

Blue jeans

4 essays

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Anneke Beerkens
Georgette Koning
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2 photo series

Freudenthal/Verhagen
Denimheads

2 posters

Freudenthal/Verhagen
Pattern

1 denim dictionary

in collaboration with
Tenue de Nîmes



CENTRAAL
MUSEUM

Colophon

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DE **RODEWINKEL**
DEUTSCHER BUCHVERLAG SINCE 1927

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Blues Jeans



CENTRAAL
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Design Jeans



essay

**Georgette
Koning**


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Figure 4

Advertisement for Calvin Klein Jeans with Brooke Shields, 1980

Photo: Richard Avedon, Brooke Shields, New York, July 1980

© The Richard Avedon Foundation

For over a century, since modern jeans were created, they have fascinated us.

Gloria Vanderbilt was the first to associate her name with what are regarded as true 'designer jeans', back in 1976. Gloria Vanderbilt jeans were rather tight, and had her name embroidered on the right back pocket in yellow and gold. Advertising campaigns featuring models bending over made it clear to potential customers that the jeans were stretchy. [figure 1] The idea of the first designer jeans came from Warren Hirsch. He realised that it was time to inject some glamour into the jeans market, more than 20 years after casual American jeans – originally 'workwear' – were widely adopted as leisurewear. The first to champion jeans as everyday wear were film stars and style icons like Marlon Brandon in *The Wild One* (1953), and James Dean, who inspired youngsters in the film *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) with his white T-shirt and jeans – not the popular brand of the time, Levi's, incidentally. Off set, Dean would wear the famous Levi's 501®, however. [figure 2] As American youth culture rapidly conquered the world, jeans inevitably found their way to Europe, too.

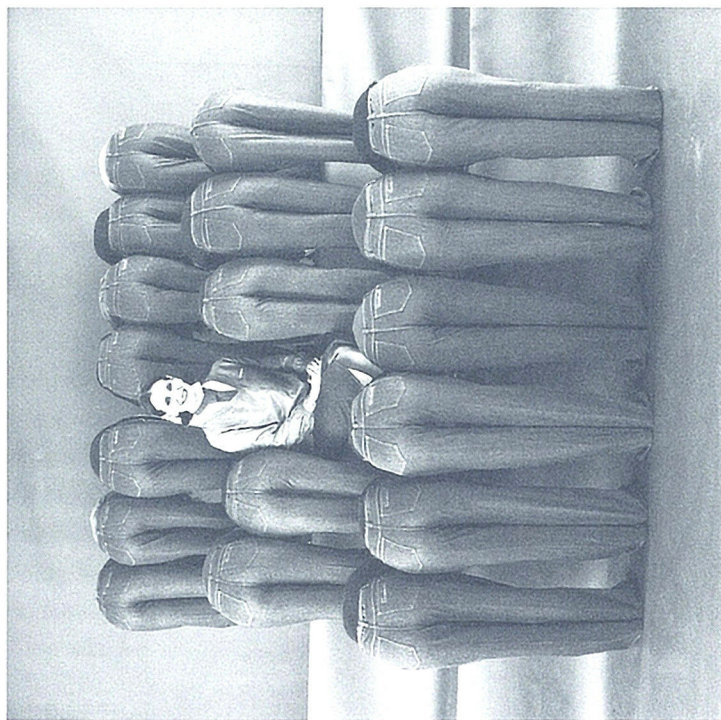


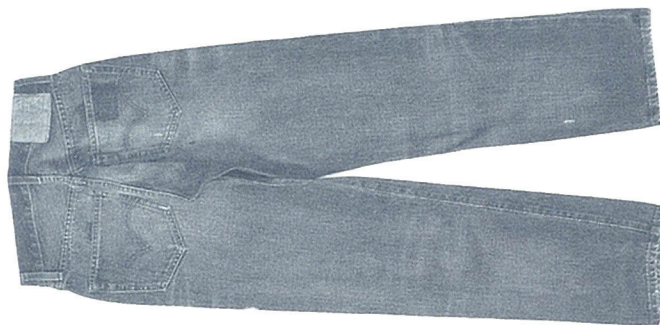
Figure 1
Gloria Vanderbilt with her jeans, 1979.
Photo: Evelyn Floet + Getty Images



Figure 3
Yves Saint Laurent *Rite Gauche* Spring/Summer 1973
© Arthur Elgort - ELLE - SCOOP



Figure 2
Levi Strauss & Co.
c. 1950-1960, pre-1971
© Ernst Moritz



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In an attempt to reposition jeans – from casual to dressy – Warren Hirsh was looking for a high-society figure, someone with whom consumers would like to identify. He approached Jackie Onassis, but she was not keen, Diane von Fürstenberg failed to get back to him, and he never thought of Yves Saint Laurent. But Gloria Vanderbilt took the bait. Heir to a fabulously wealthy railway magnate, she had already tied her name to a wide range of products, including greeting cards for Hallmark, porcelain and table linen. She knew how lucrative licences could be.

Pierre Bergé was aware of this too. Business partner to Yves Saint Laurent, the couturier who made a breakthrough with youth couture in the mid-seventies, he pulled in one lucrative deal after another for Saint Laurent. The focus was on perfumes and make-up, however, though his name did also appear on cigarettes, a product which in those days suited the image of Yves Saint Laurent chic. Although Yves Saint Laurent once actually said in an interview that he bitterly regretted not having invented jeans, and he regularly used denim in his *Saint Laurent – Rive Gauche* range long before the advent of Gloria Vanderbilt jeans, to launch an actual designer jeans collection was apparently beneath a designer of his status. But just imagine if he had persuaded his girlfriends and original 'it girls' Talitha Getty or Betty Catroux, or even Catherine Deneuve, to be photographed for an advertising campaign wearing perfectly coutured denim. Yves Saint Laurent, the man who got women wearing elegant trousers, could then certainly have added another great feat to his list of accomplishments. [figure 3]

The use of a celebrity like Gloria Vanderbilt to sell fashion jeans was a sign of things to come. In 1980, in a series of suggestive television commercials for Calvin Klein Jeans, Brooke Shields asked: 'You wanna know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing'. The 15-year-old American actress, who had just had her breakthrough in the romantic teen film *The Blue Lagoon*, moved provocatively as she wormed her long legs into a pair of high-waist jeans. Sex sells, and jeans are no exception. [figure 4]

The man behind this brilliant advertising campaign was not Calvin Klein himself, but again Warren Hirsh who, after his success with Gloria Vanderbilt, had been lured to Calvin Klein Jeans with a seven-figure salary, and soon secured the company an annual turnover of half a billion dollars.

In 1985 Levi's scored a success with *Laundrette*, which became the most popular television commercials of the decade. A handsome young man enters a laundrette, takes off his Levi's and throws them in a washing machine full of stones. He then waits, semi-naked, until his shrink-to-fit jeans emerge, shrunken and stone-washed, girls spying on him all the time as he waits. Again: sex sells.

From folk art to design

These stories make it clear that jeans are a marketing man's dream. One reason is that they so quickly became an essential feature of our wardrobes that there was simply a huge demand for them. Richard M. Owens, author of *Blue Denim Magic*,¹ writes of the rapid rise in the popularity of jeans from the 1950s onwards: 'Anyone who did not experience it will never be able to understand entirely how stifled and dull the attitudes reflected in the fashion of that period were'. Men's fashion was colourless and women's hardly feminine at all. Young people needed an outlet for their frustrations – both with society and with fashion – and denim served as a blank canvas for free expression. 'My work with needle and thread is a cosmic adventure to me', Marta Green remarked in *Blue Denim Magic*. 'The final result has a magical effect.'

The desire to decorate jeans gave rise to a real form of folk art – customised denim we would call it nowadays. Embroidery, appliqué, paint, bleach, patchwork, and tie-dying – countless old (by those days) handicraft techniques were used on the blue fabric.

Jeans as a fashion item have come to us from various corners of the world since the late 1960s. 'Hipsters' imported the iconic brands Lee, Wrangler and Levi's, as well as Lois (originally Spanish), from America to Europe. Although, by the 1970s, young people had already won their freedom, partly thanks to jeans, denim remained amazingly popular. The biggest manufacturer at the time, Levi's, even covered books and chairs with denim.

After the advent of Gloria Vanderbilt designer jeans in the late 1970s, and the ranges subsequently launched by Calvin Klein Jeans, Ralph Lauren and, in Europe, Giorgio Armani and the young Fiorucci, interest in design grew. Suddenly, the word was on everyone's lips. Marithé + François Girbaud of France (established in 1964 by Marithé and François Girbaud) created streetwear with a 'designer edge', innovative in terms of their finish, shape and details like stitching and zips. [figure 5]

While the Girbauds focused mainly on streetwear, by the mid-1980s catwalks featured 'Haute Jeans'. Karl Lagerfeld, working for Chanel since 1983, sent top model Linda Evangelista down the catwalk in a jeans version of the famous Chanel two-piece suit. Azzedine Alaïa, like Thierry Mugler, created broad-shouldered jackets with ultra-tight skirts in raw denim. As inspiration from the street waned, leading designers like Jean Paul Gaultier, Vivienne Westwood and Dolce & Gabbana continued to let all their creative powers loose on denim until the late 1990s. [figure 6]

1. Richard M. Owens. *Het versierde spijkerpak. Blue Denim Magic*. 1975. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York.

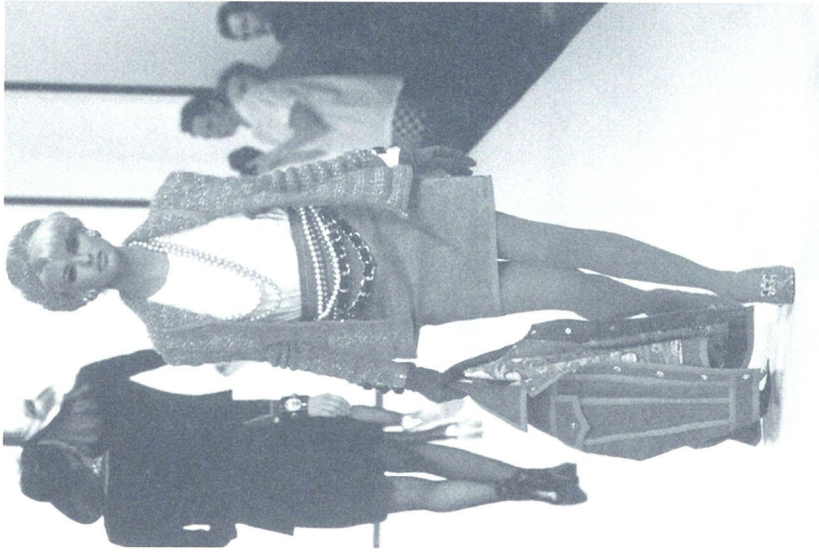


Figure 6
CHANEL Prêt-à-Porter
Autumn/Winter 1991
© CHANEL

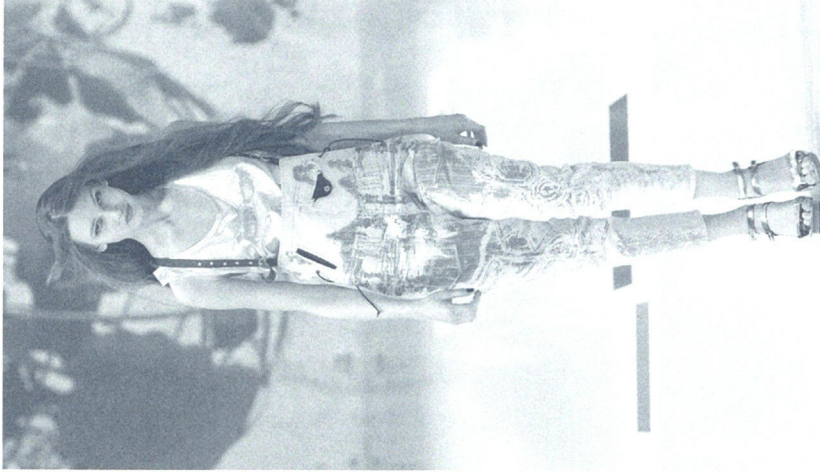


Figure 5
Marithé + François Girbaud,
Spring/Summer 2008
© Jean-Louis Coulombel

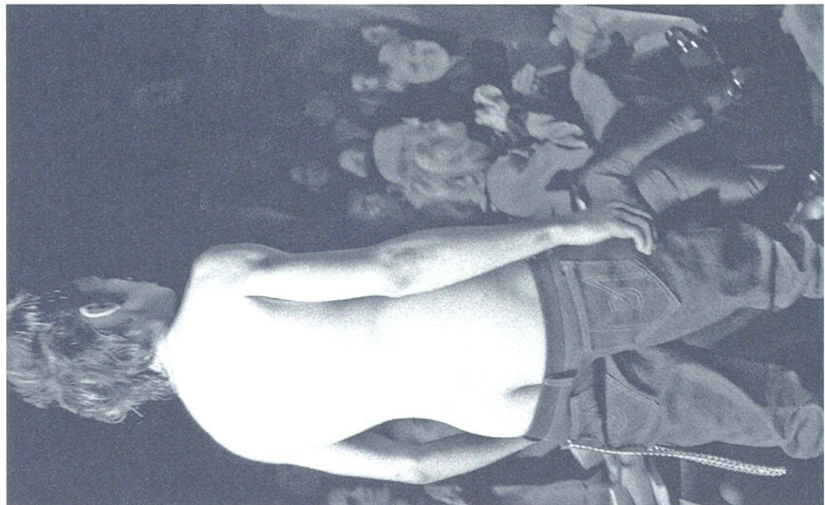
But there was one designer who, in 1996, launched a trend that truly would revolutionise streetwear: Alexander McQueen with his 'bumster jeans'. These low-rise jeans, revealing a 'construction worker's cleavage' were heavily promoted by the fashion press. [figure 7]

In 1999 Gucci advertising campaigns featured exuberantly decorated jeans – with embroidery and even feathers – designed by Tom Ford. But with a price tag starting at two thousand euros, they were unaffordable for the masses. But Acne and Cheap Monday also managed to achieve success without much 'help' from the press, advertising or celebrities by creating something new that the public really wanted: skinny jeans. Like Hermes and the *Kelly* bag, these two Swedish labels became famous for just one single design.

The deep-blue raw denim trend, which began in 2000, was soon superseded by the jeans with holes, frayed edges and bleached patches created by Balmain's designer Christophe Decarnin from 2006 onwards. Following on from McQueen, a new trend in jeans has originated on the catwalks of Paris. [figure 8]

Clean and minimalist is not what the masses want. Distressed is all the rage. In 2009, Maison Martin Margiela (known for the high fashion recycling trend) launched its bleached, skilfully ripped jeans that were more leg than denim. [figure 9]

Figure 7
Alexander McQueen, bumster jeans, New York, March 1996
© Catherine McGann / www.catherinemcgann.com



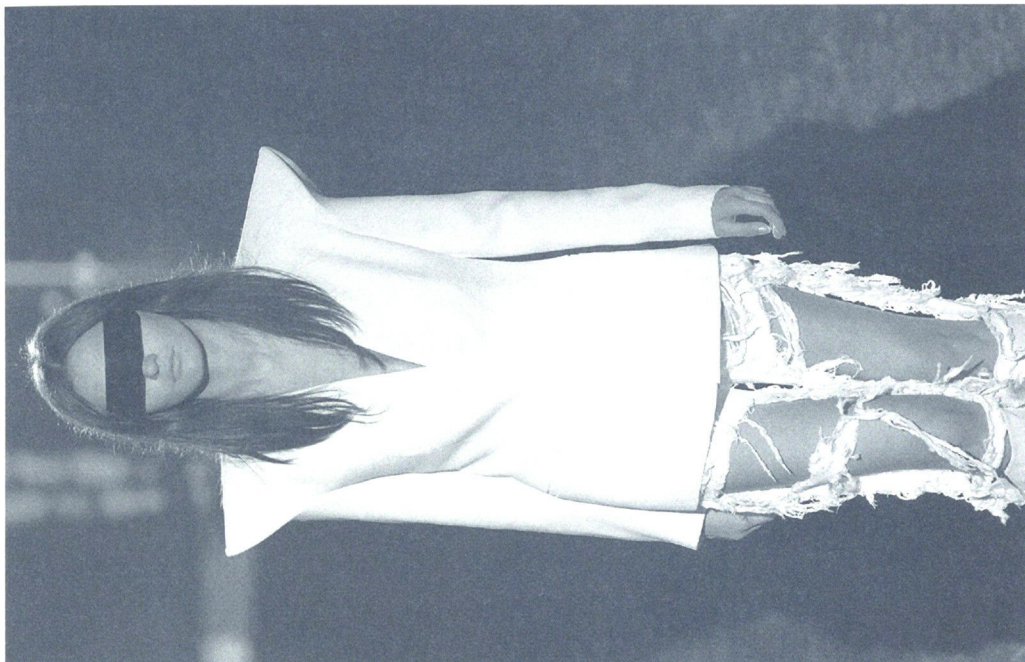


Figure 9
Maison Martin Margiela Spring/Summer 2008
© Catwalkpictures / Catwalkpictures.com

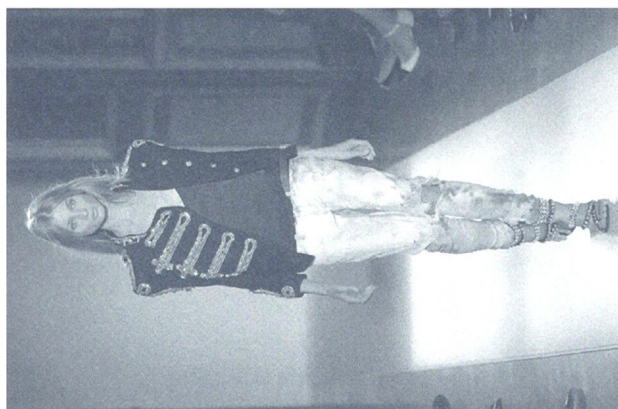
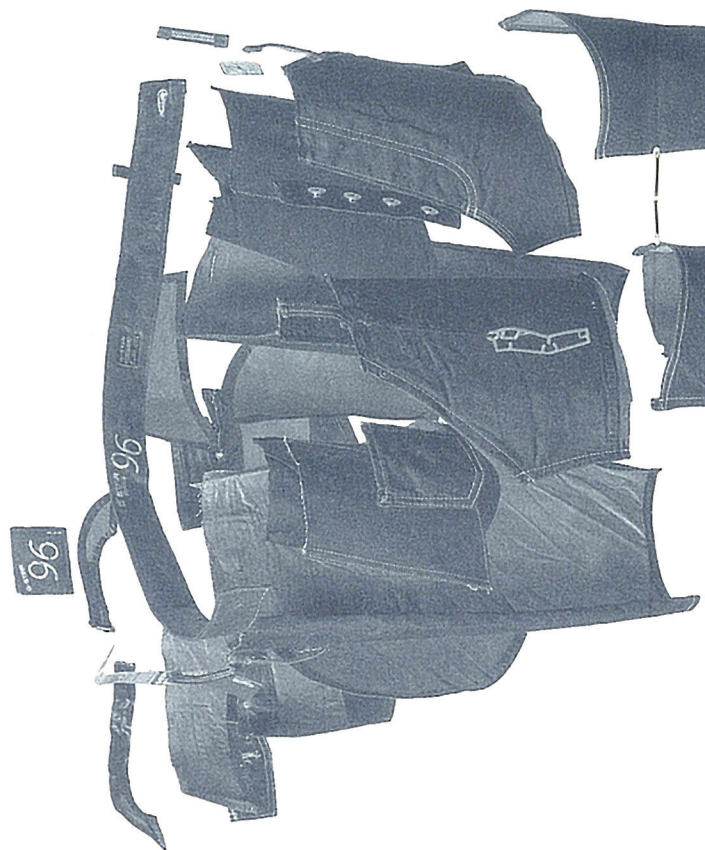


Figure 8
Balmain Spring/Summer 2009
© Catwalkpictures / Catwalkpictures.com



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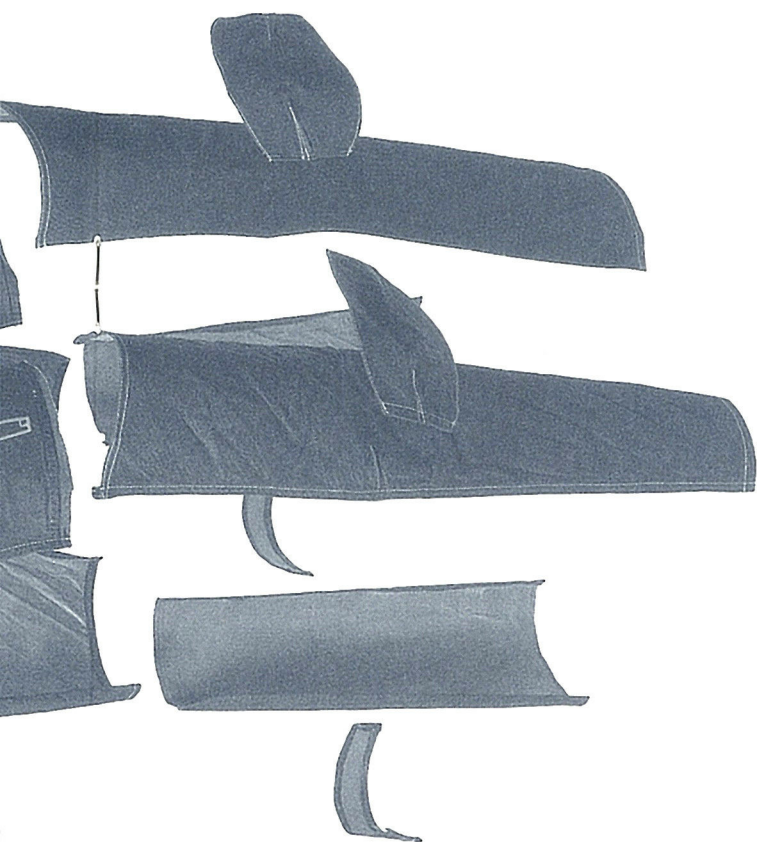


Figure 10
G-Star Elwood in 3D

Blue, the colour of Dutch streets

Every country now has one or more successful labels. Even the Netherlands. The most successful is G-Star, established in 1989 as Gap Star, whose *G-Star Elwood* jeans, inspired by motorcyclists' trousers with horizontal stitching around the knee, became hugely popular soon after their launch in 1996. [figure 10] In the late 1990s Kuyichi launched the first jeans made of organic cotton, to a mixed reception. Blue Blood, presented as an exclusive jeans concept – a 2002 idea of Steve te Pas and Jason Denham's – whose arrival was announced with great fanfare, profited from the premium jeans hype. Six years later, Jason Denham established DENHAM the Jeanmaker.

Blue, the colour of Dutch streets. The Dutch never grow bored of indigo, and Amsterdam's position as jeans capital of the world grows gradually stronger. Jason Denham has called the city 'capital of jeans' for years. James Veenhoff, the brains behind jeans centre of expertise House of Denim, looks at it in a broader perspective. He believes that the Netherlands is actually a country of jeans, on several levels, which is why foreign labels like Tommy Hilfiger have moved their design and head offices here. Many other brands, from the well-known Pepe Jeans and Levi's, to Amsterdams Blauw (Scotch & Soda's denim range), the trendy Avelon, the organic Kings of Indigo, the avant-garde Gluejeans and commercial Cars are all now building on their international success from a base in the Netherlands. [figure 11] The annual turnover in jeans and jeans-related fashion in the Amsterdam region is at least three billion euros. At two billion, Tommy Hilfiger is responsible for the lion's share of this, and G-Star, with a turnover of some 800 million euros a year, accounts for a large proportion of the rest.²

² *Het Parool*, Bregje Lampe, 7 January 2012.

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Figure 11
Gluejeans Revolution Jeans © Bill Tanaka

According to James Veenhoff, who worked in the jeans industry for many years, the Netherlands has hundreds of jobs in the industry, which is why he has set up a special training course for the jeans sector in collaboration with a college of vocational education. Since September 2012, 20 young people have been studying at the world's first 'Jeans School' in Amsterdam. The emphasis is on technical skills and sustainability, but students also learn about the history of jeans. Denim remains a popular fabric among students at several fashion academies. Maaïke Bles, who studied fashion at ArtEZ art college in Arnhem, showed a denim set comprising trousers and a top at her graduation show. [figure 12]

Figure 12
Maaïke Bles, Fashion Design ArtEZ graduation collection, 2012
© Peter Stigter



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Every denim tells a story

Since they were invented, blue jeans have undergone a series of developments: from work attire to leisurewear to trend-sensitive 'must-have'.

Where would we be without them? Whatever the latest trend, our beloved jeans are here to stay. Trends succeed each other at a dizzying rate.

Increasingly, there is a story behind each pair of jeans, perhaps about a denim woven on an original American loom from the 1960s, the heyday of jeans. This may explain why, halfway through the first decade of the 21st century, a pair of jeans made by premium Japanese brand Evisu had such a huge price tag. In another example of the narrative behind the jeans, in 2009 Blue Blood gave out thirty pairs of classic five-pocket jeans made of denim woven on a 1930s loom to thirty denim heads. The idea was that they should wear them every day for six months without washing them.

For, as every jeans connoisseur knows, jeans become more beautiful the longer they are worn. After six months of intensive use, the personalised jeans were framed and displayed as artworks at an exhibition where visitors could examine them like true archaeologists.

Not only does every pair of jeans tell a story, the 'heritage' labels – Lee, Levi's, Wrangler – profit from their longevity, turning it into an asset. Their history provides new inspiration based on past successes, enabling them to compete with a new wave of designer jeans and distinguish themselves in a crowded jeans market, essentially by producing large quantities of the same. The focus these days is on fit, materials and sustainability. One example of the focus on fit is Curve ID Women's Denim Line, a range of Levi's specially designed to accommodate women's curves. G-Star launched Powerstretch in 2012, with extra stretch to emphasise the sexy female form.

The current economic crisis has focused the minds of the fashion world on sustainability. For designers, this means that designing is no longer necessarily merely a matter of creativity. With the knowledge that it takes 7000 to 8000 litres of water to make just one pair of jeans, awareness is growing rapidly, matched by efforts to make the industry more sustainable.

Red jeans thread

While the design of a T-shirt is 'simply' a matter of fabric and form, designing a pair of jeans is about fabric, form and finish. Disc cutters, laser beams, steel brushes, sandblasters, sandpaper, bleach and washing machines full of stones. A whole battery of tools, techniques and hand-crafts has been deployed over the past few years to produce a fashionable pair of jeans – some of them almost ruined. Louis Vuitton's men's collection for summer 2013 includes modern denim suits made of newly developed fabrics, and shirts and bermuda shorts in a patchwork of reworked denim.

If there is a common thread running through the jeans world, it is the irresistible urge to rework denim. Fashion brands like Louis Vuitton, preceded by Balmain and Maison Martin Margiela, approach the whole thing from a fashion point of view. [figure 13] But the reworking of jeans in the 1960s was originally born of a need for individual expression. Until well into the 1970s, hippies beautifully decorated their indigo garments. And in the late 1970s, punks abused their jeans with bleach, ripped them and 'decorated' them with safety pins.

Diesel, established in 1978 by Renzo Rosso, and known for its 'destroyed' jeans, was inspired by punk. 'Distressed to impress' is still the speciality of this Italian label, which was hugely popular in the 1990s, when the general public wanted 'unique' jeans with special details and finishes. The 'distressed' look achieved widespread popularity. 'Destroyed' jeans are produced by hand, and are therefore unique. This perennial trend also ties in with the ever-popular vintage look, made of deceptively old-looking denim that has been washed and treated so often that it is soft and comfortable to wear.

Although jeans have never gone out of fashion for over half a century, since the start of the new millennium there has been a constant stream of new brands offering unique concepts and trends. Is the end in sight, or will our love of jeans live forever?

At any rate, the highpoint so far of the jeans renaissance came on 14 May 2012 in Versailles, when Karl Lagerfeld showed Chanel's resort collection for 2013 around the famous fountains. It featured pannier denim skirts with ruches combined with white lace, in a witty reinterpretation of eighteenth-century fashion from the time of Marie-Antoinette. [figure 14] The liberties he had taken with denim in his playful designs was highlighted by the denim livery jackets with epaulettes worn with denim knickerbockers in which female models dressed as boys paraded down the improvised catwalk. Like a present-day sun king of fashion, Karl Lagerfeld showed in Versailles that clothes once favoured by American miners are appropriate attire even in a palace.



Figure 13
Louis Vuitton *Homme Spring/Summer 2013*
© Louis Vuitton Malletier



Figure 14
CHANEL Cruise 2012-2013
© CHANEL

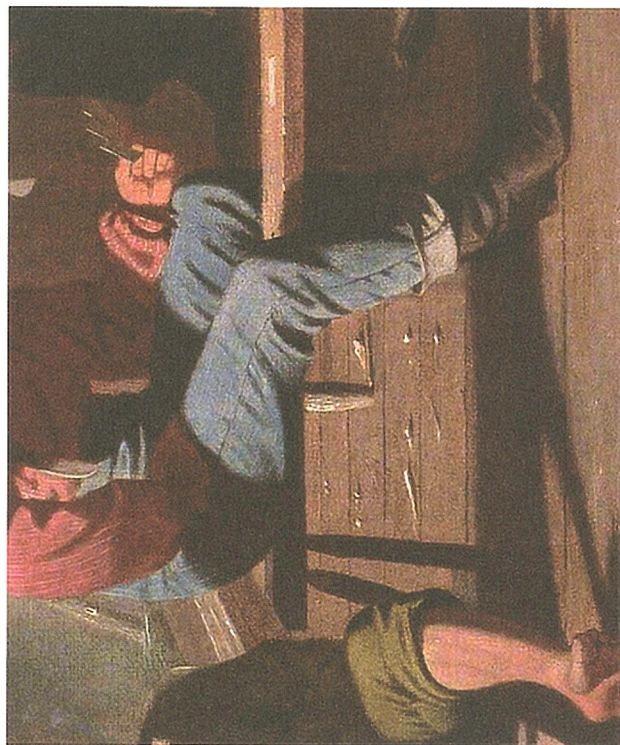
GEORGETTE KONING is a fashion journalist who publishes in *Vogue*, *Glamcult*, *Linda*, *Elsevier Stijl* and other magazines. She also writes for several newspapers, including *NRC Handelsblad*, *nrc.next*, *Het Parool* and *Het Financiële Dagblad*. Georgette Koning also writes a blog entitled *Independent Fashion Daily*.





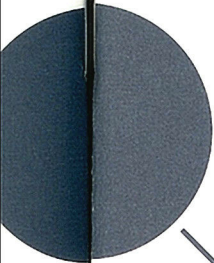


Dutch Jeans

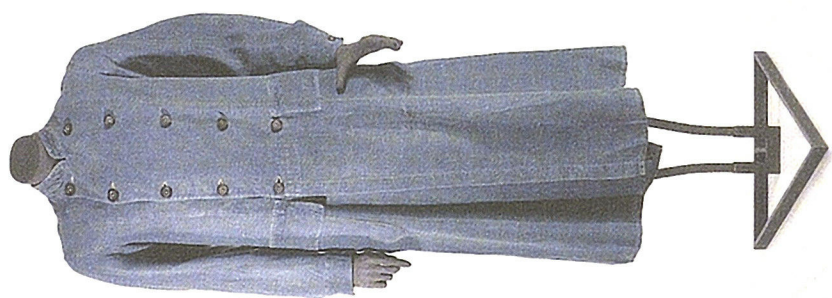


essay

**Ninke
Bloemberg**



**CENTRAAL
MUSEUM**



Nowadays, many brands of jeans come from the Netherlands: G-Star, Kuyichi, DENHAM the Jeanmaker, Scotch & Soda, Blue Blood, Kings of Indigo, to name but a few. The Dutch jeans industry has an annual turnover of two billion euros.¹ Our country is also home to the headquarters of Tommy Hilfiger, Lois and Levi's. Jason Denham (b. 1969), founder of DENHAM the Jeanmaker, believes he knows why. 'There are lots of creative people here, and there is a great demand for jeans', he says. 'Seriously, I don't know of anywhere in the world where people have such good taste in denim'.² Several Dutch labels rank among the international industry leaders when it comes to innovation and design. Since 2008, for example, G-Star has had a show at the prestigious New York Fashion Week. The roots of this success probably lie here at home. On Saturday 17 March 2012, newspaper *NRC Weekend* ran the following headline: 'Dutch greatest jeans lovers in the world'.³ With 1.82 pairs per inhabitant, we come first ahead of Sweden and Germany for annual sales of jeans.⁴ Italy languishes at the bottom of the ranking, with just 0.6 pairs per head of population. That is why Amsterdam is currently known as 'the jeans capital of the world'.⁵ Since September 2012 we have even had a *Jeans School*, established by James Veenhoff of House of Denim.

Despite the fact that jeans to a large extent determine the look of Dutch fashion, there has never been a major exhibition devoted to them in this country. In 1991, the Textile Museum in Tilburg organised an exhibition entitled *Spijkergoed*, which looked at the use of denim in early work clothing. In 2001, the Centraal Museum staged *Designers Do Denim*, in which several leading international designers presented their own take on jeans. So it was high time for an extravaganza like *Blue Jeans*, which looks at jeans both in history and in the present day. Though the subject appears somewhat mundane, one can look at it from any number of interesting perspectives. When we hear the word 'jeans', we may think immediately of the Gold Rush, miners and cowboys, but there is much more to the story of jeans. The recent 'discovery' of the paintings of The Master of the Blue

1 *RTL Nieuws*, 25 January 2012. According to Statistics Netherlands, the total export value in 2011 was 404.6 billion euros.

2 Interview with Bregje Lampje, *Het Parool*, Saturday 2 June 2012.

3 *NRC Weekend*, LUX fashion supplement, Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 March 2012, pp. 12-13.

4 Source: GfK Panel Services/Kantar European Jeans Market World Panel, December 2010-November 2011. The Italians spend the most on their jeans, however, at an average of € 49.38. The Netherlands comes second, with € 41.20, closely followed by Sweden on € 41.18. Levi's, Diesel and G-Star are the most popular brands in the more expensive segment of the market.

5 *NRC Weekend*, LUX fashion supplement, Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 March 2012, pp. 13.

GROOTE UITVERKOOP wegens

AFDEELING LINGERIËN (Parterre).

Dames-Tailles	Onze reclame wit katoenen Dames-Tailles , met prima entre-deux (Uitsluitend verkrijgbaar vóór 12 uur.)	68 cts.
Dames-Tailles	750 stuks fijne shirting Dames-Tailles , met mooi breed borduursel. — Alle maten.....	83 cts.
Dames-Tailles	Fijn Elsasser katoen met breede Zwitsersche strook. Vierkante en punthals, thans.....	1. 08
Dames-Tailles	Prima madapolam met rijk borduursel en entre-deux gearneerd. — Diverse modellen	1. 28
Dames-Tailles	Buitengewoon aanbod. Fijne Fransche madapolam, gearneerd met rijk borduursel en entre-deux	1. 38
Dames-Tailles	Prima shirting. Keurig afgewerkt en met rijke gearneering. Alle maten, thans	1. 58
Dames-Tailles	Fijn Elsasser katoen met breede Zwitsersche strook. Opruiming van circa 250 stuks.	1. 88
Dames-Tailles	Prima madapolam met sterke madapolam strook en entre-deux SPECIAAL AANBOD.	2. 15
Dames-Pantalons	Opruiming van 50 dozijn madapolam en jeans Dames-Pantalons . Fransch model met borduursel... (Uitsluitend verkrijgbaar vóór 12 uur.)	1. 68
Dames-Pantalons	Prima madapolam met fijne Zwitsersche strook en entre-deux. Groote partij. Speciaal aanbod. Thans	1. 98
Dames-Pantalons	Enorme partij prima katoenen Dames-Pantalons , met breed Zwitsersch borduursel en entre-deux, thans ..	2. 15
Dames-Pantalons	50 dozijn prima wit shirting Dames-Pantalons , (Fransch model) worden opgeruimd tegen.....	2. 55
Dames-Pantalons	Groote partij fijn madapolam Dames-Pantalons , in diverse modellen, thans (Uitsluitend verkrijgbaar vóór 12 uur.)	2. 85
Dames-Hemden	60 dozijn Dames-Hemden , met geborduurd pas of feston en entre-deux. Soliede afwerking (Uitsluitend verkrijgbaar vóór 12 uur.)	1. 98
Dames-Hemden	1000 stuks fijne shirting Dames-Hemden met mooi feston en entre-deux. Diverse modellen..... Buitengewone prijswaardige aanbieding.	2. 35

VROOM & DREESMANN

UITBREIDING 1918

AFDEELING LINGERIËN (Parterre).

Dames-Hemden	Van prima Fransch madapolam vervaardigd. Voorzien van breed borduursel. Diverse modellen. Thans.....	2. 65
Dames-Hemden	Extra voordeelige aanbieding van een zeer groote partij prima Engelsche shirting Dames-Hemden . Naar verkiezing met vierkanten of punthals...	2. 95
Dames-Nachthemden	Speciale aanbieding van 30 dozijn Dames-Nachthemden . Fijne kwaliteit madapolam met breed Zwitsersch borduursel.....	3. 55
Dames-Nachthemden	Groote partij prima madapolam Dames-Nachthemden , met extra breed borduursel en entre-deux. Diverse modellen (Uitsluitend verkrijgbaar vóór 12 uur.)	3. 85
Dames-Nachthemden	Fijn Fransch madapolam met Zwitsersche strook en entre-deux-garneering. Soliede afwerking. Diverse modellen Buitengewoon prijswaardig.	4. 15
Dames-Nachthemden	30 dozijn prima madapolam Dames-Nachthemden worden opgeruimd. Naar verkiezing met vierkanten of punthals	4. 55
Dames-Onderrokken	Zeer groote partij prima wit jeans Dames-Onderrokken . Gefestonneerd. Soliede afwerking (Uitsluitend vóór 12 uur verkrijgbaar.)	2. 35
Dames-Onderrokken	Opruiming van circa 10 dozijn fijne witte shirting Dames-Onderrokken , met breedestrook-garneering (uitsluitend vóór 12 uur verkrijgbaar.)	3. 35
Kussensloopen	Buitengewone aanbieding solied wit katoenen Sloopen , met overslag, tegen de volgende serie-prijzen.....	83 - 93 cts.
Kussensloopen	In de afdeling Sloopen reserveerden wij groote partijen, die wij als volgt hebben ingedeeld	1. 38 - 1. 58 - 1. 68
Lakens	Groote partij 2 persoons graslinnen Lakens . Naar verkiezing gefestonneerd of met ajour-bewerking. Thans	4. 85
Heeren-Overhemden	Met kleine plooijs gestikt. Fijn madapolam. Prima afwerking. Thans	2. 55
Heeren-Hemden	50 dozijn wit katoenen Heeren-Hemden , met korte mouwen. Met en zonder boord verkrijgbaar. Goede pasvorm.....	2. 65
Heeren-Hemden	Met korte of lange mouwen. Prima Elsasser katoen. Keurige afwerking. Goede modellen. Thans.....	2. 85
Heeren-Nachthemden	Zeer groote partij van prima shirting vervaardigd. Met waschecht rood galon afgezet. Diverse maten.	3. 15

Kalverstraat - Amsterdam

Figure 2
Figure from Neapolitan nativity scene, Naples,
eighteenth century, Museum Catharinconvent,
Utrecht, ABM bh.500.22



Figure 3
George Caleb Bingham, *Refugees Playing Cards*, 1847,
1847, oil on canvas, Saint Louis Art Museum,
Saint Louis, Illinois, United States,
bequest Ezra H. Linley, inv. no. 50.1934



Figure 1

Master of the Blue Jeans, *Begging Woman with Two Children*,
late seventeenth century, oil on canvas, 152 x 117 cm,
Paris, Galerie Canesso. Photo: Thomas Hennoque



Jeans sheds new light on the history of jeans. [figure 1] Combining them with illustrations from eighteenth-century books featuring 'jeans' and 'denim' fabric samples, and with the shepherds in 'jeans' from Museum Catherijneconvent's Neapolitan nativity scene has allowed us to add a whole new chapter to the early history of jeans. [figure 2] We have also devoted plenty of space to the DNA of jeans (what makes a pair of jeans a pair of jeans?), the characteristic indigo colour, and issues like innovation and sustainability, jeans couture and, of course, streetwear. Anyone who delves into the history of jeans will discover that, in the late eighteenth century, you had both 'American jeans' and 'Dutch jeans', and that jeans fabric was originally a woven cotton twill with warp and weft threads in the same colour. It is only since the 1950s that the word 'jeans' has referred specifically to an item of clothing with a number of key features: the twill weaving, the indigo colour, rivets, the label, the stitching. In short, both the 'denim heads'⁶ and the 'DNA' give us new insights into blue jeans, whose real story often lies in the details.

Jeans and jeans fabric

The Dutch word for jeans – *spijkerbroek* – is a combination of the words *spijker*, meaning stud or nail, and *broek*, meaning pants or trousers. The first official definition from 1954 was 'a pair of trousers generally made of blue denim with slightly shiny reinforcements on the seams resembling the heads of nails; jeans'.⁷ The word *spijkerstof* ('jeans fabric') was not incorporated into the Van Dale standard dictionary of Dutch until 1984, when it was defined as 'sturdy cotton fabric for work and leisure clothing'. According to historical linguist Nicoline van der Sijs (b. 1955) of the Meertens Institute, a *spijkerbroek* (pair of jeans) is said by analogy to be made of *spijkerstof* (jeans fabric, or denim). The first mention of the fabric can be found in the *Limburgsch Dagblad* newspaper of 14 July 1972, in an article that claimed 'there is virtually no young girl who does not wear jeans – a tight-fitting pair of trousers made of denim'.⁸ Interestingly, the Netherlands is one of the few countries that has invented its own word to refer to this item of clothing. Most other countries, including France, Germany and Belgium, use the word jeans. A map in the 2011 *Dialect Atlas of the Dutch Language* features various regional variations on the word *spijkerbroek*, *spijkerboks*, *spiekerbroek*, *spaikerbroek* and *jeans* or *jeansbroek* being the most common.

To discover the origins of blue jeans, however, we shall have to look further afield, to the United States. Although Levi Strauss is still widely regarded as the inventor of jeans, a similar garment did exist earlier. The painting *Raftsmen Playing Cards* of 1847, by George Caleb Bingham (1811-1879) features a group of men intent on their card game. [figure 3]

6 See: Jorgen Koolwijk's contribution to this publication.

7 See: <http://gdb.inl.nl/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=WNT&id=A014212&lem=modern-spijkerbroek>.

8 *Limburgsch Dagblad*, 14 July 1972, National Library of the Netherlands.

Figure 5
Limburgsch Dagblad newspaper,
 1 February 1952, advertisement
 featuring cowboy jeans, National
 Library of the Netherlands, The Hague

U.S.A.
HEERLEN
MAASTRICHT
GEERSTRAAT 30 a.h. VLEESCHHUIS 17

Kleden ontvingen 'n zeer goede partij klinkertanden
 in prijs van
 5,95, 7,50, 8,75, 10,25, 12,50, 14,50
 Schlitzende partij originele Amerikaanse
 Cowboy-shirts voor 13,50
 Cowboy-splinterrokken van 16,75, 18,75
 Met danks tegen de kou 18,75, 22,75
 Jeld ontvallen 'n zeer goede partij
 werkbroeken tegen de zeldzaam lage
 prijs van 5,—
 Wij krijgen ook binnen de
 originele Americ. werk-
 broeken in prijs van 6,50
 Vadersmaats 14,75
 millaire broeken voor slechts 10,95
 Tigerbroeken, onverslijp en zeer sterk 12,50
 De nieuwste Americ. werkbroek,
 krimprij 2,50
 Op gebied van
 voor de winter van 0,85, 1,65, 2,50
 naar vooruit in prijs van 0,85, 1,65, 2,50

Voor weekkleding is er slechts
 één adres en dat is de U.S.A.

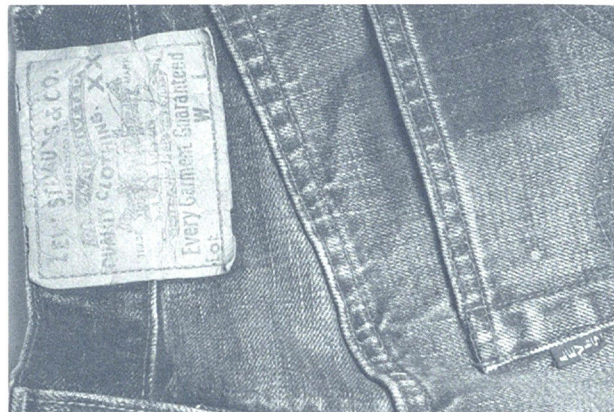
Junk ontvingen een zeldzame kwaliteit
 Zwets polen mijakenden 9,95
 Zeer zware kwaliteits mijakenden 14,75
 Extra versierde mijakenden 16,75
 Voor jongen een prachtige plus-
 four in ribliefde van 11,75
 Schlitzende jongensjassen in ribliefde 16,75

Wij ontvingen een grote partij kindercoats
 in alle maten en de nieuwste desin. Deze zijn
 van een ongeëvenaarde kwaliteit met 80% wol
 en 20% katoen, onverslijpbaar vanaf 70 ct.
 met een kleine stijging in prijs per maak.
 Op gebied van damessmokingen een geheel
 nieuw assortiment in prijs van
 29,50, 42,50, 45,—, 52,50, 62,50
 Herenreiden, 100% Waterpoof, van
 35,—, 39,75, 45,—, 54,50, 59,50
 De zeldzaam mode en warme reetjas
 die met zomer en winter gedragen kan
 worden voor slechts 97,50
 Voor de liefhebber van de Amerikaanse
 Veder 100% stikken tegen normaal lage prijs

U.S.A.
HEERLEN
MAASTRICHT
GEERSTRAAT 30
 50 meter van postkantoor
 Achter 't Vleeschhuis 17

DIT KAN ALLEEN DE

Figure 4
 Levi's jeans labels
 © Ernst Moritz



One of the men is wearing a pair of blue trousers with turned-up bottoms in a lighter colour, suggesting they are made of denim. They do not have the characteristic rivets, however. It was in fact the rivets that were the main reason for the emergence of jeans in the United States in the nineteenth century. In March 1853, Bavarian immigrant Loeb Strauss (1829-1902) established the company Levi Strauss, a drapery wholesaler, in San Francisco. Encouraged by Jacob Davis (1834-1908), a tailor originally from Latvia who lived in Reno (Nevada), in 1873 Strauss applied for a patent on a pair of workman's trousers reinforced with rivets.⁹ The metal rivet was designed to make the pockets stronger, so that the seams would not give. Several pairs of nineteenth-century jeans excavated in the mines of California do indeed have rivets at these weak spots.¹⁰ The patent said nothing about a specific fabric, but the examples found in the mines include some made of cotton duck and some made of denim. The quality of the strong cotton fabric was already being emphasised in 1886, on the rectangular leather label used by Levi Strauss, which features two horses trying with all their considerable might to pull a pair of jeans apart. However much the horses are spurred on, it seems they are unable to do so. [figure 4]

When did jeans arrive in the Netherlands? The earliest known reference has been found in an advertisement in the *Limburgsch Dagblad* of 1 February 1952. [figure 5] Hlt was placed by U.S.A., a shop in Heerlen that specialised in work clothing. Besides 'unique quality [...] miners' clothing' the shop also offered 'Cowboy jeans'.¹¹ The fact that jeans first went on sale in a mining region has everything to do with the composition of the fabric. After all, miners in the United States prized jeans for the 'unique quality' of the weave. Still, it was not until after the Second World War that they became available here. Though earlier Dutch collections include blue cotton working trousers, they are not made of denim. Another interesting fact is that, from the early twentieth century, American silent films showing cowboys in jeans had been screened in Dutch cinemas.¹² One of the first Westerns, *The Great Train Robbery* of 1903, included scenes several minutes long featuring cowboys. One of the best known screen actors – both here and in the rest of the world – was 'Bronco Billy' (1880-1971), whose original name was Gilbert M. Anderson. Another world-famous actor, Tom Mix (1880-1940), actually visited the Netherlands on 25 April 1925. Film footage shows that his arrival attracted a huge amount of interest. He appears to be wearing jeans, judging by the style and the drape of the fabric. However, due to the poor quality of the film, we cannot be entirely certain. Gerard Martens (1923-2003) of Rotterdam recalled Westerns in the 1930s where the door-man at the cinema would wear a 'Wild West costume he'd been given by the famous film star from the United States'.¹³ This suggests that jeans were not yet available in the Netherlands.

Once a youth culture began to emerge in the 1950s, interest in workmen's clothing, including jeans, began to grow. In its 1967 'Tweenies Survey', the Dutch Statistical Foundation found that youngsters aged 16 to 24 had money for the first time, and were keen to spend it.¹⁴ The meaning of 'free time' also changed. Jeans were ideal for the image that young people – like the 'pleiner' protesters, the rockers and the Teddy boys – wished to project.¹⁵ The tough image of rebellious young post-war film stars like Marlon Brando, James Dean and Marilyn Monroe reinforced this confident image and inspired young people to wear things like jeans and leather jackets, as a visible

9 Patent # 139,121, granted on 20 May 1873. See <http://www.google.com/patents?id=XnZNAABBAJ&printsec=abstract&zoom=4&onepage&q&l=false>. The patent remained in force until 1891.

10 Lynn Downey arrived at the dating on the basis of the rivets, the stitching and the design. See: *Blue Denim by the Bay*, pp. 152-153 and pp. 162-163, and the Japanese magazine *Boon*, which ran an article minutely describing the evolution of Levi's jeans.

11 *Limburgsch Dagblad*, 1 February 1952, volume 52, no. 27, pp. 5, National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague.

12 Thanks to Mrs. Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi, Silent Film Specialist at EYE Film Institute Netherlands.

13 See: <http://www.engelfinet.net/Alie/Gastenboek/astameer.htm>. Thanks to Bianca M. du Mortier.

14 *Jong!*, pp. 21 and: *Lawaaiige tweeners* ('Noisy Tweenies'), CBS, 1967. 'Tweenies' were defined as unmarried boys and girls aged 16 to 24.

15 *Lawaaiige tweeners*.

expression of their protest against the established order. In the 1970s, jeans replaced smart suits and dresses for good.¹⁶ And they still define the way we dress today.

The history of *De Rode Winkel*, established in 1837,¹⁷ originally to sell workwear, illustrates the fact that jeans did not immediately achieve broad acceptance.¹⁸ This changed from the 1950s onwards, however, as young nephew Thom Broekman began to sell jeans 'under the counter'. Youngsters who, inspired by film and pop stars, went in search of jeans, had few places to go. Owner Willem Broekman initially saw little prospect in selling them, despite the fact that jeans were also a type of workwear, and he even predicted the demise of the family firm. Nothing could have been further from the truth, however. Demand rose so sharply, in fact, that the shop eventually began to specialise in jeans. They are now worn by people of all ages, for all kinds of occasions. Denim baby clothes are available from size 50 cm, and the baby boomers have remained faithful to jeans as they have grown older.¹⁹ This is by no means the full story, however.

16 *Volkskrant*, 8 July 1972, pp.2

17 Before becoming a shop Broekman's was a tailor's and haberdasher's, established in 1834. See the anniversary publication *Broekmannen*, p. 42.

18 Other shops, like VET (now Forecast/Colt), had a similar experience.

19 In the 1970s, people even got married in jeans. The Gemeentemuseum's collection includes an embroidered pair from 1973: K117-1975. See also: *The Ideal Man*, pp. 19.

20 Paris, Musée de la Mode et du Costume, Palais Galliera, 25 October 1994 – 12 March 1995.

21 *Raman Spectroscopic Investigation*, pp. 85.

22 *Cotton*, pp. 40-41, pp. 66 and pp. 71.

23 See: <http://gtb.inl.nl/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=WNT&id=AC04086&lem=modern-denim>.

24 *Garen en goed*.

25 *Oxford English Dictionary*.

26 'Serge' was regularly used on its own, too. In 1682, for example, a sign in verse on an awning in Heerlen, advertising worsted, serge and yarn, among other things, read: 'Hier verkoopt men Lake, Serge, en Greyne fijn / Ook Garen en Zy, daar sy mé genaait moeten zijn', see: *Koddige en ernstige opschriften. Op Luyffens, Wagens, Glazen &c*, 12 January 2012.

27 *Textielwaren*, pp. 424. The standard Dutch dictionary also describes serge as 'a woollen twill fabric'.

28 *Histoires du jeans*, pp. 27 and *La serge de laine*, pp. 18.

Denim and Jeans

The terms 'denim' and 'jeans' appear interchangeable. Nevertheless, there is a key difference, not only in terms of definition, but also in the history of these two fabrics. The common belief that denim comes from *serge de Nîmes* has been drawn into question in the past couple of decades. The publications *Bleu de Nîmes, le bleu populaire* (1989) and *Histoires du jeans 1750-1994* (1994) argue that the origin of jeans is not as clear as is often assumed.²⁰ Nowadays, denim is a twill-woven cotton fabric with a coloured (often blue) warp thread and an undyed weft thread.²¹ This gives it its characteristic coloured face and white or ecru reverse. A similar fabric was probably portrayed in the late seventeenth-century painting *Woman Begging with Two Children* by the anonymous Master of the Blue Jeans. It shows a young woman stooping over a stick, looking pleadingly at the viewer. To her right and left are two children in worn clothing. The woman's apron has a large tear with a frayed edge. The reverse of the fabric is also worn, and the apparently ecru-coloured seam suggests it has a white weft thread. The appearance of the fabric in this painting by an anonymous artist calls to mind a contemporary denim skirt, but is this comparison appropriate? To draw conclusions about the quality, texture and composition of woven fabrics of this period, it is useful to study authentic garments. Unfortunately, no textile appropriate for such a study has remained preserved from the seventeenth century. One unique example – albeit later – has come from a somewhat unlikely source, however – the eighteenth-century Neapolitan nativity scene belonging to Museum Catherijneconvent in Utrecht. If we look carefully, we can see that several figures in the nativity scene are wearing rough cotton twill with blue and undyed threads, a fabric equivalent to what we know today as denim. Luxury fabrics like silk, velvet and most types of woollen fabrics (such as worsted fabric) were intended for the upper echelons of society. The less workable fabrics like linen, hemp, cotton and cotton mixes such as fustian were largely worn by the lower classes.²²

Denim from Nîmes?

The standard Dutch dictionary *Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal* defines denim as a 'tough cotton fabric', which among other things is 'used for work clothing'.²³ The '3/1 twill' weave has a fine warp and a 'rough, unbleached weft'.²⁴ Denim is said to be a truncation of 'de Nîmes', or 'from Nîmes',²⁵ a town in southern France. *Serge*²⁶ was a collective term used even before the seventeenth century for woollen, semi-woollen and silk twill fabrics.²⁷ The name Nîmes also occurs in variant spellings. The region played an important role in the production of serge, worsted and other fabrics in the eighteenth century.²⁸

This etymology is not certain, however. *Serge de Nîmes* was in fact originally a woollen fabric, or a wool/silk blend, whereas denim is now made of pure cotton. Furthermore, in the eighteenth century there was also a woollen twill known as *nim*. It came from Spain, but was also produced in

southern France.²⁹ To complicate things even further, there was also *serge de Rome*, *serge d'Amiens*, *sarge de Florence*³⁰ and *serge de Londres*.³¹ However, the reference to a place does not necessarily mean that the fabric was exclusively produced there. It could also have been produced elsewhere, under the same name. The *Dictionnaire universel* written by author and scholar Antoine Furetière (1619-1688) and published in 1690 states, for example: '*On fait des habits long d'ete de serge de Rome qui se manufacture Amiens*'. So *serge de Rome* was in fact made in Amiens. Unfortunately, the dictionary makes no mention of *serge de Nîmes*.

Serge de Nîmes was known in the Netherlands from the seventeenth century onwards. Household inventories of the time mention items like 'a piece of *sarge de Nime*',³² 'a coloured *charge de nime* undergarment with silver buttons' and 'a coloured *sarge de nime* coat with trousers'.³³ Prosperous Utrecht citizen Jacob de Malapert (1711-1782)³⁴ also mentions it in his detailed *manuaal* (a kind of accounts book). [figure 6] During the course of over 40 years of account keeping, Malapert purchased '*sarsie de nime*' almost every year. In 1751 he bought '2 $\frac{3}{4}$ el Swart Sarge de Niem a 2 gl' and, on 15 April 1774, '3 el geblaud Serge de Niem', which he had made into a pair of trousers. The Amsterdamse Courant newspaper actually mentions domestic and English *serge de Nîmes*, which suggests it was also produced in the Netherlands.³⁵

Other evidence of 'domestic *serge de Nîmes*' comes from several anonymous eighteenth-century invoice ledgers in the collection of Museum de Lakenhal in Leiden. They are part of the inventory of the Le Poole textile mill, established in 1680 by Jacob Le Poole (1651-1704), a descendant of a leading Leiden textile manufacturing family. The mill specialised in producing and exporting woollen fabrics, including serge. A fabric sample was included with some orders, such as one dispatched on 11 July 1792 in which, next to the words '*serge de niem*' written in ink, a sample of approximately one square centimetre is attached. [figure 7] It is therefore possible that this textile mill also produced *serge de Nîmes*. Only further research can tell us whether *serge de Nîmes* really was made in the Netherlands, however.

29 See: *Histoires du jeans*, pp. 27.

30 *La serge de laine*, pp. 270.

31 *Ibidem*, pp. 276.

32 Duverger, 1984, pp. 381. Thanks to Marieke de Winkel.

33 GAA, Not. A. Lock, NA 2262, 13 August 1680, pp. 1177-1227.

34 The Utrecht Archives, De Malapert family archive 63, 204, ledger of expenditure on carriage, horse, wine, clothing etc., 1739-1782, by Jacob de Malapert.

35 GAA, Not. A. Lock, NA 2262, 13 July 1688.

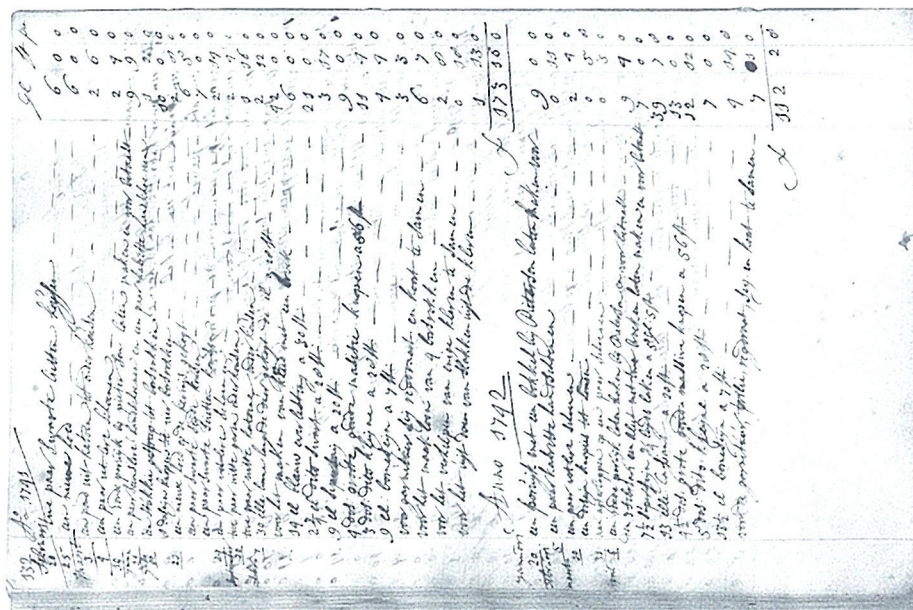


Figure 6
Ledger, 1738-1781, Jacob de Malapert,
The Utrecht Archives

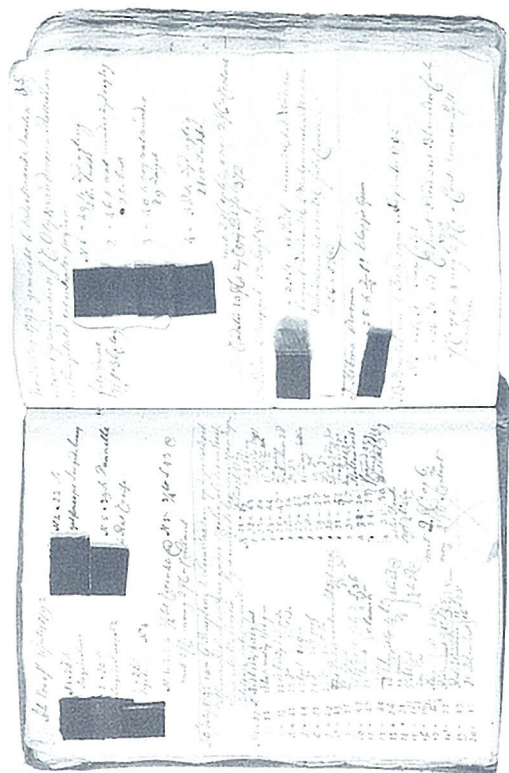


Figure 7
Invoice ledger of textile manufacturer Le Poole,
from 1772, Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden

Denim = cotton

Denim first arrived in England in 1695, at a time when the cotton industry was flourishing.³⁶ Almost a century later, we find a sample of the fabric in the 'Hilton Manuscript', a sample book of 1786, named after cotton merchant John Hilton of Manchester.³⁷ The 'Hilton Manuscript' contains a wide variety of fabrics, including 'satinette', velvet and four different types of denim: double, single, striped and Prussian denim, which are mostly brown. It is clear from the sample book that this denim – like the denim we know today – was made largely of cotton. It no longer included any wool. We find samples in the Netherlands, too, albeit of a later date. The collection of Museum TwentseWelle in Enschede includes a sample book from around 1928 containing descriptions and illustrations of all kinds of specialist and work clothing. For example, 'grey denim' was used for a 'gentleman's dust coat', worn by shopkeepers, warehousemen and drivers. [figure 8] Gemeentemuseum Den Haag has in its collection a coat from circa 1905-1920 similar to the one in the illustration, made of blue denim. [figure 9] It was generally worn over normal clothing to protect it.

Another use of denim is found in a walking costume from around 1900,³⁸ consisting of a blue denim skirt and a white cotton blouse.³⁹ [figure 10] The style of the skirt is typical of the turn of the century, flaring out slightly from the waist and reaching to the ground. So denim was known in the Netherlands before the First World War, and was used in a range of garments. There are however no known examples of jeans from this period.

36 See: <http://gtb.int.nl/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=WNT&id=A004086&lem=modern-denim>.

37 The National Archives, Public Record Office (London), *Hilton Manuscript*, inv.no. BT 6/112.

38 *Een leven in mode*, pp. 103-104.

39 Thanks to Jacoba de Jonge.

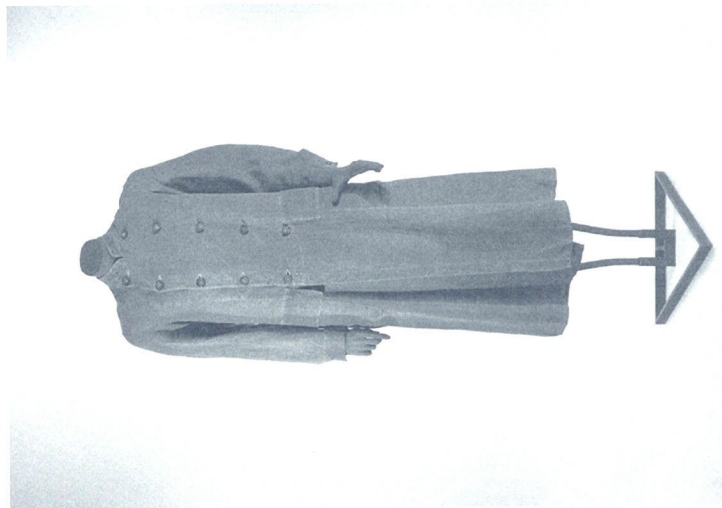


Figure 9
Denim dustcoat, 1905-1920,
Gemeentemuseum Den Haag

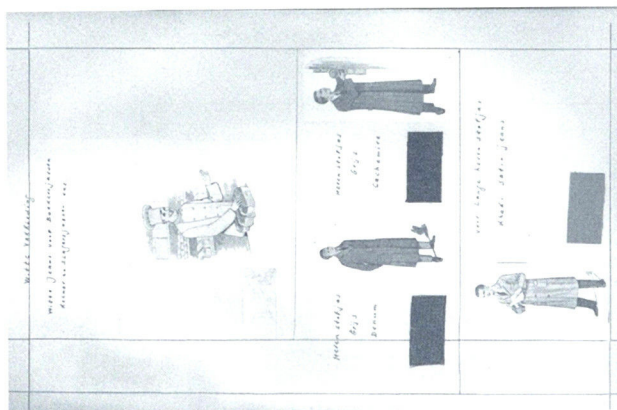


Figure 8
Sample book of J. Van der Molen 1928-1930,
TwentseWelle, Enschede

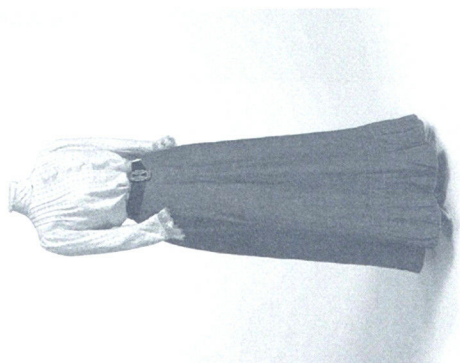
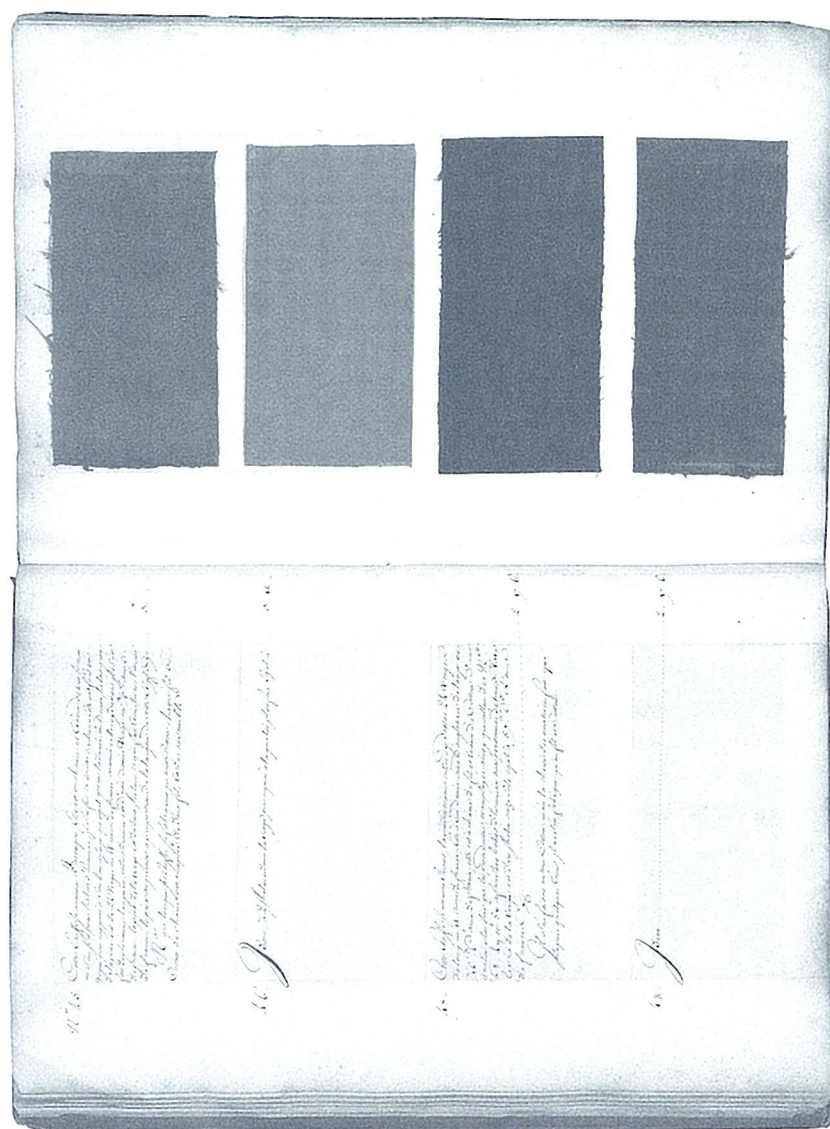


Figure 10
Walking costume with denim skirt and cotton
blouse, c. 1900, Jacob de Jonge/
ModeMuseum Antwerp, B58 and B50.
Photo: Hugo Maertens - Bruges

Figure 11
*Libre d'échantillons, 'Holler Manuscript', Les Arts Décoratifs,
 Musée de la Mode et du Textile, Paris*



Jeans from Genoa

It was not until the 1950s that jeans became synonymous with the Dutch name *spijkerbroek*. Prior to that, jeans (the fabric) was a strong, multi-purpose heavy cotton twill or satin weave.⁴⁰ There was no reference as yet to trousers. So what exactly was jean? And where did it originate from? The general consensus is that jeans is based on 'fustian from Genoa' (Italy).⁴¹ The city state of Genoa was for centuries important in the production and transport of various types of fabric, particularly fustian.⁴² From the fifteenth century onwards, there was intensive trading between Northern Italy and England. The English referred to fustian from Genoa as 'Jene fustyan' (1567) or 'Gene fustian' (1589).⁴³ However, from the mid-eighteenth century, the term jeans written as it is today is found in English sources, and two decades later in the Netherlands, too. 'Jeans' does not necessarily imply a plural form, but could be based on the French spelling of Jannes, Gênes.⁴⁴ Both forms were used interchangeably.

Wool, hemp and flax were traditional materials used in the production of clothes in Europe. Silk from the Middle East was used from the thirteenth century onwards. It was not until after 1500 that cotton became an important resource for the production of woven textiles.⁴⁵ From the seventeenth century England, particularly the city of Manchester and the county of Lancashire, led the world in the production of cotton fabrics. The *Livre d'échantillons* of 1750, part of the collection of Les Arts Decoratifs museum in Paris, includes several samples of fabrics from this region of England. [figure 11] This is very important, because it shows us what jeans looked like. In this sample book, which belonged to Englishman John Holker (1719-1986), numbers 47 to 50 are four plain 'jeans' fabrics in mustard yellow, chestnut brown and moss green. The woven cotton twill fabrics are of '*une qualité plus fine*'. Each sample includes a number and a brief description of the quality of the fabric, the English and sometimes also the French name, the price in England, the method of production and generally also the application. Some of the fabrics were made for export, to dress naval officers, or to make petticoats, for example.

40 *Woordenboek voor den Manufacturier*, pp. 34.

41 Fustian is a collective term for a group of fairly coarse fabrics made of half-linen or cotton.

42 *The Master of the Blue Jeans*, pp. 23.

43 *Histoires du jeans*, pp. 28.

44 See: WNT jeans, <http://gtb.int.nl/iwdb/search?actie=article&wdb=WNT&i.d=A009430&lemmodern=jeans> en <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/jean?q=jean>, 15 March 2012.

45 *Cotton*, pp. 33 and *Le mode de la coton*, pp. 45.

Dutch jeans

The first known use of the word 'jeans' in the Netherlands is in the *Amsterdamsche Courant* newspaper of 3 March 1778, announcing a sale of textiles. In the 'consignment of English and other draperies and shop goods', the fabric 'jeans' appears between 'Silk and Semi-Silk Fabrics' and 'Cotton de Niems'.⁴⁶ A later announcement, on 10 November 1772, mentions the sale of 'English draperies, consisting of [...] Jeans'.⁴⁷ [figure 12] This fabric was imported from England to the Netherlands and sold there from the late eighteenth century. Jeans was also exported from the Netherlands. From the first quarter of the nineteenth century onwards, we see references to jeans in several newspapers from former Dutch colonies. The *Javasche Courant* of 1 July 1828, for example, mentions 'Coloured Jeans' in a list of imported cotton goods. The trade in jeans appears not to have been successful, however. The *Indische Marktbericht en Prijs-Courant*⁴⁸ of 1877, for example, says sales of jeans are poor, and 'there is nothing to report on this' or 'no jeans was sold'.⁴⁹ A more interesting source is *Eduard Schellhass & Co.'s Market Report* of 1877, which specifies 'English jeans' and 'Dutch jeans' under imports of 'Cotton Goods' to Hong Kong and Shanghai.⁵⁰ [figure 13] But here, too, trade in jeans was clearly not terribly successful at that time: the English jeans were traded 'at lower rates' and the Dutch jeans 'remained neglected'⁵¹ or 'have been in no demand whatever', as reported in several newspapers in 1877.⁵² 'American jeans' appears twice.⁵³ This too would not appear to be very profitable, since it had 'not improved in value'.⁵⁴ English, Dutch and American may refer to a difference in the quality of the various jeans fabrics.

46 *Amsterdamsche Courant*, 3 March 1778, National Library of the Netherlands.

47 *Amsterdamsche Courant*, 9 August 1791, National Library of the Netherlands.

48 Unfortunately, only a few copies of these newspapers have been preserved, so only fragments of information are available.

49 *Bataviaasch Marktbericht en Prijs-courant*, Surabaya, 1877, NEHA, Special Collections, 572, I, 2g.

50 Edouard Schellhass, who established the *Marktbericht*, was a merchant who lived in Hong Kong from 1872. The report did not appear on a daily or weekly basis, though it was published regularly (often several times a month), depending on the 'change of the monsoon'.

51 *Eduard Schellhass & Co.'s Market Report*, 7 July 1877, NEHA, Special Collections, 572, I, 6i.

52 *Eduard Schellhass & Co.'s Market Report*, 14 March 1877, NEHA, Special Collections, 572, I, 2i.

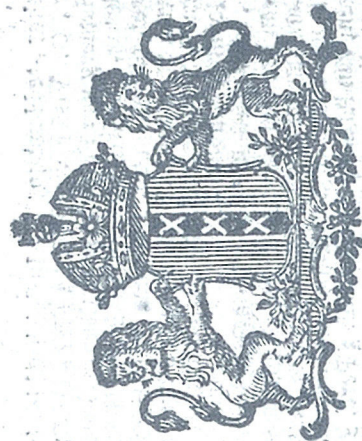
53 Based on newspapers in the Netherlands Economic History Archive (NEHA).

54 *Eduard Schellhass & Co.'s Market Report*, 7 July 1877, NEHA, Special Collections, 572, I 2i.

A^o. 1772.

AMSTERDAMSCHÉ

Word uitgegeven by
bezyden de Beurs.



N^o. 135

Dingsdagfche Courant.

HENDRIK LINSEN,
den 10 November,

, zullen op Donderdag den 12 Novemb., 's morgens ten 9 uren, t'Amst. in de Keizers-
an extra frisse party Koopmanschappen, als supra syné Haarlemmer gebleekte en andere
bbelde Canefassen, Bonten, Broekeltreepen, gefigureerde en gestreepte Sjamoiſen en een
tſen, Catoenen, Neteldocken en Neusdoeken; als mede diverse Engelsche Manufacturen:
Calminken, Catoen de Niem, Jeans, Sattinet, gefikt Rokkengood en Canefas, een frisse
ts, Zyde en half Zyde-Stoffen; Turks Gaarn, Trypen &c. Daags te vooren te zien.
zullen op Maandag den 23 November, t'Amst. in 't Oude Heeren Logement verkoopen;

Figure 12

Amsterdamsche Courant (two details), 10 November 1772,

National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague

Figure 13
Edvard Schellhuus & Co. Market Report,
 13 July 1877, NEHA Special Collections,
 International Institute of Social
 History, Amsterdam

		QUOTA		Cotton	
		Per piece.	Estimated Sales:		
					pieces.
Grey Shirtings.....	6 lbs. Tls.	0.95	a	1.05	83,450
"	7 "	0.98	"	1.40	
"	8½ a 8½ "	1.10	"	1.88	
"	9 a 10 "	1.80	"	2.53	7,550
White	52 reeds	1.30	"	1.40	
"	56 "	1.35	"	1.45	
"	60 "	1.48	"	1.54	41,360
"	64 "	1.60	"	1.85	
T-Cloth.....	6 lbs. ord.	0.83	"	0.92	
"	7 "	0.95	"	1.05	5,790
"	6 " Mex.	1.04	"	1.10	
"	7 "	1.15	"	1.49	
"	8 a 8½ "	1.38	"	1.69	37,560
Drills, Dutch	13 a 14½ lbs.	2.10	"	2.22	
"	English.....	1.77	"	2.10	
"	American.....	2.75	"	2.93	18,270
Jeans, English.....	15 "	1.31	"	1.95	
"	8 a 8½ "	2.00	"	2.10	
"	Dutch	1.70	"	2.30	1,260
"	8 a 8½ "	1.70	"	2.30	
"	American.....	1.70	"	2.30	

The reference to 'Dutch jeans' raises several questions. How does one explain the name? And does 'Dutch' mean that jeans was also manufactured in the Netherlands? A search of the literature and of primary sources has not revealed any references to production of this fabric in the Netherlands.⁵⁵ Although it is too early to rule out the possibility, it seems more likely that this fabric ended up here through trade with England or America. The *Java Bode* of 9 February 1853 supports this idea, reporting under 'Import' that '30 dozen bl. Jeans'⁵⁶ were imported from Boston by American ship.⁵⁷ The 'Dutch' in 'Dutch jeans' therefore probably does not refer to the place where the fabric was manufactured, but to the type of weave. Further research may shed light on this matter in the future.

⁵⁵ Thanks to Ebelte Hartkamp-Jonxis.

⁵⁶ 'Bl.' probably stands for 'bleached' or 'blued' jeans.

⁵⁷ *Java Bode*, 9 February 1853, National Library of the Netherlands.

⁵⁸ 'Vroom & Dreesman' brochure, 1915, p. 8, NEHA, Special Collections 572 II, I, 1g, 1915.

⁵⁹ 'V&D Sale due to Alterations 1918', 1917, NEHA, Special Collections 572 II, I, 1g, pp. 8.

Jeans for 'undergarments'

Originally, jeans was a lightweight fabric which was used among other things for work clothing and underwear, as we have seen in John Holker's *Livre d'échantillons*. Examples of more recent applications can be found in brochures for the Vroom & Dreesmann department store (established 1887) from the early twentieth century. A weekly advertising brochure from September 1915 promotes 'Ladies Skirts' of 'Fine French Jeans, white with openwork hem'. The offer is 'EXCEPTIONAL'; the skirts cost only 90 cents.⁵⁸ In June 1917 a brochure announcing a clearance sale ahead of an expansion to the store refers to a sale of 'jeans Ladies Pantalons, French design, embroidered....'.⁵⁹ [figure 14 and 15] Two sample books from 1904, from the collection of the Textile Museum in Tilburg, give us an idea of what kind

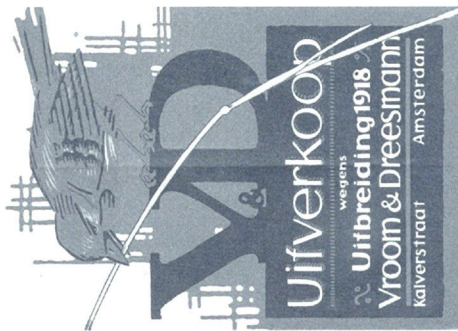


Figure 14
V&D department store brochure,
1917, NEHA Special Collections,
International Institute of Social
History, Amsterdam

8 GROOTE UITVERKOOP wegens	
AFDEELING LINGERIËN (Parterre).	
Dames-Tailles	Onze reëls, 36 knopen Dames-Tailles, met prima... (Uitsluitend verkrijgbaar vóór 12 uur) 88
Dames-Tailles	36 knopen, 36 knopen Dames-Tailles, met mooi lreed bodemaat. — Alle maten 83
Dames-Tailles	36 knopen, 36 knopen Dames-Tailles, met mooi lreed bodemaat. — Alle maten 1.08
Dames-Tailles	Prima middelpunt met rijk bodemaat en extra-dex gegarneerd. — Diverse modellen 1.28
Dames-Tailles	Buitengewoon aanbod. Fijne Franche middelpunt, gegarneerd met rijk bodemaat en extra-dex 1.38
Dames-Tailles	Prima skiers. Keurig afgewerkt en met rijk ge- seering. Alle maten, 36 knopen 1.58
Dames-Tailles	Fijne Elasser knopen met goede Zeilpreke strook Opbreiding van circa 250 stiks. 1.88
Dames-Tailles	Prima middelpunt met sterke middelpunt strook en extra-dex 2.15
Dames-Pantalons	SPECIAL AANBOD: Opbreiding van 36 knopen middelpunt en extra- dex 1.08
Dames-Pantalons	Prima middelpunt met rijk bodemaat en extra- dex (Uitsluitend verkrijgbaar vóór 12 uur) 1.38
Dames-Pantalons	Prima middelpunt met rijk bodemaat en extra- dex. — Grote partij. Speciaal aanbod. Tien 1.38
Dames-Pantalons	Eenige partij prima knopen Dames-Pantalons, met lreed bodemaat. — Grote partij. Speciaal aanbod. Tien 2.15
Dames-Pantalons	36 knopen prima knopen Dames-Pantalons, (French model) worden opgevoerd 2.25
Dames-Pantalons	Grote partij, fijne middelpunt Dames-Pantalons, in diverse modellen. — Grote partij. Speciaal aanbod. Tien 2.35
Dames-Hemden	66 knopen Dames-Hemden, met 2 bodemaat, met of zonder (Uitsluitend verkrijgbaar vóór 12 uur) 1.38
Dames-Hemden	100 knopen, fijne skiers Dames-Hemden met mooi fason en extra-dex. Diverse modellen. — Grote partij. Buitengewoon prijswaardige aanbieding. 2.38
VROOM & DREESMANN	

Figure 15
V&D department store brochure,
1917, NEHA Special Collections,
International Institute of Social
History, Amsterdam

of fabric this was. [figure 16] Here we find various plain white jeans fabric samples specifically intended for 'Underwear, Butchers' Coats and Chefs' Hats'. In contrast to John Holker's sample book, these woven twill fabrics are all white. Clothes for these purposes had to be hygienic, of course, so they needed to be washed at high temperatures. Around 1900, only white fabrics could withstand such treatment. The TwentseWelle sample book also gives us examples of what jeans was used for, and who wore it, stating that it was intended for painters' coats, waiters, 'overalls' etc. [figure 17]

Conclusion

Australian anthropologist Michael Taussig summarised this story perfectly when he said 'To slip into your jeans is to slip into history'. The history of blue jeans is not only more colourful than we thought, our beloved jeans are now more popular than ever.

NINKE BLOEMBERG joined the Centraal Museum as fashion and costume curator in 2009, having previously worked for the Rijksmuseum, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag and the Arnhem Mode Biennale.

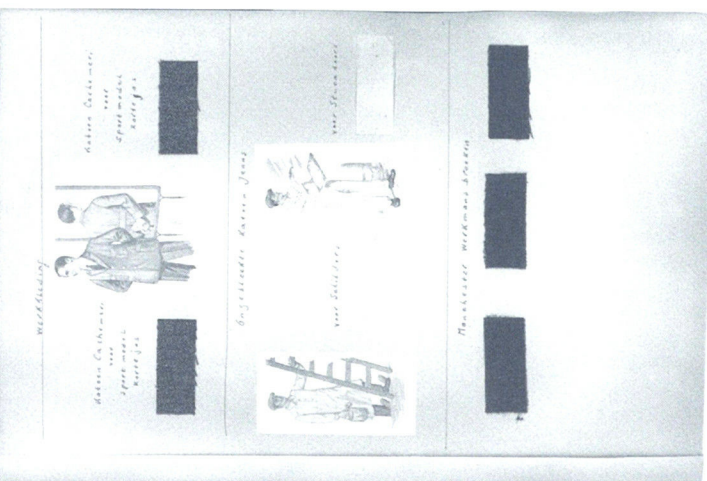


Figure 17
Sample book of J. Van der Molen,
1928-1930, Twentse Welle, Enschede

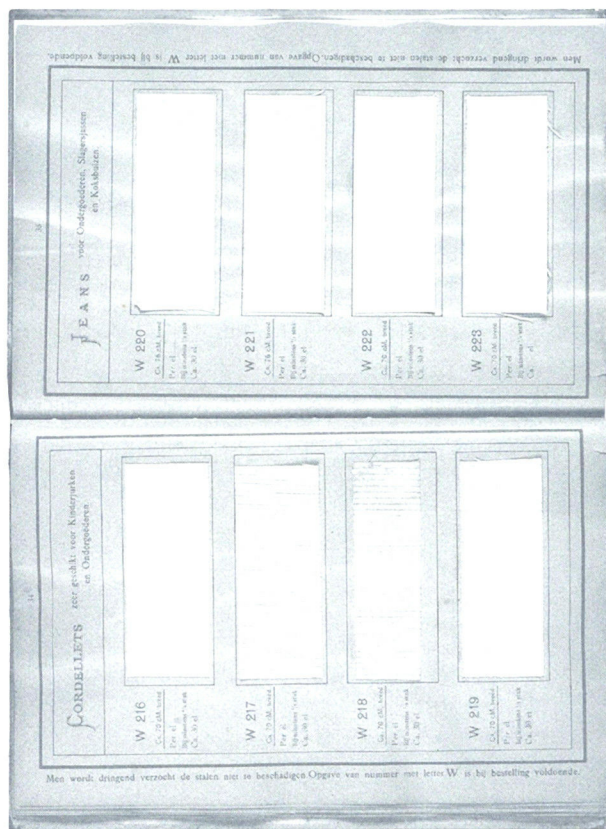


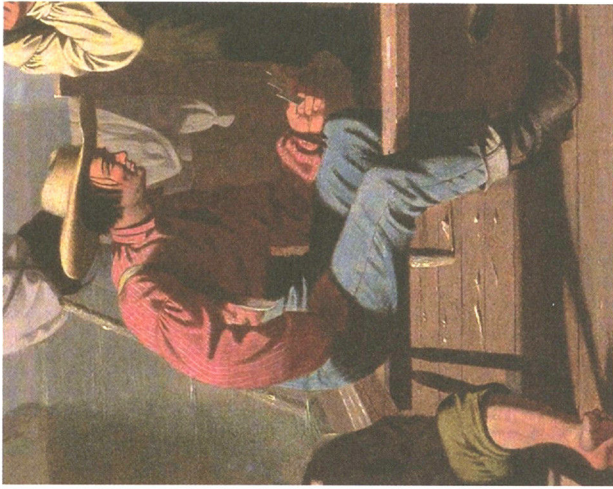
Figure 16
Sample book, 1904,
Audax Textile Museum, Tilburg.
Photo: Audax Textile Museum Tilburg

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Al. Krosch 11 July 1792

N 1. 28 H
Serge de Num
2. 20 H
Serge de Beau N 2
3. 26 H
Serge de Beau N 4

N 4. 22 H
gelsceps Serge de Beau
N 5. 39 H Pannelle
in Ruz Croise

N 1. 2. 3. 4. $\frac{3}{4}$ bit circa 40 @ N 5. $\frac{3}{4}$ bit 43 @
mit 2 fl. en nog 2 fl. a Contant

20 July 1792 aan G. Buysdeng te Leuwarden op zijn verzoek
alhier mededeeling om geen andere staalen als die in hand
hand getrokken worden. Hij is een daer beginnende van zijn
Liefde van het myn niet

N 1. 37 18 bit met 2 fl. 10 goud
2. 53 18 bit met 2 fl. 10 goud
3. 37 23 bit met 2 fl. 10 goud
4. 42 23 bit met 2 fl. 10 goud
5. 44 22 bit met 2 fl. 10 goud
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31. 58 22 bit met 2 fl. 10 goud
32. 47 22 bit met 2 fl. 10 goud
33. 20 22 bit met 2 fl. 10 goud
34. 29 22 bit met 2 fl. 10 goud
35. 30 22 bit met 2 fl. 10 goud

mit 2 fl. op 6
nog 2 fl. a Contant

den 22 Aug. 1792 gemaakt 6 onderstaande koosten 35
en daar i geronden aan J. C. Olyk van Doornse Rotterdam
en hangt ueld tot ontb. pryzen

July 1792
7/16 366

N 1. 49 H 2yd a gting
2. 46 H wat minder dyd a gting
3. 40 H nog wat minder
4. 38 H dyd a gting
2100 Fubdt

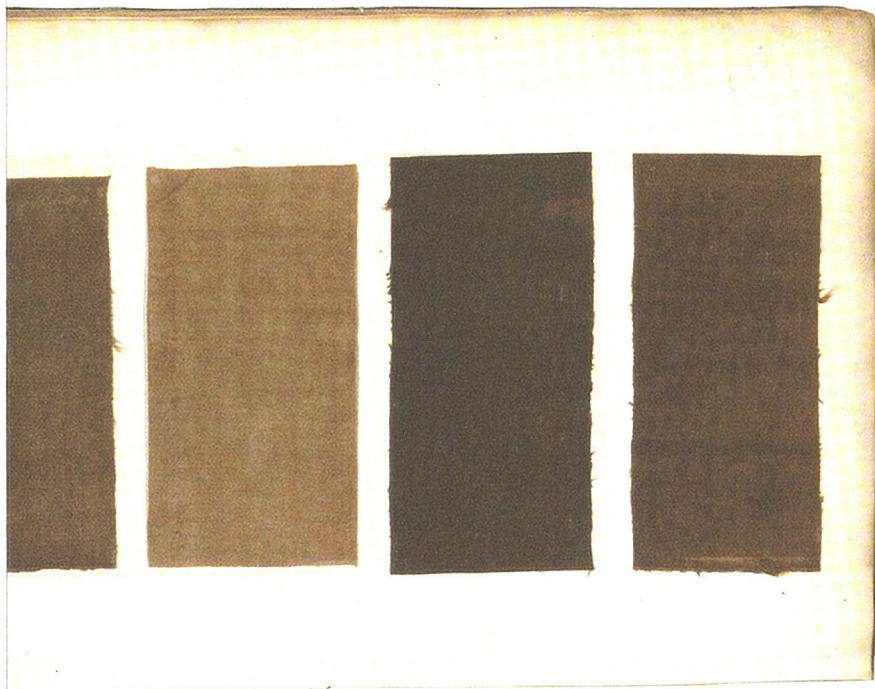
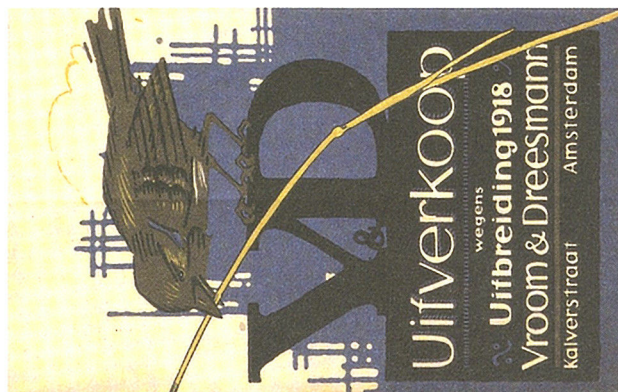
mit 2 fl. op 6 m en nog 2 fl. a Contant
nadat G. d. d. 10 fl. dy 10 fl. 372

Alte N. d. d. 27 Aug. 1792

a 33 H 12 Poll onder de het Noedigen
begeert worden de 4 Mecken maeten 14 g ton
dan Londen het voor de fabrieken
L 56 a 57

J. Mibma wroonen
25. H 28. klopjes Gwin

N. d. d. 27 Aug. 1792
N. d. d. 27 Aug. 1792
2. 56 H ord Passant Brood 21 H Blenchee font
29 fl. op 6 m 4 nog 2 fl. a Cont hem aan Lyst
ge worden



Ame- kaji



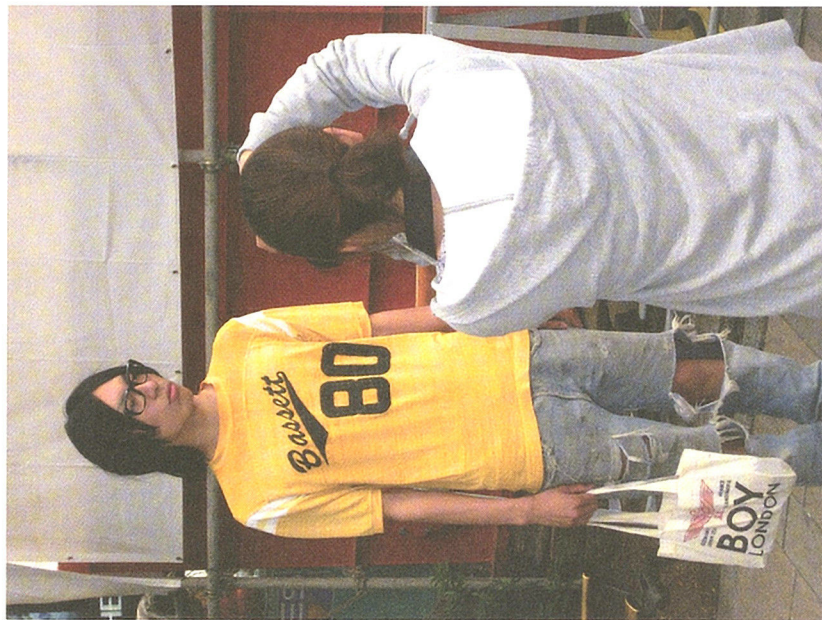
essay

**Anneke
Beerkens**

CENTRAAL
MUSEUM

33/4517
en RECORDS

VIN



Think of Japan, and what comes to mind? Delicate weaving techniques, *aizome*, the ancient indigo dying methods, and outstanding craftsmanship. Ideal ingredients for sophisticated jeans of the highest quality. And indeed, since the 1960s Japan has established a reputation as one of the most important producers of premium denim. Nowadays, jeans fanatics all over the world swear by the 'made in Japan' label, and major fashion houses make their jeans exclusively from Japanese denim. With such quality and craftsmanship at home, I expected to see the streets of Tokyo teeming with home-produced denim. Wouldn't you expect Japanese youngsters to showcase the pride of their country? I visited a number of districts to check it out.

EBISU: to the quick, cheery rhythms of Count Basie's 'Jumpin' at the Woodside' I plough my way through racks of original vintage overalls, dungarees and other workman's clothes. 'What a fabulous shop, are you the owner?' 'No, but my boss is in the United States at the moment.'

HARAJUKU: authentic leather 1920s American football shoulder pads adorn the walls of this second-hand denim shop. 'This shop is amazing. Where does all this stuff come from?' 'Well, our team of buyers are at the Rose Bowl Flea market in Los Angeles as we speak.'

SHIBUYA: Clarence Gatemouth Brown's 'I Was Born in Louisiana' pumps out of the speakers as I enter another shop. The smell of old clothes, the music, the American flags and aprons, the wooden interiors and pennants make me forget I'm in Tokyo - Tokyo, the 'jeans Valhalla' for denim freaks from all over the world! 'It's actually a bizarre fact that American vintage shops like this are much easier to find in Japan than in the United States. It's really difficult there, but here they're on every street corner in some neighbourhoods', says a perfectly dressed young man who stands behind the workbench that serves as a counter. The words 'Fresno, California' are stamped into the wood. Bizarre, it certainly is.

Where does this interest in classic American work clothing come from? Why this obsession with worn out old jeans from the United States? Why does the old 'west' hold such attractions? And above all: why in Japan, of all places?

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De Tweede Wereldoorlog

'Well, we lost the war.' The first few times the youngsters I talk to come up with this answer I'm surprised. But I keep on hearing it. How can an event that happened well before these young people were born have such a major impact on their daily lives? It was their grandparents and great-grandparents who suffered the privations of the war, not they. And what is more, how can this explain their desire for American jeans? The more often I hear these youngsters talk about losing the war, the more I realise that the United States' victory over Japan is not such a crazy explanation for the attraction of all things American. Fashion, as well as other every day and more luxury items, provided a focus for the image of America to transform in people's minds from that of arch-enemy to role model. The 'modernisation' of Japan was already in full swing before the Second World War, in the *Meiji* Period (1868-1912). After around 200 years of almost total isolation from the rest of the world, in 1853 Japan opened itself to external cultural and material influences. The nation eagerly exploited foreigners' expertise in trade, industry, technology and education. All the things that had led to success and growth elsewhere were seized upon with enthusiasm to create a modern Japan.

As victor, the United States occupied this devastated country in 1945. During the seven-year American occupation, the modernisation process took a different turn. The Americans were not only concerned with rebuilding the mutilated country, they also wanted to turn it into a pro-American democratic state. Public life, infrastructure, political life and the education system – everything was transformed to such an extent that Japan merged seamlessly with the American ideal of civilisation and modernity. Although the institutional reforms of the post-war period had a major impact on life in Japan, this was not how the 'Americanisation' of daily life happened. American soldiers drove cool cars, wore tough-guy Levi's and listened to the blues, doo-wop, jazz and the supremely hip rock 'n' roll in obscure and oh-so-inviting bars. They walked through the streets hand-in-hand with their American girlfriends – a sight that has only become commonplace in Japanese towns and cities in the past few decades. They went shopping at 'PX stores', department stores full of imported American goods, which provided for the overseas armed forces' every need. Enticing billboards and American TV shows completed the attractions of the 'other life'. Slowly but surely, the American way of life permeated the lives of the Japanese.

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From the 1960s the Japanese economy flourished. The American way of life was no longer simply something to long for; it was becoming a reality for many. In the 1960s and 70s, televisions, huge refrigerators, music and films were consumed in large number. You weren't 'cool' until your traditional Japanese interior featured some items of western (read: American) furniture, made specially to fit smaller Japanese homes. Young people in Japan were particularly enamoured of all things American.

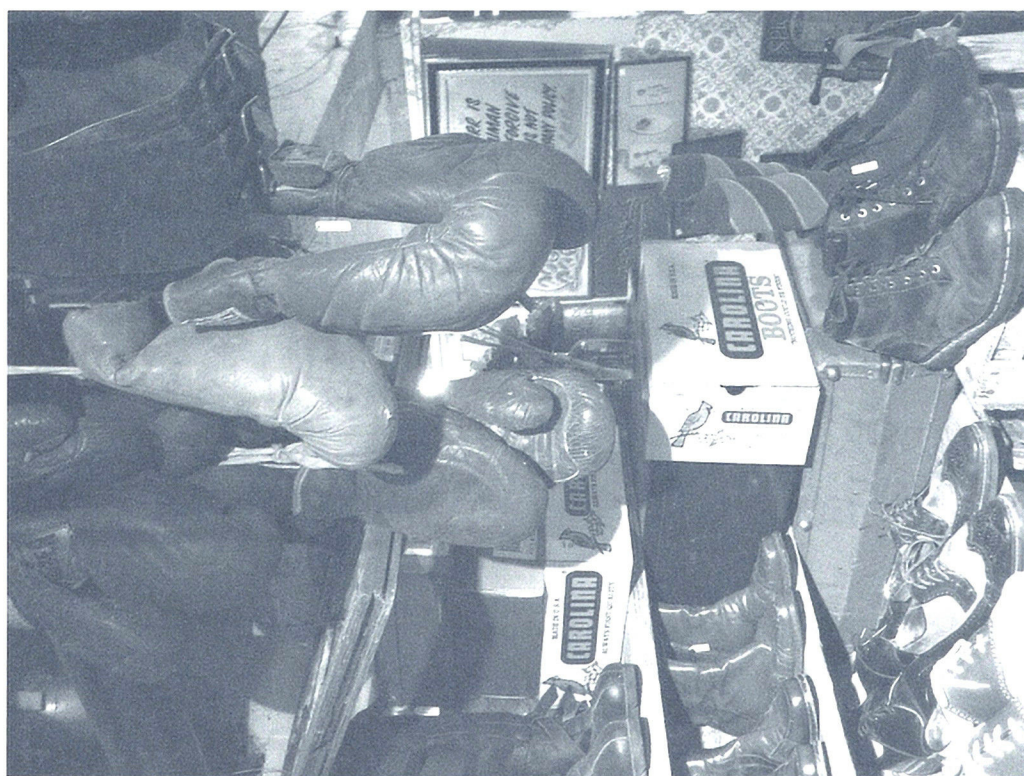
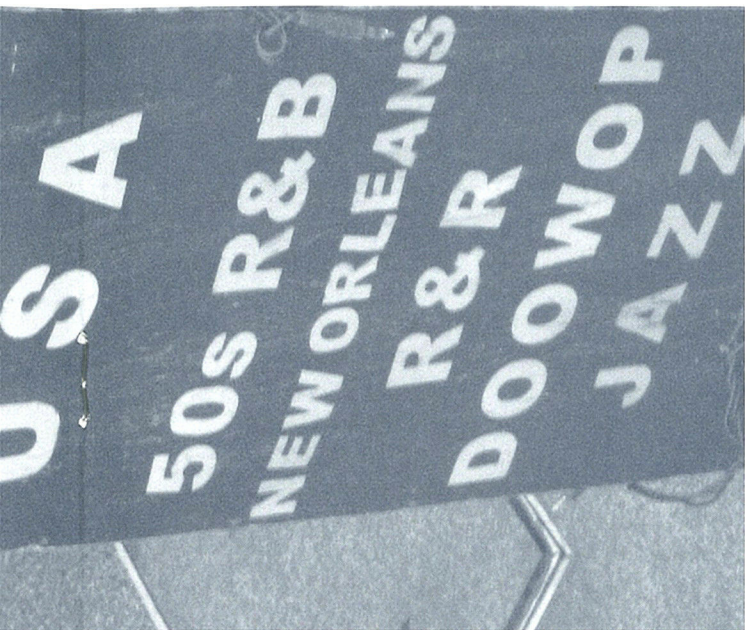
Amekaji

Fashion was slowly becoming 'westernised' as long ago as the *Meiji* period. In the early twentieth century, traditional dress (including the kimono) was still common in Tokyo. But 'western' clothes and hairstyles soon came to dominate. The transition was not a smooth one, however. Although men were encouraged to wear western suits, in line with the modernisation process, in the 1920s many people disapproved of women wearing western clothes. It was feared that wearing this rather provocative clothing was bound to change women's attitude. *Mogas*, modern girls (モダンガール), they were called, with a mixture of contempt and secret admiration. But when the Second World War broke out, followed by the American occupation, there was no way back.

During the American occupation the people of Japan first encountered a new kind of rough, robust cotton: denim. The product soon became highly popular on the black market, and Americans sold their old jeans to tailors, who altered them to fit the Japanese. Hungry for new challenges, the Japanese textile industry was keen to experiment with this new material. For a long time, however, the Japanese imitations could never hope to achieve the status of real American denim. Lee, Levi's and Wrangler, that was what people wanted. Eventually, after decades of perseverance, textile manufacturers around Okayama prefecture managed to master denim techniques. Nowadays, the Japanese not only make good imitations of the 'real American thing', they also create their own distinctive styles.

VINTAGE
RECORDS
FROM
U S A





So why this love of American vintage? As I continue my search, I come across a sign saying 'Vintage records from USA'. A narrow staircase leads up to the smallest record shop I have ever seen, jammed from floor to ceiling with 78, 45 and 33 rpm records. Hardly a piece of bare wall or a window to be seen. For the first five minutes I stand frozen with amazement amidst this unique collection of exclusively American music. Behind the counter stand Abe, the owner of the shop, and Bo, a friend and American vinyl freak. These two young men, born in the 1970s, tell me they feel that American popular culture has always been their culture. 'America was everywhere. You could say we're the 51st state of America', Abe smiles. 'The fact that the youth of today think, live and breathe *amekaji* is entirely normal to us.'

Amekaji (アメリカジ), the Japanese acronym for 'American casual', has become the most popular and most common fashion and lifestyle in Japan. It encompasses all things American, from sneakers to cowboy boots, from overalls and dungarees, to oversized T-shirts. Bo shows me a magazine featuring an interview with Rin Tanaka, one of the world's most famous American vintage collectors, author and founder of *My Freedamn!* magazine. Tanaka, it says in the interview, still perfectly recalls the *amekaji* influences from his youth. Yokohama, where he grew up in the 1970s and 80s, was the site of one of America's biggest army bases. From a young age, Tanaka saw the clothes worn by the tough American guys, and became obsessed by it. Unable to afford it himself, he dreamed of one day wearing Levi's jeans like the Americans of his youth. Although *amekaji* is used to refer to absolutely everything that comes from 'the land of dreams', I think that Rin Tanaka would agree that the absolute icon of this trend is a pair of 'good ol' jeans'.

Gradually, things began to become clear to me. 'Don't forget that the Americans are interested in our culture too', Abe calls after me as I go down the stairs. 'What about all those people who think it's hip to have a *kanji* [Japanese, though originally Chinese, character] tattoo? Another person's style is always cooler...' And indeed, I realise that the attraction of 'something different' is nothing new, and certainly not 'typically Japanese'. All around us, the unknown is romanticised, in an oriental game of seduction and rejection that we all play. The distant, unknown 'other' is exoticised, eroticised or declared barbarian, whether we are talking about semi-naked Polynesian dancers with flowers in their hair, or the Sámi at the North Pole in their layers of reindeer fur.

Heritage

OK, so the tendency to find the unknown interesting and desirable may be a reason for people outside Japan to worship Japanese denim and, conversely, for the Japanese to prefer *amekaji* to their own high-quality products. But there is more to it. Why this need to buy a denim jacket covered in splashes of paint, rust stains, holes and tears? And why wear army trousers worn by your former enemy, particularly when Japan's defeat is still fresh in the minds of many? 'Imagine how many people have worn these trousers', says Bunya, a 29-year-old shop assistant, in a slightly dreamy tone. 'The more the better. Don't you think it's fantastic that this original workman's clothing is now fashionable? Clothes originally designed for the army or the construction industry are tough, indestructible. I feel strong when I wear them.'

The vintage trend is huge in Japan, but the same tendency towards nostalgia exists elsewhere, too. Food, clothes, friendship or our deepest desires: many people are in search of originality, authenticity. The urge to know the origins of the things with which we surround ourselves is typical of the current *zeitgeist*, of a post-industrial world where we can easily get lost as the pace of progress and change steadily increases. Think of your friends who are obsessed by macrobiotic food, your mother who has traced her family tree way back to the eighteenth century. Think of yourself, with your vintage shoes 'that used to belong to your father', or your favourite old jeans, whose every rip tells a story.



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All examples of our yearning for purity, authenticity and history. 'America is important for all vintage lovers who want to go back to the origins of denim', says Bunya. 'If we want to go back to the first, most original every day wear, we ultimately end up with American army surplus and work clothes.'

Bunya confirms my idea of a more widespread fashion for heritage. 'Look,' he says with a serious face, 'our love of American vintage has more to do with vintage than with America. Remember that we Japanese don't have our own "modern" fashion history. Most of us were still wearing kimono a hundred years ago. Western clothes are relatively new here. Of course we don't put on an old kimono when we fancy wearing vintage, so if we want to wear cool old clothes, clothes with a story, we automatically have to look to other countries.' Bunya's right. Japan has an entirely different clothing tradition and has had to stand on the shoulders of others when it comes to modern fashion. Vintage European clothes are just as welcome as all the stuff from the United States, it's just that Europe is further away, he explains. 'We know where to go when we're in California. We can find what we want in no time.'

Japanese authenticity

Abe, the owner of the record shop, rightly warns me against making too much of the 'Americanisation' of young Japanese people. 'America is such a presence in our lives that it has almost become Japanese, you know? Don't forget: young people here are highly aware of their own cultural background and traditions. Probably more so than American youngsters.' He says I should interpret the need for American vintage jeans more as a desire for heritage, for authenticity, than as a fascination with big brother America.

America has never left Japan. Neither physically nor ideologically. But Japan has always managed to retain its own cultural identity, no matter how strong the influence of foreign ideas and values. Japan is more than a copycat, does more than simply 'absorb' and imitate what America dictates. Just think of the beautiful, perfectly detailed handmade Evisu jeans that tailor Hidehiko Yamane designed out of frustration at being unable to find the 'perfect vintage jeans'. Or Japanese denim brands like Edwin, Momotaro, Triple Works, Real Japan Blues and Studio D'Artisan, who create unique new designs with the original American flavour of yesteryear. If these jeans were nothing more than imitations, would they have had such a major impact on contemporary western fashion?

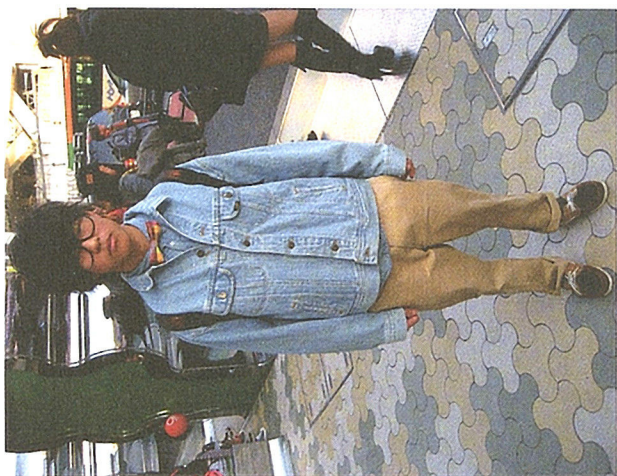
The Japanese cannot be accused of simply consuming America. They embody and appropriate the American cultural heritage in their own unique way. Yuki, one of the first *amekaji* youngsters I meet, tells me: 'The old American clothes I wear remind me above all of our history, our own Japanese history. They have the same kind of beauty you used to be able to find everywhere in Japan.' I am curious to know more about his ideas on Japanese aesthetics. 'In Japan,' he continues, 'we try to see beauty in things that are broken, in asymmetry, age and imperfection. Traditional Japanese gardens are always full of moss, and Japanese calligraphy is held to be

most beautiful when you can see the ink running in the grain of the paper. It's not perfect, it's not a smooth image, but that is precisely where the beauty lies. Old indigo jeans bleached by sun and water, or denim jackets whose holes and imperfections tell a unique story give me the same sense of natural beauty.' Yuki's engagement with his own Japanese heritage makes second-hand American clothes beautiful in his eyes. Indeed, by interweaving old jeans with his own personal aesthetic tradition, he makes them Japanese.

While the Japanese could only dream of American goods in the 1950s, in the decades that followed growing prosperity allowed them to 'buy' their ideal. More recently, however, Japan has reached the point where America's visual and material culture is being transformed into something Japanese, no matter how American it actually is. The boys I met were absolutely perfect representations of America's past. Japanese in their perfection. By acquiring the 'raw materials' on the other side of the ocean, and making them their own by adding unique cultural flavours, they create an end product that is supremely Japanese. The 'American dream' is no longer produced in the United States. Welcome to the 21st century. Welcome to Japan.

ANNEKE BEERKENS is a cultural anthropologist at the University of Amsterdam. She is currently working on her dissertation in Tokyo. From her hand also appeared *Fashion Gods: Neotribes in the streets of Tokyo*.

All photos: © Anneke Beerkens



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Green jeans



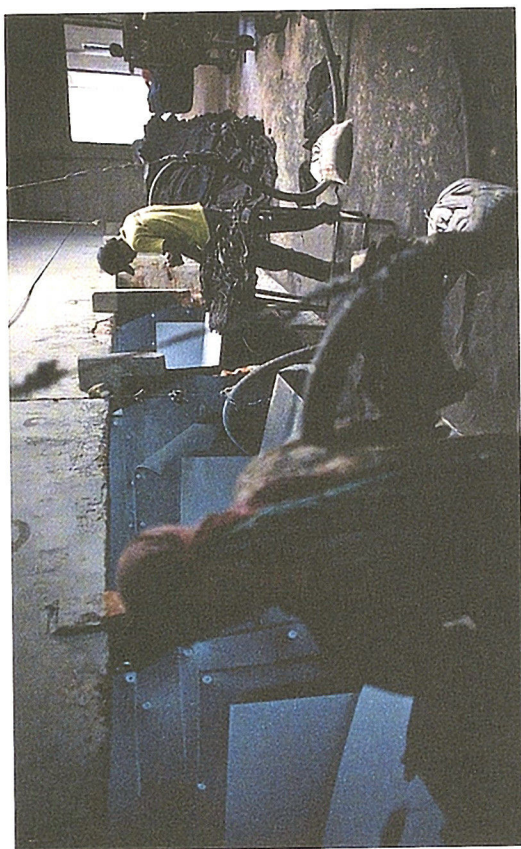
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'Eco-chic' is a paradox, says researcher Sandy Black of the London College of Fashion in her book of the same name.¹ The concept of sustainable clothing would appear to be at odds with the frivolous and plentiful world of rapidly changing fashion trends. The apparent conflict between the environment and fashion is certainly true of denim. Though jeans are an extremely hard-wearing garment that last for a long time, denim is also subject to trends these days, so jeans do not always enjoy a long life. But this is not the only reason for the bad environmental image of the jeans industry. Both the processing of cotton and the dying and treatment of denim face the textile industry with major challenges in terms of its consumption of water, chemicals and energy. Just how sustainable is denim, and how can we make jeans greener?

Finishing?

The environmental issues associated with jeans are largely the same as those of other cotton goods. But there are a number of sustainability issues that are connected specifically with the jeans industry. The majority of denim is made of 100% cotton, a downy raw material whose cultivation pollutes the environment.² The negative environmental effects of cotton production in countries like Benin, India, China and Uzbekistan are largely due to the large areas of land needed to grow it. This means there is a risk of cotton cultivation displacing other crops that are needed to feed the local population.

Water consumption in the cotton industry also has a major impact on the environment. It takes an average 7000 to 8000 litres of water to make just one pair of jeans, half of which is used to grow the cotton. The irrigation of cotton fields can have a disastrous impact on the quality of the surrounding land. The Aral Sea in Central Asia, which is almost completely dried up, is visible evidence of what can happen.

Non-organic cotton production therefore burdens the environment because of the amount of water it takes, and also because of the polluting chemicals used. Plantations are usually generously sprayed with insecticides and pesticides. Chlorine bleach, chemical dyes and toxic finishings are also used to process the cotton fibres into yarn and fabric. In low-wage countries, these polluting substances often end up in rivers near factories, and ultimately in drinking water. Unlike other types of textiles, denim is dyed before the cotton threads are woven. This means it has to be washed anywhere between three and ten times to obtain the characteristic indigo colour. Consumption of water, energy and chemical dyestuffs is therefore

1 Sandy Black, *Eco-Chic. The Fashion Paradox*, Black Dog Publishing, London, 2008.

2 Lucy Siegle, *To Die For. Is Fashion Wearing Out the World?*, Forth Estate, London, 2011.



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much higher in the production of jeans than of other cotton garments. The water in the river close to the Chinese city of Xintang, where 260 million pairs of jeans are produced every year, is dark blue along the stretches where factories dump dyestuffs and wastewater [figure 1] What is worse: the 2011 Greenpeace report *Dirty Laundry* revealed that, in 2011, 70% of the water was polluted, and 50% was actually declared 'unsafe'.³ However, several national and international companies like C&A, H&M, Nike and Adidas have committed to a 'Joint Road Map' to phase out the discharging of toxic substances to rivers and lakes near their factories by 2020.⁴ Since a large number of suppliers are involved in the production of clothes, it will take some time before the industry manages to rid itself of these practices.

Despite the intensive process involved in obtaining the characteristic blue colour of jeans, for some time now the fashion has been for denim to look anything but new. Sandblasting is one of the techniques used to create the popular 'distressed look'. This trendy look also has a downside, however. Sandblasting literally involves firing sand under high pressure at the jeans. Poor ventilation and long working days mean that staff are exposed to high concentrations of silica dust, a very fine substance which is barely visible but can penetrate deep into the lungs. [figure 2] This increases their risk of developing acute, incurable (and sometimes fatal) respiratory conditions. Pressure from clothing industry campaign group SKC has led to a ban on sandblasting for suppliers wishing to export to the Netherlands.⁵ SKC is a Dutch partnership of trade unions, consumer groups and development organisations working to improve conditions in the clothing industry in low-wage countries. Several Dutch fashion brands, such as CoolCat, Kuyichi and Scotch & Soda were already against sandblasting before the SKC campaign.

3 See: <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/reports/Dirty-Laundry/>.

4 See: http://www.canda.com/uk/en/corporate/fileadmin/templates/master/img/fashion_updates/International_Press_Releases/111118_StatementJoint-Roadmap-EN.pdf.

5 See: <http://www.schonekieren.nl/activiteiten/zandstralen>.

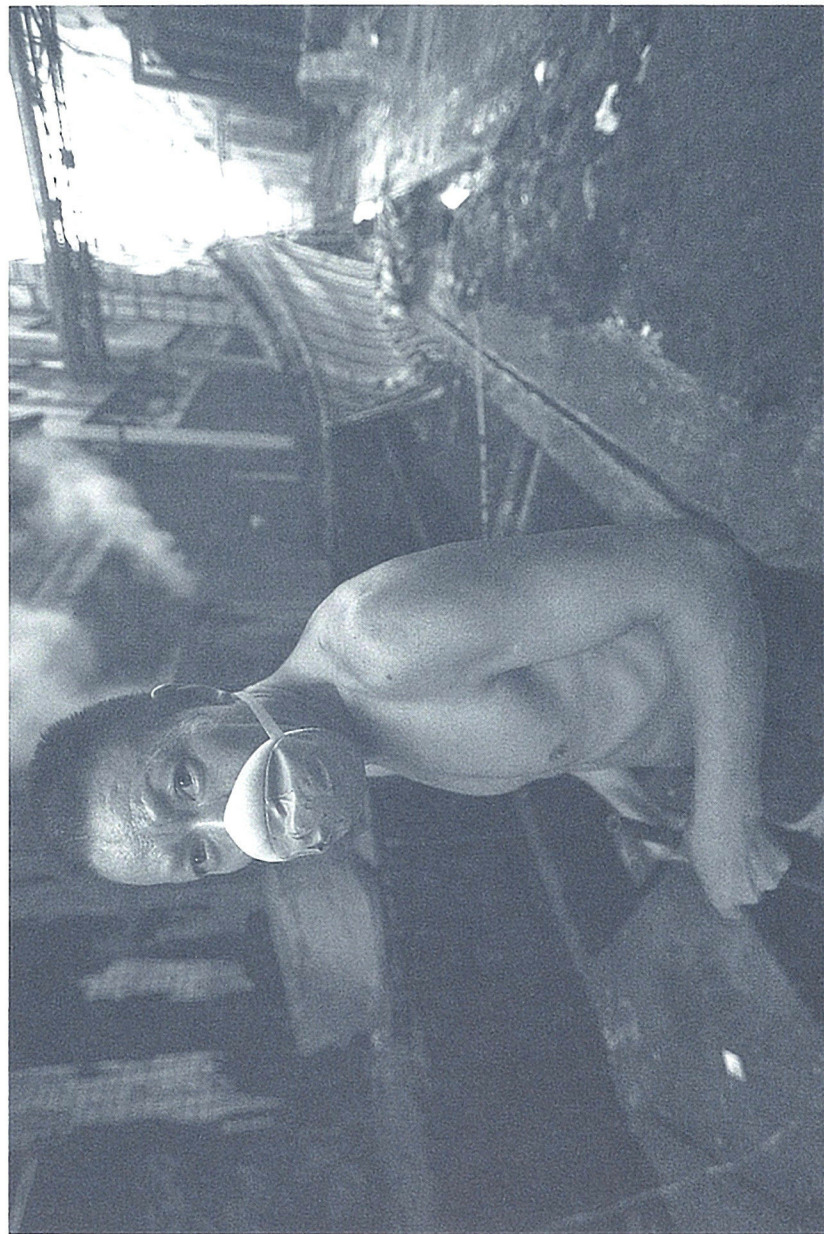
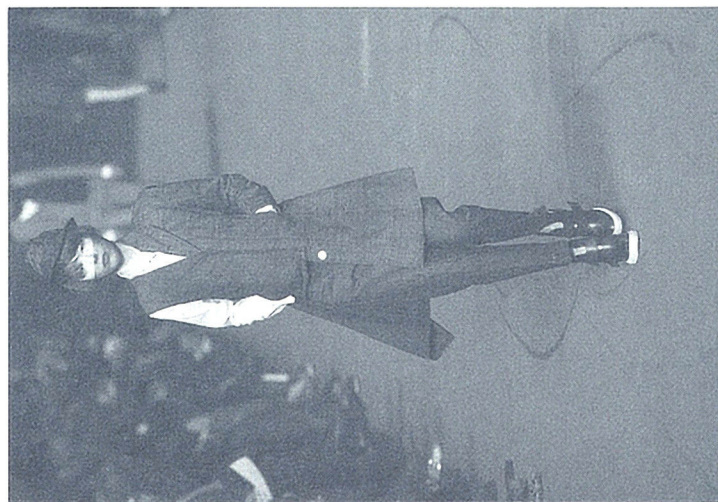


Figure 1
Factory worker in Guangdong province
© Lu Guang / Greenpeace

Figure 2
Fashion Victims
© Allison Joyce 2010



Figure 3
Marit  + Fran ois Girbaud, Autumn/Winter 2010-2011
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We can still enjoy the vintage look, however, since alternative techniques are now available. Famous labels like Girbaud of France and Replay of Italy, and sustainable brands like Kuyichi of the Netherlands, have been using laser technology for some time to give their denim a worn look without the use of sandblasting [figure 3]. The same effect can be obtained in just a few minutes with this new technique. The greatest benefits are of course the improvement in the working conditions of factory workers, and the saving on water, consumption of which is reduced by many litres.

Green jeans

Many initiatives are being undertaken in a range of areas to make denim more sustainable. Companies can generally reduce their water consumption themselves. New technologies, like the ozone washing machines used by Replay and Girbaud, are much more resource-efficient than conventional washing machines. One additional benefit of ozone is that it destroys bacteria. The machine also produces lower carbon emissions.

For its Water<Less denim range launched in 2010, Levi's uses a finishing method that replaces traditional laundering with a single wash. The company says that this has reduced its water consumption by between 28% and 96%. Jeans lovers can also do their bit, by changing their laundering and drying habits, for example. Frequent washing at high temperatures is energy-intensive and wastes water. Levi's calculated that if consumers were to wash their jeans once a fortnight, rather than once a week, they would save enough water to provide 60,000 people with drinking water for 14 years. Canadian Josh Le wore his jeans almost every day for 15 months without washing them.⁶ Rachel McQueen, associate professor at the University of Alberta's Human Ecology Department, tested the jeans in the lab, and came to the conclusion that they did not harbour substantially more bacteria than a pair that Josh had worn for just two weeks. Honesty compels me to point out that he had put the jeans in the freezer a couple of times to get rid of the odour, however.

6 See: <http://www.nakedandfamousdenim.com/blog/denim-science-experiment/>

Figure 4
G-Star RAW Nerdie



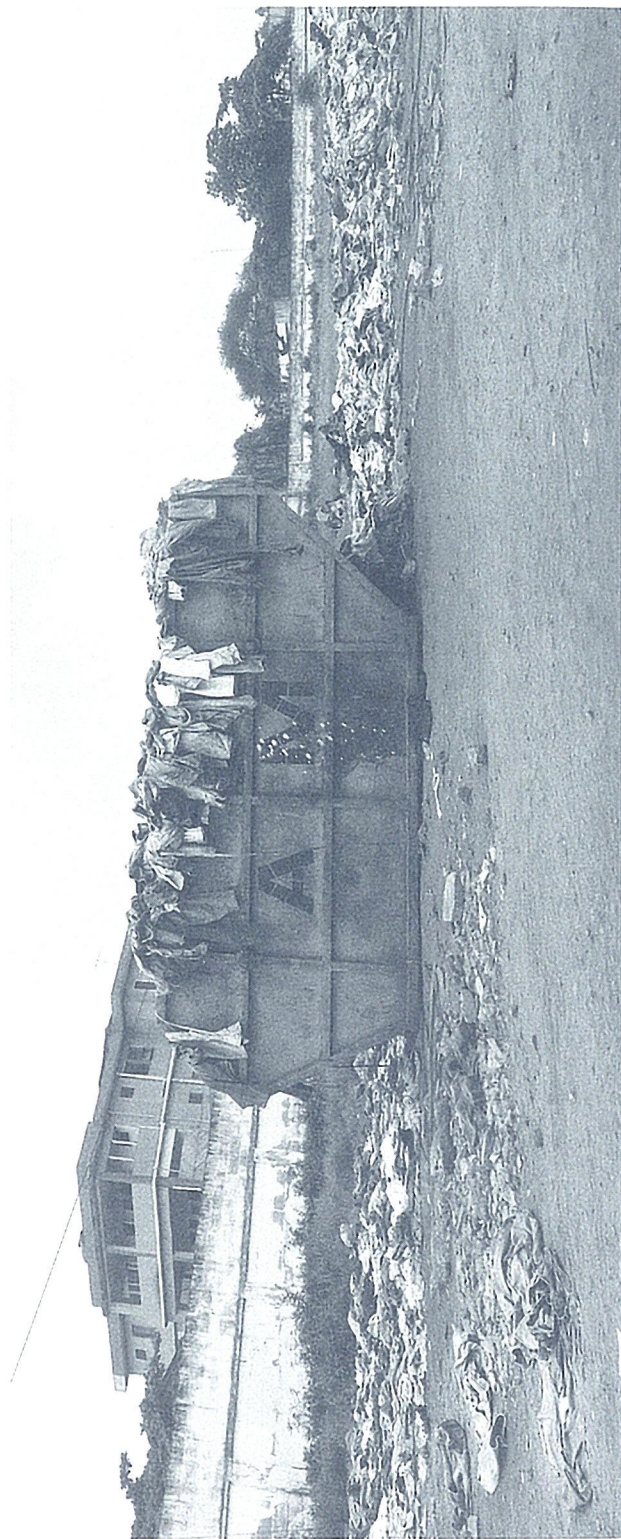
Alternatives

For a number of years, now, it has been possible to reduce the environmental impact of jeans by using alternatives to conventional cotton. Bio-cotton is perhaps the best known. This organically grown cotton is produced without the use of pesticides or genetically modified seeds. In 2012 Sweden's Nudie Jeans presented a collection that was made entirely of organic cotton. Even the thread used to sew the pockets, buttons, zips and rivets is made from sustainable cotton. More and more retailers, including H&M, C&A and Dutch department stores Hema and De Bijenkorf already stock organic cotton products. Since the production of organic cotton consumes just as much water and energy as conventional cotton, however, sustainability pioneers are looking for alternatives. Kuyichi, for example, uses recycled cotton and Tencel. Tencel, the brand name of lyocell, is relatively environmentally friendly.⁷ The fibres are made from wood pulp and the production process does not involve highly polluting chemicals. Garments made of Tencel are also easy to recycle, and are biodegradable.

Another promising textile fibre comes from stinging nettles. The 'RAW Nettle' collection, a partnership between the Dutch companies G-Star and Netl, has been in the shops since 2011. [figure 4] This still limited range features jeans made of 90% organic cotton and 10% nettle fibres. The nettles are grown by Netl on the Netherlands' Northeast Polder. Relatively little water and chemicals are used in the cultivation and processing of nettle fibres. Since they are grown here in Europe, this reduces the ecological footprint of the jeans.

⁷ Kate Fletcher, *Sustainable Fashion and Textiles. Design Journeys*, EarthScan, London, 2008.

Figure 5
Whar We Wear, Accra, Ghana (2010),
distribution centre for textile waste
© Pieter van den Boogert



Jeans' ecological footprint comes from fossil fuel consumption, and is determined above all by the transport involved in the production of fibres, fabrics and garments. In 2001 two journalists from the British newspaper *The Guardian* calculated that a pair of jeans in a shop in the United Kingdom had travelled almost 65,000 kilometres by land and sea.⁸ The jeans had been to thirteen countries by the time they were sold in a shop in Ipswich. A world trip like that generates huge greenhouse gas emissions. Young photographer Pieter van den Boogert illustrated the journey in his *What We Wear* project. [figure 5]

8 See: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,497788,00.html>.

Recycling

Making denim more sustainable is no longer simply a question of improving the production process. Growing attention is also being focused on reuse and recycling. One direct form of reuse is the charities that collect old clothes, like KICI, Humana and the Salvation Army. They collect our cast-offs to sell them on to Dutch second-hand shops or to merchants in Africa and Eastern Europe.⁹ Textiles that can no longer be worn are reincarnated as cleaning cloths, or are reduced to fibres and used to make thread or insulation. Old jeans can be used to make new jeans, saving 40% on raw materials.¹⁰ Open innovation centre Texperium is experimenting with a 'Jeans for Jeans' project, in which new fibres are made from cast-off jeans. These can then be used to spin 'new' cotton thread, for example. Dutch label YOUASME has used yarn made by this technique to knit sweaters and scarves from old jeans. [figure 6]

Every year, however, some 135 million kilos of textiles end up in waste incinerators.¹¹ Experts estimate that no more than one in three residents of the Netherlands currently take unwanted textiles to the recycling bin. To encourage consumers to make their old clothes available for recycling and reuse, Dutch companies like C&A, Didi and Claudia Sträter are experimenting with collection points in their stores. At C&A, customers who donate old clothes receive a discount voucher for their next purchase. Other shops organise collections in support of good causes like 'Dress for Success', a voluntary organisation that provides jobseekers with suitable clothes for interviews.

A number of sustainable labels have recycling at the core of their company philosophy. The young Dutch jeans label Kings of Indigo (K.O.I.), for example, uses second-hand jeans and work clothes, which are made into new garments at a certified factory in Tunisia.¹² There is no need for sandblasting, because the vintage look comes from the pre-worn jeans themselves. Second-hand jeans are also good for making accessories like bags. Dutch company Windkracht8 produces bags from leftover fabrics and denim that designer Nelly Verduijn gathers from second-hand shops and flea markets. Chatoui, a Dutch company that produces bags, jewellery, scarves and textile products from used materials, works with sheltered workplaces, where people who find it difficult to get a mainstream job assemble the company's limited edition products.

9 It might not sound sustainable, but exporting to developing countries is less polluting than recycling into fibres or making new garments after old ones have been destroyed in a waste incinerator.

10 See: <http://www.texperium.eu/en/nieuws/1/24nieuwe+spijkerbroek+uit+oud+klm-pak>.

11 *Composition of household waste, results of sorting analysis 2010*, NL Agency, The Hague, February 2011.

12 Clothes production in Europe is barely possible in large batches. The factories with which K.O.I. works have been checked for compliance with social standards.



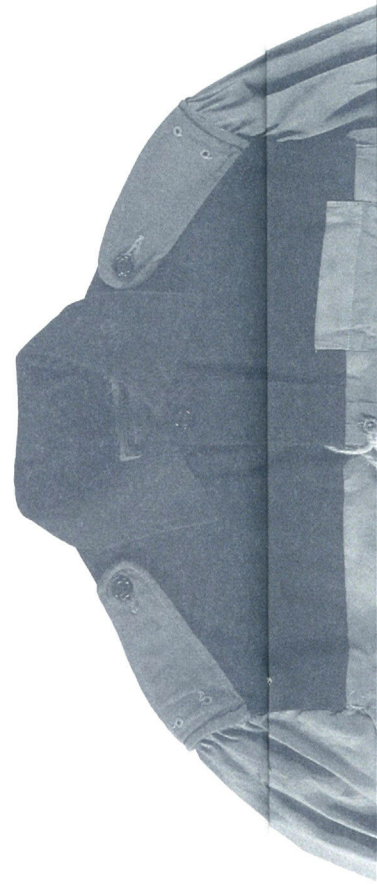
Figure 6

YOUASME, MEASYOU,

100% recycled denim knitted sweater, *Recover*, Autumn/Winter 2012-2013.

Photo: Blommers/Schumm. Styling: Lidewij Merckx. Model: Vie @ Ulla Models

Recycling is environmentally beneficial for fashion companies, because it allows them to save on raw materials for their new creations.¹³ It also offers a solution to clothing manufacturers' and retailers' waste disposal problems. Offcuts, overstock and discarded buys can all be recycled. Kuyichi is already experimenting with this. Its 2012 'Salvage Project' is a mini-collection made entirely of old denim products. [figure 7] The sustainable denim company makes new garments from samples and items it has collected. They are hand-cut, -sewn and -dyed indigo in Amsterdam. The labels and packaging are also made of recycled materials.



13 G.J. van de Vreede and M.N. Sevenster, *Milieuanalyses textiel. Ten behoeve van prioritaire stromen ketengericht afvalbeleid*, CE Delft, Delft, March 2010.

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Figure 7
The Kuyichi Salvage Project
© Kuyichi

Figure 8
Atelier Tossin, *with you in my mind*.
Photo: Koen Tossin

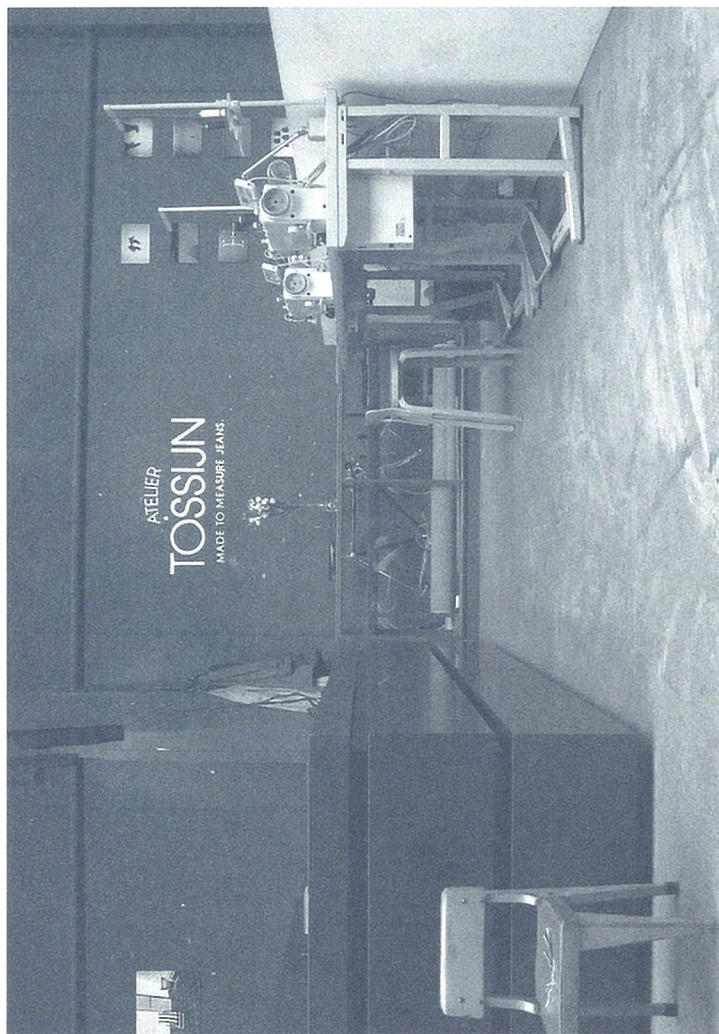


Figure 9
Jeans with Triple R concept -
Recycle, Repair, Reuse.
© Jorgen Koolwijk



Green wardrobe

Organic fabrics, alternatives to cotton, water- and energy-saving production techniques, recycling... Today's multitude of perspectives on ethical fashion clearly show that there is no single, simple route to sustainable denim. Plus, making jeans and denim more sustainable is not just a challenge for designers and manufacturers. Only half a garment's environmental impact is caused in its production. The other half comes from the way it is used and disposed of.¹⁴ Anyone who is worried about the growing mountains of waste we produce would do well to give a pair of jeans a new life, be it by taking them to a textile container, a clothing swap party or a repair service. Dead Jeans uses the pockets of old jeans to make holders for smartphones, for example.

Finally, consumers can consider sustainability in their purchasing decisions. They can opt for environmentally friendly fabrics and ethically manufactured products. They can also think about long-term use when they buy a new pair of jeans. At Atelier Tossijn, Amsterdam designer Koen Tossijn makes bespoke jeans using tailoring technique. [figure 8] The idea that clothes are assembled for the international market by human hands on the other side of the world inspired him to do it himself. He uses Japanese 'raw denim' in his jeans, and the longer the dark blue garment is worn, the more 'character' it gains. Labels like K.O.I. and DENHAM the Jeanmaker produce classic jeans inspired by the past that are designed to be long-lasting. [figure 9] And, like recycling, jeans that can withstand the test of time help the fashion world become more sustainable.

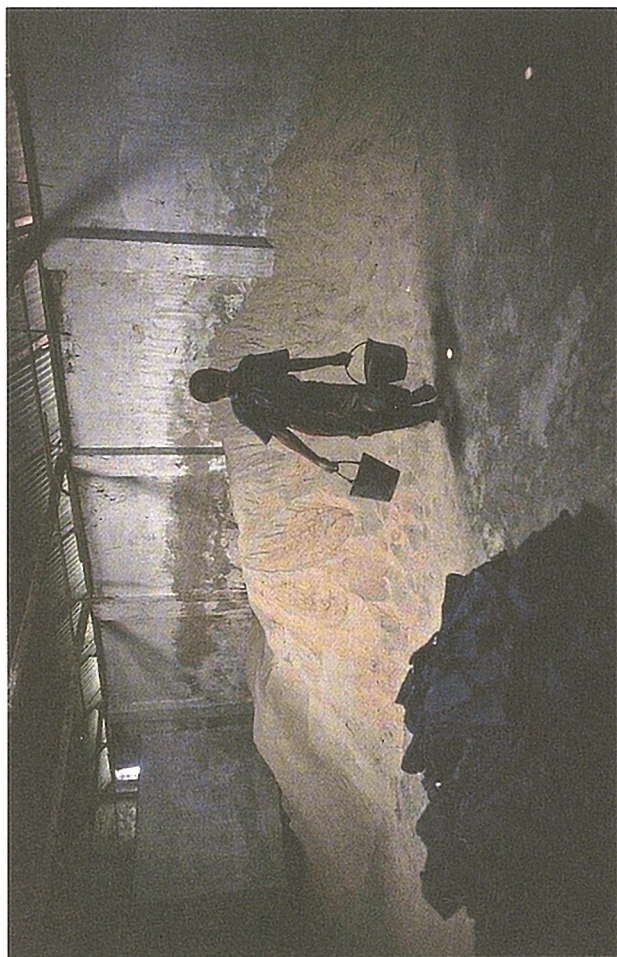
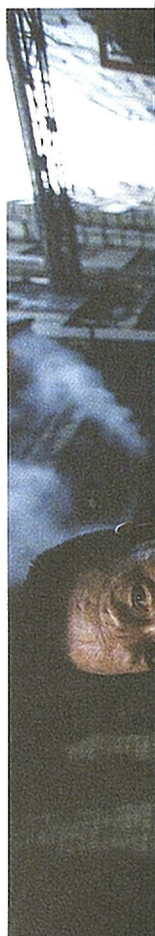
If we look at it this way, sustainable jeans are not complicated at all. It is above all a matter of choosing timeless quality goods that suit your personal style and body shape. Then 'eco' and 'chic' need no longer be a contradiction in terms.

¹⁴ Barbara Giesen, *Ethical Clothing. New Awareness or Fading Fashion Trend?*. VDM Verlag, April 2008.

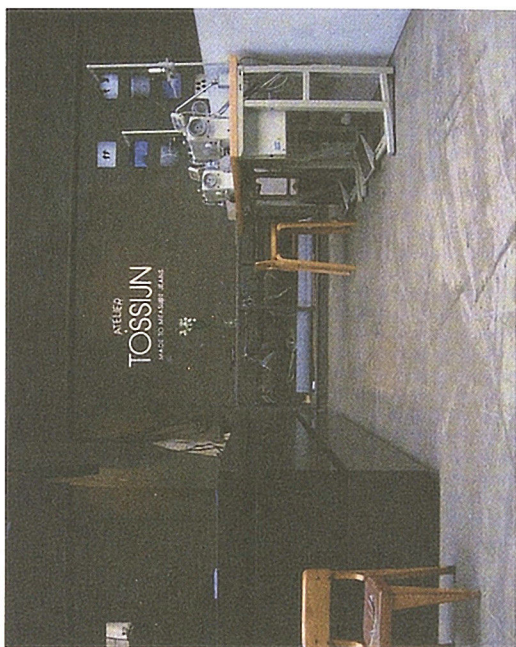
A few facts:

- Some 2.5% of the world's agricultural land is used to grow cotton.
- Every year, five billion pairs of jeans are produced worldwide.
- Almost half of Dutch people wrongly assume that torn or worn-out clothes cannot be deposited in textile bins or given to door-to-door collections.
- The majority of Dutch adults have their jeans for between one and three years.
- An item of clothing can be washed an average of 52 times before it wears out.

LYNSEY DUBBELD is a trend analyst and copywriter. She has specialised in sustainable fashion since 2009. Her book on the subject, *Mode voor morgen. Duurzame kleding in Nederland*, was published in 2012.



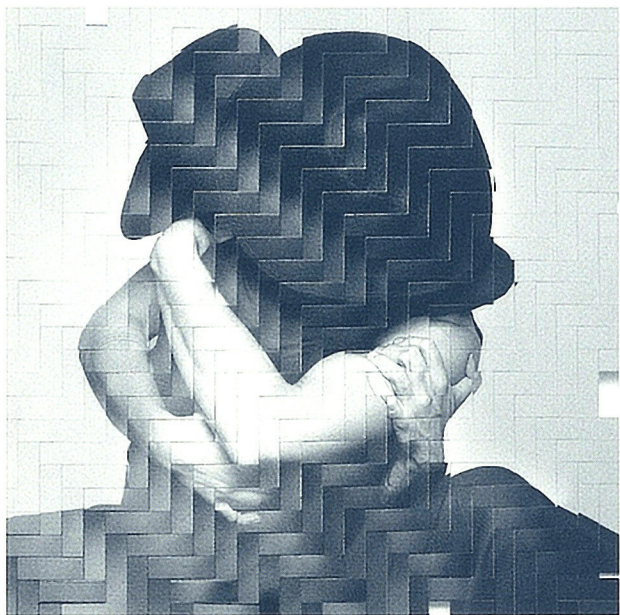




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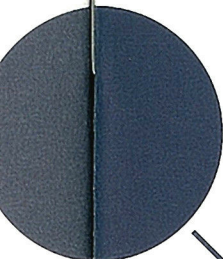
Made pos

Freudenthal/ Verhagen



The duo Carmen Freudenthal and Elle Verhagen proves that denim is more than just a fabric for jeans. Together they created at the request of the Centraal Museum new photos, which are inspired by themes from the exhibition, such as DNA, sustainability and early history.

Made possible by the Mondriaan Fund.



**CENTRAAL
MUSEUM**



Carmen Freudenthal and Elle Verhagen
Horse and rider, 2012

Special thanks to: G-Star, Sergul Iyriboz, Ben Verhagen,
Aernout Veerman and Thijs

Hat: English Hatter

Commissioned by the Centraal Museum

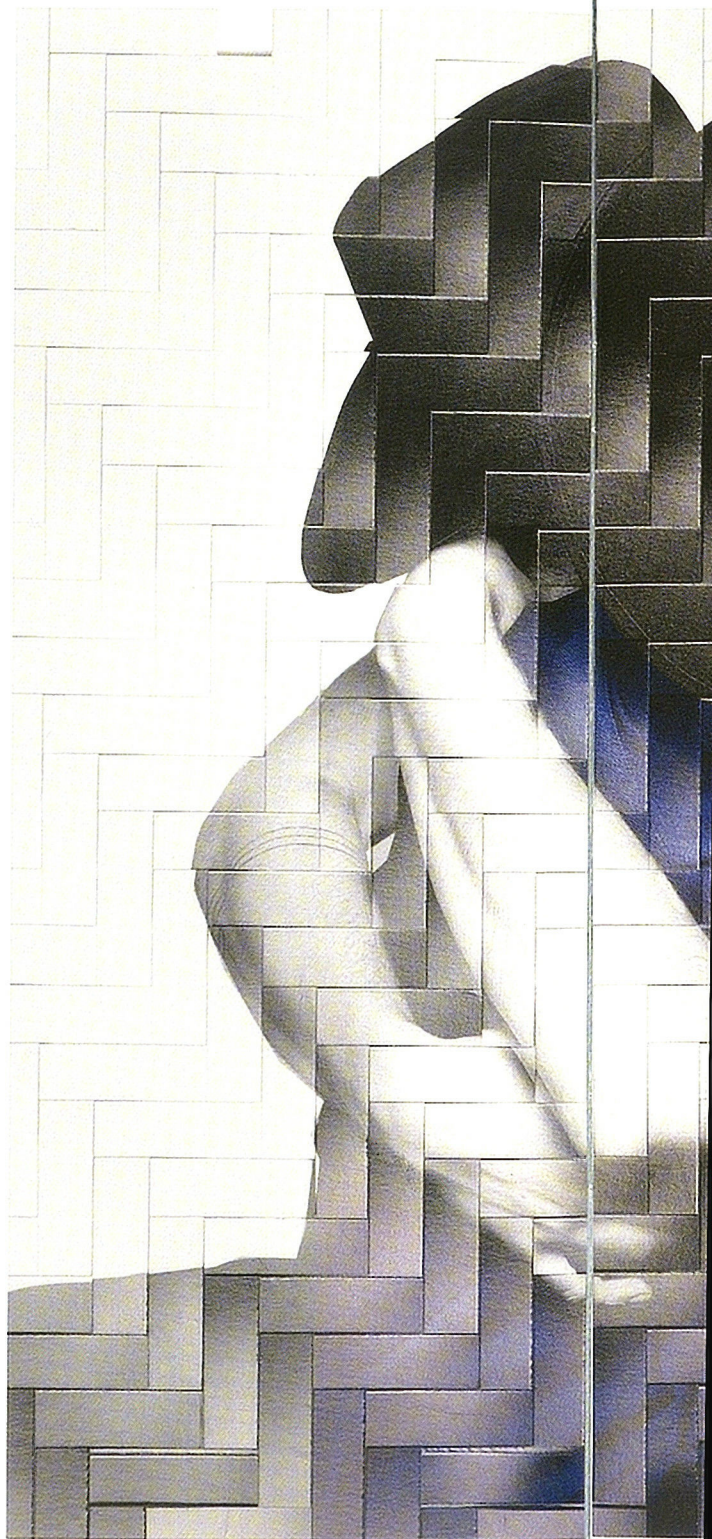
Carmen Freudenthal and Elle Verhagen
Dye, 2012

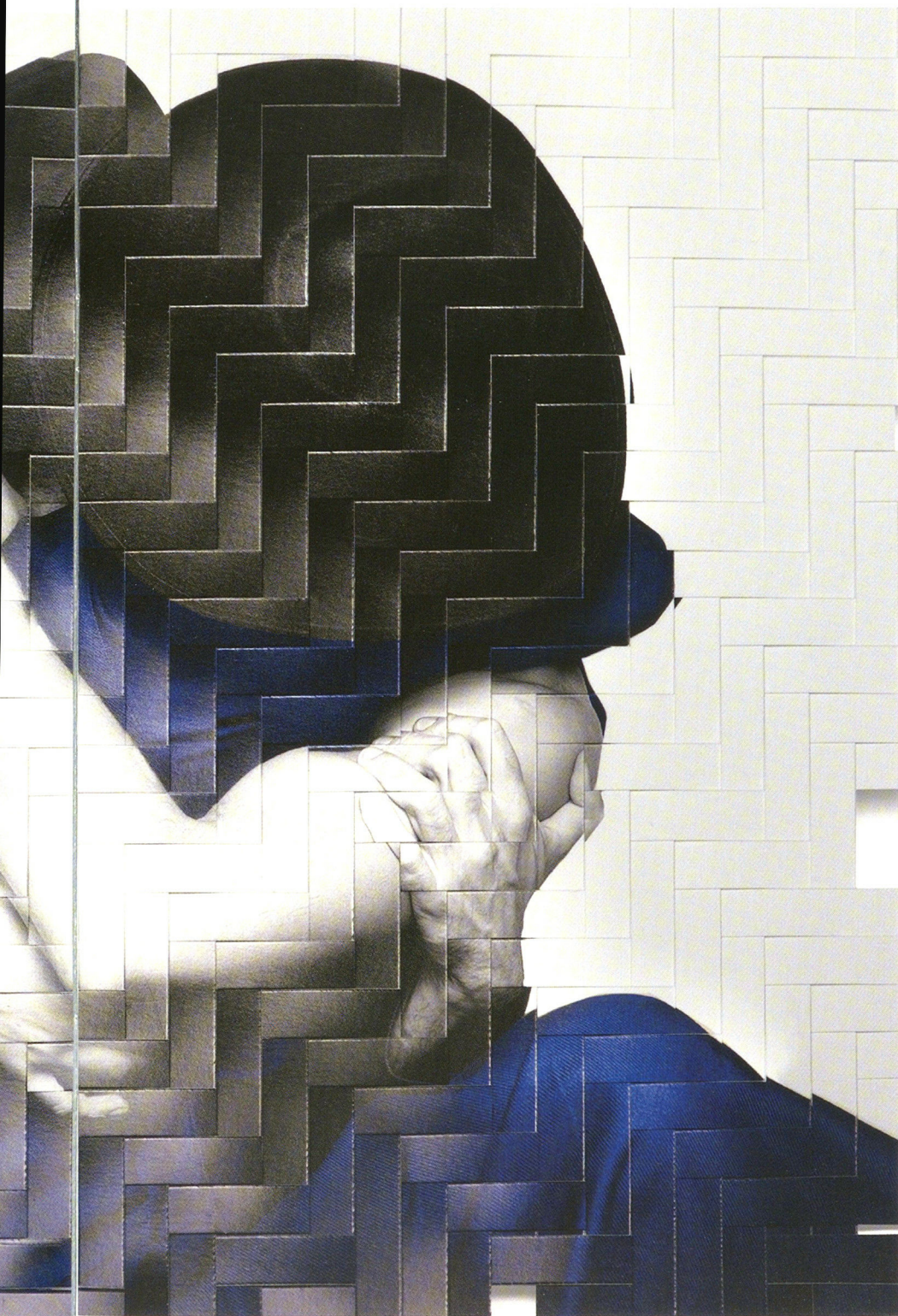
Commissioned by the Centraal Museum



Carmen Freudenthal and Elle Verhagen
Genes, 2012

Commissioned by the Centraal Museum





JASON DENHAM



I first fell in love with denim when I was studying fashion design at university in England (1990-1994). I created a final year collection called 'DENHAM-DENIM'... I guess it was meant to be. I finished university on a Friday in April 1994 and started my first job in denim on the following Monday... I couldn't start quick enough.

After 20 years in this business the thing I love most is that I still learn every day. Denim is an organic product that is alive, it changes every day. The techniques and developments are endless. What does denim mean to me? - "it means everything". I based my life & my career around it. Denim is my fabric of choice, it's the most hard working, beautiful & versatile cloth. Denim is a canvas to create your own art.

Early 1940's (Lew 501) RE: SCULPTED Fly BURNED & REPAIRS WITH ORIGINAL MATERIAL.

GRAFTED LEG, THE FULL LEG HAS BEEN RE: ATTACHED, USING ORIGINAL CLOTH FROM THE SAME PERIOD. THIS JENI HAS A LOT OF STORIES TO TELL.



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Vintage denim is voor mij bijzonder
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een bepaald denimmodel.

Man Kit Lam
Denim verzamelaar

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at de broek te fragiel
worden, draag ik in
na nooit meer



Denim is a magical fabric. It reflects your personality like no other fabric does. The shades of Indigo give away your habits & moves by discolouring/becoming lighter in certain places. If you start out with raw denim (non-distressed) your own jeans becomes truly unique, because nobody else makes the same moves etc.



Denim is also one of the few fabrics which becomes better looking over time, and if you choose a classic fit it will never be out of fashion.

I wouldn't want to miss out of jeans in my wardrobe.

Natasja Martens
Fashion Designer

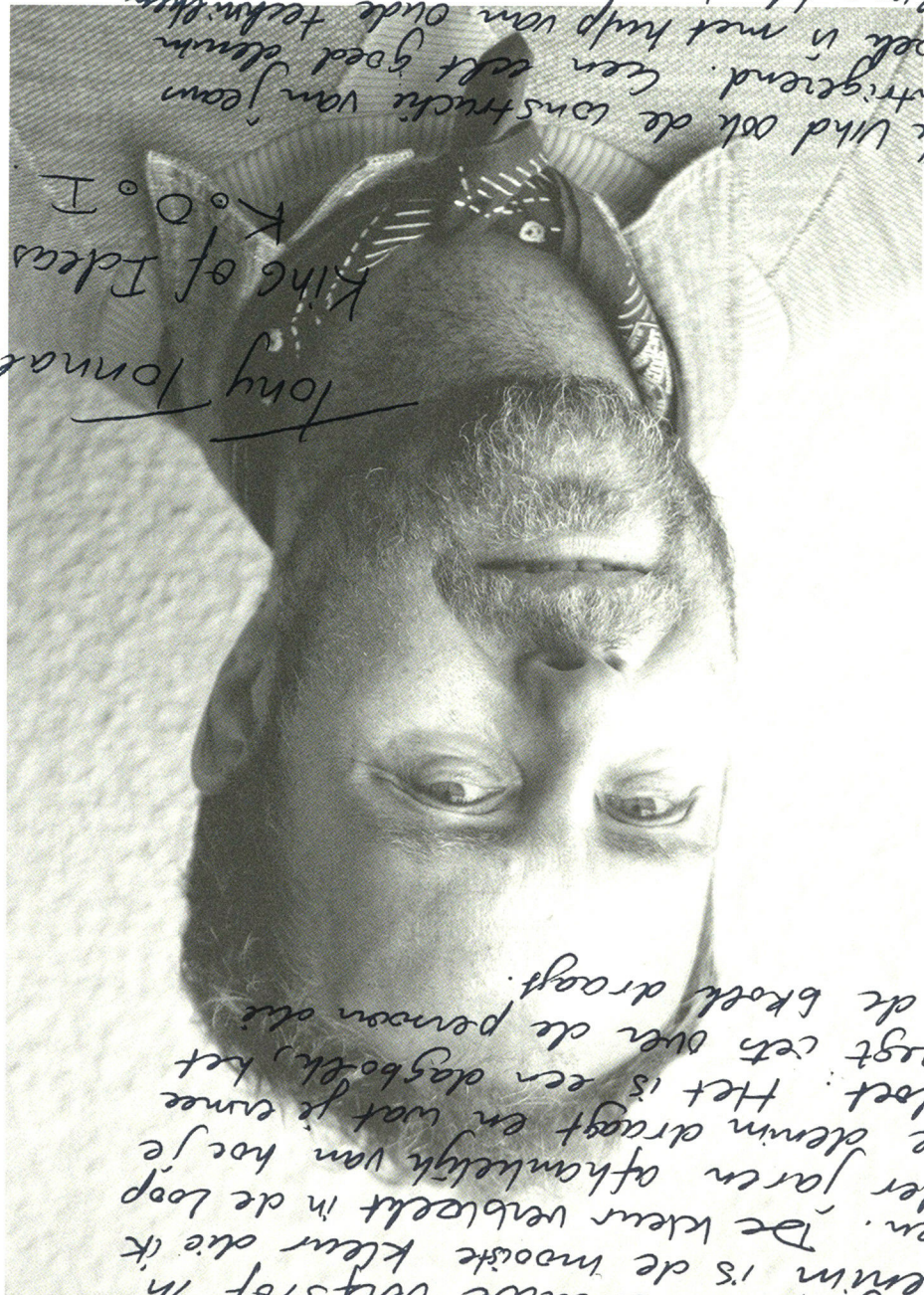
on the inside of this pair of jeans are
a lot of different colours

on the inside of this pair of jeans are
a lot of different colours.
these are cotton patches that I used at
the back of the embroideries.



the golden embroideries may seem to have a diverse "look" I used different types of thread.
like Indigo + the golden thread also loses colour over time, so you can see what the older holes are.

Ik draag denim sinds mijn 3e,
 Indigo, de blauwe veststof in
 denim is de mooiste kleur die ik
 ken. De kleur verblijft in de loop
 der jaren afhankelijk van hoe je
 de denim draagt en wat je er mee
 doet. Het is een dagboek, het
 zegt iets over de persoon die
 de broek draagt.



Jonny Jomare
 King of Ideas by
 K.O.O.I

Ik vind ook de constructie van jeans
 intrigerend. Een echt goed denim
 broek is met hulp van oude technieken
 gemaakt, bedoeld om de broek zo
 lang mogelijk mee te laten gaan...
 Denim is made to last!

4 folded
hem met
chainstitch.

Triple
needle hem,
200's U.S.
workwear.

self edge of
zelfkant
van de stof.
roll them up!

love this worn
in blue color!

handmade repairs:
zynaad open
knippen lap
erachten, zynaad
slater, kan
wee, men niet

double clabbete
kettlingstich in
de band van de
broek, the way
it should be!

Half
Geweerde coin
pocket voor
extra stevigheid

The best thing about denim for me
is that it is uncomplicated and non
pretentious. Its without ego and
is wearable as a tuxedo and a
pyjama in one.



Denim grows on you as it is such
an organic product. I love the smell
of a well worn in pair when worn
after a rain shower hit you during a
bikeride. Not to mention the hundreds
of blue shades you can discover on
a sunny day at the beach.
Denim is alive and it lives it to
the max. Blue jeans, coveralls,
and "chucks" are all a part of the

indigo addiction.

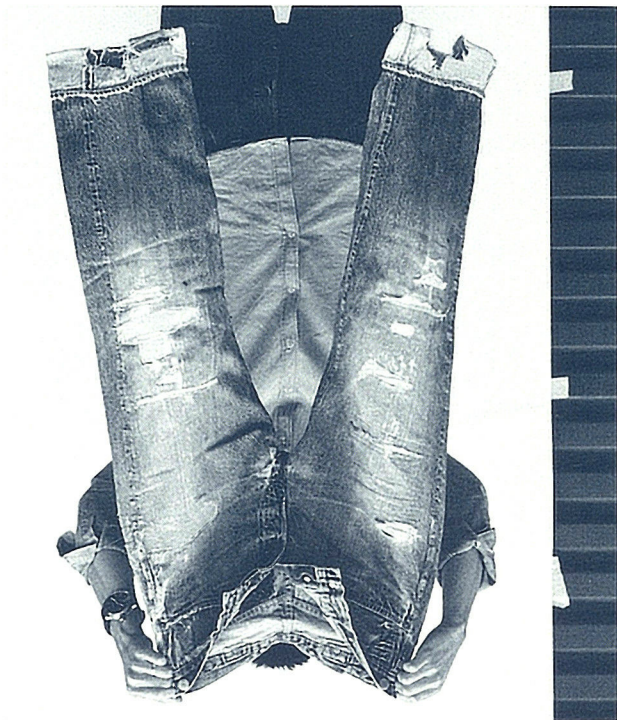
Alex Jaspers

Brand Manager Denim



Denimheads

Jorgen Koolwijk



Especially for the exhibition, five denimheads are portrayed with their favorite jeans. They share their passion for jeans by discussing one special pants in detail.

Jorgen Koolwijk photographed the five aficionados, each with their own role within the denim world.

denim dictionary

in collaboration with
Tenue de Nîmes



CENTRAAL
MUSEUM

#

3x1 Weave

See under 'Twill'.

501

Once the rivet patented by Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis in 1873 expired in 1890, they decided to give work jeans numbers. Besides the cheaper 200 series, there was also a 500 series. Number 501 is the only model that has survived. The design has undergone slight changes over the years. Nowadays, the 501 model is mainly known for its double arch stitches on the back pockets, the leather label with the two horses and the red tab. LS&CO initially used common work wear materials such as canvas and denim.

A

Abrasion

The distressed section on a pair of denim, where the fabric shows results of heavy wear. Often created with use of the washing technique with pumice stones on pre-washed jeans.

Acid Wash

This washing technique could singlehandedly represent the 1980s. Acid wash used pumice stones soaked with chlorine. This would strip off the colour of the top layer of the fabric creating sharp contrasts all over the jeans, which were popularized by hard rock and metal acts in the 80s. Candida Laundry patented the process in 1986.

Amoskaeg

The first major supplier of denim fabric in the United States, located in a New Hampshire factory town. This was the source of denim used on the first pairs of jeans by Jacob Davis and Levi Strauss.

Arcuate (or Arcs)

Generally refers to the decorative double stitching on the back pockets, shaped like bat wings. Levi's is credited with first using it on their very first 501, and they're commonly still associated with this iconic jeans. It goes further than mere association though - particularly in the U.S., where no other denim brand is allowed to sell jeans with patterns that even remotely resemble the Levi's arcs. Japanese reproduction brands have imitated the arc's, an act that resulted in several lawsuits.

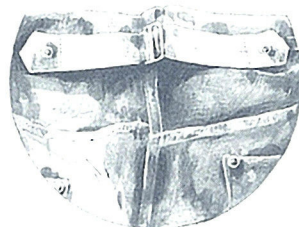
Atari

A word borrowed from Japanese, the term describes the selective fading alongside the ridges of the seams. In most cases it concerns the seams on the back-yoke, back pockets, the belt loops and zip fly.

B

Back Cinch

While a 'back cinch' traditionally refers to the leather strap attaching the saddle around a horse's back, on a pair of jeans it is used to tighten the waistband. Also known as a martingale it consists of a denim strap and a buckle. Jeans with a back cinch also referred to as 'buckle back' and most jeans manufacturers abandoned the back cinch in 1942.



Back Pocket Flasher

Traditionally a paper or cardboard flap attached to the right back pocket to indicate differences in size, finishing, fabrics and shapes. Also used as a marketing gimmick, it often featured illustrations that referred to a specific theme associated with that specific model, like Westerns.

Baggy Jeans

Wide-cut pants, with a low-slung waist, a very low crotch and the polar opposite of skinny jeans. The oversized models were initially especially popular among skaters and in hip-hop scenes. It supposedly originated in American prisons where prisoners wore their oversized overalls but were not allowed belts.

Bar Tacks

These tacks are closely spaced stitches, forming a band, or bar, on virtually all denim garments that act as reinforcements on stress points such as zippers and pocket openings.

Bell-Bottoms

It is said these models were first spotted with US navy men wearing the bell-shaped pants, although clothing could vary per ship. The bell-bottoms were extremely popular during the 1960s and 70s, it had a tight waist and thighs, but flared below the knees. This gave the jeans a vague resemblance to the shape of a bell, which is supposedly how the name.

Belt Loops

As the name indicates, these were placed around the waist to hold a belt. They replaced the suspender buttons 1920s to supply the trend of belts that emerged after the World War I. Most jeans have five loops, but some brands like Wrangler have seven, for extra support.

Big E

This term denotes collector's item from the LS&CO range. Prior to 1971, all LS&CO jeans and jackets featured a red tab with an embroidered uppercase 'E' and are now much sought after by collectors.

Bleach

A chemical that is needed in the process of fading denim. Typically, either sodium hydrochloride or potassium permanganate is used.

Blue Bell

Established in 1904 and producing denim overalls, they started making jeans after the World War II. Their first jeans produced in 1947 were named Wrangler, the name the company is now known with.

Blue Jeans

The name that was given to jeans trousers, quite obviously due to their typical blue colour. Blue jeans have inspired many, from filmmakers to songwriters.

Bombazine

In 17th and 18th century Netherlands, a fabric made from cotton welt yarn was also referred to as bombazine, a cheap fabric used for workwear.

Boyfriend Jeans

The Boyfriend design refers to an oversized baggy jean. The name is derived from the idea that the wearer looks like she is wearing her boyfriend's jeans.

Bootcut

Reminiscent of bell bottoms in their shape, but less extreme. Bootcut, or bootleg, have a wider leg openings that were originally intended to more easily fit over boots.

Broken Twill

Denim weave in which the twill line changes direction. Whereas until the 1960s denim was woven to the left or right hand side, causing the legs to twist, broken twill reverses this to cancel out the leg twist effect.

Buffies

Artificial creases around the thighs that are created during the finishing process. The term 'Buffies' is taken from the Italian word for moustache, 'baffi'.

Bull Denim

Heavyweight weave (from 14 oz. upwards). Bull denim is an ecru fabric and during production is either printed or piece- or garment dyed.

Brushed

Brushing is part of the final treatment for a worn out look. Thighs and backside of a pair of jeans are 'brushed' with an electrical brush that smoothers over rough edges that may appear earlier in the treatment process.

Buddy Lee

A doll introduced by H.D. Lee in 1920 and used as advertising mascot wearing Lee miniature outfits. The 13-inch dolls were made of ceramic until 1949, when the less fragile plastic dolls started being produced. The production of the Buddies stopped in 1962 and nowadays they are valuable collectors items.

Button

Small, usually round fasteners used to attach two pieces of fabric together. Traditional type is composed of two parts: a short nail that is attached to the fabric, and the more visible part, the head. Typically made of a metal alloy such as copper, brass or aluminium. Three styles can be distinguished: shank, sew-through and stud.

Button Fly

The original work wear pants fastening at the front fly, with buttons instead of the later introduced zipper.

C

Capital E

See under 'Big E'.

Capri Pants

A style of pants that ends around mid-calf or just below the calf.

Carrot Fit

A descriptive term for a loose fitted style of jeans. They have a shape similar to that of a carrot: wide at the top, narrow towards the bottom. Also known as peg jeans.

Caste/Cast

This refers to any extra colour tones that might be present in denim fabric that is sometimes added by way of an additional dyeing process. Indigo denim can have a black, brown, grey, green, red or yellow caste to it.

Cellulose Enzyme Wash

See 'Enzyme Wash'.

Chambray

Also known as 'cambric', chambray is a plain woven, medium weight cotton fabric. Usually made from blue and white yarns, used for making shirts, dresses and children's clothing. It takes its name from the town of Cambrai in the north of France. A heavier version was used for workmen's shirts in the USA and as such supposedly the source for the term 'blue collar'.

Chain Stitching

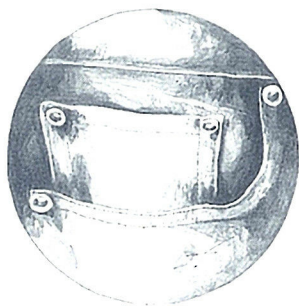
The traditional stitch used to hem jeans. It uses one continuous thread that loops back on itself and ends up looking like the links of a chain.

Cigarette Jeans

Straight-legged, slim fit pants.

Coating

A method applied in the finishing process of production. Normally done using pigment, acrylic or polyurethane coating. Acrylic and PU are transparent, while pigment gives a new look to the denim. Used to prevent fading of the fabric and stains. Often gives a leather-like shine to the denim.



Coin Pocket

The fifth pocket, strictly functional. This small-added pocket can be found inside the right front pocket. Also known as the watch or match pocket. It supposedly first appeared in 1890 and has become smaller over the years, yet retains its functionality.

Colour Fast

The level of attachment of dye to the garment. Indigo is common for use on denim garments because of its colourfastness. The contact of the garment with water and exposure to sunlight often results in loss of the colour.

Combing

Combing is a preparation process after fibres have been carded. It separates and untangles fibres. It is performed just before the fibres are spun into yarn.

Cone Mills

A name that sounds familiar to denim heads all over the world. Not surprising since it's to this day one of the biggest denim manufacturers in the world. It started its business in 1891 in Greensboro, North Carolina. It was founded by Moses and Cesar Cone and started out as a wholesale grocer. A few years after opening its doors, it began weaving cloth. It then started supplying to LS&CO in 1910 and became exclusive supplier for the 501s.

Construction Worker's Cleavage

The so-called construction worker's cleavage emerged on the runway in 1996 in an Alexander McQueen show. The trouser is particularly popular in the hip-hop scene.

Cotton

A vegetable fibre collected from the cotton plant. It has been used for over 7000 years to make cloth. It withstands high temperatures and can therefore be boiled and hot pressed. Abrasion resistant and gains 10% in strength when wet. Cotton accounts for more than 40% of the total world fibre production. As early as the first century AD, Plinius spoke in his *The World, Naturalis Historia* about 'wool bearing trees' from Egypt. These trees grew pumpkin-like fruits the size of quinces. Once fully ripe, they would tear open to reveal balls of fluff, which was eventually used to make clothes. They named the tree *Gossypium* (cotton tree). Despite this early reference, cotton did not reach Italy and the Netherlands and North Europe until late 16th century. See also 'Staple'.



Cotton Duck

See under 'Duck'.

Crease

See under 'Whiskers'.

Crooking

Describing the process of the dye that rubs of the denim and 'bleeds' on your skin, shoes or any other fabric.

Crotch Rivet

A rivet attached at the base of the button fly for reinforcement purposes. The story goes that LS&CO removed them from their jeans in 1942 after numerous complaints from cowboys about these rivets heating up considerably in front of campfires. Others were forced to remove them from their jeans to save metal for the war effort.

Crushed Denim

Denim that looks permanently wrinkled. A look that is achieved by weaving it with an over twisted welt yarn. The fabric then shrinks when washed. The result can be made even more visible by stonewashing and/or bleaching.

D

Denim

Denim is a sturdy twill weave fabric with a dyed (often blue) warp thread and an uncoloured weft thread. The fabric therefore has a coloured front and a white/ecru back. Nowadays, denim is mostly associated with jeans trousers. The word denim is thought to have derived from *serge de Nîmes*. Serge was used to refer to any type of woolen, semi-woolen and silk fabrics, made with twill weave. Denim is thought to be short for 'de Nîmes', or 'from Nîmes'. This town in the south of France was an important textile region in the 18th century for materials such as serge and cloth. In this same period, there was, however, also a fabric named *nîm*. This woolen fabric was originally made in Spain, but was also manufactured in the south of France. Its definite origin remains uncertain. Denim first appeared in England in 1695. Almost a century later, an example of the fabric can be found in *Hilton's Manuscript*, a sample book from 1786 named after cotton trader John Hilton from Manchester. See 'Serge de Nîmes'.

Denim head (or 'Denim Aficionado')

A word to describe denim fanatics.

Density

The density of denim refers to the number of yarns that make up the weave. Four categories differentiate the density: low, medium, high and super high. This is the difference between looser or tighter fabric construction.

Desizing

A specific sort of enzyme rinse that is done to soften denim fabric.

Destroyed Finish

Artfully shredded jeans, mostly by scissors and knives. This look first gained popularity in the mid-80s of the twentieth century, when model Katherine Hamnett showed slashed jeans on the runway. It has never completely gone out of style.

Dip Dye

The act of dipping yarn or fabric into dye. The more it is dipped, the darker the eventual colour. In between dips, the yarn is usual exposed to air, to allow the indigo to oxidize.

Distressed Jeans

Jeans that underwent excessive wear and show strong abrasions and have ripped and torn parts. Can be artificially created to give the jeans a real vintage and worn-out look. Taken to extremes with frayed hems and seams, the denim is torn and ripped, and so on.

Double Dyed

With double dyeing, denim is dipped in the indigo bath 12 to 16 times, instead of the regular 6-8 dips. The colour of the denim ends up a darker, deeper and brighter shade of blue as a result.

Double Stitching

Also called 'twin needle'. A method that is used to create perfectly parallel seams, most often to make jeans stronger and more durable. Double stitching on back pockets is a tell tale sign of a classic jeans look.

Doughnut Button (or Donut-Hole Button)

A button used on a button-fly pair of jeans that resembles a donut design, containing a 'hole' in the centre of the button. See also 'Button' and 'Logo Type Button'.

Drawing (or 'Drafting')

A step in the spinning process, whereby slivers of cotton fibre are passed through several drafting rolls. This 'drafts' them into a single strand and is repeated to ensure uniformity in the final yarn.

Drill

A durable fabric made of cotton with a strong diagonal twill weave. It is a lightweight, strong, breathing fabric. It is because of these specific qualities that it's used on sails and tents as well as uniforms and safari clothing.

Dry Denim

The original production form of denim, when it is still unwashed and untreated. After dyeing and weaving of the fabric, the cloth is quite stiff and has a deep blue indigo colour with a shine. It is left up to the wearer to break in their jeans made of dry/raw denim. In this condition, the jeans mould to the wearer's body type and shape, creating unique folds and fade marks along the way. Also see 'Raw Denim'.

Dual Ring-Spun

Dual ring-spun denim is made from ring spun yarn, providing a rougher and uneven fabric. It is the most expensive choice out of dual ring-spun, ring-spun and open-end denim. See also 'Ring-Ring Denim'.

Duck

A type of canvas that has tight woven threads, opposed to the plain weave type of canvas. Supposedly the name derived from the Dutch word 'doek'. This canvas is created from medium to coarse yarns. Cotton duck is classified by weight, with a heavier weight being more thick and durable.

Dungarees

Similar pants to jeans but generally baggier due to their work wear origins. The word itself refers back to Dongari Kapar, a thick cotton country cloth that is produced in India.

Dyeing (process)

Tinting procedure of the denim cloth, in which the natural cotton warp yarn is dipped into a number of indigo dye baths. After each bath, the denim is hung out to allow the indigo to oxidize, which eventually turns the colour from yellow to green to blue. As a last step, the yarn is rinsed to remove excess dye.

E

Eco Denim

Denim that is made with environmentally friendly cotton, dyes and recycling techniques. After the dyeing process for example, remains of the indigo substance are filtered and recycled for other dye baths, rather than simply thrown out.

Ecru

This is the natural colour of undyed denim. There are jeans that have not been dyed with indigo that have this colour, but they are quite hard to find.

Eight O Seven (807)

Also known as 'production sharing', 807 is a controversial law that relates specifically to the textile industry. It allows manufacturers to reduce the cost of labour for their products. In practice, this means they are allowed to have their garments cut in the United States, assembled in Mexico, Caribbean and Central American countries and returned to the US.

Elastane

An elastic fibre used in stretch jeans. See also 'Stretch Denim'.

G-Star Elwood

G-Star's defining, signature jeans model, is designed in 1996 by Pierre Morisset, the company's head designer. The look was inspired by the pants of a rain-soaked motorcyclist, which is reflected in the added kneepads. This very first three-dimensional denim is designed to follow the contours of the body, resulting in slightly inward bent trouser legs.

Embroidery

Decorative details that are added to jeans by sewing. Different colours are used for perspective and depth purposes. Most commonly found on back pockets and often seen on the back of denim jackets. Embroidery was very popular in the 1970s.

Enzyme Wash

A particular washing method to give jeans a worn out look. It also softens the fabric and brings out highlights. Enzymes are organic, non-toxic substances that speed up chemical processes and are used as an alternative to stone washing.

F

Faded Denim

An effect that is obtained after repeated wear and wash of indigo dyed denim. The indigo attached to the cotton fibres detaches and therefore the denim fades. Recognizable by its lighter colour other than the standard dark shade of blue or black. Multiple methods exist to create this effect artificially, for example by stone washing or bleaching.

Fair to Middling

Cotton is graded according to strength, staple length, colour, smoothness and uniformity. This term stands for an average grade of cotton, usually used in denim.

Finishing

a) Finishing processes are used to age denim garments or create other effects by various means such as the enzyme wash or the stone wash.
b) It may also refer to the very last step in denim production, which consists of three phases: running the denim through rolls to remove excess lint or fibres; hauling it through a gas flame to burn off these fibres. Lastly, the cloth is dipped in a vat of a finishing liquid and run through ringers to remove any remaining liquid.

Fit

Describes and determines the cut, shape and design of any pair of jeans. Different brands offer varying lengths, sizes and specifics such as loose fit, skinny fit, boot cut or straight fit to accommodate different preferences and body types.

Five Pocket Design

Nowadays, five pockets is the standard number of pockets found on a jeans design. Introduced by LS&CO in 1922 with its new 501 design, it consists out of two back pockets, two front pockets and a coin pocket inside the right-front pocket. The Levi's prototype from 1873 only had three: two in the front and one on the back. The coin pocket was added in 1890. The fifth pocket (second back pocket) came a bit later on in 1905. The five pocket jeans remained standard within the jeans industry.

Flag

See under 'Tab'.

Flare Jeans

Jeans with low rise and bell-bottom flare. This style was in huge demand in the 1970s and even made a (short lived) comeback around the 1990s and in 2000.

French Cut

Especially for women, this is a tight style of jeans. It is made of stretch material for a very close fit. It is therefore also known as 'second skin'.

Frosted Denim

Very pale blue jeans, frosted denim was an especially popular washing in the 1980s.

Fustian

Fustian is the collective name for a group of fairly coarse fabrics made from half-linen or cotton.

G

Garment Dyed

Whereas yarn dye takes place before the weaving of the yarn, garment dye, or 'just in time dyeing' is done with the finished garment. It is stocked in ecru or bleached colour, then dyed in a range of colours, depending on demand. Tell tale signs of garment dye are pocket linings or labels that have the same colour as the self-fabric.

Genua

See under 'Jeans'.

Ginning

The process of removing seeds from the cotton got its name from the cotton gin, which was invented by Eli Whitney in 1794.

Gold Rush

A period during the 19th century in which countless people migrated to North America (and Australia) in search of gold. It was during this period that Leob Strauss (later Levi Strauss) came to San Francisco and settled there as a businessman, picking up on this Gold Rush to create a pair of durable pants that would establish his business and ensure his name in the history books.

Good Middling

Symbolized by the letters 'GM', good middling is a term for the highest quality of cotton. It has an off-white colour and contains virtually no other matter. Middling cotton is the standard to measure all grades of cotton.

Greycast

A denim dye process in which the denim is dyed with grey sulphur dye before the indigo is added.

Greencast

A denim dye process in which the denim is dyed with green sulphur dye before the indigo is added. It gives the denim a blue/greenish colour. With wear and time, the indigo fades and the green underneath is gradually exposed.

H

Hand/Handle

A term to describe how denim feels, referring to the material's specific characteristics like smoothness, stiffness, stretchability or thickness.

Hank Dyeing

A dyeing process to maximize colour penetration, that also makes the yarn keep its soft feel. Yarn is looped over a hook and dipped in water, which opens up the fibres. This allows the dye to reach everywhere. The fabric is left in the dye for 48 hours, then washed and redipped, a process that is repeated a few times.

Hangtags

Just like labels, tabs and back pocket flashers, hangtags are another way for brands to communicate its philosophy and the specifics of its products. They 'hang' from garments, hence the name.

Heavy Weight Denim

All denim that is heavier than 12 oz. is considered heavy weight.

Hemming

A process of adjusting clothe by folding up a cut edge twice and sewing it in place, preventing it from unravelling. Denim is usually hemmed in the factory with a chain stitch.

Hemp

Is a low-cost, extremely versatile seed plant. The plant was cultivated in China as far back as 4000 BC. It is one of the strongest plant fibres and creates a durable fabric similar in texture to linen. Besides wool and flax, it is one of the oldest raw materials of textile.

Hige

Hige is Japanese for 'moustache' or 'whiskers': horizontal fade lines around the hip and crotch section of jeans that are formed by extensive wear of dyed denim. Especially in raw denim this is the area that fades first.

Hip Huggers

Style of jeans especially popular in the 1960s and early 1970s. It featured a low waist and tight fit, which inspired the nickname.

Hipster jeans

See under 'Flare Jeans'.



Honeycombs

Also referred to as just 'combs', this refers to the area at the back of the knee of a pair of jeans. The indigo colour fades the more the pants are worn, and is said to resemble honeycomb patterns.



Hotpants

Very short cut-off jeans for women, they're typically cut off right below the seat, exposing the whole of the leg. It became a common sight in the 1970s and is in fashion again since 2011.

Hyperwashed

A term used to describe fabric that has been washed time and again for an extremely faded look.

I

Inch
An American and British Imperial unit of size, used to indicate length and waist size of jeans. One inch is 2.54 centimetres. Size 28 means the hip size of the trouser is 28 inches, or 71cm.



Indigo (Indigofera tinctoria L.)

Typical of jeans is that they are indigo blue, hence the widely used name *blue jeans*. The indigo dye, which gives jeans that deep blue colour, has a long history. The use of the word indigo could be confusing, as it refers to the dye itself, the colour of the dyed fabric, as well as the dye's natural sources the Woad (*Isatis tinctoria* L.) and True Indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria* L.). Both of these green plants produce such a similar blue dye that chemical analysis of historical textile cannot even tell whether it has been dyed with woad or indigo. Preparation of the dye tubs and the dye process itself are complicated and require a lot of work. The dye bath starts out a white-green colour, which only turns blue once the textile is exposed to oxygen. The more often the fabric is dyed, the deeper the blue becomes. An important characteristic of indigo is that it is colourfast. In 1826, French Jean Baptiste Guimet secretly developed a synthetic blue, which was put on the market at the end of the 19th century by the German company *Badische Anilin- und Soda Fabrik* (BASF). Synthetic indigo soon exceeded the demand of traditionally produced dye.

Inseam

The inseam is the length as measured from the inside of the pant leg, from the crotch to the hemline (which should reach to the anklebone). Together with the waist size, the inseam determines the various jeans sizes.

Iro-Ochi

The term *Iro-Ochi* is Japanese for 'colour slips', and as such refers to a look whereby only exposed areas are faded during the fading process.

J

Japanese Denim

A denim cloth that is in high demand due to its quality. This quality is maintained by the traditional production methods used in Japan: using the 28-inch shuttle looms, as well as high quality ring-spun yarn. Japanese denim is typically given several indigo baths.

Jeans

Only since the 1950s has the word jeans referred to a specific item of clothing: the jeans trouser with familiar features such as its stitched threads, rivets, five pockets and stitched back pockets. From the mid 20th century, younger generations started to wear the blue pant to visibly rebel against prevailing norms and values. Jeans were therefore deemed unsuitable. This changed in the 1970s when the garment became commonly accepted. Jeans fabric is originally made from twill weaved cotton. It differs from denim in that both warp and weft threads have the same colour. In the mid 18th century, the current spelling of jeans started to appear in England, two decades prior to the Netherlands. The use of jeans with an 's' is not necessarily the plural form of jean, but a derived form from the French spelling *Jannes* or *Gènes*. Both uses occurred at random. First referring to a type of fabric, jeans is now associated with an item of clothing.

Jelt Denim

Lee started using their exclusive Jelt Denim on their denim garments from 1925 onwards. It was an 11.5 oz. denim but had the quality of a 13 oz. fabric due to its tight construction and twisted yarn. The 'J' in their 101J denim jacket stands for Jelt.

L

Label

Item that identifies a brand and the garment used for the cloth. It shows the brand logo, and other relevant brand information.

Laser

A laser is used to burn dye off the surface of the fabric. It can be used to create vintage effects such as wrinkles or lettering. This technique is generally more sustainable than sand blasting.

Laundrette

This refers to a world famous scene of a Levi's commercial that relaunched basics in 1985. It featured teen idol Nick Kamen who took off his jeans in a packed laundrette to wash them, while Marvin Gaye's 'I heard it through the grapevine' played in the background. It was made by British ad agency Bartle Bogle Hegarty.

Laundry

Laundry is a manufacturing company that washes, sandblasts or garment dyes jeans. Italy, Japan and the US lead the field in this industry because their techniques are most advanced and are therefore most influential in pushing fabric development.



Leather Label

This is a rectangular label made of real or imitation leather or paper, usually sewn to the waistband above the right-back pocket. The label was first used by LS&CO in 1886. It then already depicted the two horses attempting at full horsepower to rip apart a trouser in opposite directions. Despite prompting the horses, this still seems to fail. The label usually has the brand logo, the jean serial number, as well as its size. In 1954, LC&CO substituted the leather label of the 501 for a paper version.

Left Hand Twill (LHT)

Describes how the direction of the weave heads to the left. It gives the material a soft feel after washing. It is however difficult to produce as it needs to be treated with care during sanforization and finishing.

Leg Opening

The openings at the bottom of all pairs of (denim) pants. The width of it varies per brand and model.

Leg Twist

The phenomenon of left or right hand twills that tend to twist in the direction of the weave. A broken twill weave is often used to prevent this from happening, as leg twists are quite noticeable on the outer seams.

Logo Type Button

The (bachelor) button on a button-fly pair of jeans that contains the brand's logo or name. Introduced after the anonymous 'doughnut button' that used to be the standard on jeans.

Loom

A loom is a weaving machine that produces fabric by weaving vertical threads of yarn (warp) with horizontal threads (weft).

Loomstate

This is a type of denim that comes straight from the loom and has not been sanforized or modified in any way. Any pre-1920 produced denim will have been loom state denim.

Loom Dyeing

The original method of dyeing denim by which ropes of yarn are pulled through vats of indigo and then laid out on top of the roof of the factory to allow the indigo to oxidize before the next bath. It creates more consistent indigo shades than other processes. One of the three main methods to dye indigo yarn, also see 'Slasher Dyeing' and 'Rope Dyeing'.

LS&CO

An abbreviation written on 1873. One text was c Strauss in 1847. H founded a Francisco

Lycra

This is Du artificial f known as registered is part of most com jeans is th to chlorin

LYOCE

The gener degradable therefore durable an to look lik

Micro

A process horizontal either abra agent. It le the texture

Millw

Millwash been wash manufacture

Moth

So called become the indigo-dye

Mous

See under

Natur

A costly an up to alm dye, called dried poly with lye an usually do in and out deeper the synthetic f when wash

LS&CO

An abbreviation of Levi Strauss & Co, originally written on the rivets: L.S. & Co. S.F. Pat May 1873. Once the patent expired in 1890, the text was changed to 'L.S. & Co. S.F. Cal.'. Loeb Strauss immigrated to America from Germany in 1847. He changed his name in 1853 and founded a dry goods wholesale business in San Francisco named Levi Strauss & Co.).

Lykra

This is Dupont's trademark for elastane, the artificial fibre that is obtained from a resin known as segmented polyurethane. 'Lykra' is a registered trademark of the Invista Group that is part of the US-based chemical group. The most commonly used variety of Lykra in stretch jeans is the T-400 type, which is very resistant to chlorine.

Lyocell

The generic name for cellulosic fibre. It is biodegradable (made from dissolved wood pulp) therefore not hazardous to the environment. It is durable and versatile, as it can be manipulated to look like diffit

M

Microsanding

A process in which denim is pulled over horizontally placed rollers that are wrapped in either abrasive paper or a chemical abrasion agent. It leads to a faded colour and softens the texture.

Millwash

Millwash is a term for denim that has already been washed before being delivered to garment manufacturers.

Mother Cotton

So called because the fruits of this cotton become the 'mother' of next year's crop. When indigo-dyed this cotton takes on a vintage look.

Moustaches

See under 'Whiskers' or 'Hige'.

N

Natural Indigo Dye

A costly and time-consuming process. It takes up to almost one hundred days to prepare the dye, called *sukumo* in Japanese, made from dried polygonum leaves. The dye is then mixed with yie and lime and fermented. The dyeing is usually done by hand, by dipping the garment in and out of the dye pulp. The more dips, the deeper the shade of indigo. Natural indigo, unlike synthetic form, is colourfast and its will not run when washed.

O

O.F. (or A.F.)

Abbreviation for 'other fibres' (or 'altre fibre'). Sometimes seen on the composition label of fabrics made of recycled material. Fabrics produced around the area of Prato in Italy are made using yarns spun from a blend of reclaimed wool, or of course other fibres.

One Wash

Refers to a very soft, loose denim weave that is rinsed just once after loomstate. It's done for environmental purposes as well as to create a specific look and feel. It is a Japanese invention from 1991 that never quite made it to European or American shores.

Open End (Denim or Yarn)

Often referred to as 'O.E.' this is the most common type of denim. Open End is an industrial type of yarn spinning using turbine machines. Open End denim was adopted by many manufacturers because it produces strong, durable jeans for less money and in less time, but is said to lack the quality that ring-spun or ring-ring denim typically have.

Organic Cotton

This is cotton that is grown in soil, free of any chemicals, for three years. It therefore has a low impact on the environment and also shies away from genetically modifying.

Overalls

A one-piece garment made from denim or canvas, with a bib top and suspenders, it was originally made and worn as a work wear item. Until World War II jeans were also named 'overall' or 'waist overall'.

Overtwisted Denim

Denim with a deliberate crinkled-looking appearance that is the result of overtwisted yarn with which the denim is made.

Oxidation

This is part of the dyeing process. For raw denim, oxidation happens when indigo yarn comes out of an indigo bath and is exposed to oxygen. This causes the deep blue colour to reappear and most importantly, it ensures the colour is permanently fixed to the fibre.

Oz.

Abbreviation for ounces. Denim is weighed in oz. per square yard.

P

Paperbag Waist

As the name indicates, this means a loose, pleated waistline, pulled together with a belt.

Patchwork

Jeans with patches of other denim or just plain other fabrics, that make it look like a customized repair job, DIY-style.

Patent nr. 139/121

This is the patent that was granted to Levi Strauss and business partner Jacob Davis in 1873, for their revolutionary introduction of copper rivets to strengthen the stress points on pants. The patent expired in 1890.

Piece-Dyed

See under 'garment dyed'.

Pigment Dye

A popular dyestuff used by manufacturers who want a faded look on their jeans. The pigment dye does not naturally stick to fibre. It only coats the surface and attaches itself there with the use of resins. It therefore washes off quite quickly, achieving what looks like an authentic fade. Pigment dyes are available in various colours.

Ply

This term refers to the number of strands in a yarn. Most denim is woven from 2 or 3 ply yarn.

Pocket Lining

The (concealed) cloth used for the front pockets of a five pocket style jeans. Often made from a strong cotton fabric to assure duration of the pockets.

Pocket Stitching

A typical jeans characteristic. Pockets on the back of jeans are usually stitched in a decorative way. The 1970s saw extensive and almost exaggerated pocket stitching, but that was a short-lived trend. From the 1980s brands used straightforward patterns, but ones that clearly differentiated them from others.

Polycore Denim

This refers to a blend of polyester and cotton that gives denim extra strength, but the look of authentic jeans. It is quite often used by manufacturers to strengthen stress points on jeans. It minimizes shrinking of the jeans as well as wrinkles.

Pre-Shrunk

During production, fabrics typically stretch. Once they're being washed, the fibres relax and shrink back to their original length. Pre-shrinking, or sanforizing, eliminates this. See also 'Sanforized'.

Pull Strength

As the name suggests, it indicates the power of the denim fabric. Ring spun yarn is often considered as having the strongest pull-strength.

Pumice Stones

Pumice is solidified lava: volcanic rock that is formed when lava and water are mixed. It is the material of choice when stonewashing garments, as it is tough, rough and lightweight.

R

Railtracks

The term describing the fades along the outer seam of a pair of jeans. The contours of the folded inseam are seen in the in the fades and resemble a train track.

Rag Weave

Found in the majority of denims, it is the tightest of all and retains colour the longest. Its recognized by its slightly diagonal incline when looking at the warp.

Raw Denim

The purest form of denim. That is, denim that has not been washed, or treated in any way. Hence it is quite rigid. G-Star is credited with the term 'Raw denim'. At any rate they were the first to use it for their untreated, unwashed products in 1996. See also 'Dry Denim'.

Recycled Denim

Recycled jeans can be new or second-hand, but have been customized in some way before being sold to the consumer. Decorative patterns with rhinestones or embroidery for example, which was quite the rage in the 1970s.

Redcast

A term that is used for denim with a reddish hue. The fabric has only been dyed with indigo. See also 'Caste'.

Red Tab

This barely needs explanation. The red tab is the famous Levi's flag found on the right-back pocket of the 501 jeans. This allowed for the jeans brand to be instantly recognized from a distance. The tab was trademarked in 1939, after its introduction to the world three years prior. The original tab used the capitals LEVI'S. From 1971 this was changed to Levi's.

Red Line

Levi's denim from before 1983 had a red line selvedge. Cone Mills, which manufactured the Levi's denim fabric, added this red line to their selvedge to make their fabric stand out. At the time it was considered as good as a standard of excellence. Denim aficionados still argue that the red lines denote top grade denim. See also 'Cone Mills'.

Reverse Denim

A novel use of denim, patented by Japanese designer Toshi Hosogai. He has come up with a design for jeans that allowed them to be worn the normal way and inside out, as the regular inside has clean finishes and as such cannot be distinguished as the 'inside'.

Rigid Denim

See under 'Dry denim'.

Right Hand Twill (RHT)

A weaving construction, typical for denim, where the twill line runs diagonally from bottom left to top right. It creates a tighter, denser material. Over time, the fade on this type is more distinct than on other types.

Ring Dyeing

Ring dyeing only colours the outer layer of the yarn, and the core of the yarn remains white, as would be best seen in a cross-section of the material. This process is used for jeans that are supposed to fade with wear: as the blue wears off, the white underneath is exposed.

Ring Ring Denim

This is the term for traditionally made denim, where ring-spun yarn is used for both the warp and the weft. The yarn is created by rolling the fibres, rather than pressing them into shape, and creates a contrasting structure with a slightly washed denim look. Also named 'double-ring spun denim'.

Ring Spun Denim

Ring Spun yarn is made by constantly rolling and thinning fibres, using a 'ring' for spinning. It uses longer fibres which means the end result is a more uneven yarn. It was used as method of production until the late 1970s, but because it is labour intensive and takes more time, ring spun denim was replaced by cheaper, open-end yarns. The rough and uneven look is now back in demand, because of its likeness to traditional vintage denim.

Rinsed

A term that implies raw denim that is only rinsed, rather than being subjected to a full wash, and therefore keeps its rough, durable qualities.

Rise

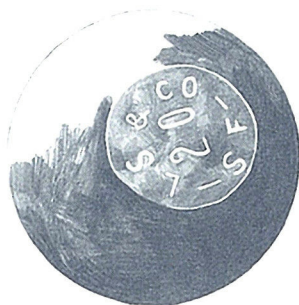
The length ranging from the crotch up to the waistband. Jeans can have a rise ranging from high to low, making the difference whether the waist is cut under or above the navel.

Riser

See under 'Yoke'.

River Washing

A method of washing denim with pumice stones and cellulose enzymes to give the fabric an aged look. It takes its toll on the environment, and is therefore not used as often these days.



Rivet

Proposed by Jacob Davis, a Latvian tailor from Reno (Nevada), Levi Strauss filed for patent number 139/121 for a work trouser strengthened with copper rivets. This patent emphasized that the use of the rivet as 'improvement in fastening pocket-openings' ensures 'sewed seams are prevented from ripping' by applying 'a metal rivet or eyelet at each end of the pocket-opening' of 'a pair of pants'. Rivets are often also used decoratively.

Rope Dyeing

Generally regarded as the best method for indigo dyeing of yarns. These yarns are twisted together until they form a rope and then briefly dipped in indigo baths. Because of the short dyeing time, the dye does not fully colour the yarns. The resulting ring-dye yarn therefore fades faster than yarn that has fully absorbed the indigo. One of the three main methods to dye indigo yarn, also see 'Slasher Dyeing' and 'Loop Dyeing'.

Rope Effect (or Roping)

The fading effect on the hem of jeans that resembles a rope because of its diagonal fading pattern. Old Levi's XX pairs are known for their strong roping.



Saddle Stitch

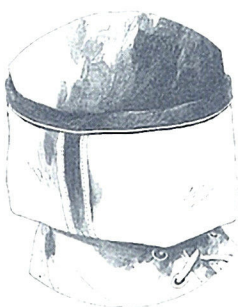
This is stitching with an extra thick thread, typically used to create an authentic, old-time effect.

Sanding

A finishing process to soften the denim for a smoother, softer feel. Can be done with sandpaper or mechanically. Sanded jeans usually cling to the body better.

Sanforized

Indicating jeans that underwent the process of sanforization. Raw fabric is likely to shrink up to 20% on the initial wash. Sanforization stabilizes the fabric before it is cut or washed, by stretching and pre-shrinking it. It reduces the chance on shrinkage to less than 3%. The process was named after Sanford Lockwood Cluett and was patented in 1928 and first used in 1936 by J.C. Penney Big Mac. Lee jeans soon became sanforized, Blue Bell used them on their overalls and the Lady Levi's introduced in 1938 were sanforized too.



Selvedge/Selvage/Self-Edge

The term that is used for the vertical edge of the denim fabric that is usually decorated with a coloured thread. It prevents the end of the denim from unravelling and gives the jeans a clean, finished look. The colour varies, according to the brand and producer. Vintage Levi's for example used to have an all-white strip and later had a single redline selvedge. Wrangler used a yellow and Lee often a plain white type.

Serge

The word serge is a French word that means a general name for a silk twill fabric. In France, in the role in the p... In this period... Spain, known... really derive... discussion.

Sheet

See under 'S'

Shrink

Before proc... washing we... buy their jea... of the shrink... Such un-trea... to shrink and... For example... until 1959... today by sel... denim head...

Singe

Once the jea... thing that is... stray, loose... controlled fl...

Skew

To prevent le... shrinking pr... fect by skew... of the twill... in 1976. De... and 10%, d... weave yarn...

Skinny

Refers to sk... the legs and... Skinny jeans... soon followe...

Slashe

In the slash... form of a w... and followe... The sheet is... and sizing... process. It i... dyeing meth... to dye indig... 'Loop Dyein...

Slm F

An overall t... the thighs... not necessa... a much-love...

Slub

Slubs are in... created on... uneven spin... some areas... to be seen... deliberately

Serge de Nîmes

The word denim would be descended from serge de Nîmes (de Nîmes = from Nîmes). Serge was a general name for woollen, half-woollen and silk twill fabrics. Nîmes, a town in the south of France, in the 18th century played an important role in the production of textiles, including serge. In this period there was also a woollen fabric from Spain, known by the name *nîm*. Whether denim is really derived from 'de Nîmes' remains subject of discussion. See 'Denim'.

Sheet Dyeing

See under 'Slasher Dyeing'.

Shrink-to-Fit

Before processes as sanforization and stone-washing were available, people were obliged to buy their jeans a couple of size bigger, because of the shrinkage that would occur after washing. Such un-treated jeans were soaked before wear, to shrink and soften the rigid fabric of the jeans. For example, Levi's 501 models were shrink-to-fit until 1959. Shrink-to-fit jeans are still offered today by selected manufacturers for the true denim head.

Singeing

Once the jeans are as good as finished, the last thing that is done to it is singeing, whereby any stray, loose fibres are burnt off using a small, controlled flame.

Skewing

To prevent leg twist that can happen during the shrinking process, manufacturers minimize this effect by skewing the cloth in the opposite direction of the twill. Karin Hakanson patented this step in 1976. Denim is usually skewed between 4% and 10 %, depending on the fabric's weight, twill weave yarn size and yarn twist. See also 'Twill'.

Skinny Jeans

Refers to skin-tight jeans that follow the shape of the legs and are thus tapered towards the ankles. Skinny jeans were introduced by Raf Simons, soon followed by Hedi Slimane.

Slasher Dyeing (or Sheet Dyeing)

In the slasher dyeing method, denim yarns in the form of a warpsheet are pre-treated with chemicals and followed by (multiple) dip dyeing in indigo. The sheet is then after-treated by washing, drying and sizing, and a last dry cycle completes the process. It is a low-cost alternative to the rope dyeing method. One of the three main methods to dye indigo yarn, see also 'Rope Dyeing' and 'Loop Dyeing'.

Slim Fit

An overall tight and narrow fit, particularly around the thighs, but contrary to skinny jeans they are not necessarily tapered. Invented by Pierre Cardin, a much-loved designer in the 1970s.

Slub(byness)

Slubs are inconsistencies in denim that are created on old 28-inch shuttle looms. Due to uneven spinning, the fabric may be thicker in some areas than in others. Whereas they used to be seen as flaws, slubs are now sometimes deliberately added to give more character.

Snow-Wash Denim

A synonym for acid-wash denim, but specifically this is a more extreme variety, in that snow-washed denim has been acid-washed until the denim has bright white highlights.

Spijkerbroek

The Netherlands is one of the few countries, which has its own word for jeans: *spijkerbroek* (lit. nail trouser). Who came up with this name is not known. Other countries usually use the word jeans, such as France and Flanders.

Staple

A fibre often indicated by a certain length. In denim production it refers to the cotton fibre, and indicates a long or short 'staple length'. In general longer staple lengths are more valued for they are more easily spun and can create softer and stronger yarns.

Starching

This is a process that is applied to denim fabric, usually after the singeing process, and adds starch to the fabric to stiffen the textile. When the design patterns are cut from a pile of 40 layers of denim at a time, this makes sure the textile doesn't move or fold. When raw denim is produced this starch creates the stiffness of the fabric. Some denim heads nowadays apply the starch by hand to foster the whiskering process.

Stonewashing

When the denim is washed, pumice stones are added to the wash cycle process to fade the colour of the denim and roughen it up a bit. This gives the denim an aged and faded look. In the 1970s, designers such as Francols and Marithé Girbaud experimented with the technique. From the 1980s, the production of bleached jeans became industrialized to keep up with their demand. See also 'Pumice Stones'.

Straight Leg

The term indicating a consistent leg-width from the waist down to the leg opening.

Stretch Denim

This refers to a denim hybrid. It is denim fabric made with a percentage of elastane fibre in the weft, which makes the model cling to the body thanks to its elasticity. Cone Mills was the first (American) mill to produce it, back in 1962. See also 'Cone Mills'.

Sulphur-Bottom

Sulphur-bottom is a process in which jeans are treated with sulphur dye before the indigo baths. One result of it is you get the deeper colours in less time and it cuts down on the amount of indigo needed. Jeans treated with this process get a yellow or grayish cast. See also 'caste'.

Synthetic Indigo

See under 'Indigo'.

Tapered Jeans

A specific model that is figure hugging and gets narrower, skinnier, towards the ankles.

Tate-Ochi

A Japanese term that translates directly as 'vertical falls', referring to vertical faded stripes in (vintage) denim made from slub yarn. The unevenness of the thread causes the thicker parts to fade more rapid. Also see 'Slub'.

Tobacco Stitching

Indicating the tobacco colour tint of the stitches commonly used by denim manufacturers.

Topstitching

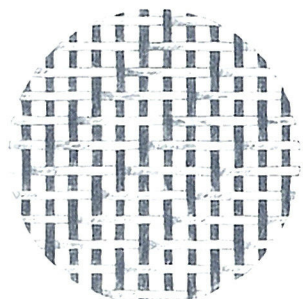
A sewing stitch that is both practical and decorative, usually on the hem, seam and neckline of garments for a more finished look.

Triple Needle Stitch

Often associated with traditional workwear pieces, a triple needle stitch provides more strength and durability to the seams of the garment.

Trucker Jacket

The jargon for the type of denim jacket introduced by Levi's in 1962 by the name of 557XX. It was the first jacket to feature the characteristic pointed pocket flaps. Also known as the Levi's type III jacket.



Twill

Twill is a weave technique that gives the fabric a characteristic pattern of diagonal lines. Twill weave is not limited to a certain type of material and can be applied to cotton, silk, linen, wool, or any combination of these materials. All twill fabrics consist of warp threads and weft threads. The warp threads run along the length of the fabric and the weft across the width. The way in which these threads are crossed determines the strength and look of the woven fabric. Thread quality and width also influence the fabric's flexibility and sustainability. Denim is often specified as 3x1 twill, which refers to the number of weft threads per warp thread. Denim fabric is traditionally woven using 3x1 twill, as opposed to a more lightweight denim (under 10.5 oz.) with 2x1 twill. With a 3x1 fabric, the weft thread is woven three times over the warp thread, one time under, then again three times over the warp thread, and one time under, and so on.

T

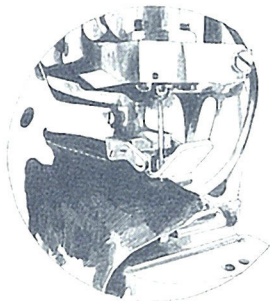
Tab

The very recognizable yet small signature label usually attached to the side of the right back pocket of any pair of jeans that identifies the pants' brand. Also known as 'flag'.

U

Union Special

The Union Special Machine Company of Chicago was the leading US manufacturer of commercial sewing machines. They are nowadays highly regarded for their distinctive quality of chain-stitch machines, especially the rare 43200G model. This model is known to produce such a tight and strong chain stitch that creates a 'rope effect' after wear and wash.



Unisex

A pair of jeans is the perfect example of a unisex garment, a garment that can be worn by both men and women.

Unwashed Denim

See under 'Dry Denim'.

V

Vintage (Denim)

A term that is thrown about a lot these days, but it means anything from the past, or second hand, when clothing happens to have been worn previously. Generally clothing older than 25 years is considered as vintage. Vintage clothing can also be clothing that has not been worn before, but stored in its original state, and is referred to as 'dead stock' vintage.

W

Waist Overalls

This was the original term Jacob Davis and Levi Strauss used to describe their riveted work pants in 1873. 'Jeans' was a word that wasn't coined and used until almost a century later, during the 1950s.

Warp

A specific construction of yarn in which the vertical yarns are alternately woven over and under the weft. It makes the resulting material stronger. In denim, warp runs parallel to the selvage and is usually blue. The term 'warp' is said to have been derived from either the Norwegian *varp* or from the Dutch verb *werpen* i.e. to throw across.

Weft

This is the term for the horizontal threads that pass through the warp threads via the shuttle during weaving. They run perpendicular to the selvage. See also 'Twill' and 'Warp'.

Weight

Denim is graded in terms of weight per square yard of fabric, in three categories: light, medium and heavy. The material usually weighs from 5 oz. to 20 oz., although exceptions of extremes like 30 oz. do exist. Most jeans are made of 12 or 14 oz. denim. Lighter denim is mostly used on skirts, shirts and other garments.

Wet Processing

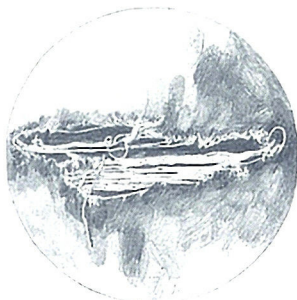
A collective name for different finishing techniques that all use water, or some other liquid, in combination with mechanical treatment of the denim fabric or garments.

Whiskers

The horizontal crease lines around the crotch, thigh and knees of jeans. Formed by wearing dyed jeans resulting in an aged look. They can also be artificially applied with industrial fading techniques such as laser or sandblasting.

Woad (Isatis tinctoria L.)

Prior to the great overseas voyages in the 16th and 17th century, woad was the European version of indigo and was the primary blue dye for textiles. Woad is also a plant, which can be used to extract indigo blue pigment. This plant has oblong leaves and small yellow bunches of flowers, and grows approximately 90cm high. Woad favours mild climates, growing in regions such as the Netherlands, Germany (Thüringen), France (Toulouse, Languedoc) and England (Northumbria). In the Middle Ages, woad was considered the queen of medieval dyes, partly due to its high value to the economy. See also 'Indigo'.



Worn-in Denim

Denim that has a faded and worn look to it, because of intensive, frequent wear or by means of artificial treatment.

Worn Out

A form of wet processing where sandblasted garments are stonewashed as well for an (artificial) appearance of wear and fade.

X

XX

The name of the model jeans made by Levi's before 1890, when they introduced the name 501, meaning 'Double Extra Heavy'. However the XX symbols have been present on the tag until 1968, signifying the quality of the denim fabric woven by Cone Mills.

Y

Yarn

A long, continuous length of spun fibres. Used for the production of fabric through the process of weaving.

Yarn Dyed

Fabrics where the yarn has been dyed before the weaving. Denim is a prime example of a yarn dyed fabric.

Yoke

The v-shaped section at the back of a jeans that forms the curve of the seat. The deeper the 'V', the greater the curve. There are many types of yokes found on jeans, all meant for the different backsides of their wearers.

Z

Zip Fly

The zipper was invented in 1893 and perfected in 1913. Originally it was called the hookless fastener. After sanforization of denim fabrics became institutionalized, the zipper was more widely used. Lee introduced their first zip-fly jeans in 1925 on the 101Z model.

Z-Twist

The majority of cotton yarns are right-hand spun, resulting in a z-twist. This type of yarn is normally used for left-handed twill, because its counter-clockwise construction results in a softer fabric. S-twist yarn is then similarly used for the right-handed twill.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Joost Stokhof, *The Things We Are*
www.thethingsweare.com

RESOURCES

The *Denim Dictionary* is a collaboration between Tenue de Nîmes and Centraal Museum. The aim was to provide a comprehensive as possible list of blue jeans terminology. Although great care was taken to obtain accurate dates and years, resources frequently provide contradictory information. The following sources were used to compile this dictionary:

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www.tenuedenimes.com



A happy coincidence occurred in spring 2011. Fashion curator Ninke Bloemberg said it was time for us to organise an exhibition on jeans. This was something that had never been done on a grand scale in The Netherlands, as far as she knew. Of course jeans had been included in numerous fashion exhibitions, and many designers had taken jeans and done their own thing with them. But that was as far as it had gone.

At the same time, Utrecht businessman Tom Broekman began making plans to celebrate his family firm's 175th anniversary in 2012. Broekman owns *De Rode Winkel*, the place to buy jeans. Pauline Broekman, Tom and Margriet Broekman's daughter, got in touch with Ninke, and the two things came together.

Almost everyone has a pair of jeans. This item of clothing has found its way into wardrobes the world over. And although many manufacturers have brought out countless different versions and designs, jeans have never entirely lost touch with their origins as work clothing. On talkshow *Zomergasten* in August 2012, fashion guru and trendwatcher Lidewij Edelkoort called for an exhibition devoted to jeans. If there is one garment that brings together the representation and appreciation of fashion, it is jeans.

Blue Jeans, the title of the Centraal Museum's exhibition, features unique historical items, seventeenth-century art, fashion photography, design and of course a host of fabulous jeans. Bloemberg brought in designers like Jan Taminiau to design a denim garment specially for the exhibition. *Blue Jeans* also takes a critical look at the production of jeans, and looks ahead to the use of new techniques and innovative resources in future.

The museum as a workshop – one of the defining characteristics of the Centraal Museum – takes three forms in this exhibition: a designer's studio, an industrial production site, and a space where visitors can have a go themselves. In short, *Blue Jeans* broadly showcases the phenomenon that is jeans, using unique items on loan from other countries, alongside outstanding exhibits from the Netherlands.

We should like to thank all those who have been involved, especially Tom, Margriet and Pauline Broekman and Erik Kuijsten. Many thanks also to Joachim Baan for designing the exhibition and this publication, to which Anneke Beerkens, Georgette Koning and Lynsey Dubbeld made their own expert contributions as well. Lot of thanks to those who provided items on loan, and to Freudenthal/Verhagen, gluejeans, Boudicca and G-Star, who all contributed something special to the exhibition. And of course our thanks also go to BankGiro Loterij, the Mondrian Fund, the KfHein Fund and the other sponsors for their collaboration, ideas and faith in *Blue Jeans*.

Edwin Jacobs,
director



4 essays

Ninke Bloemberg
Anneke Beerkens
Georgette Koning
Lynsey Dubbeld

2 photo series

Freudenthal/Verhagen
Denimheads

2 posters

Freudenthal/Verhagen
Pattern

1 denim dictionary

in collaboration with
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