

# Where The Art Is

If you thought the works of Banksy, the Chapman Brothers and Polly Morgan were only for the walls of art galleries, lawyer GOZ LEE's unique apartment proves otherwise.

*By Rachel Read; photography by Suzanne Goodwin and portrait photo by Michelle Tng Ying*



**G**oz Lee's 750-square-foot space in Sai Ying Pun, which he shares with his wife Phoebe and their newborn, has become a cosy haven for modern art, vintage furniture and one-of-a-kind knickknacks, which turn every inch of his home into an exciting talking point.

## Market Fresh

Originally from Singapore via a stint in London, the Lees fell in love with their harbour-view new-build in the bustling heart of the Western District. As passionate food-lovers – Goz has written a cookbook, *Plusixfive*, featuring his favourite Singaporean dishes, while Phoebe is the co-owner of Singaporean café and vintage home store Carpenter & Cook – the flat's proximity to one of the city's best wet markets was a major selling point.

"We love having accessibility to such a wide selection of fresh fish, meat and organic vegetables," Goz says. "I'm a major sucker for live fish and chickens since we can't get them in Singapore; I'm not sure where else in the world you can live in the city yet still go from a live fish to a freshly steamed one in less than 30 minutes!"



### Collector Chic

While their two-bedroom flat boasts a modern kitchen and sizeable living-dining area perfect for their love of cooking and entertaining, as avid collectors of modern art and vintage furniture ("Is messy-art-chairs-vintage-chic a valid style description?" Goz jokes), the only real challenge with the space was finding a way to fit everything in. "We've had to think of how to creatively display our art collection," says Goz. "On tables, on floors... anything goes!"

With the couple both having a penchant for chairs, you'll find their collection used for a variety of purposes – including the vintage French school and Ercol chairs in their bedroom that double as bedside tables – and all of them have special memories attached. "I like collecting chairs from restaurants," Goz explains. "The Eagle Farringdon is one of my favourite go-to locals in London, so I went there one day with one of my own chairs and said I wanted to swap with them – and they let me!" Unsurprisingly, there have been some Hong Kong additions too, from two of Goz's favourite eateries, Yardbird and Little Bao.

Another notable piece is a 1950s Eames chair, found in a vintage warehouse while bargain-hunting in New York. "We totally fell in love with it so I lugged it all the way back to Manhattan on the subway in the dead of the night (meeting some pretty interesting characters along the way), then dragged it all around New York, moving from hotel to Airbnb and finally back to Hong Kong," he recalls.

### Art Attack

Forget sterile works displayed behind glass – Goz's art pieces all have special memories attached to them too. Take a signed skateboard by British artists, the Chapman Brothers. "My wife normally hates their art – I have another piece of theirs, which she usually tries to hide – so when she told me she saw a skateboard by them with a little boy on it in Sheung Wan that was super cute, I couldn't believe it! I emailed the Chapman Brothers and they thought the story was hilarious; I bought it from their London studio and they sent it with a note dedicated to my wife."

Meanwhile, his Banksy piece, *Flags*, was bought on a trip to Palestine. "As soon as I heard he had a show on, I took two days off work and booked a flight straight to Tel Aviv, crossing to Bethlehem the next day. I bought it at his show but also stopped at a local store to buy a keffiyah scarf, picking up some random pamphlets along the way. When I got to the airport, I was immediately questioned as to why I was in Palestine for just one day; when I said for an art show, the officer raised a sceptical eyebrow – so they searched my bag, finding the keffiyah and pamphlets... which I later found out were invitations to join the fight against Israel. Thankfully they let me through but the moral of the story is don't pick up random stuff when you don't know what it says!"

It's not all famous artists though (although eagle-eyed collectors will spot works by Space Invader, FAILE, David Choe, KAWS and Jose Parla); while there's a stuffed chick

by famed London artist Polly Morgan, there's also a stuffed rat made by Goz himself after attending a taxidermy course. ("Always a conversation starter – or killer!") Meanwhile, the eye-catching *Home* piece above their dining table was created by the couple using fonts from special moments in their life, like their wedding venues and own handwriting.

As for one piece that Goz would never sell? "The signboard to Plusixfive, the private dining supper club that I used to run in London on weekends, despite having a full-time job – which also became the name and cover of my cookbook. It was a couple of years of madness, but I made so many friends and learnt so much; it was possibly the most rocking time of my 30s!"

With so many exciting new art pieces and vintage treasures to be discovered, we reckon there are plenty more highlights still to come.





## Goz's Recommendations

### VINTAGE FURNITURE AND HOMEWARE

#### Carpenter & Cook

19 Lorong Kilat, #01-06,  
Singapore  
+65 6463 3648  
carpenterandcook.com

#### Chen Miji

G/F, 10 New Street, Sheung Wan  
2549 8800 | chenmiji.com

#### Select 18 & Mido Glasses

18 Bridges Street, Sheung Wan

#### Sham Shui Po Market

Apliu Street, Sham Shui Po

### ART

#### Above Second

9 First Street, Sai Ying Pun  
3483 7950 | above-second.com

#### Cat Street Gallery

222 Hollywood Road,  
Sheung Wan  
2291 0006  
thecatstreetgallery.com

#### Contemporary by Angela Li

248 Hollywood Road,  
Sheung Wan  
3571 8200 | cbal.com.hk

#### Lazarides

11 Rathbone Place, London, UK  
+44 207 636 5443 | lazinc.com

#### Pictures On Walls

picturesonwalls.com

#### Studio Cromie

studiocromie.org 