

RETAIL

Le Bon March signals emerging luxury market interest with 'Sangam' installation

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Despite their eye-catching mirror effect from a distance, the utensils that make up "Sangam's" sculptures are well-worn. Image credit: courtesy of LVMH/Le Bon March

By MARYBETH CONNAUGHTON

Parisian department store Le Bon March Rive Gauche plays host to a new exhibition from celebrated Indian artist Subodh Gupta this month, as part of its annual "Carte Blanche" series. This exhibition, like all of Mr Gupta's works, draws inspiration from, and pays homage to, his cultural heritage. Its release coincides with a growing awareness of India as the next major luxury market.

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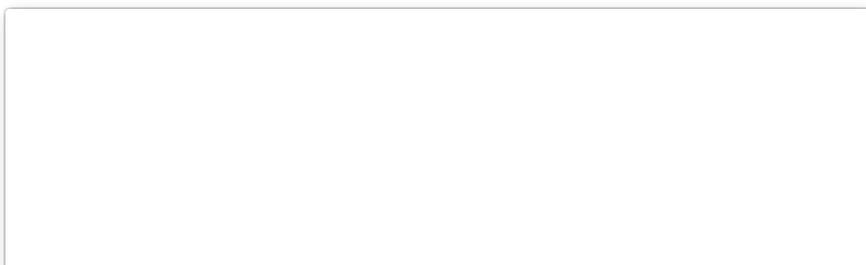
All that glitters

"Sangam," the title of the exhibition, is Hindi for "confluence," and is inspired by the point at which the Yamuna, Saraswati, and Ganges rivers meet. According to the artist, the French department store, which boasts a long history of arts patronage, is a most fitting venue.

"**Le Bon March** is where people from all over the world meet, encounter each other and form a human river," said Mr. Gupta in a statement.

"Sangam" is a series of oversized installations made entirely of kitchen utensils, most notably cooking pots. Though the artist purposely incorporated only those that were dull and worn from use—and thus still imbued with all the varied emotions associated with domestic life—they nonetheless gleam and shimmer when seen from a distance.

Arguably the most notable example of this effect is the hut-like structure made of aluminum pans titled "The Proust Effect."



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A post shared by Le Bon Marche Rive Gauche (@lebonmarcherivegauche)

Mr. Gupta's whole body of work could be considered an homage to everyday life in India. He regularly features milk pails, steel tiffin boxes which are used for carrying lunch, and bicycle parts—all hallmarks of a daily commute—into his pieces. These sculptures, he says, are meant to provoke thought about the economic transformation India has undergone in his lifetime.

Mr. Gupta's career itself has been extraordinary, and he is one of India's most celebrated artists. His wildly popular sculpture, a massive skull made of stainless steel containers called "Very Hungry God," toured the world before it was purchased by Francois Pinault, founder of the Kering group.

Many believe that his beloved country's luxury market is on a similar upward trajectory.

Time to shine

According to Euromonitor's Global Wealth and Luxury Report 2022, India was one of three Asia Pacific countries—along with China and Vietnam—set to see its number of ultra-high-net-worth individuals, high-net-worth individuals, and affluent adults all enter the triple digits between years 2022 and 2030 ([see story](#)).

With that kind of spending power, people took notice. The summer of 2022 saw a number of big names enter the Indian market for the first time.

In July of last year, Beauty group Estee Lauder Companies (ELC) joined Indian beauty group and lifestyle retailer Nykaa to launch Beauty & You. Their mission is to lend support to burgeoning Indian beauty brands ([see story](#)).

French fashion house Balenciaga signed a deal making Kering-owned Reliance brands its sole partner in India. The brand is scheduled to make its debut in the country some time in the middle of this year ([see story](#)).

British luxury automaker McLaren Automotive opened its first Indian retail space in Mumbai, its 41st global territory overall ([see story](#)).

Regardless of economic status, the country has a champion in Mr. Gupta.

"Sangam" will be on display at Le Bon March Rive Gauche through Feb. 19 of this year.