

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 Black childhood and 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 and brutal 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, thread, glass, shell, and other mixed media. Alongside this material shift, she has expanded her practice to include assemblage, film, and deeper research-based work that continues to center the stories at the core of her art.