

The New York Times

Art Gallery Shows to See in December

By Max Lakin, Andrew Russeth and Martha Schwendener

Published Dec. 4, 2025 Updated Dec. 18, 2025

This week in Newly Reviewed, Max Lakin covers a group show with sharp shoes, Kenny Rivera's tactile streets and Beth Campbell's angsty inner monologue.

SOHO

Beth Campbell

Through Feb. 7, 2026. Kate Werble Gallery, 474 Broadway; 212-837-1239, katewerblegallery.com.



Installation view of "Beth Campbell: Won't Ever Be the Same." Credit...via Beth Campbell and Kate Werble Gallery, New York; Photo by Adam Reich

Since 1998, Beth Campbell's series "My Potential Future Based on Present Circumstances" — droll, diagrammatic drawings mapping out a tangled nest of choices and hypothetical outcomes — has given shape to an angsty inner monologue.

Fashioned after early computational models, they're simple and handwritten, closer to shopping lists than machine learning philosophy, each branching out from a single banal reality ("I spend too much time online") into deadpan near-misses and bleak dead-ends ("I become involved with a pickleball instructor").

In her show at Kate Werble, “Won’t Ever Be the Same,” a series of bent wire mobiles brings the same impulse into three dimensions, making the dangling strands of possibility sculptural, as if “Obstruction,” Man Ray’s cascading wooden hangers, expressed the dread of an unknowable future. Less evocative though soothingly analog, Campbell’s pieces share the reassuring title “There’s No Such Thing As a Good Decision.”

“Same as Me” a time-space-continuum-bending video from 2002, is a kind of conclusion. Like a downbeat rendition of the rom-com “Sliding Doors,” from the same era, Campbell plays three versions of herself in parallel timelines.

There is no decisive moment — no missed train — that propels the plot, or any plot at all really, only the existential ennui and empty hours of an uneventful day. The protagonist eats breakfast (at home, in a Wendy’s, a cafe) and lounges (in a park, in front of a television, on a desert mesa).

Beauty and monotony knock together. Nothing much happens, and yet the particularities are profound. Even with the possibility of infinite realities, there’s little escape from the conditions of being alive. MAX LAKIN