

SHOW

08 — ART AND RETAIL remain a power couple

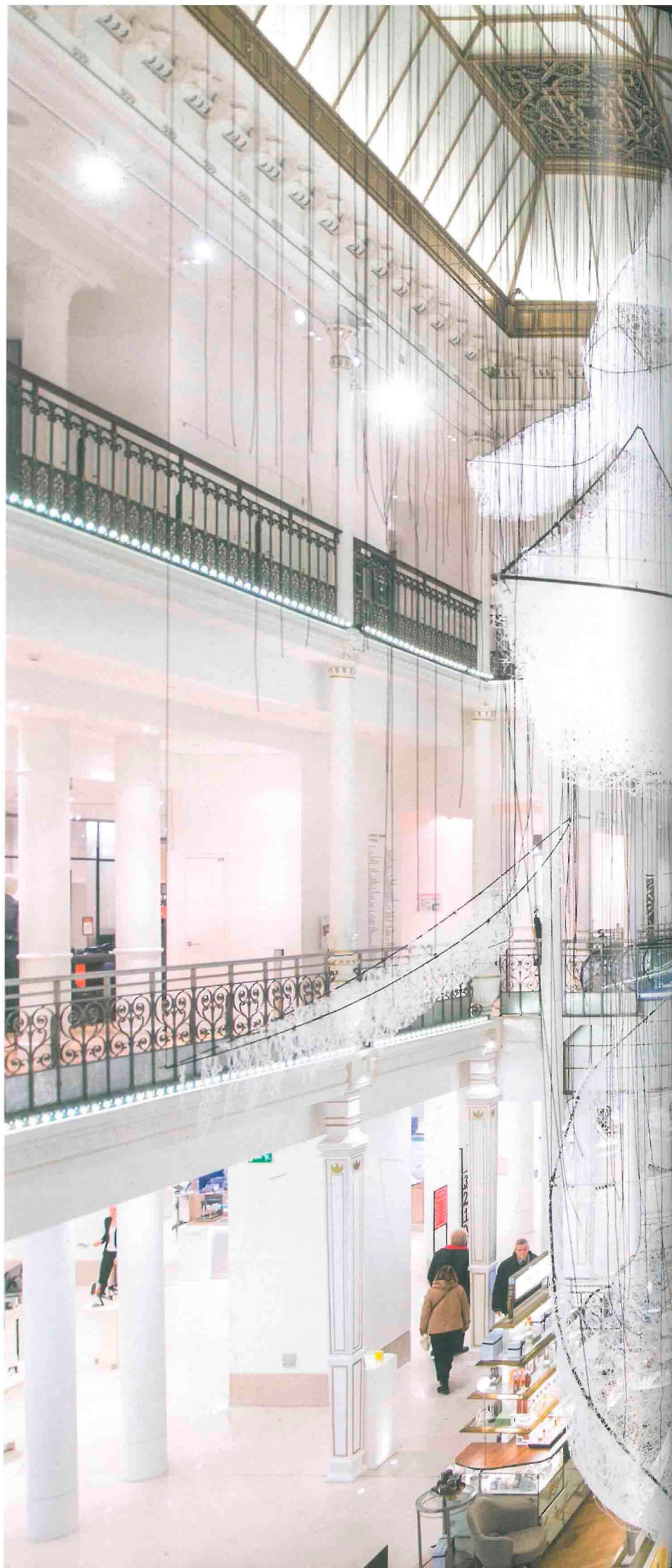
Bigger, bolder and more expressive: art in retail spaces — like Chiharu Shiota's installation at a Parisian department store — continues to make grand statements.

PARIS — An installation of 150 white boats by Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota brought an ethereal dose of culture to Le Bon Marché in Paris earlier this year. 'The biggest challenge was respecting the weight limit, because the boats had to be hung from the glass ceiling,' says Berlin-based Shiota of her first experience exhibiting in a retail environment. 'These conditions were new to me, but the idea of setting up an exhibition in an empty store was intriguing.' When probed further about her motivation to show her work in a department store, the artist says that 'the thought of creating a piece that addresses a public perhaps unfamiliar with art was scary but challenging. It opened a new door to reach a wider audience.' She's the second artist to make a temporary large-scale installation at Le Bon Marché, following Ai Weiwei's contribution last year.

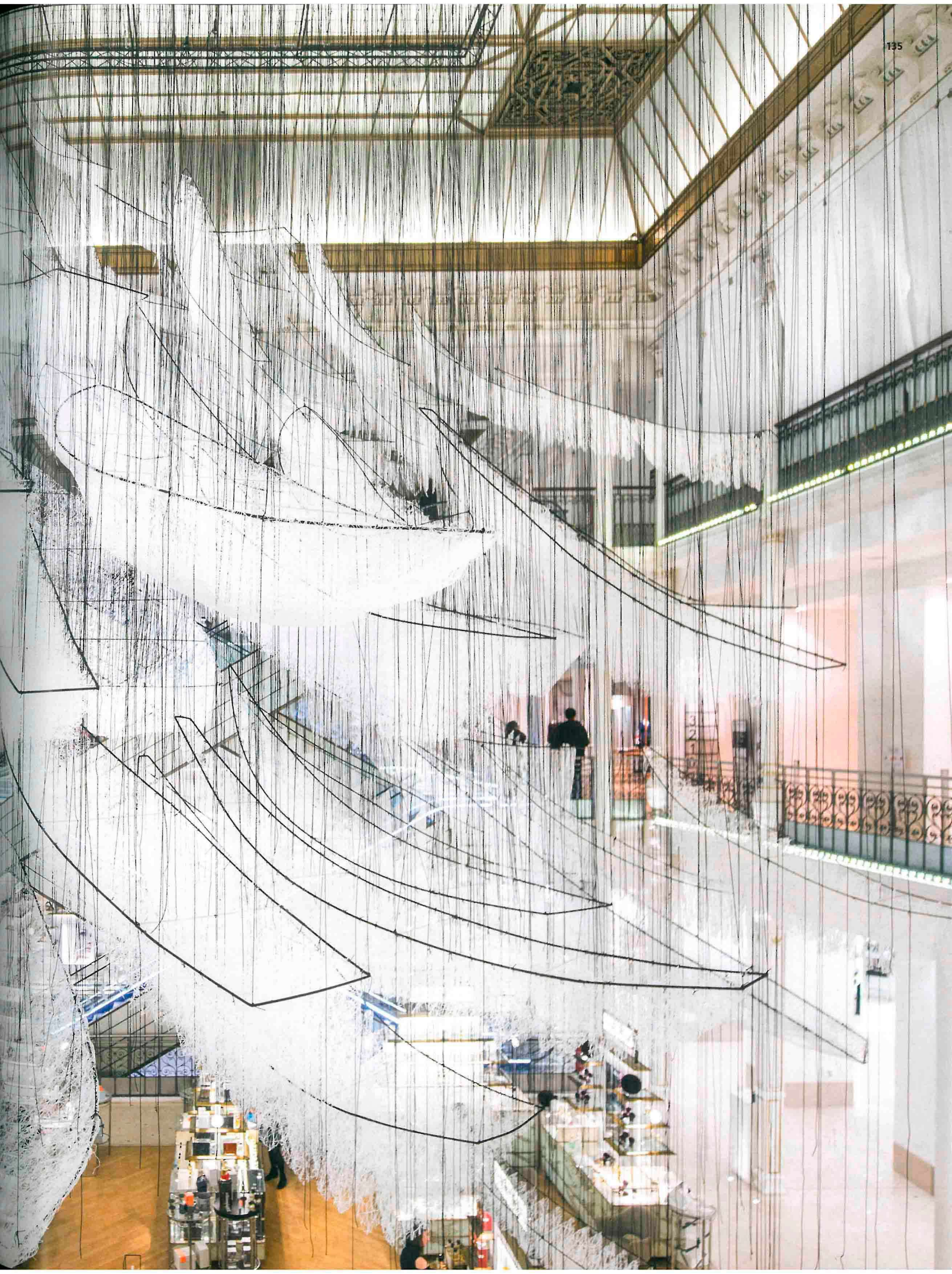
Where are we going? is a metaphor for the uncertain journey of life. It's evocative of Shiota's childhood boat trips and the reconstruction of part of Japan following the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and subsequent tsunami. Boats feature strongly in Shiota's work. In 2015 she filled the Japanese pavilion at the Venice Biennale with three Venetian fishing boats enmeshed in red threads and laden with household keys (*Frame 106*, p. 130). Last year at Blain|Southern, a Berlin art gallery, she engulfed visitors in a red haze of threads growing out of six iron boat hulls pared down to stark silhouettes.

At the invitation of Le Bon Marché, which has a white theme each January, Shiota eschewed her preferred thread tones of red and black in favour of white for the first time. During the evenings, when the department store was closed to the public, the artist spent two weeks with her team weaving the piece *in situ*. Alongside *Where are we going?*, a wavy walk-through installation called *Memory of the Ocean* greeted shoppers on the ground floor, while other pieces appeared in window displays. — AS

chiharu-shiota.com



Gabriel de la Chapelle



Chiharu Shiota's first retail-related project included *Memory of the Ocean*, a walk-through installation on the ground floor of Le Bon Marché.



