

Creative Design in shoe Industry

Unit B1 – Creative Design

Lecture LB1.4 – Fashion design in
footwear and leather sector



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T2.2 – Development of modular
courses and training
material.

D2.2 – Modular Course in
Creative Design



Contents

1. Fashion in footwear and leather goods
2. Trend forecasting and seasonal cycles
3. Cultural influences and consumer lifestyles (luxury, streetwear, sportswear)
4. Collaboration and branding in fashion footwear (designer + brand partnerships)
5. Case studies of iconic fashion-driven leather designs

Trend Forecasting & Seasonal Cycles

- Fashion operates on **seasonal cycles** (Spring/Summer, Autumn/Winter, Resort, Pre-Fall)
- **Forecasting works 18–24 months ahead**, predicting:
 - Colors & textures
 - Silhouettes & shapes
 - Materials & finishes
- Ensures designers align with **market demand + cultural moods**
- In footwear & leather → impacts **sole shapes, uppers, leather treatments**



Forecasting = connecting future culture to today's design decisions

Tools for Designers

- **WGSN** - leading digital platform for fashion & consumer trend forecasting
- **Pantone** - global authority on color, defines seasonal palettes (e.g., Color of the Year)
- **Collections & Lookbooks** - how brands showcase their ready-to-wear ideas
- **Trade fairs & expos** - leather fairs (Lineapelle, Première Vision) connect suppliers & designers

DIGITAL LAVENDER
134 — 67 — 16

SAGE LEAF
072 — 45 — 06

ASTRO DUST
010 — 42 — 20

GALACTIC COBALT
120 — 28 — 32

APRICOT CRUSH
024 — 65 — 27

The Design Process: From Concept to Creation



Concept & Inspiration

Drawing from historical periods, nature, street style, travel, and technology to inform aesthetic and functional direction



Technical Development

Creating technical drawings, selecting materials, and developing patterns for production



Prototyping & Refinement

Transforming specifications into physical samples, with rigorous testing and iterative improvement



- **Sketches:** Translating abstract concepts into preliminary visual forms
- **Iterative Process:** Continuous cycle of evaluation and refinement

Inspiration Sources & Concept Development

Historical Periods

Designers delve into historical archives or art movements (e.g., Art Deco, Bauhaus, Renaissance) to extract motifs and silhouettes for contemporary appeal.

Street Style

Observing current street fashion and emerging subcultures offers insights into evolving tastes and practical needs of consumers.

Nature & Organic Forms

The natural world provides inspiration from the intricate patterns of leaves to the fluid lines of animal anatomy, influencing shapes and textures.

Cultural Exploration

Exposure to diverse cultures and traditional crafts sparks innovative ideas for construction and material combinations.

Technological Advancements

New technologies in material science or manufacturing processes can inspire designs that push boundaries in terms of performance, sustainability, or aesthetic novelty.

Mood Boards

Collages of images, textures, colors, and words that visually articulate the collection's theme and emotional tone, serving as a central reference throughout the design process.

Fashion as Meaning: Function + Identity + Culture

- Shoes and leather goods serve both practical and symbolic functions
- They communicate status, identity, and cultural belonging
- Footwear: from sneakers to stilettos → markers of lifestyle
- Leather goods: bags, belts, jackets → blend of utility and luxury



Market Segments & Current Trends

Key Market Segments



Luxury

Targets high-net-worth individuals seeking exclusivity, superior craftsmanship, and premium materials. Emphasis on heritage, limited editions, and bespoke services.



Accessible Luxury

Bridges gap between high-end and mass-market, offering aspirational products with quality materials and design at more attainable price points.



Fast Fashion

Focused on rapid trend adoption and affordability, producing high volumes of trendy items with shorter lifecycles. Emphasis on speed to market and competitive pricing.



Specialized

Products designed for specific functions or needs, such as athletic performance, orthopedic support, workwear, or niche fashion subcultures. Driven by functionality and technical requirements.

Market Segments & Current Trends

Current Trends

Rise of Sneakers in Luxury

Sneakers have transcended their athletic origins to become staples in luxury fashion, with high-end brands incorporating elaborate designs, premium materials, and limited releases.

Demand for Minimalism

A strong counter-trend to overt branding and embellishment, minimalism emphasizes clean lines, understated aesthetics, and functional design.

Sustainability

Growing consumer awareness of environmental and social issues has led to significant demand for sustainable materials, ethical manufacturing practices, and transparent supply chains.

Vintage Revivals

Fashion is cyclical, and vintage styles from past decades are continually reinterpreted and reintroduced, appealing to nostalgia and a desire for unique, characterful items.

A top-down view of various leather goods arranged on a light-colored wooden surface. In the top left is a wide-brimmed straw hat with a dark band. To its right are two brown leather lace-up shoes. Below the hat is a dark leather bag with a prominent metal buckle and a braided strap. In the center is a dark leather wallet. At the bottom center is a round watch with a dark face and a light-colored case. In the bottom right corner is a rectangular brown leather folder or book. The text 'The Power of Branding in Leather & Footwear' is overlaid in the center in a white, serif font, with a thin white horizontal line underneath it.

The Power of Branding in Leather & Footwear

"Which brand logo first comes to mind when you think of leather goods?"

The Power of Branding in Leather & Footwear

- **Logos** = instant recognition (LV monogram, Gucci interlocking G)
- **Luxury** relies on heritage storytelling
 - Hermès (*"Made in France"* craftsmanship),
 - Gucci (*Italian heritage*),
 - Coach (*American accessible luxury*)
- **Brand identity** builds emotional attachment
 - Hermès = exclusivity/status, Dr. Martens = individuality/subculture, Nike = performance/aspiration



Coach - Accessible Luxury Leather Goods (US)

Positioned between heritage luxury and mass fashion, offering affordable entry into the luxury leather market.



Founded in New York (1941) as a small leather workshop



Known for handbags, wallets, belts, and small leather goods



Positioned as accessible luxury - lower entry price vs. Hermès, LV



Branding: heritage craftsmanship + modern, youthful fashion





Case Example – Desa (Turkey)

- Established 1972,- vertically integrated with its own tannery
- Produces jackets, shoes, bags, and accessories
- Balances functional leatherwear (outerwear, shoes) with fashion items (bags, luxury goods)
- Example of a regional brand with international presence
- Branding emphasizes craftsmanship + scale + modern design

Branding with Regional Identity - Nomadic Camel (Dubai)

Camel leather products (handbags, wallets), handcrafted, sustainably sourced hides from camel farms.



Material differentiation - camel leather = unique to region



Craftsmanship - handcrafted, sustainable sourcing from camel farms



Brand story - connects desert heritage + authenticity



Positioning - niche luxury, appeals to regional + global buyer

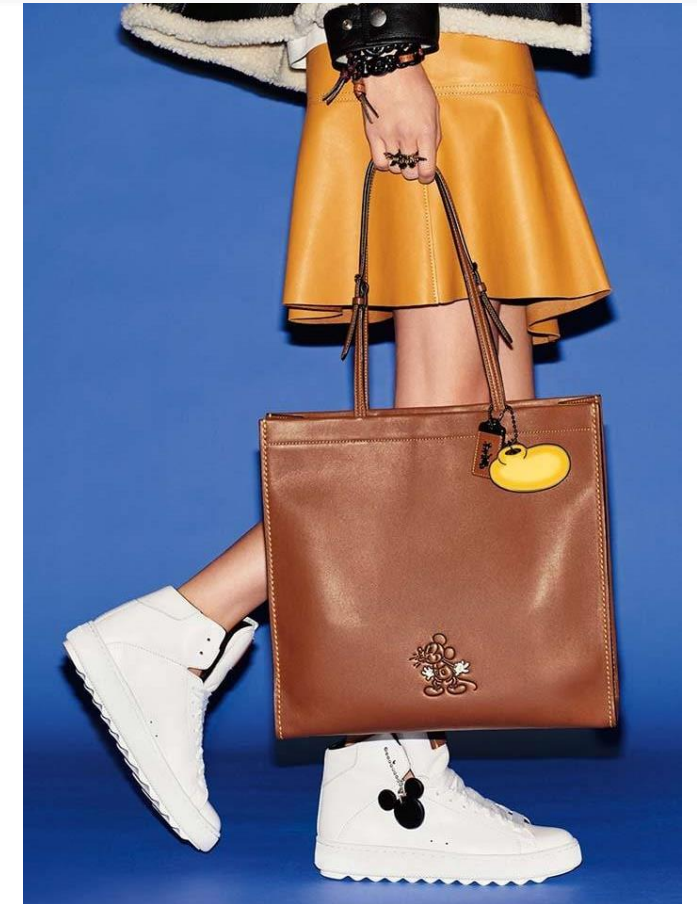
Source



Designer-Brand Collaborations

- **Coach x Disney** → playful reinterpretation of luxury leather goods
- **Louis Vuitton x Supreme** → *Luxury meets streetwear*
 - LV's leather goods (bags, wallets, trunks) reimagined with Supreme's bold branding.
- **Gucci x North Face** → *Luxury outdoor gear*
 - Leather-trimmed backpacks, boots, and outerwear.
- **Balenciaga x Crocs (Leather Versions)** → *Controversial & viral*

Collabs generate buzz, new audiences
• Crocs are foam-based, Balenciaga introduced leather reinterpretations in





Celebrity & Influencer Impact

- Kanye West (Yeezy with Adidas) → streetwear empire
- Rihanna (Fenty x Puma) → merging sports + fashion + leather
- Karen Wazen (Dubai) → promotes luxury handbags, eyewear, and footwear to millions of followers
- Influencers drive Instagram-based demand for "must-have" shoes and bags



Case Example: Hermès Birkin Bag

a practical yet elegant bag

- Introduced in the 1980s, inspired by actress Jane Birkin
- Handmade from premium leathers (togo, crocodile, ostrich)
- Requires 30-40+ hours of artisanal craftsmanship per bag
- Extremely limited availability → waiting lists, exclusivity
- Global status symbol in luxury leather goods



Case Example: Dr. Martens

from functional footwear into cultural icons

- Originally: durable workwear boot (post-war utility)
- Adopted by punk & grunge subcultures (1970s-1990s)
- Signature features: full-grain leather, yellow stitching, chunky sole
- Today: global fashion staple, blending heritage +



Case Example: Case Example – Rolex Leather Watch Straps

from functional accessory to cultural symbol

- Rolex and Swiss luxury brands use premium leathers (alligator, calf, ostrich)
- Leather straps symbolize heritage, craftsmanship, and exclusivity
- Strap choice = cultural signal (formal, casual, conservative, bold)
- Represents how leather wearables define identity & status
- Parallel to Birkin bag → product as a status symbol



Future of Fashion & Leather

Overview of Emerging Trends and Developments in Circular Economy for Leatherware

- AI-driven trend forecasting: faster, data-based style predictions
- On-demand customization: 3D printing & personalized shoe/leather designs
- Sustainable biomaterials: lab-grown leather, recycled/upcycled innovations
- Shift in consumer values: focus on ethics, transparency, and circular fashion



Sustainable Material Innovations

The industry is adopting innovative materials to reduce environmental impact and support circular fashion



Recycled Textiles

Utilizing post-consumer or post-industrial waste to create new fabrics, reducing landfill waste.

Recycled PET (rPET)

Polyester fabrics made from recycled plastic bottles for linings and straps

Recycled Nylon (ECONYL)

Regenerated nylon from waste materials like fishing nets and industrial plastic.



Stella McCartney bag made of mycelium leather



Bio-fabricated Materials

Materials grown from microorganisms, offering a truly circular and scalable solution.

Mycelium Leather (Mylo)

Grown from the root structure of mushrooms, offering a biodegradable and versatile material with leather-like texture.



Adidas a yarn which contains at least 50% Parley Ocean Plastic

Plant-Based Leather Alternatives

Innovations for Footwear & Leather Goods

Derived from agricultural waste or plant fibers, these mimic traditional leather with lower environmental impact.

GrapeSkin

grape leather is a bio-based material by processing grape skins, stalks and seeds derived from wine production.

Cactus Leather

Made from nopal cactus, offering softness and breathability.



Sustainable sneakers made from Vegea
<https://vegeacompany.com/>

Piñatex

Made from cellulose fibers extracted from pineapple leaves.

AppleSkin

Produced from apple pomace (waste from juice industry).



Cactus bag engineered by Desserto
<https://desserto.com.mx/>

Case Example: Piñatex Watch Straps

from functional footwear into cultural icon

- Made from **Piñatex**, a plant-based leather alternative from pineapple leaf fibers
- Used in **watch straps** – compatible with Apple Watch and luxury timepieces
- Offers a sustainable, cruelty-free alternative to animal leather accessories
- It is a perfect choice for the people that cares to source modern and sustainable products for daily



Case Example: Hugo Boss Piñatex Sneakers

Part of the brand's ongoing efforts to incorporate more sustainable practices into its design and production processes.

Sole

Lightweight recycled TPU



Laces

100% organic cotton



Upper

100% Piñatex®

Natural plant-based dyes



Lining

50% cotton, 50% linen

Padded insole



Future Outlook & Conclusion

Personalization • Sustainability • Technology • Circularity



Personalization

Greater customization enabled through digital design, allowing consumers to specify materials and embellishments.



On-Demand Manufacturing

Reduced inventory and waste through 3D printing and automated production, supporting sustainability.



Smart Technology Integration

GPS tracking, biometric sensors, and self-lacing mechanisms blur the line between fashion and technology.

✓ Key Takeaways

- ⚖️ Success=balancing creativity with commercial viability.
- 🔄 Adapting to trends while respecting tradition
- 🌿 Sustainability is increasingly driving design decisions.
- 👥 User feedback creates a cycle of refinement

"The balance of creativity, technical skill, and market awareness is the cornerstone of impactful design."