



Cultural Phenomena

Blue Jeans (17)

14:30 minutes

Two-track audio

00:53 Ruedi Karrer collects jeans. In his jeans museum in Zurich he keeps 9'000 pairs. Many have their own story to tell.

03:12 Levi Strauss, an emigrant from Bavaria, began manufacturing working clothes in San Francisco in 1850. Intended for cowboys, mineworkers and gold diggers, they were made from canvas. An extract from the indigo plant soon gave them their characteristic blue colour.

04:46 It was not until nearly a hundred years later that, at the end of World War II, American GIs brought blue jeans to Europe. The so-called 68-generation wore them to distinguish themselves from their parents.

05:43 Today everybody is wearing jeans. How then can the young express their individuality through them? Now it comes down to details such as label, cut or holes in the material. New trends spring up in London appear in no time in Sydney. On average, one new model comes onto the market every day and competes for its share.

07:06 Cotton production is a strain on the environment. The methods used for dyeing, washing and bleaching the jeans material also affect the health of factory workers. These days, though, it is possible to buy jeans from environmentally sustainable cotton production. But for many young people such models are just not cool enough.

10:58 Nowadays only few occasions are left where wearing jeans would be inappropriate. In Döttingen (Canton Aargau), teenagers take jeans to school and test Karrer's expertise.