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Tony Berlant

Line of Sight

April 14 – May 20, 2000
Tuesday-Saturday 10-6

One of the works in the exhibition is titled *Line of Sight* - a tall panel sheathed in metal, black with swirls of white. Narrow red lines interrupt, describing a window or a door, in front of which sits a colorful tropical bird looking out beyond the left side of the picture. *What Kind of Bird Am I?* asks the title of another large work in which a bird perches on a limb high up in the crown of a tree, a tree whose branches entwine with a writhing, paint-spattered black and white sky. What kind of bird, indeed, is this graceful creature whose head pivots rearward and whose gaze darts beyond the picture, farther than we can see? We are birdwatching, our line of sight is trained on the flamboyant headdresses and brilliant plumage of these showy birds, but Berlant's birds themselves are watching and it's not us they're seeing. The *Parrot* seems to look at a spiky figure at the top of an accordion-folded stairway etched on a nocturnal sky like a constellation. Berlant's birds seem as ancient as petroglyphs and as modern as fashion ads. Like the birds of Joseph Cornell, Berlant's inhabit a psychologically and emotionally charged place we can peer into but not quite penetrate.

Tony Berlant, as he has for many years, cuts and collages painted and printed sheet metal into compositions laid down on wood with hundreds of tiny nails. The exhibition includes a dozen new works, including a fiery fingerprint piece like those in our prior exhibitions, *Red Hot Honey*, and some smaller-format landscape pieces.