# Hermitage: 20 years of eternal treasures

Posted on



Hermitage offers an artistic selection of collectibles and antiques.

**Discover a quaint store nestled in the quiet environs of Gower Street. Home to rare and valuable pieces, Hermitage offers collectibles, art and antiques, which are from a bygone era, exquisite and unforgettable.**

**Words** Tatiyana Welikala.

**Photographs** Menaka Aravinda.

What began as a shared hobby of traveling and collecting antiques, inspired two life-long friends, Co-founders Safiya Husain and Yasmin Akbarally to initially organize many small events of their finds at a café in Colombo. 20 years later, Hermitage has grown into an emporium of unique collectibles, antique and ethnic furniture reproductions and art and aesthetic home décor that emanate aged splendor.

Upon entering the store, visitors will be instantly captivated by the rich culture and history exuded in every object. On their quest to discover the unknown, Safiya and Yasmin feature items in the store that once served a purpose in time. The handpicked pieces reflect their own taste and preference so customers can witness true rarities.

One of the most fascinating artifacts at Hermitage is a wooden cart table, which has been converted from an original camel drawn cart in Rajasthan. Interestingly, the harness of the cart has been turned into an innovative shelf. Most of the furniture has been upcycled into useful and functional pieces. This includes an original door frame remodeled into a bookshelf, coffee tables carved from windows and couches made effortlessly from wooden chests.

Among the rustic collections, motifs of regal empires and heritage have been exquisitely hand-painted onto cupboards, stools, and side tables. Vibrant figurines of horses, camels, elephants stand atop of racks and bar counters, adding a pop of color to the store. Wooden masks from Indonesia, framed autographs and vintage photographs adorned on the walls enhance the feeling of nostalgia. Hermitage also offers a precious selection of books, postcards, maps and prints. Upon request, customers can view them as they are securely stored away to ensure the durability of the products.

Neatly arranged in display cabinets is an assortment of ethnic inspired silver jewelry and antique collectibles such as sand timers, telescopes, compasses and miscellaneous trinkets.

The expansive outdoor garden is decorated with stone sculptures echoing serenity. Meticulously designed doorways highlight the cultural significances of old housing in South India. Safiya and Yasmin explained as a gesture of respect, these doorways were built lower than the average height to allow visitors to bow their heads while entering an Indian household.

Hermitage pays deep appreciation to the arts and cultural embellishments hailing from India, Indonesia, Nepal and Turkey. The partners enthusiasm as well as passion for revealing extraordinary objects is reflected in every corner of the gallery. As such, the inspiration for the Hermitage logo was derived from the duo's first acquisition – a painting of 'Drummers' by esteemed Indian artist Jamini Roy. Hermitage offers endless creativity and beauty for customers to create desired living spaces.

*Hermitage; 28, Gower Street, Colombo 5;*

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*hermitart.com/store; Opening Hours: 9am – 6pm daily*

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