

PRESS RELEASE

SANGVAM

CONFLUENCE

SUBODH GUPTA

Original creations for Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche
Installations from January 9 to Sunday, February 19, 2023



AN ANNUAL SHOWCASE

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ARISTIDE BOUCICAUT

“Le Bon Marché has chosen to showcase contemporary art each year since 2016, choosing major international artists like Ai Weiwei, Joanna Vasconcelos, Prune Nourry... They are free to feature what they like, so long as they include white. This can be subjective, as is the case here with Subodh Gupta. White is a tribute to the “Mois du Blanc” – White Month – an idea our founders Aristide and Marguerite Boucicaut had which focuses on household linen”, explains Frédéric Bodenes, Art and Image Director of the Le Bon Marché Group, who initiated this collaboration.

Subodh Gupta is the eighth guest artist as part of the “January carte blanche” organized by the Rive Gauche department store.





SANGAM, OR “CONFLUENCE” IN HINDI

In Hindu mythology, Sangam is the confluence of three rivers, the Ganges, the Yamuna and the Sarasvati. It is a place people have been going to on pilgrimages to worship for several centuries. *“This very simple word is the place in the north-east of India where three rivers with the name of three goddesses meet where many pilgrims come to submerge themselves in the water to purify themselves”*, explains Subodh Gupta.

A confluence of collected and new objects, a confluence of two cultures, two countries, a confluence between art and mercantile... It is the opportunity for everyone to question the confluence at which they find themselves at.

“Sangam is a cascade of mirror facets and sculptures made of domestic objects. It is an installation that questions the audience on their pilgrimage in a society focused on consumption”, explains Subodh Gupta.

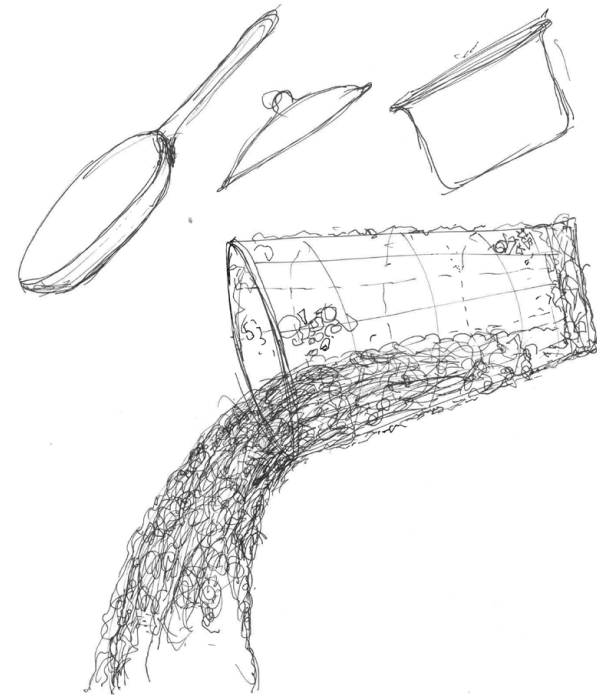
A NATURAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN HIS WORKS AND LE BON MARCHÉ ACCORDING TO SUBODH GUPTA.

“I chose the reference to Sangam because Le Bon Marché is where people from all over the world meet, encounter each other and form a human river. I am proud to be part of the connection that Le Bon Marché cultivates with art. I see Le Bon Marché as more than an exhibition place, I see it as a theatre for my works. My project is a performance in which the store’s customers will play a role.

It’s a very stimulating project for me, as I’m used to the whitecubes in museums and galleries or outdoor spaces where I usually exhibit my work. But I like challenges, unconventional places.

As an artist, I find it exciting to open up environments rarely explored. And then I appreciate making art more mainstream, the idea of showing my work to people who might not be familiar with art. You don’t have to be an art lover to appreciate my works. Visitors will have a purely instinctive approach to feeling my work.

White is everywhere, it is not just a color but a perception. A whiteness that diffuses throughout the space radiates from the silver and stainless steel of my sculptures”.





INSTALLATIONS THAT CAN BE SEEN FROM RUE DE SÈVRES RIGHT TO THE CENTRE OF THE STORE

The Indian artist Subodh Gupta, who creates monumental works, will take over the emblematic spaces of Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche with the exhibition, *Sangam* ("confluence" in Hindi).

IN THE TEN STORE WINDOWS ALONG RUE DE SÈVRES

Conveyed by the values of intercultural dialogue and sharing that treasured by Subodh Gupta, *Sangam* pays tribute to the French culture and expertise Le Bon Marché represents. Installations are exposed in the ten window displays on the rue de Sèvres: the series of ten "*Stitching the code*" works,

composed of collected vintage objects and furniture and bound in cords, that reflect French culture and the artist's taste for diverting ordinary objects from their original use, and transforming them into artistic installations.

"Subodh Gupta has brought together anonymous lives to create Sangam", according to Frédéric Bodenes.

UNDER THE GLASS ROOFS

Two monumental installations are set up under the glass roofs either side of the escalators Andrée Putman made famous. A traditional Indian pot, *Sangam I (Confluence I)*, and an XXL bucket, *Sangam II (Confluence II)*, shaped by shiny aluminum cooking utensils, will each pour out a flow of mirrors with a host of facets reflecting Le Bon Marché and its visitors.



ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE STORE

The exhibition space on the second floor will feature *The Proust Effect*, a suspended hut which is like a place open to meditation and contemplation.

"I designed a round hut made up of very old aluminum utensils collected in markets, anonymous objects that I reincarnate as works of art. Each has its own character and has already experienced a first life, which can be seen in the traces of time marked on the objects", explains Subodh Gupta.

A "making of" film shown at the installation exit allows visitors to continue their visit and understand more about the process the figure of contemporary art uses. Visitors will also be given a tote bag and an exhibition catalogue.

A piece written by the art critic and exhibition commissioner Nicolas Bourriaud will be included with the catalogue. He has followed the artist since his beginnings and organized the first exhibit of his work in France at the Contemporary Art Center in Sète in 1999. The catalogue will also feature five illustrated recipes by Subodh Gupta, as an invitation to share the universal dimension of his work while enjoying a meal.



ABOUT SUBODH GUPTA

“Do you remember the last meal you ate? How is it part of different contexts throughout your life, your community, the society you grew up in? In which way do the way you eat a meal and the community-based act of sharing it, or not, reflect a story that is bigger than you?” Subodh Gupta asks.

In this way he explains why he chooses to use utensils in his works: *“Utensils are simple objects, yet when combined together in my mind they speak of the complicated textures of life, nuances, lines and shadows, like what we can see in the palms of our hands”*.

Subodh Gupta is a major figure of contemporary art who turns domestic objects into monumental works of art. He has been exhibited in France for more than 20 years in institutions (the Centre Pompidou, the Monnaie de Paris) and is represented in France by Galeria Continua. Using

the kitchen utensil as his chosen material, having been fascinated since he was a child by the shine on objects in this material (cooking pots, lunchboxes), he has continually built a work that extends over several levels of narration by alluding to the cosmos through assembling well-worn utensils.

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