

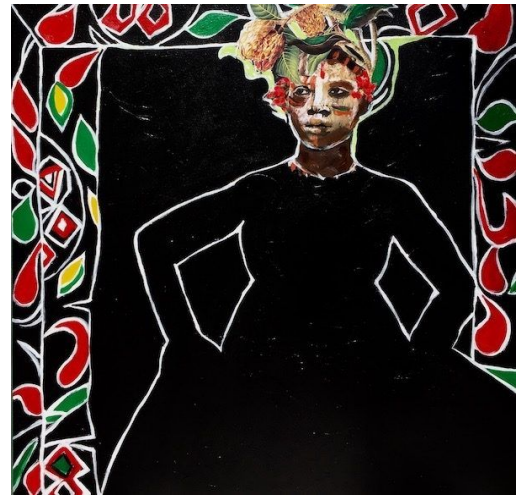
# JANET TAYLOR PICKETT

Janet Taylor Pickett is an American artist born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1948, the third generation in her maternal family to be raised in that city, a stop on the Underground Railroad. Her father, Dempsey Taylor, Jr., was born in Brownsville, Tennessee, and traveled north during the Great Migration, settling with his family in Ypsilanti, Michigan. This overlapping of personal and shared Black history, concealed in Taylor Pickett's birthplace, is central to her work.

Her work is inspired by her life as an African American woman and explores her sustained engagement with identity, heritage, and the complexity of lived experience.

In her own words, "My Blackness is a declarative statement in my work. There are wonderful discarded objects brought home by my father and botanical prints my mother found from various second hand stores. Makers of things and tellers of stories surrounded me. In the late 1960's and early 1970's in the midst of sociopolitical activities, I began to formulate an aesthetic language, a visual synergy."

She was inspired by Matisse's *Egyptian Curtain* appliqué fabric. In many of her dresses, Taylor Pickett juxtaposes images of African sculpture, textiles, and cultural elements, with details from Matisse's work, in particular [The Red Studio](#) in which he had incised white lines to outline objects.



Janet Taylor Pickett, *And She Was Born*, 2017, Acrylic on canvas with paper collage, 30 x 30 in.

The Phillips Collection, Acquired 2020,  
The Dreier Fund for Acquisitions

## Movement Exercise: Power Pose

- Stand in a circle facing outward.
- Close your eyes (or look downward, away from others) and focus on yourself.
- Take 3 long and deep breaths.
- Stand - feet planted on floor, head is strong (mountain pose).
- Open up your mind - what big thoughts do you have above your head? What small ones?
- Do you feel heavy? Do you feel light? How do these thoughts above your head impact you? Hold your head high.
- How do your shoulders feel? Your neck?
- Feel the ground again. Make sure your feet are grounded. If you feel off balance, bring yourself back.
- Come up with your own **power pose**. Think about what pose makes you feel powerful. Make the pose. Hold on to it, it is yours!