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## Art in Review

### Dice Thrown (Will Never Annul Chance)

*Bellwether*  
134 10th Avenue, near 18th Street,  
Chelsea  
Through Nov. 11

Organized by Joao Ribas, the young critic, and Becky Smith, Bellwether's owner, this admirably coherent selection of photo-based work by 12 artists indicates that the base continues to expand.

Drawing simultaneously on photosensitive paper with a lightpen and chemical fixer, Walead Beshty adds a footnote to the history of automatism, the photogram and Abstract Expressionism. Marius Engh makes curiously inviting photographs of sites frequented by homeless people in Stockholm. Spencer Young and Elspeth Diederix also contribute straight outdoor photography, although it doesn't look that way. Eileen Quinlan continues to coax abstraction from almost magical manipulations of smoke and mirrors, making beautiful Polaroids not unlike the paintings of Mark Grotjahn.

Lisa Oppenheim prints damaged negatives from the files of defunct newspapers on newsprint; each is a scarlike forensic mystery with a highly specific caption, like "Jury of Clergymen to Try Insane." Amanda Ross-Ho combines photographs of her previous installation pieces and images of confiscated drugs, drug money and drug paraphernalia downloaded from the Internet into a small environment that is both sinister and carefully indexed.

Peter Coffin creates pictorial haiku by photographing the open pages of books of photography, some of which he alters. Melanie Willhide exhibits what appear to be old found snapshots seen from the back, but are actually astounding acts of trompe l'oeil, as suggested by their nonsnapshot largeness.

Similarly oblique are David Lieske's photographs of the labels he has designed for the records he produces. Sara VanDerBeek and Daniel Lefcourt organize existing objects and materials into startling images that command prolonged study, different as they are in every way. And each artist chips away at the illusion of the photograph as instantaneous event — a throw of the dice — and blurs the distinction between found and made, extending the medium in time, space and memory.

ROBERTA SMITH