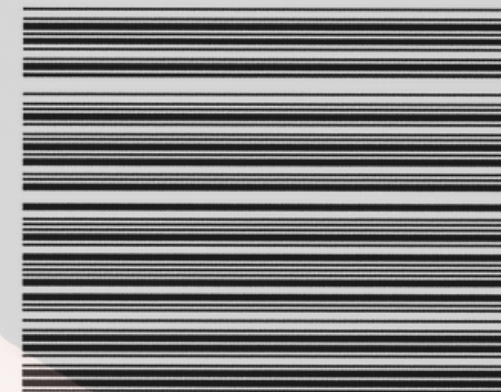


THE CYCLE OF THE SUITCASE

AV
MARIA VALENTINA DE PONTE
FASHION DESIGN



MARIA VALENTINA DE PONTE

0074KL 774268

MADEIRA/CARACAS/SAVANNAH

THE
CYCLE
OF THE
SUITCASE

MADEIRA/



0074KL-426877

CARACAS/



0074KL-774268

SAVANNAH/



0074KL-776842

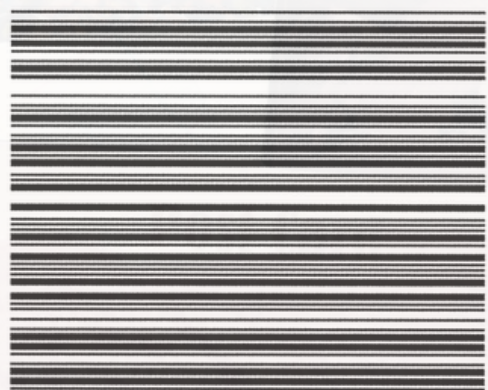
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F/W 2026
FASHION COLLECTION
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The Cycle of the Suitcase reimagines the suitcase as a symbol of memory, identity, and permanence. Inspired by my grandparents' migration journey from Madeira, Portugal, to Venezuela, the design explores the stories, traditions, and personal experiences that people carry across generations and borders.

Created from repurposed whole cowhide leather, the garment challenges the fast-fashion cycle through durability, versatility, and emotional value. Designed to transform from a dress into a bag, it offers multiple functions within a single piece, encouraging long-term use and reducing the need for additional consumption.

The design reflects the reality of migration, where only a few possessions can be carried, while suggesting that we ultimately become the keepers of our own invisible suitcases filled with memories, culture, and experience.

Through craftsmanship, multifunctionality, and timeless materials, The Cycle of the Suitcase celebrates individuality while demonstrating how leather can create lasting garments that are cherished, repaired, adapted, and passed down rather than discarded.

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MARIA VALENTINA DE PONTE
FASHION DESIGN

CONCEPT BOARD



COLOR
BOARD



MATERIALS

Designer Whole Cowhide

The primary material used in this design is Designer Whole Cowhide Leather sourced from Tandy Leather. These hides are acquired as surplus tannery inventory, often sold as odd lots consisting of remaining hides from production runs. By utilizing existing leather stock, the project gives value to materials that have already been produced, supporting a more resource-conscious approach to design.

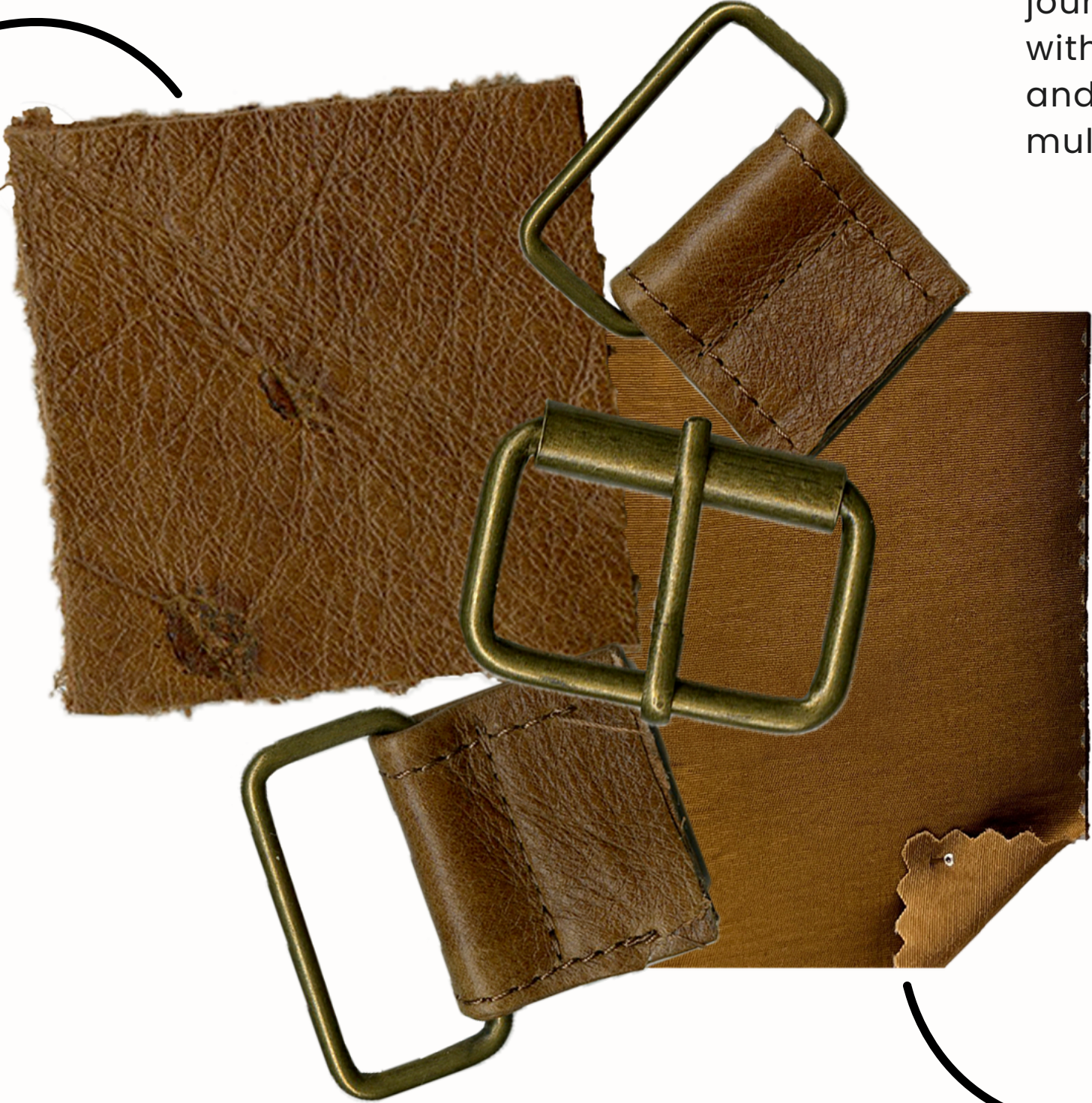
Antique Brass Hardware

Antique brass hardware was incorporated both for its durability and symbolic value. The aged finish references historical luggage, heirlooms, and the personal belongings carried during migration journeys. Their durability allows the garment to withstand repeated transformation between dress and bag configurations, supporting the piece's multifunctional and long-lasting design.

Lyocell-Blend Plain Weave Lining (Lyocell & Cupro)

The garment is lined with a Lyocell-blend plain weave composed of Lyocell and Cupro fibers. This lining was selected for both its comfort and its reduced environmental impact compared to conventional synthetic alternatives.

Lyocell is a regenerated cellulose fiber produced from sustainably sourced wood pulp using a closed-loop manufacturing process that recovers and reuses the majority of solvents and water. Cupro is created from cotton linter, a by-product of the cotton industry that would otherwise be discarded, transforming existing waste into a luxurious and breathable textile. Together, these fibers create a soft, durable, and biodegradable lining that complements the longevity of the leather exterior while supporting a more resource-conscious approach to material selection.



RESEARCH / SKETCHBOOK

for a lot of people it was important to arrive in "their new home" looking respectable and dignified, so they would take their best garments on, to give a good impression.

Wearing elegant garments gave a sense of pride and identity, especially at borders and train stations where they were "seen" by authorities.

In some cases, people would sew money or jewelry into their clothes to transport savings discreetly.

Immigrant women found America's bounty hard to resist.

Wages were very low, so many families lived by subsistence farming.

Political repression and censorship made upward mobility difficult.

Many sought freedom and modern opportunities abroad.

Migration has always existed → since prehistoric migrations spreading Homo sapiens across the globe till late 20th-21st century increased global migration driven by infinite reasons...

Some migrants pictures and guest worker programs in Europe.

People often fled with only what they could carry... -clothes, blankets, family photos, documents, religious items, jewelry, and REMINDERS OF HOME...

Many people could only take one suitcase or a few bags, so wearing their best clothes saved them a lot of space...

Portuguese Migration in the 1950s-1980 was one of the largest European migration flows of the time...

Economic Crisis

Portugal under Salazar's dictatorship (Estado Novo, 1933-1974) was super poor, rural, and underdeveloped compared to the rest of Europe.

Migrants often sent remittances home, which became vital for the Portuguese Economy

People started to build a "home" anywhere they went to feel warmth and strength to be able to continue fighting for a better future for their families...





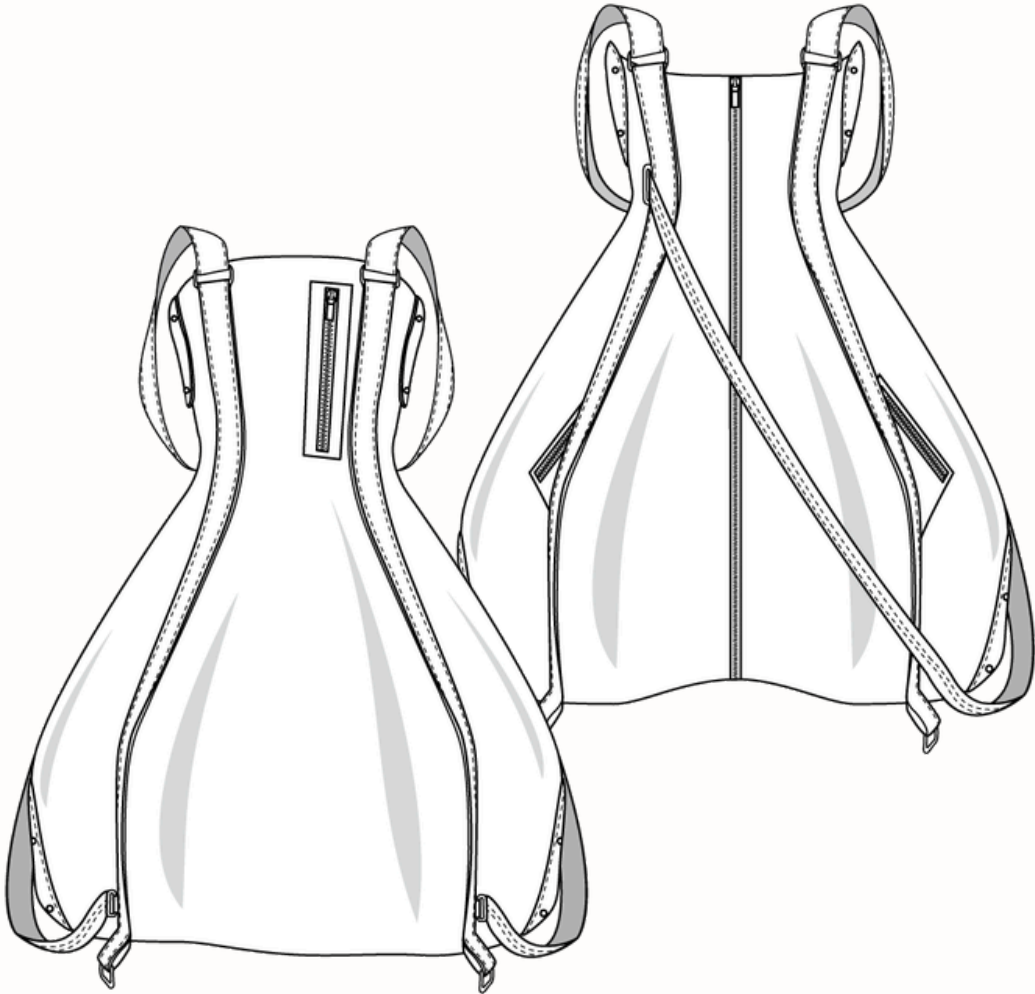




LINEUP



CHOSEN
DESIGN



PROCESS



PROTOTYPE



THE CYCLE OF THE SUITCASE

FINAL PIECE

MARIA VALENTINA DE PONTE



F/W 2026



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MV

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