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## Dara Friedman Reverses a Scene of Destruction

In the Hirshhorn's "Damage Control", a woman has a different take on breaking things.



Watch a clip from Dara Friedman's "Total", a 1997 film which I recently saw in the show called "[Damage Control: Art and Destruction Since 1950](#)" at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington. (I previewed it [in the New York Times](#).) Friedman's conceit is simple: She filmed herself tearing a room to shreds then projects it in reverse, so we see the decor reassemble itself. The piece drove home something I noticed throughout the Hirshhorn show: that the few women who've made art about destruction have had a quite different take than the boys' (and I do mean "boys"). Yoko Ono offers herself up to the scissors of strangers; Mona Hatoum makes hand grenades of delicate glass; Laurel Nakadate mourns 9/11 (or at least plays at it). And Friedman presents herself as undoing any destruction she's caused. It's not hard to think of her piece as a response to Jeff Wall's seminal (pun intended) "[Destroyed Room](#)", from 1978, a huge photo for which he carefully staged the utter destruction of an unnamed woman's room. He constructs, but plays at destruction; Friedman destroys but presents it as tidying up.