



Home Is Where The Art Is  
Chatting with Pino

**Pino** – The retired banker spent most of his first salary in April 1971 on art and never stopped since. Today, his collection spills beyond his walk-up apartment, his gallery, a warehouse space, yet his desire to add to it continues. In his beautifully curated (or in his words, “blended”) home, we get a glimpse of Pino’s life through his wide repertoire of art, antiques, textiles, furniture.



## How did you start collecting art?

I grew up in the south of Italy surrounded by beautiful things. My grandparents’ home was decorated with lovely 19th century furniture, and the walls of the entrance were covered with frescoes from the 1920s, of flamingos around waterponds with flowers. These memories are still impressed upon me and all the ingredients were there as a child for me to appreciate beautiful objects. A beautiful object, in my opinion, is not just restricted to antiques but it could be anything even in the supermarket, as long as it has a spirit of its own and blends with other objects.

I remembered spending almost my entire first salary on purchasing objects, but I never stopped. These objects are toys that I never had, and I don’t intend to sell any of them. I was posted by the bank to several countries and I became consumed with the fascinating art that each country could offer. Three years in the UK exposed me to museums and antiques; when I came to Singapore in 1990 the strong fusion of Chinese, Indian and Malay culture opened a whole new perspective and by the time I moved to Australia, I had discovered aboriginal art. When I returned back to Singapore many years later, I explored India and delved intensely into Tibetan rugs.





## Does your collection have a theme or principle?

Objects have to blend together. I like creating dialogues between different pieces and this vision drives the way I purchase objects.

I have a painting by an Australian aboriginal artist where she traces the footprints of the animals walking across the desert sand in the moonlight. The artist then recounts a dream of her mother where her mother wakes up in the middle of the desert at night and vomits as she has, for the first time, felt the life of her daughter. In front of this painting, I placed a marble sculpture created by an Indian artist in his 80's of a couple that have become one in their embrace. These two pieces were bought in different periods and in different places, but today they have a dialogue, that of unity. An Ikea lamp which cost me \$69 lights up these two pieces. The lines on the lampshade are similar to that in the painting. Despite the simplicity of each of these 3 objects, all the elements blend together.

On a red lacquer table from Shanxi, I placed some 18th century copper lions and a collection of silver pieces bought from different places. One of them is an offering bowl from Indonesia, the others were bought on different trips to Thailand, Laos, Cambodia. I like how these silver were probably all made in the same period and the cross referencing and inspirations between cultures at any one time is fascinating.

As a collector, I don't focus on one particular thing but purchase objects from different cultures and histories. The challenge then is to put these objects together.





## **Tell us about the Tibetan rugs.**

I have a number of extremely rare and beautiful pieces, and you would be surprised at what these tapestries are actually used for! One particular piece which I love is a horse blanket, and I was intrigued by the different elements within the textile which have individual significance but come together to express the Tibetan tradition and beliefs. The representation of the universe and the natural environment is seen in the sacred mountain, clouds and blossoming peonies. The manuscript character in the middle is a direct reference to longevity. Lush vegetation sprouts from the vases along the border, and a pearl flaming at the centre is associated with dragons, or male energy.

You have moved houses very often over the years, is there anything to consider when you set up a new home?

Every home is different, the feel is never really the same. I take the chance to re-blend my objects together whenever I set up a new home and the results are always different.

Of course there are practical considerations too. In Singapore I don't buy work on paper as the humidity will affect the piece. The humidity has already caused the white part in one of the paintings to turn yellow, but I don't mind it as art pieces will change over time and we shouldn't be afraid of that, just have hope!



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<http://artloftasia.com/blog/home-is-where-the-art-is-chatting-with-pino/>



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### **Photography by Attilio Rapisarda**

Attilio Rapisarda is a 42-year-old Singapore Permanent Resident, originally from Sicily, Italy. Attilio has been living in Singapore for seven years, working in psychiatric research and, more recently, teaching medical students. He trained in both digital and film photography at the Photographic Society of Singapore and Objectifs Centre for Photography and Filmmaking. His main photographic interests lie in the area of performance art but he has also published in the domains of food and architecture photography, on websites and magazines distributed locally and overseas.

### **Written by Gladys Teo**

A freelance art writer currently based in Singapore, I was a regular features contributor to The Pocket Arts Guide covering contemporary trends in Asia. With a background concentration in economic development and social anthropology, my special interest is in the different mediums of sociopolitical art as a tool, genre, expression.