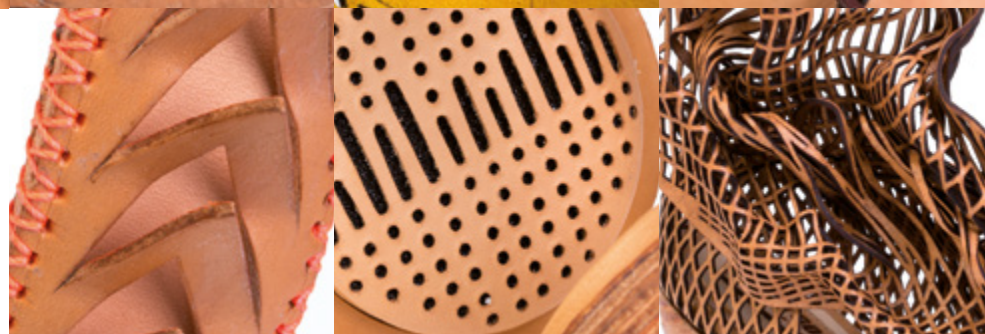




**CRAFT** THE  
LEATHER  
2016







THE PROJECT





**Diane Becker**  
Tutor  
Craft the Leather

## Time

The time it takes to grow, to ripen, to mature, to master a craft to the level of excellence. Time we can feel in the architecture and artifacts of people who came before us, who took the time to leave their mark and create lasting beauty. Time we witness in the cycle of agriculture from planting to harvest, and then the time of transformation, as from grapes to wine. The time it takes to tan the hides with vegetable tannins to create Tuscan Veg Tan Leather... it takes time, it is not instantaneous on-demand. The ability to use tools to transform the leather into objects with the assured gesture of the master craftsman requires time and practice. And the objects produced have their own transformation over time; they are made of a material that has a long season of usefulness, before returning to the earth. So we must take time to be thoughtful in our intent of what we make.

The Craft the Leather workshop based in the Leather District of Tuscany provides a rare experience of so many of these aspects of time in a cultural surround that resonates the values embodied in the material we explore.

The landscape shows the hand of man in olive groves and vineyards, and wine and oil are fundamental to meals. We eat classic Tuscan fare, closely aligned with 0 km local production and the crops ripe in the season.

We live in the monumental Convent of Santa Chiara, a structure dedicated to learning since the 14th Century, in San Miniato, on the pilgrimage route from Canterbury to Rome. All of this attunes us to the respect the industry has for its place in the environment and in the heritage of place. The production of vegetable tanned leather is on a very human scale. It is not large industry, automated and robotized, it deals with a product that ultimately is highly individual- every skin is unique, and each season impacts the process.

The agents of choice to transform raw hides into precious leather are vegetable tannins – a natural process by definition, closely akin to the strong agricultural traditions of the area. The integration of tradition and the constant research to improve the process, to raise the quality of the product while minimizing environmental impact is clear in the investment of the tanneries in the services of the Technological Pole PO TE CO and the water purification plants. This aspect of serious commitment to sustainable responsibility always adds a thought provoking dimension to the poetic story of a material destined for high-end accessories and individual craftsmen. It is the material to make objects that can and will last a long time, and get better over time.

The tanners care because they live here; they are the stewards of one of the most beautiful places in the world, balanced between benevolent nature and the artistic patrimony of some of the finest works of man. And during Craft the Leather, we live here too and fall into its rhythms, become part of the time of this place. This provides the insight and inspiration that is shaped by these young designer/makers into their collections. Each project is a distillation of the impressions of their visit and the culture of their creative development. It is an experience of excellent balance of values and hard work, which hopefully may continue to inform their own individual paths, over time.

## Hands

The Greek philosopher Anaxagoras (5th. Century BC) claimed that “the hand is the man itself”, since the hand holds in itself the power and the magic of man; it expresses his emotions, conveys his feelings, shows his intentions, interprets his will, and gives shape to his ideas and thoughts.

During the evolutionary history of the human race the refinement of manipulative skills has always been strictly connected to the growth of brain volume. So we may assume that our hands are our most important source of information about the world. With our hands we touch and use objects and can understand if they are products of high quality.

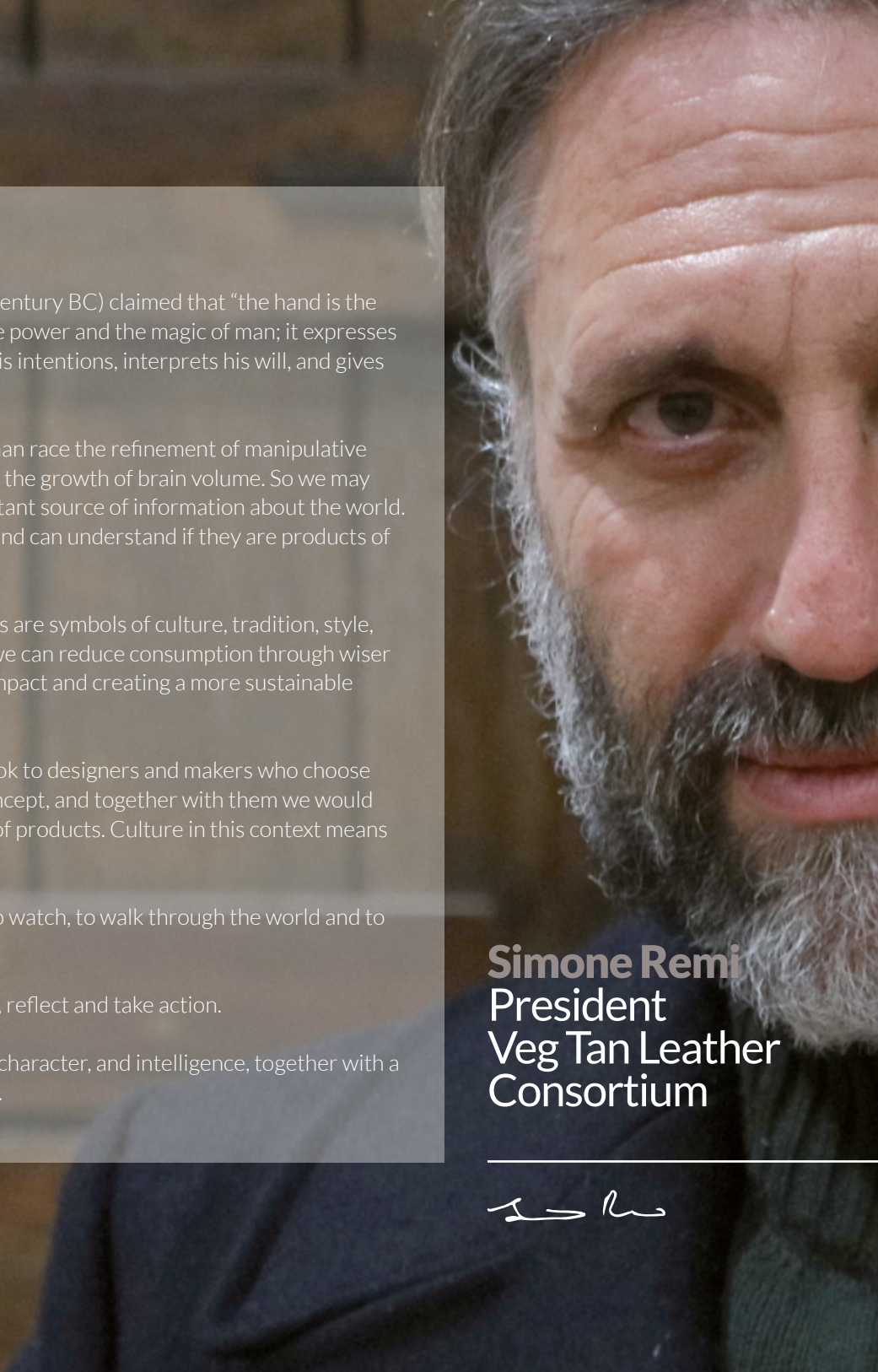
Objects tell their stories: valuable products are symbols of culture, tradition, style, and know-how. When we choose quality, we can reduce consumption through wiser purchases, benefiting our environmental impact and creating a more sustainable lifestyle.

We, at the Veg Tan Leather Consortium, look to designers and makers who choose quality as the keyword of their creative concept, and together with them we would like to collaborate to create a new culture of products. Culture in this context means tradition, skill and time.

We all need time to think, to understand, to watch, to walk through the world and to talk to other people.

Take your time! Pay attention, concentrate, reflect and take action.

I strongly believe that in our job creativity, character, and intelligence, together with a bit of courage, are fundamental to succeed.



**Simone Remi**  
President  
Veg Tan Leather  
Consortium





THE DESIGNERS





UK

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UK

Aleksandra Kukula

ITA

Giulia Andreoli

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Shannen Gallardo

JPN

Masahiro Abe

USA

Whitney Yu Bai

NLD

Helga Sigurdardottir

KOR

Young Bin Kong

JPN

Nasami Kushino





JPN

## Giving Life Back to The Shoes

Leather used to be skins, animals. We had precious experiences in Tuscany and the chance to see how Veg-Tanned leather is made at the tanneries. The natural manufacturing process that was sustainable and also recognized that it was part of the cycle of life, inspired me. Life is beautiful, though every single life will end someday. And after that, the next generation will rise up. No time to waste, we need to know who we are, need to break out our own shell. I put that thought into 3 pairs of shoes. A bird, the ground and a molting creature -I gave them second lives to remember where they come from.

Skills I used: cutting with knife, coloring, natural exposure to sunlight. I chose cutting because I wanted to try something 3 dimensional. Coloring is a skill that I use for most of my works or repairs. It is self-taught with some advise by professional footwear colorists. Sun tanning is, I think, the best way to show the special features of this leather, which is called natural patina. Changing color indicates how old it is, and how much it has been used.

These experimentations are very different from my dress style shoes, but it is exactly for this reason that my stay in Italy was so exciting and valuable.

*Masahiro Abe*

**Masahiro Abe**  
Bunka Fashion College  
Tokyo - Japan





**Masahiro Abe**  
Bunka Fashion College,  
*Tokyo - Japan*

**文化服装学院**  
BUNKA FASHION COLLEGE





ITA

## Molecule

This project represents the structure of the tannin molecule's composition. Natural tannins are what give the leather structure in vegetable tanned leather. The laser cut motif echoes the patterns of tannins as seen under a microscope.

Like molecules, our memories make us who we are and who we become, and so a box made of leather for our precious things, with time, becomes more and more beautiful, the leather retains the marks of its history and the box contains the memories.

The geometrical structure of the box refers to the chemical structure of the natural elements of the tannins (mimosa, quebracho, chestnut).

To enhance the concept, the boxes have been coloured with natural dyes to represent the plants the tannins are made of: mimosa, quebracho, chestnut, and are coloured respectively with: turmeric, blueberries, and spirulina.

*Giulia Andreoli*



**Giulia  
Andreoli**

IED Istituto Europeo  
di Design  
Roma - Italia



# Giulia Andreoli

IED Istituto Europeo  
di Design  
*Roma- Italia*







USA

## Tuned Out

The collection materializes the non-musical function of headphones: people use them not (just) for music, but to immerse themselves into white noise, to create private oasis in public, to build “invisible cubicles”, and to shield themselves from interacting with others. Sometimes we wear headphones to be alone even when we are surrounded by people.

“White Noise. This over-ear headphone echoes this concept of white noise manifested by the randomly generated patterns and shapes in the front plate, the ear cup housing, and the band.

“Do Not Disturb”— The idea of this headphone is simple and direct—nothing says “leave me alone” like the universal do not disturb sign, a simple minimal look to emphasize the directness of its intent.

“Defensive Armor”— How can you protect yourselves from being approached or bothered? This on-ear headphone bumps this up a notch with its obvious visual cues referencing a spiky armor.

The veg tan leather headphones will respond to their users and environments, and develop distinct individual stories with time. TUNED OUT is to start a conversation regarding the relationship among objects, environments, and human interactions.

*Whitney Bai*

**Whitney  
Yu Bai**  
Rhode Island  
School of Design  
Providence RI - USA





**Whitney  
Yu Bai**  
Rhode Island  
School of Design  
*Providence RI - USA*







USA

## Sueño Despierto

This is a collection that promotes universal peace and eternal love among all people. The avant-garde look incorporates pieces that are normally representative of violence, but with a pro-peace twist. After witnessing the atrocities of terrorism that occurred around the world this summer, I did not want my designs to be interpreted as an endorsement of violence. The ammo-harness holds a flower in each of the ammunition slots, meant to shed light on the anti-war movements.

The codpiece is representative of the international controversy behind female mutilation throughout the world. I realized the platform I have as a designer is to project a positive message through my work. Sueño Despierto: "I dream with my eyes open".

*Shannen Gallardo*

**Shannen  
Gallardo**

Fashion Institute  
of Technology  
New York NY - USA





# Shannen Gallardo

Fashion Institute  
of Technology  
New York NY - USA

**FIT** Fashion Institute of Technology  
State University of New York





**Kira Anne  
Goodey**  
Royal College of Art  
London - UK

## Orlandi's Opera

My collection is named after Deodato Orlandi's beautiful 13th century opera that hangs in the convent of San Miniato. This exquisite depiction of the crucifixion painted on a large wooden cross evokes the spirit of the Tuscan region – its rich history, steeped in the crafts and an appreciation for tradition and aesthetics. This sentiment is echoed in the exquisite veg-tanned leather produced in Tuscany to this day.

The most beautiful feature of Orlandi's painting is the delicate sash tied around Christ's waist. It is rendered so subtly to be almost invisible – the drapes so light and gentle it would appear to flutter at the slightest breeze – in dynamic contrast to the robust wood onto which it is painted. I have explored this dichotomy of fragility and strength in my collection by showcasing two contrasting characteristics of veg tanned leather – its ability to be both delicate and sturdy. I have mimicked the intricate folds of the sash in the lace like uppers of the shoes, which appear caught in a gust of wind or falling softly to the ground. This is juxtaposed against the solid stacked leather heels of the shoes that are strong enough to hold the weight of a person.

*Kira Goodey*



UK



**Kira Anne  
Goodey**  
Royal College of Art  
London - UK

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**Royal College of Art**  
Postgraduate Art and Design







KOR

## Slug

My inspiration for this work is a creature that lives under the sea called 'Sea Slug'. I was inspired by its beautiful and unique colors. Most of them have combination of at least two different colors that are rare but harmonious. I thought using complementary colors would best show this interesting feature. Color is one of the most important concepts for my work. I used daring color matches like yellow and purple for one piece, blue and orange for the other piece.

I thought the texture of a sea slug is very similar to thin leather. To me, the slug seems really flexible and it looks like something that I want to touch, which is the same reaction I have to leather. I cut out triangular patterns using leather and sewed them together to create the basic shape of a sea slug to express the texture of a sea slug.

The lamp has four parts (the bottom part of the lamp, shade supporter, LED light bulb and the shade) that needs to be assembled but it is simply designed so anyone can assemble easily.

*Young Bin Kong*

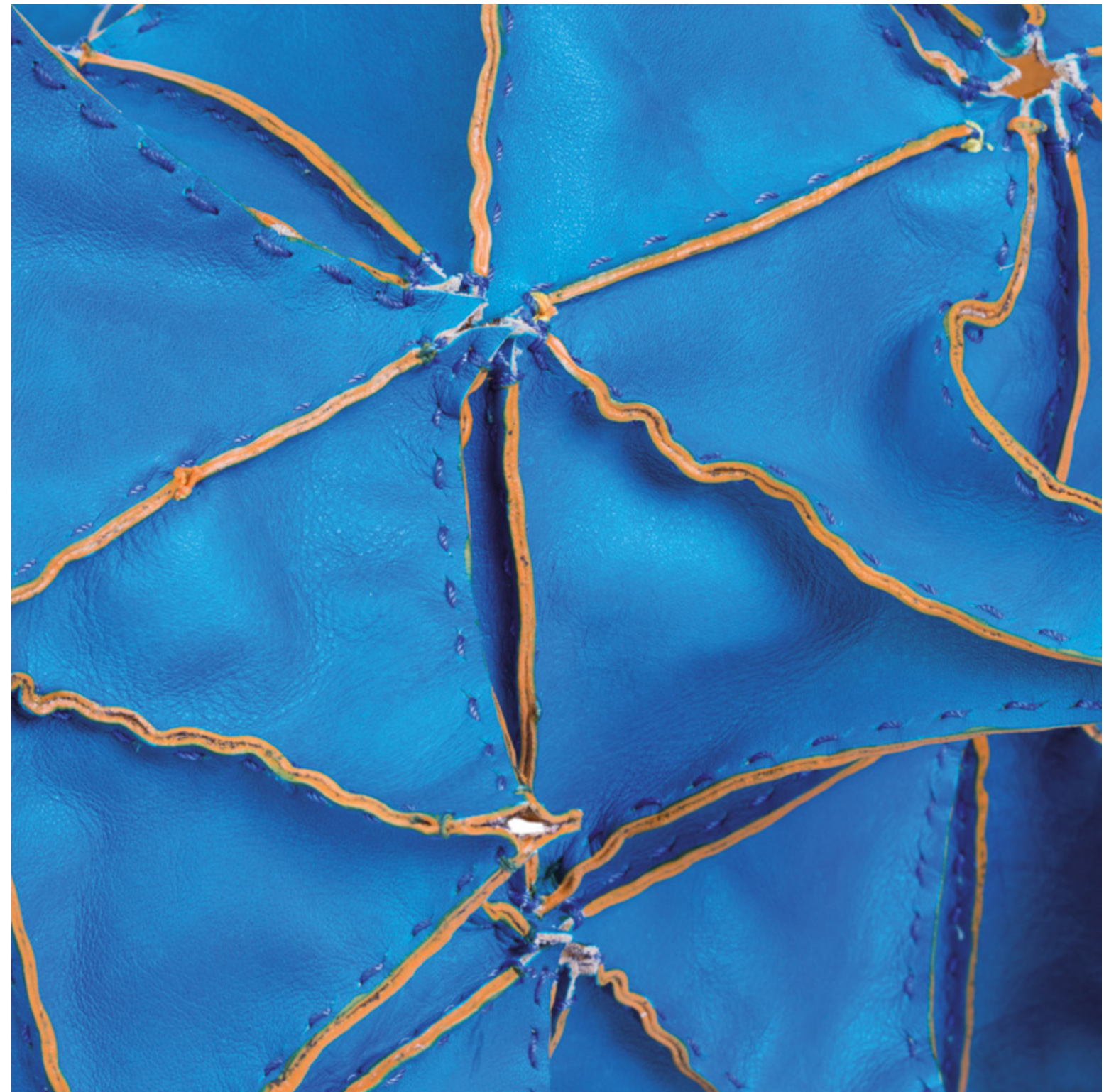
**Young  
Bin Kong**  
Kookmin University  
*Seoul – South Korea*





# Young Bin Kong

Kookmin University  
Seoul - South Korea







UK

## Ephemeral Beauty

As a textile designer, I wanted to develop a capsule collection that played to my strengths. The concept, dehydration, was influenced and informed by the tanning process of veg tan leather – by the water and plant matter used in tanning.

The plants and the seed heads researched were dry and brittle but beautiful in their fragility, giving the impression they had been slightly scorched. Naturally created shapes and the texture of plants were explored in laser cutting and laser engraving. The laser cutting gave a 3D aspect to the leather motifs and details which was exciting and the burnt edges give the impression of dehydration.

Working with veg-tanned leather allowed me to experiment with fascinating forms and motifs used in repeat pattern, then developed to 3 Dimensional shapes that proved to be the essence of the collection. Detailed, delicate shape on the choker, accomplished by laser cutting was also achieved in oversized scale in the laser cut and etched decorative hood accessory. Where on the collar, the motif was sectioned re-scaled and engraved on the leather. The accessories explore elements and components of clothing but isolated so they become wearable decorative accessories.

*Aleksandra Kukula*

**Aleksandra  
Kukula**  
Northampton  
University  
Northampton - UK





**Aleksandra  
Kukula**

Northampton  
University  
*Northampton - UK*







JPN

## Twist

Vegetable tanned leather can change into many different shapes when it is soaked in water and softened. In addition, it will remember these forms when it dries. The design of my shoes utilizes this characteristic of vegetable tanned leather. I try to express a beautiful line. I slit the leather with equidistant straight lines and twisted it. This idea is from the creative exploration workshop in Italy.

I have made many experiments aimed at knowing the range of how much I can control the leather. The variables are cutting direction, depth, and twisting angle strength.

The design process begins by putting a last on a piece of leather cut to A4 size. Depending upon the position and angle of the last, the surface of the leather is organized differently. I used a laser to cut the lines because the heat hardens the edge of the slits helping to keep the lines clear and clean as they are manipulated. Twisting and molding will change the shape of the slit leather.

Each shoe has different pattern according to a position of the last and the direction of the lasered lines, while they all have in common the format of the same A4 size.

By slitting and twisting the leather and sewing it together, I made one-piece shoes.

*Nasami Kushino*

**Nasami  
Kushino**

Hiko Mizuno College  
of Jewelry  
*Tokyo – Japan*





**Nasami  
Kushino**  
Hiko Mizuno College  
of Jewelry  
*Tokyo – Japan*

HIKON  
MIZUNO  
COLLEGE  
OF  
JEWELRY







## Enhancing Beauty

Sometimes our bodies don't function as we wish or as we think they should. Because we are social and developing creatures, if something doesn't function we want to repair it and often that requires spare parts or support material. Often these 'repairs' are seen as flaws when on the contrary, they are enhancing the vitality of the whole being, allowing us to live and do what we love even better.

This collection acknowledges the need for 'extra support' in human functions such as movement, support and digestion, and raises them into a 'second skin', a sphere of beauty where the solutions, and not just the issues, are considered.

Each object displays how the support world of deformity can be accepted, cherished and also decorative.

*Helga Sigurdardottir*

**Helga  
Sigurdardottir**  
SLEM  
Waalwijk - Netherlands





**Helga  
Sigurdardottir**

*SLEM*

*Waalwijk - Netherlands*







## THE SCHOOLS







## Bunka Fashion College

[www.bunka-fc.ac.jp](http://www.bunka-fc.ac.jp)

Tokyo - Japan

A school that is a world leader of fashion

Bunka Fashion College is a forerunner of fashion education in Japan.

Knowing that it must produce powerful leaders for the fashion industry, the college has established four courses that follow all aspects of the industry. Among these courses, Fashion Accessories and Textile Department aims to teach expertise and skills that can respond to footwear, bag, millinery and jewelry industries' trends, and to develop human resources that can demonstrate creativity with imagination.



## Fashion Institute of Technology

State University of New York

## Fashion Institute of Technology

[www.fitnyc.edu](http://www.fitnyc.edu)

New York City, NY - USA

FIT's Accessories Design Program – the first of its kind in the U.S. – offers the Associate in Applied Science degree and the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, plus the country's only certificate programs in Millinery and Performance Athletic Footwear. Students learn how to design, construct, and produce a full range of accessories. Faculty members are industry professionals who teach the skills needed for success in the industry. FIT's Manhattan location provides unparalleled opportunities for real world experience through field trips, networking, industry-sponsored competitions, and internships at top accessories firms. The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), a college of the State University of New York, has been a leader in career education in art, design, business, and technology for 70 years.



## Hiko Mizuno College of Jewelry

<http://hikohiko.jp>

Tokyo – Japan

Hiko Mizuno College of Jewelry is the only government authorized jewelry college in Japan. It has continued its journey as a college nurturing “making” and creative design techniques by establishing the Watch, Shoes, and Bag departments, and in 2012, the Tokyo College Cycle Design. Hiko Mizuno has attracted global recognition as an academy of developing design fields. Our educational policy “Man & Object” informs all areas of study: the relationship of objects to the human body and all products are designed with a good understanding of the human structure. The pieces produced by the students can be considered art pieces as well as fashion/product designs directly related to contemporary life styles.



## IED - Istituto Europeo di Design

[www.ied.it](http://www.ied.it)

Roma – Italy

Founded in 1966 by Francesco Morelli. For fifty years, the Istituto Europeo di Design has been operating in the fields of education and research in the disciplines of Design, Fashion, Visual communication and Management. IED is now an Italian international excellence; partnerships with international leading companies are an essential factor in its educational strategy and its training programme is based on credits (CF) in accordance with the most advanced European institutions. As a school with an international vocation, the Istituto Europeo di Design welcomes students with different nationalities and cultures to all its 11 campuses: Milan, Turin, Rome, Florence, Venice, Cagliari, Como, Madrid, Barcelona, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro.



## Kookmin University, College of Design

[design.kookmin.ac.kr](http://design.kookmin.ac.kr)

Seoul - South Korea

Kookmin University is one of the leading private universities in Korea. Its educational goal is to foster and educate leaders who make a difference in the global world. Kookmin University provides students with opportunities to have academic, cultural, and professional worldwide experiences and an insight for the future. Designers of the 21st century are expected to create sustainable designs that resonate with the individuals in society. At the same time, the designers need the ability to incorporate scientific technology with artistic visions in their creative work to keep current with the worldwide trends, and to maintain traditional and cultural relevance to the society. In this respect, College of Design at Kookmin University aims at providing the students with an established curriculum incorporating the spirit of time into design education.



## Rhode Island School of Design

[www.risd.edu](http://www.risd.edu)

Providence, RI – USA

The Rhode Island School of Design, RISD's mission, through its college and museum, is to educate its students and the public in the creation and appreciation of works of art and design, to discover and transmit knowledge and to make lasting contributions to a global society through critical thinking, scholarship, innovation and critical making.





**Royal College of Art** [www.rca.ac.uk](http://www.rca.ac.uk)  
*London - UK*

Fashion at the RCA is facing forward, asking questions, looking to the new languages of bio materials, virtual identities, the debates and nuances about gender and economic shifts. This all adds to the excellence of line and craftsmanship as the skills required to establish new fashion design and new fashion business models.

The Royal College of Art (RCA) is the world's number one art and design university (QS World University Rankings), and the only entirely postgraduate university devoted to research and knowledge exchange, teaching and practice in art, design, communication and humanities.



**SLEM** [www.slem.nl](http://www.slem.nl)  
*Waalwijk - The Netherlands*

SLEM (Shoes Leather Education Museum) is an international footwear innovation institute that includes a consulting department, a training institute that offers both fulltime and part time programs on a professional level, an incubator and a footwear museum. SLEM is known for its future forward and meaningful contributions to the footwear industry.

At SLEM our goal is to create meaningful innovation and positive added value in the footwear and related industries; we do this by transferring, maintaining and improving footwear knowledge and the overall industry by bringing new technologies, creative thinking and cutting-edge methods into practice.

In our educational programs this happens through research, workshops and application of new methods that are suitable in a sustainable future vision. We eliminate the typical department divisions between technology, design and marketing, providing a multi-disciplinary platform for both students and professionals from diverse backgrounds.



**University of Northampton** [www.northampton.ac.uk](http://www.northampton.ac.uk)  
*Center of the UK's Footwear & Leather Industry - Northampton - UK*

At Northampton University, Fashion courses are part of the newly formed Faculty of Arts, Science and Technology, which emphasizes the synergy between design and technology. We offer undergraduate courses in Fashion, Fashion for Textiles, Fashion for Leather, Footwear & Accessories, Fashion Marketing and Fashion Promotion & Communication. The courses are underpinned by technical knowledge, research and creative exploration.

Three London Livery Guilds, The Worshipful Companies of Cordwainers, Curriers and the Leathersellers offer assistance in the form of scholarships and bursaries.





## GENUINE ITALIAN VEGETABLE TANNED LEATHER CONSORTIUM

The Genuine Italian Vegetable Tanned Leather Consortium was founded in 1994 by a small group of traditional Tuscan tanners. Today the consortium brings together 22 tanneries, all of whom share the same production objectives and operate in Tuscany, in the area between Pisa and Florence. In the Tuscan Leather District high quality vegetable tanned leather is still produced according to an ancient production process which uses tannins extracted exclusively from tree barks and plants, the skills of master craftsmen and all the time necessary to create the finest natural leathers. The result of a knowledgeable combination of technology and tradition, the leathers produced by the members of the consortium satisfy the needs of a niche market in which not only high quality, but also style and individuality are fundamental requisites.

The aims of this nonprofit organization are to promote vegetable tanned leather, to safeguard a typical Tuscan product, to guarantee the quality of raw materials and processes used in its production and to highlight traditional techniques whose origins lie deep in Tuscan history. Yet the consortium also looks to the future with the organization of study activities, events on emerging trends, seminars and workshop for young designers and producers, guided tours of tanneries for students of fashion schools and the publication of materials about characteristics and quality of the leather.

The consortium acts as guarantor and ambassador of Tuscan excellence throughout the world, an undertaking it has consolidated with the creation of a quality label guaranteeing the quality and origin of leathers produced by its member tanneries. Presented as an elegantly scripted certificate of warranty, the Pelle Conciata al Vegetale in Toscana label is the property of the consortium and can only be used by its member tanneries who respect the Rules of Production and Technical Standards established by the consortium or, under license, by manufacturers who use leather produced by consortium members.

[www.pellealvegetale.it](http://www.pellealvegetale.it)

PELL  
CONCIATA  
AL VEGETALE  
IN TOSCANA  
MADE IN ITALY

THE CONSORTIUM





TUSCAN VEGETABLE-TANNED LEATHER





## 5<sup>th</sup> international creative competition for new designer/makers

Catalogue of the work inspired by the weeklong  
international workshop exploring the culture,  
tradition and innovative possibilities of a product of  
local excellence: Tuscan Vegetable-Tanned Leather.  
Photography by Luca Palatresi.

With special thanks to all of the community that makes  
Craft the Leather possible:

Mario Bemer, Giorgio Testi, Calzaturificio Buttero,  
Pelletteria CI-VA, Dott. Domenico Castiello,  
PO.TE.CO., Consorzio CuoioDepur

and all the staff at the  
Fondazione Conservatorio Santa Chiara in San Miniato



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Regione Toscana

