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FEATURED BY ARTSY

The Artist-Scavenger Who Turns Scraps of Tin Into Evocative Collages

In his latest exhibition, collagist [Tony Berlant](#) combines photographs he shot within and around his Santa Monica home with his signature tin material, often scavenged from the streets. “There are literal things, and things in my mind that I project into that space,” says [Berlant](#). “It’s this combination of very literal depiction and highly subjective images all mixed-up together.”



Tony Berlant

Rolling Right, 2013

Works such as *Rolling Right* (2013) and *Visitation* (2013) elaborate on street scenes with nature-inspired shapes of swirling nebulas. *Rolling Right* takes the collage element out of context, placing the twisting form in the center of a tin background, while *Visitation* superimposes a similar shape over a



Tony Berlant

The Good Shepherd, 2013

street scene, so that a pastiched tree appears to grow from the sidewalk. Other works, such as *The Good Shepherd* (2013), imagine entirely surrealistic scenes, with flame-like elements falling from the sky. The composition, which incorporates a photograph of police activity, stands out as being much more colorful and chaotic than the other works in the series.

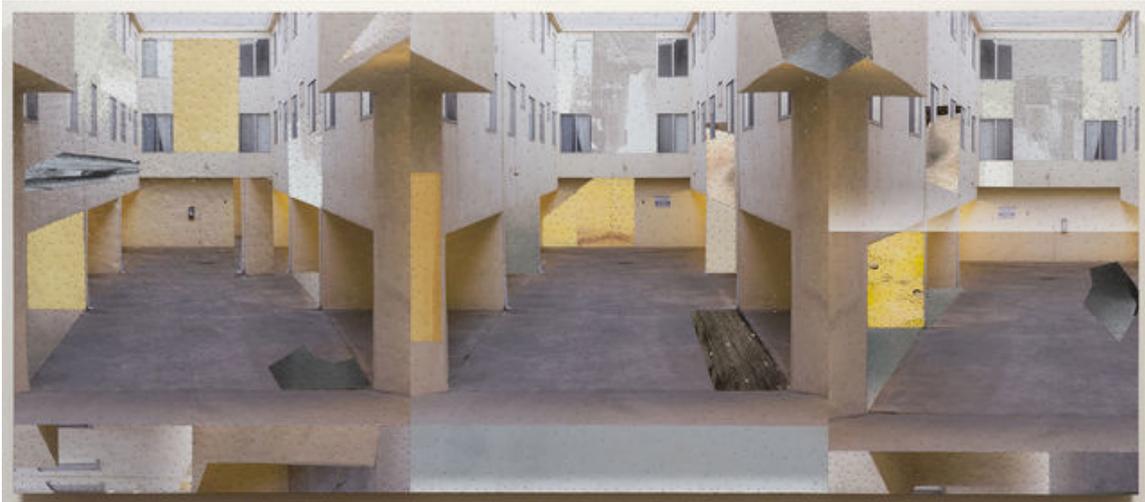
Berlant believes in the artistry of exploring one material for decades, having worked with tin—

both found and fabricated—his entire life, in this case incorporating photography. His process involves nailing flat tin fragments onto wood panels, and then printing and collaging his photographs over both the front and sides of it.

His more recent work employs personal elements, including close-up images of the artist's skin. Now in his '70s, Berlant admits that this series is more referential and sentimental, as he has lost many fellow artist friends. He doesn't see dealing with themes of age as morbid, but rather about "celebrating life, but being aware of mortality, your own body, and hidden images that are there, and the things that are in your head that come out in the process of making art." He notes, "It's like discovering something very close to home."

—Sola Agustsson

"Tony Berlant: Close to Home" is on view at L.A. Louver, Venice, CA, Oct. 30–Nov. 29, 2014.



Tony Berlant

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