

Blue Harebells, a paper sculpture (hand dyed) by Sourabh Gupta

boys' CLUB

The artist, the writer, the furniture maker—Anjali Kumar meets the young creatives who are currently driving and dominating the conversation in New York City's cultural circles

Photograph: Matt Novac (Strawberry flower)

★ SOURABH GUPTA ★ the artist

To try to DEFINE SOURABH GUPTA'S WORK would be a FOOL'S ERRAND. In his own words, he is a "MULTIDISCIPLINARY DESIGNER", but that doesn't quite capture THE SCOPE OF HIS ARTISTIC IMAGINATION AND TALENT.

Born and raised in the small village of Hari Nagar in Jammu, Gupta had an insatiable drive to "just make things" from an early age. But traditional art supplies were hard to come by, so he got creative with materials instead. "I would pick up old receipts or try to write as small as possible in my school notebooks so that I could save pages," he says. Once, he even turned some of his mother's saris into curtains. "Resourcefulness has always been a virtue of mine," he jokes.

Gupta, 29, always excelled at studies, and eventually found his way to architecture school in India and earned a master's in interior design at Parsons in New York City, where he now lives and works out of his Harlem studio.

After leaving school, Gupta began making paper flowers as a therapeutic process, as he felt the need to make *something*. "I wanted to set up my potter's wheel, but couldn't for a lack of space. Paper was the most accessible material, so I started making flowers—I felt I had to, for my mental health and well-being." But soon, *The New York Times* came knocking, followed by designer Tory Burch, who

Sourabh Gupta sitting by his handcrafted paper flower bouquet sculpture at Tucker Robbins Design Showroom, New York Design Center



commissioned Gupta to create hundreds of paper daisies for her Met Gala gown this past May.

"For a long time, people didn't take me seriously because I was doing [many things] and they weren't sure how to classify me or my work. People thought I had not 'arrived' at my medium. Until I discovered someone who works the way I do—making a chair, then an airplane, then a sculpture—and is one of the most celebrated designers in the world."

Gupta is referring to Thomas Heatherwick, who is responsible for the recently unveiled Vessel in Hudson Yards in New York City, the new Google headquarters in Silicon Valley, and the reimagined London double-decker bus. "Since Heatherwick can operate on so many different dimensions, he is able to translate things across mediums—that is how I want to work."

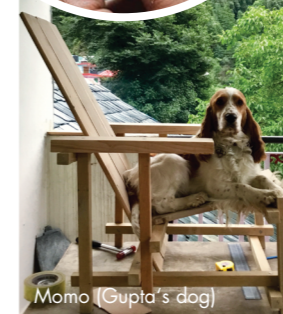
As for what's next, he is content to continue exploring the medium of paper flowers, with an exhibit at the Bolton Historical Museum in Upstate New York later this year. And when he is done with paper flowers, he will simply move on to something else. "I plan to keep doing what I feel like," he says. "At some point, it all ties together." >



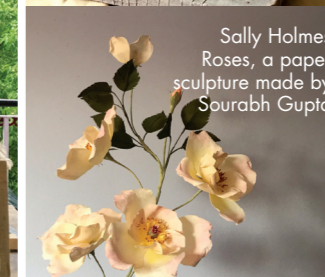
Gupta studying the wild strawberry flower and plant



This Installation is a memory of the earthquake in Nepal



Momo (Gupta's dog)



Sally Holmes Roses, a paper sculpture made by Sourabh Gupta