

All for the Love of Art

Posted on



Saskia and Annika Fernando

An ivory hued sculpture of a human figure holding a bird with a cage around his head—‘a unique portrayal of freedom’, was what I felt upon seeing it at the largest contemporary art gallery of Colombo, the Saskia Fernando Gallery. And right next door is PR, a design concept store of fashion and accessories. A fine combination of art and design born through the creativity of two sisters.

Words Hansani Bandara **Photographs** Menaka Aravinda

The Saskia Fernando Gallery and PR are the collaborated efforts of Saskia and Annika Fernando—the two daughters of the Sri Lankan lifestyle connoisseur, Shanth Fernando—to

expand the Paradise Road philosophy by extending on the different sections of Paradise Road that individually inspired them.

Different dimensions of contemporary art—sculptures and paintings —find their home within this uniquely designed Gallery. I walked through the white hued spaces on the ground floor—soothingly lit to instil a sense of peace—trying to grasp the stories the creations were narrating through the expressions of the artist.

Up the staircase, onto the first floor, we were stopped in front of a projector directed at a plain wall. Reflected on the wall, through the projector was a finger dance. Strange it seemed at first, but as I continued to watch, I realised that there was a rhythm and a story, which the performer was attempting to convey through the swaying movements of the fingers to old folk music. The first floor also houses the new media and the viewing galleries where mesmerising paintings of various mediums, sculptures of extraordinary concepts and soulful portrayals of photography can be found.

Housed in the same building, next to the gallery is PR—Colombo's first 'Design Concept Store' that is far from being just another ordinary fashion store. PR features a well-curated collection of designer clothing and accessories, items for people from all walks of life.

Wherever you look, you can see one-of-a-kind fashion pieces. The collection of elegant decorative items for households, stacks of fancy soaps and candles and racks of neatly arranged designer wear are all part of the admirable atmosphere at the store. The blowy parachute skirt instantly caught my eye, given its unique design and colours.

The store exclusively retails reputed Indian fashion labels such as Rajesh Pratap Singh, Abraham and Thakore, Sanchita, Eka and Smallshop as well as local design labels, Touche, Salt, Maus, Khogy, Conscience, TukTuk and Stringhopper. In addition to clothing, the store currently stocks local jewellery labels, Ayne, Kinsfolk and Saskia Fernando's new range, 'Papillon du Thé'.

The gallery and the fashion store, different in their own ways, take lovers of art and fashion on a blissful and inspiring journey.

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