

# Daylight robbery

Beat the burglars with the latest anti-theft technology. John Leaver reports on several ways to protect your collection and respond to the growing trend towards daytime snatches

The common image of art crime is one of hooded men breaking into homes and galleries at night to execute organised plans. In response, art owners have focused their efforts on protecting their property while they're away at night. However, recent information suggests that many criminals now prefer to take their chances during the day. They would rather go back to basics and grab something while you're not looking than face an advanced security system at night. The security industry has responded.

## 'Euronova Anti-snatch Alarm is designed for temporary and permanent exhibits and simply sticks onto articles with double-sided tap'

### Invisible barrier alarms

A potential star of future 'Mission Impossible' films, the EBS Invisible Barrier Alarm bathes an item in an electromagnetic field. If anything, such as a hand, penetrates this area, a warning alarm sounds. When the hand is retracted, the alarm stops. The temporary alarm can act as a warning to the viewing public not to touch a display, as well as a security blanket to alert you to the presence of thieves. It can also be used as an invisible barrier, extending 80cm vertically to protect a tabletop or counter. Priced at around £500, the EBS alarm comprises a 3mm thick metal mat, which is placed under the object, and a wireless alarm. The mat is subjected to very low frequency radio waves, which leak out and follow the contours of the object. The waves also radiate out about 20cm from the object's edges. When someone penetrates the invisible blanket, their body effectively earths the electromagnetic field. The system picks up this relayed pulse and activates the alarm.

As with many new security gadgets, it can be linked to smart CCTV devices to guide their focus. The ingenious system has recently been installed in the National Art Gallery of Australia and other public collections in Germany, Switzerland and Sweden.

BELOW: Displays at the Kunsthalle, Bonn, protected by EBS



### Vibration, chord and anti-snatch alarms

Organisers of a recent exhibition of artefacts from the Titanic chose to make wide use of vibration alarms. This involved attaching vibration detectors to exhibits, all wirelessly linked to an alarm. Vibration systems are generally recommended for the protection of 'medium value items'.

Another inexpensive and effective device is the chord alarm. Simply attach the small box-like unit to a wall

or table and attach the chord from the unit to the article. If the chord is cut or pulled the alarm sounds. This allows people to pick up and handle an item, but prevents them from moving it more than 30cm or so. Again in response to an increase in 'grab and run' crimes, the Euronova Anti-snatch Alarm is designed for temporary and permanent exhibits and simply sticks onto articles with double-sided tape. Costing around £40, the tubular device, 17cm in length, generates 112dB when grabbed, but doesn't respond when touched gently.

### Listen in when you're out

Private collectors face an extra difficulty – they're not always at home to hear an alarm sound. And the police won't usually respond to a private alarm until someone has verified that there is a crime in progress. One way you can provide that verification is by a remote 'listening in' device.

HouseSitter is a simple piece of kit, which allows you to link your mobile phone to various household alarms and detectors. If an intruder is detected, the device will call you and let you decide what action to take.

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the much-hyped super mobile network, will deliver digital data rates of up to 2MBs - faster than current ADSL. This will allow you to control virtually anything in the home with a few voice commands or touches of a button. With larger screens, 3G phones will allow you to connect to your home CCTV system and watch over your property in high-resolution video and crystal clear sound. You'll be able to control the direction of the cameras, adjust their focus and activate or de-activate the alarm.

However, don't get too excited – widespread problems and delays have put a worthwhile 3G network back at least a couple of years. Mobile operators aren't keen to suggest that they'll exceed the government's target of 80% 3G network coverage by 2007.

Right now, GPRS (General Packet Radio System) phones are appearing in the shops. These allow data rates of around 50k, similar to most desktop computers, and speeds will increase over coming months. Expect to see some interesting security features appearing later this year.

For more details on the Invisible barrier, anti-snatch and vibration alarms, and Housesitter, contact Euronova, tel 01179 442 061 [www.euronova.co.uk](http://www.euronova.co.uk)



ABOVE: Shockwave system

Before deciding whether to call the police or deal with the situation yourself, you can listen to what is going on in the house, via a powerful microphone. HouseSitter consists of a wall-mounted box and a wire, which plugs into your telephone socket to allow you to contact it through your mobile. It also comes with an infrared detector and a magnetic door contact and it can be linked up to multiple anti-snatch alarms.

### The future is wireless

It is a truth universally acknowledged that the future is wireless. The problem is, it's still in the future. 3G,



ABOVE: Titanic exhibition, protected by anti-snatch alarms