

# Dr. Yemonja Smalls

## ARTIST STATEMENT



When used to define the relationship, the uttered words, “its complicated” suggest hidden or unexplained snags, trickiness or entanglement that blur the beauty of the bond. Yemonja selects and assembles mixed media to convey the complexities that color relationships. In her work, she explores both a metaphorical and literal process of breaking, tearing, hiding, layering and cementing to yield insight into what creates and maintains unions.

Through deconstructed and re-assembled materials, Yemonja presents multifaceted layers of said connections with precision. The chemistry of colors combined are held together, and even in fracture, everything remains whole. She presents reflections of life/death, self-love, soul-ties, and work-life balance, to name a few, for viewer dialogue.

### BIO:

Originally from Hershey, PA, but a recent Chicago, IL to Baltimore, MD transplant, Dr. Yemonja Smalls works in the Maryland Department of Health’s Developmental Disabilities Administration as the Director of Professional Development.. She has over 25 years of experience working with children and adults with developmental disabilities who exhibit significant challenging behaviors and is committed to supporting them to live their best lives in the communities in which they wish to thrive.

Yemonja completed her doctorate from Louisiana State University in psychology. She is expanding her clinical skills with a master’s degree in Art Therapy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, with focused interest in caregivers who may be subject to secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout.

Yemonja’s creations in various mediums have been exhibited in the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry, on the set of the famous Fox Hit TV show “Empire”, Harold Washington Library, South Side Community Art Center, Gallery Guichard, Howard University, Hill Center Galleries, the Sojourner Family Peace Center among others, and reside in various private collections across the nation. As the author and illustrator of “The Day It Rained, Yemonja has also has sought to bring creative opportunity for children and their parents to discuss the

challenges that dementia presents on the family structure. And woven between these creations, she adorns and embellishes, and designs apparel in her JustHuman line.