

Hidden Wounds of War: Sister Soldiers Share Their Pain

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ALICIA FERRIABOUGH of Sukari,

which means "sweet" in Swahili.

WHAT: Sukari is a luxury handbag line, which features exquisite hardware and exotic skins.

WHY: "I made my first wallet when I was in third grade out of a pair of leather pants," she says. "I've always been into designing."

THE BEST PART ABOUT THE JOB: "I like seeing my sketches come to life," the Boston native says. "I like to order my supplies. All the hardware I use is plated in 24-karat gold rhodium, whereas a lot of designers use tinted metallics."

This spring, when it comes to handbags, it's all about exotic skins and eye-catching color.

Heart & Soul caught up with three talented designers whose bags are right on target. Here, they share their handbag obsessions and inspirations.

ROCHELLE THWAITES,

a Caribbean beauty and brainchild behind handbag line **Mimeki** (Jamaican patois for "I made it").

WHAT: Thwaites' fancy collection is made from Italian leather, suede and exotic skins, including python. "I design everything myself," she says. Thwaites also launched her new venture, Mimeki Custom Line, which incorporates interchangeable handles for her signature style handbags.

WHY: "I was doing interior design, but I kept getting gigs in fashion," she says. "I had a dream I was in a store looking at shelves with handbags. I knew that was my calling."

THE BEST PART ABOUT THE JOB: "To see a random person wearing my bag. It makes me realize there are people out there who like the product."



PRICE RANGE
\$65-\$900



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