

NINA KATCHADOURIAN

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Nina Katchadourian

Sara Meltzer Gallery,
through Sat 25 (see
Chelsea).

The installation and two video works (all, 2005) in Nina Katchadourian's current show walk the line between silly and illuminating. In *Genealogy of the Supermarket*, the artist invents a family tree with portraits taken from supermarket packaging; the goal of *Accent Elimination*, a hugely enjoyable six-channel video piece, is for her to learn how to speak with her parents' accents and vice-versa. Whether you find these works thought-provoking or merely entertaining, Katchadourian's fertile imagination makes for irresistible viewing.

Although *Genealogy* touches on such culturally sensitive issues as in-



Nina Katchadourian, detail of *Genealogy of the Supermarket*, 2005.

terracial relationships (Aunt Jemima marries the Quaker Oats man) and homosexuality (Mr. Clean and the Brawny paper towel guy adopt the Gerber baby), overall the sprawling wall installation feels naggingly inconsequential. So does the show's third piece, *The Recovery Channels*,

a compilation of loose videotape Katchadourian found on the street (much of it porn), accompanied by a document carefully detailing the location where each segment of tape was discovered.

Accent Elimination, on the other hand, finds profound implications in the artist's own identity as she works with a speech coach to mimic her parents' hybrid accents—her mother is from a Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, and her father is a Turkish Armenian who grew up in Lebanon—and they attempt to eliminate them through the same method. The piece recalls Gillian Wearing's photographic self-portraits disguised as her mother and father. But it delves even deeper, as Katchadourian stages her humorous tug-of-war between family history and the ultra-American goal of assimilation.—*Merrily Kerr*