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A CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATION

ART break

New galleries spring up in unexpected places and so does ALICE LUMSDEN, pinpointing art under £500



1, *Odyssey* by Peter Burke, construction at the Louise Hallett Gallery, £500;
2, photogravure by David Hiscock, £160, at Richard Pomeroy;
3, *Ken Draper's*, pastel, £305, at Louise Hallett;
4, monoprint by Jill Kay, £120, from the Last Gallery

The last thing you budget for after summer wardrobes is Art, least of all Art-with-a-capital-A. But why not? British contemporary art has never been so prolific. A new breed of young dealer is also afoot, eager to break down the barriers which exclude first-time buyers from the art world, and to make art more accessible. You do find established contemporary galleries, like D'Offay and Lisson, that are not intimidating and have wonderful drawings for under £500. But whether you dress your wall in graphic Bruce Maclean prints or graffiti slogans illuminated on a light-box, there's only one secret to starting a collection. Discover a dealer with the good sense to share your own taste. Finances need not be a problem as many galleries let you pay by installment. Some participate in Artfund, a scheme that loans a minimum of £2,000, and Alliance Leicester offer secondary accounts through the

Bank of Scotland, which combine high interest savings with a cheque book.

Galleries are after space, a rare commodity in central London, and often settle on the fringe of commercial areas. Portobello is a recent mushrooming success, and during its annual spring festival likened to New York's village. The East End pulls innovative artist-owned galleries and unaligned free-spirits set up south of the river.

West End magnetism ultimately draws serious Art, which is why Karsten Schubert opened at 85 Charlotte St, W1 (Tues-Sun, 10am-6pm). He developed an eye working at the Lisson Gallery and plucks artists from Europe, Britain and the US who attract both serious collectors and prices. But you'll see small abstract oils and brightly coloured collages by Peter Zimmerman for £150, beside Robert Golder's ink drawings for sculpture. This month, consider Ed Ruscha's brilliant air-spray pastel prints on paper. Rebecca Hossack exhibits young contemporary artists at 35 Windmill St, W1 (Mon-Fri, 11am-7pm), and has a wide

range under £500. Ann Charrington, a 1987 graduate of the RCA, uses found-objects for her tin sculptures, particularly kitchen debris - tuna-can fish are £130. Stephen Masterson paints accomplished, quirky portraits and Tim Lewis uses old door panels, or any weathered surface, as a base for his intense natural history studies.

Newly expanded into Soho is the Thumb Gallery, 38 Lexington St, W1 (Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm; Thurs, 10am-8pm; Sat, 11am-4pm), where Jill George umbrellas some seventy artists. Limited edition prints, from £50, drawings and originals are always on view downstairs. Upstairs, until July 8, Martyn Brewster's richly textured oil paintings line the walks. Small canvases are affordable, as are Katherine Virgil's paper constructions decorated with gold and silver. Birch & Conran, 40 Dean St, W1 (Mon-Fri, 11am-6pm), always keep a selection of sculptures, drawings, watercolours and photographs under £500, such as Dan Farson's telling snaps of screen-stars and Be-bop Soho.

Alexander Roussos at 22 Princes St, W1 (Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm), is a boisterous twenty-four-year-old who already dreams of opening a museum. His fervent preference for fledgling talent is off-set by a taste for relevant modern "names". A *Warhol Retrospective 1963-87* runs all summer, prices in tens of thousands, but level >60