

T The New York Times Style Magazine



Kwamé Azure Gomez's "Back Water Blue New Moon (After Dianne)" (2025) is one of two large-scale paintings on display in "Set the Atmosphere," the artist's first New York solo exhibition.
© Kwamé Azure Gomez, courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, Aspen

A PAINTER'S ABSTRACT ODE TO DANCE, ON VIEW IN NEW YORK

BY Roxanne Feguiere
February 19, 2026

As a member of the Church of God in Christ, the artist Kwamé Azure Gomez grew up performing in a liturgical praise dance group, which sparked a lifelong interest in music and movement. When she left her hometown, Akron, Ohio, to attend graduate school in Chicago, she became immersed in queer nightlife, learning about the origins of house music and the history of ballroom. "I've never really stopped dancing. I just switched partners, in a way," says Gomez. "Set the Atmosphere," her debut New York solo exhibition opening at Marianne Boesky Gallery on March 5, features 12 new paintings that draw on her personal experience as well as on the work of Black radical theorists like Fred Moten. With inspirations and references ranging from the poet Lucille Clifton to the musician D'Angelo, and paintings dedicated to both her grandmothers, the body of work on display functions as a meditation on "ancestral veneration," says Gomez. Her color-drenched works, which are created with layers of oils, acrylics, modeling paste and spray paint, feature small symbols — a number, a cowrie shell, silhouettes of the African continent — that only become apparent upon close inspection. Gomez considers the planning of her paintings to be an act of choreography: "I set up my figures [to] flow in and out."

"Set the Atmosphere" will be on view at Marianne Boesky Gallery from March 5 through April 18, marianneboeskygallery.com.