

Do we really need more? You know what I mean. Look around. We are consuming resources beyond their capacity for renewal while, paradoxically, continually finding reasons to put one more thing into the world. I wonder if, somewhere along the way, we have lost the ability to distinguish real problems from manufactured ones.

This design process is an inquiry into sustaining complexity - resisting the temptation to flatten layered problems into easy answers simply so we can pretend to solve them. Perhaps our role is not problem-solving after all, but problem-finding and problem-framing.

Lifeline takes shape within this tension, as a symptom of the world we have built. It is a speculative rehearsal and an inquiry into the cultural and environmental conditions that could give rise to an object that should never need to exist - should never need to be designed.

As an architect, designer, and artist working in the physical world, it has become increasingly difficult not to question the very act of materializing things within our present context. But that contradiction also presents an opportunity to use the tools of design critically and politically - not necessarily to provide answers, but to ask our own questions.

Lifeline gives form to this question through choreography within the city. A familiar object suddenly appears out of place - as dystopian as the first images of a flooded subway once felt. The transition from an ordinary bag into an emergency object creates a rupture, bringing contrasting conditions into tension: convenience and emergency, consumption and survival, privilege and vulnerability. These disparities sit side by side, even as their consequences fall unevenly across bodies, communities, and geographies.

This same thinking shaped how the bag was made, treating making itself as a form of inquiry. Rather than imposing a predetermined form, the process took time to understand its constraints and respond to them. The first working prototypes were developed from a single mass-produced rain jacket. Its existing seams, proportions, closures, and material limitations became parameters for the new form. Something new emerged through negotiation with what was already there, carrying traces of the original object both functionally and formally, while taking on an entirely different reason to exist.

An upcycled inflatable life vest went through a similar process of testing and transformation. It was adapted in shape and scale, then heat-welded to accommodate the mechanics of instant inflation. The final soft good was constructed from three yards of nylon, two invisible polyester zippers, four yards of black cord, and four adjustable metal locks.

The materiality of Lifeline holds its own contradictions. Technological and emergency mechanisms, existing objects, and decisions toward more environmentally conscious choices

coexist within the same artifact. Rather than resolving these contradictions, the process acknowledges and works within them through an artisanal approach and a deliberately contained scale - keeping its footprint as limited as possible.

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