

Exhibitions

## The All-Woman 'Whitney Houston Biennial' Is Back, and It's No Joke

Curator Christine "C." Finley promises the 2017 edition brings the "Greatest Love of All"

**Sarah Cascone**, March 15, 2017



Kira Nam Greene, *Grab It by the Papaya*. Courtesy of the Whitney Houston Biennial.

Big contemporary art survey shows all tend to have one thing in common: a predominance of male artists. This year's Whitney Biennial in New York may be a more representative showcase of the current state of American art (both in terms of race and gender) than is the norm, but curator and artist Christine "C." Finley is showing up the highly anticipated event with an exhibition of her own: the second edition of the cheekily named Whitney Houston Biennial, which features women artists exclusively.

The show is named, of course, for the beloved singer and actress Whitney Houston, who died in 2012. The inaugural outing in 2014 took its name from the Grammy winner's 1994 hit "I'm Every Woman," while this year's show is titled "Greatest Love of All," after the 1986 Houston single. (Like the Whitney Museum of American Art, which delayed its biennial a year following the opening of its new Meatpacking home in 2015, the Whitney Houston Biennial took a time-out in 2016.)

"We have less square footage but more than double the artists, which sounds crazy," Finley told artnet News of this year's alterna-biennial in a phone conversation. "When I say it's a salon-style show, I mean it's like art wall paper!"



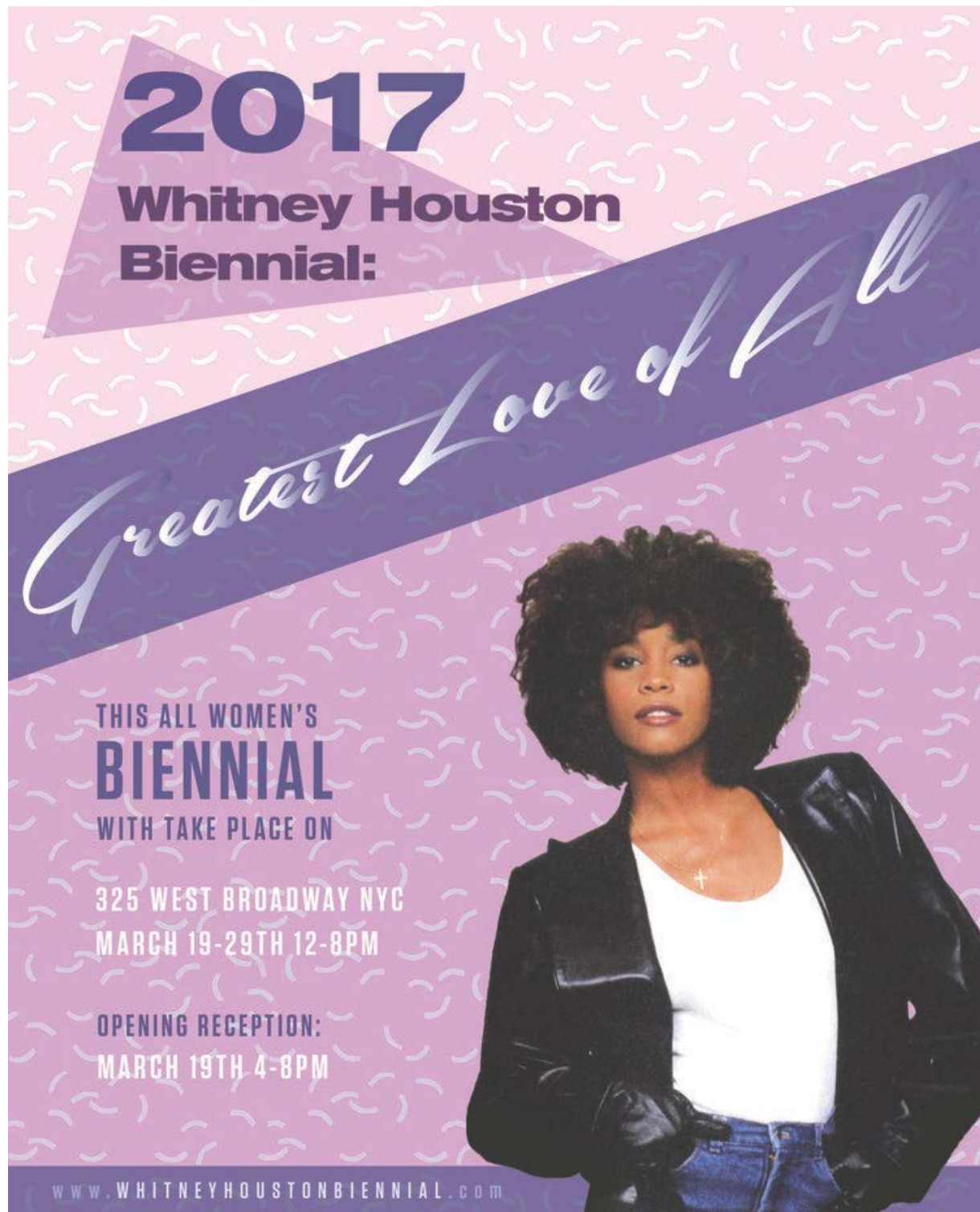
Cat Del Buono, *Tears*. Courtesy of the Whitney Houston Biennial.

The exhibition has moved from an artist's studio in DUMBO, Brooklyn, to 325 Broadway, the home of chashama, a curatorial non-profit run by Anita Durst (yes, of the *Durst Dursts*) that hosts exhibitions in unused real estate space. "We're feeling fancy!," Finley joked.

While it's easy to see the Whitney Houston Biennial as some sort of protest of the more established exhibition on which its name is a play, Finley said it was not meant as any sort of critique.

"We're grateful for the Whitney, because without it this show wouldn't be as funny," she insisted, pointing out that in order for young artists to one day show at the more famous Biennial, they have to exhibit their work at smaller, scrappier outfits like hers.





Whitney Houston Biennial flyer. Courtesy of the Whitney Houston Biennial.

This year's 125 participants include many artists returning from 2014, as well as women whom Finley discovered over the intervening three years, be it through art fairs or Instagram. Each was invited to submit a proposal, and in addition to her own work, each artist has contributed a text honoring another woman, be it a family member or a historical figure, who helped pave the way for them.

"This allows the women who are in the show to think about their own legacy," said Finley, proudly calling the exhibition "super generational" as well as "an exciting and encouraging platform for people to be able show some fresh work."



Maureen St. Vincent, *Rock, Tit, Lipstick*. Courtesy of the Whitney Houston Biennial.

It's also a time where women's issues are coming to the fore, with millions participating in the Women's March in January following the inauguration of President Donald Trump, and worldwide celebrations of International Women's Day on March 8.

"[The current political climate] makes [the Whitney Houston Biennial] more important," Finley acknowledges, "but it was always going to be awesome when you get this many women together."

"A lot of women are like 'this is our time,'" she added. "I want to respond to that rather than the negative experiences women have had in the past."

Although the 2017 biennial doesn't open until March 19, Finley is already looking forward to 2019, and says she has already enlisted two young curators to help run it. She plans to then entirely hand off operations in 2021, but doesn't see that as limiting the biennial's potential. "I'm looking forward to going forever," she insisted.





Saira McLaren, *Untitled*. Courtesy of the Whitney Houston Biennial.

**See the full list of participating artists below.**

Marzena Abrahamik

Nick Alciati

Aurora Andrews

Storm Ascher

Amna Asghar

Karen Azoulay

Ingrid Baars

Isabelle Baldwin

Meegan Barnes

Chloe Bass

Rachelle Beaudoin

Elizabeth Bick

Mx Justin Vivian Bond

Genevieve Bormes

Mitsuko Brooks

Jude Broughan

Lauren Camarata

Maureen Catbagan

Tara L. Cavanaugh

Natalee Cayton

Alana Celii

Sophia Chai

Kiran Chandra

Shahrzad Changalvae

Jesse Chun



Maxi Cohen

Liz Collins

Daryl Daniels

Desiree Des

Cat Del Buono

Patricia Domínguez

Liz Dosta

Jessie Edelman

Melissa Eder

Ari Elefterin

Zoe Elefterin

Sessa Englund

Deanna Erdmann

Florencia Escudero

Gianna Leo Falcon

Caroline Falby

Gianna Leo Falcon

Adriana Farmiga

Angel Favorite

C. Finley

Daphne Fitzpatrick

Becky Flanders

Britta Fluevog

Lucy Fradkin

Mary Goldthwaite

Daniela Gomez

Christina Graham  
Sophie Grant  
Kira Nam Greene  
Dana Grossmann  
Megan Hays  
Clarity Haynes  
Patrice Helmar  
Sarah Heinemann  
Haley Hughes  
Lorra Jackson  
Emily Janowick  
Robin Kang  
Miatta Kawinzi  
Ambre Kelly  
Jenny Kemp  
Sylbee Kim  
Orrie King  
Amy Khoshbin  
Rya Kleinpeter  
Dominika Ksel  
Kristina Lee  
Phoebe Legere  
Mia Legg  
Alexandra “Sasha” Lerman  
Liz Ligouri  
Marissa Long

Tora López  
Sandra Mack-Valencia  
Nadja Verena Marcin  
Nicole Maloof  
Rachel Mason  
Chanel Matsunami Govreau  
Saira McLaren  
Glendalys Medina  
LuLu Meng  
Qiana Mestrich  
Tracy Molis  
Sharon Molloy  
Linda Montano  
Sarah Moran  
Gala Mukomolova  
Jasmine Murrell  
Qinza Najm  
Amanda Nedham  
Alex Nuñez  
Alexis O'Hara  
Keri Oldham  
Nasrah Omar  
Francena Ottley  
Juliana Paciulli  
Megan Pahmier  
Valincy-Jean Patelli



Amanda Turner Pohan  
Heather Powell  
Tamika Rivera  
Michelle Rogers  
Kate Rubens  
Katie Rubright  
Doraelia Ruiz  
Nomi Ruiz  
Victoria Sambunaris  
Rachel Schmidhofer  
Eddy Segal  
Salpy Semerdjian  
Talía Shulze  
Lauryn Siegel  
Susan Silas  
Tabitha Soren  
Maria Stabio  
Tara Strongosky  
Maureen St. Vincent  
Constanza Alarcon Tennen  
Karen Tepaz  
Katie Urban  
Gabriela Vainsencher  
Beka Venezia  
Margeaux Walter  
Anastasia Warren

Nichole Washington

Lauryn Welch

Saskia Wilson-Brown

Suzanne Wright

Shaina Yang

*The Whitney Houston Biennial will be on view at chashama, 325 West Broadway, March 19–29, 2017.*

[https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/whitney-houston-biennial-893306?utm\\_campaign=artnetnews&utm\\_source=031617daily&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=from\\_utm\\_term=artnet%20News%20Daily%20Newsletter%20USE](https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/whitney-houston-biennial-893306?utm_campaign=artnetnews&utm_source=031617daily&utm_medium=email&utm_content=from_utm_term=artnet%20News%20Daily%20Newsletter%20USE)