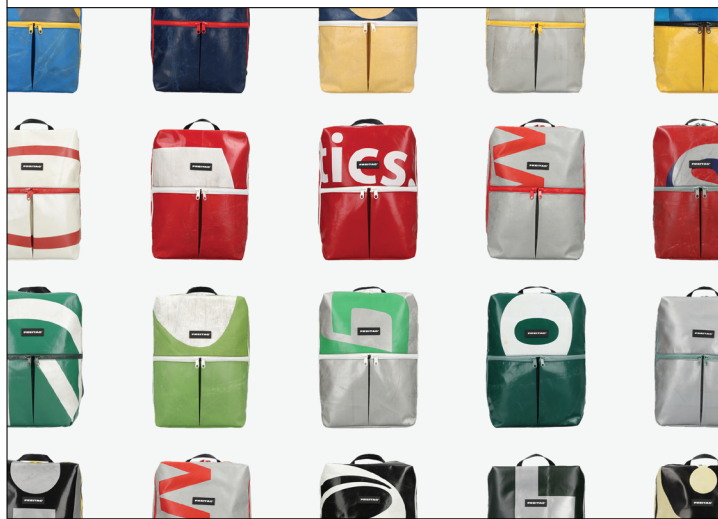


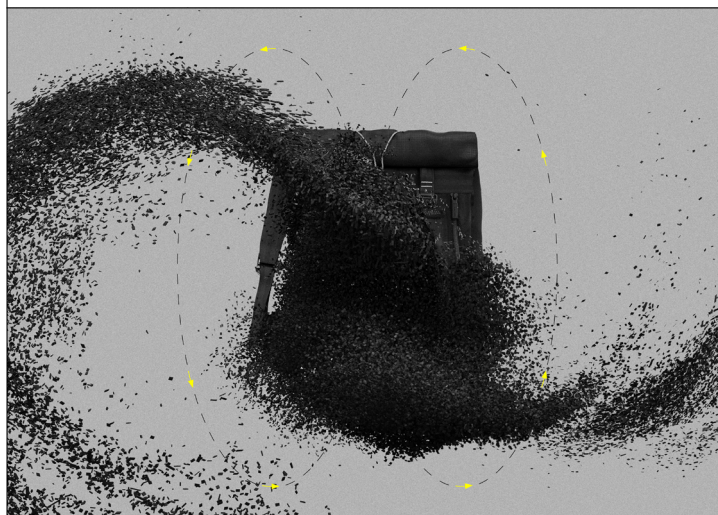
FREITAG – WE THINK AND ACT IN CYCLES

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 bags⁷ as well as a wide variety of accessories⁷, each a one-off.

Thinking and acting in cycles is integral to FREITAG's DNA. Drawing on holistic product design and well-thought-out repair⁷, exchange⁷, 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 cases⁷. Launched in 2024, the Mono[PA6] Backpack⁷ 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 tarp⁷ that, even after a long second life as a bag, doesn't end up in the garbage but back in the cycle.



FREITAG bags – every one an upcycled one-off.



The first circular FREITAG Mono[PA6] Backpack.

With their use of unconventional materials, the bag-makers continue to surprise. Discarded tarps continue to play a major role, but used PET bottles⁷, salvaged airbags⁷, and worn-out ski boots⁷ now all contribute to the diverse range. Additional, life-extending options are increasingly taking center stage: In addition to repair services⁷ 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 has ten repair stations worldwide.



The first truck test fleet with circular tarps.

THE FREITAG STORY

So how did it all start?⁷ 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.

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



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

FREITAG TODAY

Nowadays, 230 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 300 retail partners in around 25 countries, and at freitag.ch.

FREITAG has not only committed to the circular economy but is also organized in circles: in 2016, the company, which is still owned by the Freitag brothers, abandoned the classical hierarchical structure and replaced it with Holacracy, a form of organization based on self-management.



FREITAG Flagship Store: made of 19 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.⁷



1. FINDING TARPS: SOURCING ACROSS EUROPE

Even today, we still use only discarded truck tarps to make FREITAG bags. But the discarded tarps we need in a whole range of colors for around 400,000 products a year don't just show up at the roadside. Our three-strong team searches across Europe for the best-looking ones, bringing up to 270 tons to Zurich every year. First, every tarp is tested for harmful substances to make sure FREITAG products are totally safe.



2. DISMANTLING: WHERE TARPS 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 TARPS: 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. CUTTING: CREATING 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. Some of the cutting is done by hand, some with machines. Every cut for every one-off counts. The cut pieces then head off to our production partners across Europe for stitching.



5. FROM THE WORKSHOP 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.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Headquarters:	+ FREITAG lab. ag / Nørd industrial complex, Zurich-Oerlikon
Founding year:	+ 1993
Company owners:	+ Markus and Daniel Freitag
Employees:	+ around 230
Production:	+ around 400,000 bags and accessories yearly
Number of stores:	+ 30 FREITAG Stores (seven in Switzerland, six in Germany, four in Japan, three in South Korea, three in Thailand, one each in Shanghai, Vienna, Milan, Amsterdam, Taipei, Sydney and Melbourne), around 300 sales partners in 28 countries and online store based in Zurich-Oerlikon
Material usage:	+ about 270 tonnes of used truck tarps, 140 km of B-stock car safety belts, 17,000 m of recycled PET textile
Label:	+ «Circular Globe», Level Advanced (assessment model from SQS and Quality Austria on the maturity level of organizations with regard to the circular economy)

SELECTED AWARDS

2024	+ ADC Switzerland, Gold «Promotion & Spatial Experience» and ADC Europe, Bronze «Spatial Design» for 30 years FREITAG: Donnerstag-Weeks
2023	+ Green Product Award, Winner «Accessories» for F385 CIRC-CASE
2022	+ Best of Swiss Web, Gold «Creativity» for F-CUT
	+ The Lovie Awards, Winner «Websites: Best Design - Aesthetic»
	+ Frame Awards, Winner «Accessoires» for F707 STRATOS
	+ ADC Switzerland, Gold «Film» for F707 STRATOS
2021	+ Special Edi, «Production Design» for F707 STRATOS
2020	+ Dezeen Awards, Winner «Small Retail Interior of the Year» for FREITAG Yourself Store
	+ Frame Awards, Winner «Exhibition of the Year» for UNFLUENCER

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2024	+ «ACCESS OVER OWNERSHIP» by FREITAG x Ecal, Milan Design Week
2023	+ «Always Beta. Never Waste.» by FREITAG, Dropcity, Milan Design Week
	+ F13 TOP CAT, Messenger Bag, exhibition object «Life Cycles: The Materials of Contemporary Design», MoMA, New York
2021	+ F12 DRAGNET, Messenger Bag, exhibition object, «Bags: Inside Out», Victoria & Albert Museum, London
2019	+ «UNFLUENCER» by FREITAG x Georg Lendorff, Milan Design Week
2015	+ «FREITAG AD ABSURDUM – Carte Blanche for FREITAG brothers feat. Frank & Patrik Riklin», solo exhibition, mudac, Lausanne
2012	+ «FREITAG - Out of the Bag», solo exhibition, Museum for Design, Zurich
2003	+ F13 TOP CAT, Messenger Bag, part of the design collection, Museum of Modern Art, New York
1997	+ FREITAG Prototype, part of the design collection, Museum for Design, Zurich

PUBLICATIONS

2016	+ «FREITAG AD ABSURDUM feat. Frank & Patrik Riklin», mudac
2012	+ «FREITAG – Out of the Bag», Museum for Design Zurich, published by Lars Müller Verlag
2001	+ «F01 FREITAG Book», Verlag Lars Müller