



## **ROSHANI AND NIROSHANI LEANAGE AWARDED THE KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF ARTS AND LETTERS**

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**(“Chevalier des Arts et Lettres” in French)**

**Recognised in the Knight of the Order of ‘Arts and letters by the French Government**

The French Government recently awarded the rank of Chevalier (knight) in the order of “Arts et Lettres” to Roshani Leanage and Niroshani Leanage, two pioneering personalities in the local fashion industry.

On 24 January 2022, Ambassador of France to Sri Lanka and the Maldives H.E. Mr. Eric Laveru awarded Roshani Leanage and Niroshani Leanage with the insignia of Knight of the Orders of Arts and Letters in a ceremony held at the French Residence for their constant devotion to the cause of bilateral relations between France and Sri Lanka. Both of them were bestowed with Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters (Chevalier des Arts et Lettres in French) in recognition of their creations in the artistic field as well as the contribution made to the influence of French culture in the world.

Speaking at the official ceremony held at the French Ambassador’s residence in Sri Lanka to confer the awards, French Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives H.E. Mr. Eric Lavertu shared: “It is a rare privilege to be given the opportunity to include both of your names in the same speech. It is in this respect you offer me to show, by means of these awards, the appreciation of the French authorities with regard to your constant devotion to the cause of bilateral relations between France and Sri Lanka.”

Roshani Leanage is the Chairperson of Lanka Institute of Fashion Technology (LIFT) and Mod’Art International – Sri Lanka. Following her higher studies, Roshani began her career in the fashion and textiles industry in 1980 as a business partner of R.N. Garments and went on to being an entrepreneur in apparel production for exports and retail.

Niroshani Leanage is the Managing Director of LIFT and Mod’Art International – Sri Lanka. Having graduated as a fashion designer in 1999 in Bangalore India, she entered the fashion industry the following year. In 2007, she went on to pursue her MBA from the University of Northampton, UK. At a time when Sri Lanka lacked formal fashion education institutes, Niroshani took a bold step to establish LIFT in the year 2000 with the aim of creating internationally renowned fashion entrepreneurs in the country.

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In recognition of her role in the industry as well as the country, the Sri Lankan Government in 2013 conferred an award of appreciation to Niroshani, through the Sri Lanka Army “Seva Vanitha” unit.

Her endeavours don't stop here. Niroshani initiated the International Graduate Fashion Spectacle (IGFS), where Sri Lankan fashion students in collaboration with international fashion graduates are given the opportunity to showcase their collection to a broader audience, and in 2020, she became a Member of the Sri Lanka-France Business Council (SLFBC).

Today, with 20 years of experience in both fashion design education and business behind her, Niroshani has formed links and partnerships with foreign universities.

This has elevated her efforts to make the LIFT as the official representative for the University of Northampton – UK, and also to develop a partnership with Mod'Art International Paris, a top Parisian school of fashion, to offer a three-year Bachelor in Fashion Design degree in Sri Lanka and the latest partnership of Ferrandi – Paris offering students to study culinary arts and hospitality management in Paris.