

# MODERN PAINTERS

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**Zipora Fried  
Breaks a  
Glass Ceiling**

TRENDS // SNEAK PEEKS // NEWSMAKERS // **PORTFOLIO**

A/V LAB

## MAKE, THEN BREAK

**Zipora Fried** has wanted to perform “Betray Yourself” for years, but institutions and galleries have always deemed the piece too risky. It entails hanging hundreds, or even thousands, of glass wine bottles in clumps covering the ceiling, creating, in Fried’s words, a “repeated gesture” whose “endurance and silence will be negated through an eruptive

act of destruction—I plan to break the bottles with a steel bat once the installation is completed.”

In **MOMA PS 1** director **Klaus Biesenbach**, Fried has finally found someone undeterred by the work’s potentially dangerous details, such as the fact that she will be exposed to a cascade of glass shards during the performance. Bie-

senbach offered the artist the rarely seen attic-level Richard Serra room—named for the permanent 24-foot-long steel-line diagonal trench that Serra cut into floor in 1976—at PS 1, in Queens, New York, and Fried spent the late summer and early autumn stringing a wire grid across half the ceiling and then suspending empty yellow-glass wine bottles

“When the bottles have all been installed, it will look like a fresco on the ceiling of a cathedral.”

from it. Spectators will stand under the uncovered part of the ceiling, behind a Plexiglas partition, while the bat-wielding Fried will wear protective clothing. The date of the performance is yet to be determined.

A related work, a table with wine bottles secured underneath it, is included in the current “Greater New York” exhibition at PS 1. But the seeds of “Betray Yourself” lie in Fried’s drawings, sheets of paper as long as 30 feet covered in dense curtains of graphite lines. The artist works on these for up to six months in silence, restricted to the tight movements of her pencil marking the paper. Smashing the bottles will be “the first time” in her artistic life, she exclaims, that she will “be able to make noise!” After its long germination, the performance will be capped by a quick obliteration. “You take control of your creation by destroying it,” Fried says during the installation. “It will feel so good to smash these bottles. Or maybe I won’t have the heart to do it.” —**DANIEL KUNITZ**

**Zipora Fried**  
at work hanging  
bottles at PS 1.

