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# ART DIRECTION

If you're looking to buy your first piece of art you needn't spend a fortune, says Dominic Lutyens

Lorch Seidel is one of Berlin's new breed of approachable galleries

**F**or first-time art buyers, even stepping into a gallery can be intimidating. When you're greeted – or should that be ignored? – by an unapproachable presence behind a desk, it becomes clear that some galleries specialise not only in art, but also in attitude.

Gallery owners value punters who buy art out of passion rather than for monetary investment, so first-time buyers should never feel unwelcome. Indeed, many gallerists are dismayed at the tendency to 'collect with the ears rather than the eyes' by blindly choosing works by hot 'names' instead of using personal judgment. "Art isn't like any other commodity... Speculative buying is antithetical to it," asserts Maureen Paley, founder of the eponymous gallery in London's East End ([maureenpaley.com](http://maureenpaley.com)).





## “Gallery owners value punters who buy art out of passion rather than for monetary investment”

“Always follow your personal taste,” agrees Fred Mann, owner of another east London gallery, Fred (fred-london.com). “Living with and enjoying art should be a major part of the process.”

The upshot is that buying art should be fun – which partly accounts for the recent proliferation of art fairs. London has Frieze and the more accessible Affordable Art Fair; Brussels has Art Brussels (which this year takes place from 18-21 April; [artexis.com/artbrussels](http://artexis.com/artbrussels)); Madrid has Arco ([fema.es](http://fema.es)) every February; and Basel boasts its own world-famous fair (4-8 June; [artbasel.com](http://artbasel.com)). In addition to these seasonal treats, the worldwide art scene has plenty to offer at any time of year. We round up some of the key galleries and artists to check out in London, Budapest, Berlin, Tel Aviv and Madrid.

### London

In the past, the US art world viewed Britain as small fry but now, with the arrival of mega art fair Frieze (and its satellite show Zoo), the city attracts international collectors aplenty, and the London art scene has come to rival New York's.

The famous Cork Street in Mayfair may be home to pricey galleries where

some new buyers complain of a frosty reception, but smaller galleries like START SPACE on Columbia Road on the Shoreditch/Hackney border are just as interesting and less intimidating. StART SPACE ([st-art.biz](http://st-art.biz)) shows reasonably affordable photography, figurative and abstract painting and sculpture. Kirsty McLaren's dreamlike photographic landscapes sell from €314 (£235), while Tania Britto's canvases exploring human relationships start at €534 (£400).

England & Co ([englandgallery.com](http://englandgallery.com)), on fashionable Notting Hill street Westbourne Grove, is also a great port of call “for first-time buyers and those making costly acquisitions alike,” stresses owner Jane England. One particularly promising artist, she says, is Alberto Duman, whose silkscreen prints of iconic London landmarks, often quirkily represented by text, start from €802 (£600) unframed.

At the London Art Fair ([londonartfair.co.uk](http://londonartfair.co.uk)), held every January at the Business Design Centre in Islington, artworks can be bought for as little as €67 (£50).



**Clockwise from top left** Buyers can pick up Kirsty McLaren's landscapes and Tania Britto's canvases at East London's START SPACE; Benjamin Bohmack and Daniela Fornsheim's work shows at Lorch+Seidel; Frieze founders Amanda Sharpe and Matthew Slotover

and US magazine *Art & Auction* has described it as “a modern and contemporary art fair where collectors at all levels of experience can browse and mingle”. Its side show, Photo50, sells works by emerging photographers. Last year, pieces by Gábor Kudász were

priced from €200 (£150). For more information on London's art scene, buy *Art in the City – London* by Tiddy Rowan (published in April by Quadrille), part of a series that will also include Berlin (to be published in 2009).



## Fun of the fair

Fairs are a handy way to get an overview of a city's art scene, as well as what's going on in the art world internationally. Here are some upcoming art-fests to put in the diary:

### The Affordable Art Fair London (13-16 March, affordableartfair.com)

The name says it all; at this easy-going fair in Battersea Park, artworks are priced from €67 (£50), and none exceeds €4,000 (£3,000). A wine bar, café and children's crèche are all on hand.

### Battersea Contemporary Arts Fair London, 16-18 May, bcafi.info

This fair spotlights the work of more than 150 established and emerging contemporary artists, photographers and sculptors, who visitors also get to meet. Prints, photography and sculpture can be bought direct from the artist, without galleries or agents taking the usual hefty commission. Work is priced from around €53 (£40).

### Art Forum Berlin Berlin, 3-6 October, art-forum-berlin.com

This international fair plays host to more than 120 galleries, and provides a platform for emerging artists. A newer event taking place on similar dates is Preview Berlin (October 2-5; previewberlin.de). Held in a disused hangar at Berlin's Tempelhof Airport, it attracts around 55 galleries specifically showing work by promising young artists.



## Berlin

First-time buyers should make a beeline for Berlin, which is renowned for relatively affordable art. It's best to bypass the city's erstwhile art centre, Zimmerstrasse, whose galleries have become very top-end. The new hub is around Auguststrasse in Mitte, but even this is becoming very bourgeois, with rising rents forcing galleries to migrate to funkier neighbourhoods.

In the centrally located borough of Mitte, Heidestrasse is home to several vibrant galleries, including Haunch of Venison and Spielhaus Morrison, while the nearby Brunnerstrasse has Nice and Fit, and Klemm's. Lindenstrasse in Kreuzberg boasts Gregor Podnar and Konrad Fischer, and nearby Reichenbergerstrasse has Galerie 5213.

Another approachable gallery is Lorch+Seidel (lorch-seidel.de) on Tucholskystrasse in Mitte, which showcases work by emerging German artists such as Benjamin Bohnsack (a painter of abstract canvases), Charlotte Bedke (a figurative painter) and Daniela Florsheim (a watercolourist).

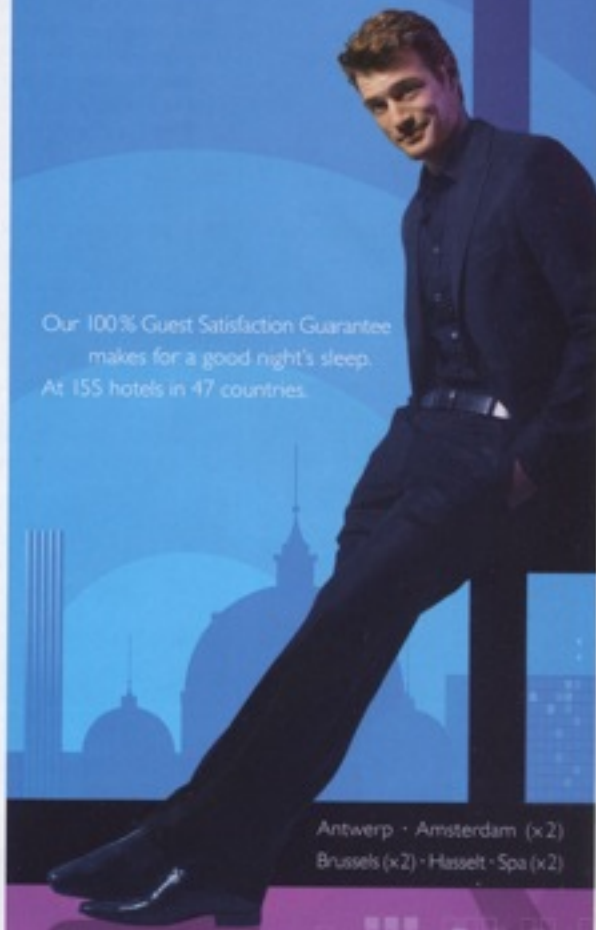
Rising stars to look out for include Julien Grenier, whose work is exhibited by Galerie 5213; Heinz Peter Knes, represented by the gallery



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