

THE LEGACY OF STRENGTH

CONCEPT STATEMENT

Where heritage becomes strength, it becomes design.

Kanjogera: The Legacy of Strength is a sustainable leather couture collection inspired by Rwandan cultural heritage and the historical legacy of Kanjogera, a powerful Queen Mother.

The collection transforms traditional Rwandan identity into contemporary luxury fashion by reinterpreting cultural symbols such as Umushanana, royal motifs, and heritage aesthetics into structured leather couture garments.

It positions leather not only as a material, but as a medium for storytelling, identity, and cultural preservation.

INTRODUCTION

This collection explores the transformation of Rwandan heritage into modern sustainable fashion. It bridges the gap between tradition and innovation by reimagining cultural identity through leather couture design.

Inspired by the strength of Kanjogera, the collection reflects themes of motherhood, leadership, protection, and legacy. Each design expresses a narrative of African identity evolving into contemporary luxury fashion.

The project demonstrates that heritage is not static, it is a living source of design innovation.

Umushanana will be made with leather 85% nonleather 15%

INSPIRATION & CONCEPT

The collection is inspired by:

Historical Inspiration

- Kanjogera, Queen Mother of Rwanda
- Symbol of motherhood, leadership, wisdom, and protection



THE LEGACY OF STRENGTH

- Cultural survival
- Identity preservation
- Timeless heritage
- Resilience through change

PROBLEM STATEMENT

African traditional fashion is increasingly limited to ceremonial use, while modern fashion trends prioritize fast, disposable clothing systems.

Key challenges include:

- Decline of cultural fashion identity
- Underuse of leather in African couture
- Loss of traditional craftsmanship
- Environmental impact of fast fashion

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To create a sustainable leather couture collection inspired by Rwandan heritage and the legacy of Kanjogera.

Specific Objectives

- Preserve Rwandan cultural identity through fashion
- Innovate leather couture construction techniques
- Promote sustainable fashion practices
- Transform heritage into modern luxury design
- Strengthen African storytelling through fashion

INNOVATION CONCEPT

HERITAGE LEATHER DESIGN SYSTEM

A design methodology that transforms:

- Culture Design Language
- History Fashion Structure
- Leather Storytelling Medium
- Tradition Contemporary Couture

Innovation Layers:

Cultural Innovation

- Reinterpreting Umushanana into leather couture
- Transforming royal symbols into design codes

Material Innovation

- Leather used as a primary couture textile
- Sculptural leather construction techniques
- Hybrid textile integration

Sustainability Innovation

- Zero-waste pattern design
- Circular fashion system
- Long-life intergenerational garments

CULTURAL & RESEARCH REFERENCES

This project is grounded in Rwandan cultural heritage:

- Umushanana traditional attire
- Intore cultural expressions
- Agaseke basket symbolism
- Imigongo art patterns
- Royal Rwandan aesthetics

DESIGN SIGNATURE

The collection is defined by a unique visual identity:

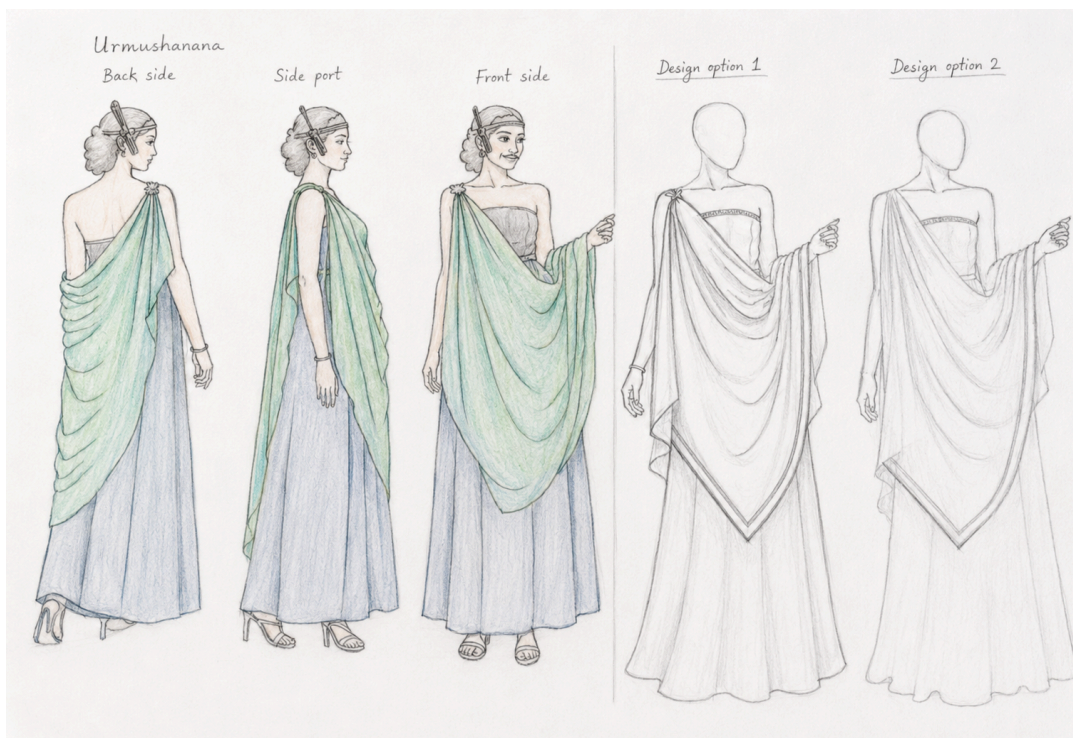
- Sculptural leather draping inspired by Umushanana
- Structured shoulders representing leadership and authority
- Gold detailing symbolizing royalty and legacy
- Flowing silhouettes representing motherhood and continuity
- Cultural motifs integrated into modern construction

Mood board



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Pencil drawing



Illustration

details



MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES

Materials:

- Vegetable-tanned cowhide
- Cotton lining
- Wood accessories
- Imigongo
- source : ethical sourced from Local market

Techniques:(construction)

- Hand stitching using pillow stitch
- Machine stitched seams at 1.5 mm for spacing for primary construction
- Leather molding and sculpting
- Structural tailoring
- Embellishment detailing

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

- Zero-waste pattern cutting
- Reuse of leather offcuts
- Repairable couture garments
- Long-lasting fashion pieces
- Intergenerational clothing ownership

TARGET MARKET

- Luxury fashion consumers
- Brides and ceremonial clients
- Cultural institutions and museums
- African diaspora communities
- Fashion collectors

Revenue Streams:

- Couture collections
- Ready-to-wear adaptations
- Leather accessories
- Cultural fashion exhibitions

IMPACT

Social Impact;

- Preservation of cultural identity
- Empowerment of African heritage storytelling
- Inspiration for young designers

Economic Impact:

- Job creation for artisans
- Growth of leather craftsmanship sector
- Fashion entrepreneurship opportunities

Environmental Impact:

- Reduced fast fashion waste
- Promotion of durable fashion systems
- Sustainable material usage

RUNWAY CONCEPT

The collection is presented as a royal cultural runway inspired by:

- Rwandan royal court aesthetics
- Traditional drumming and storytelling
- Golden ceremonial lighting
- Slow, narrative runway presentation

MESSAGE

Kanjogera: The Legacy of Strength transforms African heritage into sustainable luxury fashion, proving that culture is not history but a living source of innovation.

It preserves identity, empowers communities, and redefines African fashion on the global stage through contemporary leather couture design.

Image of the final product



CONCLUSION

This collection is more than fashion design, it is a cultural storytelling system expressed through modern couture.

It honors African motherhood, leadership, and resilience while demonstrating how sustainable leather innovation can transform heritage into global luxury fashion.

It proves that African identity is not only valuable, it is a foundation for the future of design.