In one of her earliest films, Friedman slowly and systematically trashes a room, shattering plates, smashing chairs, and stomping dresser drawers. The Super 8 footage of Total, 1997, was printed in reverse, however, so what we see instead is a lurching, mystical return to order. As in many of the films to follow, from the two-channel 16-mm Bim Bam, 1999, to the cacophonous multiscreen Dichter (Poet, 2017), Friedman uses structural film techniques—looping, flicker effects, color fields, and asynchronicity of image and sound—to highly emotive ends. Though her films have gotten bigger and bolder—fifty-five singers perform in the forty-eight-minute-long Musical, 2007–2008, and sixty-six in Dancer, 2011, for example—her interests in intimacy, affection, and magic have remained. With two dozen works and an accompanying catalogue, the first midcareer survey of this Miami-based artist offers a welcome chance to track the movements of her evocative, empathic oeuvre over the past twenty years.

— Rachel Chumer