Tattoo art celebrates Black history
The artist Donnen Garner works on a tattoo at Recess as part of her project Invisible Main Tattoo. © Recess
The artist Doreen Garner, whose work often looks at the medical industry’s exploitation of Black bodies, has turned to body art for her new project, Invisible Man Tattoo. “While the American traditional style of tattooing can be seen on the walls and in the portfolios of tattoo shops across the US, rarely are Black figures or Black culture included in these renditions of American life,” her statement says. Garner—a licensed tattoo artist—is taking on this lack of representation in her pop-up tattoo shop at Recess (until 8 March), an artists’ workspace that is open to the public and recently moved to Brooklyn, as part of its Sessions programme. On Fridays through Sundays during the show’s run, she is tattooing visitors with her own designs that replace ubiquitous images like rugged white men with Black heroes such as abolitionist leaders, and experiences of the African Diaspora. Recipients each also record a video diary, shown in the furnished space, in which they talk about the importance of their selection.