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Someone told me that the really good knockoff designer handbags are so good because they are made in the same factory as their authentic counterparts. You see for a short period of each workday, a drowsy seeming functionary in an office perched above the factory floor reaches across his desk, past his tidy little lunch items, and presses a button which quite literally stops the clock. Down below everything goes on as before. The tailors sew. The foremen pace. The floor manager hums an indiscernible melody. But none of this activity is inscribed or noted anywhere, except in the newly alert eyes of the functionary, which dart to and fro and miss nothing.

It is important to note that this process produces not two, but three species of handbag: the authentic made on the clock, the knockoff made off the clock, and the curious hybrid which is begun on one side of this critical schism and finished on the other. Though it is general practice to incinerate this mutant category, sometimes a bag is rescued and smuggled out of the factory. This bag is called a synthetic, not because it mimics an authentic bag, like the knockoff, but because it constitutes the rare physical example of sublation (*aufheben*), a kind of calcified hyphen in the real-knockoff dialectic. In so doing, the synthetic undermines the atomistic nature of the categories real and knockoff, and illuminates how the meaning of each is predicated on the existence of its opposite. Obvi then they are the most expensive of the three bags, and I even saw a guy selling ashes that he claimed were scraped from one of the factory incinerators.

Me and India own a few of these bags but we prefer to call them Authentix, a term we feel more concisely captures their peculiar ontological vibe. We like to sit and look at them, for occasionally they come to life and they sing to us. At these moments we listen and understand that what we are hearing is some strange new hymn emanating from the vibrating nothing between the tuning fork prongs of use-value and exchange.