

FREITAG at 3daysofdesign – WASTE IS OUR RESOURCE

ZURICH / COPENHAGEN – The Swiss upcycling pioneers FREITAG present «WASTE IS OUR RESOURCE» during 3daysofdesign 2026. From June 10–12, the installation explores the potential of discarded materials. At the very entrance of the Swiss Atelier in the newly opened Swiss Embassy, FREITAG showcases how circular thinking can transform trash into functional, long-lasting, one-of-a-kind design pieces.

Thinking and acting in cycles is deeply rooted in the FREITAG culture. At this year's 3daysofdesign, the Zurich-based bag makers transform the entrance of the new Swiss Embassy into a statement on the reuse of waste materials. This installation symbolizes the durability of upcycled materials telling the story of their former life on the road. Visitors don't just enter a building; they transition through a physical history of European transit and the FREITAG factory process, interacting with the textures, sounds, smells, and the scale of materials that have traveled thousands of kilometers before finding a second life in a bag.

Beyond the visual experience, guests are invited to get hands-on at a DIY station, creating their own small pouches from leftover tarp scraps – a tangible piece of the circular journey.

THE SWISS ATELIER

From June 10–12, 2026 the Swiss Atelier brings Switzerland to 3daysofdesign, celebrating a design philosophy rooted in innovation, precision and sustainability. Leading brands like FREITAG and Geberit meet rising designers from Switzerland and Denmark – weaving craftsmanship and innovative thinking into a creative experience in and around the newly opened Embassy of Switzerland in Denmark in Store Kongensgade.

Exhibition Dates

10–12 June 2026

Opening Hours

10:00–17:00

Address

Embassy of Switzerland
Store Kongensgade 128
1264 Copenhagen

Press Contact

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The starting point: used truck tarps as raw material.



Bags and accessories are cut into one-of-a-kind pieces.

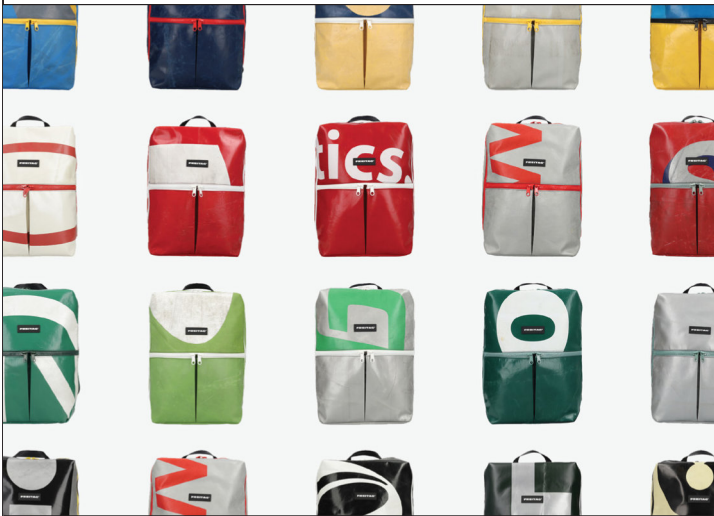
ABOUT FREITAG – WE THINK AND ACT IN CYCLES

FREITAG makes bags and accessories from used and, increasingly, circular materials, too. Something that started in Zurich in 1993 with messenger bags made from discarded truck tarps now comprises a range of backpacks and crossbody bags as well as a wide variety of accessories, each a one-off.

Thinking and acting in cycles is integral to FREITAG's DNA. Drawing on holistic product design and well-thought-out repair, exchange, and take-back services, we aim to extend the life of bags and accessories or even close material cycles. This has already been achieved with the development of the F-ABRIC compostable clothing line or our circular alternative to short-lived smartphone cases. Launched in 2024, the Mono[PA6] Backpack marks another milestone on the road to a circular economy. And because it is made of a mono-material, it is the first FREITAG backpack that is fully recyclable. And the research continues: Together with industrial partners, FREITAG is working towards the development of a truck tarp that, even after a long second life as a bag, doesn't end up in the garbage but back in the cycle.

With their use of unconventional materials, the bag-makers continue to surprise. Discarded tarps continue to play a major role, but used PET bottles, salvaged airbags, and worn-out ski boots now all contribute to the diverse range. Additional, life-extending options are increasingly taking center stage: In addition to repair services and the chance to design your own bag, the S.W.A.P. exchange platform also ensures that FREITAG products are used and loved for as long as possible. With inspiring initiatives and conspicuous campaigns FREITAG repeatedly succeeds in drawing attention to its vision of a circular future.

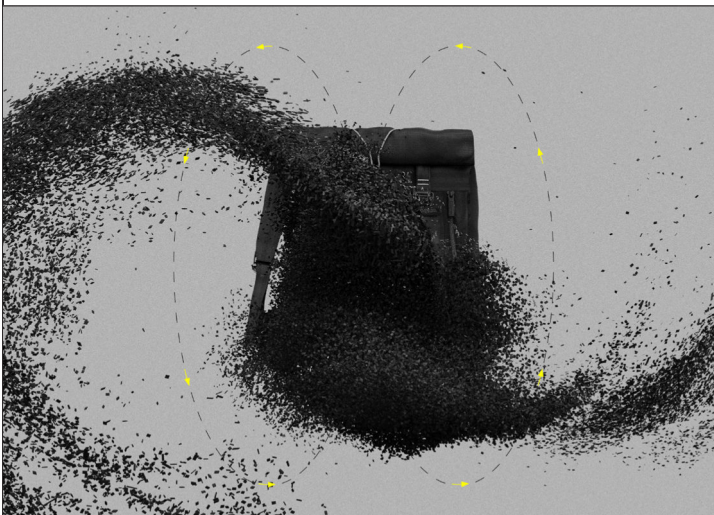
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FREITAG bags – every one an upcycled one-off.



FREITAG has ten repair stations worldwide.



The first circular FREITAG Mono[PA6] Backpack.



The first truck test fleet with circular tarps.

THE FREITAG STORY

So how did it all start? In 1993, graphic designers Markus and Daniel Freitag were looking for a robust, water-repellent bag to hold their creative work. Inspired by the multicolored heavy traffic that rumbled through the Zurich transit intersection in front of their apartment, they developed a messenger bag from used truck tarps, discarded bicycle inner tubes, and old car seat belts. This is how the first FREITAG bags took shape in the living room of their shared apartment. What began as the idea of two brothers was soon to conquer the world of bags from Zurich across Europe and all the way to Asia.



The first prototype from 1993 in the Museum of Design Zurich.



The F-Crew at the factory in Zurich-Oerlikon.

FREITAG TODAY

Nowadays, 220 people are employed by FREITAG lab. ag. Over 30 of them work at the Zurich-Oerlikon headquarters, dismantling, washing, and cutting truck tarps, among other things. The one-off bags and accessories are assembled by long-standing production partners in Portugal, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. The bags and accessories are available in 30 FREITAG stores, from over 220 retail partners in around 25 countries, and at freitag.ch.



FREITAG Flagship Store Zurich: made of discarded containers.



Reflected Bags: More visibility from old truck reflectors.

FROM TRUCK TO BAG

It all started with the idea of turning a used truck tarp into a tough messenger bag. Today FREITAG goes a lot further than processing colorful transit waste and uses a whole range of upcycled, recycled and rejected materials to make its bags and accessories. But tarps taken straight from the road still play the leading role. From truck to one-of-a-kind bags – in five steps.



1. FINDING TARP: SOURCING ACROSS EUROPE

Even today, we still use only discarded truck tarps to make FREITAG bags. But the old tarps we need in a whole range of colors for all our products to be produced don't just show up at the roadside. Our three-strong team searches across Europe for the best-looking ones, bringing up to 130 tons to Zurich every year. First, every tarp is tested for harmful substances to make sure FREITAG products are totally safe.



2. DISMANTLING: WHERE TARP ARE STRIPPED DOWN

Turning dirty road waste into the raw materials for functional one-offs starts here. Our tarp dismantlers get to work with knives, pliers and sheer muscle power, stripping the bulky tarps of their straps, buckles and fittings. Tarps that are dry, brittle or too thin are rejected. The good ones are cut into machine-washable pieces and sorted by color.



3. WASHING THE TARP: WITH RAINWATER FROM THE ROOF

We wash the tarp pieces in three big machines to remove road grime and dust and bring out their unique patina. About half the water we need is rainwater collected on the factory roof. Wastewater heat warms the fresh water, and at the end of the washing cycle the by now almost-clean water is retained and reused for the next wash. Once the tarps are dry, we decide which pieces are best suited for the various bag models.



4. BAG DESIGN: THE CREATION OF ONE-OFFS

Cutting tarp pieces to shape is far more than just hard work. Because it's here – on the bench – where it's decided what each FREITAG one-off will look like. For each bag model we have a set of transparent templates that are laid out on the tarps to make sure we get the best patterns – and as many bags as possible – from each piece. Partly by hand, partly with machine support, each individual piece is thus crafted, cut by cut. The cut pieces then head off to our production partners across Europe for stitching.



5. FROM THE SEWING ROOM BACK TO THE STREET

In Portugal, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, our long-term partners get to work on their sewing machines, turning the tough tarp pieces into finished bags. Back in Zurich, we thoroughly inspect every bag and take the product photos. We then ship them to FREITAG Stores, retail partners or straight from the online store to customers all over the world.