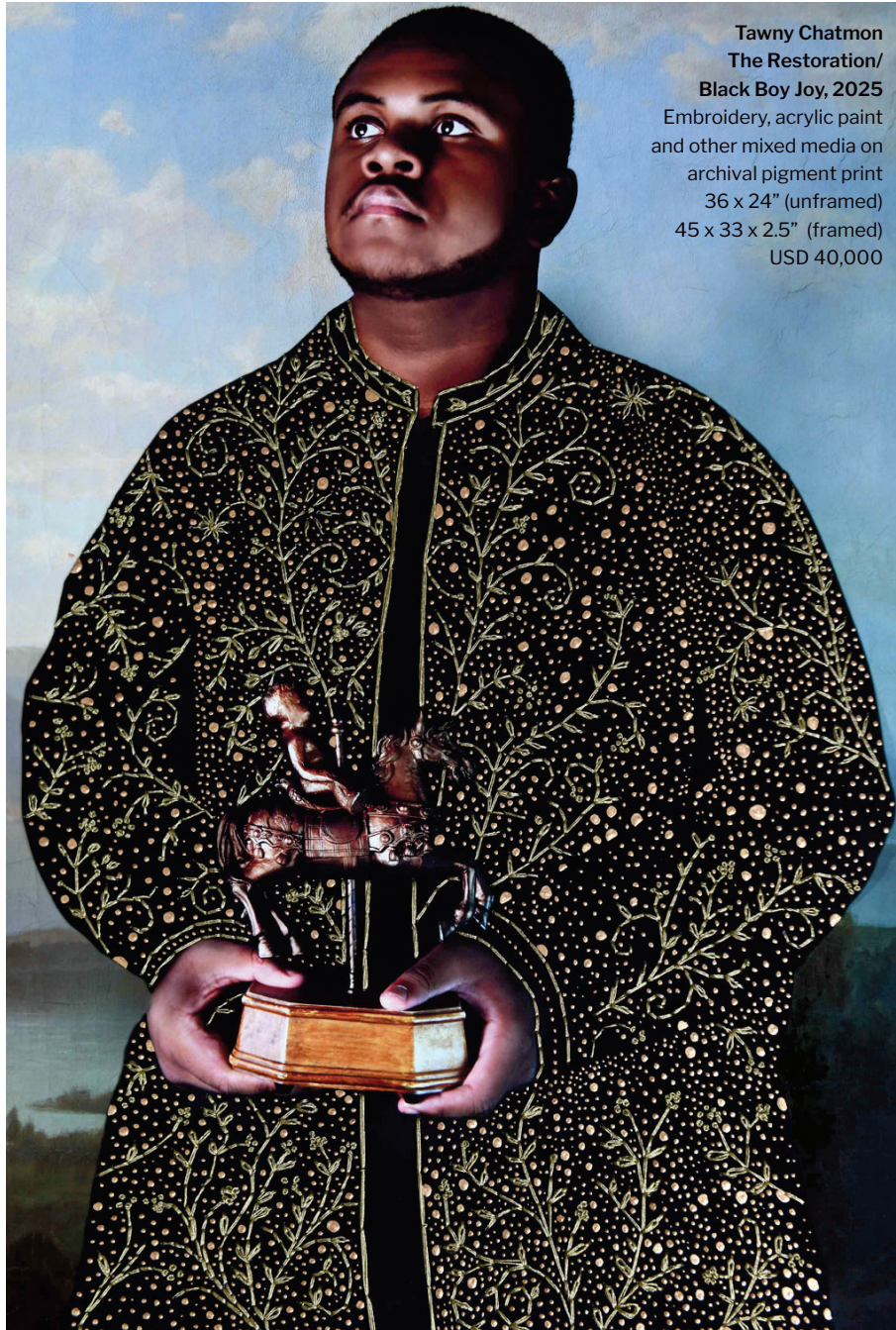
# TAWNY CHATMON

Tawny Chatmon's (b.1979, Tokyo, Japan) work explores identity, heritage, and the beauty of Black childhood through richly layered portraiture. Working primarily with photography as a foundation, her practice expands into material processes that include hand-embroidery, beading, metallic pigments, and other mixed media that center Black children and families with dignity and grace. Her work reflects a deep engagement with cultural memory, affirmation, and the reclamation of visual narratives that have historically diminished or distorted Black life. Through luminous imagery and intentional storytelling, Chatmon contributes to a contemporary generation of artists expanding how Blackness and history are seen within today's cultural landscape.

**Tawny Chatmon, The Restoration / Made Whole Again, 2024-25**, Embroidery and handstitched threadwork on archival pigment print, 30 x 25" (unframed), 36 x 31 x 3" (framed), USD 35,000

Contact Sales Director, Noel Bedolla at [noel@galeriemyrtils.com](mailto:noel@galeriemyrtils.com) for sales inquiries. [Click here to watch the video that accompanies works from The Restoration series.](#)





**Tawny Chatmon**  
**The Restoration/  
Black Boy Joy, 2025**  
Embroidery, acrylic paint  
and other mixed media on  
archival pigment print  
36 x 24" (unframed)  
45 x 33 x 2.5" (framed)  
USD 40,000

## THE RESTORATION

For about a decade, I have collected figures that were created to dehumanize, sabotage, and demean. Figures such as the Mammy, Pickaninny, Golliwog, and Uncle Tom, which, despite their harm, continue to circulate, are still sold in antique shops, auctions, and online marketplaces, and in some cases, even reproduced today. Each time I encountered them, I purchased what I could; not as a collector, but as many in the Black community have done, to remove these objects from shelves.

The "Mammy" doll, for example, portrays Black women as loyal, submissive, and content in their enslavement and servitude. Whereas, The "Coon" depicts Black boys and men as lazy and foolish, reinforcing narratives of inferiority. These figures were instrumental in shaping public perception and stereotypes.

Over time, I began to reinterpret, reclaim, and "restore" these figures, removing them from their original context and transforming them through repainting, reclothing, and

storytelling. No longer objects of mockery, but restored as heirlooms, not as they were, but as they should have been.

The Restoration is not just about repair, but return. In this series, these restored figures become a part of a larger photographic series. In these portraits, the dolls rest in the arms of Black children and families, restored with care and dignity, and positioned within compositions that honor, rather than dehumanize.

At its core, The Restoration also exists to confront the circulation of these objects calling attention to their harmful legacy while advocating for their removal from commercial markets, and their continued placement within museums and institutions as evidence of a past that must be studied and examined.

- **Tawny Chatmon**

[Click here to watch the video that accompanies works from The Restoration series.](#)

## THE RECONCILIATION

The Reconciliation is centered around the culinary traditions that have been the foundation of the Black family and, at times, our survival. In this series, I honor the meals that have nourished us and reclaim foods often distorted by stereotypes, sabotage, shame, and racism. This series invites us to return to the table and to keep the tradition of family dinners alive, where stories are shared, wisdom is passed down, and our connections are strengthened.

Food has always played a major role in the lives of Black people, serving not only as nourishment but as a means of preservation. At the same time, racist caricatures and misconceptions have long been used to reduce the richness of our histories, often placing them in a negative light and, at times, giving credit where credit is not due. This series looks closer at those truths.

Working on The Reconciliation has been a process of learning, reflection, and honoring. The work and dedication

of Black scholars, historians, chefs, authors, and others who have committed themselves to preserving our foodways made it possible for me to look more deeply.

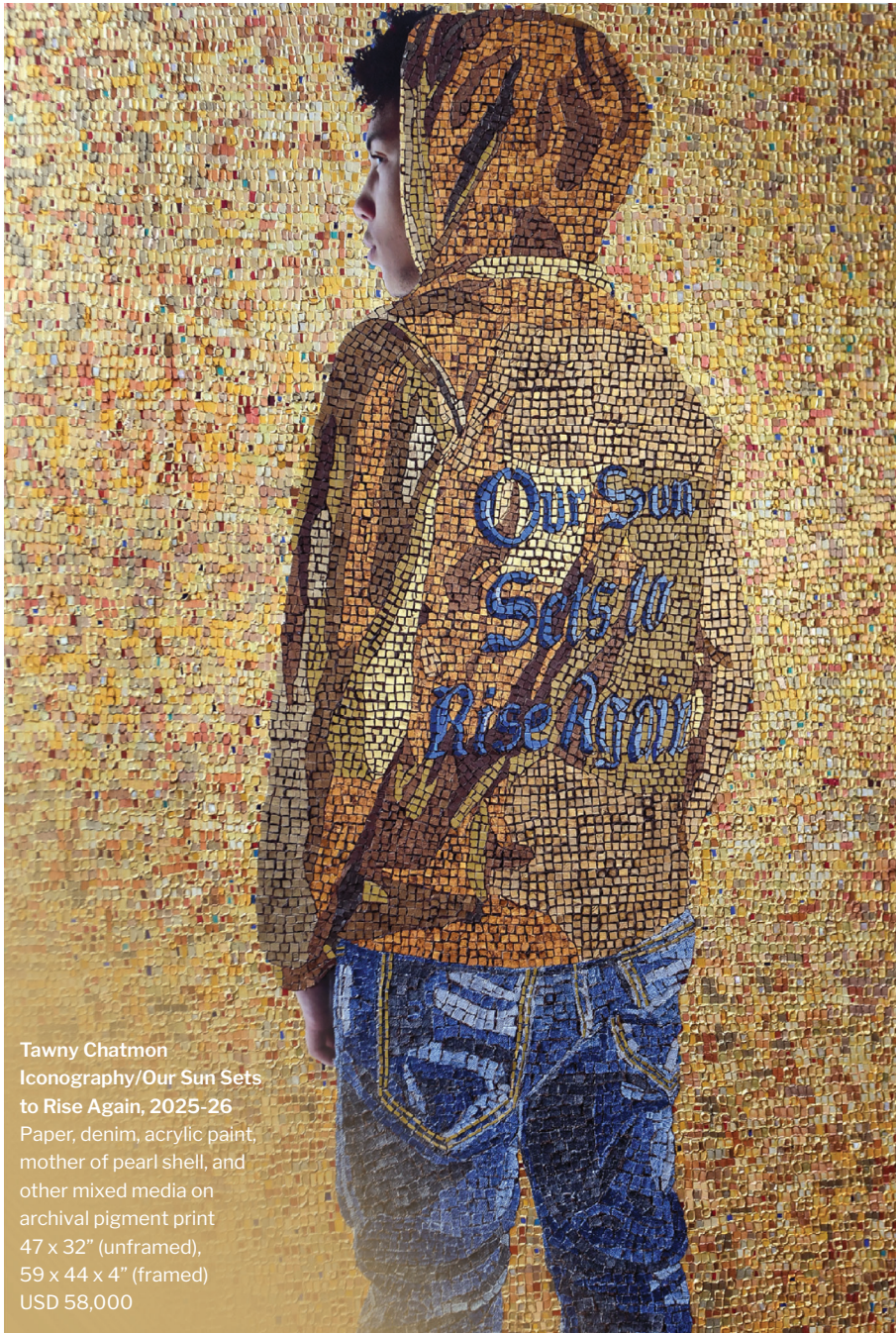
Speaking with family and close friends about food and tradition to also inform this series, I have been reminded that it's often during holidays and over shared meals that we often feel most connected to one another. At the same time, I've come to realize that many of us, including myself, have inherited these traditions or known of certain stereotypes without always knowing where they came from. This work is shaped by all of it, and these meals hold more than ingredients; they hold memory.

- Tawny Chatmon

[Click here to watch the video that accompanies The Reconciliation / Economic Heritage.](#)



Tawny Chatmon  
The Reconciliation /  
Economic Heritage, 2024  
Embroidery and acrylic paint  
on archival pigment print  
50 x 34" (unframed),  
60 x 43 x 2.5" (framed)  
USD 50,000



Tawny Chatmon  
Iconography/Our Sun Sets  
to Rise Again, 2025-26  
Paper, denim, acrylic paint,  
mother of pearl shell, and  
other mixed media on  
archival pigment print  
47 x 32" (unframed),  
59 x 44 x 4" (framed)  
USD 58,000

## ICONOGRAPHY

Iconography is an evolving body of work influenced by Byzantine icons and religious iconography. While in Venice during the Biennale, I again stood charmed by the tilework, mosaics, and icons found across Italy. This experience moved me to devote myself to embarking on a journey into iconography.

An icon is a work typically religious in nature. These visual declarations were used to assist the observer in focusing on all things sacred and were viewed more as literal prayers than art. Believed to serve as conduits to the divine, each was crafted by an iconographer on a journey of prayer and meditation. As they created, their hands were believed to have been guided by the spirit of the Most High. While my "icons" deviate from the traditional context of worship, like icons of the past, they nevertheless call on the viewer to recognize their significance, preciousness, sacred nature, and value as they embody my prayers for them and the world.

As this series and my exploration of gold have progressed, concerns over

the unethical sourcing of materials such as gold and cobalt in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have led me to forgo my use of genuine gold. Still, reminiscent of the tesserae used to make Byzantine mosaics, the painted paper remnants of my past works cut into tiny tiles take on new energy as they're carefully arranged, constructing works transcending the earthly, connecting to the heavens.

The series poses an important question: Who gets to decide who is worthy of veneration, and why do we accept their authority? In reframing these notions of reverence, Iconography positions the Black family (mother, father, and children) as sacred figures adorned in mosaic-rendered garments, depicting iconographic portraits of historical Black figures, family, and community, and meaningful patterns and motifs. Just as icons of the past serve as windows to the spiritual realm, may my icons serve as a means of sending gratitude to those who have shaped our lives and legacies across generations.

- Tawny Chatmon

Tawny Chatmon  
The Restoration/  
Not Your Mammy, 2025- 26  
Embroidery and acrylic paint  
on archival pigment print  
30 x 20" (unframed)  
31.5 x 41.5 x 3" (framed)  
USD 25,000



Tawny Chatmon  
The Restoration/ Tell  
Them The Truth About The  
Watermelon Man, 2025-26  
Embroidery and acrylic paint  
on archival pigment print  
30 x 20" (unframed)  
31.5 x 41.5 x 3" (framed)  
USD 28,000



Tawny Chatmon working in studio.  
Photographer: Cheriss May; Image  
courtesy of The Washington Post.





## BIO

**Tawny Chatmon (b. 1979, Tokyo, Japan)** is a self-taught artist based in Maryland. Through a layered process of photography, painting, and hand-embellishment, she creates works that honor and celebrate the beauty of the Black family, while at times confronting historical misrepresentation and erasure. She became widely recognized for her gold gilded portraits of Black children and families, drawing inspiration from Byzantine iconography and Gustav Klimt's "Golden Phase." Embracing gold's historical role as a symbol of sacredness, she positioned her subjects as precious and valuable.

As her work has evolved, so have her materials. Becoming increasingly aware of the unethical mining practices tied to materials such as cobalt—which powers much of the technology we rely on—and gold, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, she made the decision to step away from using genuine gold in her work. Her current process incorporates gold-toned pigments, embroidery, beads, and other mixed media.

Chatmon was among eight African American artists featured in the 2022 Venice Biennale exhibition "The Afro-Futurist Manifesto: Blackness Reimagined," curated by Dr. Myrtis Bedolla of Galerie Myrtis. The exhibit explored the theme of Black life on the continuum of its imagined future presented in the Personal Structures art fair. Most recently, the artist's first solo museum exhibition in Washington, D.C., titled "Tawny Chatmon: Sanctuaries of Truth, Dissolution of Lies" was on view through March 2026 at The National Museum of Women in the Arts.

## RESUME

### SELECT SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 Tawny Chatmon: Private Collection of Richard Marks + Amy Haines, Academy Art Museum, Easton, MD
- 2025 - 26 Tawny Chatmon: Sanctuaries of Truth, Dissolution of Lies, The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC Curator Virginia Treanor, Ph.D.
- 2021 Tawny Chatmon: What He Left Behind, Joan Hisaoka Gallery, Washington, DC, Curator Dr. Myrtis Bedolla  
Tawny Chatmon: If I'm No Longer Here, I Wanted You to Know..., Galerie Myrtis, Baltimore, MD, Curator Dr. Myrtis Bedolla

### SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 Stars and Stripes: Pride or Despair, Galerie Myrtis, Baltimore, MD, Curator Dr. Myrtis Bedolla  
EXPO CHICAGO, Navy Pier, Chicago, IL, Curator Dr. Myrtis Bedolla
- 2025 1-54 Art Fair, Halo at 28 Liberty, New York, NY, Curator Dr. Myrtis Bedolla  
IFPDA Print Fair, Park Avenue Armory, New York, NY, Curator Dr. Myrtis Bedolla
- 2023 - 24 Spectrum: On Color and Contemporary Art, The Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA, Curator Key Jo Lee
- 2023 There Within Lies the Gospel: Truth, Galerie Myrtis, Baltimore, MD, Curator Dr. Myrtis Bedolla  
Intertwined: Labor and Technology in Contemporary Textile Art, Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts, Tallahassee, FL, Curators Keidra Daniels Navaroli and Annie Booth  
Too Much Is Just Right: The Legacy of Pattern and Decoration, Asheville Art Museum, Asheville, NC, Curators Marilyn Laufer and Tom Butler  
100 Days of Summer, Art Genesis, Los Angeles, CA, Curator Mashonda Tifrere
- 2022 - 23 The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy, Banneker Douglass Tubman Museum, Annapolis, MD, Curator Dr. Myrtis Bedolla

### SELECT COLLECTIONS

- Minneapolis Institute of Art
- Microsoft Corporate Collection
- National Museum of Women in the Arts
- University of Maryland Global Campus
- Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art