

Diakité et Frères

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Décor and accessories with a story

With his brothers in Bamako, Mali, Souraka Diakité is continuing his family's tradition of making leather bags by hand.

"When I was small, I started at about 12 years old," he explains. "I did not think of doing anything else. I've concentrated my life on this skill."



The three brothers of Diakité et Frères make all of the bags by hand, except for some stitching where they use a sewing machine. They select goat and sheep skins, prepare them and tan them. They buy bogolan, traditional Malian cotton cloth dyed with plant pigments, in the market.

"We work on the leather and cut it to use with the bogolan to make our bags," Souraka says. "We do everything from A to Z. It's a family skill we learned from our fathers."

The brothers and five other members of the extended family can generally each make one bag a day; on a good day, they can produce 15 bags. They export their bags to France, Germany, Holland and the United States.

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