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THE NEW YORKER

ART

“Petroleum Jelly”

There's no actual greasy lubricant in this cunning bicoastal match of two New York artists, Polly Apfelbaum and Kirsten Nash, and two from L.A., John Burtle and David Zuttermeister. But the idea of the stuff's lens-blurring use nicely poeticizes the contrasts between, on the one hand, Apfelbaum's woozy ceramic plaques and Nash's sort-of abstract paintings and, on the other, the Californians' medleys of such oddments as peeled acrylic paint, resin, hair, a lollipop, and a packing peanut. In one juxtaposition, the easterly formality of a pencilled grid on butterscotch-colored paint, by Nash, is jostled by the SoCal what-the-heckness of a Burtle that you won't forget: dried sardines embedded in a surf of blue and white paint and transparent gel. Through April 12. (Clifton Benevento, 515 Broadway, at Spring St. 212-431-6325.)