

SADDLEBACK

"LAUKKKA"



AMI JUUSELA, 2023

A HORSE SHOOK ME DOWN FROM ITS BACK

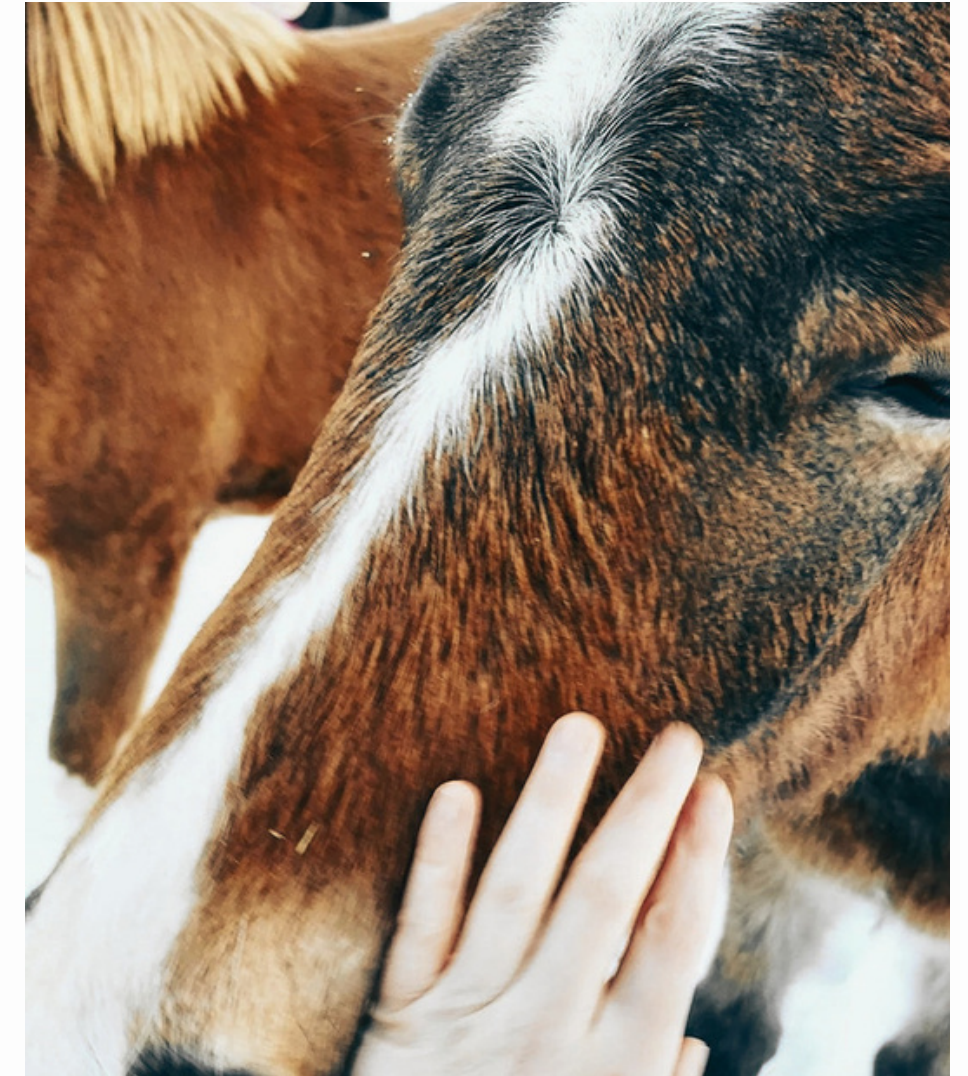


My stepsister is a horse girl, so I also became one. Or tried to. I could admire horses on the pages of comics and in the shape of toys, series, movies and games, but the real ones scared me. Simply because they were so big and unpredictable. The two times I rode a horse I fell: first, because the horse just simply shook me off like an annoying itch, second, because the saddle was too loose. Not my fault, really, but it deepened my fear.

10 years ago I had a right sided migraine attack so bad, that I had to go to a hospital. Since then I've been getting worse because of medical neglect. My right side will probably never be free from pain and I've had to adapt to it in different ways. One of them is that I carry bags with weird ways because I can't often stand the weight on my right shoulder, hip, arm or back.

When I heard about this competition I immediately thought about what would be the easiest kind of bag for me to carry and I reached out my left arm. I recalled a memory when my relative's foal advanced me and from the moment I touched his head I felt safe. How my fear disappeared and the pain did too.

I thought about how a saddle simply balances the weight of the rider. And how the power relies in the animal itself. It's about sharing the weight accepted as it is. So instead of fear I decided to try and find strength on my good side. To reach out and help others and myself with design.



I CAN'T RIDE A HORSE OR SEW, BUT I HAVE A STRONG WILL AND IMAGINATION



mitä on mahdollisimman vähän materiaalia
kannus on?
yksi pari!
tän on pienestä osasta tai vähästä
yhteen

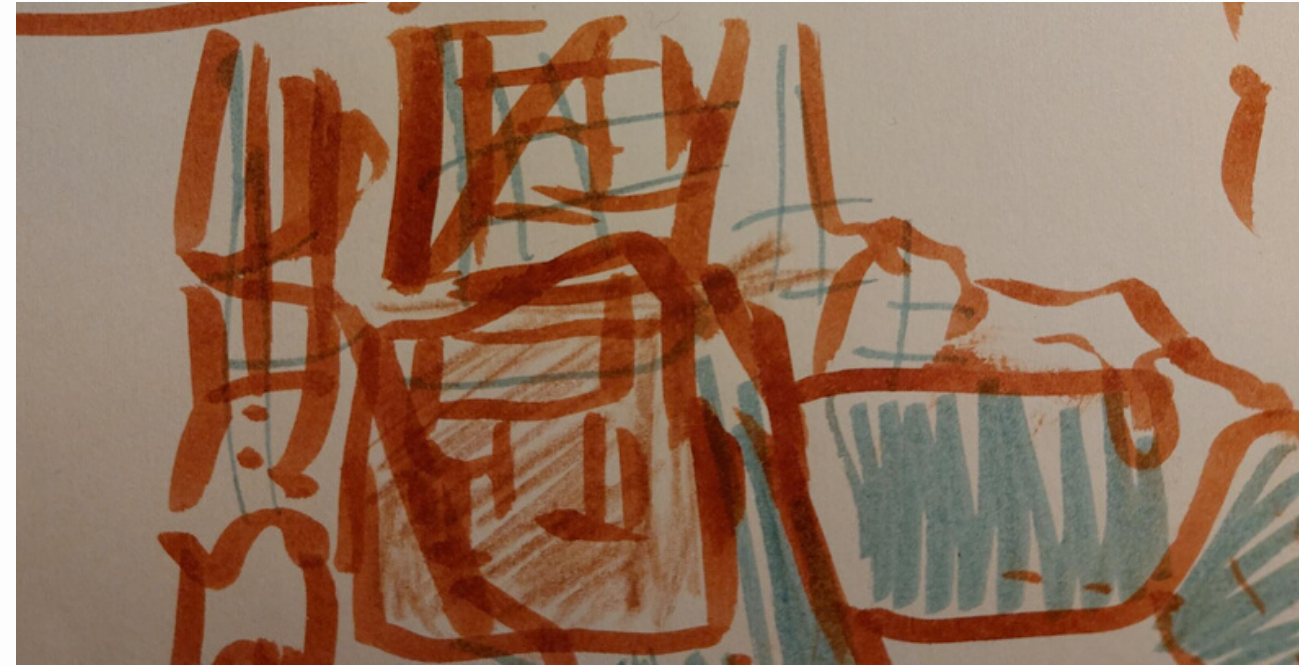
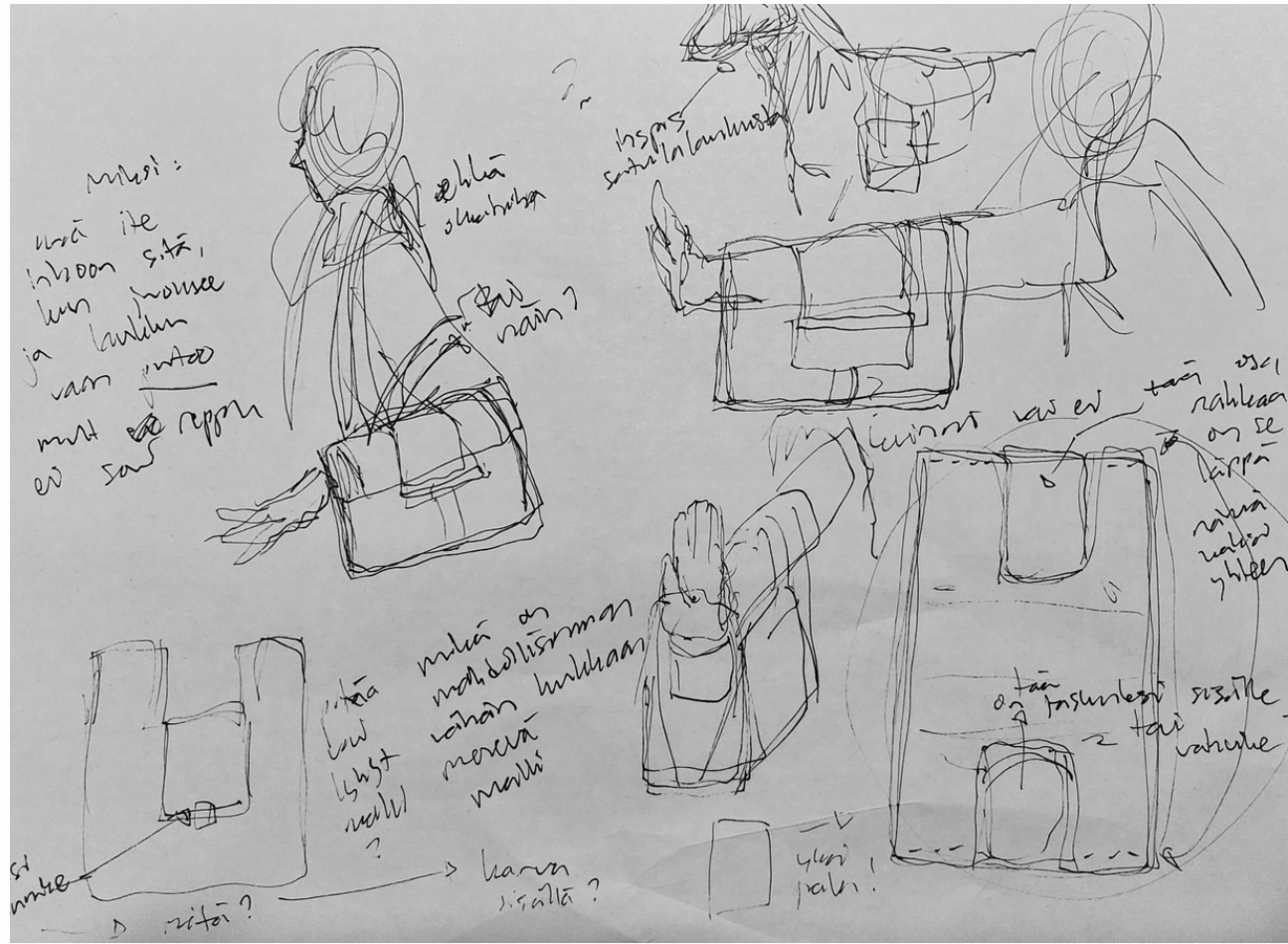
BALANCE

From the thought of saddles came the inspiration from saddlebags. How a simple shape can balance and fit so much inside while also looking beautiful. Perfect for its purpose.

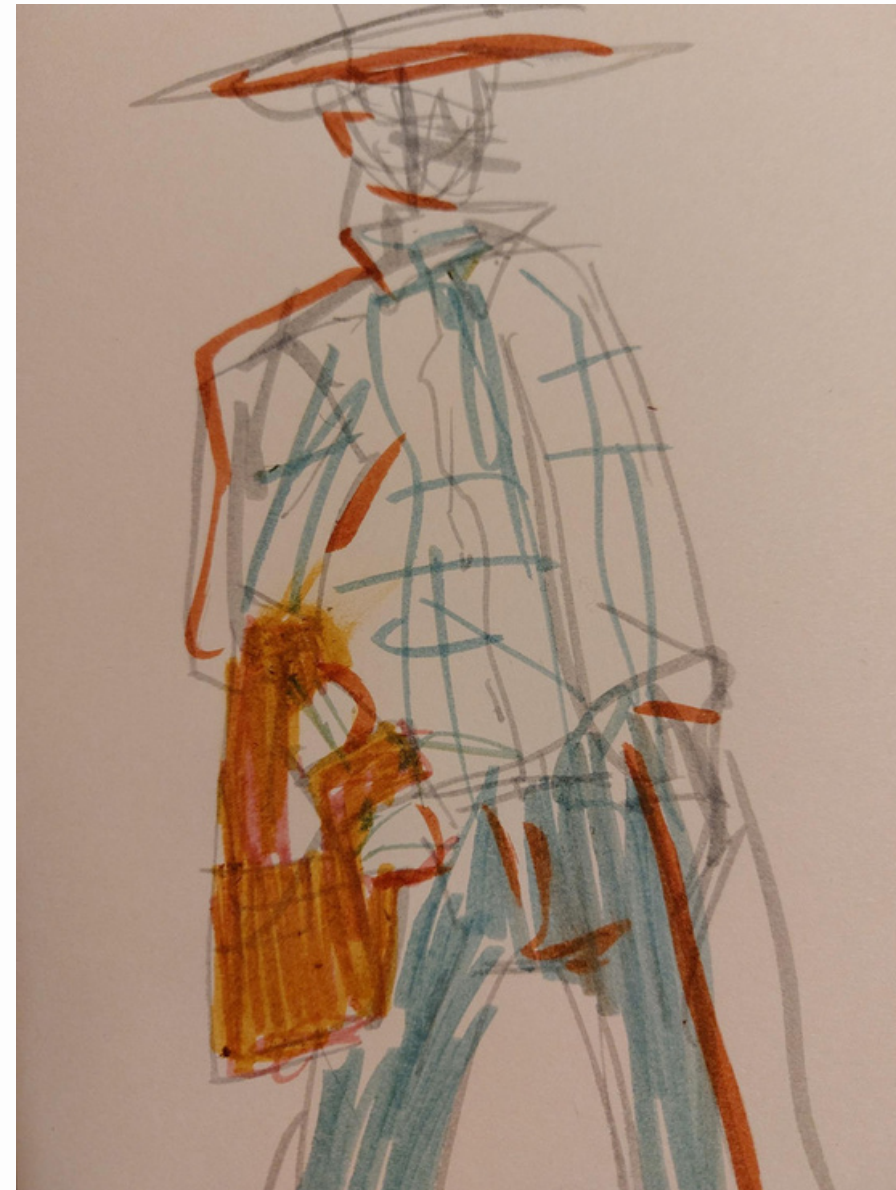
The shape of the bags took my mind to how some ancient Chinese shirts are made from one piece of fabric and nothing goes to waste. Clever cuts save material, time and lessen the environmental impact.

I cut some wide strips of paper and tried folding them in a way that no paper was left over. I have an immense respect towards leather as a material and wanted to be sure of what I was doing.



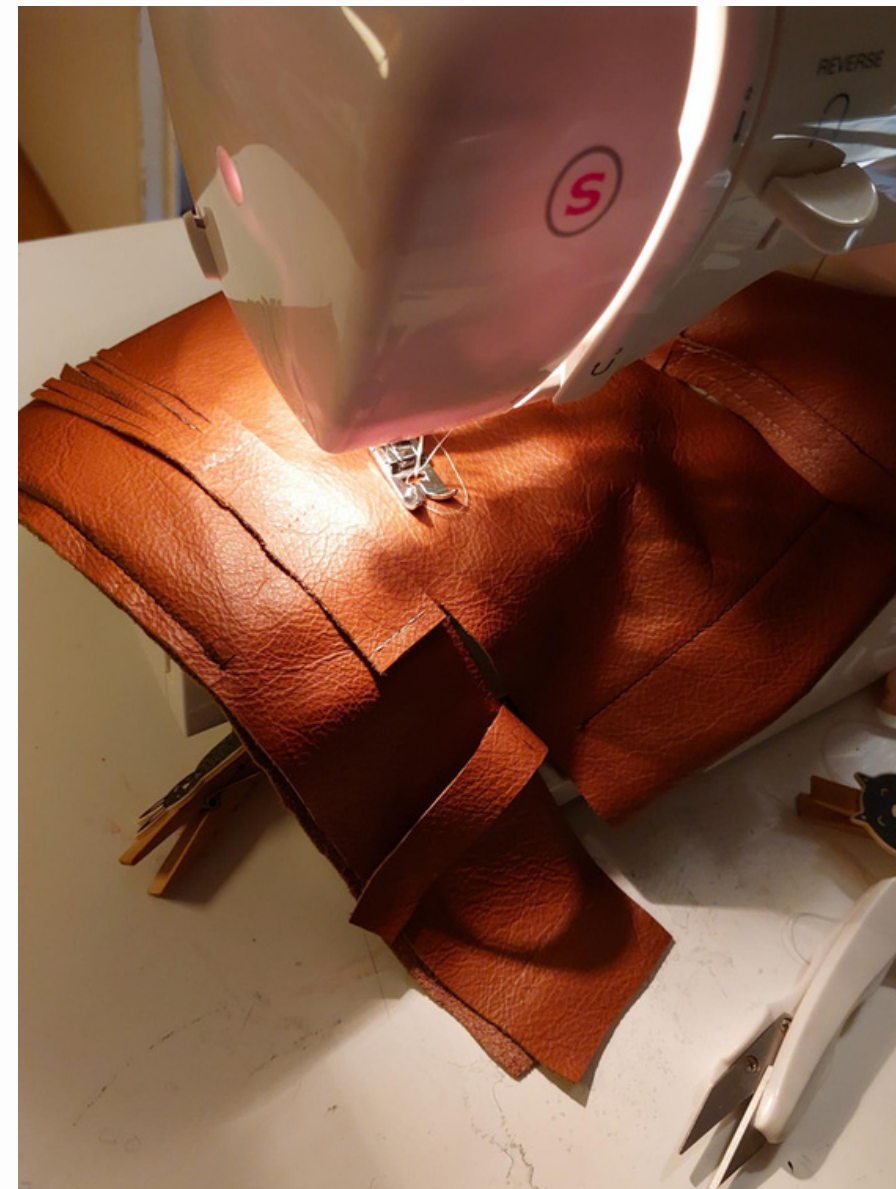
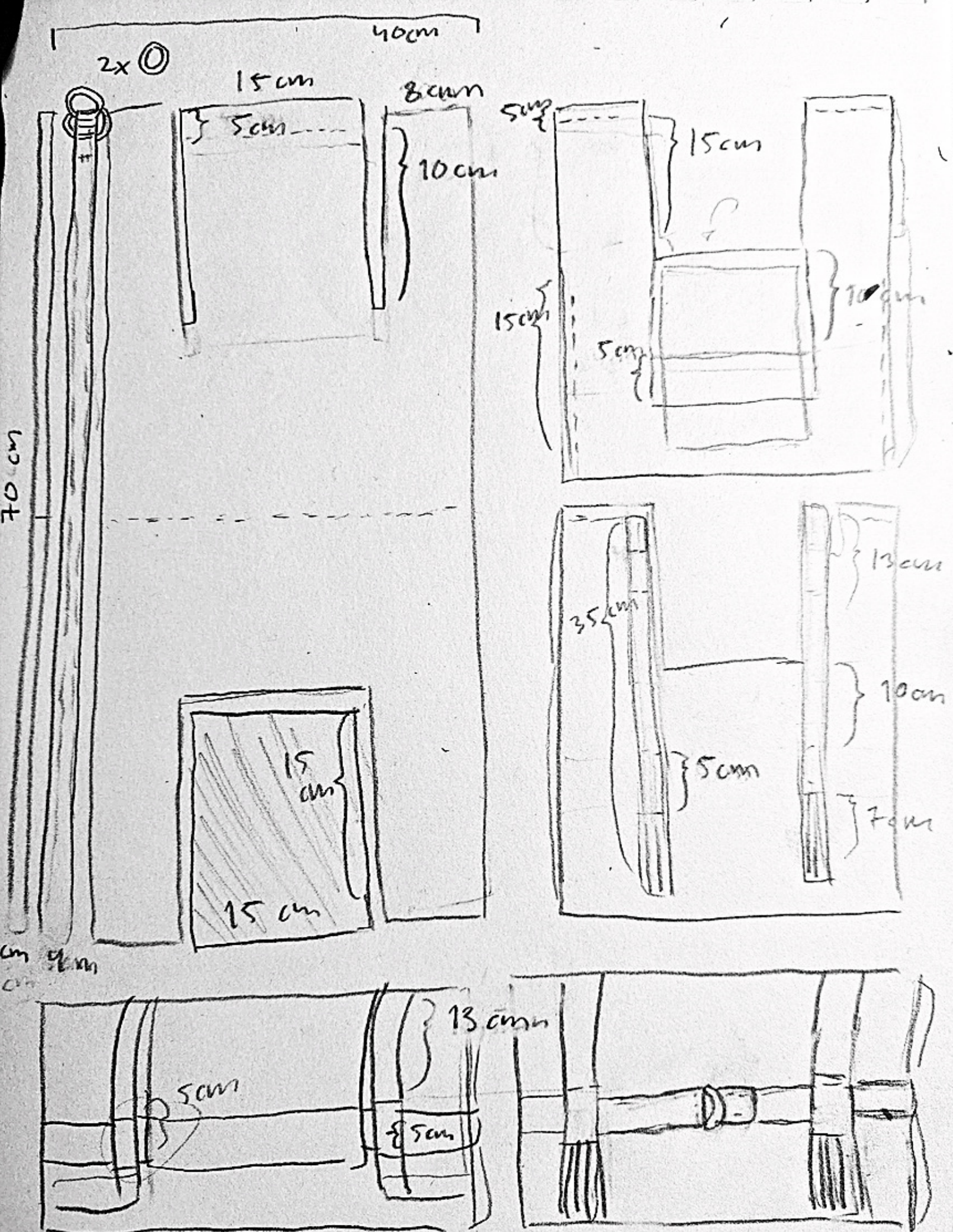


The first initial sketches were done within 10 minutes after the brief had been given and I immersed myself in sketching a cowboy using the bag in different ways. I wanted the bag to look cool and aloof, but pretty at the same time.



SEWING AND SADDLING

This was my first time sewing leather and the fact that everything shows and every cut matters made me nervous. I also don't like math and making patterns with exact measurements, but in the end I managed to make the prototype. My idea was to make the bag from one single piece of leather and the waste in my hand is only caused by some miscalculations and my inexperience with sewing. I'm proud of myself that the pattern actually works! If I made a proper bag, I would probably choose a larger piece, but for my first try I'm extremely pleased with the result.



TO THE STABLES



The prototype made out of cow hide. I had to use metal pieces for the belt, but I would rather use wooden rings.

LAUKKA

I wanted a bag that you could rely on. That you could run with and from there came the Finnish word "laukka", which means gallop. This bag is something that you take on the go. A bag you can change from an evening purse into a bag for small groceries. It gallops with you, it has whimsicality and power. It won't shake you off from its back, it won't slide off your arms.

Saddleback as a brand represents this trust. You choose a companion to saddle up and ride into days to come.



Here are at least four ways that you can assemble Laukka, but you can also use the strap as a belt and attach it to your hip. There is a pocket inside made out of the excess cut of the flap.

FOR US



This is my good friend Sami. Like me he is physically impaired (and good looking!) so I asked him on a whim to be a model for Laukka. I'm so grateful that he agreed to do this small photoshoot and I'm happy to see how the bag actually could work in use.

BY ME, they / them

I was never a crafty person, art was more my thing, but somehow I ended up being a textile student, now a 30-year-old third year with a passion for sustainability, socioeconomic ethics and functionality in design. The environmental impact of my field weighs me down sometimes.

To me textile waste is the most terrible thing.

Leather could be environmentally sustainable if treated right. But to think we use an animal to its end and have abandoned the ingenious ways of using EVERYTHING that comes from it. There is no respect towards the material at all. The life taken and the life of the garment are both made worthless.

I wanted to avoid wasting the life of leather and to create something that could be used in multiple ways and by everyone.

That's why Saddleback is a life I would like to continue with in the future. One hide at a time.

In Helsinki, 30th of June 2023,
Ami Juusela

