
MELINA BUCHER

TRADITION RETHOUGHT: THE ART OF VEGAN BAG MAKING IN MELINA BUCHER'S GERMAN MANUFACTORY

Author: Elena Wacker, 15.02.2024



February 2024 – Dexterity in every stitch, precision in every seam and a clear commitment to animal welfare. The progressive label MELINA BUCHER is opening its first own master craftsmanship for fine bag-makers in Mannheim, specializing in vegan and bio-based materials.

The profession of a fine bag-maker traditionally involves the work with animal leather, but at MELINA BUCHER, the craft is revived with forward-thinking leather goods. In the first vegan master craftsmanship for fine bag-makers, new vegan materials are used instead of animal leather. The fascination with the craft and professional perfection are at the center of their work. *'It's beautiful to see how the use of sustainable materials makes our work more valuable again'*, says Judith Lein, fine bag-maker at MELINA BUCHER.

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In Germany, there are few training centers that offer apprenticeships for fine bag-makers. Due to the aging of existing businesses, lack of succession and limited knowledge of working with new, sustainable materials, there is to witness a decline in this professional field. At MELINA BUCHER, the craft is being revived. With flexible and modern working methods, young people are offered a new perspective to incorporate their values into their work. *'We are lucky that many young people apply who have learned this profession and want to make a difference'*, says Melina Bucher.

In the past, MELINA BUCHER has worked in particular with partner manufactures in Spain and, after years of research and development, was the world's first fashion brand to launch a handle bag made from 100% plastic-free material, called MIRUM®. *'The demand was not only enormous among customers. Even startups dedicated to material development approached us with great interest'*, says Melina Bucher. The various development projects associated with these diverse demand could hardly be handled by traditional production facilities. The next logical step for MELINA BUCHER was therefore to set up its own manufactory.

At the master craftsmen's business in Mannheim, designers and master fine bag makers work hand in hand with scientists from all over the world. They test new material innovations and also develop their own components. *'The leather industry has to catch up when it comes to sustainability. Most of the components in a bag are not recyclable. We are actively working on solutions here'*, says the founder.

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In addition to the manual crafting of own products and customized items according to customer requests, product developments for B2B clients are also made possible. Thanks to its expertise in working with bio-based materials, MELINA BUCHER is the interface between brands and material producers. Although there are already some promising bio-based materials in development, these are no plug and play solutions. New materials rather need new solutions to be processed. *'Many projects have failed in recent years because brands neither have the time nor the knowledge to carry out this development work. Conversely, innovators often don't know how the materials are processed into a product'*, reveals Melina Bucher.



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This is where the label MELINA BUCHER would like to start by sharing the know-how from its own manufactory on the selection of materials, design and processing for more sustainability in the fashion world.



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