

Jeans

From 8 December 2020 to 22 January 2022
at the **Cité des sciences et de l'industrie**

“Jeans presents the extraordinary saga of a universal garment, a tale that encompasses culture, the fashion industry and consumption. A fascinating story in which France and its creators and entrepreneurs play a decisive role. Jeans also shows how our globalised world works today and identifies its excesses. Devised by the Cité des sciences et de l'industrie in partnership with the French Ecological Transition Agency, the exhibition turns jeans inside out to reveal what lies under their surface. It invites all of us consumers – 73 pairs of jeans are sold worldwide every second – to explore the alternative of ‘clean jeans’. A way of gathering to weave together the threads of pleasure and responsibility.”

Bruno Maquart, Chairman and CEO of Universcience

Jeans are the most widely worn article of clothing on the planet. 73 pairs are sold every second!

As legend would have, jeans first appeared in California, worn by hawkers and goldminers. In less than a century, they conquered the world, reflecting the growth of the textile industry and its globalisation. A symbol of rebellion or anti-conformism, for working or leisure wear, over the years they have made their appearance on catwalks everywhere. And now that jeans have become a wardrobe essential, the question of their production is crucial.

Criticised for their ecological impact, a symbol of overconsumption and industrial pollution, the iconic garment is the victim of its own success. So what alternatives exist? And what current research can help us purchase ‘clean jeans’? Today, there are solutions for their ethical production, friendlier to both the environment and worker welfare.

Immersive, offbeat and fun, the exhibition invites the public to discover every side of jeans.

Fashion, economy, technology, history, society, consumption and the environment – the exhibition takes the cult garment apart stitch by stitch. In a setting that suggests a large workshop, visitors explore the different areas, in turn becoming historians, designers, top models... and educated consumers.

EXHIBITION ITINERARY

The Jeans exhibition in six parts...

• Where do jeans come from?

Serge ‘de Nîmes’, Gênes (Genoa) canvas, jeans material or denim... it is not easy to work out the **origin of the cloth!** Visitors investigate and discover the difference between jeans and denim. After this introductory presentation, they will certainly be drawn to the **‘buttock wall’**. For never in the history of clothing has a garment so spectacularly showcased the behind. Then the public pose in a **photo booth** for pictures that resemble those of famous personalities such as James Dean, Barack Obama, Shakira or Angèle, the Belgian singer. An **‘exploded’ pair of jeans** shows the different sections of the clothing and, finally, a **wall of dolls** demonstrates that the material is used for all kinds of dress, not just the ‘universal garment’.



In scientific partnership with the Ecological Transition Agency (ADEME).

With the support of the Afnor Fund for Standardisation, the Haut École Francisco Ferrer (HEFF), ISKO™, Marithé + François Girbaud, the Prefecture of Okayama and Uniqlo

Trilingual exhibition
(French, English, Spanish)
From age 9.

Entirely devised and produced by the Cité des sciences et de l'industrie, the exhibition is configured to comply with Covid-19 health requirements. An **internet site** provide the public with an original view of the subject including many additional resources: www.cite-sciences.fr/jean

• Jeans: a universal history

This area places jeans in the context of history, from the 19th to the 21st century, seen through the prism of **music**, **protest movements** and **film** stars, from the Far West to the present day. This great saga is shown on a large screen with an examination of the garment's historical and sociological dimensions. **Collector jeans** are exhibited, dating from the end of the 19th century to 1945: a miner's work clothes and the uniform of a sailor in the US Navy show that jeans have long been used as working wear because of their well-known durability.

• Jeans: technical clothing

The garment is unpicked stitch by stitch. A film shows different production stages from cotton farming to finishing, presenting an industrial view of jeans. Here, visitors find out about the main techniques associated with jeans: spinning, weaving, cutting, stonewashing... They can also explore the variety of denim uses in the **fabric library**, which exhibits cloths and explains the characteristics of different fibres. Moving from theory to practice, they can then **virtually design their own jeans** using a multimedia system.

• Jeans and excess...

Loose or tight, torn or with glitters, today, 2.3 billion pairs of jeans are sold every year. But behind the iconic garment's glamour lurk bitterer truths about its impact on our planet and its inhabitants. A **sobering film** goes behind the scenes and follows the **creation of a pair of jeans** to reveal the consequences of its manufacture and consumption. Here, the visitor looks at the lifecycle of the garment and learns about problems of water consumption, pesticides, shipping, fast fashion, globalisation, working conditions and recycling.

• What alternatives can enable us to buy 'clean jeans'?

"Choose better, buy less and make it last," suggests designer Vivienne Westwood. Methods of manufacture, production and consumption have a real impact – not just on the environment, but also on working conditions and human health. That is why some industrialists and consumers are keen to develop new modes of consumption today. They are launching initiatives to make **'clean jeans'** available. In an area presenting items, projects and laboratory research, the public can see a humorous film that introduces alternatives that enable the production of more ethical, but still fashionable, stylish jeans. They can then attend a customisation workshop, watch a tailor at work and discuss the principles of upcycling with her*.

• Jeans and fashion

Originally a workman's garment, jeans steadily caught the eye of fashion designers, who adopted them in the 1980s and brought them to the catwalk. How is a fashion show organised? Who decides on the trends? In a **collective game area**, visitors are invited to parade in front of a green screen and then see their performance transferred to a catwalk. To accompany the fashion show, there is a presentation of **items from designers**; Jean-Paul Gaultier, Marithé + François Girbaud, Chloé and a number of young stylists meet to a soundtrack associated with jeans.

As they leave the exhibition, What Can the Consumer Do provides visitors with advice and food for thought enabling more responsible purchasing and consumption.

*Workshop held at the weekend and during school holidays.



Jeans is part of the editorial line 'Chemins de traverse / La science là où on ne l'attend pas' (**Byways: Science in Unexpected Places**).

This programming line includes exhibitions whose subject does not initially seem scientific or technical, but which gets there in one way or another, either directly or, more often, via a detour. The idea is to show science in unexpected places, bringing in the great family of creators.

Practical information

Cité des sciences et de l'industrie

30, avenue Corentin-Cariou - 75019 Paris
M Porte de la Villette T 3b

Opening hours

Every day except Monday from
10 am to 6 pm and until 7 pm on Sunday.

01 40 05 80 00

Admission

€12, TR : €9. Reduced Rate: €9 (over 65s, teachers, under 25s, large families and students).

The ticket includes admission to the Argonaute submarine and planetarium.

→ Free of charge for the under 2s, jobseekers, recipients of income benefit and the disabled and their carers.

www.cite-sciences.fr


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