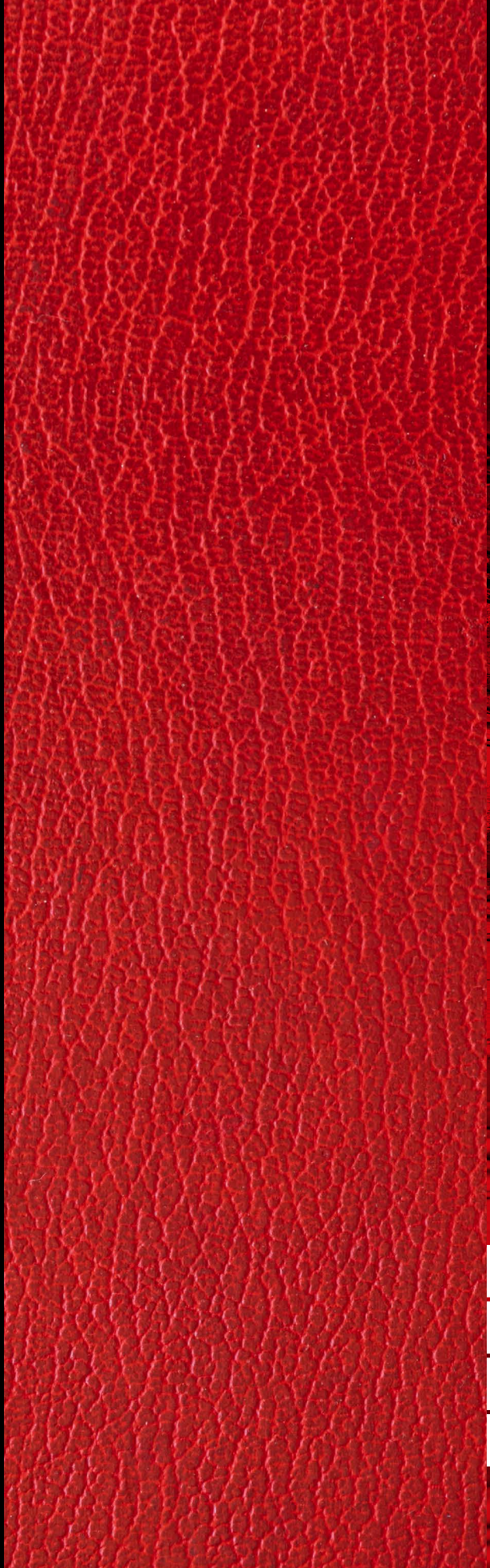


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**REAL
LEATHER.
STAY
DIFFERENT.**



**REAL
LEATHER.
STAY
DIFFERENT.**

2022
THE ANNUAL
STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION

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Front cover photo by Tom Webb.



“I had high expectations, and those expectations were far exceeded”

STEVE
SOTTHMANN

REAL LEATHER. STAY DIFFERENT. STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITIONS 2022 – THE ANNUAL

Welcome to the second of our annuals celebrating the Real Leather. Stay Different. Student Design Competitions.

After the first year of these competitions, I said I was amazed at the talent we had managed to unearth. Well, I'm still amazed. In fact, even more so. I had high expectations, and those expectations were far exceeded. We had more entries from more countries and more universities than ever before. And that can only be good for the future. The aim of these competitions, beyond the obvious acts of finding and rewarding talent, is to educate tomorrow's designers, tomorrow's manufacturers and tomorrow's decision makers. To educate them about the vital role leather, and indeed all responsibly sourced natural materials, has to play in the establishment of a more sustainable society and in combatting the effects of climate change.

We must use cowhides, the by-products of the meat and dairy industries, to avoid the

waste and the carbon cost of their disposal AND to avoid the unnecessary creation of oil-based plastics. Hundreds of millions of cowhides are either burned or sent to landfill each year. We can tackle this by using more leather. The creation of plastics from oil generates more CO₂ than using that oil for fuel. Again, we can tackle this by using more leather.

We want to use by-products and reduce waste. We don't want to create new supply chains. That's why our competitions prohibit the use of fur and the skins of exotic animals, and anything else that is farmed just for its skin.

But back to the competition! Read on to find out about all our winners and their fantastic creations. You can also read about companies and people we think are doing the right thing with leather, some facts and figures about the leather, and great news on what happened next for some of our former winners.

2022 CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

Real Leather. Stay Different. created the Student Design Competitions to promote the use of leather and educate people on its sustainability, beauty and durability by engaging with the next generation of talent. The success of the competitions took us by surprise.

The number of countries and universities involved, the number of entries, the interest from the general public... everything surpassed our expectations. Here's a look at the competition's success in cold, hard numbers.

1 CAMPAIGN

One global campaign that engages consumers through its digital and social platforms, workshops and other channels to educate on the material, environmental and societal benefits of using leather, and inspires the next generation

11 CHANNELS

Expanding our digital presence for a slow fashion future, building a community of advocates, from Facebook, Instagram, X and WeChat to YouTube and LinkedIn

40+ NATIONALITIES

Engaging with students from across the globe

134 UNIVERSITIES

Partnering with top universities and colleges worldwide in countries including China, Taiwan and the UK

2_k STUDENT COMPETITION ENTRIES

Educating students on the benefits of leather and natural fibres and inviting them to create and compete

51_k FOLLOWERS

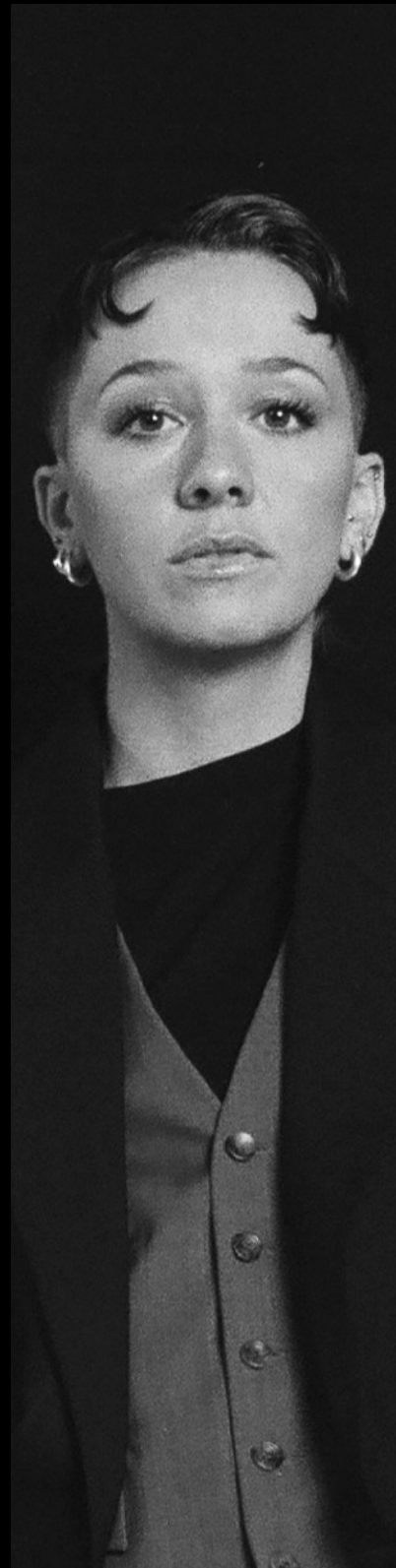
Attracting our social media followers to share to its network, to feed information and news, now and in the future

1.3_m ENGAGEMENTS

Stimulating activity, conversation, sharing of information – and in turn, leather loyalty

386_m IMPRESSIONS

Spreading the word by being seen and recognised by the right people, at the right time - a combination of paid and organic activity



MEET THE JUDGES

Our established panel of international competition judges includes the movers and shakers of the fashion and design industries.

MANAGING DIRECTOR
OF HUGO BOSS TICINO

CHRISTOPHER

KOERBER

Christopher Koerber has spent most of his professional life in the fashion industry, from senior executive roles at Tommy Hilfiger to the current Managing Director of HUGO BOSS. He is known as a change agent, an innovative, big-picture thinker, a strong cross-functional collaborator, and a powerful motivator and mentor. His expertise encompasses operations, strategy, brand management, innovation, and consumer-centric products at all stages of the life cycle.

“Form and function must come together seamlessly, beautifully and practically”.



1 — SAYS OF HIS BEGINNINGS

“Interning is hard, but it is the best way to learn your craft and develop your skills. This is how you forge friendships and relationships and build a professional network. I once worked on a project for Nike – and seeing the result of my labor fly-postered all around central London was one of my proudest moments. Working in the creative industry is all about opportunities - recognizing and seizing them when they happen. You need to keep your eyes open and your ear to the ground.”

2 — HIS DESIGN PHILOSOPHY IS

“This is actually quite an easy question. For me, good design must always be made as the answer to a problem and must be answered in an aesthetically pleasing way. Both form and function must come together seamlessly, beautifully and practically. Too often, function is neglected to the benefit of the shape and form... Thing is, function is an integral part of the definition of an object or a piece of clothing. It is why it is so important that it is included in the overall design.”

3 — HIS TIPS ON SUCCEEDING IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

“Passion is the number one quality to succeed in any chosen career, but I would say that it is especially true for the fashion industry. Passion for what you are doing, your own craft, passion for what you have become a part of and passion for the whole industry.”



ROSIE WOLLACOTT PHILLIPS

HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY
MULBERRY

1 — WHEN DID YOU FIRST REALISE THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND LEATHER'S ROLE IN IT?

“When I started my role in the Sustainability Department at Mulberry in 2017, one of the first things I did was calculate the volume of leather which we sourced from tanneries with environmental accreditation. Leather is in around 90% of the products that we sell, so it's our most important material in terms of sourcing, quality and sustainability. Leather manufacturing is incredibly resource intensive – chemicals, water, energy – so we it's vital that we work with partners committed to protecting and enhancing the environment. Back in SS18, only 6% of our leather was sourced from Leather Working Group tanneries. We worked with our long-standing partners whilst they achieved their own environmental certificates, and when sourcing new articles we sought out tanneries with existing certification. For SS23, 100% of our tanneries have been certified by Sustainable Leather Foundation, Leather Working Group or hold an ISO:14001 certificate. We're really proud of this achievement, and continually work alongside our tannery partners to improve their environmental footprints, alongside working to transform our supply chain to a regenerative and circular model where we have traceability back to farm for our hides.”

2 — SHE SAYS OF HER BEGINNINGS

“I grew up locally to Mulberry's factory, The Rookery in Chilcompton, and joined the business when I was 18 after leaving school. I was taught to stitch the inside pockets of Bayswater bags by the fantastic training team, and within six weeks was in the main production line. My career at Mulberry has evolved over the last 13 and a half years into the position I now hold, Head of Sustainability.”

3 — HOW DO YOU THINK WE CAN BEST COMBAT FAST FASHION?

“I think all brands have a responsibility to communicate the ethos of “buy less, buy better.” We're all guilty of playing a part in the throwaway culture, and no one's wardrobe is perfect. But there are lots of opportunities for consumers to move away from fast fashion models, from buying vintage, pre-loved pieces to renting for a special occasion.”

“I think all brands have a responsibility to communicate the ethos of buy less, buy better.”

MEET THE JUDGES

MIKE ALDER

“Right place, right time!”

**WORLD-RENOWNED
FASHION STYLIST AND
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
OF REAL LEATHER.
STAY DIFFERENT.**



Mike started as a model more than 20 years ago and got his break when he filled in for a stylist who fell ill. He has been making his name in the global creative industry ever since. Mike’s talents and client base have seen him creating style and wardrobe content for celebrity red carpet, campaign, editorial, luxury private consultancy and the Paris haute couture seasons. He has worked with Glenn Close, Elizabeth Hurley, Maisie Williams, Poppy Delevingne and many more.

1 — HE SAYS OF HIS BEGINNINGS

“Right place, right time! After a short stint modelling in my home city of Perth, Australia, a fashion week designer that I had walked the runway for allowed me to assist on a female-led shoot. The stylist fell ill, so I volunteered to take on the role and, as luck would have it, an editor walking by loved the shoot and offered me further work. You depend on people. It’s these people and collaborations that have seen my work featured among their famous exhibitions and books. It’s awe-inspiring and humbling.”

2 — HIS DESIGN PHILOSOPHY IS

“I am very classic and traditional — I like practical. A great design has to translate onto the body and make sure it serves its intended purpose. I look at fabric, texture, silhouette, color and overall craftsmanship. Even if it’s inexpensive, it must be executed well. I am very particular when making an expensive purchase — either for myself or for a client. It has to be something I love absolutely — liking it is just not enough — in order to responsibly justify the price tag.”

3 — HIS TIPS ON SUCCEEDING IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

“You need a relentless respect for the role and the responsibility of managing garments and money. It’s an ongoing challenge to respect what we really do at the end of the day and how we strive for its success. Taking the extra time to do it right within a fast-paced industry and as a team takes focus, planning and patience.”

CATTY TAY & LEANNE ELLIOTT YOUNG



“IoDF acts as a platform to restructure how technology and digital are used from creation to consumer, pushing tech-use towards a more democratic and sustainable future.”

1 — THEY SAY OF THEIR BEGINNINGS

Leanne: I was lucky and entrepreneurial enough to get a gig in-house with Nike after graduating with my MA, where I practised fine art, digital imagery and photomedia, but my work always had a heavy philosophy of innovation and culture.

Nike was a hub of creativity. I worked within the global influence, entertainment and marketing team for Europe, Middle East and Africa [EMEA], within the elusive Room72 lab. This was my step into the knowledge that brands can create belief systems and drive a sense of belonging to communities. I met amazing minds like Heron Preston, Ronojoy Dam, Sharmadean Reid, Nana Adu-Sarfo and Acyde, and worked with some of the most talented people in the world.

Primarily though, my biggest insight into fashion was through being in London and within the queer club scene; this was the most inspiring leap into fashion and its nuances.

I then worked at a fash-tech start-up as Head of Partnerships, Global Strategy and Creative Business Development. I developed global partnerships for the Mastered fashion tech platform whilst creating and managing an authentic communications strategy for the company mission. This built my resilience for change, an understanding of how important technology is within this industry, and how to democratise the learning trajectory.

I later co-founded CommuneEast with Richard Nicoll, a company that based IRL x URL strategies for future-facing living using STEAM narrative as a module agency that drafted strategic global irl x url partnerships, incubating relationships and building diverse talent curation. Clients included: Selfridges Group, British Fashion Council, British Council, Blonstein Productions, Fashion Revolution, AKQA, Michèle Lamy, Dominos', Ace Hotel Group, Depop, Lexus, 50m, Frieze, London Craft Week.

Cattytay: I studied Textile Design at Chelsea College of Art & Design, University of the Arts London. I have been working in fashion tech since graduating, holding roles at Merlin Entertainments within clothing development to then building a notable community for 400+ 4D markers - DIGI-GXL.

Whilst spearheading conversations in the industry on inclusivity, diversity and fashion futures, I became noted as the first digital fashion creative, and created the first digital fashion asset to go viral. This led to being a digital fashion designer, a new role for that time! Then landing campaigns for Balenciaga, Alexander Wang, Nike, Adidas, Vogue and Selfridges.

We both met on a Dazed Digital panel where we realised there were some striking synergies in our perspectives – we were discussing the metaverse whilst everyone was rolling their eyes at the mention of it, we realised the potential.

So, we decided to combine forces and birth IoDF – a hybrid of our two former companies and collectives.

2 — THEIR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY IS

“Be creative but also make it inclusive. Design so that everyone feels like they can be represented in a way that feels ‘like them’. It’s important to understand that clothes do not exist in a vacuum – whether that means considering their environmental impact, who can wear them (and who wants to wear them), what the materials can do, how they exist within a sphere of art and not just practicality.

At IoDF, we put people and the planet first – we innovate not just because we want to make garments that stand out as the aesthetic future of fashion but also because we want to use design to solve some of the fundamental pain points of the fashion industry. Design should be informed by the problems we are trying to solve in the world around us and our culture, not only by trends and what is commercial.

We are Emblems for Change, and we ask those who buy, wear and support us to join us in that journey.”

3 — THEIR TIPS ON SUCCEEDING IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

“Be bold, experiment and be prepared to work hard on your craft. It’s a really tough industry, so a real commitment to innovation and determination is key, alongside an ability to work well with others. Build your network and nurture it – foster mutually beneficial relationships.

Whilst studying, be as experimental as possible, take risks while you can. It is still so early in your learning trajectory – you don’t need to be a finished designer when graduating.

Think about what has been done well, and badly, before and try to do it better – take it further. Be ‘new’ with it.

Look at the world and see what it needs. What is missing? These are the things that will excel.”

EMILY OMESI

“Embrace volume and dimension as creative elements”

1 — SHE SAYS OF HER BEGINNINGS

“I entered the fashion industry by following a dedicated path. After graduating from the Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC, I actively pursued multiple internships to gain practical experience. My proudest success came during my senior semester internship at Oscar de la Renta, where I impressed the team to be hired right after graduation. This experience allowed me to build my skills and network, eventually leading me to my current role as a designer at Ulla Johnson”.

2 — HER DESIGN PHILOSOPHY IS

“My design philosophy revolves around embracing volume and dimension as creative elements that breathe life into my work. I believe that fashion should not only be visually appealing but also tell a story. I strive to craft designs that celebrate the beauty of movement and the depth of human expression. By playing with volume and dimension, I aim to create garments that empower individuals to feel confident, unique, and truly themselves. It’s about merging artistry with wearability, and I’m passionate about pushing the boundaries of what fashion can be”.

3 — HER TIPS ON SUCCEEDING IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

“One of the key tips I have for succeeding in design is to be a dedicated hard worker. The fashion industry demands perseverance and a strong work ethic. Additionally, it’s crucial to stay informed about current trends to remain relevant. However, what sets a great designer apart is the ability to draw inspiration from the past. The rich history of fashion provides a wealth of ideas and techniques that can be reimaged and incorporated into contemporary designs. So, my advice is to combine hard work with a passion for both the present and the past, creating designs that are not just fashionable but also timeless and evocative.”



IN THE SPOTLIGHT WITH GAL BENJAMIN

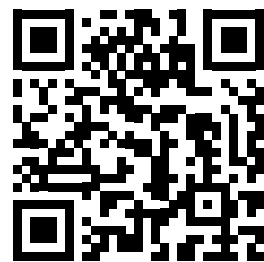
Gal Benjamin, from Israel, was the overall winner of the Real Leather. Stay Different. International Student Design Competition and is already making waves as a designer at luxury fashion brand KAWAYAN. Here, he gives us his thoughts on fast fashion and leather's role in the future, and starts by passing on a bit of advice for young designers.

Photo by Tom Webb.



“LOOK INSIDE YOURSELF AND EXPRESS THE UNIQUE WAY YOU SEE THE WORLD.”

Follow Gal on Instagram
@galbenyamin__



“Definitely the best piece of advice I've ever had was after I had failed a college presentation. An external examiner called me afterwards and stressed to me that it didn't matter what the professor said, that I must keep on following my instincts, that I should never look for approval from others, and not to expect that others would understand and see things the same way you see them. So I think sticking to bettering yourself and trusting your instinct is probably the most important thing.

I believe that despite sharing, maybe, similar cultures or common values, each of us is really an individual. So, I would say the best way to find a unique point of view would simply be to look inside yourself and express the unique way you see the world. If you simply stay authentic to yourself, it will definitely be unique. If you just convey the true thoughts about things that really matter to you, it must be unique, I think.

We live in a world which is obviously far from perfect. And, as a fashion designer, you cannot ignore the fact that fashion is literally a reflection of reality. So I'm being constantly inspired by what we are going through. It's not an easy time. Maybe it's never been, but I think now in particular, there are so many things to be protested against or to strengthen and to fight for. And I think approaching fashion from that perspective is really a strong path to take. It allows you to really get deep within your design and not stay on a superficial level of following trends and such things. Because you create out of pure emotion and desire for change or to embrace something. I think just looking around us and realising where we are, you can get a lot out of it.

Well, obviously we're currently facing global warming and climate change and, you know, it's a crisis that we cannot keep on ignoring, especially the younger designers, the younger generation. I mean, the rest of them, they're not going to be here.

It's really a responsibility that we have as young designers – to choose to use long-lasting materials that won't pollute and that won't be thrown away. Or if they are thrown away, they could be disposed of in a way that won't harm. Leather is definitely one of the greatest examples for that. The whole use of leather is basically taking a by-product of another industry and, instead of it going to landfill and polluting, reusing it. And beyond that, there is already the technology to recycle leather.

And I'm not talking about all the leather alternatives that are basically like polyesters, but recycled leather, made out of leather and actually with the qualities of leather. It's simply something that we are obligated to do. We cannot keep on destroying this world. Leather is one of the most exciting materials we can use. The qualities of it... The huge numbers of techniques that can be applied to it... Its durability, its lasting style. I mean, it doesn't matter how old the jacket is, it's a leather jacket. I'm wearing a leather jacket from the 80s that my mom used to wear. It has a lot of character. It's obviously sexy and rich. Fast fashion basically contradicts everything.

Do things out of a purpose, from designing the pattern and choosing your material and understanding the best techniques possible in order to serve the purpose of the design. It's about doing the research before and after to create the best outcome possible to convey a message. Slow fashion is the closest thing where fashion can actually become art. Because fashion is not art, especially not fast fashion, but when you put your soul into something in such depth and when you succeed in conveying a message so strong, when you witness people just contemplating a piece of clothing, it would never be fast fashion. It would always be a piece, a slow fashion piece. It would be something that someone, or a few people, put their heart into making. And it definitely speaks for itself. You just know you can feel it.”



Photo by Tom Webb.

LEATHER FOR LIFE

The Real Leather. Stay Different. Student Design Competitions bring to the fore everything we love about leather. Leather as a material is extremely important. We love it because it saves waste, because its use provides an alternative to the production of oil-based plastic and because when it is used and produced well, it benefits the environment. Here's why.

IT PREVENTS WASTE!

330 million hides come from the meat and dairy industries around the world each year. Around 33 million are processed in the US, but as many as 4.8 million US hides ended up as landfill in 2020 – that's 15% of the national total.

Worldwide, the waste figure is approximately 40%, or 130 million hides. With the average hide weighing 25kg this means that three million tonnes are thrown away every year.

Leather production turns more than 4.5 million tonnes of potential waste, every year, into useable, durable goods. This saves 2.7 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions from landfill sites.

Leather is a by-product. And the more we use, the more waste we save.

IT COUNTERS THE PRODUCTION OF PLASTICS!

We all know about plastic pollution – the microplastics that are shed and the general waste caused. And we know how difficult it is to recycle a product that takes 500 years to biodegrade. But the harm plastics cause starts even before they are made.

Plastics including nylon, polyester and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) are made from fossil fuels and emit greenhouse gases from cradle to grave. Currently, they are responsible for up to 8% of oil consumption globally and, unless action is taken, that figure will only rise. In fact, from 2020 to 2040, analysis suggests that BP expects plastics to represent 95% of the net growth in demand for oil. Plastic & Climate: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet, a report by the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), a nonprofit environmental law organisation, found that if we continue to rely on plastics as heavily as we do, they will account for 20% of oil consumption by 2050.



Oil, gas and coal are the building blocks of plastics, and their extraction and transportation are carbon-intensive. The CIEL report estimated that extracting and transporting natural gas for plastic creation in the US alone accounts for 12.5 to 13.5 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent each year. These emissions are all produced before the plastic is actually made.

Refining plastics is equally greenhouse gas-intensive. In 2015, emissions from the manufacturing of ethylene, which polyethylene plastics are made from, were 184.3 to 213 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. That is about as much as 45 million passenger vehicles emit each year, according to the CIEL report. Carbon dioxide emissions from ethylene production are projected to increase by 34% between 2015 and 2030.

LESS PLASTIC PRODUCED MEANS LESS IS THROWN AWAY!

Of the nine billion tonnes of plastic discarded between 1950 and 2015, less than 10% has been recycled. The rest has been burned, landfilled or littered.

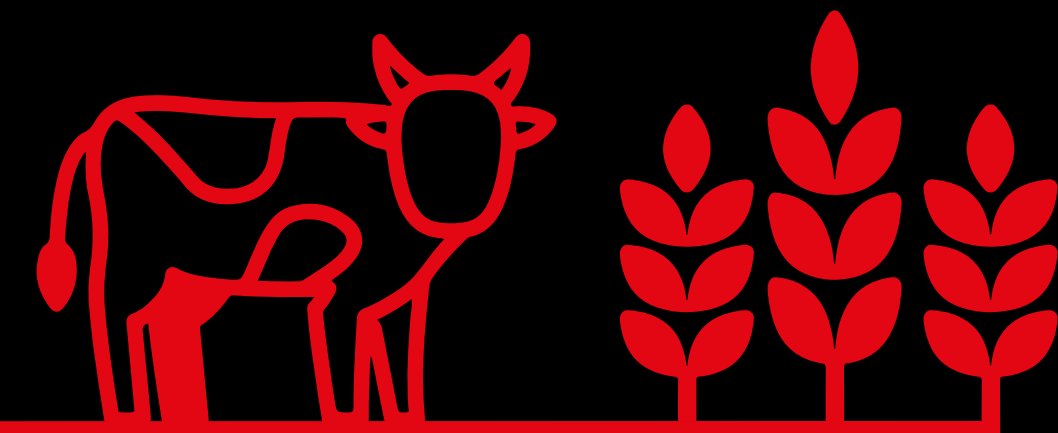
Plastic is harder to recycle than its manufacturers and sellers would have you believe.

For the tiny proportion of plastic that is recycled, the main method used is chemical. Chemical recycling involves using solvents to make either fuel or feedstocks for making more plastic. Plastic to fuel conversion, unsurprisingly, produces greenhouse gases, compounding the problems caused when the plastic was created. Plastic to feedstock conversion also produces toxic waste.

Greenpeace addressed this problem in a report published in 2022. It found that the amount of plastic actually turned into new products has fallen to about 5% of all that is produced. And as the increasing production of plastic places more strain on the capacity to recycle, that figure will drop even lower.

According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the future of plastics report, for something to be called recyclable, 30% of it must be recycled. Greenpeace found that no plastic can be called recyclable because no types of it have ever achieved anything close to that rate.

Here at RLSD, we believe the way to tackle this problem is to produce less plastic. We're not saying leather can be used to replace all of its applications, but when offered the choice between leather and a plastic "alternative", the decision is simple.



CATTLE FARMING CAN LEAD TO HEALTHIER SOIL, A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT AND MORE FOOD!

Soil erosion leads to the release of CO₂ into the atmosphere. Some modern farming techniques can lead to soil erosion. For example, over-ploughing can compact earth and reduce microbes essential for the growth of healthy plants. In turn, this can lead to the need for more fertilisers and pesticides, which may further damage the soil and the environment.

Healthy soil is vital to the health of the planet. It holds three times as much carbon as the atmosphere and plays a vital part in the production of 95% of global food supplies.

Regenerative farming, as the name suggests, is the use of a variety of practices that support soil health and, through that, the entire ecosystem. These practices include water management, minimal disturbance of soil and a preference for the use of natural fertilisers (animal manure) and pesticides.

In short, the more plants that can thrive, the more carbon is captured from the air. The very fuel system of plants – photosynthesis – does this. Plants use water, sunlight and carbon from the air to produce oxygen and energy in the form of carbohydrates.

So where do cattle fit in with this? Grazing cattle and other livestock encourage improved grasslands, which have a strong capacity for carbon capture and storage. Some regenerative farming models feature strip grazing, which allows cattle access to limited areas of land for short periods. In addition to fertilising the soil naturally with their manure, the cattle trample plants into the soil, which not only aerates it but also enriches it, encouraging better regrowth, deeper roots and, therefore, better carbon capture. Some arable land farmers have started to bring livestock on to their land for the soil health benefits – a return to the old model of mixed farming.

With the latest research showing significant carbon capture gains and soil quality improvement, cattle mean a win-win for food, ecosystems and our fight against climate change. Raising cattle also makes use of marginal land, meaning a valuable food source can be obtained from areas unsuitable for growing crops. This is a topic examined in detail in the RLSD-produced documentary series Rewind, available to watch at chooserealleather.com. When it comes to the future of the planet, we have a lot to learn from the past.

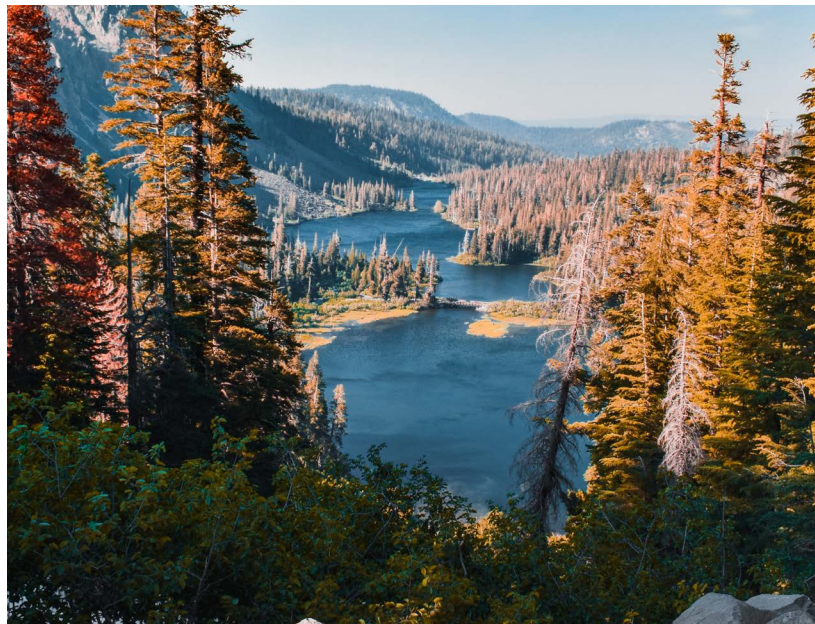
METHANE FROM COWS IS MUCH LESS HARMFUL THAN METHANE FROM OIL PRODUCTION!

Cattle have evolved to digest cellulose. They are able to consume grasses and other plants that are high in cellulose and, through enteric fermentation, digest the carbon that is stored there. This fuels growth and milk production.

When cows eat grass, they are essentially eating carbon. Plants capture CO₂ from the atmosphere and, by photosynthesis, convert it into cellulose. Ruminants digest cellulose and take its nutrients through enteric fermentation. So cattle are upcycling CO₂ into milk, beef and, of course, hides that make leather.

One of the by-products of enteric fermentation is the methane that cattle belch, returning some of the carbon sequestered by plants back into the atmosphere. But the good news is it takes about 10 years for this methane to break down into CO₂ again. Once that has happened, plants can convert it back to cellulose by photosynthesis. This is called the biogenic carbon cycle.

The biogenic carbon cycle is much faster than the cycle applying to the extraction and burning of fossil fuels. It takes 1,000 or more years for the CO₂ this releases to be returned to geological reserves. This means it stays in the atmosphere for much longer than biogenic methane, contributing much more to global warming. When cattle numbers stay the same, the methane they belch replaces CO₂ that plants are absorbing; it does not increase the amount in the atmosphere.



AND WE'RE STILL WORKING TO UNDERSTAND HOW WE CAN DO MORE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT!

The Leather and Hide Council of America (L&HCA), which funds Real Leather. Stay Different. is working to assess all environmental impacts of leather throughout its lifetime. This Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) will help leather producers, product manufacturers, designers and consumers make the best choices in production processes and material use.

The impacts of leather include emissions from the cattle that provide the hides. While leather is a by-product, a small portion of the impact of the animal agriculture can be attributed to hide. Other things to be taken into account include water use, biodiversity, and leather's physical and perceived durability and use.

Working with industry partners, from ranchers and packers to tanners and manufacturers, L&HCA is enabling individual LCAs to be connected through the supply chain. This includes product manufacturing, leather manufacturing and animal agriculture. Each of these sectors has developed input/output matrices. The leather industry and agriculture supply chain has done a lot of work to use these matrices in lifecycle assessments to better understand its footprint.

This work will enable producers and manufacturers to review their supply chains and understand the net benefit and impact of the leather they produce or use. Consumers will be able to access the same information.

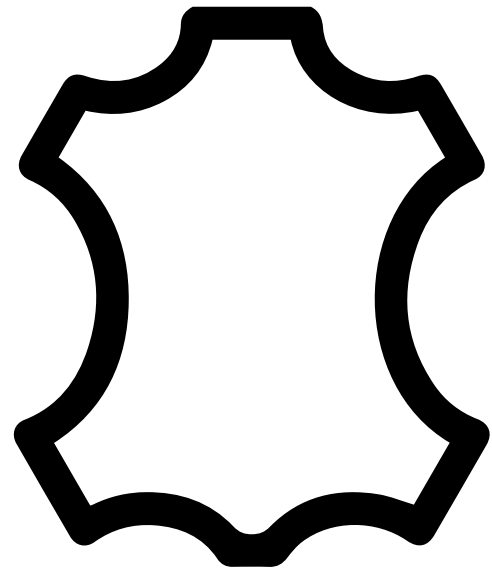
Forthcoming laws will require products to carry an LCA label. Brands will need to take their leather belt, wallet, bag or jacket and understand enough about where it is from to be able to assess its impact on water, energy, carbon and biodiversity. They will also need to be able to characterise and incorporate expected longevity into the LCA label, so cheap, disposable products are not at an advantage when the impacts of materials are compared.

The transparency of LCAs can only be good for the consumer, the leather industry and, most importantly, the planet.

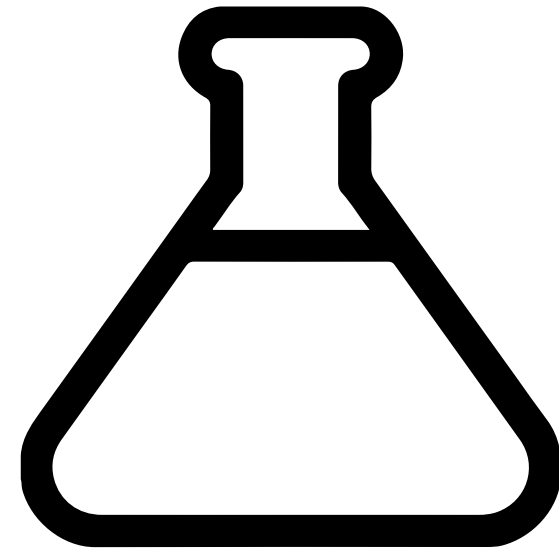
WHAT DOES ALL THIS TELL US?

The overall message is pretty simple: before we create new industries and place new demands on the planet's struggling resources, we must work with nature and do everything we can to cut waste.

LEATHER BIODEGRADATION - HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?



VS.



50

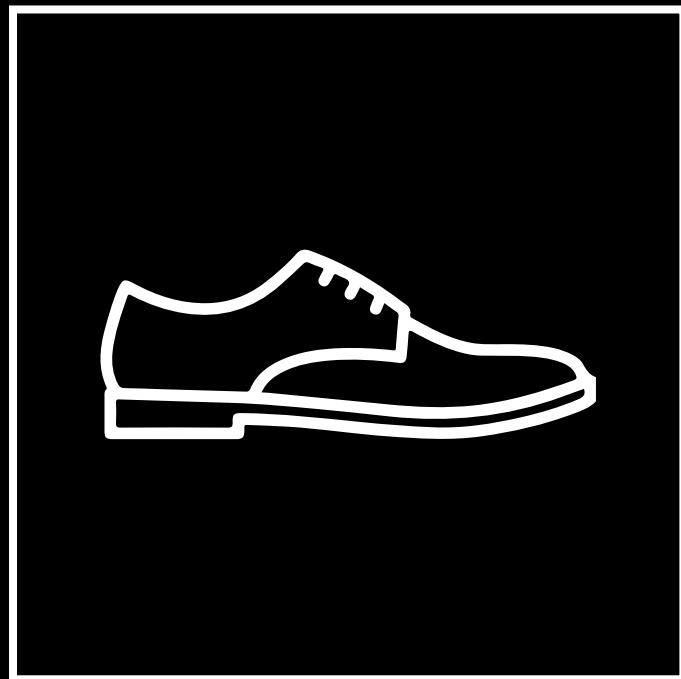
VS.

5000

It can take 500 YEARS or more for synthetics, made from petrochemicals, to biodegrade whereas leather takes at most 50 years to biodegrade.



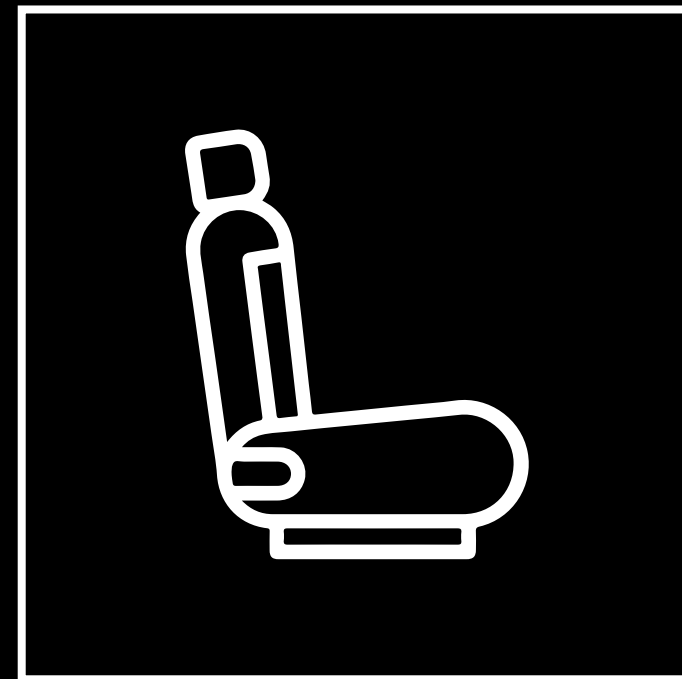
INDUSTRY ESTIMATES FOR LEATHER USE



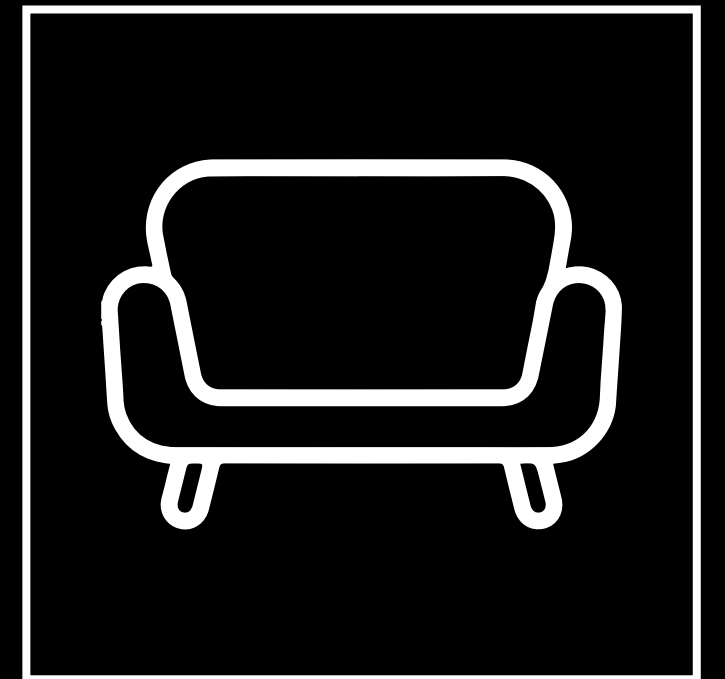
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APRIL GLOBAL

Our Student Design Competitions received almost 2,000 entries across 40 countries.

The International Competition received entries from...

Australia	Portugal
Belgium	South Africa
Brazil	Spain
China	Sweden
Czech Republic	Denmark
Dominican Republic	Poland
Finland	Taiwan
France	United Arab Emirates
India	United Kingdom
Israel	United States
Italy	
Philippines	
Poland	



REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

UK

173 entries
16 universities

NORDIC

13 entries
11 universities

CHINA

234 entries
32 universities

TAIWAN

450 entries
18 universities

ISRAEL

**INTERNATIONAL
COMPETITION
WINNER**

WINNER PROFILES

WINNERS

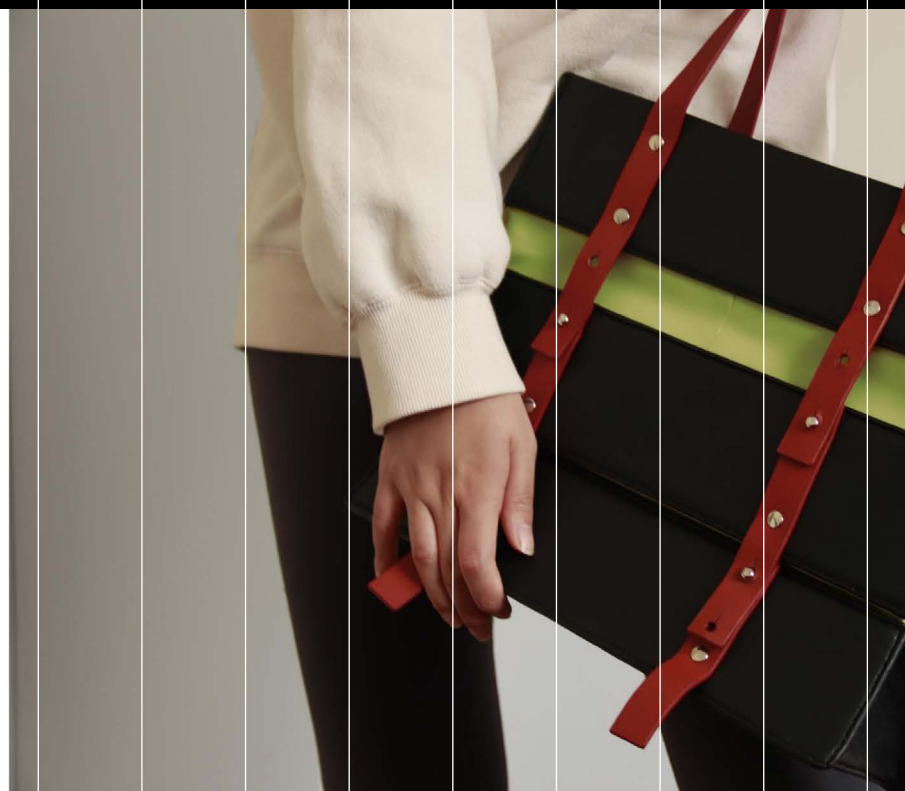
CHINA

MAINLAND

The China Mainland Real Leather. Stay Different. Student Design Competition, held in partnership with the China Leather Industry Association (CLIA), culminated in a fantastic awards ceremony in Xinji, China's leather capital, despite the disruption caused by the pandemic. The competition attracted more than 200 entries from 25 universities.

Attended by guests including representatives from local government, the tanning and leather industries, the fashion industry and the media, as well as students and educators from participating schools, the ceremony celebrated winners from the 2022 competition.

Here's our selection of winners.





YUNTIAN DONG

CHINA MAINLAND
ACCESSORY & OVERALL WINNER

YunTian Dong is a 22-year-old designer from Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, currently studying at Donghua University. Her winning entry was inspired by the marine octopus, and her aim was to showcase the uniqueness of leather. Its malleable nature enabled the creation of the contours of the air holes and the playful span of the octopus tentacles.

SHE SAID

“As a natural fabric, leather has good ductility and durability, and different parts of leather have their own unique texture. Additionally, its biodegradable advantage falls in line with the increasingly sustainable fashion industry, so it has become an excellent design material.”

2022 WINNING ACCESSORY DESIGN

Photo by Tom Webb.



CHINA MAINLAND
FOOTWEAR WINNER

LIBIN CAO



LiBin Cao is a 22-year-old student from Jiamusi City, Heilongjiang Province. She is currently studying at the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology. Inspired by iron beetles and their strength, LiBin's footwear design was created to emanate a sense of power.

SHE SAID

"Firstly, leather is environmentally friendly and will not burden the environment itself. Secondly, current technology makes the shape of leather full of possibilities. I believe that it has the potential to replace other materials."



Iron armour
铁·甲

Final design draft
最终设计稿



WINNER PROFILES



YAWEN ZHANG

CHINA MAINLAND APPAREL WINNER

YaWen Zhang, from Zhoukou, Henan Province, is currently studying for a Master's Degree in Fashion Design and Manufacturing at Wenzhou University. Her project is inspired by ink and landscape paintings, and their ability to create a state of mind in which the form and spirit are blended, and the world and sense of self are united. The goal of the project is to make Chinese traditional culture fashionable.

SHE SAID

“For thousands of years, leather has been one of the preferred materials for manufacturing because of its durability and versatility. Products made of natural leather can be used for a longer time, reducing waste of consumer goods. Leather is easily degradable by nature and, with its beauty, versatility and sustainable aspects, it's difficult to replace with other materials. In terms of texture, leather surfaces can be smooth, soft, plump and elastic to the touch.”

YINGYING PAN

**CHINA MAINLAND
BEST ART AWARD
WINNER**



YingYing Pan is 20 years old and currently studying at Donghua University in Shanghai, majoring in Product Design. Her entry to this year's competition is a bag with the design feature of an adjustable back that allows the user to adapt to their needs according to the items it needs to fit inside, when going out.

SHE SAID

“Inspired by the folding and stacking of objects, the bag can adjust its capacity arbitrarily, allowing it to change its size at any time according to the items it needs to hold. Its design refers to the style of geometric simplicity and atmosphere, whilst being practical, convenient and aesthetically pleasing, giving users a comfortable and fashionable experience.”



WINNERS TAIWAN REGION

Taiwan Region Winners pay tribute to feminist campaigners, seek privacy in shared spaces and inspiration in plant life – and motocross.

The competition, held in association with the Taiwanese International Leather Association (TILA), attracted more than 460 entries from students at 18 participating universities. It featured three categories: accessories, apparel and design.

The winners were celebrated at a glittering awards ceremony that took place at AMBI Space One, Taipei. Representatives attended

from the tanning, leather and fashion industries, local brands and retailers, media and government, as well as students and educators from participating schools. The awards ceremony featured a catwalk show organised by participating students and featuring their designs.



“The winners were celebrated at a glittering awards ceremony.”



TAIWAN REGION
GOLD APPAREL & OVERALL WINNER

YU-LUN
LU

Yu-Lun Lu is a composite material artist, fashion designer and illustrator based in Taipei at Shih Chien University. Her project, *The Sight*, highlights the objectification and labeling of women; it explores the concept that in certain countries and religions, exposure of body shape is a crime. Despite women following strict dress codes, the designer wanted to explore the idea that in most cases, whatever they wear can be maliciously misinterpreted in the eyes of others.



SHE SAID

“Leather has many forms and textures, so it could be presented in different ways and styles according to the creations; it could be hard and firm, but also soft and smooth. For artists, designers and any creator, that is a great feature.”



Photo by Tom Webb.



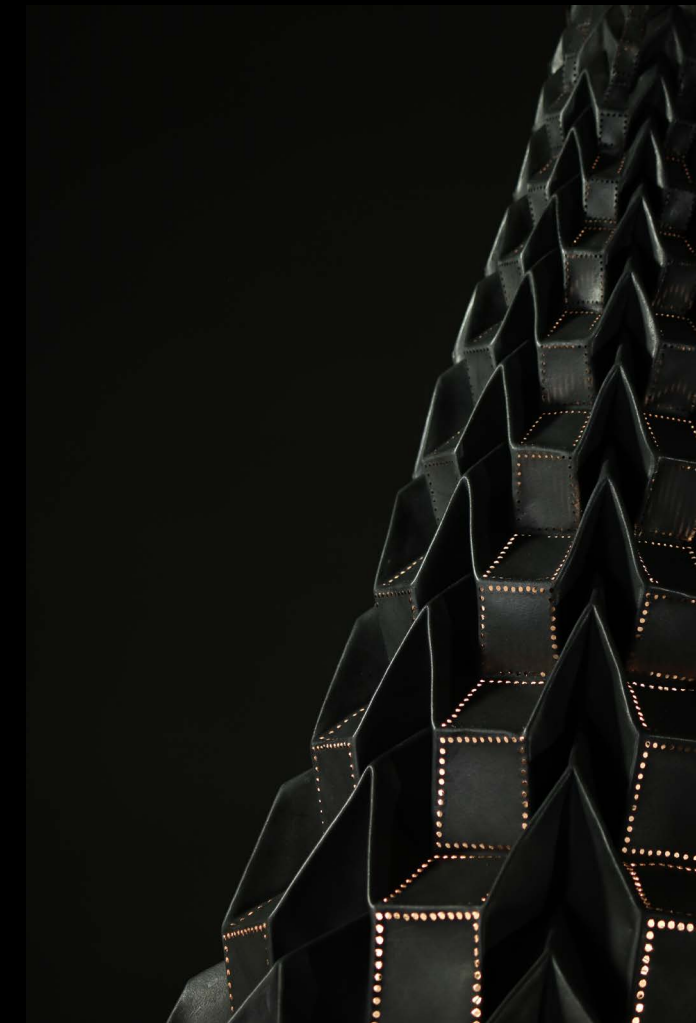
XIAO-YUN CHANG

TAIWAN REGION
GOLD DESIGN WINNER

Xiao-Yun Chang has always had a love for disassembling and building objects – she has worked with a range of materials, including metal, ceramics and glass. While studying craft design in college, she was introduced to leather and found its charm and durability incredibly appealing. Her project is based on origami, a common children’s entertainment activity and worship ritual in Taiwan.

SHE SAID:

“There must be many undiscovered possibilities for leather. I hope that, in the future, the leather industry will develop to support the lifestyle of the Taiwanese – as does my origami design.”





JIA-WEN ZHANG

**TAIWAN REGION
GOLD FOOTWEAR WINNER**

Jia-Wen Zhang is currently studying in her senior year at Shizhan University and has studied bag design, shoe design and knitting design among a range of other courses. Her project draws upon themes of toxic love; where people seek to control you emotionally in the name of love and blackmail you in the name of passion.



SHE SAID:

“The inspiration behind Hot Rebirth comes from a toxic concept of love. The flames are a metaphor for being devoured like a flame and the ribbon is like a vine, which surrounds you slowly before tightly restraining you. The hollow heart represents someone that has been gradually consumed by feelings and has gradually become hollow. The high heels overall express the hope that everyone who has experienced this toxicity can go on living confidently after, being reborn. The bright red signifies that you can now walk through life with enthusiasm just like before.”

TA-TUNG LIN

TAIWAN REGION GOLD ACCESSORIES WINNER



Ta-Tung Lin was born in Taitung, Taiwan. Taitung's natural environment and local culture, and Lin's parents' upbringing, have shaped his craft and thinking. At the age of 16, he enrolled in a five-year junior college programme and started learning various craft and design theories. His project is based on his love of motorcycles and leather, producing a line of accessories that are both stylish and practical, as they form part of the motorcycle's storage capabilities but can also be removed when necessary.

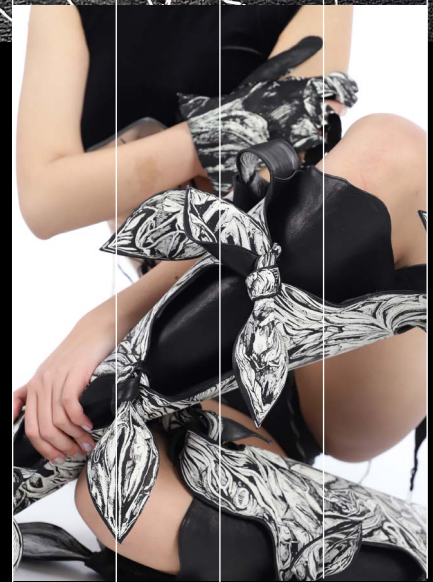
HE SAID

"Leather is one of the by-products of cattle farming; it is durable and eco-friendly. Putting aside the pursuit of famous brands, leather is the earliest technology used by human beings. The charm of leather is in our DNA."



THE WINNERS

The UK Real Leather. Stay Different. Student Design Competition was held in partnership with Leather UK. Winners drew on a huge range of influences for groundbreaking designs with sustainability at the forefront. The UK Real Leather. Stay Different. Student Design Competition was held in partnership with Leather UK. Winners drew on a huge range of influences for groundbreaking designs with sustainability at the forefront. Overall and footwear category winner Anna Melegh went on to win the International Competition and she is profiled in that section.



“I became more aware of fashion’s devastating impact on the environment and started searching for more sustainable solutions to become less impactful.”





THE UK
ACCESSORIES WINNER

HANZHI TANG

During her university years, Hanzhi Tang majored in industrial design but had an interest in fashion, which is why she eventually chose to study it at postgraduate level. During her time at university, she had a passion for studying materials and was interested in the use of industrial-related techniques in fashion. During her postgraduate studies, she explored ways to combine new materials with fashionable, traditional materials. She hopes to continue to use natural materials in combination with new industrial techniques to better allow users to connect with their surroundings.



SHE SAID

“It is moldable and hard-wearing and, if used wisely in fashion designs, it can be an environmentally friendly material. In my opinion, leather goods should not be a fast fashion product. We should promote the idea that it is not easily damaged in design. For example, in my design, the combination of mirrors and leather allows the surrounding environment to interact with the leather bag, increasing the connection between the user and the object and making the leather goods more compatible with the surrounding scenery. In today’s world of fast fashion, a bag should be given more possibilities to be matched with other objects.”

THE UK
APPAREL WINNER

ORIOLO CLAVELL

Oriol Clavell is a Catalan designer based in London. His project Epentismo won this year's Apparel Category for the UK Student Design Competition. His work focuses on self-identity discovery – exploring cultural heritage as well as notions of gender, sexuality and identity. After starting his studies in architecture at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, he decided to move to London to pursue his dream career in fashion. While studying a BA in Fashion Design Technology: Menswear at London College of Fashion, he focused on creating garments that combine craftsmanship with new technologies such as 3D printing.



HE SAID

"I think that leather is here to stay in terms of sustainability. It is one of the longest-lasting materials there is, which means that it can stop the massive production of fast fashion. It's also on its way to adapting more to the industry by taking the initiative of reducing its environmental impact."



Photo by Tom Webb.



**THE UK
OVERALL AND FOOTWEAR WINNER**

**ANNA
MELEGH**

Anna Melegh is a footwear and accessories designer turning everyday objects inside out by using the methods of surrealism. She comes from an artistic family and has nearly 10 years of art and shoe-focused education.

This started at the Secondary School of Visual Arts in Budapest, where she learned to be a leather goods maker.

She finished the BA Fashion, Textiles, Footwear & Accessories course at the University of Northampton and completed the MA Footwear at London College of Fashion in 2022.

SHE SAID

“Leather is a biodegradable material, long-lasting and easy to maintain as opposed to plastic, which is highly polluting from the start. From a footwear point of view, I think leather should replace plastic in sneakers as these are today the most popular footwear types yet mainly made out of plastic.”



Photo by Tom Webb.

THE UK PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNER IS...

ABIGAIL HOBBBS

“DESIGNING AND CREATING SUSTAINABLY IS ESSENTIAL IN THE MODERN FASHION INDUSTRY.”



Abigail Hobbs recently graduated from Loughborough University, where she specialised in Multimedia Textiles Design & Innovation. With a keen eye for colour and detail, she found that the possibility of experimenting with materials within fashion design is an incredibly exciting and rewarding process. Abigail particularly enjoys the conceptual research process behind developing a collection, correlating and sourcing imagery through photography, exploring exhibitions and discovering new upcoming designers.

SHE SAID

“Designing and creating sustainably is essential in the modern fashion industry, and leather is such a unique and ideal material with so much potential. Not only is it a by-product of the meat industry, but it is also durable and long-lasting, easily repairable and recyclable. Unlike faux leather, it is micro-plastic free and organic, so is much kinder to the environment. It is crucial that we utilise materials with qualities such as these over other synthetic materials, so that we can buy higher-quality products and therefore are buying less, as these are much long-lasting.”



NORDIC REGION **WINNERS**

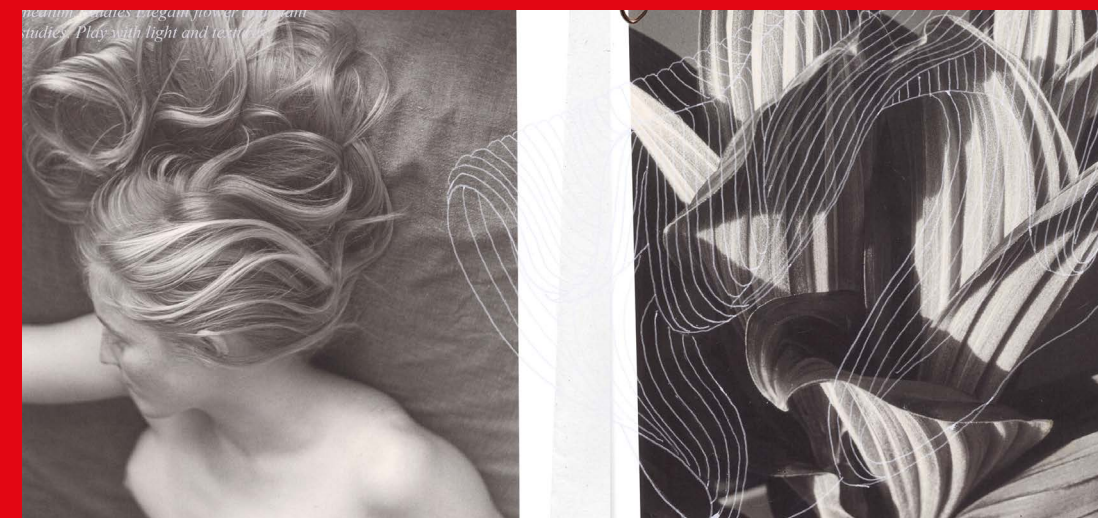
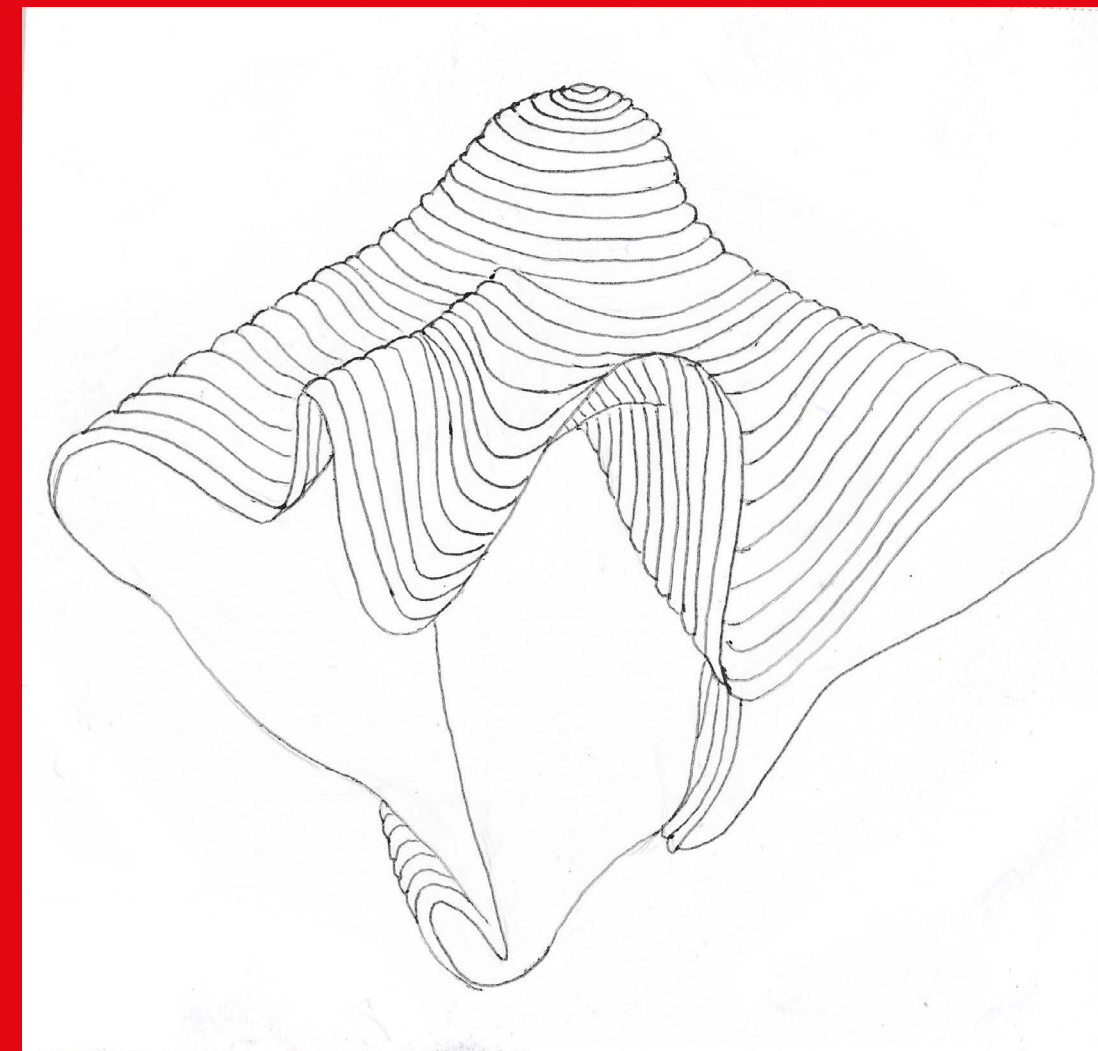
**COVERING DENMARK, FINLAND,
ICELAND, NORWAY AND SWEDEN**

**NORDIC REGION
ACCESSORIES WINNER**

**RIIKKA
PELTOLA**



Riiikka Peltola is a 28-year-old fashion designer and fibre artist from Finland. She graduated from Aalto University in 2020 with a degree in Fashion. Her passion is in creating precious knit and crochet objects by adapting traditional craft techniques into original ways of using materials. Over the past few years, she has explored slow handcraft techniques, enabling her to discover each material's qualities and develop a common language between shape, material and technique. Translating memories into a material experience by creating associations between past and present is core to her artistic practice.



SHE SAID

“Well-made and cared-for leather is a high-quality material and a product that lasts a lifetime. It gains a personal character through use, meaning it only gets better with time. Building real memories which connect us to the leather products we own and buy reduces our buying of things we don't respect.”



NORDIC REGION
APPAREL & OVERALL WINNER

EMILIA UTBULT -KARLSSON



Photo by Tom Webb*

Emilia Utbult-Karlsson is a fashion designer who graduated from Beckmans College of Design. She has a passion for providing solution-oriented designs with sustainable elements incorporated into all stages of the creative process. Her goal is to create clothing and products that are inviting and fun, with a twist. As a designer, she works in an experimental and spontaneous way with textile techniques. Ruby GG228 is about shaping Emilia's origins in a contemporary fashion context. Her point of departure has been her references to clothing from the fishing culture in Gothenburg's northern archipelago, and the move to a city. The goal was to work with a collection inspired by the fishing culture where she grew up in Öckerö and adapt it to her current context, where the historical references play an important secondary role, while the primary ones are her own created references about clothes.



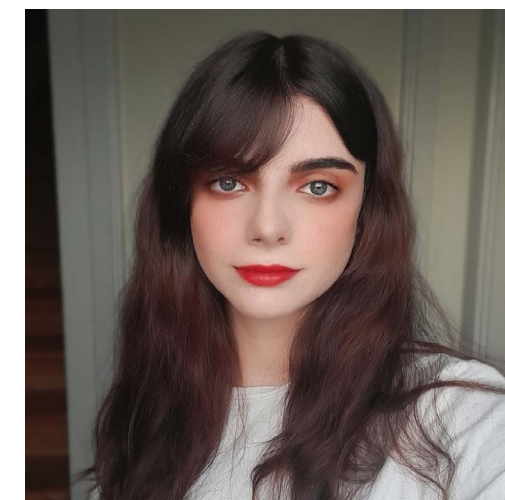
Photo by Tom Webb.

SHE SAID

"Something I learned early on in this project was to compromise, as leather is a material unlike 'regular' textile fabric – it always varies in appearance, feel and thickness. For me, this became an opportunity in my creation that opened up new paths and an interesting result, whereby I took advantage of the limited material I had and used as much as possible, which in turn had surprising results."

THE NORDIC REGION PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNER IS...

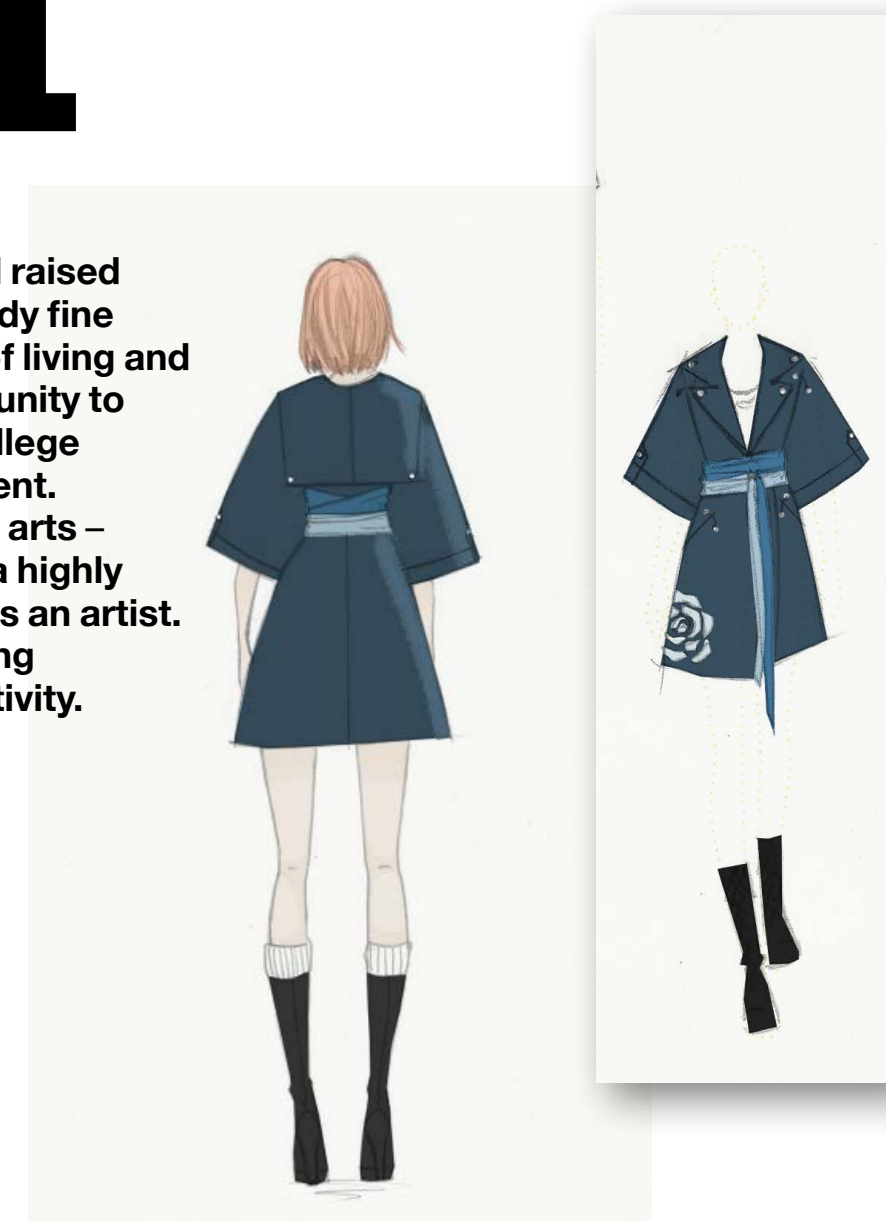
MARIA JULIA ECHARTE PASCUAL



Maria Julia Echarte Pascual was born and raised in Tenerife before moving to Madrid to study fine art and fashion design. After a few years of living and working in Spain, she received the opportunity to further her education at VIA University College in Denmark, where she is currently a student. Her interests lie in history, fashion and the arts – which she attributes to her mother being a highly skilled seamstress and designer, as well as an artist. Being surrounded by creative people during her childhood helped shape her own creativity.

SHE SAID

“I am a huge fan of leather styles, and I believe that the more we work with it and the deeper the research, we can find out how to make it more sustainable, and how to respect the environment and the life of the people that work in the factories. This motivates me to work towards fashion that is fair-minded, slower and respectful.”



AND THE INTERNATIONAL WINNERS ARE...



The International Student Design Competition saw a record-breaking number of entries from more than 20 countries across the globe. Voting closed with 42,000 people deciding the People's Choice Winners across the International, UK and Nordic Competitions.

The judging for the International Overall Winner took place in London, where all winning designs from the International Competition and overall winning designs from the Regional Competitions were on display as part of a capsule collection.

INTERNATIONAL
OVERALL & APPAREL WINNER

GAL **“SOCIALLY LED VALUES ARE SHAPING
CONTEMPORARY CULTURE”**
BENJAMIN

Gal Benjamin is a 24-year-old designer currently based in Israel, who specialises in menswear atelier, pattern cutting and gender neutral/mixed FM fashion. Their work explores the distinctly stereotypical masochistic worlds of motorsport and, as a contrast, the works of Pierre Solage and Hans Hartong, pioneers in the genre of lyrical abstraction, characterised by free, emotional and personal compositions that are unrelated to objective reality. Their designs are made using advanced pattern cutting and sewing techniques in leather, emphasising zero-waste techniques, as well as items designed with consideration and sewn fully from leather leftovers.



Gal Benjamin pictured with their design Alexithymia.

They said:

“Movements and socially led values are shaping contemporary culture; gen Z consumers are concerned more than ever about brands’ sustainability and ethical values. I believe that leather is somewhat an inevitable solution in the process of encouraging slow fashion that will once again make the consumer care, love and appreciate the clothes, and stop the current waste culture.”

INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION
FOOTWEAR WINNER

ANNA
MELEGH

“THERE IS A MISCONCEPTION ABOUT THE ORIGIN
OF THE SKINS USED IN THE LEATHER INDUSTRY.”



Photo by Getty.

Anna Melegh pictured with her design
Haute Couture Trash

Anna Melegh is a footwear and accessories designer turning everyday objects inside out by using the methods of surrealism. She comes from an artistic family and has nearly 10 years of art and shoe-focused education.

This started at the Secondary School of Visual Arts in Budapest, where she learned to be a leather goods maker.

She finished the BA Fashion, Textiles, Footwear & Accessories course at the University of Northampton and completed the MA Footwear at London College of Fashion in 2022.

She said:

“I think there is a misconception about the origin of the skins used in the leather industry. As I know well, more than 95% of all leather produced is the by-product of the meat industry. So leather is basically waste! This should be highlighted, as leather is a biodegradable material, long-lasting and easy to maintain, as opposed to plastic, which is highly polluting from the start. From a footwear point of view, I think leather should replace plastic in sneakers, as these are today the most popular footwear types yet mainly made out of plastic.”

LIOR WEINBERG

INTERNATIONAL
PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNER

Lior Weinberg is a 27-year-old third year fashion design student at Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art in Israel. She specialises in apparel, womenswear, lingerie and swimwear. Her work examines dress codes and uniforms over the years and the paradox that fashion creates in our need to imitate others but also distinguish ourselves from each other. The Paradox of Fashion collection deals with the question of how to create individuality in uniformity, playing with proportions, colours and new combinations. The jacket, made from leather, suede elements and Swarovski/pearl buttons, incorporates a hand-weaving technique called Intrecciato to create the checks. Lior used the subtraction technique in Photoshop, which leaves white-grey checks, to neutralise familiar elements from dress codes and examine their identity.



Lior Weinberg pictured with her design Paradox of Fashion.

She said:

“As long as the meat industry exists, leather would be wasted if not used. Also, the durability and longevity of leather are great qualities for designers to make pieces that will last for a long period of time, reducing the need for fast fashion and throwaway pieces.”

INTERNATIONAL
ACCESSORIES WINNER

GIANLUCA AMBROSINI



Photo by Tom Webb.

Gianluca Ambrosini pictured with his design The Pouch Shopping Bag.

Gianluca Ambrosini is a Peruvian accessory designer with a BFA in Industrial Design from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and is currently based in Georgia, U.S. working on his MFA in Accessory Design, specialising in handbags. His approach to design is rooted in storytelling, creating interesting and tongue-in-cheek designs that start a conversation.

He said:

“I believe leather should be at the forefront of the sustainability conversation in design. Leather is often ignored and even overlooked when discussing sustainability. However, due to its organic origins and long-lasting qualities, it is perfect to create products that last for several generations of use, instead of discardable products made with alternative materials. I believe that smart, high-quality leather products offer a great solution for overconsumption and overproduction when talking about sustainability in the world of handbags and fashion.”

THIS IS WHY WE DO IT!

One of the aims of our Student Design Competitions is to showcase the very best in leather production, design and manufacture. Fortunately, we are not left to do this alone – here's our selection of artisans who know that care runs from cow to consumer.



BILL AMBERG STUDIO'S KNEPP COLLECTION

Luxury leather designer Bill Amberg studio has collaborated with the Knepp Estate to create a sustainably sourced furniture collection. The leather comes from the hides of longhorn beef cattle that roam freely on the West Sussex estate, and the wood is from ash dieback clearance – part of an ambitious rewilding project by estate owners Charlie Burrell and Isabella Tree.

billamberg.com

ADVENE

Zi Xuan and Yijia Wang, co-founders of the handbag brand, decided not to compromise between price, style and sustainability, and set out to create a totally transparent and ethical production process and unique, fashion-forward designs at an affordable price. The brand uses 100% traceable leathers crafted in a tannery certified gold standard by the Leather Working Group.

advenedesign.com



ATP ATELIER

Founders of ATP Atelier Jonas Clason and Maj-La Pizzelli created a 'city sandal' by fusing their Stockholm style with Italian craftsmanship. The brand has led by example, principally using vegetable-tanned Tuscan Vacchetta leather from eco-friendly tanneries. Its Nappa leather is tanned using a patent-pending metal-free process, which reduces water and electricity consumption.

atpatelier.com



RECO

Launched by Paris-based designer Bea Recoder, Reco uses surplus leather to create geometric handbags. Since the materials only come in small batches, Bea developed a patchwork technique (or 'assemblage') to create soft, shapely designs made in limited-edition runs, depending on how much of each colour is available. The brand uses deadstock leathers from Leather Working Group-approved tanneries.

recoparis.com



ONWARDS

AND

UPWARDS

RLSD Student Design Competition winners from this year and previous years are going from strength to strength. Working at brands including Oscar de la Renta, Dior and Christian Louboutin, and dressing stars like Machine Gun Kelly and drumaq, their careers have really taken off.

We're not claiming credit for their talent, but we'd like to think the Student Design Competitions may have given a boost to their careers. Here they are. Meet the RLSD Student Design Competition alumni!

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

ORIOLO CLAVELL



who won the Apparel Category in the 2022 UK Student Design Competition, has not wasted any time. His Epentismo collection has been seen on the backs (and legs and arms) of a triumvirate of celebrities. Rapper and singer Machine Gun Kelly wore the trousers on stage at the Roxy, musician drumaq has sported a head-to-toe outfit and Ru Paul's Drag Race UK runner up Bimini Bon Boulash wore the dress and bag to the Business of Fashion 500 gala at Paris Fashion Week.

Oriol has also styled shoots for Pap Magazine and worked as a fashion assistant for artist and fashion designer Sarah McCormack. He has recently started working at Jaded London as an assistant womenswear designer.

IG: @oriolclavell_
LinkedIn: Oriol Clavell Sansalvador



EMILY OMESI



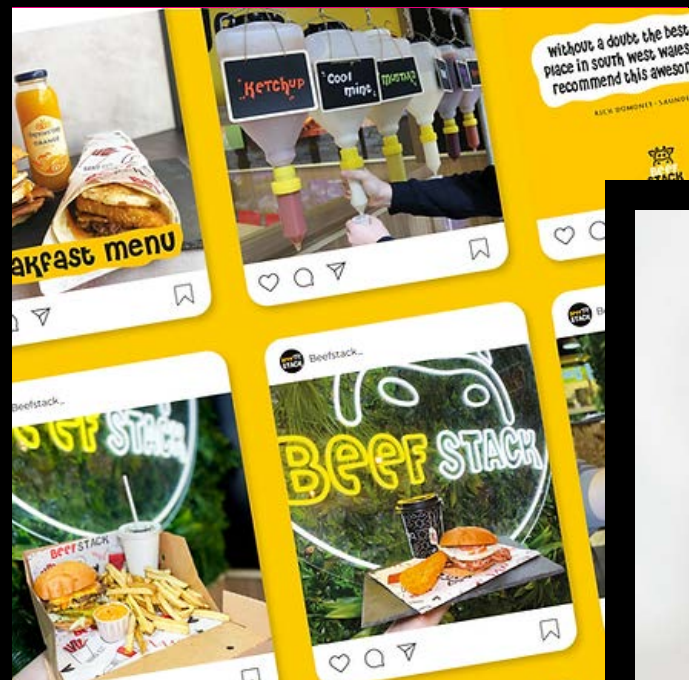
our overall and Apparel Category winner of the 2021 International Student Design Competition, is now an associate designer at Ulla Johnson following a spell as a design assistant at Oscar de la Renta.



IG: @emilyomesi
LinkedIn: Emily Omesi



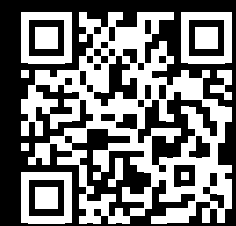
ONWARDS AND UPWARDS



CELINA SMITH

won the Accessories Category in the 2021 UK Student Design Competition. She designed gym wear for the Irish team at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and now runs her own creative content and design business called Celinajdesigns, with clients including Aver Active, Fraggell Productions and Quatro.

IG: @celinajdesigns
LinkedIn: Celina J Smith



ANNA MELEGH



who was the overall UK winner and the International Design Competition Footwear Winner in 2022, has worked as a cobbler for the famous shoe brand Christian Louboutin. She now specialises in care and repair for the same iconic brand.

IG: @annamelegh
LinkedIn: Anna Melegh



Photo by Tom Webb.



ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

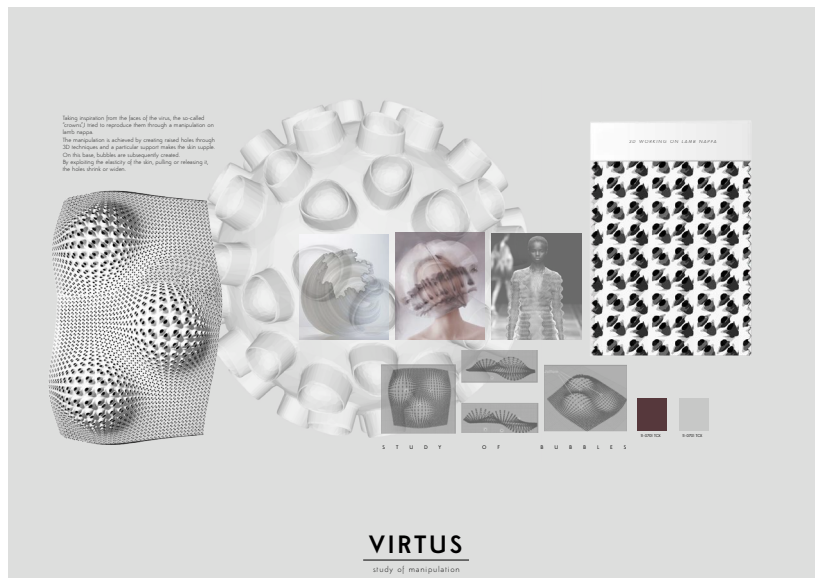


BRIGIDA

AIELLO

who won the 2020/21 Italy Student Design Competition Apparel Category, has gone straight to the top of the brand tree!

She's now a leather goods designer at Dior, having previously worked at Celine and Maison Alaïa.



IG: @brigidaiello
LinkedIn: Brigida Aiello

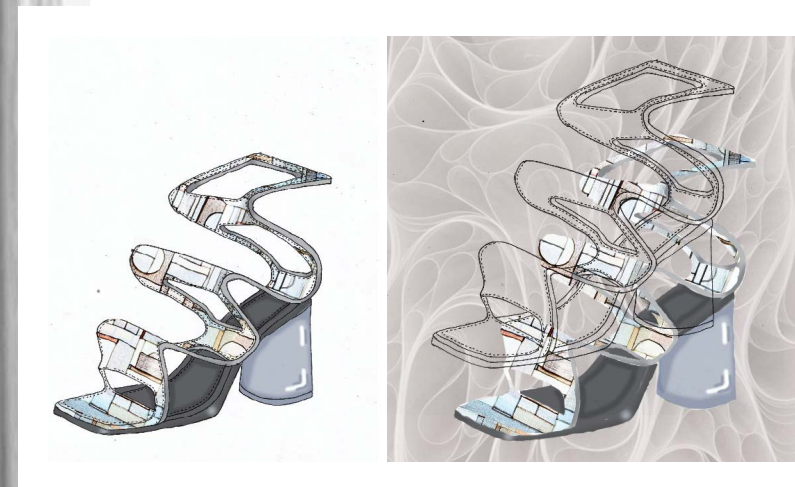


ASTRID

HEISTERBERG



won the Footwear Category in the Italy Student Design Competition in 2020/21. She is now a footwear designer at Loewe having interned at Bottega Veneta before the dream move.



IG: @astridheisterberg
LinkedIn: Astrid Heisterberg

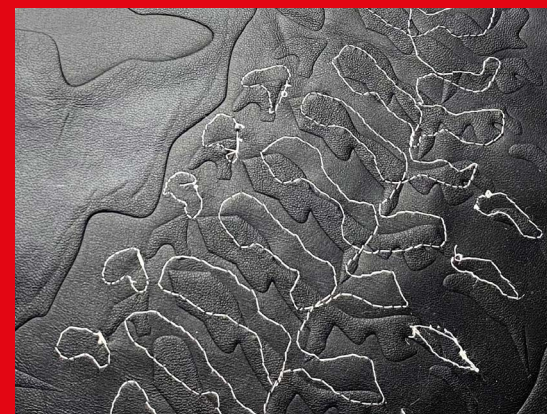
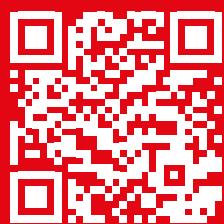


ABIGAIL HOBBS

won the UK People's Choice Category in 2022 and is now working as a brand consultant at French Connection.



IG: @abbey_hobbs.art
LinkedIn: Abigail Hobbs



EMILIA UTBULT- KARLSSON

was the Apparel and Overall Winner of the 2022 Nordic Region Student Design Competition. She's now a fashion designer and buyer at sustainable Swedish brand Movesgood.

IG: @emiliautbultkarlsson
LinkedIn: Emilia Utbult

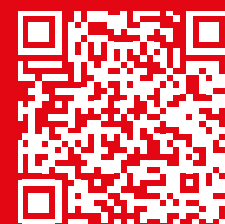


Photo by Tom Webb.



Photo by Tom Webb.

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS



Photo by Tom Webb

won the International People's Choice Category in 2022. She's now designing womenswear for Castro in Tel Aviv, Israel.

LIOR WEINBERG

IG: @liorweinberg
LinkedIn: Lior Weinberg



MARIA JULIA



won the People's Choice Category in the 2022 Nordic Region Student Design Competition and is now an intern at Danish brand SELECTED FEMME.

ECHARTE PASCUAL

IG: @ohmybubbletea
LinkedIn: Julia Echarte



LET'S

PARTY

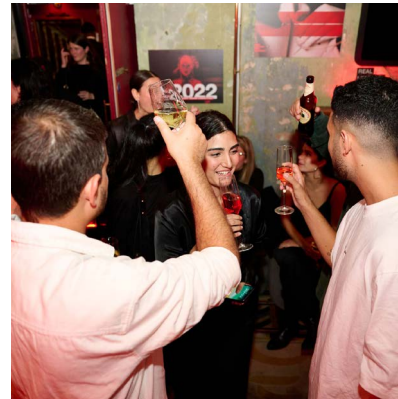
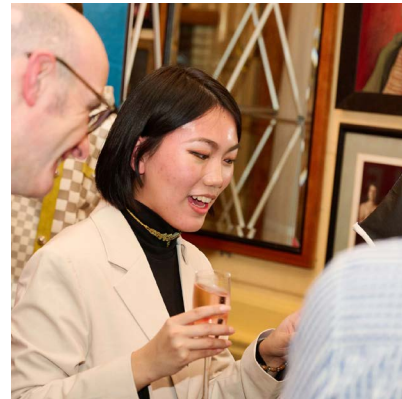
Photography by Tom Webb.

After all their hard work, it was only fair they had a little fun.



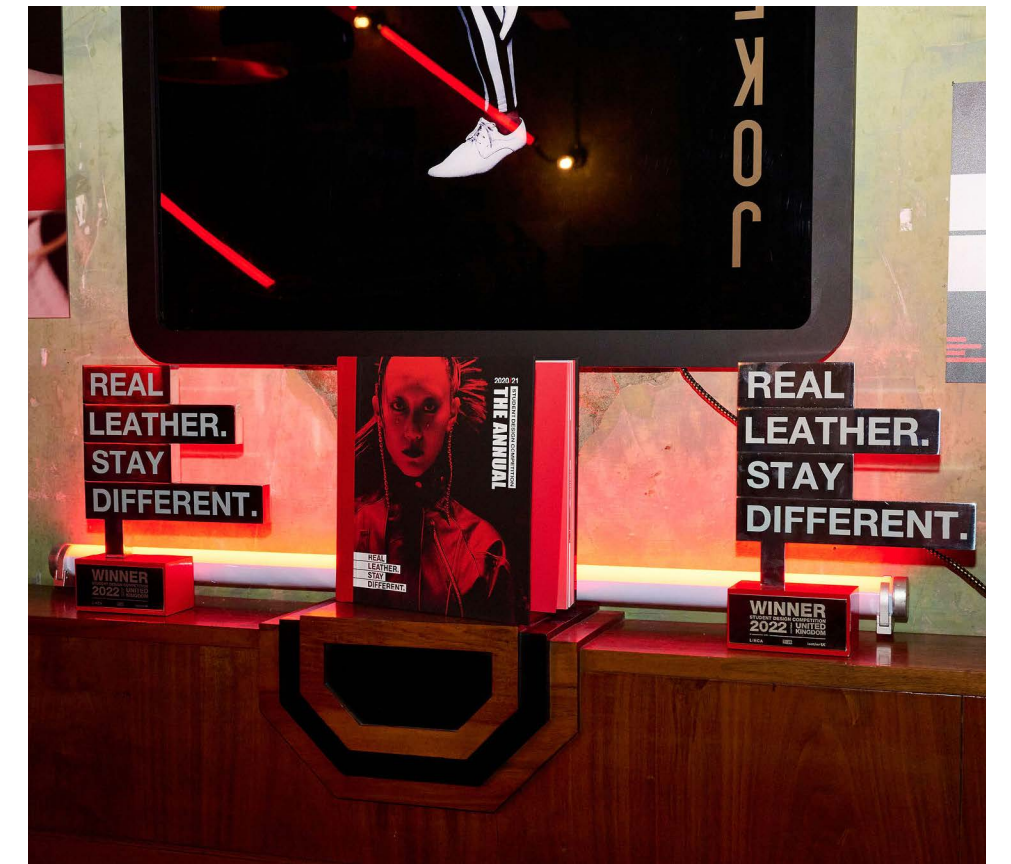


The Real Leather. Stay Different. International Student Design Competition Live Final in London was followed by an awards party attended by winners of the Regional Student Design Competitions, leading fashion industry experts including Hugo Boss Managing Director Christopher Koerber, and influencers.



Photography by Tom Webb.

The award was presented by Chairman of the Judges Kerry Brozyna, Vice President of Wolverine Worldwide. Take a look behind the scenes.



PAINT YOUR DRAGON

It's quite a career change from designing textiles in New York to travelling the world painting Japanese tattoo-inspired designs. Gina McQuen tells us how it came about. Inspiration, it seems, comes from unexpected places.



"It was a chance meeting with a Brazilian Jiu-jitsu world champion at an erotic party, actually. He told me the story of a Japanese master going to Brazil to teach the Gracie family [of martial arts experts]. The guy who I met had been taught by Hélio Gracie, and his fascination with Japanese culture ultimately passed to me."



THIS MEETING HAPPENED AFTER A SUCCESSFUL CAREER THAT GINA HAD BECOME DISILLUSIONED WITH

"I studied as a textile designer - textiles and surface pattern - in Taunton [Somerset, UK], and I worked at that for 20 years. I worked in New York for five years. And when digital came in, I did a photoshop course and found myself on the computer all the time. And my passion just went. Everything we did in textile design was all hand painted on paper and luxury fabrics. And that stopped."

AFTER THE MEETING AT THE PARTY, GINA SET TO WORK IMMERSING HERSELF IN JAPANESE CULTURE

"I went to the British Library to study samurai and one thing led to another, and I discovered Horiyoshi III, the oldest living tattoo artist in Japan. And his work just blew me away. He blew me away! So I decided to research the masters of Japanese tattooing.

Inspired by this, I got a marker pen and started hand drawing samurai warriors on my 10-year-old sofa. And it looked pretty good. I thought, wow, I need to really research and find out everything I can about leather, everything I can about the products that will adhere to the leather to make this art functional.

I hand painted a section of the sofa then sent it to Horiyoshi in Japan, and he sent me back an original painting. And then I just went on from there. And then people got to know about me through Instagram. And a lot of customers would send me jackets, furniture, bags... And I would paint them and send them back. One thing led to another, and I've had enough commissions to keep me going. I've just done a commission in Porto. There were nine padded leather panels to paint.

They're actually at the back of the restaurant, mounted on the walls. And the customers lean against them. So it's functional art. I did a dragon panel going into a phoenix panel, going into cranes, and then finishing up with rabbits and foxes. It all has some meaning. There are lots of stories and mythology behind traditional Japanese tattooing. That is what I really love. It really changed the whole of the restaurant. When you walk in, it has got a completely different feeling about it. It's really added a lot of value to it."

SO WHY DID SHE CHOOSE OUR FAVOURITE MATERIAL?

"For me, it's all leather now. It's the longevity. I wanted to learn how to look after it. And because I wanted to produce art that looks like tattoos, well... It's pretty close to skin. And my technique is very similar to tattooing. You do the lines first, and then you do the shading, then you build it all up from there.

It has to cure for about two weeks to a month, depending on the size. All the paint goes into the leather and really becomes a part of it. After the curing, you get a leather protection cream, which stops it from fading in the sun. This is how you look after your leather. Any leather that you buy, you really should look after. It's all about sustainability. Never throw anything leather away. Because you can repair. Once I follow this process, it will last as long as the leather that it's on, because it almost becomes a part of it."

"I also did a piece for a David Bowie exhibition. I found out he was really inspired by the kabuki theater of Japan. So I did this chair, and it was all different images inspired by kabuki."

DOES SHE HAVE A FAVORITE PIECE?

"It was a secondhand sofa, a two-seater, which was given to me. It was tan colour, and I wanted to test my skills, so I recoloured it gray and then hand painted with white. It looked like lace. Oh, it looked really beautiful, very detailed. It looked very delicate, and people couldn't understand how it was done. They didn't realise it was painted."

WHERE WILL GINA'S TALENT TAKE HER NEXT?

"There are quite a few exciting projects. I'm going to New York to paint a couple of sofas, and hopefully towards the end of the year I'll be traveling to Lisbon and Barcelona. But in the meantime, I'm working on a new project: headboards for beds. I love art that is practical."



TAIWAN REGION GOLD ACCESSORIES WINNER TA-TUNG LIN TELLS US ALL ABOUT HIS DESIGN

TELL US ABOUT THE INSPIRATION BEHIND YOUR PROJECT

When someone is riding a motorcycle and carrying luggage or other items, it can cause a distraction. So I combined leather goods with motorcycles and created Biker&leathers to solve this problem. These multipurpose leather storage goods can be dismantled and then used as a rear or side backpack.

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES LEATHER A GREAT MATERIAL TO DESIGN WITH?

Leather is one of the by-products of cattle farming; it is durable and eco-friendly. Putting aside the pursuit of famous brands, leather is the earliest technology used by human beings. The charm of leather is in our DNA.

HOW DO YOU THINK WINNING THIS COMPETITION WILL IMPACT YOUR CAREER AS A DESIGNER?

I have more confidence in materials, in craftsmanship and design concepts. This will drive me to continue designing and crafting.

HOW HAS THIS COMPETITION INFLUENCED YOUR VIEW OF WORKING WITH LEATHER IN THE FUTURE?

After I graduate from college, I want to create a brand with two main purposes: rider leather and fine leather carving customization, and of course general leather goods.

THE JOURNEY TO THE FINAL

Some people might find a two-wheel trip from Taitung to Taipei a little daunting. The heavy traffic in the cities and the journey of more than 200 miles are a lot to take on. But Ta-Tung's lifelong love of motorcycles meant there was only one way to get himself and his design to the finals.

There was no better way to show how practical Biker&leathers really are. And no better way to prove his faith in his design – conquer the ride with the beautiful panniers and backpack in place, cruise into the competition, then cruise home a winner.



NEXT MEET THE NEW BREED GENERATION



As we've seen with our competition entrants, there are plenty of people around the world with the right idea about leather. We'd like you to meet three companies that are doing the right thing and doing their best to make sure leather is at the heart of the sustainable fashion future.



TED LOUISE

WHAT MAKES YOUR COMPANY DIFFERENT?

Ted Louise is more than a bag for its clients. It is a brand that empowers and identifies with its customers.

WHY IS LEATHER SO IMPORTANT TO YOU, AND WHAT OTHER MATERIALS DO YOU USE?

We discovered a tanning method called Zeology-Leather, and we are the first leather bag brand in Europe to make a complete collection with it. Zeology-Leather is real, natural leather that incorporates advanced chemistry which increases biodegradability, improving its circularity. This ensures the leather in your shoe, bag or lounge chair is not only compostable but also biodegradable. You can return it to the earth (not that you would want to)!

WHAT IS YOUR SIGNATURE PRODUCT/WHAT ITEM BEST SUMS UP YOUR PHILOSOPHY?

The Sylvie is where it all began. Ted designed it after being frustrated with the chaos of my handbag. There are specially designed compartments for your pens and AirPods, a hook for your keys and even a built-in wallet, so you open your bag and you can see everything immediately.

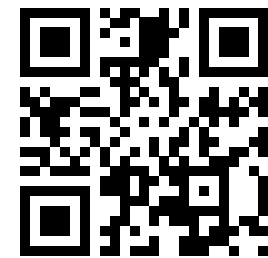
WHAT DOES TED LOUISE STAND FOR?

Ted Louise stands for an organised bag with the highest-quality leather: full grain leather. The bags are elegant, daring and have a classy look with a fashion twist. It's all in the details!

WHAT DOES RLSD SAY?

Great design, great looks and, most importantly, great-quality, sustainable leather.

Find out more at tedlouise.com



WHAT MAKES YOUR COMPANY DIFFERENT?

HEREU takes its name from the Catalan word for 'heir'. True to this moniker, the brand has worked since 2014 to produce contemporary accessories that redefine a rich heritage. HEREU's shoes, bags and small leather goods are crafted in Spain by a network of family-run manufacturers.

WHY IS LEATHER SO IMPORTANT TO YOU AND WHAT OTHER MATERIALS DO YOU USE?

Every HEREU garment is made from Spanish or Italian leather sourced in compliance with The Leather Group ethical standards. We take responsibility in selecting exclusively leathers that are by-products from the meat and dairy industries. All our canvas linings are made from Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)-certified organic cotton, while the nets for our SS22 collection are entirely recycled. We strive for a minimal impact on our planet: all our components, including packaging, are consciously sourced from local suppliers.



WHAT IS YOUR SIGNATURE PRODUCT/WHAT ITEM BEST SUMS UP YOUR PHILOSOPHY?

All of them! Our brand's essence lays in exceptional design brought to life through artisanal heritage to craft timeless items. Each limited piece of enduring beauty is fabricated with materials of the highest quality.

WHAT DOES HEREU STAND FOR?

At HEREU, each item is an expression of our maker's individual calling by engaging handweaving mastery, exclusively preserved by women since the 1970s – as well as the ancient Spanish moccasin-making and espadrille hand-sewing expertise.

WHAT DOES RLSD SAY?

It is obvious how much thought and care goes into the design and crafting of HEREU products. Each shoe or accessory is a celebration of sustainable leather.

Find out more at hereustudio.com



HEREU



KOVERED

FOUNDED IN 2013 IN A SMALL STUDIO IN BATH, UK, A LOVE OF NATURE AND A PASSION FOR TECHNOLOGY BOUGHT TOGETHER A SMALL COLLECTIVE OF ENGINEERS, DESIGNERS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS. TEN YEARS LATER, THEY HAVE JUST SOLD THEIR **25,000TH BAG.**

WHAT MAKES YOUR COMPANY DIFFERENT?

Inspired by nature, we design and make bags that combine natural materials, timeless design and boutique craftsmanship. We believe in quality, care and creating unique pieces that everyone can enjoy. Colourful, creative and inspired by what we see every day, each bag represents what we love about the world we live in. We hope they'll inspire you too.

WHY IS LEATHER SO IMPORTANT TO YOU, AND WHAT OTHER MATERIALS DO YOU USE?

We use leather residues from tanneries and other manufacturers to ensure no further wastage. Our high-quality brass hardware is suitable to be continually recycled by melting down – a process that is widely used throughout the world. Also, we ensure our cotton is from recycled sources and every bit of manufactured material is utilised.

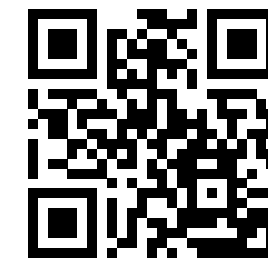
WHAT IS YOUR SIGNATURE PRODUCT/WHAT ITEM BEST SUMS UP YOUR PHILOSOPHY?

The Tay waxed canvas rolltop backpack is where it all started. Each element is considered with the health of the planet in mind. In colours inspired by nature, the Tay is made from reclaimed leather, recyclable organic cotton and recyclable brass hardware.



WHAT DOES KOVERED STAND FOR?

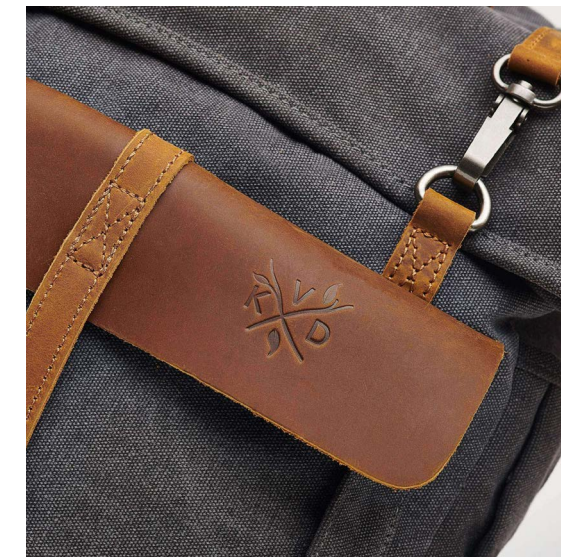
Reuse, recycle and repurpose is central to our business, so we consider sustainability in every design, operation and delivery decision we make.



WHAT DOES RLSD SAY?

Kovered's bags look good and last for ages. As we know, durability is vital for people who want to reduce consumption—look after these bags, and you'll never need to replace them.

Find out more at covered.co.uk



INDUSTRY ON THE MOVE



**WE MAY BE CELEBRATING
LEATHER'S SUSTAINABILITY,
BUT THAT'S NO REASON
TO STAND STILL...**

**HERE, WE INTRODUCE SOME
INDUSTRY INNOVATIONS THAT
ARE MAKING A GREAT MATERIAL
OR PRODUCT EVEN BETTER.**

SOURCING

With more than 130 million hides going to landfill every year, there is no excuse to source any from deforested lands. The leather industry has an obligation to ensure no support is given to destructive practices. Tapestry, the parent company of Coach, partnered with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to provide a \$3 million grant to support the elimination of deforestation of Brazilian rainforests due to cattle production.

The not-for-profit organisation Sustainable Leather Foundation (SLF) provides an audit and certification standard for organisations involved in the manufacture of leather. This measures their environmental, social and governance performance against a set of recognised standards and limits. The SLF Transparency Dashboard allows the consumer to check this performance before making buying decisions.

The SLF believes the leather industry is well positioned to be a positive driver for a sustainable cycle of production that safeguards against the exploitation of people and finite planet resources.

Other projects include mapping the leather supply chain, developing a traceability roadmap and quantifying the environmental footprint of the clothes you wear. These will help to inform suppliers, manufacturers and consumers about deforestation risks and steps the industry can take to increase traceability to meet supply chain due diligence and give consumers confidence.

With clarity, best practice supply chains become the supply chains of choice – moving whole industries and sectors to adopt and champion best practice.

WATER USE

The tanning industry is often regarded as having very high water consumption because, historically, it has. But great strides have been taken to change this, and many companies are striving to do better.

The benefits of using less water for tanning can be more than just the obvious. They can also mean fewer chemicals are needed, which, of course, will reduce the amount of residual chemicals and pollutants that need to be treated.

The treatment of water is also key. If the water that is used is cleaned well enough, it can be returned to the environment, meaning that any losses are marginal – the water can be reused by the tannery or to irrigate crops.

There are four main ways of cleaning the water. Filtration techniques have become more sophisticated and will easily remove chromium (III) for reuse. Evaporation has the same effect and is particularly effective for the removal of salt, as it leaves heavier

elements behind. Coagulants can be added to the water that bind with waste to leave a sediment which can be safely disposed of. And naturally occurring bacteria can be used (*Pseudomonas stutzeri* is one of the most effective) to clean water by consuming elements disruptive to the environment.

Processes have been refined so much recently that the amount of water used has reduced by 35% in the last 25 years. And techniques are still advancing. An exciting new way to reduce water consumption is by adding small polymer balls (trade name sFeres) to the tanning solution. This drives the solution deeper and more uniformly into the hide, cutting water use by a further 30-40%. The sFeres can be used hundreds of times and recycled when no longer useable.

And for those that are wondering - 90% of the water used in the rearing of cattle falls from the sky as rain, is captured in plants, eaten or drunk from troughs and returns to the ecosystem as urine and manure!

TANNING

Great progress has been made in cleaning up the tanning industry in recent years. Chrome compounds can now be recovered after use in a state good enough to be reused, cutting the need for the sourcing of new chrome supplies and preventing it from entering the environment.

Chrome is used by the tanning industry, as we know. It is chromium (III) in the form of chrome mineral salts. This type of chromium is not hazardous to health. In fact, it is one of our dietary requirements, occurring naturally in foods such as apples and green peppers. Drinking water is allowed to contain 50 micrograms per litre.

The toxic variation, hexavalent chromium or chromium (VI), is not used in the tanning process. It is possible for chromium (III) to convert to chromium (VI), but this needs extreme temperatures and oxidative conditions. These conditions are easily avoided by good tanners.

A number of companies that supply chemicals for leather have been pioneering methods of extracting chemicals that do not rely on the use of fossil fuels. This will help tanners further reduce their carbon footprints without compromising on the quality of the leather they produce, making leather even more sustainable compared with entirely fossil fuel-derived materials that are marketed as alternatives.

WASTE

Waste is one of the biggest challenges facing the planet today. Food waste, discarded plastics, textiles and even landfilled or burned cowhides emit greenhouse gasses and endanger delicate ecosystems.

The very act of using leather prevents waste by upcycling cowhide to leather goods, but 130 million hides are still thrown away every year. Later in the chain, manufacturers are continually working to cut the leather waste that occurs during production.

The precision of laser cutting means less material is discarded, and there are many innovations in how to use trimmings and even dust. Larger trimmings can be used for small accessories or larger products made from woven leather or patchwork. Smaller trimmings can be shredded and used to stuff furniture or cushions, or even for insulation.

Dust can be recycled as well. It can be ground into a fine powder for use as filler in products such as asphalt and rubber.

The end of life of leather is also being extended as more and more individuals and companies turn to upcycling of old leather clothes, accessories and furniture. Although leather biodegrades in 10 – 50 years, this saves old products from being thrown away.

Old leather products can also be recycled by grinding or pulverising, then combining with other materials to make composite materials for car parts, insulation or acoustic panels for buildings.

“GREENHOUSE GASES ARE RELEASED WHEN THE OIL IS EXTRACTED AND WHEN THE PLASTICS ARE PRODUCED.”

Alternatives to leather, such as polyurethane and polyvinyl chloride (PVC), are made from oil. This means greenhouse gases are released when the oil is extracted AND when the plastics are produced.

Of course, greenhouse gasses are produced when leather is made, but there is a huge trade-off. Firstly, with the emissions that would be created if the hides were abandoned and, secondly, with the emissions that would be created making the alternatives that would be needed if the leather were not produced. The use of leather stops the creation of both of these emission streams.

We also need to look what happens at leather's end of life. Not only do leather goods last longer, get more use and, are more easily repaired than alternatives, when they are finally abandoned, they biodegrade in 50 years or less. Synthetics take up to 500 years.

So how do we shift from the fast fashion model to slow style? We cherish and use what we have. And we repair, we repurpose and we recycle. And what material do we think lends itself best to these things? Take a wild guess!

FOUR FAST FASHION FIGHTERS

Centre for Sustainable Fashion

Based at London College of Fashion, this group researches environmental and social impacts and works with fashion businesses to help them become more sustainable. It has helped Kering, H&M and Nike, among others, to establish new practices to reduce carbon emissions and waste.



Greenpeace

A non-profit group established specifically to champion the environment, Greenpeace campaigns against clothes waste and overproduction, plastic pollution and the mistreatment of workers. Nike, Adidas and H&M have all pledged to change their production practices following Greenpeace's campaigning.



TRAID

This charity is dedicated to increasing clothes reuse, educating consumers and funding development projects to improve the textile industry. It raises money from a network of shops selling used clothes. It also funds organisations working worldwide to improve textile producers' working conditions.



Waste & Resource Action Programme

This charity works to extend the life of clothing and reduce clothing waste worldwide. It aims to transform the plastics economy to eliminate plastic pollution, tackle the throwaway clothing culture and transform recycling into a system that emphasises material quality. It also campaigns and advises on the avoidance of food waste.



RESOURCES

For more information on the Real Leather. Stay Different. Student Design Competitions, and features on the sustainability of leather, its production, uses and craft techniques, see:

chooserealleather.com
usleather.org
thesustainabilityalliance.us
thousandhillslifetimegrazed.com
rlsd.internationaldesigncomp.com

For information on sustainability, water use and regenerative farming, see:

chooserealleather.com
usleather.org
thesustainabilityalliance.us
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Mythbusting panels

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www.usleather.org

Slow style

worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/09/23/costo-moda-medio-ambiente

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE COMPETITIONS

AND THANKS

Real Leather. Stay Different. would like to thank the following people and organisations, without whose help and support the competitions could never have taken place. Our International Competition partners were Arts Thread (artsthread.com), the Institute of Digital Fashion (institute-digital.fashion) and AForce (aforce.co.uk).

ARTS THREAD is the leading digital platform for emerging artists and designers, a launchpad for the next generation of creative talent representing 300,000 students in more than 100 countries from over 850 design schools.

The Institute of Digital Fashion (IoDF) is leading the conversation on fashion and design in the metaverse while encouraging sustainable practices through the latest technologies. Holding six Industry Firsts, IoDF offers a platform and manifesto to restructure how technology and digital are used from creation to consumer via education, activations and discourse. IoDF's work is moving the industry beyond its hierarchical traditions.

AForce is a luxury leather goods manufacturer with a strong focus on sustainability in product manufacture and material use, innovation and supporting the next generation of young designers. Based in London, England, its motto is simple: "Leather for good".

The China Mainland Competition was run in conjunction with the CLIA – chinaleather.org. The CLIA is a national transregional organisation dedicated to the promotion of the leather industry. It has more than 1,400 companies and organisations as members.

The Taiwan Region Competition was run in conjunction with the Taiwanese International Leather Association (TILA) – leathernaturally.org. The TILA represents Taiwanese companies and organisations involved in the production, supply and distribution of leather.

The UK Competition was run in conjunction with Leather UK – leatheruk.org. Leather UK is the trade association for the UK leather industry. Established in 1908, it works to promote the sustainable growth of the UK leather industry.

We would also like to thank everyone who entered the competitions, and the staff at their schools and colleges who helped and inspired them. They are the reason for the incredible success of the competitions. Thank you.

Real Leather. Stay Different. is a campaign from the Leather & Hide Council of America as part of its sustainability program, developed and implemented in partnership with gtandi.co.uk. This program ranges from leading on life cycle assessments for leather to drive carbon out of the supply chain to challenging fast fashion and the impacts it has on people and the planet.

Thank you.

ARTS
THREAD



leather UK



A FORCE LONDON
BRITISH MANUFACTURER

