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**In Performance – Kate McIntosh, *Worktable* (COIL 2017)**

Review By [Stephen Eckert](#) on January 8, 2017

**COIL 2017**

**The Invisible Dog Art Center**

**51 Bergen Street, Brooklyn, NY, USA**



Destruction and renewal are the central themes of Kate McIntosh's remarkable installation, *Worktable*, however the piece also inspires thoughts on legacy, process, and power within artistic expression.

Simple in conception but exceptional in its execution, the experience consists of a series of rooms through which participants are led one at a time. Participants choose an object from a well-curated selection of domestic pieces (porcelain figures, globes, cut flowers, etc) and are led to a private room where they are instructed to destroy it as thoroughly as they wish (hammers, saws, scissors and more provided.) When satisfied, participants move to the next room and are tasked with repairing a different newly broken object. In the final room, the newly reconstructed pieces are placed in a gallery alongside other's recreated creations.

Throughout the experience, one feels empowered. Not only in the solitary, child-like rush of destroying an object; smashing, sawing, and cutting to your hearts content, but also the more challenging, communal responsibility of picking up the pieces of someone else's destruction; sharing glue and tape with a table of similarly-tasked individuals. Finally, one feels pride and accomplishment in placing your completed object alongside its companions and the reassurance that someone will similarly work to repair the thing that you destroyed.

*Worktable* is an enlightening and active meditation on the endless artistic cycle of tearing down and rebuilding. It may be easy to get lost in the highs and lows of this process in real time, but the distillation of the process McIntosh provides in her installation puts it all in perspective.