

The Vintage Treasures at Hermitage

Posted on



Hermitage is the place for the most unusual of objects

Hermitage is a creative space where beauty is transmitted in every object. There are relics of art from Maharaja's palaces and trinket shops situated in the street corners of cities across the world.

Words Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane

Photography Vishwathan Tharmakulasingham



The Founders of Hermitage,
Yasmin and Safiya

Like tranquillity that fills a sacred place, one's senses are awakened by the profound artistry and the echoing serenity on display at Hermitage. For the appreciator of the arts, every artefact on display has deep significance; the contours, the chiselled designs and the strokes of paint reveal a canvas of imagination, creativity and talent.

The ambience at Hermitage begins at the entrance, a doorway that leads to a well-kept garden brocaded with figurines exudes a sense of calming beauty. Laid out are remarkable pieces of items made of timber, an antique palanquin, ornate camel carts, a couch made from an old chest and much more, all surrounded by extremely decorative doors. The display, creates an atmosphere of royal mansions as well as the life of the nomads. The welcome setting is a foretelling of the exciting objects to be found inside the store.

Founders of Hermitage, Safiya Husain and Yasmin Akbarally, describe their store as a place where fine art, antiques and collectibles are offered to discernible art lovers, to those who see art in any mundane object. Safiya and Yasmin have added a personalised touch to their eclectic collection. Thus, antiques, furniture, figurines and ornaments, masks and jewellery among a range of miscellaneous items that hail from different parts of India, Indonesia, Nepal, Syria and Turkey, are 'one-off' pieces selected by them. At Hermitage no two objects, although they look alike, are the same. They are designs not found in books. Hermitage offer their clientele the individuality they desire.

"Our one-off pieces are sought by individuals, architects, corporates and hotels and because they are single pieces, they are noticed. What we offer at Hermitage can transform a simple living-room space to something extraordinary," explained Safiya, who added that quite often their atypical objects become the initiator of interesting conversations.



Jhula - an ornate swing from Rajasthan

The majestic and imposing doors from the palaces of Rajasthan and from old houses in Kerala, evoke a grandeur that many seek in decorating their private spaces. Imagination has been intensely expressed in the furniture that has been created. Bookshelves made from parts of a camel cart, door frames transformed into racks and heavily carved windows made into coffee tables; each meticulously designed to retain their original workmanship. Console tables made from old door frames, painted chests and stools, carved bar tops and side tables made from parts of a camel cart; the art strewn across Hermitage are the picture of awe-inspiring antiquity.

Arranged in display cabinets are compasses, telescopes, magnifying glasses, sand timers, door handles, ginger jars, lime boxes, chess boards, and tribal jewellery from Turkmenistan. The walls are adorned with masks and carved panels. Collectibles such as maps, books, postcards, stamps, autographs, photographs, Ceylon cars and even unlikely objects like old cameras and a manual ice cream maker are sought after by collectors in search of historical memorabilia.

In their search for unusual pieces, as explained by Yasmin, visiting trinket shops is a must and the more cluttered they are, the chances of stumbling upon extraordinary objects are

greater.

Hermitage displays icons of vintage cultures and the traditions of the Orient and the East, re-shaped into objects of purpose and beauty.

28 Gower Street, Colombo 5

(+94 11) 250 2196

hermitage@eureka.lk

hermitart.com

