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 [Between Nature and Culture \(pdf, 9 MB\)](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

A guide to the Slovene Ethnographic Museum permanent exhibition

There is now on view an exhibition that talks about the dynamics of the relations between nature and culture: about the natural environment in which we were born and the socio-cultural environment that co-determines who we are. It tells the universal human striving to

through ways of making a  
the material and non-  
es. It draws attention to  
heritage and its close  
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Costume worn by Svetlana Makarovič for her evenings of chansons, designed by Alan Hramitelj, from 1987, in use until the 1990s (SEM Collections; photo: Janja Zaga).



Individualised teenage subcultures, Ljubljana, early 1990s (SEM Collections; photo: Marja Habuš).

prestigious and often marked with the initials of their owner's name. Putting monograms on objects later became more widespread, but retained its significance as something individual and special.

The societies of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century built elitism on the foundations of the social power possessed by townspeople and on wealth. Success, reputation and the significance of the individual were no longer a matter of being born into a certain background, but were acquired. Thus the newly-arising need for self-presentation

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spread to other social ranks, and is also a characteristic of certain professions which are based on an individual's image (actors, singers, sports people, etc.). Often these have, with respect to their clothes, become a model that others aspire to imitate. When what is on offer is based on mass-produced goods, the expressions of individuality in relation to clothes are different. With respect to the representatives of the social elite or to public personalities, ways of expressing individuality are most frequently emphasised by means of a renowned clothes label of the highest quality, with a tailor-made product or an exclusive garment by a world-famous fashion designer. "Protocol clothes", stage costumes, and so on have a special role.

Completely different means of individual expression can be observed in relation to "ordinary" people. The creation of one's own image by selecting and combining different off-the-peg garments, which can be made even more unique by adding one's own alterations (changing the style, adding slogans, pictures, sewn-on trimmings, dyeing, producing decorative tears, adding metal decorations, etc.) undoubtedly involves a great deal of creativity. Bare skin can also be employed to create individuality. As it is revealed and thus "public" it is – like clothes – subject to social scrutiny and discipline. Although this is a natural part of an individual's appearance, it is individualised by occasional or permanent changes: make-up, tattoos, piercing or cosmetic surgery.

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