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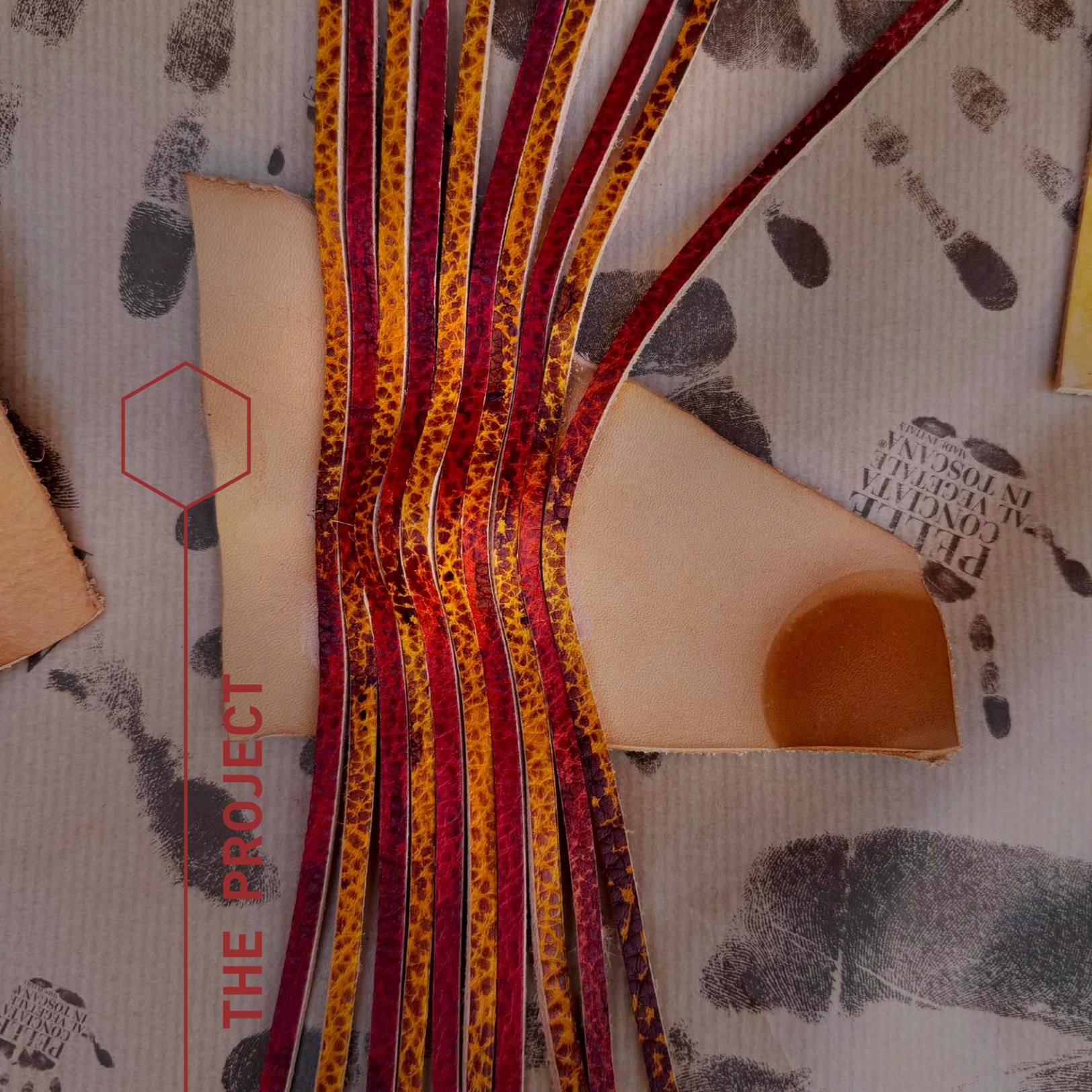
**CRAFT** THE  
LEATHER  
2025





It's  
about  
Time





THE PROJECT

## IT'S ABOUT TIME

*Time :  
To learn  
To experiment  
To make  
To repair  
To plan*

*Time as a measure of heritage  
Skills and culture built over time  
Time line  
A life time*

*Traditions and excellence  
That take time  
Value that reveals over time  
Traces of time  
Time will tell*

*Every Craft the Leather workshop exploring Tuscan Veg-Tan leather, has a signature character.*

*Across the varied cultural points of view, strong interest in materials and their long term impact is particularly important to this group.*

*There is pivotal research development in the Tuscan Leather District. Highly specialised facilities present breakthrough studies on environmental impact and quantifiable analysis of materials and life cycle outcomes.*

*The fuzzy greenwash days are over, there is data and analysis which make qualified, informed, responsible decisions possible.*

*And vegetable-tanned leather is revealed as a remarkably good choice.*

*Our collective reaction was emphatically: it's about time!*

*Diane Becker*

# Consorzio Vera Pelle Italiana Conciata al Vegetale

The Italian Vegetable-Tanned Leather Consortium was founded in 1994 by a small group of Tuscan tanners who shared the passion for producing high-quality, long-lasting, natural leather. They established a non-profit association whose mission is to keep the Italian vegetable-tanning tradition alive, to guarantee a proper tanning process respecting the environment, and to promote this Tuscan craft.

With origins in the Etruscan Age in Tuscany, vegetable-tanning was recognized by the Florentine Arts and Trades Corporations in the Middle Ages (the Guild of Leather Crafters was founded in Florence in 1282). Today the Consortium and its member tanneries, all based in the Tuscan Leather District in the area between Florence and Pisa, continue this ancient tradition.

The Consortium is the exclusive owner of the trademark "Pelle Conciata al Vegetale in Toscana" (Tuscan Vegetable-Tanned Leather). The trademark has been registered internationally. It guarantees the quality of raw materials used and the artisan production process, but most importantly it certifies that 100% of the process happens in Tuscany. Only the tanneries that are members of the Consortium and comply with the Consortium's Production Regulations can sell vegetable-tanned leather with the Pelle Conciata al Vegetale in Toscana symbol.

Since 2012, the Consortium has extended a yearly invitation to talented students and tutors from the most prestigious and innovative international fashion and design institutes to participate in an experiential training workshop: Craft the Leather. Through industry visits in this unique production territory and hands-on experience led by master leather crafters, the participants gain insight into the choices they will make as professionals in the international fashion system and the many dimensions of impact that result.

Their collections are inspired by the intrinsic properties of veg-tanned leather.

Craft the Leather 2025 is the 12th edition of the project..

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

## DIANE BECKER

### *Director of Didactic Projects*

Having worked in all aspects of the fashion accessories field: retail, trend forecasting, shoe design, and fashion design education, from New York to Tokyo to Firenze - Diane brings an international vision to this iconic Tuscan project. Researching and conducting this intensive, experiential workshop that delves deeply into how veg-tan leather is made and the ethical and sustainable choices involved, she intends to inspire the creation of wonderful objects that can last a long time.



## VIVIEN SASKIA WITTMER

### *Master Craftsman*

In the world of bespoke footwear, Vivian Saskia Wittmer has a reputation for impeccable quality focusing on a classic and traditional shoe with a modern touch. She opened her own atelier for custom made shoes in Florence in 2000, and over the years many apprentices and interns have trained with her. In 2018 Saskia opened a dedicated School for Shoemaking, along side her bespoke studio.



## CARMEL IMELDA WALSH

### *Master Craftsman*

Carmel Imelda Walsh is a deeply curious creative whose practice explores material expression and meaning. Originally from Ireland, she moved to Italy to study fashion, where she met Saskia and immersed herself in the craft of shoemaking. She is known for her volume of work as a Creative and Art Director for niche luxury brands, with a strong ability to translate insight and research into resonant, contemporary projects, always balancing substance with new modes of representation.



THE 2025 COLLECTIVE





**HAYDÉE QUESEDO CASTILLO**

Academy of Art University – San Francisco, California - USA

# Your Light and Your Scent on my Skin

This collection of leather accessories consists of a cat collar, a passport holder, and an ornate urn crowned with a necklace reliquary holding a tooth, accompanied by three inner keepsake urns. It explores belonging, memory, and transcendence. Each piece symbolizes the connection between life, death, and home, imagining an eternal rest alongside loved ones and cats.

It's inspired by the city of Barquisimeto, Venezuela, its Cathedral, the Flor de Lara, and the Monument to the Tripode. The collection fuses spiritual and cultural symbols such as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the sun and the moon, and ancient Italian reliquaries. The laser engraving represents the fire of cremation and the marks life leaves on the skin and the soul.

Above all, it is an homage to leather: a living, noble, and eternal material. Each piece honors its strength and beauty—a place where she hopes to rest one day.



ACADEMY of ART  
UNIVERSITY®  
WE MAKE ART WORK™



**HAYDÉE QUESEDO CASTILLO**

*Academy of Art University  
San Francisco, California - USA*





**ACADEMY OF ART UNIVERSITY**

California - USA

Established in 1929, Academy of Art University is one of the largest private, accredited art and design schools in the USA. As one of the oldest art schools located in San Francisco, the epicenter of culture and technology, Art U offers more than 129 accredited degree programs—available online and on-campus—spanning 70 areas of study, including entertainment arts, advertising, fashion, architecture, game development, music, communications, and photography.

School of Fashion's program offers degree options that span the fashion career spectrum beyond fashion design and textiles and cover every aspect of the industry, including marketing, visual merchandising, journalism, communications, styling, and product development. Our graduates are skilled, experienced, and connected—fully prepared to create their place in the fashion industry.

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

“*Being part of the Craft the Leather Project was an inspiring experience shared with student designers and educators from around the world. Through the residency, I observed that vegetable-tanned leather embodies people, nature, and tradition, deepening my respect for craftsmanship and sustainable design practices.*”

*Jennifer Jeon*





**EUGENIO CHENNA**

*Accademia Costume & Moda – Rome, Italy*

## Cut the Leather

Cut The Leather was born from the observation of traditional rural weavings, such as country baskets and raffia hats—objects in which solids and voids create structure, strength, and lightness. Starting from these archetypes, the collection translates the idea of weaving into a contemporary gesture: the cut.

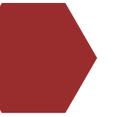
Vegetable-tanned leather is not woven like fiber, but rather cut according to repeated patterns that generate a flexible network capable of expanding, curving, and creating volume. The traditional weave thus becomes a sculpted surface, a single layer that breathes and transforms. Within each piece is a canvas lining printed with lilies, the symbol of Florence, referencing both the tradition of Tuscan leather goods and the connection between craftsmanship, nature, and contemporary design.

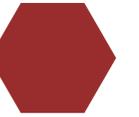
In Cut The Leather, what comes from the countryside is abstracted into essential and modern forms, transforming the material memory of weaving into a language of cuts, geometries, and volumes.



**EUGENIO CHENNA**

*Accademia Costume & Moda  
Rome, Italy*





## ACCADEMIA COSTUME & MODA

Italy

Accademia Costume & Moda (ACM) was founded in Rome in 1964 by Rosana Pistolese, a costume and fashion historian, costume designer, and writer, with the support of the Ministry of Labour, ENALC, and under the patronage of the Municipality of Rome and the National Chamber of Italian Fashion (CNMI). A private institution within the AFAM system, ACM offers accredited First and Second Level Academic Diploma courses, collaborating with over 150 companies in the Fashion and Entertainment sectors. ACM is ranked among the best fashion schools in the world (BoF, Fashionista) and has over 500 students across its two campuses in Rome and one Milan. The Careers & Placement office ensures employment rates above 90%, with peaks of 100% in some Master's programmes. Alumni include Alessandro Michele, Frida Giannini, Isabella Rossellini, and others. The "Fiamma Lanzara" Library and Historical Archive form the largest fashion documentation centre in Lazio, with 6,000 volumes and 14,000 periodicals, offering research services to students and professionals in fashion, costume, art, and communication.

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



**LUCA GREENWAY**

Chelsea College of Arts, London - UK

# Flat Tracker

The collection is born out of my interest for classic motorcycle culture and its related attire. Combining this interest with the visual and material characteristics of vegetable-tanned leather I have taken a contemporary approach to redesigning rugged, practical items.

During my time in Tuscany I was briefly introduced to the process of shoemaking, inspiring me to teach myself to make shoes by hand. The result is a pair of motorcycle boots, the centrepiece of my collection. To accompany these I have produced tool roll and pair of gauntlets.

I have utilised the leathers' natural mouldable characteristics to reference the protective elements found on motorcycle boots and gloves, ordering a refined approach to traditionally utilitarian garb and balancing form with function.

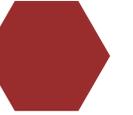
**ual:** chelsea  
college of arts



**LUCA GREENWAY**

*Chelsea College of Arts  
London, UK*





### CHELSEA COLLEGE OF ARTS

United Kingdom

BA Product and Furniture Design at Chelsea College of Arts offers an opportunity to explore our social, physical, and emotional connections with the object. Making is at the heart of design production and learning, the course builds strong practical and conceptual development skills that come together to support a creative, critical, and investigative approach. Students are invited through live projects to design meaningful artefacts that consider contemporary societal and environmental concerns; our approach also foregrounds the importance of historical precedents, material practices and cultures.

[www.arts.ac.uk/colleges/chelsea-college-of-arts](http://www.arts.ac.uk/colleges/chelsea-college-of-arts)

“*Craft the leather is a very special program. Complete in the education of vegetable-tanned leather’s circularity and regenerative potentials, with material manipulation approaches, and nurturing for both students and accompanying academics. I cannot recommend the program enough if the opportunity presents itself to take part. What I did not expect was the sense of place the experience affords. The team carefully curated the educational experience to convey the significance the material has in the community and how a community’s history and values come together to design production and infrastructure systems. With the world changing there is so much to learn from this region and industry, to help define how we choose to live. We are deeply grateful we can share the knowledge gained.*”

*Liz Ciokajlo Squire*



LIU HANG

Donghua University – Shanghai, China

## Echo

The “echo” series is a celebration of excellent craftsmanship. It praises the exquisite bamboo weaving skills of the Maonan ethnic group and the superb craftsmanship of the leather tanners. Its core concept combines the basic cross-weaving with the ancient “Hui” pattern weaving, symbolizing the Maonan’s belief in “eternal life and harmony between heaven and earth”.

The precise and symbolic bamboo weaving technique is combined with veg-tanned leather, and then its shape is explored through wet molding. The weaving technique is used to give it a unique soul. Thus, these three works were formed. They became a dialogue between material and tradition, where the original color of the leather, the precision of the weaving, and the sculptural power of the wet molding process blend together, creating a cultural inheritance with modern significance.



東華大學  
DONGHUA UNIVERSITY



**LIU HANG**

*Donghua University  
Shanghai, China*



**DONGHUA UNIVERSITY**

China

Donghua University's College of Fashion and Design stands as a pioneering institution in China's modern design education landscape. Guided by its educational philosophy of "integrating technological innovation with fashion and design," the college has established a comprehensive academic system led by fashion technology and centered on fashion design, forming distinctive characteristics through deep industry-academia-research collaboration.

Leveraging Shanghai's status as a "City of Design, Fashion, and Brands," the college promotes the convergence of technology, art, and design within its "Macro-Fashion, Macro-Design" framework. Its teaching system innovatively combines design studio practice with theoretical courses in humanities, creating an integrated educational approach that merges scientific research, industry collaboration, competition participation, and international cooperation. While engaging in fashion design practice, students systematically study theoretical courses including aesthetics, design history, and material culture, enabling a dynamic interaction between creative design and academic research that extends to cutting-edge fields like sustainable fashion and digital art. As a member of both the International Foundation of Fashion Technology Institutes (IFFTI) and Cumulus International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media, the college maintains partnerships with 42 universities across 14 countries and regions, offering multiple exchange programs including the Sino-Japanese collaborative program, continuously expanding students' global perspectives.

[english.dhu.edu.cn](http://english.dhu.edu.cn)

“The Craft the Leather workshop gave me a deeper understanding of the profound connection between vegetable tanning and sustainable development. The immersive experience in Tuscany not only allowed me to learn traditional techniques, but also provided invaluable opportunities to exchange ideas with outstanding designers from around the world. I look forward to more such interactive collaborations in the future.”

Tian Yujing





**NAYEON LEE**

Hongik University – Seoul, South Korea

# Danchung

MOKHWA / BOKNANG / SSEUGAE

“Danchung” is a traditional Korean system of colors and patterns passed down since the Joseon Dynasty. Inspired by two of its forms — ‘samcheong’ and ‘yangcheong’ — I translated these motifs into embroidery on vegetable-tanned leather. Leather itself carries a deep heritage, particularly in Italy, and merging these traditions allowed me to reinterpret cultural memory through material.

The project began with a simple idea: adding color to leather. Since dyeing could not achieve the vivid tones I wanted, thread became my medium. Embroidering onto the leather created depth, texture, and a new tactile language. The forms also reference tradition. ‘Mokhwa’ reinterprets winter military boots with a raised sole and wide silhouette. ‘Boknang’, meaning “fortune pouch,” reflects the belief that carrying money invites good fortune. ‘Sseugae’, a colorful hair ornament worn by aristocratic girls, symbolizes status, innocence, and youthful spirit.



**NAYEON LEE**

Hongik University  
Seoul, South Korea



**HONGIK UNIVERSITY**

South Korea

The department of Textile Art and Fashion Design at Hongik University, one of the nation's leading fashion schools, aims to cultivate creative professionals who bridge academia and industry through an integrated education that combines theory, research, and practice. The curriculum emphasizes the convergence of fashion design and textile art, fostering students' capacity to become global leaders in the fashion field. Faculty members with extensive industry experience guide students in developing both creative and practical expertise. Studio-centered courses further enhance learning through collaboration with related disciplines and engagement with fashion industry partners.

[www.hongik.ac.kr](http://www.hongik.ac.kr)

“Participating in *Craft the Leather* offered a valuable opportunity to experience the environmental, social, and cultural vision and practices of the Italian leather industry. Through networking with students and faculties from various countries, I also gained deeper insight into the future direction of sustainable fashion education, recognizing the importance of global cooperation.”

Jin Joo Ma





ZURINE BERRUETA GORROCHATEGUI

IED Kunstthal Bilbao – Bilbao, Spain

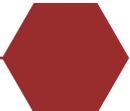
## Marbide

This collection of three leather bags is inspired by fishermen, nautical tools, and marine textures. In the Basque Country, where I come from, there's a strong fishing tradition that has left us with an enormous wealth of culture and craftsmanship. This immediately reminded me of the entire community and way of life that also exist behind trades like leather tanning or and craftsmanship. Within this world of fishing, I focused particularly on the textures of the ports, places where you can clearly see the heritage of the past that so defines us today. I tried to recreate the textures of mollusks on the rocks, the holes made in the stones by friction, the wear on the wood, the ropes used to moor the boats... I also tried to make the most of the leather, rescuing scraps from the creation of one bag to generate a new texture in another. In fact, one bag is almost entirely made from leftover pieces. The leather we used is of such good quality that even the cutoffs can be used.



ZURINE BERRUETA GORROCHATEGUI

IED Kunsthal Bilbao  
Bilbao, Spain





### IED KUNSTHAL BILBAO

Spain

Part of the Istituto Europeo di Design network, IED Kunsthal Bilbao is a creative community where design education meets craftsmanship and innovation. Its Fashion Design Department values artisanal processes as a way to foster material awareness, critical thinking and new narratives around making. Collaboration, experimentation and sustainability define a practice that connects traditional know-how with contemporary design culture. Rooted in the vibrant context of Bilbao, the school promotes design as a tool for social and cultural transformation.

[www.ied.it/kunsthall-bilbao](http://www.ied.it/kunsthall-bilbao)

“*To briefly be a part of Tuscany’s leather community has been an opportunity to witness the power of a unique living system of craft, heritage, and local identity. Each gesture, each story shared, invited us to explore our own sense of legacy and belonging.*”

*Adela Maria Orcajada DiGiacomo*



**NINA DEL MARMOL**

*Institut Jeanne Toussaint – Brussels, Belgium*

## Sacred Curves

In my « Sacred Curves » collection, continuous, curved forms reactivate the ancient metaphor of sacred architecture as a protective body. Inspired by San Miniato's convent, the soft arches and enveloping volumes of church spaces echo how sacred buildings shelter the spirit and interiority. These curves explore the need for intimacy: shapes that envelop, shelter, and open discreet spaces, offering a quiet sanctuary in a world saturated with visibility. Each piece becomes an intimate enclosure, a soft architectural gesture balancing exposure and privacy.

Working with vegetable-tanned leather made this approach even more meaningful: its tactile warmth gave a sacred feeling during crafting, resonating with the symbolism of the body and bridging architecture, flesh, and intimacy.

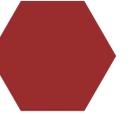
Creating bags was a natural extension: as everyday objects, they accompany the wearer intimately, becoming personal spaces that protect and reveal, reflecting the collection's themes.



**NINA DEL MARMOL**

*Institut Jeanne Toussaint  
Brussels, Belgium*





**INSTITUT JEANNE TOUSSAINT**

Belgium

Jeanne Toussaint Art School , an artistic center of excellence for the Applied Arts and artistic education, a School of the Hand and the Gesture. Jeanne Toussaint offers a rich and diverse curriculum, ranging from applied arts and artistic disciplines to woodcraft and beauty professions. Our ambition: to train visionary artisan-creators in an environment where art, technology, and sustainability come together.

[jeannetoussaint.be](http://jeannetoussaint.be)

“*Craft the Leather was a journey into vegetable-tanned leather, allowing me to rediscover my home region from a new perspective—through its environmental innovation—while sharing traditions and reconnecting with creativity alongside tutors and students in an inspiring, timeless setting.*”

*Elisa Bucciantini*



**NATHALIE SPIELMANN**

Schola Academy – Florence, Italy

## La Huella

La Huella explores the way time shapes both material and memory. Vegetable-tanned leather darkens with light, touch, and use, quietly gathering depth until it becomes something transformed, yet still itself.

This quality made me reflect on cultural memory and think about how customs change as we do. As we move through our lives, do our traditions travel with us, or do they fade if we stop tending to them?

Argentina's identity is carried in its rituals: the sharing of mate, the grip of a pato ball, the rhythm of tango, the spirit of the gaucho. These symbols are not fixed in time; they evolve, marked by each generation that keeps them alive.

Through sun-imprinted shoes, a hand-stitched pato ball, and a pumpkin mate with a veg-tan leather-shaped handle braided with rawhide, I explore the material as a living archive that absorbs light and lineage, asking what we choose to keep alive.

**SCHOLA**  
THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE HANDS



**NATHALIE SPIELMANN**

*Schola Academy  
Florence, Italy*





**SCHOLA ACADEMY**

Italy

SCHOLA is the first educational ecosystem devoted to contemporary crafts, from fashion and design to culinary and botanical arts.

It looks ahead by grounding itself in matter, exploring new languages born from gesture, technique and material intelligence. Here, contemporary making reflects cultural shifts, ecological sensibilities and the desire to reconnect mind and hand. This vision expands the value of technique, merging experimentation, transformation and new models of craft practice.

At SCHOLA tradition becomes energy and making becomes culture. Rooted in Florence yet connected to a global community, it is a living space where disciplines interact, masters share knowledge and the Intelligence of the Hands shapes a new humanistic approach to learning. A tribe of creatives who learn how to treasure, transform and translate memory into a new fascinating future.

[www.schola.academy/it/](http://www.schola.academy/it/)

“*Craft the Leather gives a unique insight into the leather industry. Visiting facilities that are all included in the life-circle of leather was so inspiring and interesting, it changes the way you see leather. This made me value leather more than I already did.*”

*Klara Schackinger Jensen*



## 12<sup>nd</sup> International Creative Competition for new designer/makers

Catalogue of the work inspired by the weeklong workshop experience immersed in the culture, tradition, and the frontiers of research of the Tuscan Leather District.

These are the explorations and celebrations of the innovative possibilities of this product of local excellence: Tuscan Vegetable-Tanned Leather.

Photo and Artwork: Key Image + Marketing.

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

Consorzio CuoioDepur, Consorzio Toscana Manifatture,  
CTC-Ars Tintoria, PO.TE.CO.,

the member tanners of the Consorzio, for their continuing support of this project through the generous sharing of their time, experience, and of course, leathers.

Chef Gilberto Rossi of Pepenero who fed us the best of Tuscan cuisine

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



**Consorzio Vera Pelle Italiana Conciata al Vegetale**

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**[Pellealvegetale.it](http://Pellealvegetale.it)**

