Leather Moulding
Process week 1
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CONCEPT STATEMENT

After looking at different processes I realized that I am interested in the transformation of flexible or malleable materials, those without a defined structure, into rigid, stiff or with a fixed structure. I was caught between leather working and slip casting so the idea of leather molding surged from merging both of these processes.

For my sample set of objects I am going to work on tray-like objects and containers using different methods to shape the leather. Once I find the method I prefer I would be interested in moving onto bigger structures such as bags or a chair, etc.
WHAT IS LEATHER MOLDING?

Through research I found that leather molding is a process of soaking leather in water at different temperatures to give it shape and make it strong and resistant.

This process is commonly used for making:
- home decorations
- furniture
- personal accessories (bags, key chains, etc.)
SAMPLES: process
SAMPLE #1

1. Paper template to cut out the piece of leather so I wouldn’t waste material in case I made a mistake.

2. Placed 5.5x5.5in piece of leather in extremely hot boiling water.

3. Quickly began shaping and stretching the leather over my mold.
4. This took aprox. 10 minutes until the leather started to dry enough to keep the shape of the mold without me holding it.

5. I thought of putting it in the oven to accelerate the drying/evaporation process but the leather started to shrink again.

**OBSERVATIONS:**
- leather burned
- shrunk
- crippled
- lost thickness
- obtained stiff shape

Although the leather kept its shape, it went through incredible transformations regarding color, texture and strength.
SAMPLE #2

5.5x5.5in. leather

- poured water at room temp.
- almost didn't shrink at all

- started molding
- had enough time to shape as desired
- left to dry for 3 hours aprox.
- put in oven at 150-200°F for 40 mins aprox.

After the leather dried it was not as stiff or hard as sample #1.
The leather retained its shape but it's still malleable.
On the other hand the color didn't change so drastically.
SAMPLE #3

- Created patterns for weave on paper
- Cut the leather and weaved it together

- Fit in tray

- Poured water at medium temp.
- Immediately put in oven for 30 mins at 250°F
- Didn’t shrink
- Edges began to burn so I took it out of the oven
- Left it to dry over night.

I was surprised that the weave kept up with the shape
It is fragile and the leather did not harden like the first sample
The color didn’t change, and actually dried back to the original color of the leather
SAMPLE #4

- Poured boiling water
- Dip leather in slowly
- Let it sit for aprox. 3-4 minutes
- Began shaping over mold
- Using a spoon to mark the creases

- after putting it in the oven for approx. 10 mins at 250-300°F the leather began to shrink and burned

- It got very thin and tore
- It hardened but is still quite flexible
SAMPLE #5

-Poured hot water over leather (not boiling)

-let it sit for aprox. 1-2 minutes

-Began to change color and shrink
-Poured ice on hot water to cool down and possibly slow down the shrinking

-I began shaping the leather.
-Placed it in the oven for aprox 10 mins.
-Leather didn't shrink

-Compared to sample #4, this one kept its shape but it is even more flexible.
SAMPLE #6

- Poured hot water over leather (not boiling)
- Starting moulding leather while still warm and completely soaked
- Waited until it started to hold its shape to pour more hot water on it
- went over the creases again while it continued to dry

- After leaving it to dry for a couple of hours, the leather retained the shape better than with other processes while keeping its color
- Poured hot water over leather (not boiling)

- Began shaping the leather while it cooled

- The fork retained its shape after leaving it to dry for 5 hrs.

I wanted to try this shape because it is a little more unconventional than the others and I wanted to see how the leather behaved.