

comradess à la mode

clothing and fashion in Zagreb
from 1945. to 1960.



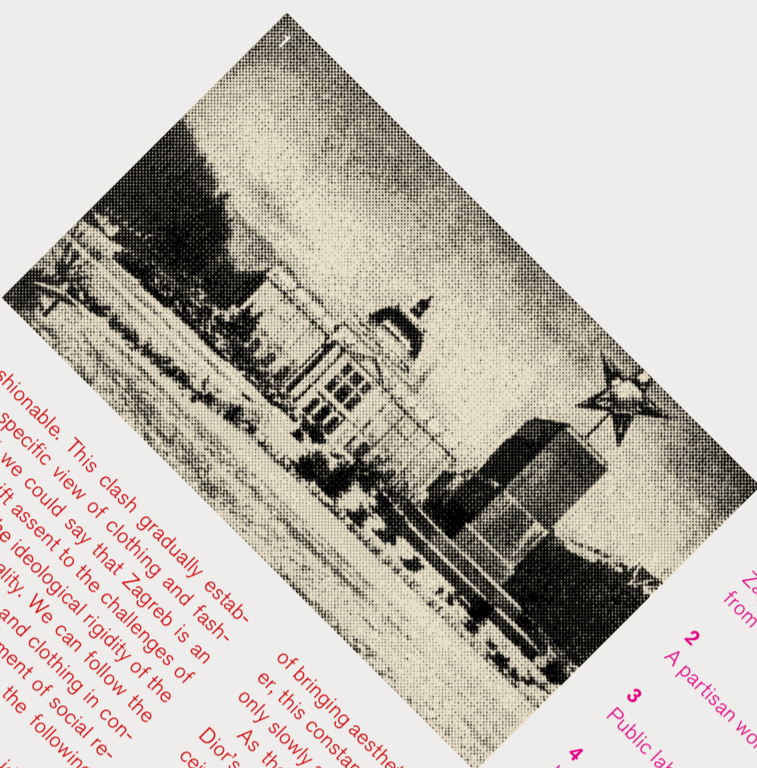
The exhibition "Comradess a la Mode" covers the phenomenon of clothing and fashion in Zagreb from 1945 to 1960.

This period, viewed from the perspective of clothing culture and development of fashion discourse, is especially interesting in this area, because it is a meeting point of the effects caused by an imposed ideological matrix, characteristic of Yugoslav socialism, contained in the stereotype of the "comradess" with preserved memory of that time was marked by the ambivalence of the ideological propaganda, put forward by the lady's desire to

be fashionable. This clash gradually established a specific view of clothing and fashion, so that we could say that Zagreb is an example of swift assent to the challenges of fashion, despite the ideological rigidity of the development of fashion and clothing in concordance with the development of social reality, which is determined by the following: The first, post-war period meant ideological imposition of manifest socialist realism, which determined the way of living in Croatia until 1948, when Tito rejected the political ideology on the totality of life).

The next period is the span from 1948 to 1952 (it is the time when the EXAT 51 group was formed, termed by Lasic as "transitory"). The period from 1952 onwards is characterized by a "more open and placable atmosphere" (Jesja Denegri). The EXAT 51 period (1951-56) marked "a short but eventful actual key period for making a variety of artistic expressions in the post-war Croatia and Yugoslavia publicly accessible" (Jesja Denegri).

Although this periodisation must not necessarily be useful for depicting the real and/or imaginary life connected with fashion clothing, it certainly makes the understanding

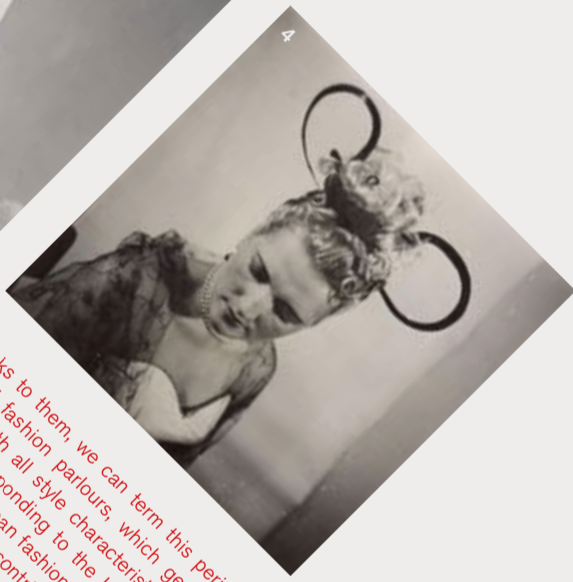
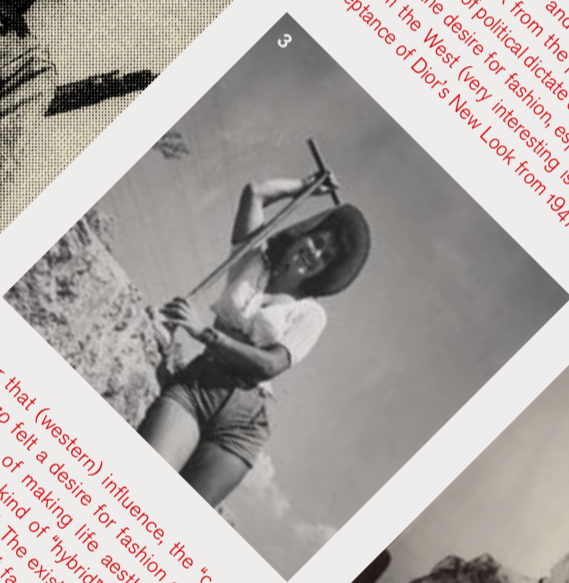


1 Zagreb 1946, View from the railway station
2 A partisan woman
3 Public labour enterprise
4 Inter-republic hairdresser competition in Zagreb, 1952., Photo Milan Pavić

of bringing aesthetics into life easier. However, this constantly present aim was achieved only slowly and modestly. As the post-war Europe had to wait for Dior's "New Look" until 1947, we can perceive fashion events in this area in the same way. It is at that time and in this area, where two ideologies (the eastern and the western) clashed with the middle-class through discourse and ideology in a very characteristic way.

By observing the clothing picture documents (mainly photographs), we can acquire a notion of certain typifications of fashionable look, i.e. ideas about emergence of new stereotypes that marked the period. The most interesting programming she has as a result of political programming, who kept defined in concordance with its political context. This "ideological" look is juxtaposed to the idea of "the lady with a memory", who kept her personal tailor and unceasing liking for fashionable look from the pre-war period.

Softening of political dictate enabled the realisation of the desire for fashion, especially fashion from the West (very interesting is the swift acceptance of Dior's New Look from 1947).



Under that (western) influence, the "comradess" also felt a desire for fashion as a particular form of making life aesthetic, which created some kind of "hybrid" stereotype of "lady-comradess". The existence and a rising number of important fashion parlours speak about the increasing number of new fashion consumers, "recruited" among the political elite.

The influence of the EXAT 51, education of artists, fashion journals (Naša moda, Svijet), film, photography, fashion shows, fashion parlours, development of textile and clothing industry and a faster information flow resulted in a special relationship to the fashion dictate of the haute couture. Those creations frequently a cheaper variety of western fashion: apart from its modesty, this fashion is markedly creative, luxurious and refined. Those creations were usually conceived by owners of fashion parlours, whose creativity was comparable to the one in haute couture parlours of Paris. The history of fashion in Zagreb of that period recorded the outstanding authorial signatures of Žužj Jelinek, Tilda Stepinski, Mia Granitz, Terka Tončić and Rosi Šavara. They were only part of a whole line of designers and makers of fashion clothing, shoes and accessories.

Thanks to them, we can term this period a time of fashion parlours, which generated fashion with all style characteristics of the 50-ies, corresponding to the haute couture of the big European fashion centres. This important contribution to clothing culture and the development of the fashion system can be observed in rich fashion documentation like photographs, quotations from diverse documents, public and private collections of photographs, amateur photographs, journals, newspapers, brochures, manuals and books. Visually and in words they convey to us the new female image, a notion of her clothing and fashion of the period.



5 Nada Stilinović, Opatija, 1949.
6 Public labour enterprise
7 Mica Kamenički, June 1945 her own creation

This exhibition displays major documents from the shrine of fashion history as testimonies of that time's everyday life.

The meeting of different sources of the same era, opens the possibility of a special reading of history, in which fashion is recognized as a powerful and autonomous starter of social changes, even when it is ignored and quiet, has subversive power able to erode even the most rigid political dictate.

Ante Tončić, Vladislavić, Author of the Exhibition

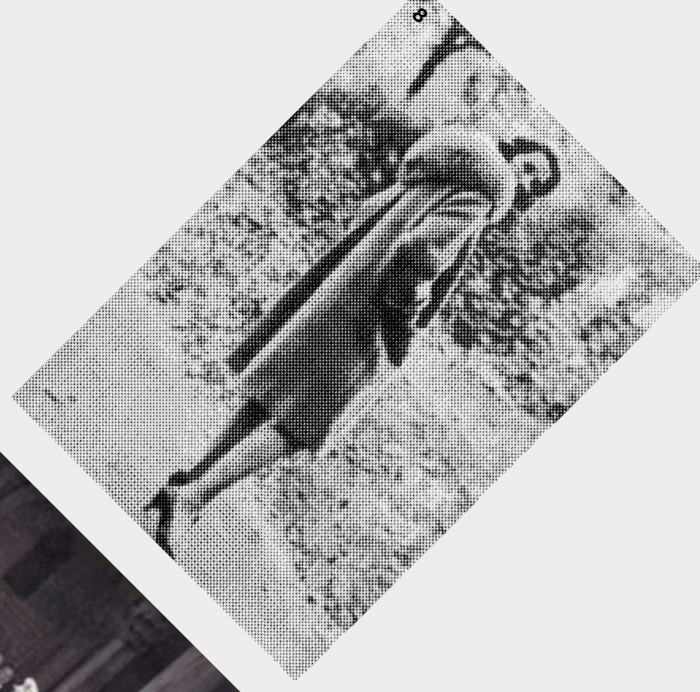
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8 Žuži Jelinek, New York, model: Suzy Parker, 1959.
9 Jovanka Broz and Vladimir Bakarić, 1952.



10

Comradess a la mode: clothing and fashion in Zagreb from 1945. to 1960.
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The Author and Curator of the Exhibition: Ante Tonči Vladislavić

Assistants: Jasminka Končić
Nina Katarina Simončić

Exhibition Coordinator: Martina Munivrana

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11

Educational programs: Nada Beros

Exhibition Set-up: Ante Tonči Vladislavić

Set-up Assistant: Jasminka Končić

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The author of the Project and Tutor: Ante Tonči Vladislavić, red. profesor, TTF, Zagreb

Designers participating in the Fashion Show, students of TTF, Zagreb: Sandra Ognjenka Antunac; Ana Babić; Zorana Debanjić; Ana Detoni / Zorana Meić; Ana Fikić; Antonia Jakišić; Ines Jakišić; Ana Kalatajić; Viktorija Krčelić; Petra Markušević / Alena Orović; Đorđe Smajlović; Lana Stojisavljević; Iva Šimunović; Marina Višić; Jelena Vojković;

Art director of the Fashion Show: Ante Tonči Vladislavić

Coordination of the Show: Ante Tonči Vladislavić
Jasminka Končić

Technical realization
Technical set-up
Contemporary Art, Zagreb: Vedran Mihalić
Tomislav Jadrisko
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Filip Zima

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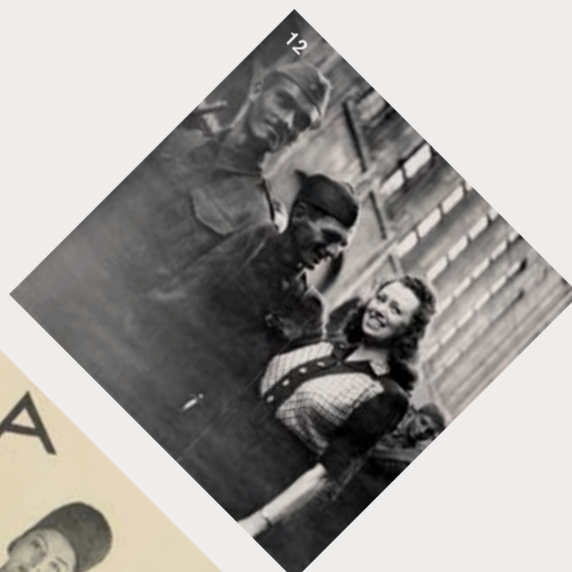
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13



12



14



15

tel. (+3851) 48 51 808; 48 51 930
fax. (+3851) 48 51 977; 48 51 931
e-mail: msu@msu.hr · www.msu.hr

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17



16

Women welders 16

Tito's birthday rally 17

Struggle 18

and Build-up of Socialism' Zagreb, 1949.

Vida Tomasić, from the book 'Croatian Women in the Struggle



Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb