

## II Contemporary Artists Inspired by Art Deco's Sleek Geometry

24 October 2025 | By Sadaf Padder

### Rico Gatson

B. 1966, Augusta, Georgia. Lives in Queens and works in Brooklyn.

From Harlem to Penn Station, Rico Gatson, who is represented by Miles McEnery Gallery, has brought his language of radiant color and geometry into galleries, museums, and public spaces. For the last 30 years, the New York-based artist has channeled memory, transcendence, and identity into works that are visually striking and historically grounded. At the Studio Museum in Harlem, his exhibition “Icons 2007–2017” honored Black cultural and political figures, surrounding their portraits with rays of vivid, contrasting color that suggested both halos and explosive energy fields.



Rico Gatson, *Untitled (Oracle)*, 2025, Acrylic paint on wood, 42 x 42 inches. Courtesy the artist and Miles McEnery Gallery, New York.

“Geometry in my work is a symbolic language—circles, triangles, fractals, and mathematical patterns carry memory, connecting history, spirituality, politics, and identity,” Gatson told Artsy. For example, in *Harriet #4* (2017) he collages a photo of the abolitionist Harriet Tubman’s portrait with painted radiating stripes that echo both sacred auras and Art Deco’s sunburst motifs. Similarly, *Untitled (Megastar)* (2025) translates that celestial energy into pure abstraction, its concentric rays recalling Deco’s fascination with light, symmetry, and spirit. Gatson cites pioneering dancer Josephine Baker’s cosmopolitan vitality and the Chrysler Building as 1920s inspirations for his blurring of the boundaries between art, architecture, and performance.