

LEATHER

BOOK

By
Zak / Zac Zakovi



2016
EDITION



1



Zac in Tuscon Arizona 1969

LEATHER BOOK ~ foreword

I began leather work in Tucson in 1966. I had discovered the Skora Leather store in the old section of downtown they purchased odd lots of leather, bought out defunct shoe shops and leather businesses, here I found odd lots of leather and a huge selection of leather working tools.

I had no idea what to do with leather I just like the material's suppleness and the range of colors and textures. The leather working tools where fun and a great new experience as well.

I went to Tucson after I was accepted as a TA in the MFA program. I had just gotten married and arrived 3 months early to find digs and explore the city.

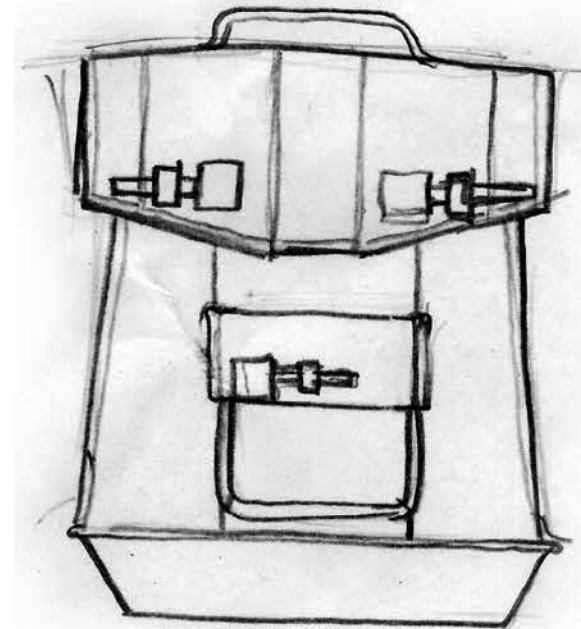
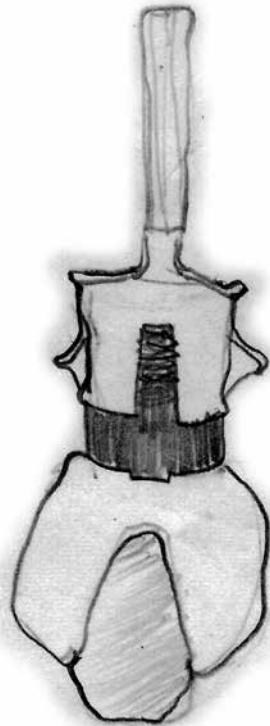
Now in 2016 looking through the mist of 48 years at the photos and drawings I saved of my first craft I decided to make this book. There is no chronological record as none of the images are dated – yet I was able to divide the work into these six categories:

CATEGORIES

1. [Beginning work – pages 4 to 11](#)
2. [Exploration of stitching, inlay and dyes – pages 12 to 19](#)
3. [Conch Bags and Forms – pages 20 to 29](#)
4. [Bobble Bags and fringe – Outrageous bags – pages 30 to 47](#)
5. [Useful wares – luggage, backpacks, notebooks, vests, wallets, gun scabbards – pages 48 to 57](#)
6. [Toys and Far-out non useful leather craft – pages 58 to 67](#)
7. [Press Copy Pages – 68 to 75](#)

I begin each section with a short statement and key drawing or photo.

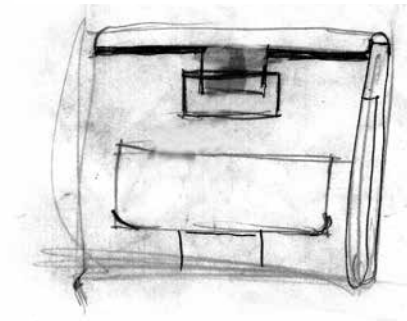
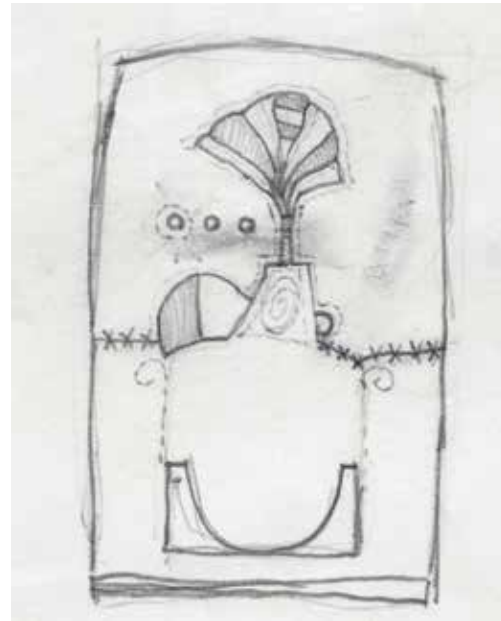
The drawings are of ideas yet to be made vs. process drawings.

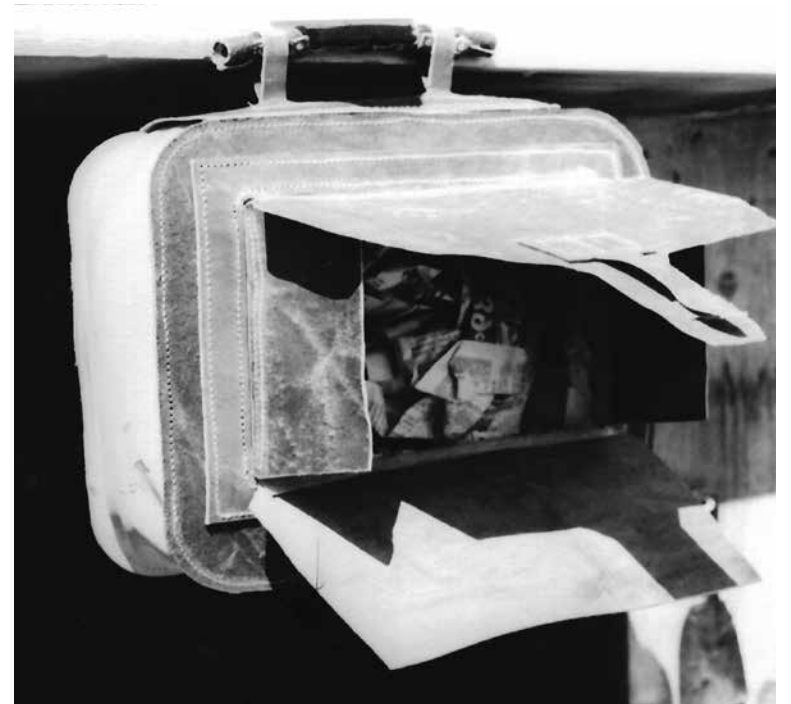
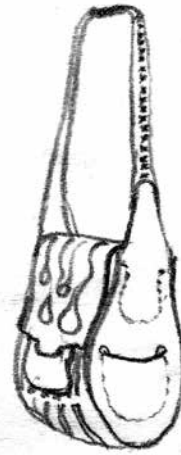
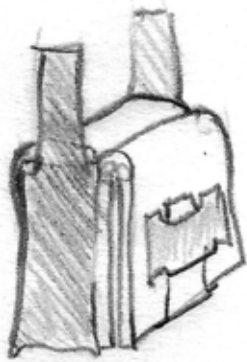


BEGINNING WORK

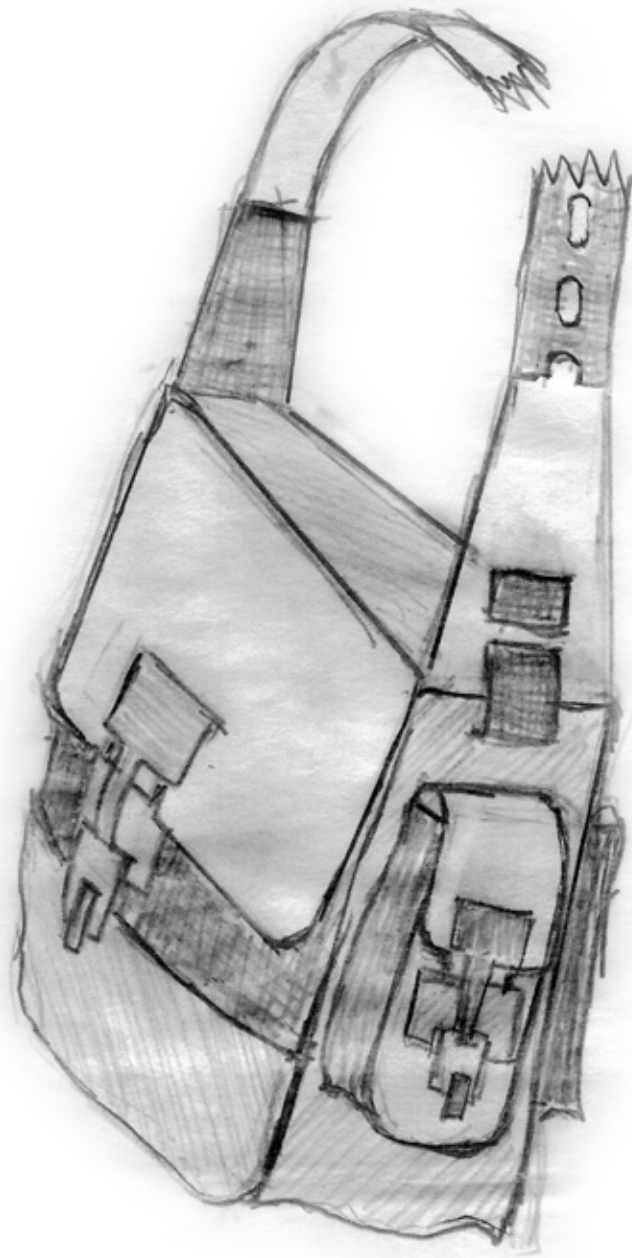
The first work I did was with some very stiff and cheap leather; learning how to use my Adler sewing machine, the finishing machine with sanding wheels to dress the edges and brush wheels to shine the end product; also how to glue the pieces together before stitching and clean up the excess.

Skora Leather catered to shoe shop needs and bought out defunct stores and odd lots of leather from suppliers so I could dig through cartons of leather and tools then dicker on the prices. Material & tools lead the creative process. The designs rapidly grew and soon I was making a wide range of wares and basically reinventing the world of leather wares.

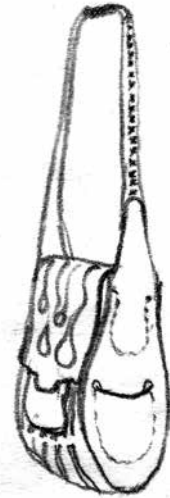
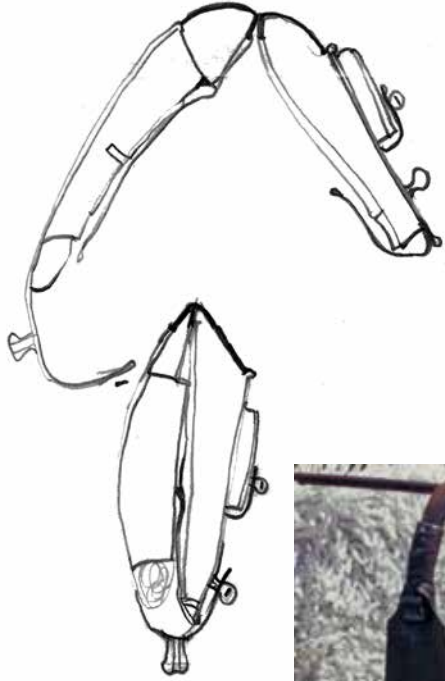


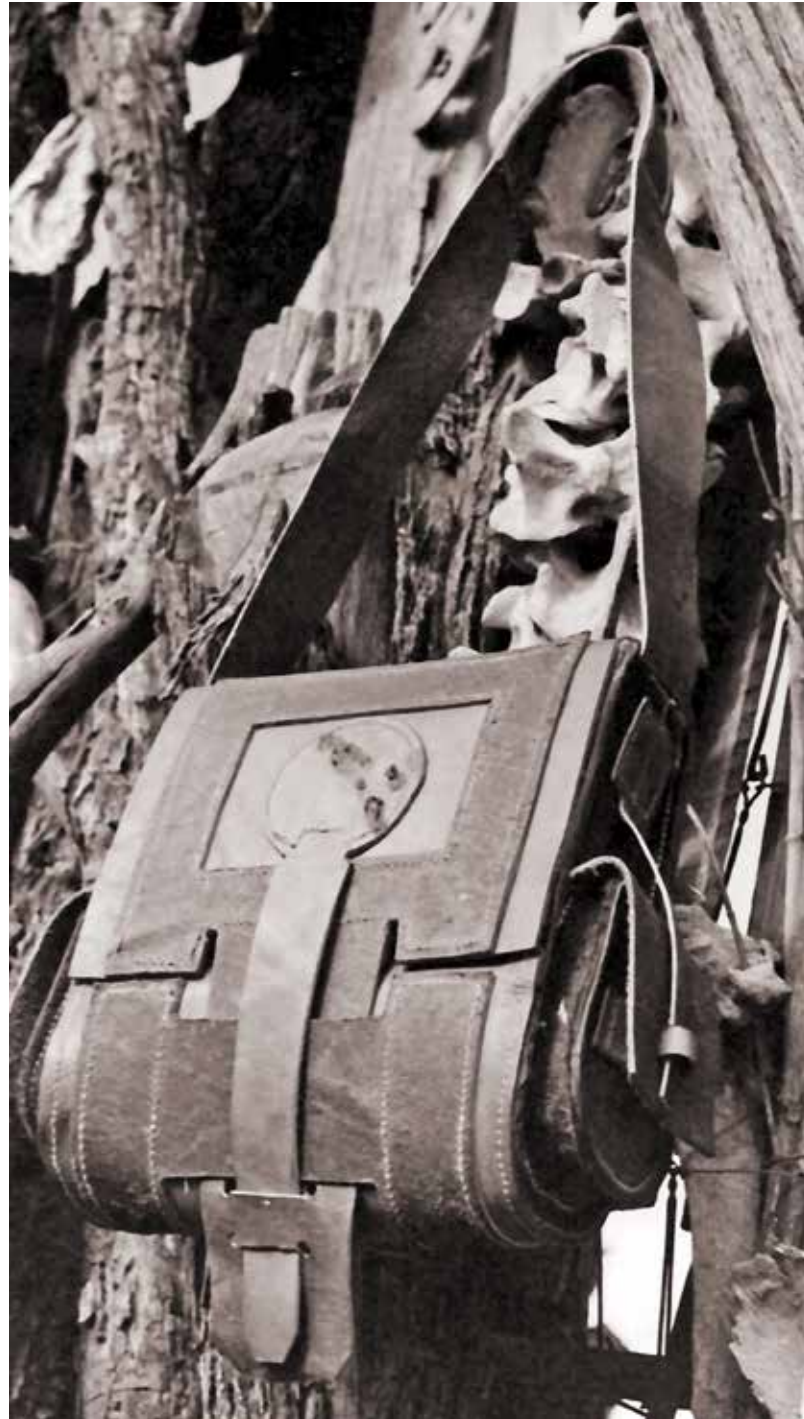


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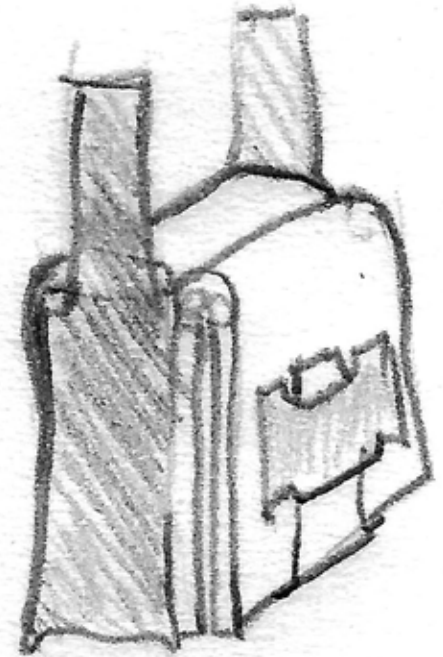
The latches, jazzed up lids ,and straps lead the way to more involved works





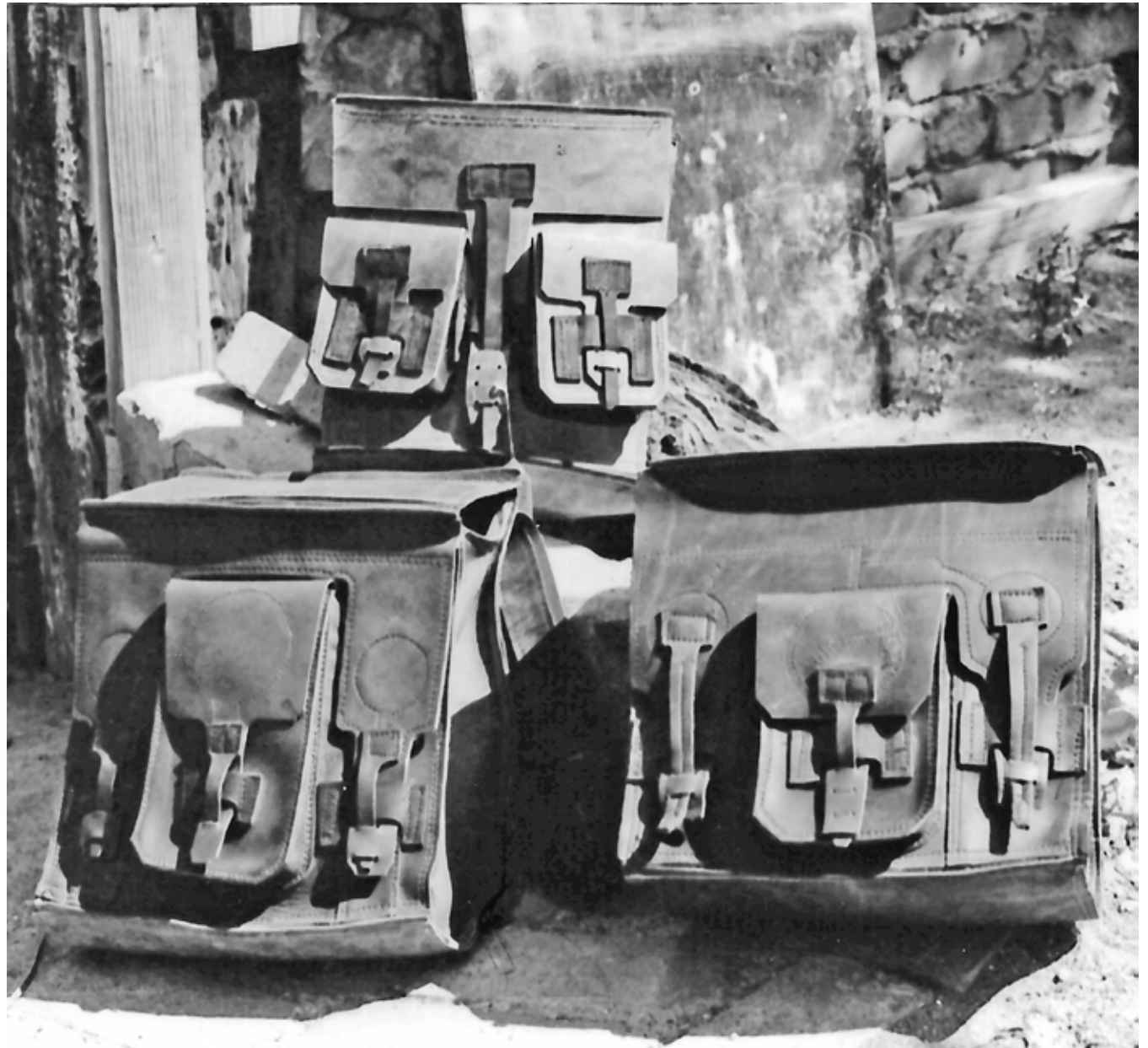
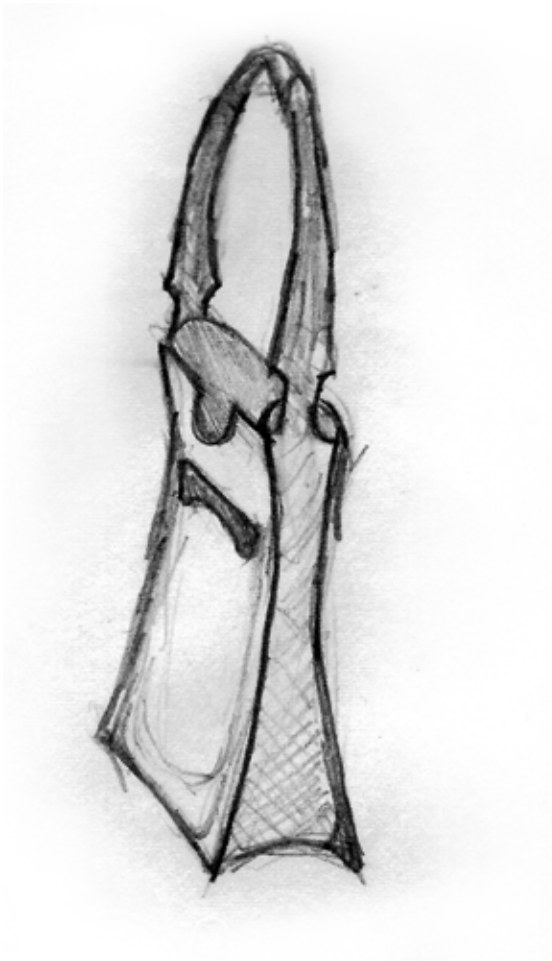
As I get a feel for the sewing machine and odd lots of leather it allowed me to play with the shoulder straps.

Shoulder bags became my standard bag with some luggage and backpack in the mix.





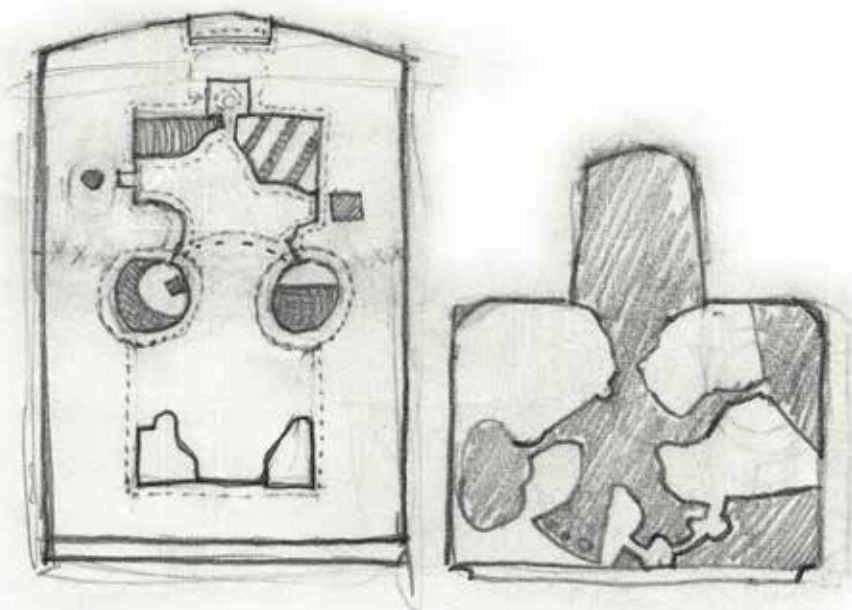


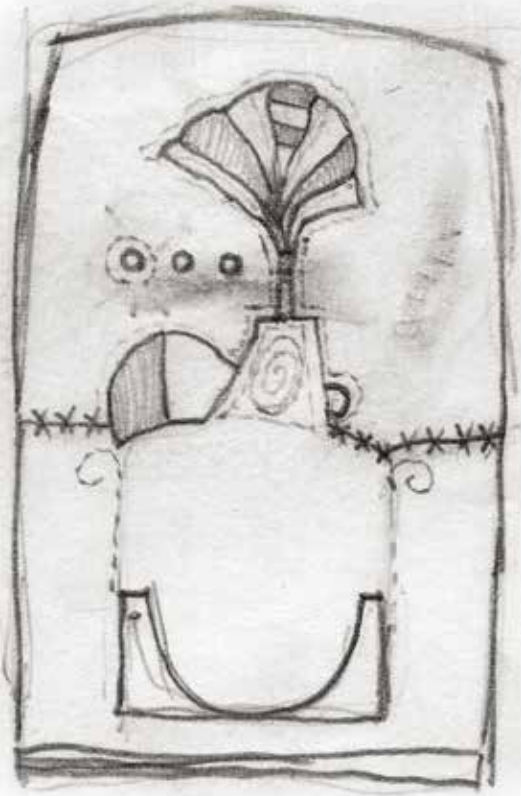


EXPLORING STITCHING AND INLAYS AND DYES

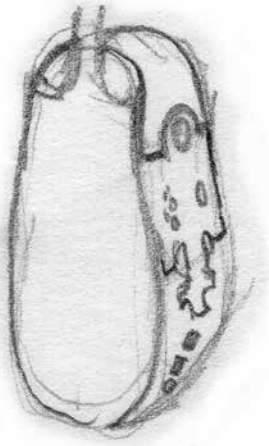
I found skins of different colors, textures and thickness which lead to inlays of shapes on the front and back panels of bags. I also began using stitching like drawing media; and learned how to make round forms by segmenting pie shapes together then joining them with hand stitching to sides, lids and straps. Using dyes I could add shapes inside the shapes by sewing boundary before assembly.

The straps became a playground adding shapes to the bag and extra pockets for keys etc. The bags became more and more playful.





Colored dyes created extra shapes on panels

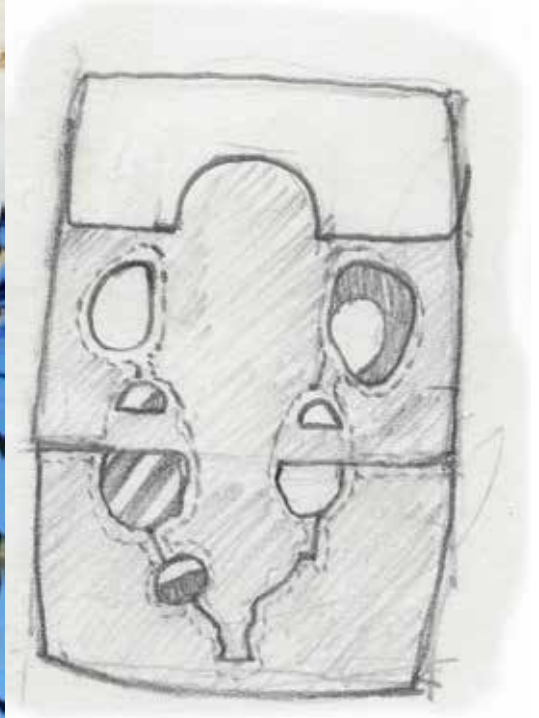




Stitching by hand made these beautiful butt joints in the heavy leather and added a nice look.

The Machine Stitching allowed me to draw on the bags and enjoy the nice footprint of the machine's advanced foot.



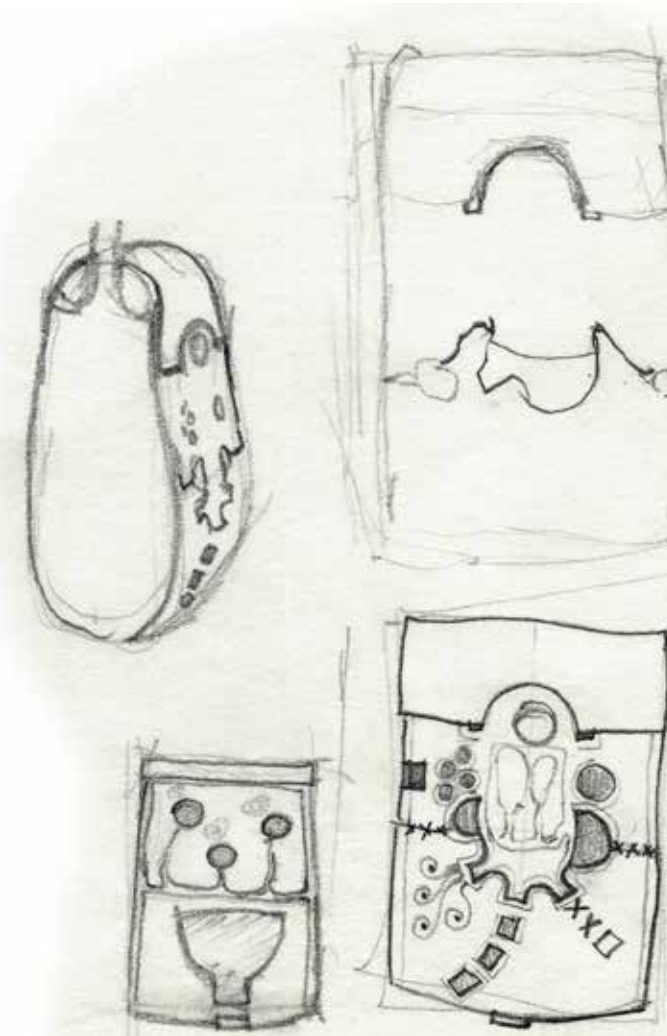




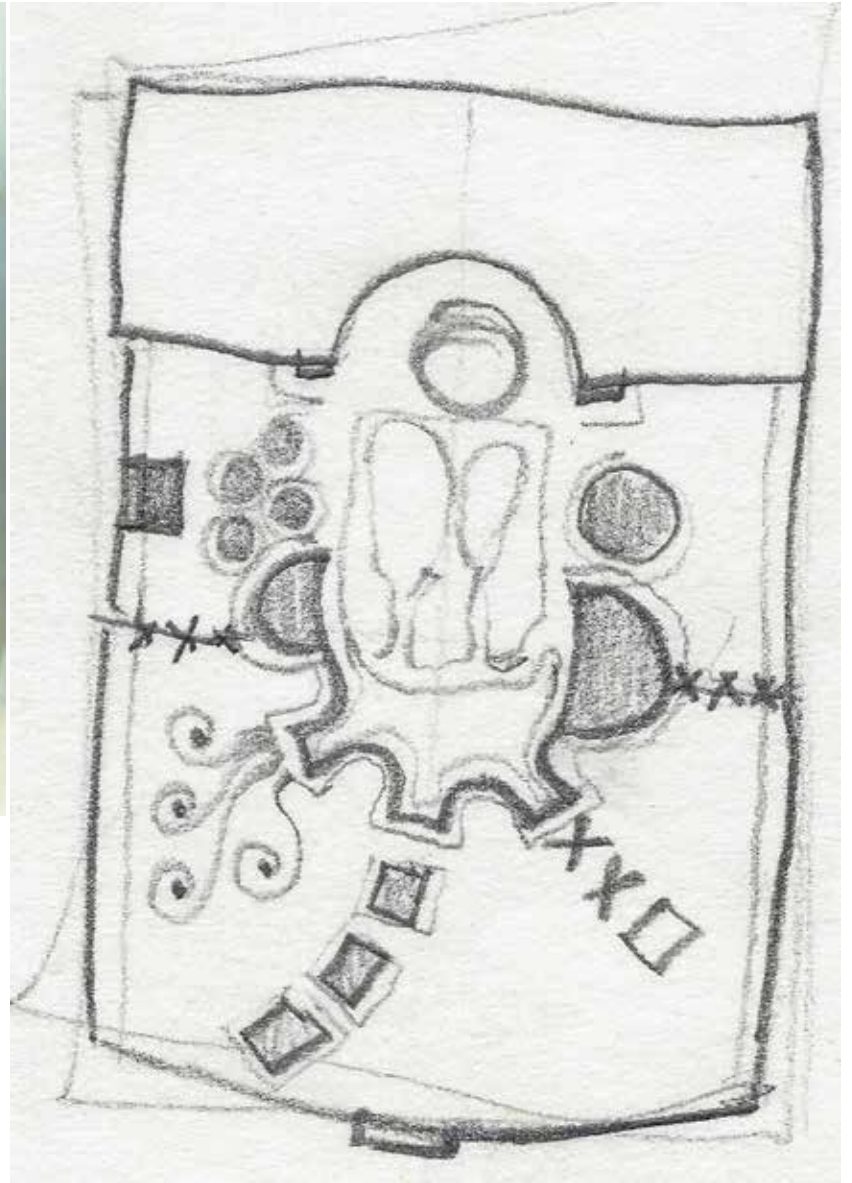
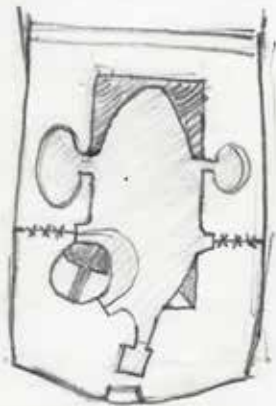
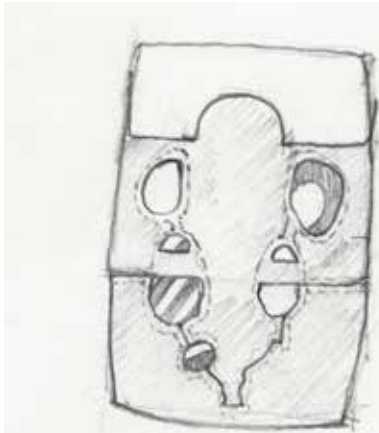
Fun to wear and show off compartments – hottest bag on the street.







The interiors lined with 'pretty and fluffy' fabrics became standard

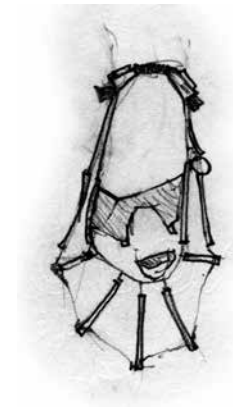
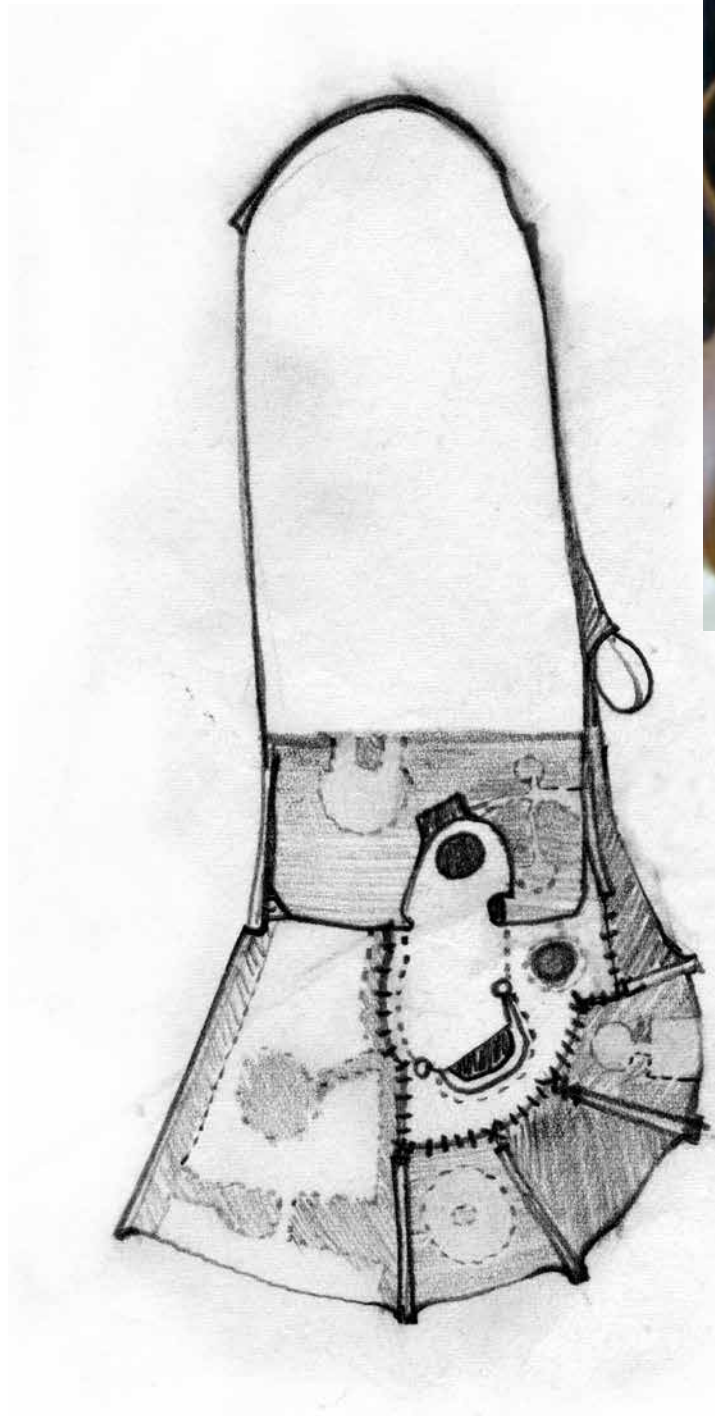


CONCH BAGS AND FORMS

The Conch Bags evolved from learning how to segment shapes together and finding a very soft yet thick leather called horse butts. This leather was made by cutting across a horse's hind quarters and down both legs, this fine grained leather was shapeable with warm water and I could get round forms then hand stitch then to the other parts making a bag that held a shape like a snail shell. The bags held there shape empty or full of stuff.

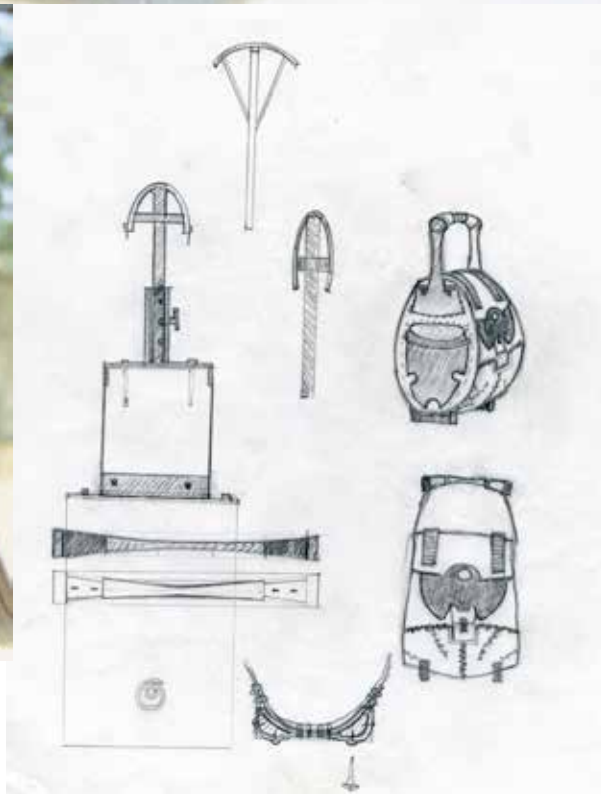
Other form soon evolved, the stapes got more carried away and my excitement grew. There was a buzz coming off the 6th street shop in Tucson. Patrons would say can you make me this or that and soon my line of products grew.

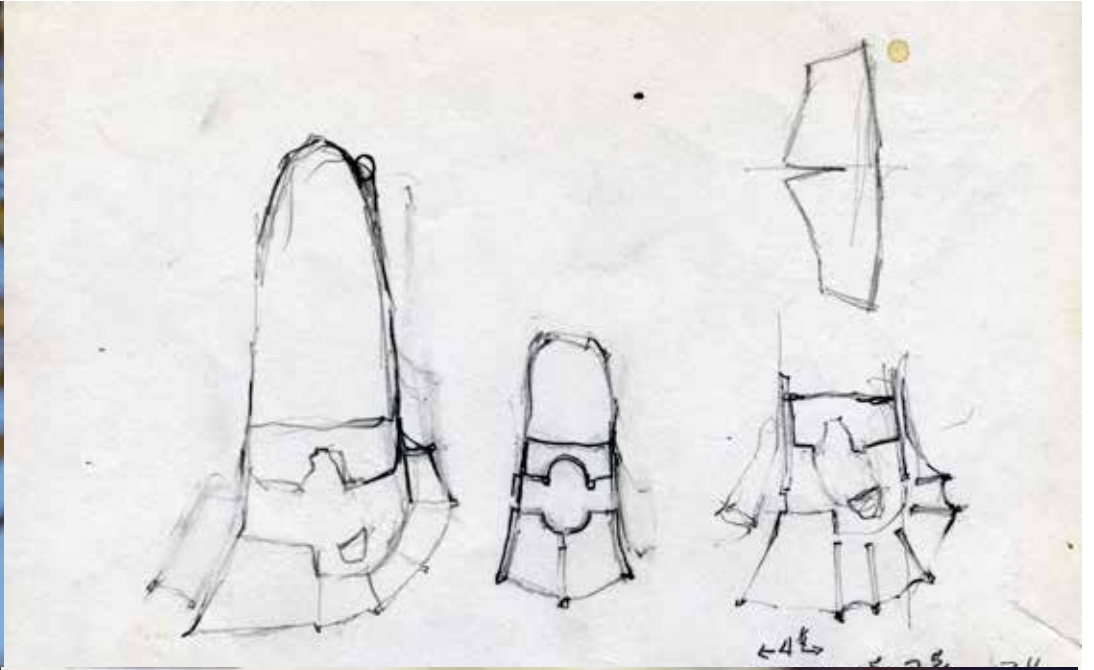


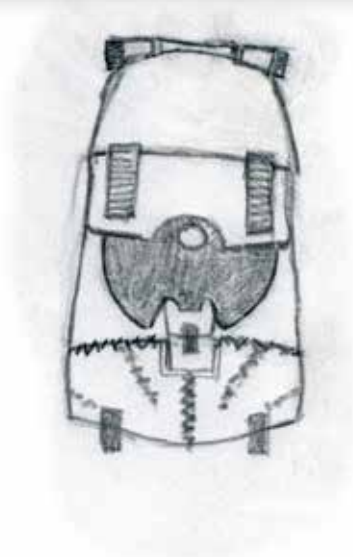


The hell with straight dull bags by Zac, the sky was the limit. Wear cool, fun bags to the party or *Strut the Walk*





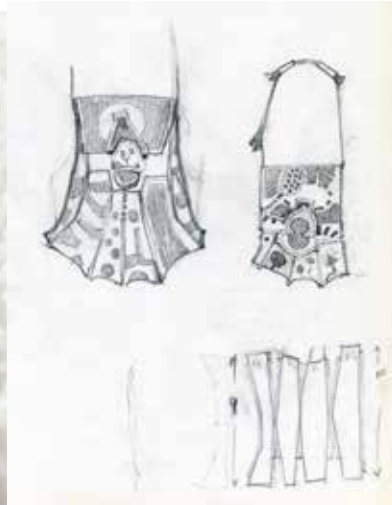








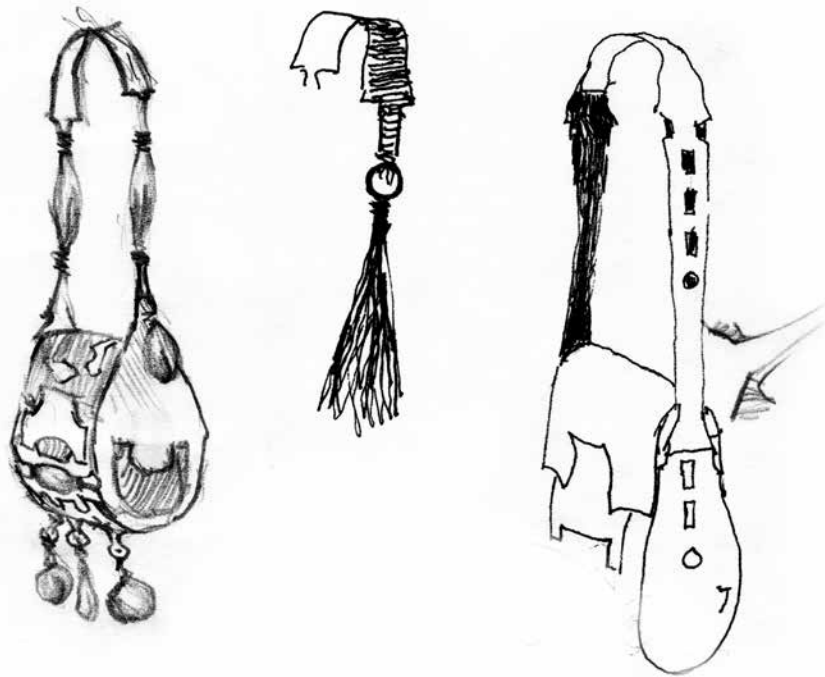
The straps and faces on the latches developed along with more involved straps



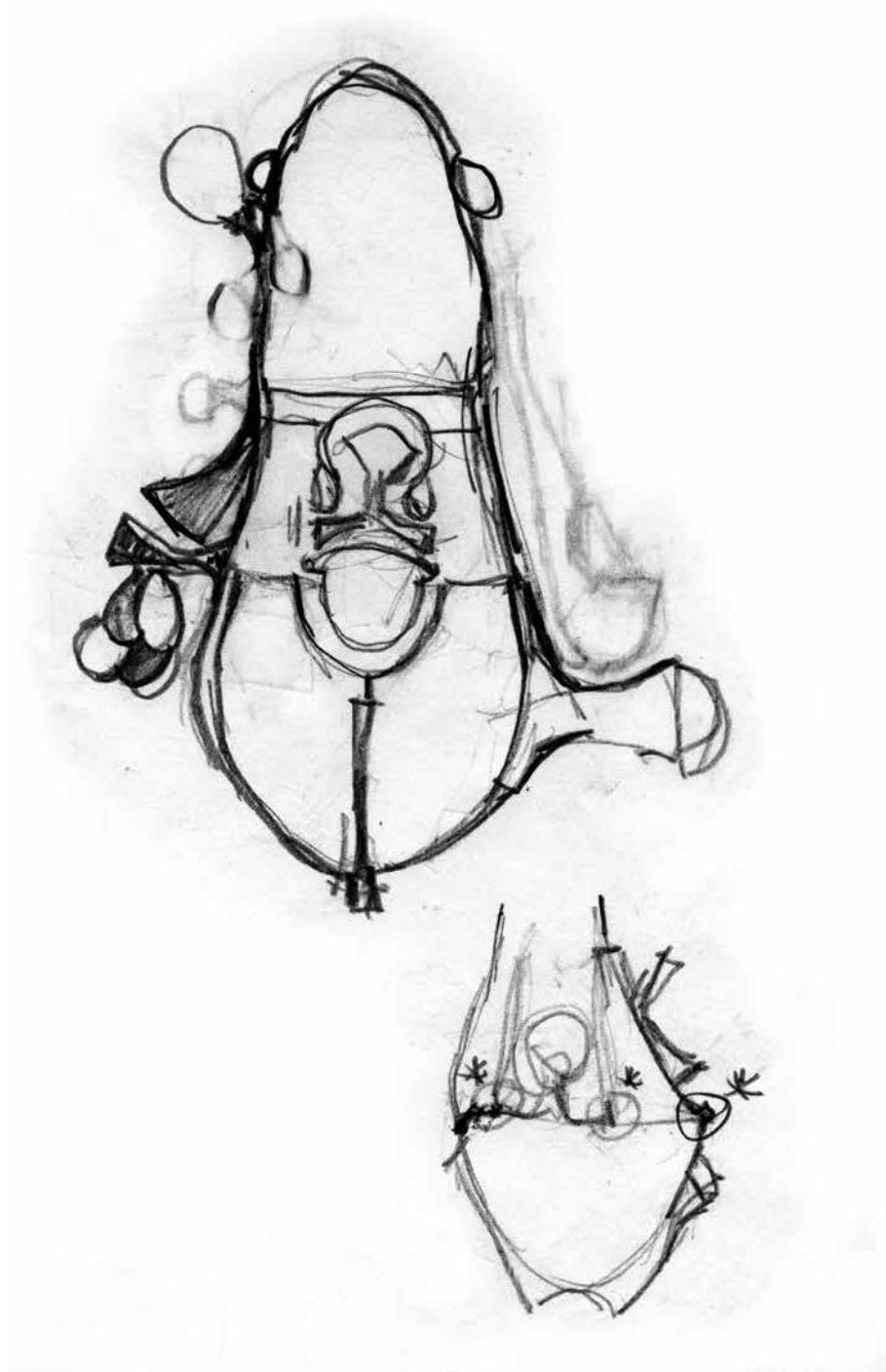
BOBBLE BAGS AND FRINGE

These bags blew the doors off my leather craft. And caused national and international recognition - spending more and more time on each item I could not charge for my time and would set a price for my things based on what bags and other leather items were sold for. Rather than put less time into my craft I actually spent more because it challenged and pleased me.

I continued my MFA studies and got more involved in teaching beginning drawing classes to undergraduates. My sculpture art was also growing not only in sophistication but in scale, I completed a 36' tall wooden piece and a very long steel piece in a desert wash, 80 feet long. This was a very busy time teaching - studying - sculpting - working leather and occasional trips to Montana and Mexico. Busy and happy.



Fringe was a gas, extended the bag and gave them movement



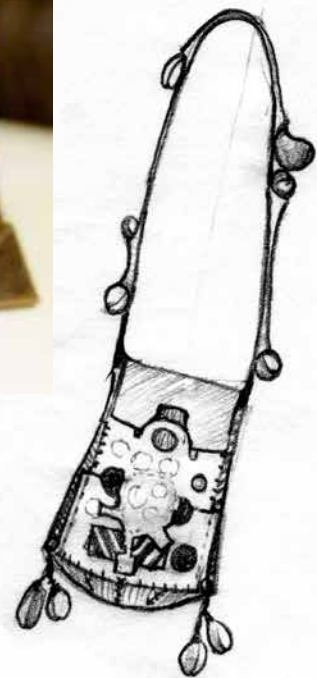
Gennie DeWeese Bag

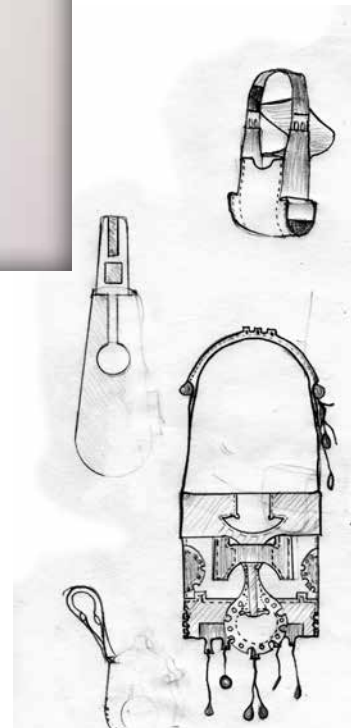
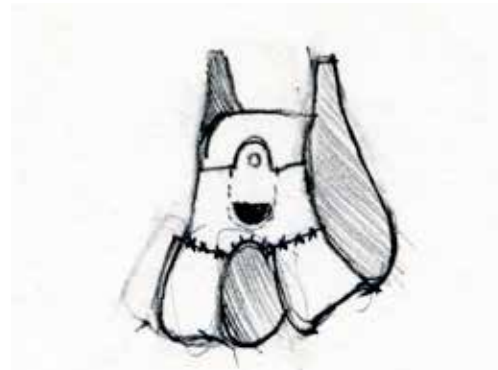
Ft. 6 = 6.00
 hr. 16 = 64.00
 bobo 64 = 7.50
 79.00 CP
 179.00
 39.50
 118.50
 7.50
 126.00
 79.85 WSP

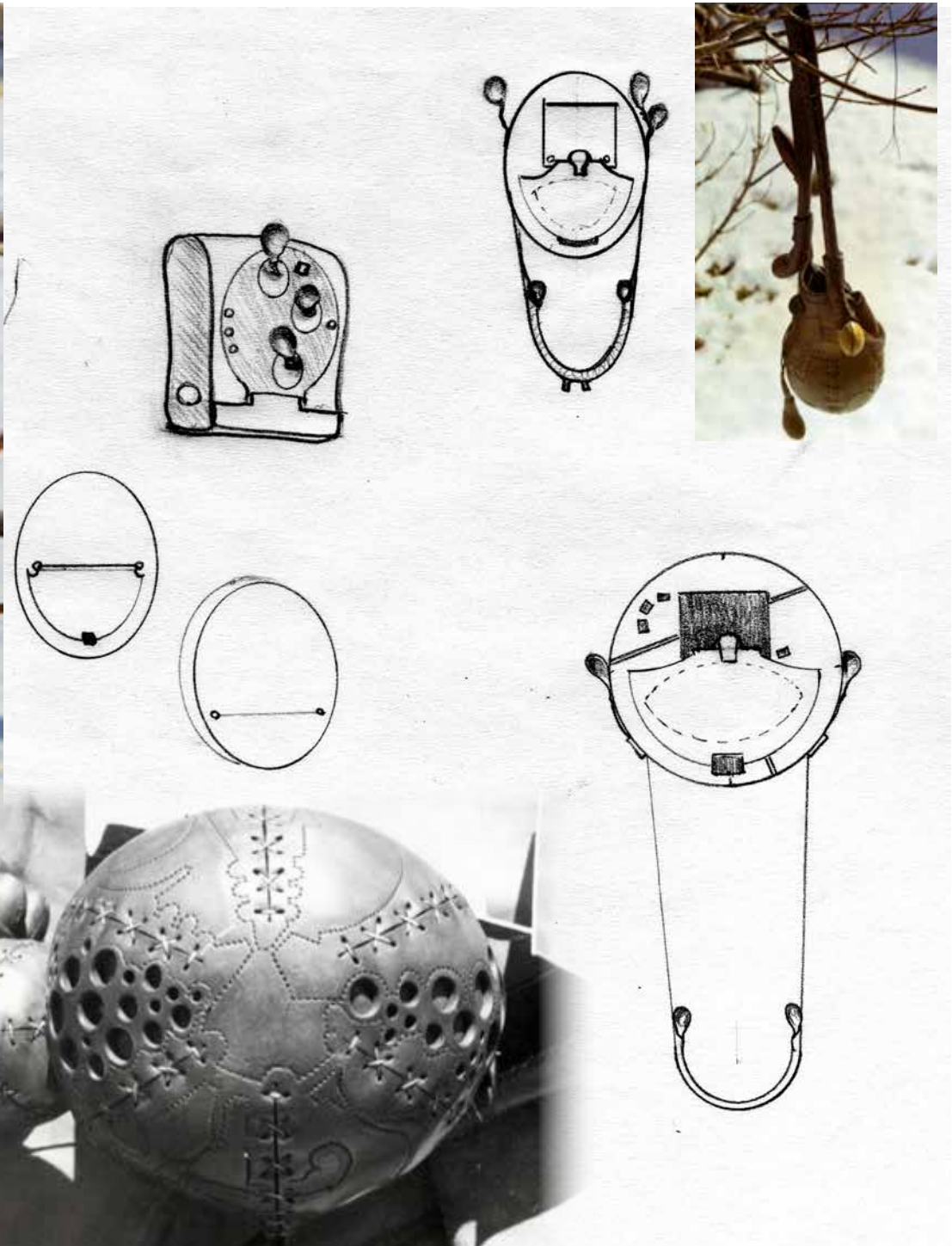
Strap - 18.50
 Leather - 7.50
 Labor - 53.00
 + 15.00
 + selling

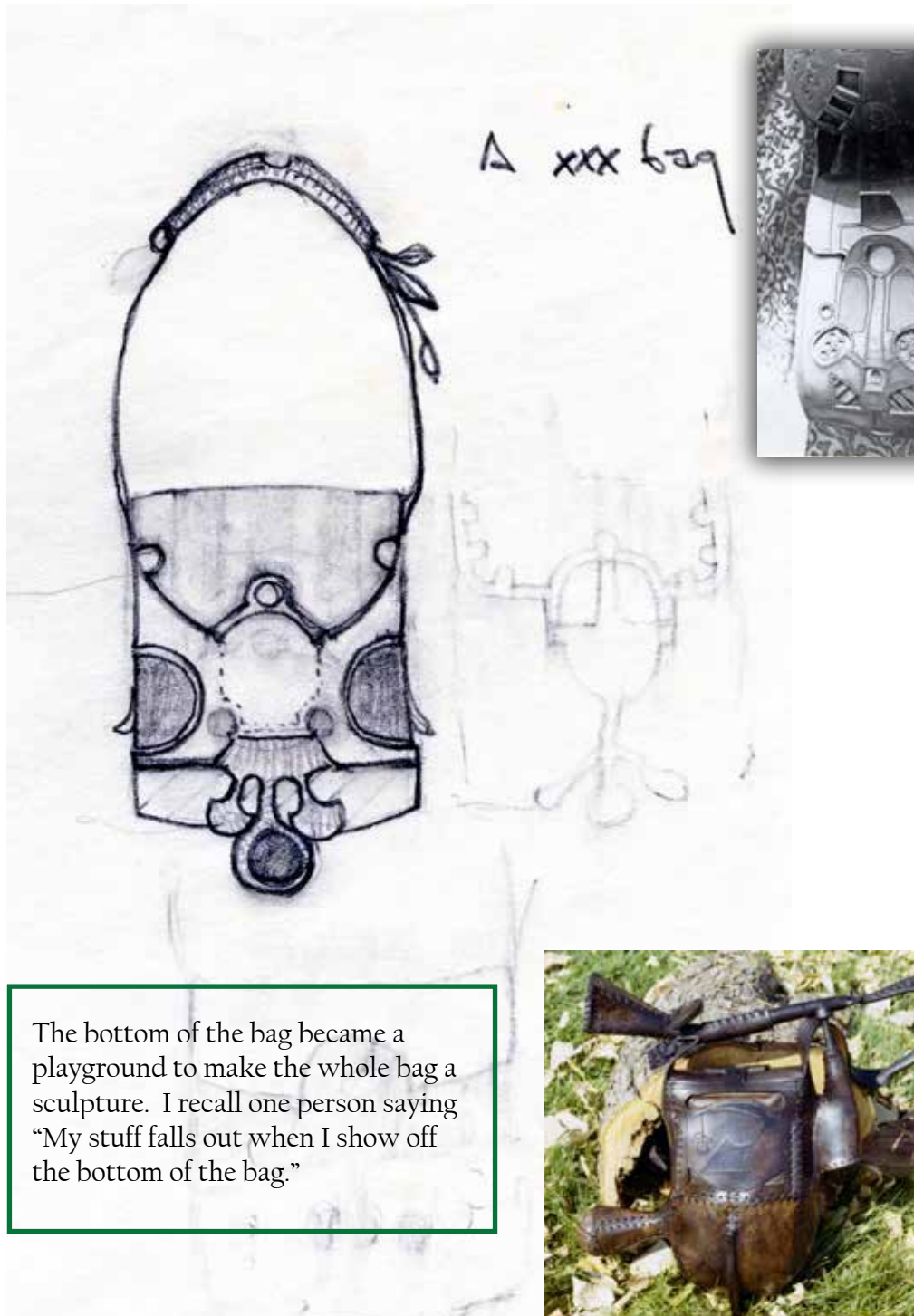


4 hr. wad strap
 4 hr. Thurs ballom + body
 5 1/2 hr. Fri 20% fabric
 13 1/2







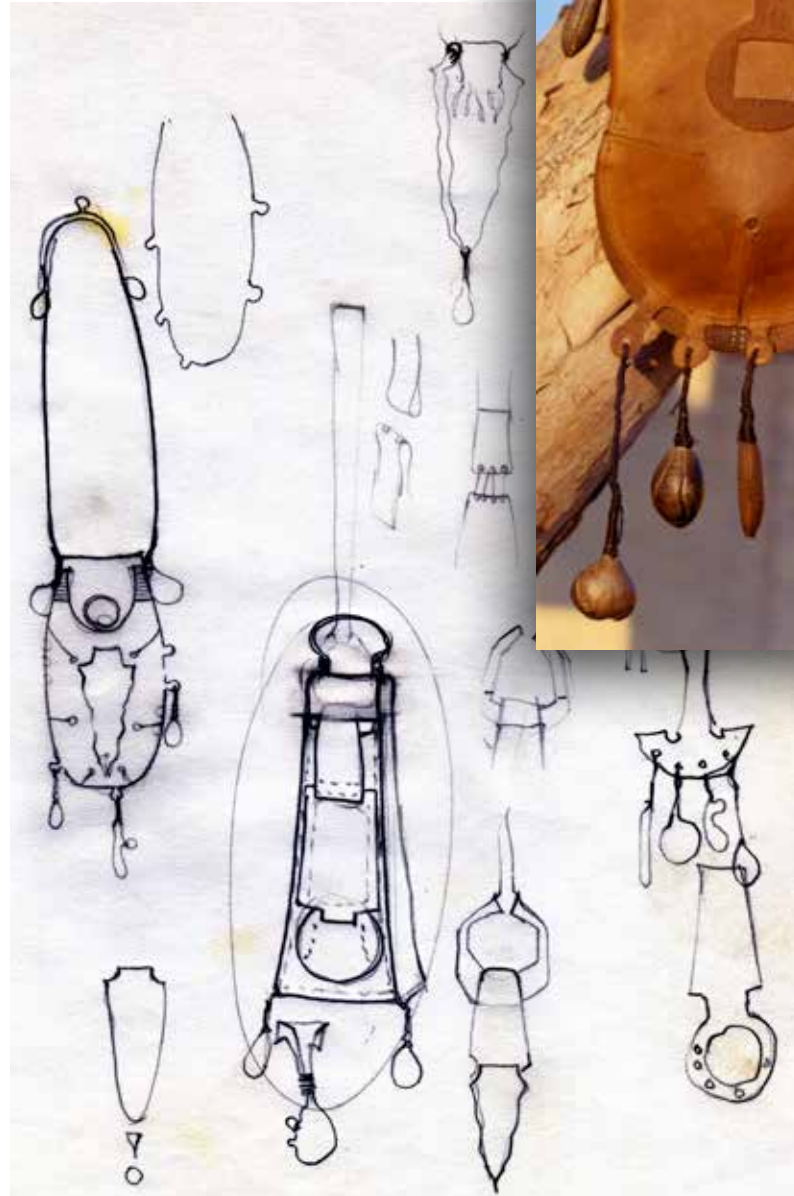


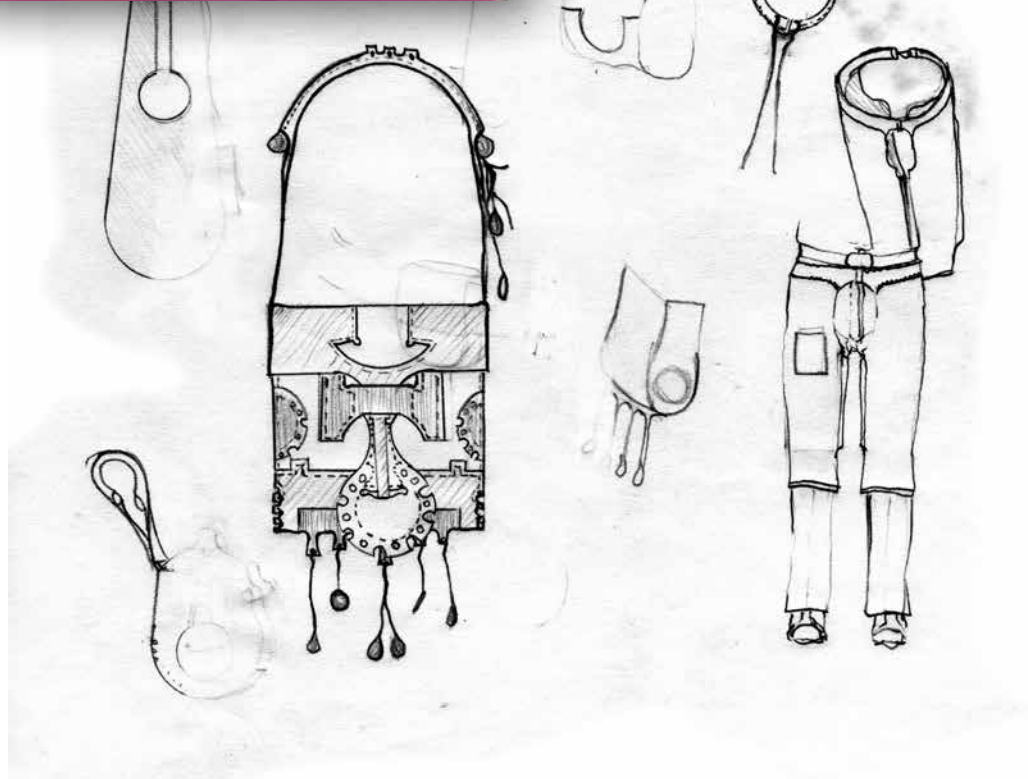
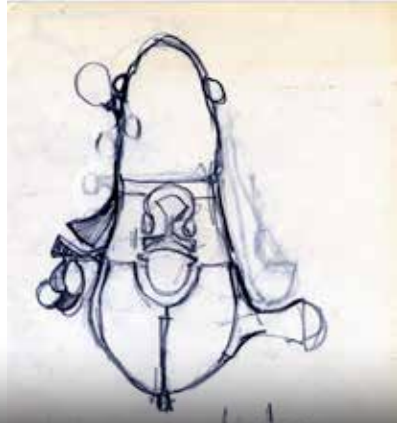
The bottom of the bag became a playground to make the whole bag a sculpture. I recall one person saying "My stuff falls out when I show off the bottom of the bag."

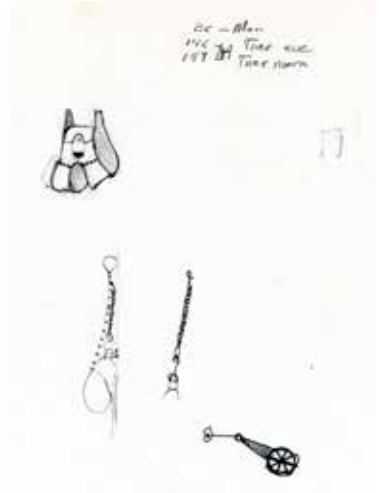
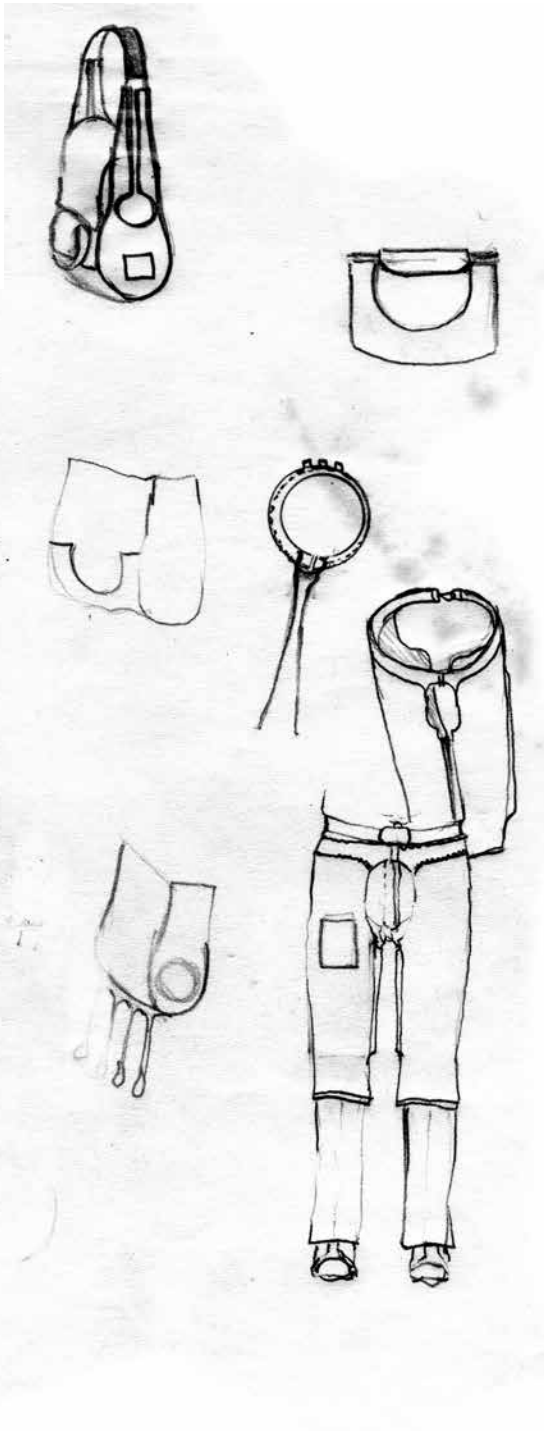




Far out became Zac's Leather Works motto



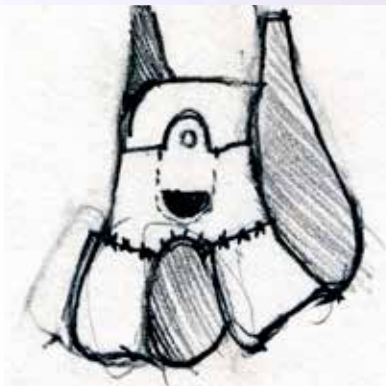
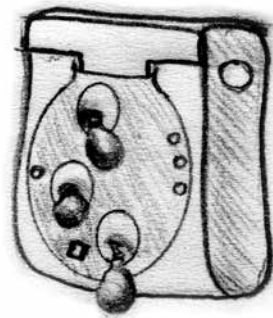
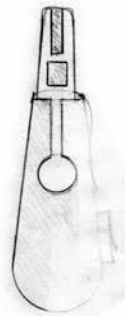


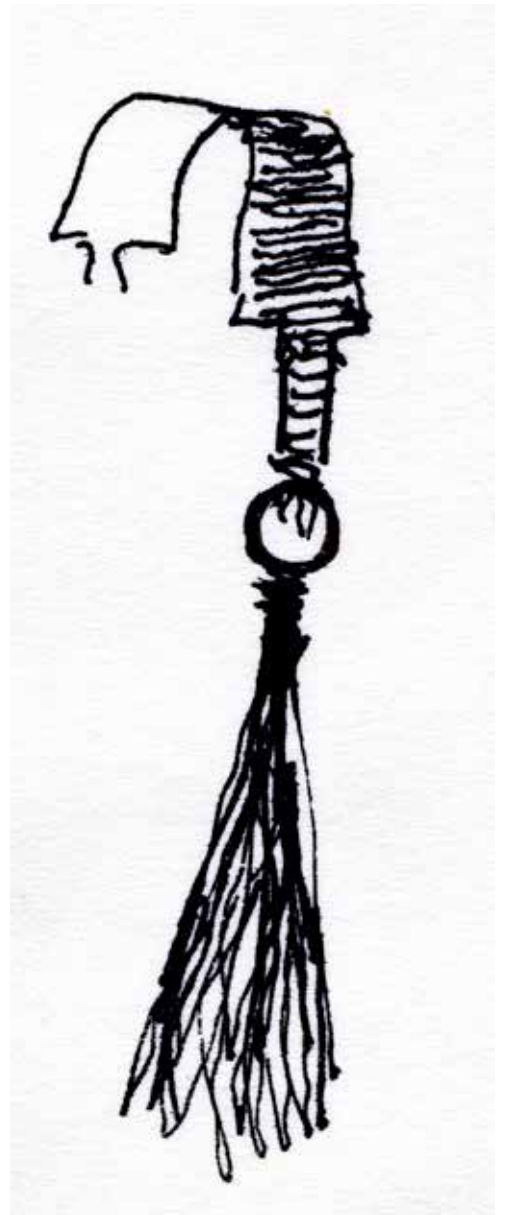




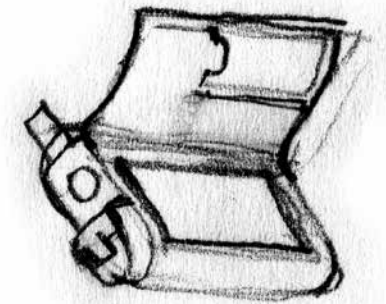


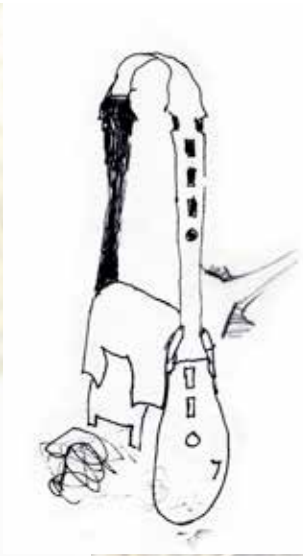


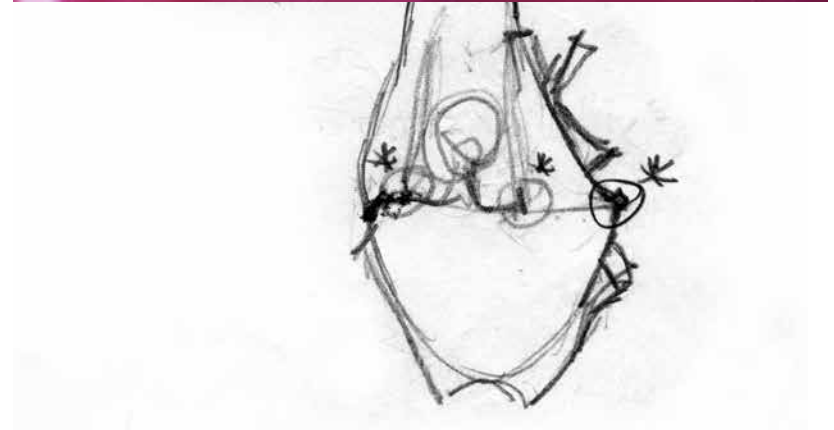








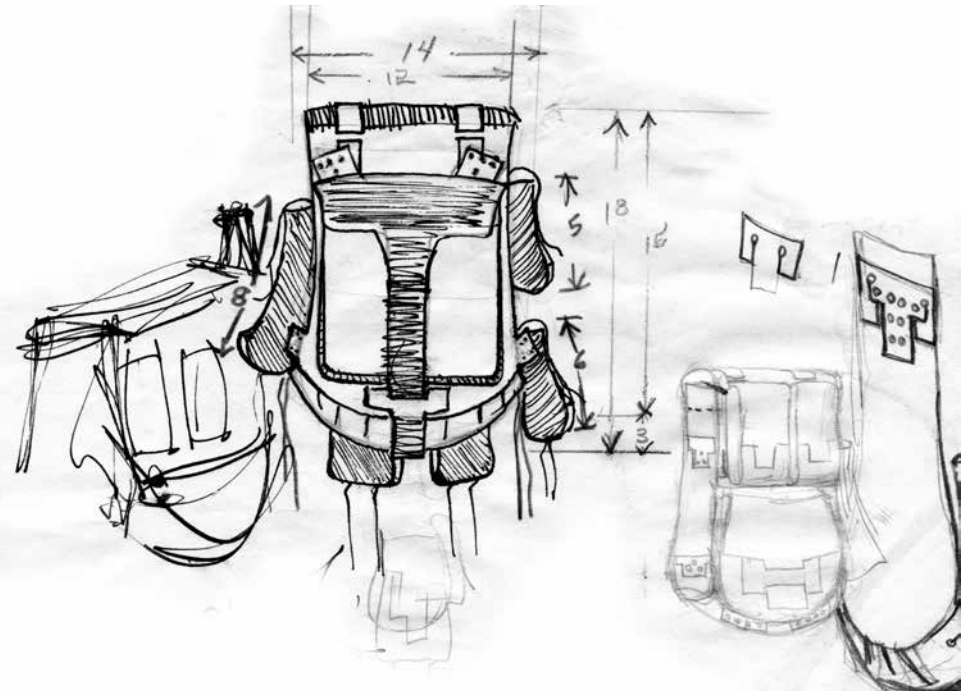




USEFUL WARES

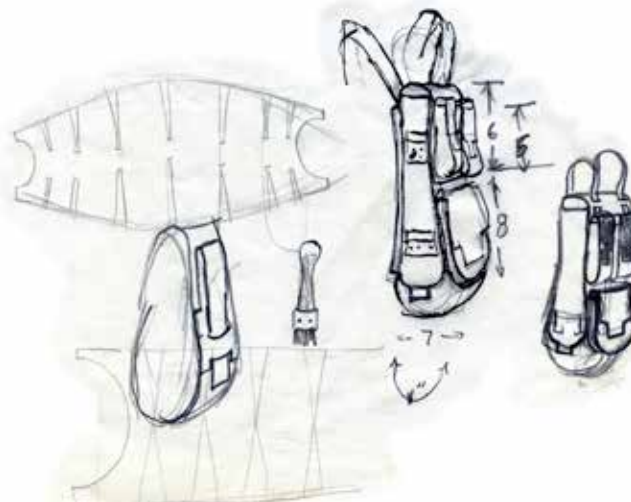
My efforts to please my clientele and earn some income doing leather work led me to making luggage / backpacks / vests / notebooks / wallets / and gun scabbards. I stayed away from sandals, belts and head bands as the shops were flooded with them and there was not much challenge in that work.

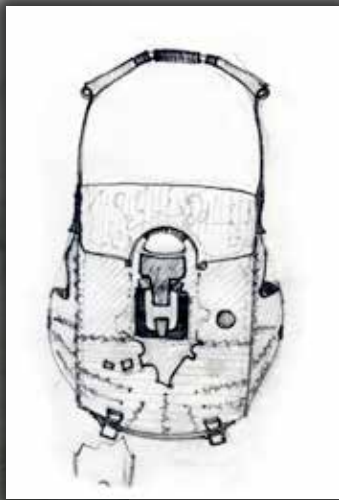
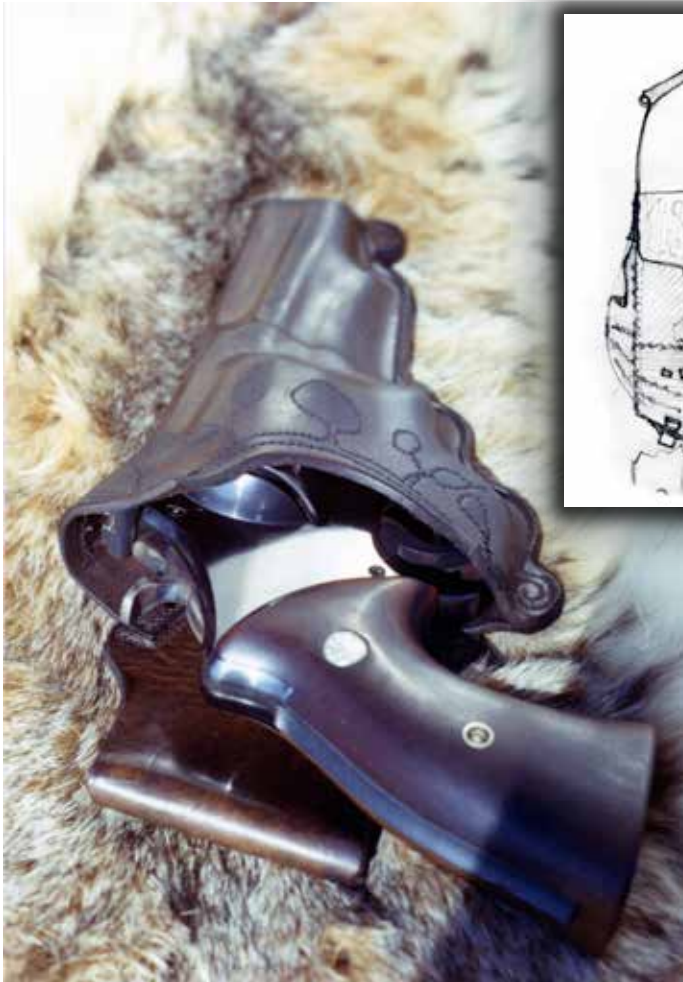
I found a few exotic animal skins at Skora and made some fun vests. The backpacks were made before the fad of nylon packs that flooded stores and campuses. I used mine on camp-outs and long hikes. The wallets were a product and I made a batch at a time to keep them affordable. I still have a notebook or two they wear well.





If you have a leather shop, you do what customers want and need. While trying to spruce it up at the same time with a bit of zing.

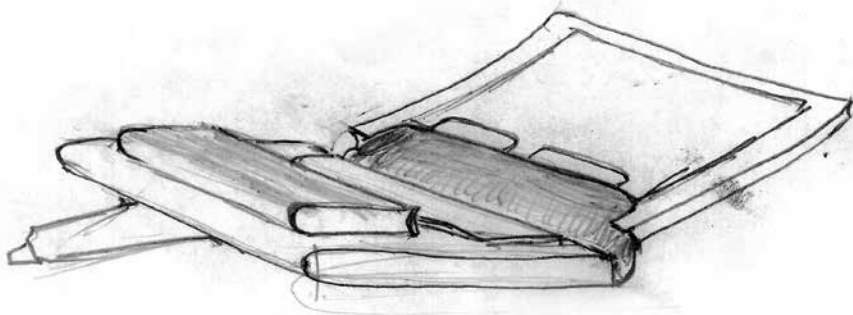
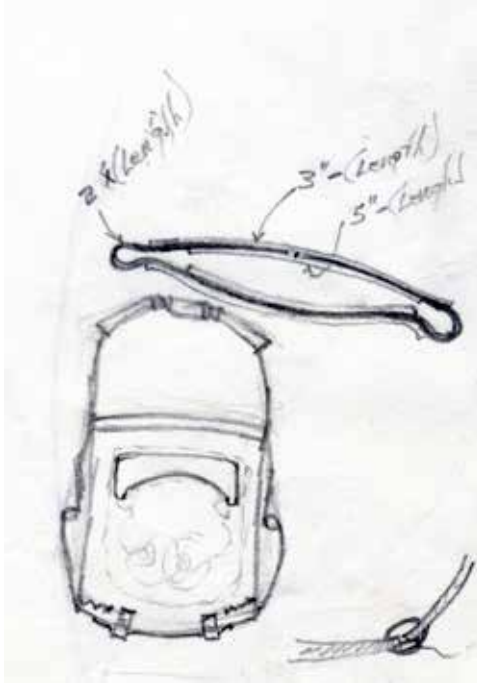




- x Lined @ canvas @ one panel inside to divide clothes
- v side pouches for newspaper, book, etc.
- x Two back pouches one for junk & drawing gear the other for drawing pad send me dimensions
- x wood handle the rest is all leather
- x I can design a way of locking if you like

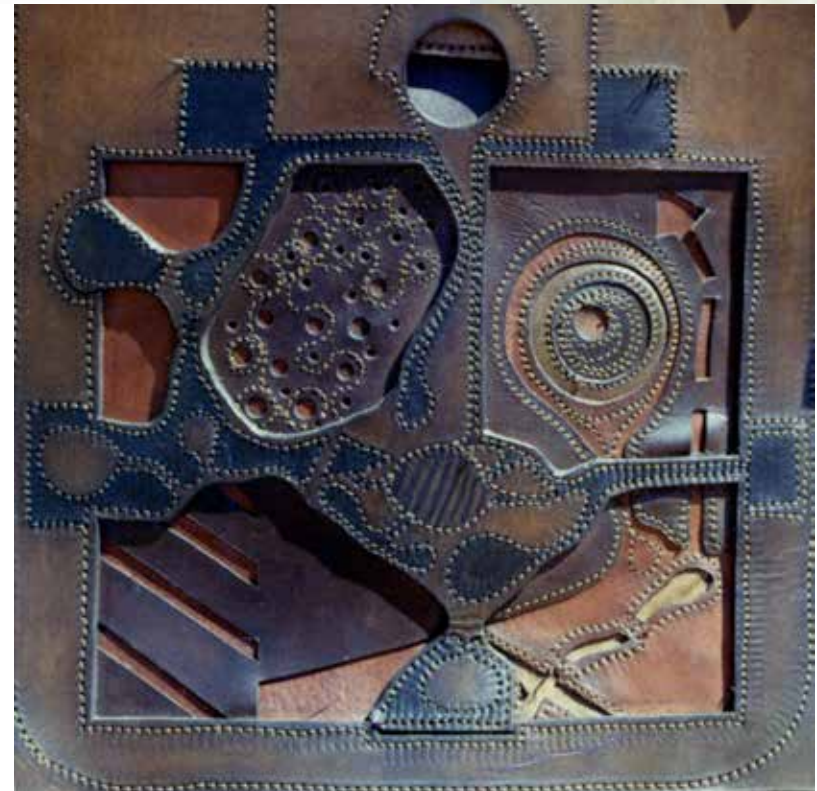
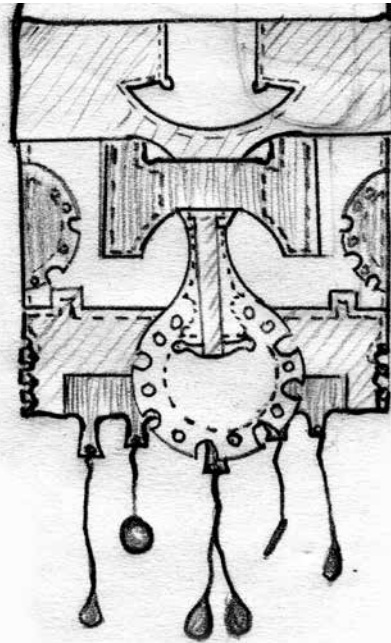








Over the top with a smile.

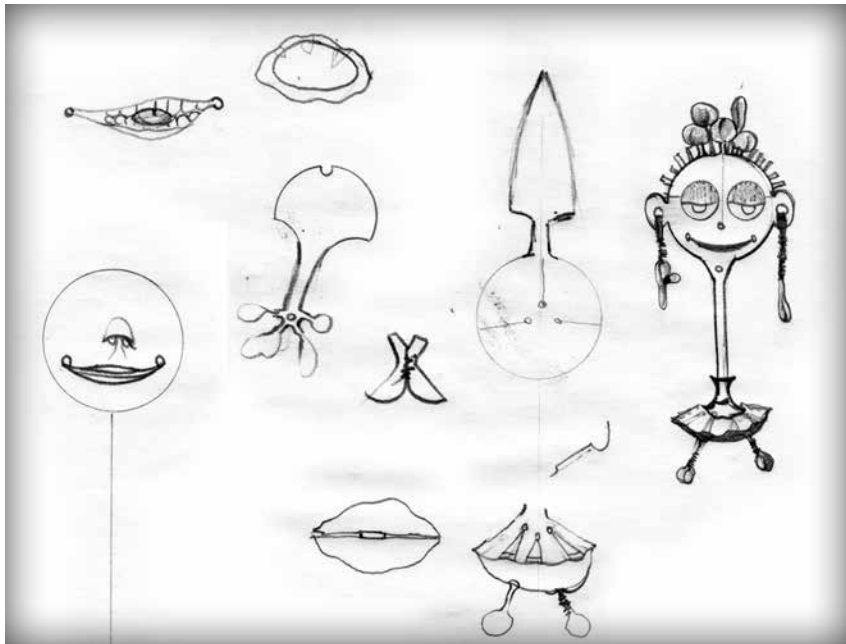


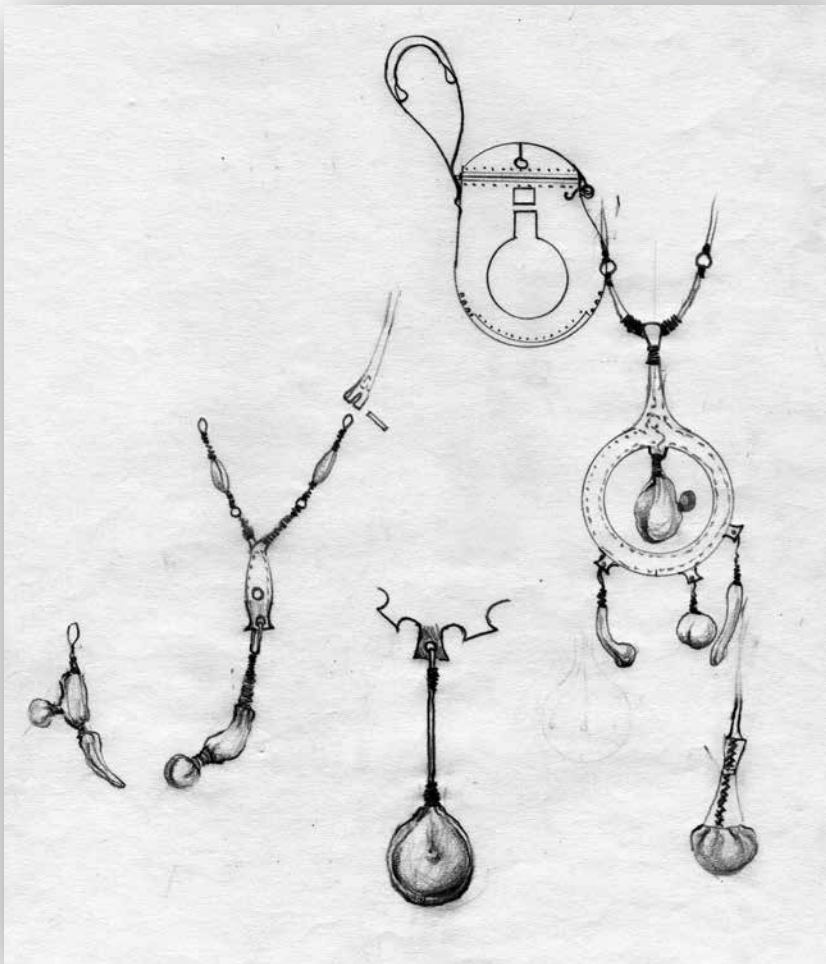


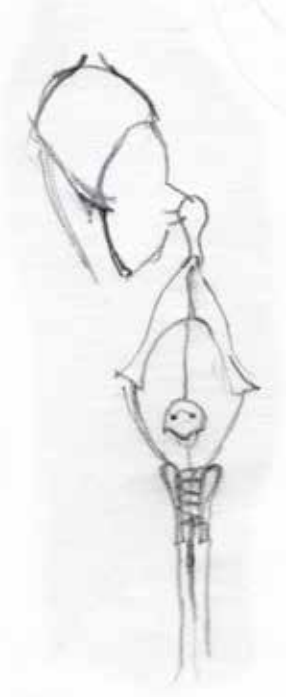


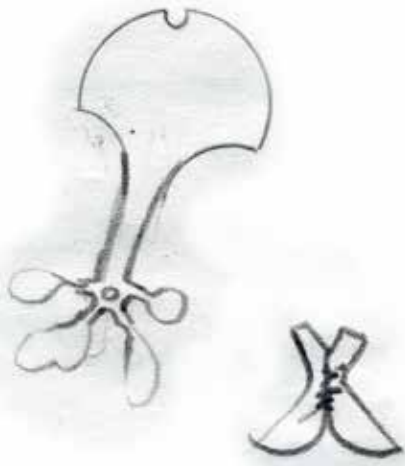
TOYS AND FAR-OUT NON USEFUL LEATHER WORKS

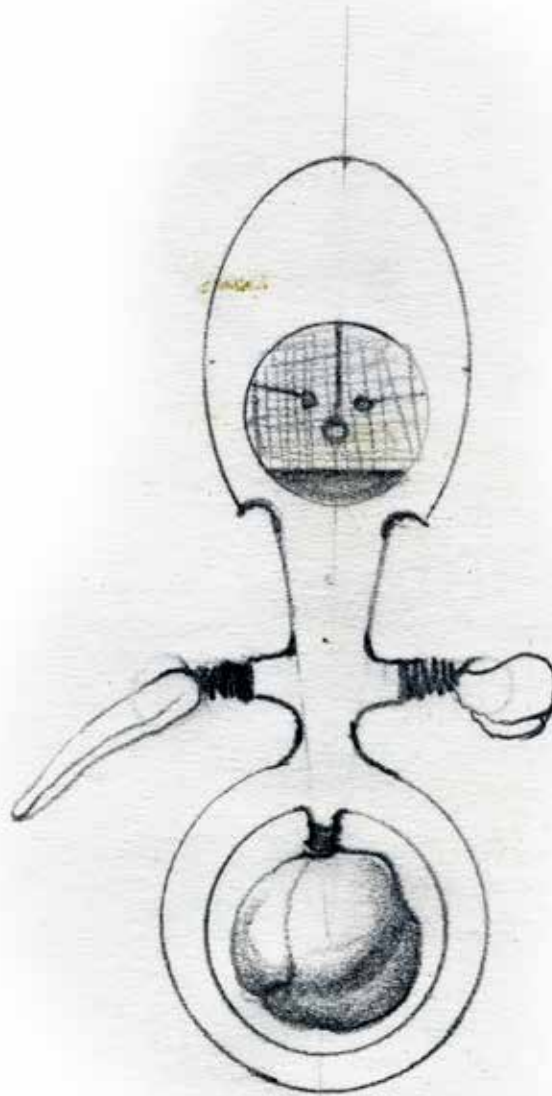
Making something with leather that had no use beyond a smile on your face worked for me. I wound up giving them a gift and actually sold a few! The bags – arrow bags – draw-string cup and bobble bag were on the edge of usable and made good party gear for those who bought them. Having fun at your craft was the bottom line + trying new ideas ... The drawings leading the way.

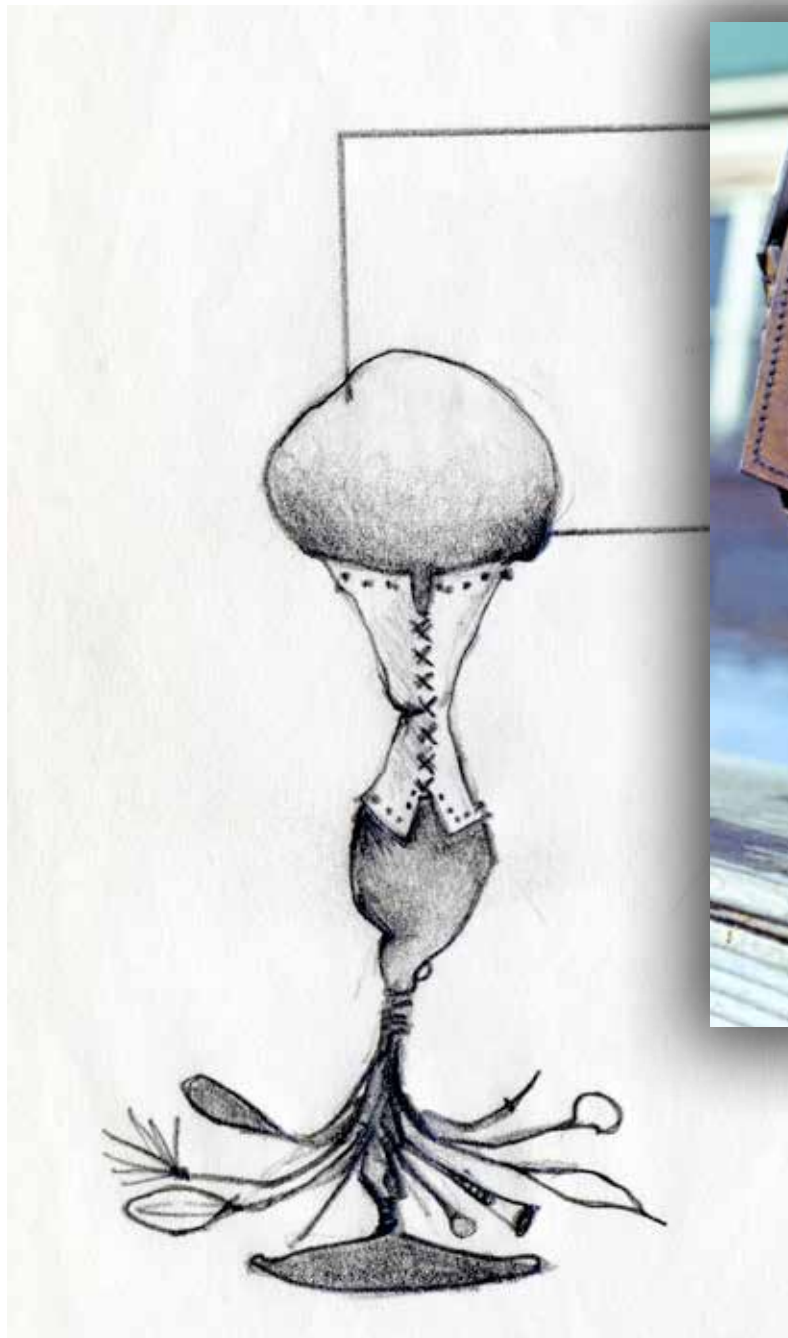


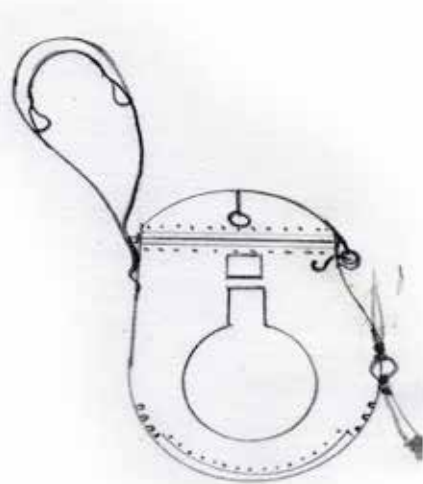


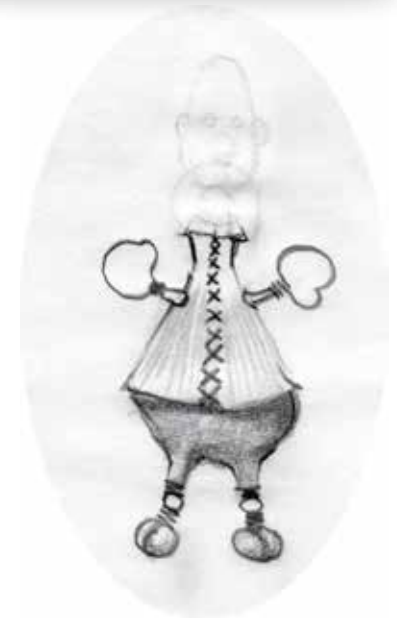
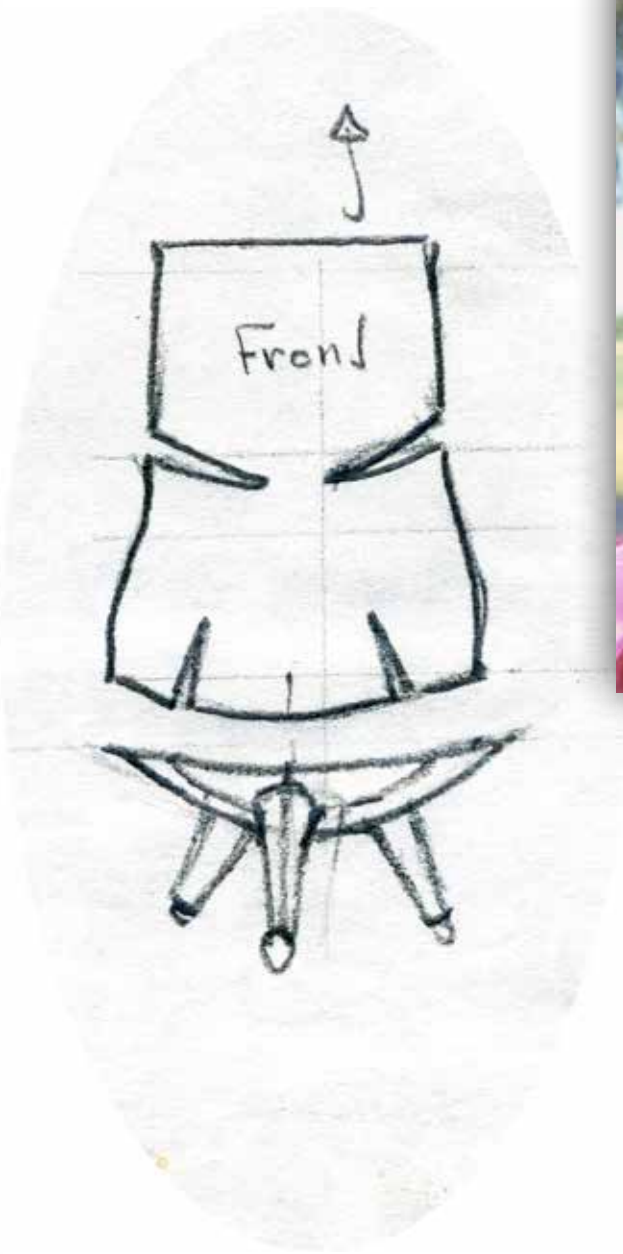


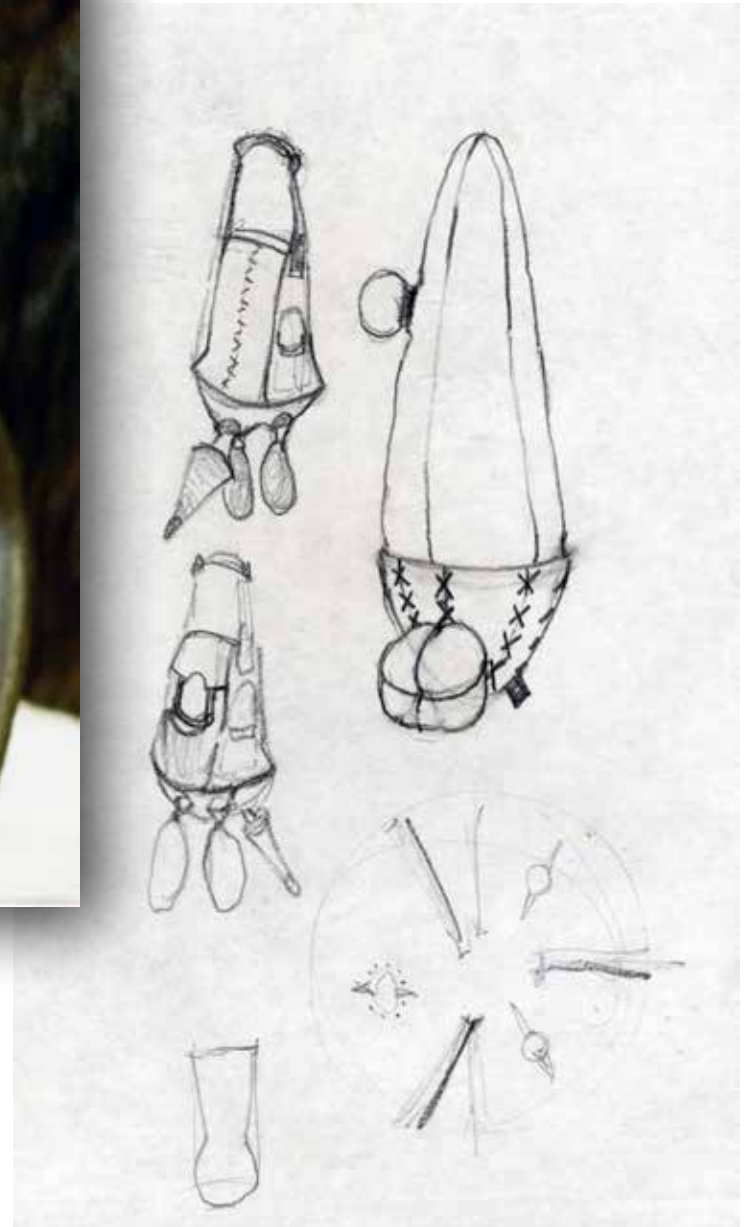


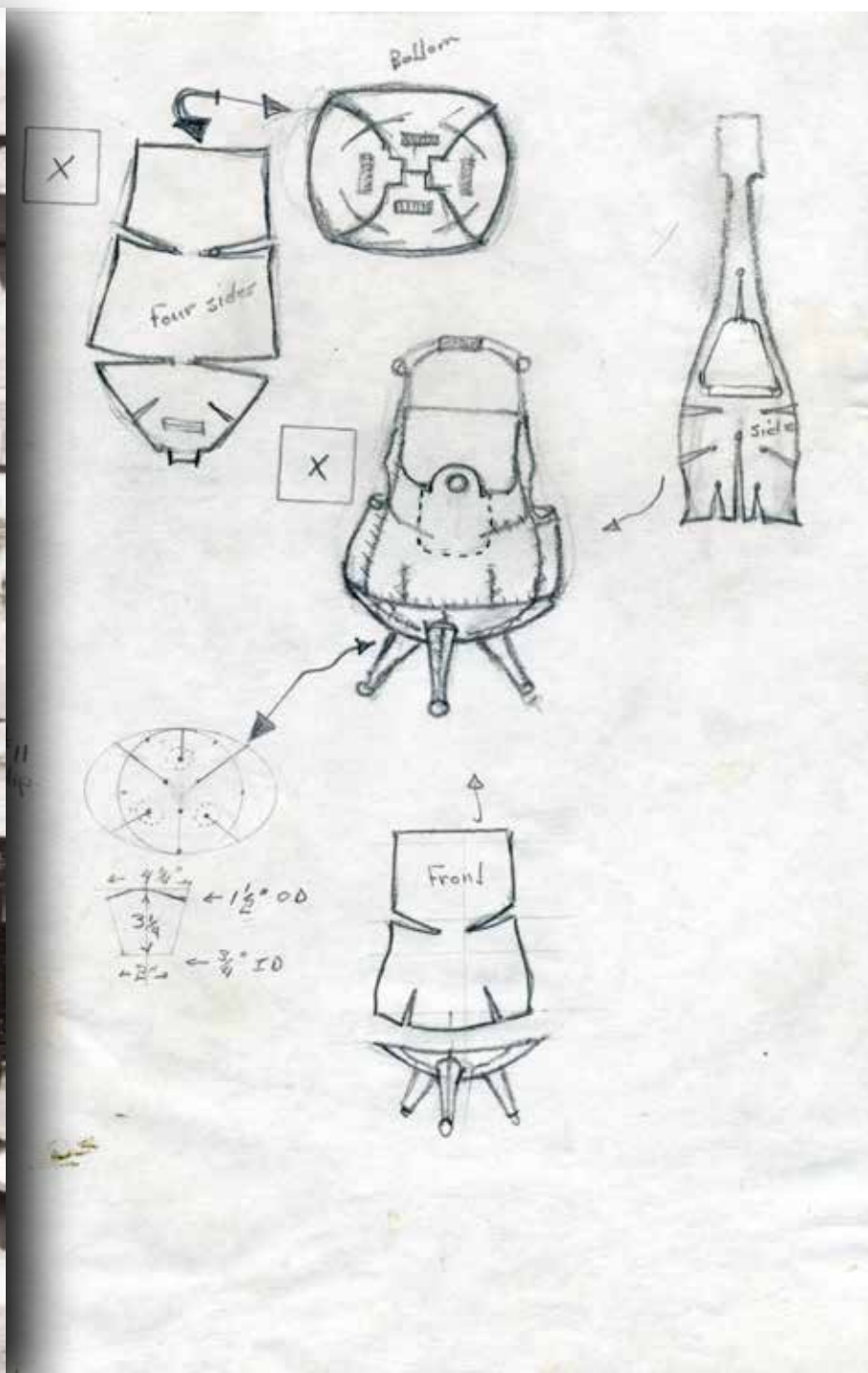
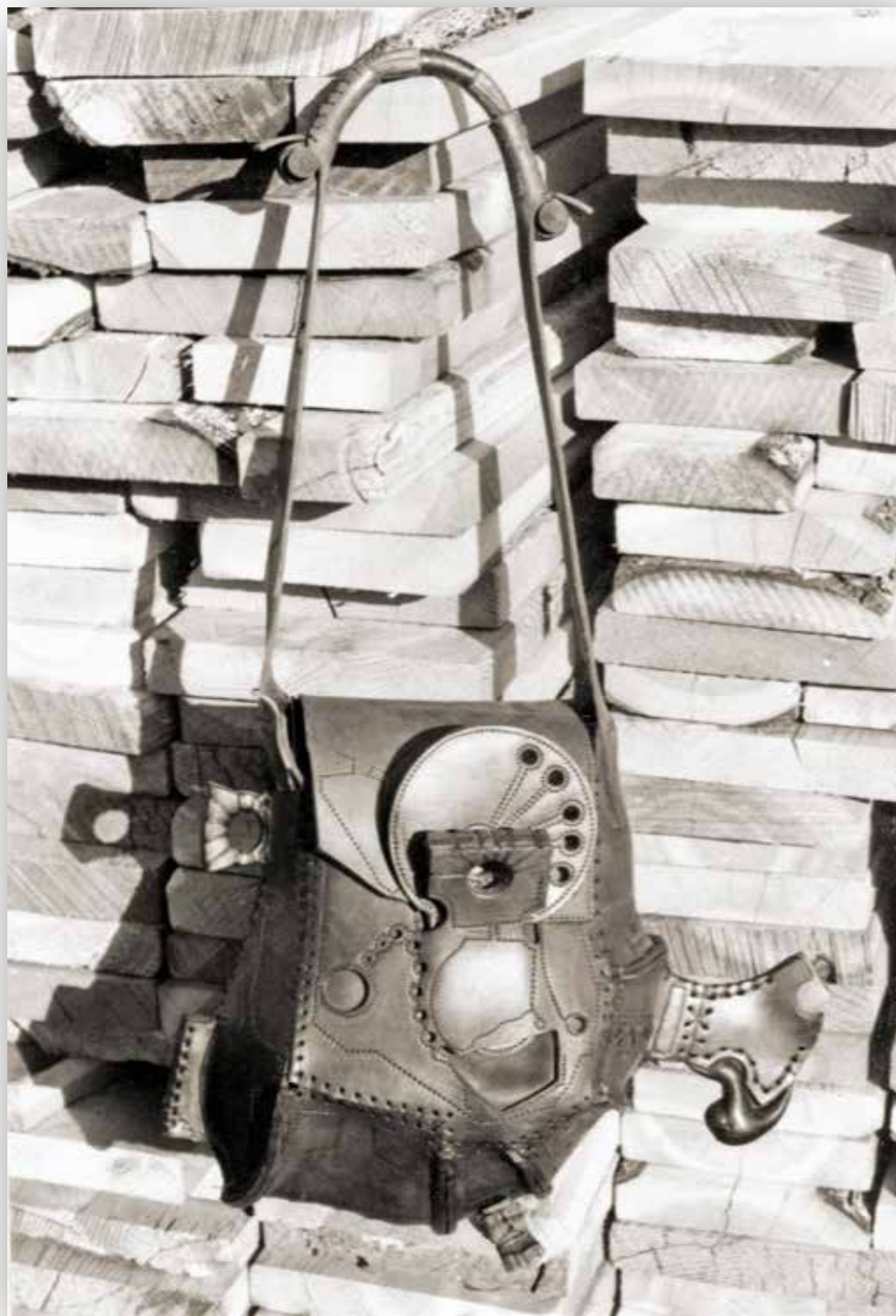












PRESS COMMENT

While organizing the materials for this book I was very pleased to see all the wonderful press I received for my leather work effort. Again my thanks to Judy Margolis my agent and friend who first contacted Vogue and Gentleman's Quarterly and made a fuss about my work all over Tucson.

I have not received such fine press since then even though my work in Wood – Fine Homes – Painting / Drawing – and Stone and Steel that followed the Leather effort have been as noteworthy.

**A note to upcoming artists – “marketing your work is a vital and important part of doing fine art work”. It allows you and others to get excited and boost you through the slumps in creative spirit.*



Parhelion Press, Inc., a contributor to the **Giclée** publishing and printing industry, has expanded into a new, 3,000-square-foot wholesale showroom and production studio in Phoenix. Services include photography of original artwork, drum scanning, digital imaging and archiving, printing, hand-embellishing, canvas stretching, shipping and custom framing. Parhelion's gallery showcases the limited editions of their artists, including Kevin Macpherson, Slade Graves, Paul Loven, J.E. Knauf, Maria Sharylen, Carey Kingsbury, Candice Eisenfeld and Zac Zakowi, whose sculpture is pictured here. The new address is 2432 W. Peoria Ave., Suite 1185, Phoenix; (602) 870-8600 or info@parhelion.com.

The Arizona Daily Star Mostly Hers

THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

TUCSON, THURSDAY, MAY 28, 1970

Leather Work Challenges Skills Of Modern Sculptor-Craftsman

(Continued From Page 1C)

develop a system, you can adapt it to different shapes."

He never uses patterns but designs his pieces on paper, later drawing on the leather before he cuts. "If you don't plan, you can wipe out 10 to 20 feet of leather. Some days I just come in here and burn up leather. Perhaps I will ruin two or three bags out of 15 good ones."

When he decides the prices of his bags, he uses a simple formula: \$4 an hour for his la-

bor, \$2 an hour for the shop then the cost of material, running about \$15 for an average bag. The retail price is somewhere between \$45 and \$200 for round-bottom bags.

Only recently he finished his first piece of luggage. The traveling bag stands about three feet high, sturdily constructed with staunch ribbing so it will take tremendous impact without sagging or depressing.

Of his new work, he said: "It is designed of structural

members as in building a house."

So far he has not put a price on it. He commented he would not charge for all his labor since he was developing a new system. He never charges for design time.

Zac, sitting on a chair he made from an old loom given to them by Ruth Brown the weaver, stroking his closely cropped beard, said:

"I used to feel I had a definite social commitment. But now I realize that my work is the most important contribution I can make."

For an 'upstart' I received some great press. Better press than my later art and artisan careers. Zak Zakovi looking back.

Intricate Design Found In Well-Crafted Leather

By JANE KAY
Star Staff Writer

Zac recognizes the need for well-crafted leather.

"Many people just slop it together," said the sculptor and leather worker, known to only a few by his full name, Craig Zakovi.

His Tanque Verde house, near green fields scattered with the grazing Black Angus cows he feeds, is the house of a craftsman.

Hanging sculptures — some of copper and others combinations of weaving, clay, metal and pods — dangle from the ceiling in a living room filled with handcrafted furniture and a loom.

He took one room for a workshop to do his leather work — intricately designed topgrade horsehide bags, vests and fitshes.

"I do original pieces only," he commented. "Perhaps when I gain more tolerance, I can repeat myself."

His bags, glowing with a subtle luster, are carefully fitted to form almost organic looking, natural shapes. He latches them with flaps cut from the main body of leather, usually attaching carved wide leather strap handles.

Leather, unlike sculpture, has a control of its own, he noted. "The shapes bounce off the material as much as bouncing off myself."

Only recently he has begun to use soft, muted colors in his bags. He never dyes an entire bag, but only segments of leather inserted by a ribbing process he uses "to bust up a surface." As he puts it, "I want little things to be happening here and there."

Zac and his wife Bert, who does income tax work for extra money and weaves for pleasure, returned to Tucson in



ZAC, crafter of leather, at work on a bag. (Photo by Monte Gast)

September after spending the summer in Montana.

He sells his work exclusively through Judy Margoli's The Departure, one of the East Sixth Street merchants. She will take 15 pieces to the New York gift show this week to increase his market — he plans to go to the Los Angeles show in July.

"What Bert and I would like to do," he said, "is buy a piece of land in Montana where we were both reared. If we could live off it using sound ecological principles, that would be my sculpture."

They plan to move to southwestern Montana in June.

Zac got into leather work four years ago, started his highly crafted work two years later and the fine art of round-bottom bags only a few months ago. He makes dolls, his own toys — "you can't sell everything" — to develop leather techniques he later used in his bags.

"So much of leather work is forming systems. Once you

(Continued On Page 4C)

VOGUE'S OWN BOUTIQUE *Continued*

What Boutique people are wearing in 1970....

Even though over the 40 years of endeavors, I have forgotten the detail of the 'Leather Gig' as I put this book together a flood of memories has emerged. The leather work was a wild ride moving from several locations in Tuscon and then to Montana while teaching at the Uof A and biting into monumental sculpture in wood and steel. Plus events like; the *Da Los Vicarious* parade - pulling a wheeled sculpture down the main street of Tuscon; Swimming in the Baha off the Mexican Coast.

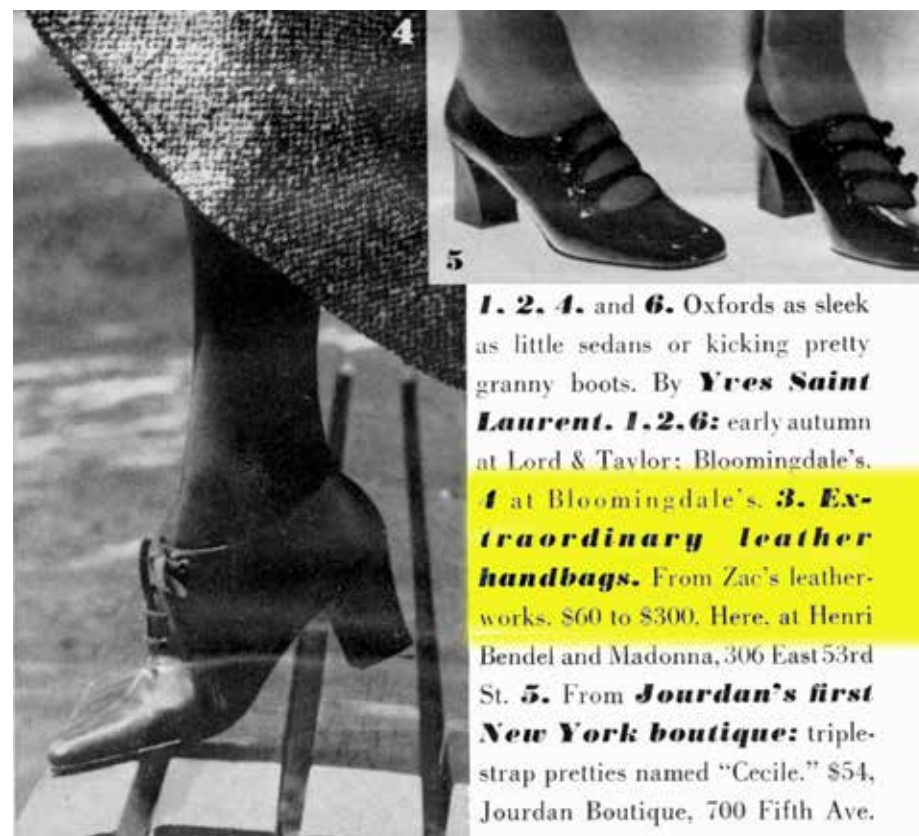
The leather years were a rich time in my life.

Zac/Zak Zakovi

Blue jeans. Now everyone wears them everywhere, in town shopping, making the city rounds, etc. Interesting how, in a place like Kenneth's which isn't, after all, a hall of hippiedom, one sees so many pretty young women, their blue-jeaned legs sticking out below their salon smocks.

... Tie-dyeing surges ever ahead. There are always new surfaces to cover with your own marvelous handmade rainbows. A line of envious friends is waiting for Sophie Engelhard to give them a set of her tie-dyed bed sheets. Sister Annette Reed's are in palest violet to purple. . . . Michael Butler has commissioned a sofa to be covered in tie-dyed velvet. . . . **The really into-it tie dyers are now making their own dyes.** Dianne Nyland, from Vision Unlimited, is busy

with clunky soles are a specialty of Goody Two Shoes, 244 East 60th Street. . . . **One of a kinds.** Just look at the handbags in photograph 3 on this page, aren't they something? They're made by a sculptor: Zac's leatherworks, for The Departure boutique in Tucson, Arizona. Obviously one of a kind, rather like wearing a little sculpture slung over your shoulder. . . . The one-of-a-kind accessory, coat, dress will be coming more and more into our life because **leather is forever.** More and more the just-one-of-its-sort coat or dress or weskit designed and handmade by such stars as **Marcia Trinder, Mirandi, Calvin** is becoming available. And now appearing in droves (and being taken in by Bendel's) are other unknown, talented leatherworkers. It's fun to



1, 2, 4, and 6. Oxfords as sleek as little sedans or kicking pretty granny boots. By **Yves Saint Laurent**. **1, 2, 6:** early autumn at Lord & Taylor; Bloomingdale's. **4** at Bloomingdale's. **3. Extraordinary leather handbags.** From Zac's leatherworks. \$60 to \$300. Here, at Henri Bendel and Madonna, 306 East 53rd St. **5.** From **Jourdan's first New York boutique:** triple-strap pretties named "Cecile." \$54, Jourdan Boutique, 700 Fifth Ave.

Donald J. Willcox and James Scott Manning

LEATHER

HENRY REGNERY COMPANY ● CHICAGO



Anyone you know? Courtesy, Craig Zakov.

Don Wilcox's Leather Book

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Courtesy, Craig Zakov.



Courtesy, Craig Zakov.



They had a meeting. Courtesy, Craig Zakov.

Don Wilcox's Leather Book

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A complete hunting bag for the vegetarian. Courtesy, Craig Zakovi



Detail.



Courtesy Craig Zakovi



Courtesy, Craig Zakovi.



Detail.

Don Wilcox's Leather Book

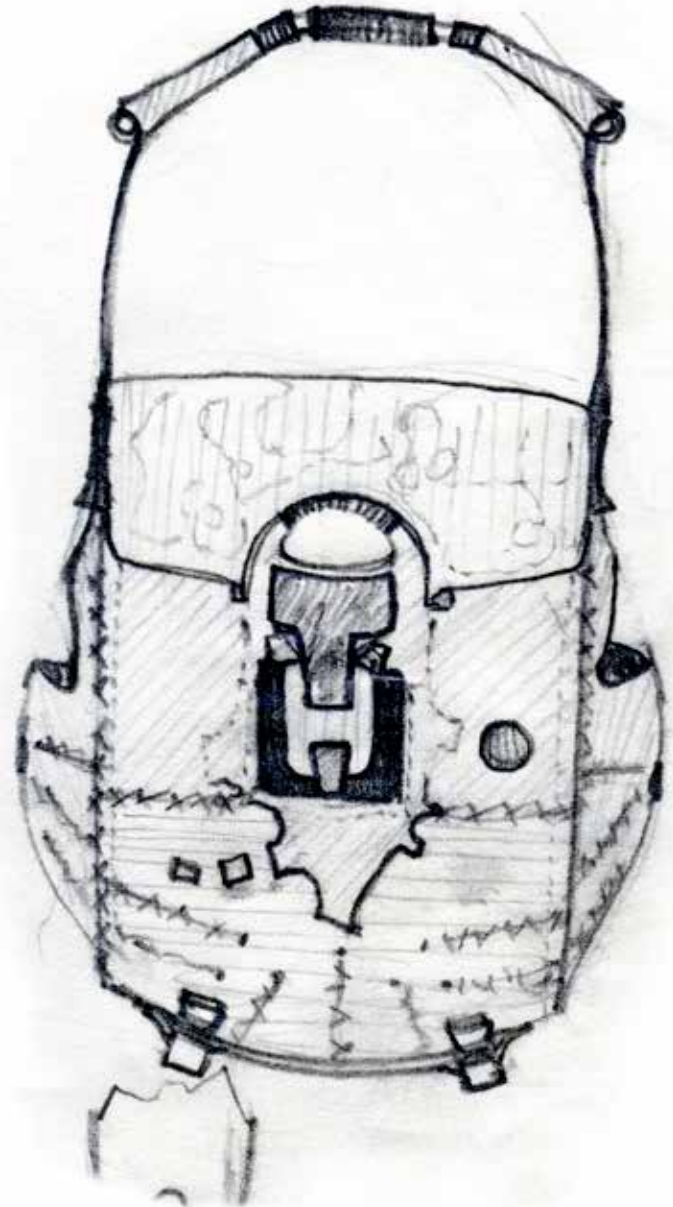


Don Wilcox's Leather Book

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Don Wilcox's Leather Book



AFTERWORD of the LEATHER BOOK

One person should be credited – Judy Margolis. Early in my endeavor I met Judy who became my agent, adviser selling my wares in her shop Departure in Tucson and take them on her buying trips to the east coast. Judy also showed my work to Vogue Magazine and Gentlemen’s Quarterly; that lead to Don Willcox including me in his book Leather published in Denmark.

My leather shop/studio bounced around as we changed residences during grad school. I had the 6th street shop in the heart of the flower-child district; we also lived in Ted Degras’s compound where I had a sculpture studio and the leather shop in a shed. I got a job after receiving my MFA with a Doctor who had a hobby ranch east of Tucson where he inseminated Angus cows with semen he bought at cattle shows around the country. Due to my experience as a ranch hand in Montana he hired me to be his herdsman, with pay being a nice little house on the ranch where I did my leather work. When we decided to return to Montana and start a family Zac’s Leather Works reopened in the back porch of our first home in Bozeman. I never made much money doing leather as I got carried away on each item and could not sell them even at minimum wage. So in 1971 with a kid on the way I moved on to become a building contractor eventually designing and building some cool homes. To furnish these homes I built a wood working shop where I stored the left-overs of the leather gig ... where some if it is still stored and occasionally used to make a simple leather item of need.

This book is a sequel to my books - Z ~ Stone Journey, 2015 and Processes a book of my paintings and drawings revised in 2014. On my dream board is a book on Wood work and Homes, to complete an archive of my 50 years of being an Artist – Craftsman – Artisan. Note that my professional name evolved from Zac to Zak over these years.



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