

endemic

FAO

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THE LIVING ARCHIVE FOR A WORLD THAT THROWS AWAY TOO MUCH



endemic: something that is, native to, or constantly present within a specific place, group, or region

MY NAME IS BEN LEHMANN. I'M GERMAN, BORN IN THE UNITED STATES, SPENT PART OF MY CHILDHOOD IN CHINA, AND GREW UP IN DÜSSELDORF, GERMANY. LIVING BETWEEN CULTURES FROM AN EARLY AGE SHAPED THE WAY I SEE THE WORLD—WITH **CURIOSITY, OPENNESS,** AND A FASCINATION FOR THE MANY WAYS PEOPLE **CREATE, LIVE, AND SOLVE PROBLEMS.**

I'M A **DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHER,** AND HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE TO TELL STORIES IN PLACES AND COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD. ALONGSIDE THIS, I INTERNATIONALLY **VOLUNTEER AS AN ENGLISH TEACHER,** EXPERIENCES THAT TAUGHT ME JUST AS MUCH AS I WAS ABLE TO TEACH. I ALSO HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF **CO-FOUNDING SEA HABITAT,** A NONPROFIT ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO RESTORING UNDERWATER ALGAE FORESTS AS A NATURAL APPROACH TO CARBON SEQUESTRATION.

TODAY, I SEE DESIGN AS A **CONVERSATION BETWEEN PEOPLE, MATERIALS, AND TIME.** I AM FASCINATED BY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION—HOW **CRAFTSMANSHIP, HERITAGE, AND CONTEMPORARY THINKING** CAN COME TOGETHER TO TELL NEW STORIES. AFTER RECENTLY COMPLETING AN **ARTISANAL LEATHER TRAINING AT SCHOLA IN FLORENCE,** I AM CONTINUING THE JOURNEY OF TURNING A SELF-TAUGHT PASSION INTO A LIFELONG PROFESSION.

THIS PROJECT WAS NEVER JUST ABOUT DESIGNING A BAG, AND CERTAINLY NOT ABOUT CREATING ANOTHER OBJECT FOR THE SAKE OF AESTHETICS. IT BECAME AN OPPORTUNITY TO **QUESTION ASSUMPTIONS, CHALLENGE CONVENTIONS, AND SOLVE FRUSTRATIONS** I HAD ENCOUNTERED IN COUNTLESS EXISTING DESIGNS. I DON'T BELIEVE THERE WILL EVER BE ONE BAG THAT DOES EVERYTHING—BUT I DO BELIEVE THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM TO MAKE SOMETHING MORE **THOUGHTFUL, MORE USEFUL, AND MORE ENDURING.**

FOR ME, DESIGN IS NOT ABOUT HAVING ALL THE ANSWERS. IT IS ABOUT ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS. EVERY PROJECT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO **LEARN, TO REFINE, AND TO DISCOVER** UNEXPECTED CONNECTIONS BETWEEN **CRAFT, CULTURE, AND FUNCTION.**

“If this bag succeeds, I hope it is not because it is finished, but because it demonstrates a way of thinking that will continue to evolve.”



A MODULAR HEIRLOOM TOTE FOR A CULTURE OF LONGEVITY

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The Living Archive is a large modular leather tote designed as a response to contemporary fast fashion and the growing disposability of modern design. Created from **locally sourced Italian vegetable-tanned cattle leather**, the bag explores the relationship between **permanence, function, material honesty**, and **cultural preservation**.

The project challenges the current tendency for functionality to become merely aesthetic rather than genuinely practical. In an era where many products are designed either to visually exaggerate utility or to strip function away entirely in pursuit of minimalism, The Living Archive proposes a return to thoughtful balance: where every detail exists for a purpose, and where beauty emerges from use, construction, and time.

This is not a bag designed to remain new. It is designed to remain meaningful. Its sustainability is not defined solely by material selection, but by ideology: **repairability, replaceability, modularity, transparency**, and **emotional longevity**. The design is intended to evolve alongside its owner, acquiring patina, marks, and memories that become part of its identity.



1/1

- MODULARITY — THREE BAGS, ONE EVOLVING SYSTEM
- CONSTRUCTION — DESIGNED FOR REPAIR, NOT REPLACEMENT
- CRAFT PRESERVATION — SUPPORTING LIVING TRADITIONS THROUGH COLLABORATION



Mood

4

LIVING SURFACES

Every crease, fibre, and mark contributes to a material language that continues to evolve through use.



#0E0E0E PITCH BLACK

#FAFAFA ANGELIC WHITE

THIS PALETTE IS INSPIRED BY THE WOUNAAN NONAM INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY, WHOM I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF DOCUMENTING OFF THE COAST OF BUENAVENTURA, COLOMBIA, IN 2024. THEIR PROFOUND RESPECT FOR THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT AND WAY OF LIVING IN HARMONY WITH IT REVEALED A QUIET BEAUTY ROOTED IN RESTRAINT RATHER THAN EXCESS. THE MUTED MONOCHROMATIC TONES REFLECT THIS SIMPLICITY, HONESTY, AND ENDURING CONNECTION BETWEEN PEOPLE, MATERIALS, AND NATURE.

BEHIND THE SHADES

#0e0e0e
A deep charcoal black inspired by forged steel, burnished hardware, and the shadows found within traditional workshops. It conveys strength, permanence, and an uncompromising commitment to function.

#262626
A midnight grey that softens the severity of black while maintaining a sense of sophistication and authority. It reflects the understated elegance of well-made objects designed to endure.

#4e4e4e
An industrial graphite grey reminiscent of aged metal, stone, and weathered equipment. Practical and grounded, it reinforces the language of utility and honest construction.

#6a6a6a
A refined silver-grey that introduces balance and clarity to the palette. Subtle and versatile, it highlights form, craftsmanship, and material detail without distraction.



BEHIND THE COLORS

#838b8e
A weathered stone grey inspired by aged metal hardware and river-worn surfaces. It introduces a sense of restraint, durability, and quiet modernity while complementing natural leather tones.

#8c8251
A muted olive-gold that recalls military field gear, heritage canvas, and functional design. It communicates utility, permanence, and timeless sophistication.

#6f4c3a
A deep saddle brown reminiscent of vegetable-tanned leather at the height of its patina. Rich, grounding, and tactile, it embodies craftsmanship, longevity, and honest material character.

#a98a71
A warm taupe-beige inspired by untreated hides, natural fibres, and sun-softened earth tones. It brings balance and versatility, creating a refined backdrop that feels both organic and enduring.



BACK IN TIME

The project draws inspiration from the earliest history of bags as essential tools of human mobility.

From prehistoric hide carriers used to solve the first problem of transport, to Ötzi the Iceman’s modular carrying system, Roman military satchels, medieval guild-made pouches, and the refined utility of traditional saddlery, bags have historically been shaped by necessity.

Across centuries, one principle has remained constant:

“the container follows the content.”

Modern bag design often prioritizes trend-driven aesthetics over practical intelligence. The Living Archive seeks to restore the historical relationship between **utility**, **craft**, and **enduring value**.

It proposes a contemporary heirloom object informed by historical carrying systems and designed for **modern movement**, **travel**, and **adaptability**.

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c. 3300 BCE — Ötzi the Iceman
Ötzi, found preserved in the Alps, carried a complete system of bags and containers: a calf-leather belt pouch, a hide backpack on a hazel frame, a birch-bark canister, a deer-hide quiver, and a woven grass mat. His equipment shows that early bags were already specialized by material, function, weight distribution, and access.

Ancient civilizations — Bags become social signals
In Egypt, Mesopotamia, China, Africa, Asia, and the Americas, bags developed beyond utility. They became signs of status, identity, trade, religion, and cultural belonging. Egyptian priests and nobles used decorated pouches; Mesopotamian merchants used containers for goods, valuables, and tablets; Indigenous American and African textile bags encoded community, status, and spiritual meaning.

Classical Greece and Rome — Practical carrying systems
Greek culture often idealized minimal possessions, but merchants and travelers still used pouches and knapsacks. Rome developed the loculus, a leather satchel carried by soldiers. Its strap system may have worked structurally under load, showing how military needs shaped durable bag design.

500–1500 CE — Medieval Europe and the fashion bag
During the Middle Ages, drawstring purses and girdle pouches became common across Europe. Working people used simple functional bags, while the wealthy carried embroidered purses made from silk, wool, gold thread, beads, and gemstones. Bags became visible displays of skill, wealth, and rank.

625 CE — The Sutton Hoo purse
The Sutton Hoo burial in England contained a purse lid made from gold, garnet, and enamel. Though the leather decomposed, the surviving hardware shows that bags could already function as regalia, jewelry, and political symbols.



11th–16th centuries — Guilds and modular carrying

European leather guilds formalized training, quality standards, and craft accountability. Later, the chatelaine emerged as a modular waist system holding keys, purses, scissors, watches, and tools. It solved the problem of access when women’s clothing made hidden pouches impractical.

1790s — The reticule

As neoclassical fashion made women’s dresses slimmer, hidden waist pockets became impossible. The reticule, a small drawstring handbag carried by hand or wrist, replaced them. This marked a major gender split: men gained sewn-in pockets, while women increasingly carried external handbags.

19th century — Industry and travel

Railways, sewing machines, industrial tanning, and mass production transformed bags. Luggage became more common and affordable, while structured leather handbags emerged to meet the needs of travel, urban life, and women’s increasing movement through public space.

1841 — The first luxury handbag collection

Samuel Parkinson commissioned H.J. Cave & Sons to make a coordinated set of leather bags for his wife. This is widely regarded as the beginning of the modern luxury handbag: durable, purpose-specific, coordinated, and status-conscious.

1854 onward — Louis Vuitton and modern luggage

Louis Vuitton introduced flat-topped, stackable trunks suited to railway travel, lighter materials, water-resistant canvas, and secure locks. His son Georges later introduced the LV monogram in 1896, partly to fight counterfeiting.

20th century — The icon era

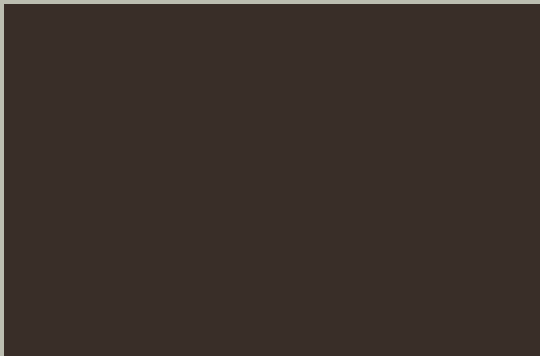
Luxury houses turned bags into cultural symbols. Chanel introduced the 2.55 in 1955, freeing women’s hands with a shoulder chain. Hermès transformed equestrian leatherwork into the Kelly and Birkin. Gucci, Prada, Roberta di Camerino, Fendi, Dior, and Bottega Veneta each created bags that became recognizable through shape, material, craft, celebrity, or brand codes.

Core lesson

Across history, bags have always followed the same principles: the container follows the content, material must serve function, craft quality creates lasting value, and the story behind a bag becomes part of the object itself.



THE MARKET DEMONSTRATES THAT CONSUMERS VALUE TIMELESS MATERIALS AND FUNCTIONAL SIMPLICITY. THE LIVING ARCHIVE BUILDS UPON THESE STRENGTHS WHILE INTRODUCING MODULARITY, REPAIRABILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY AS THE NEXT EVOLUTION OF ENDURING LEATHER DESIGN.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

• **Utility is timeless**
The strongest products rely on simple, functional silhouettes that have remained relevant for decades rather than following seasonal trends.

• **Material is the primary aesthetic**
Natural leather, canvas, and visible wear become the defining visual language, allowing the material to age rather than deteriorate.

• **Heritage builds desirability**
Military, workwear, and artisanal references communicate authenticity and durability without excessive branding.

• **Simplicity improves longevity**
Reduced construction complexity creates products that are easier to repair, manufacture, and live with over time.

• Most products prioritise appearance over adaptability
While visually compelling, few designs evolve with changing user needs through modular or interchangeable components.

OPPORTUNITIES

Repair-first construction
Most existing bags are difficult or expensive to repair. Designing replaceable high-wear components increases product lifespan.

Modular functionality
A removable lining and interchangeable accessories allow one product to serve multiple purposes, reducing ownership redundancy.

Transparency of craftsmanship
Few brands communicate where materials originate or who produced them. Visible provenance strengthens emotional value.

Design for ageing
Rather than hiding wear, materials and construction should encourage a desirable patina that records use over time.

Local collaboration
Integrating regionally produced textiles and artisanal components creates cultural value that mass-produced products cannot replicate.

- Weaknesses Observed**
- Limited adaptability after purchase.
 - Permanently fixed interiors reduce versatility.
 - High-wear components are rarely replaceable.
 - Decorative details often add complexity without improving function.
 - Sustainability is frequently communicated through materials rather than construction logic.
 - Most bags solve one use case instead of evolving with the user.

Design Principles Informed by This Analysis

- Timeless over trend-driven.
- Repair before replacement.
- Function creates aesthetics.
- Materials should improve with age.
- One object should fulfil multiple roles.
- Craftsmanship should remain visible, not concealed.

a blank canvas upon which material, maker, and owner collectively paint a unique story.



1/2



TEXTURE

REFINED, AND
QUIETLY TACTILE.

TONE

COLD WITH QUITE
DEPTH

THICKNESS

1.8MM

FINISH

UNFINISHED, PREPPED TO DYE

EMOTION

CALM, HONEST, AND ENDURING. A MATERIAL THAT
INVITES TOUCH AND REWARDS TIME.

naturally darkened through process,
revealing the character hidden within the
hide.



2/2



TEXTURE

DENSE, REFINED,
SOFTLY GRAINED.

tone

DEEP CHARCOAL,
SUBTLE VARIATION.

THICKNESS

2.2MM

FINISH

NATURALLY DARKENED, REVEALING DEPTH THROUGH USE
AND PROCESS.

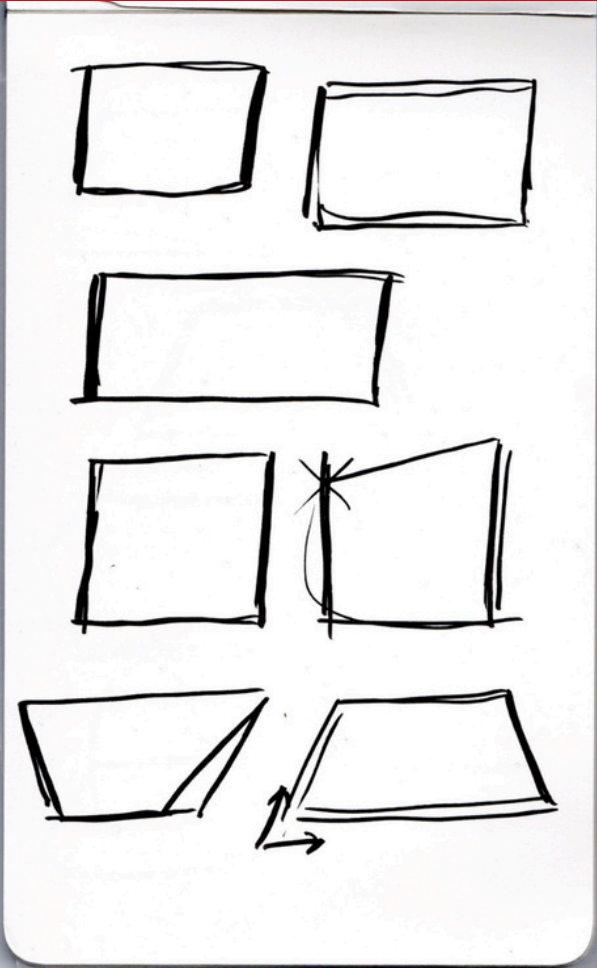
EMOTION

CONFIDENT AND UNCOMPROMISING. DESIGNED TO AGE
WITH DIGNITY.

Archive

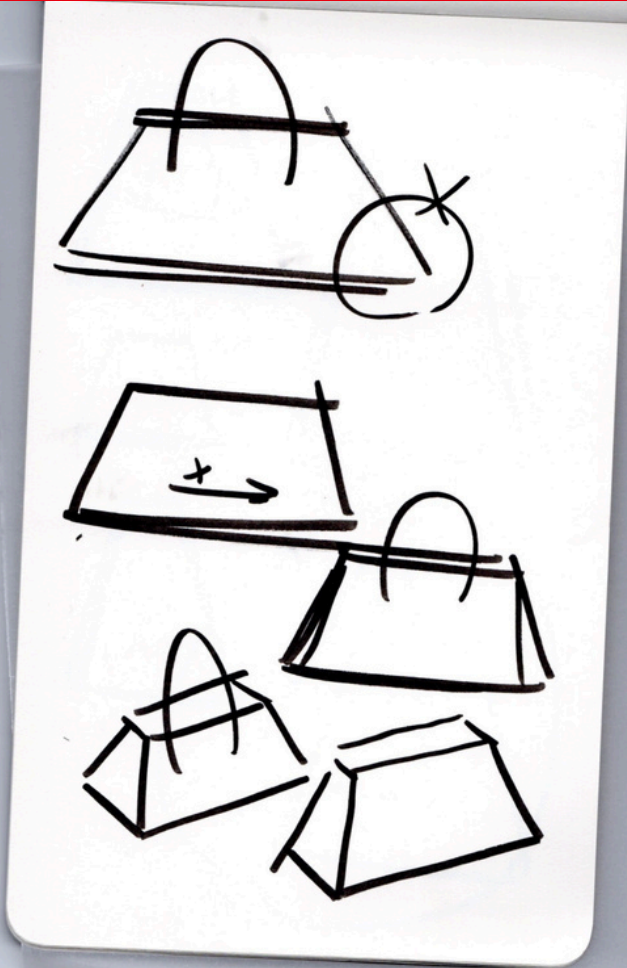
MODULAR ARCHITECTURE

Three bags from one system
Interchangeable drop-set interior
Adjustable carry configurations
Standardized component language
Distributed attachment points
User-defined functionality
Adaptable ownership model



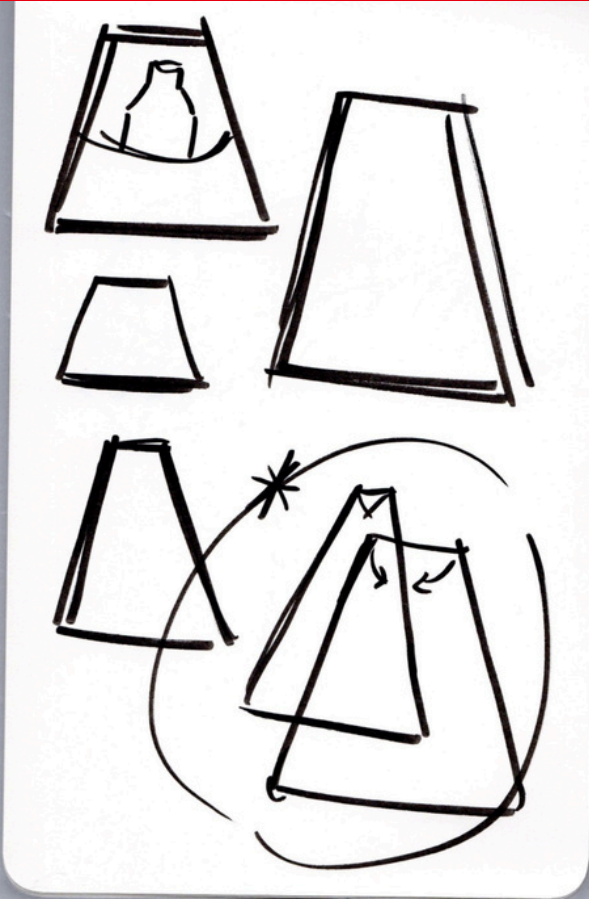
FUNCTIONAL ADAPTABILITY

Secondary bag integration
Dedicated equipment inserts
Travel-ready versatility
Backpack conversion
Luggage attachment capability
Everyday to expedition
Simplicity through flexibility



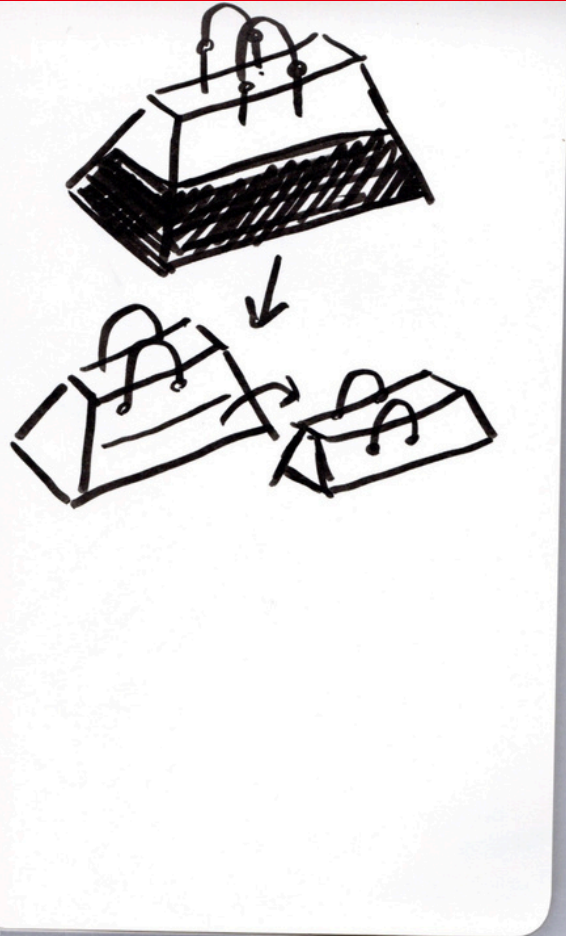
REPAIR-FIRST

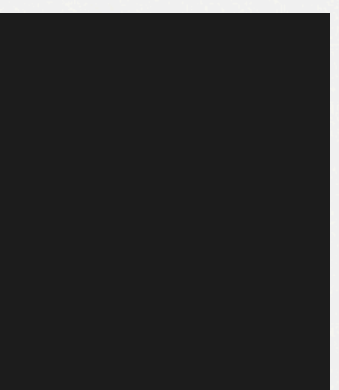
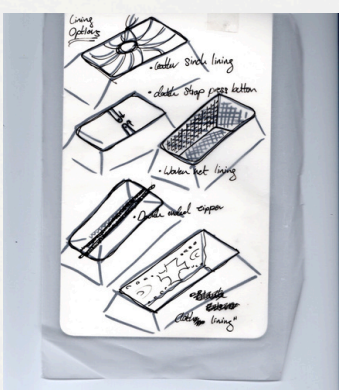
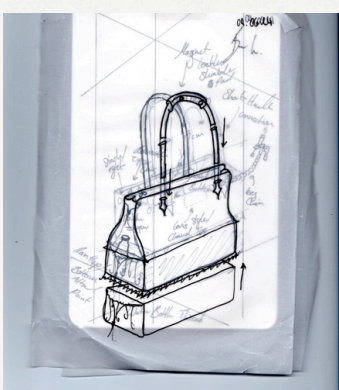
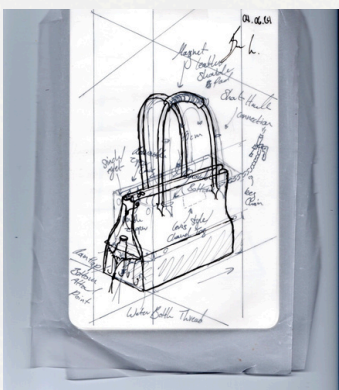
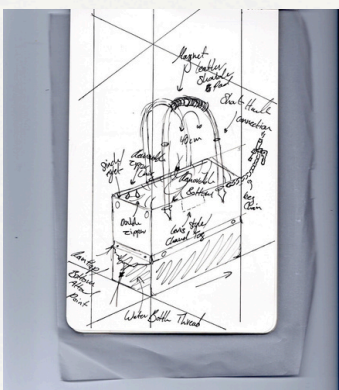
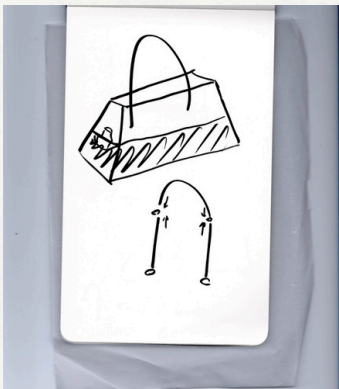
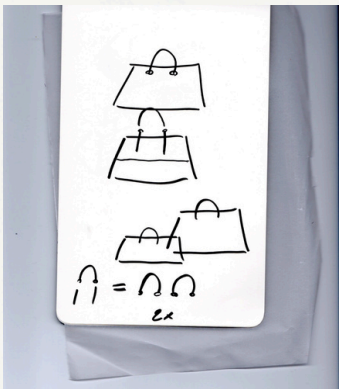
Replaceable base panel
Modular hardware system
Standardized strap widths
Reduced component count
Mechanical over permanent fixing
Designed for maintenance
Extended service life



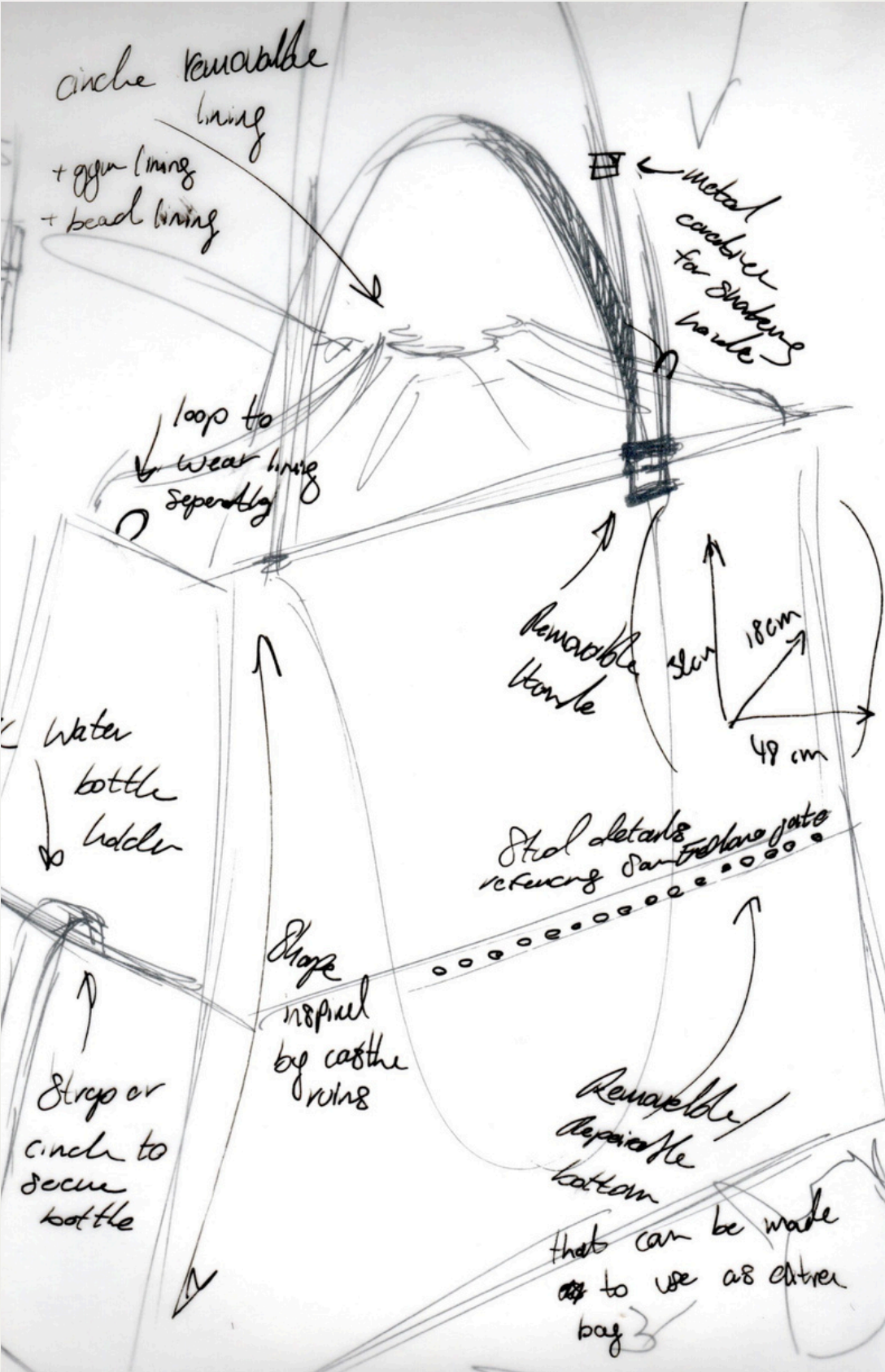
SUSTAINABLE IDEALOGY

Five-panel primary body
Optimized material yield
Reduced cutting waste
Simplified assembly
Lower production energy
Easier disassembly
Improved recyclability





1/2



2/2

THE LIVING ARCHIVE EXTENDS SUSTAINABILITY BEYOND MATERIAL LIFECYCLE BY INCORPORATING **COLLABORATION WITH ENDANGERED CRAFT TRADITIONS**.

SELECT INTERNAL ELEMENTS MAY BE CREATED USING HANDMADE TEXTILES OR COMPONENTS SOURCED FROM INDIVIDUAL ARTISANS PRESERVING REGIONAL MAKING KNOWLEDGE

EXAMPLES INCLUDE HANDWOVEN OR HAND-EMBROIDERED TEXTILES INTEGRATED INTO THE REMOVABLE LINING, OR SMALL CRAFTED DETAILS THAT CARRY CULTURAL AUTHORSHIP.

THESE ELEMENTS ARE NOT ONLY DECORATIVE ADDITIONS, **BUT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS THAT TRUE SUSTAINABILITY ALSO INCLUDES SUSTAINING HUMAN KNOWLEDGE**, INTERGENERATIONAL SKILL, AND REGIONAL CRAFT IDENTITY.

THE BAG BECOMES BOTH A FUNCTIONAL OBJECT AND A VESSEL FOR PRESERVING CULTURAL MEMORY.

WHILE TRAVELING THROUGH MALTA, I PURCHASED THIS **HANDMADE TABLECLOTH** DIRECTLY FROM AN ARTISAN WHO HAS DEDICATED **48 YEARS TO PRESERVING THIS TRADITIONAL CRAFT**. HE SHARED THAT HE HAS **NO SUCCESSOR**, MAKING THIS KNOWLEDGE INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE TO DISAPPEARING. WITH HIS PERMISSION, **REPURPOSING** THE TEXTILE INTO THE LIVING ARCHIVE AIMS TO CELEBRATE HIS CRAFTSMANSHIP AND DEMONSTRATE HOW CONTEMPORARY DESIGN CAN HELP BRING **RENEWED VISIBILITY TO ENDANGERED TRADITIONS**.



1/1



MATERIAL		HAND-STITCHED COTTON TABLE CLOTH	
SOURCE		MARSAXLOKK MARKET, MALTA	
WEIGHT		164G	FUNCTION
			SYMBOLIC LINING
COLOR	MOOD		
WHITE	ANGELIC		

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, BAGS AND PERSONAL ACCESSORIES HAVE OFTEN FUNCTIONED AS SYMBOLS OF WEALTH, STATUS, AND SOCIAL DISTINCTION. BRANDING AND VISIBLE LOGOS CONTINUE THIS TRADITION TODAY, USING PRODUCTS AS MARKERS OF PURCHASING POWER AND EXCLUSIVITY. THIS PROJECT PROPOSES AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH, WHERE STATUS IS COMMUNICATED NOT THROUGH OVERT BRANDING BUT THROUGH **THE VALUES EMBODIED WITHIN THE OBJECT ITSELF.**

THE BAG ADOPTS AN ANTI-LOGO PHILOSOPHY, ALLOWING ITS CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL CHOICES, REPAIRABILITY, AND ADAPTABILITY TO BECOME ITS DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS. **RATHER THAN SIGNALLING OWNERSHIP OF A PARTICULAR BRAND, IT SIGNALS A COMMITMENT TO THOUGHTFUL CONSUMPTION, LONGEVITY, AND RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL.** THE VISIBLE MODULARITY AND MULTIFUNCTIONALITY OF THE DESIGN COMMUNICATE THAT THE OWNER VALUES UTILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND STEWARDSHIP OVER DISPOSABILITY.

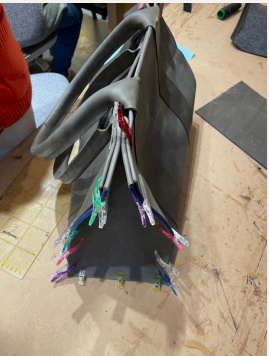
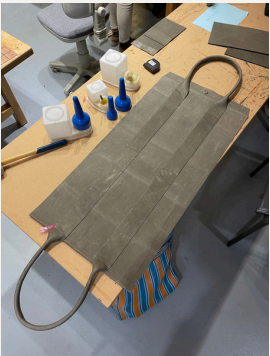
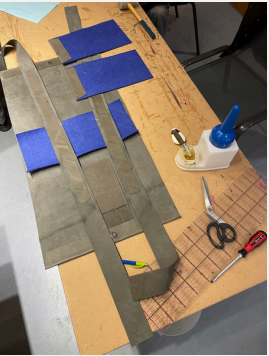
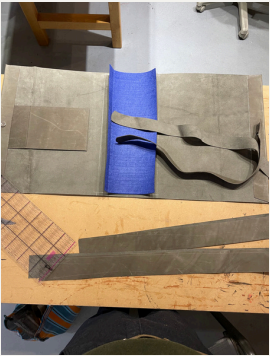
IN THIS WAY, THE BAG BECOMES A **POSITIVE STATUS SYMBOL**—ONE THAT CELEBRATES CARE FOR RESOURCES, APPRECIATION FOR CRAFTSMANSHIP, AND A WILLINGNESS TO INVEST IN PRODUCTS DESIGNED FOR LONG-TERM USE. BY MAKING THESE VALUES VISIBLE, THE DESIGN HAS THE POTENTIAL TO FOSTER RECOGNITION BETWEEN **LIKE-MINDED INDIVIDUALS, CREATING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY** AROUND SHARED PRINCIPLES RATHER THAN SHARED BRANDS. THE OBJECT THEREFORE SERVES NOT ONLY AS A PRACTICAL TOOL FOR TRAVEL, BUT ALSO AS A QUIET EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY.

“The goal is not to remove status from the object, but to redefine what is considered worthy of status in the first place.”



Clay beige
#a98a71

Midnight gray
#262626

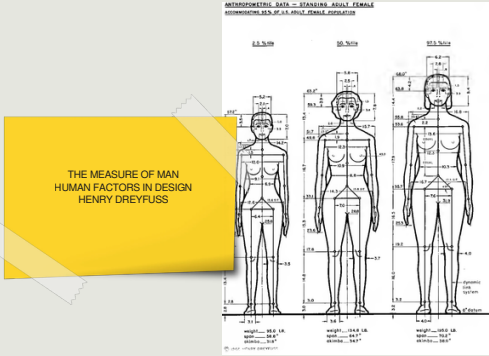


MEASURING THE PROTOTYPE TO FIND
IDEAL RATIOS

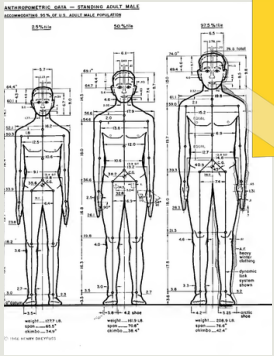
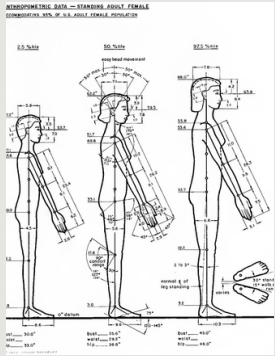


UNDERSTANDING THE CURVATURE AND
RESTRAINTS OF THE LEATHER

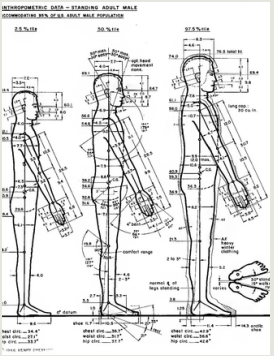




THE MEASURE OF MAN
HUMAN FACTORS IN DESIGN
HENRY DREYFUSS



USING ANTHROPOMETRIC DATA OF THE
STANDING FEMALE AND MALE TO CREATE
A ERGONOMIC BAG PATTERN



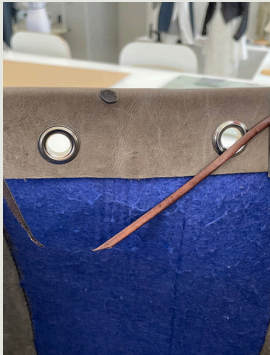
MEASURING SEVERAL LUGGAGES TO FIND
AN AVERAGE DISTANCE BETWEEN
HANDLES



IDENTIFYING POINTS OF WEAR AND
WEAKNESS ON PROTOTYPE



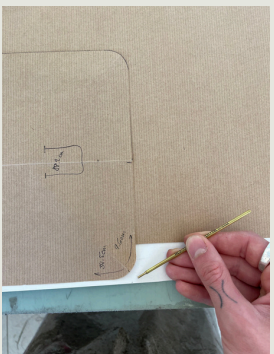
BEGINNING THE PATTERN MAKING
PROCESS

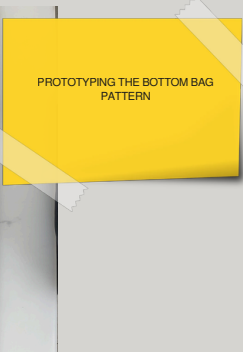


REFINING THE SPACING OF THE SNAP
BUTTONS



SHIFTING AROUND AND OPTIMIZING THE
PATTERN TO REDUCE LEATHER WASTE







CHECKING THE THICKNESS OF THE LEATHER



BURNISHING THE EDGES USING TOKONOLE



PUNCHING THE FUNCTIONAL SLOTS



STITCHING THE MAIN BODY



PRECISION IN PROCESS

Where research, experimentation, and craftsmanship converge into the first complete expression of the design.

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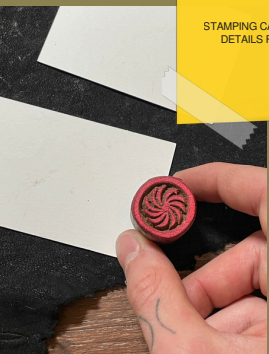
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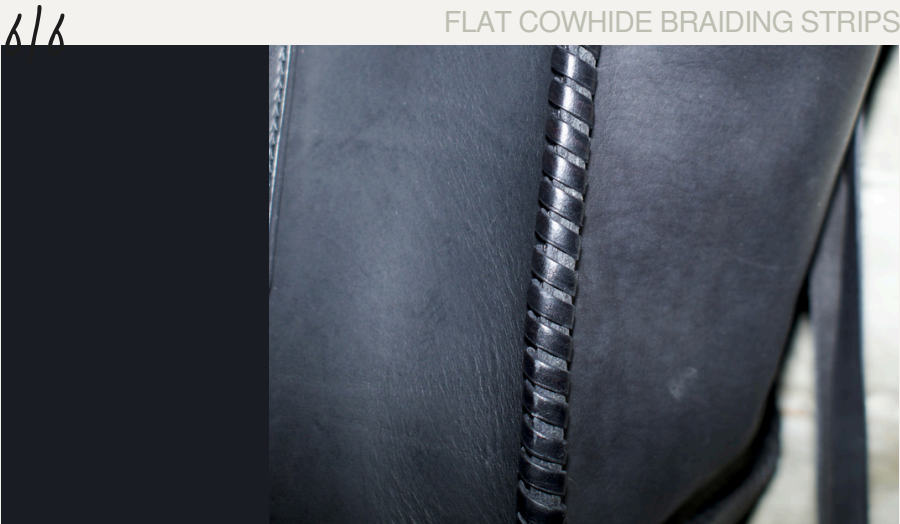


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Locally sourced, naturally expressive materials form the foundation of the collection.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE BAG IS ACHIEVED THROUGH A COMBINATION OF DURABILITY, REPAIRABILITY, MODULARITY, MATERIAL EFFICIENCY, AND REDUCED OWNERSHIP REDUNDANCY. RATHER THAN RELYING ON A SINGLE SUSTAINABLE MATERIAL, THE DESIGN APPLIES CIRCULAR DESIGN PRINCIPLES THROUGHOUT THE PRODUCT LIFECYCLE. ACCORDING TO THE ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION, EXTENDING PRODUCT LIFE AND KEEPING MATERIALS IN USE ARE KEY STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

MATERIAL SELECTION

LEATHER WAS SELECTED FOR ITS DURABILITY, REPAIRABILITY, AND ABILITY TO AGE GRACEFULLY OVER TIME. WHILE LEATHER CARRIES A HIGHER INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT THAN MANY SYNTHETIC ALTERNATIVES, ITS LONGEVITY CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE REPLACEMENT FREQUENCY. THIS IS PARTICULARLY RELEVANT IN A MARKET WHERE CLOTHING AND TEXTILE PRODUCTION HAS DOUBLED IN RECENT DECADES WHILE AVERAGE PRODUCT USE HAS DECREASED BY ALMOST 40%.

CONSTRUCTION EFFICIENCY

THE MAIN BODY OF THE BAG IS CONSTRUCTED FROM ONLY FIVE LEATHER PANELS, WHILE THE REMOVABLE BASE CONSISTS OF THREE PIECES, ACCESSORY POCKETS OF TWO PIECES, AND HANDLES OF A SINGLE PIECE. LARGE, UNCOMPLICATED PATTERN SHAPES IMPROVE MATERIAL YIELD, REDUCE CUTTING WASTE, AND MINIMIZE PRODUCTION TIME. FEWER COMPONENTS ALSO REDUCE STITCHING OPERATIONS, ASSEMBLY COMPLEXITY, AND POTENTIAL FAILURE POINTS.

REPAIRABILITY AND LIFESPAN EXTENSION

THE REMOVABLE BASE PANEL TARGETS THE AREA OF HIGHEST WEAR AND ALLOWS REPLACEMENT WITHOUT DISCARDING THE ENTIRE PRODUCT. THIS SIGNIFICANTLY EXTENDS THE USABLE LIFESPAN OF THE BAG AND REDUCES MATERIAL CONSUMPTION ASSOCIATED WITH FULL-PRODUCT REPLACEMENT. BY ISOLATING WEAR TO REPLACEABLE COMPONENTS, THE DESIGN SUPPORTS LONG-TERM OWNERSHIP AND REPAIR.

MODULARITY AND OWNERSHIP REDUCTION

THE REMOVABLE LINING FUNCTIONS AS AN INDEPENDENT SECONDARY BAG, WHILE THE BASE CAN ALSO BE REPURPOSED AS A STANDALONE CARRY SOLUTION. ADDITIONAL INSERTS CAN BE DEVELOPED FOR SPECIALIZED USES, EXTENDING FUNCTIONALITY WITHOUT REQUIRING NEW PRODUCTS.

“The goal is not to remove status from the object, but to redefine what is considered worthy of status in the first place.”



Midnight gray
#262626



Silver gray
#6a6a6a

Standardized Components

The handle system uses a single standardized webbing width across all handles and hardware interfaces. This reduces the number of unique components required, simplifies manufacturing, and makes future repair or replacement more accessible. Standardization also improves compatibility across accessories and future product developments.

Resource-Efficient Utility

The exterior attachment system increases carrying capacity without introducing dedicated hardware. Existing straps and attachment points can secure items such as blankets, jackets, sports equipment, or luggage-pass systems. By enabling multiple functions from the same components, the design maximizes utility while minimizing material use.

Plastic-Free Construction

The bag eliminates the use of synthetic reinforcement and filler materials commonly found in leather goods, including Salpa, TNT reinforcement fabrics, microfiber backing materials, and plastic structural components. This reduces reliance on petroleum-based materials and simplifies end-of-life disassembly. Although this approach increases material and manufacturing costs, these costs are partially offset through simplified construction, reduced component count, and a lower number of production processes. The result is a product that prioritizes material integrity and longevity over cost-driven material substitution.

“Rather than hiding synthetic materials beneath a natural exterior, the design commits to material honesty throughout the product.”

Circular Design Principles

The design aligns with circular economy objectives by prioritizing repair, reuse, adaptability, and long-term durability. The European Environment Agency identifies repair, refurbishment, and product-life extension as essential strategies for reducing resource consumption. Every component within the bag is required to serve multiple purposes, ensuring that additional material use is justified by increased functionality. Through this approach, one adaptable system is capable of becoming three distinct carrying solutions, delivering greater utility with fewer resources.

Timeless Aesthetic

The bag adopts a simple rectangular tote-inspired form that has remained relevant across generations. By prioritizing proportion, utility, and material quality over decorative styling, the design avoids becoming tied to a particular era or fashion cycle, supporting longer product ownership and continued use.

Anti-Trend Design

Rather than responding to short-lived trends, the design focuses on enduring user needs. Its value is derived from functionality, adaptability, and longevity rather than seasonal aesthetics. This reduces the likelihood of premature replacement driven by changing fashion preferences.

Endemic Design

The project embraces the concept of endemic design by drawing inspiration from local materials, production methods, and cultural contexts. Wherever possible, materials should be sourced and manufactured within the region of use, reducing transportation impacts while strengthening local supply chains. The aesthetic and functional qualities of the bag are also informed by local environments and lifestyles, creating a product that is both environmentally and culturally connected to its place of origin.

Craft Conservation

The consolidation of global manufacturing has placed significant pressure on traditional craft industries, causing many specialist skills and regional production methods to decline. By intentionally incorporating locally produced materials and collaborating with small-scale artisans, the project supports the continued viability of these practices. This approach recognizes craftsmanship as a cultural resource that requires active participation and economic support to survive, positioning the product as a vehicle for both environmental and cultural sustainability.

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 12: ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

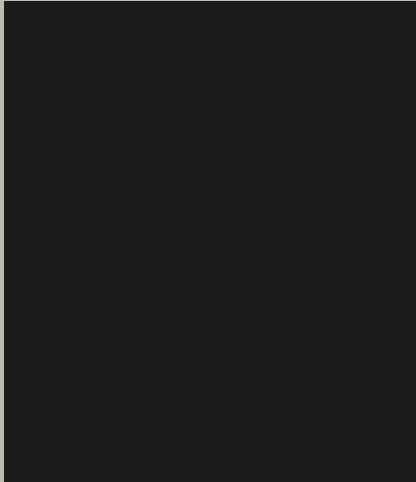
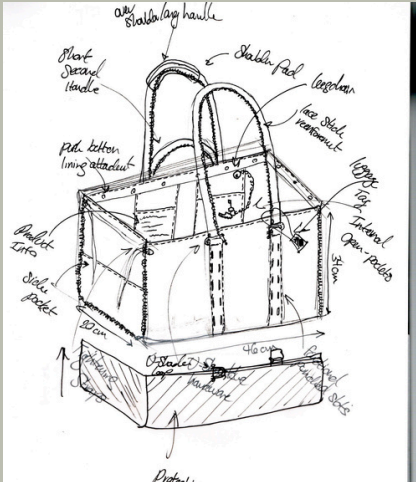
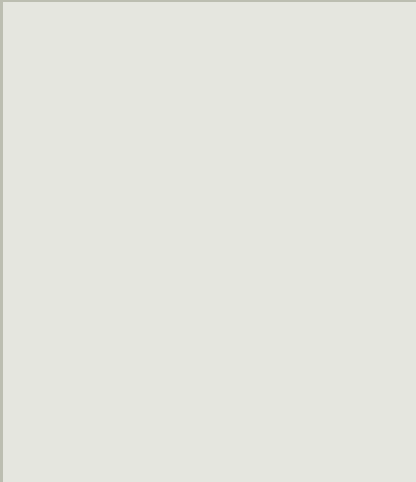
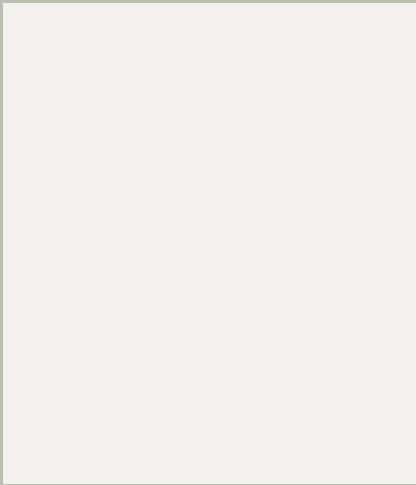
“THE GOAL IS NOT TO CONSUME SUSTAINABLY, BUT TO CONSUME LESS.”

THE LIVING ARCHIVE IS POSITIONED WITHIN THE GROWING PREMIUM AND **LUXURY SUSTAINABILITY MARKET**, WHERE CONSUMERS ARE INCREASINGLY SEEKING PRODUCTS THAT COMBINE **DURABILITY, FUNCTIONALITY, AND AUTHENTIC VALUES**. RATHER THAN COMPETING THROUGH SEASONAL TRENDS OR BRAND-DRIVEN CONSUMPTION, THE PRODUCT OFFERS LONG-TERM VALUE THROUGH MODULARITY, REPAIRABILITY, AND MULTIFUNCTIONALITY.

ITS SIMPLE CONSTRUCTION, STANDARDIZED COMPONENTS, AND REDUCED PART COUNT CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EFFICIENT PRODUCTION DESPITE THE USE OF HIGH-QUALITY NATURAL MATERIALS. THE MODULAR ARCHITECTURE ALSO ENABLES **FUTURE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT** THROUGH INTERCHANGEABLE INSERTS, ACCESSORIES, REPLACEMENT COMPONENTS, AND REGIONALLY SPECIFIC MATERIAL VARIATIONS, **EXTENDING BOTH PRODUCT LIFESPAN AND COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL**.

THE DESIGN'S VERSATILITY ALLOWS IT TO SERVE MULTIPLE USER GROUPS, INCLUDING **DAILY COMMUTERS, TRAVELERS, OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS, AND SUSTAINABILITY-CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS**. BY FUNCTIONING AS SEVERAL CARRYING SOLUTIONS WITHIN A SINGLE SYSTEM, THE PRODUCT REDUCES OWNERSHIP REDUNDANCY WHILE INCREASING PERCEIVED VALUE FOR THE USER.

BEYOND FUNCTIONALITY, THE PROJECT OFFERS A **COMPELLING NARRATIVE** CENTERED ON LOCALITY, CRAFT CONSERVATION, AND RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION. THIS CREATES OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN BOTH LUXURY AND NICHE MARKETS, WHERE CONSUMERS INCREASINGLY **PURCHASE** PRODUCTS NOT ONLY FOR UTILITY, BUT ALSO FOR THE **VALUES THEY REPRESENT**. AS A RESULT, THE LIVING ARCHIVE DEMONSTRATES STRONG POTENTIAL AS A COMMERCIALY VIABLE PRODUCT THAT BALANCES **DESIRABILITY, DURABILITY, USABILITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY**.



THE LIVING ARCHIVE ASKS A SIMPLE QUESTION:

WHAT IF A BAG WERE DESIGNED NOT TO BE REPLACED, BUT TO BE CONTINUED? IN A CULTURE INCREASINGLY SHAPED BY SPEED, DISPOSABILITY, AND TREND DEPENDENCY, THIS PROJECT OFFERS AN ALTERNATIVE.

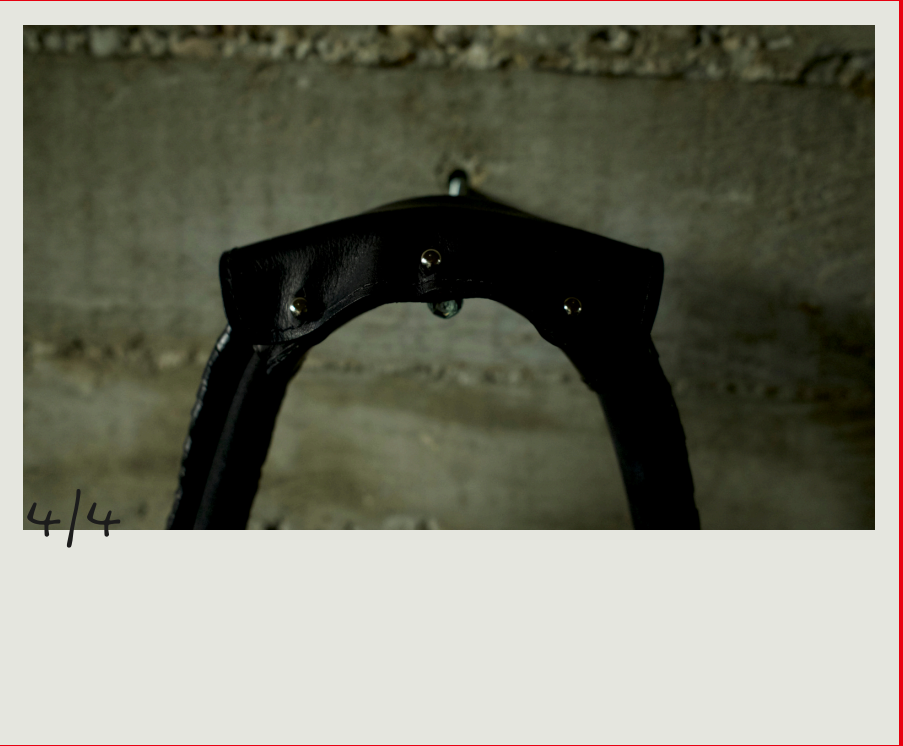
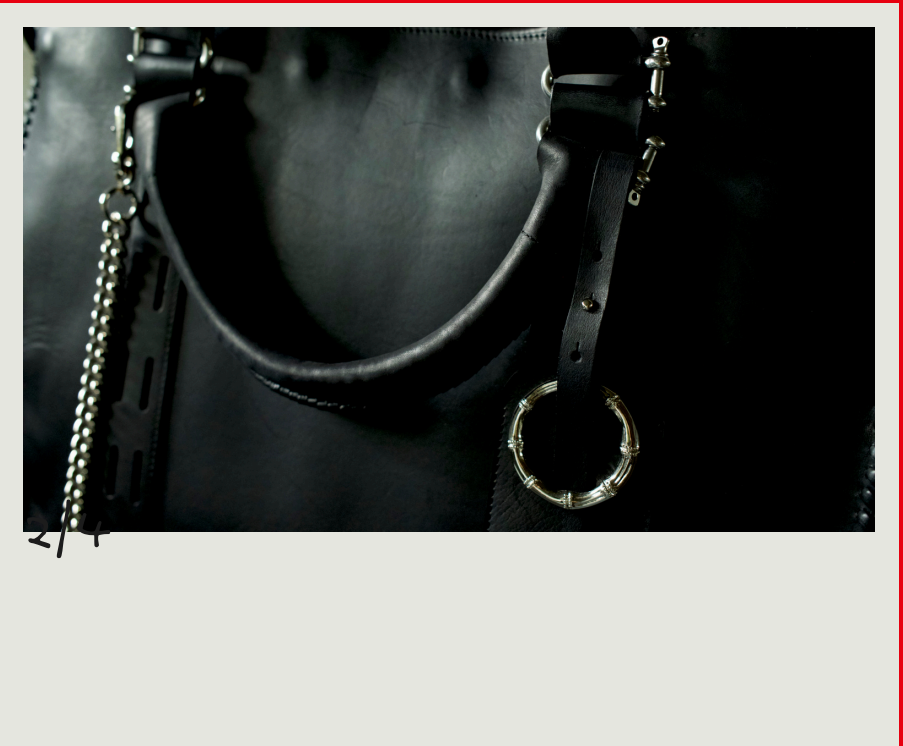
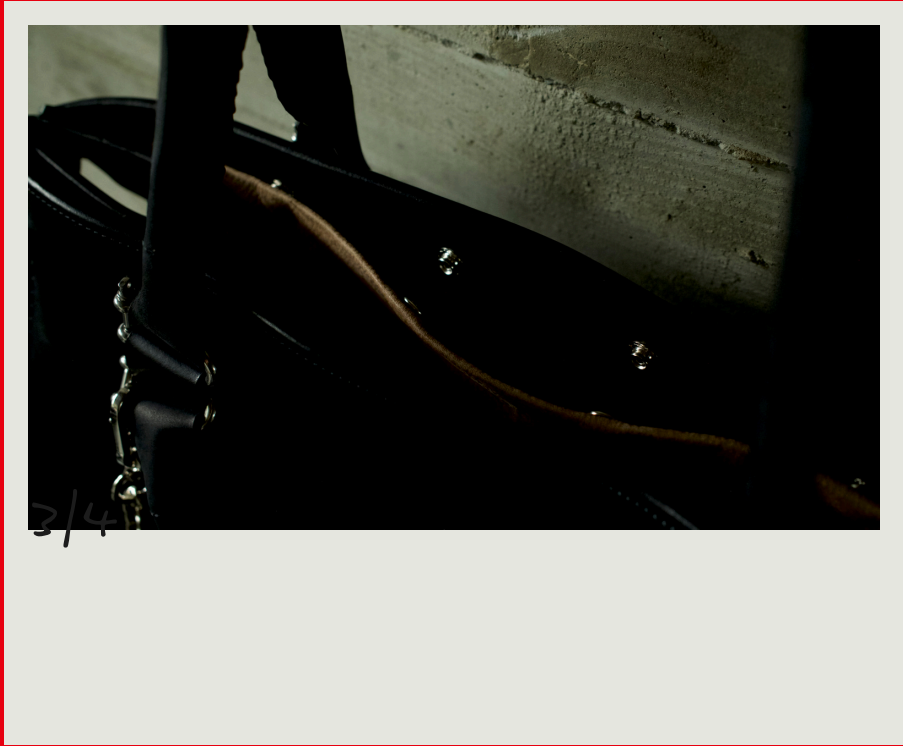
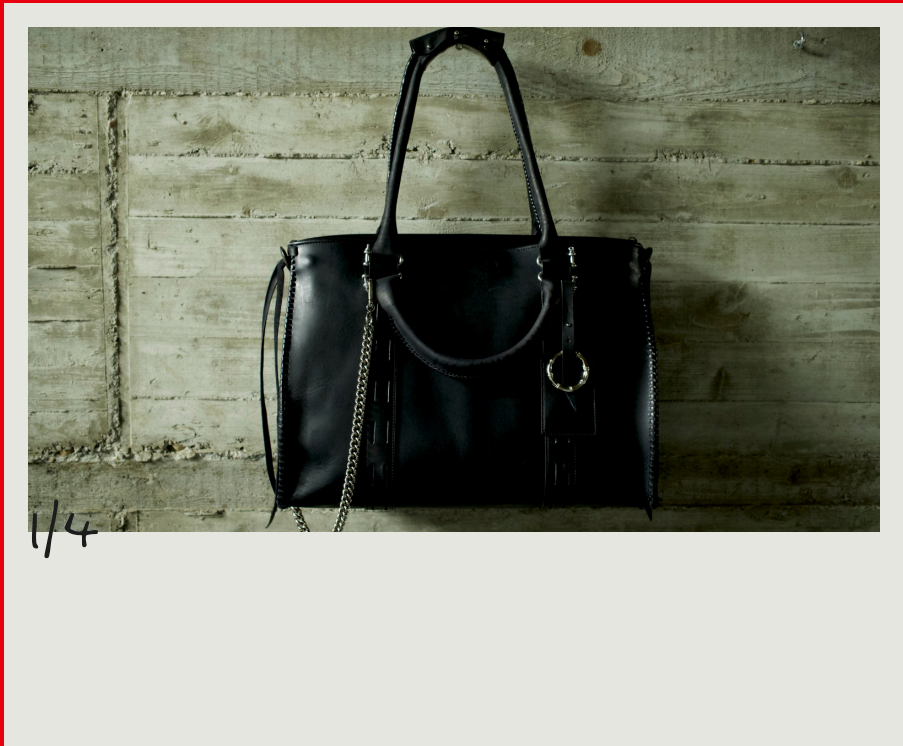
A BAG THAT CHANGES WITH TIME.

A BAG THAT CARRIES BOTH OBJECTS AND STORIES.

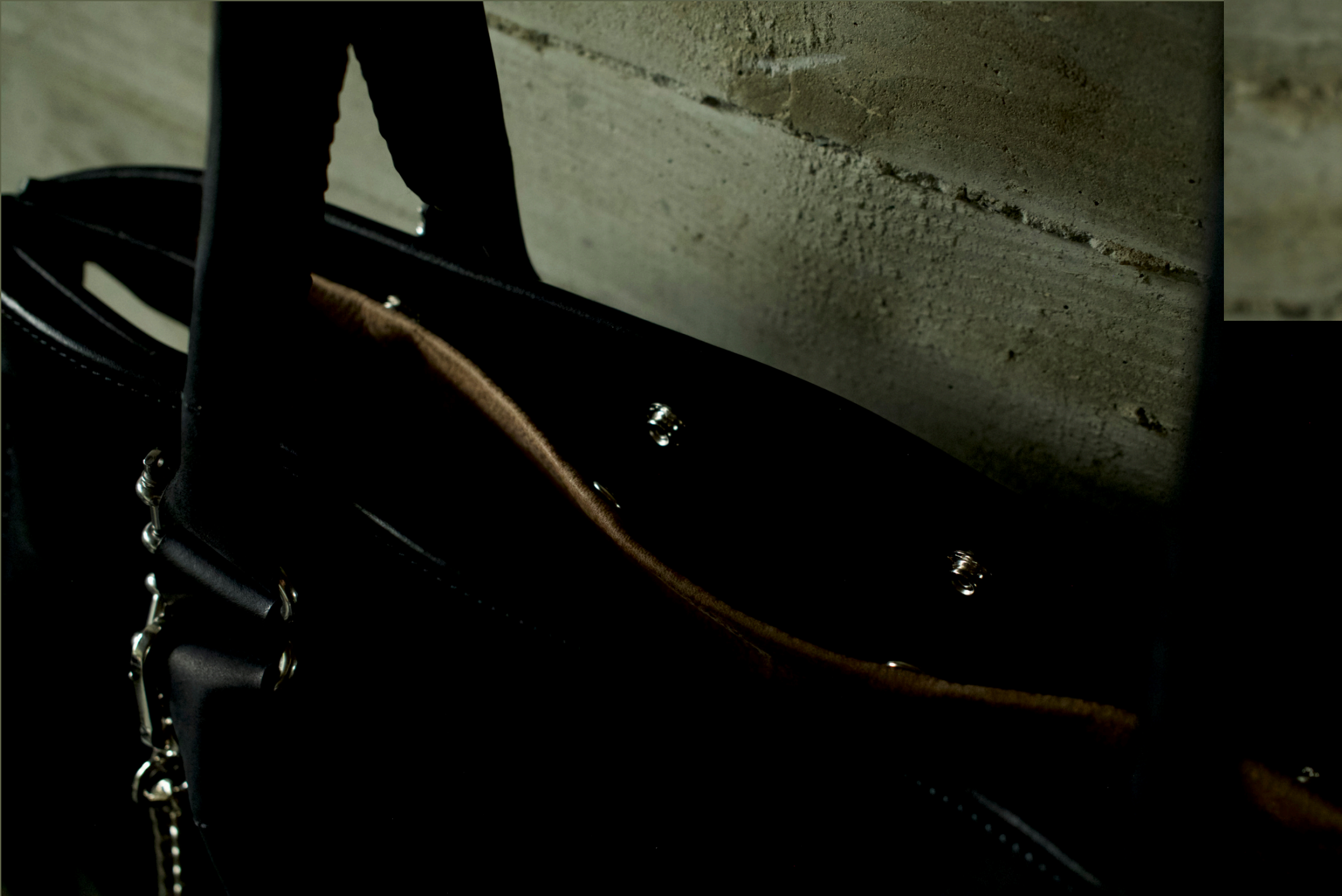
A BAG THAT BECOMES MORE VALUABLE THROUGH USE.

NOT A PRODUCT OF FASHION.

A COMPANION FOR LIFE.















endemic

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endemic: something that is, native to, or constantly present within a specific place, group, or region