

# Strangers in a Strange Land

It's easy to feel outnumbered in a country of 1 billion people, especially for non-natives. But more and more foreigners are finding ways to make China feel like home.

**EXPATS in their own words**  
photographs by **ARIANA LINDQUIST**



**MORGAN ALEXANDER JONES (MOJO)**  
age 26

“There are a lot of black people in this country now ... and they speak Chinese, too.”

**Where did you move from?**  
Brooklyn, New York.

**How long have you been in China?**  
Three and a half years.

**What do you do?**  
My main job is as a radio host for a luxury lifestyle and jazz show called *Soulfire*. The entire show is in Mandarin Chinese. My other main job is as a hip hop MC. I do my own solo work traveling around the country, hosting, rapping, and beatboxing for hip hop programs around China. But my big project right now is with my group Redstar.

Redstar is a hip hop trio consisting of a Chinese-American producer by the name of DJ Sickstar, local Shanghainese rapper Tang King, and yours truly. We've been working together for about two years and we're finally coming out with our first album sometime this summer. It will change hip hop.

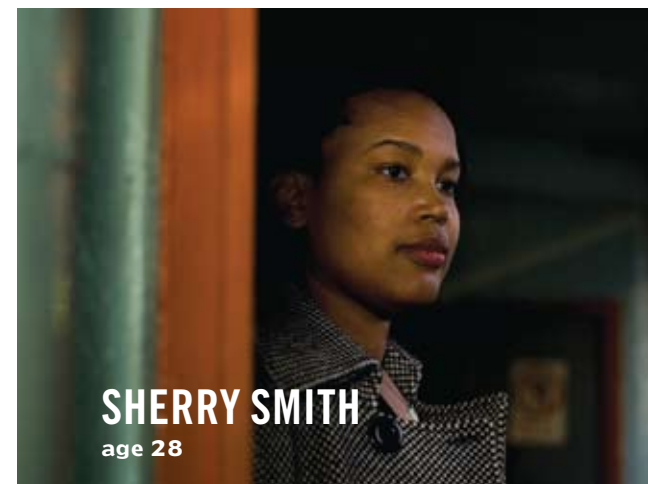
**Any funny stories?**  
A Chinese girl was walking past me and muttered a strangely straightforward phrase in Chinese: “Wow, there are a lot of black people in this country now.” So I turned around and yelled back to her “Yeah, there are a lot of black people in this country now ... and they speak Chinese, too.”

**What do you miss most?**  
I miss buying deodorant for cheap. Deodorant out here is like seven or eight bucks a pop.

**How much do you hang out with other expats?**  
Half and half. I don't really count. I think I'm mostly around Chinese people. I guess part of that is because I'm married to one. But then again, I think my wife is more American than me and I'm more Chinese than my wife.

**Any plans to come back?**  
I do plan on coming back. But I don't think it will be permanent, or at least not yet.

LEARN MORE [myspace.com/redstarhiphop](http://myspace.com/redstarhiphop)



**SHERRY SMITH**  
age 28

“I moved to China to earn less than someone living below the poverty level in the U.S.”

**Where did you move from?**  
Before Shanghai, I lived in Wuhan, China. Before that, I lived in Jackson, Mississippi.

**How long have you been in China?**

Two and a half years.

**What do you do and how did you end up doing it?**  
I work at a Microsoft joint venture with the Shanghai municipal government. (Trust me, it just sounds fancy.) My title is quality support specialist. When I worked in Wuhan, I taught maritime English to Chinese sailors.

**Why did you move?**  
I wanted to get out of Mississippi, and China is on the other side of the world ... literally. I said to myself, “I'm too smart to be paid by the hour.” So I moved to China to earn less than someone living below the poverty level in the U.S.

**What should people in America know about China?**

Americans aren't the only ones who are fiercely patriotic. And the number of people learning English in China is larger than the entire population of the United States. Learn Chinese.

**What do you miss most?**  
I miss my bra collection! I had 79, but my friends only let me bring 14.

**Any plans to come back?**  
I don't know when I'll move back for good. I haven't been home since I left in 2005. I'm curious to see how much I've changed.

**Where did you move from?**  
New York.

**How long have you been in China?**

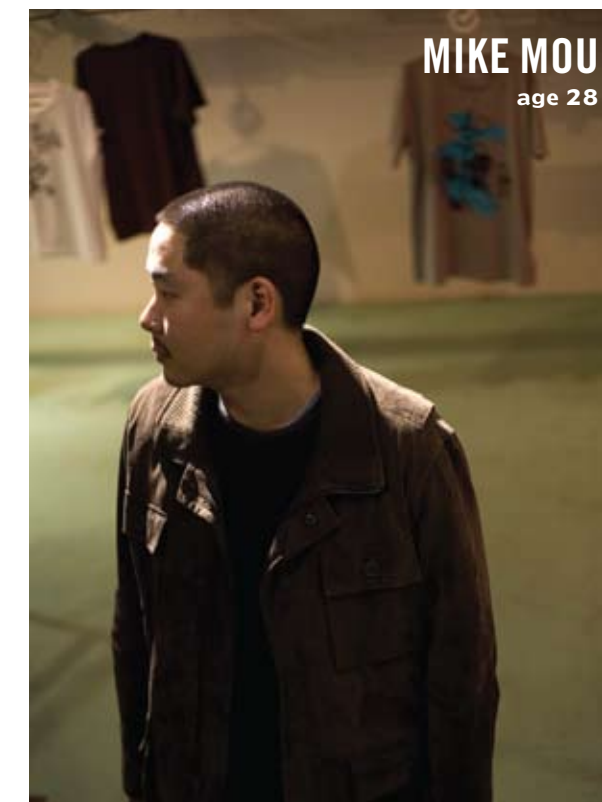
Five years.

**What do you do in China?**  
I'm now working as a senior brand manager for an up-and-coming streetwear label called Eno. We are building stores across Mainland China focusing on urban Chinese youth, one of the most fascinating and fastest-growing groups in China. The learning curve is fast and the challenge to create a cool Chinese brand is something that's great to be a part of.

**Why did you move to China?**  
I've been coming to China since I was a teenager. On my first trip to China, I visited a remote village on the Yangtze River. This was 10 years ago, and there were not as many foreigners here as

there are now. I was acting as a translator between the local and tourist groups and it was a great feeling, being this cultural bridge between two worlds. My love just grew from there. Fast forward to 2003, the hype of China's growth and development really attracted me here, from a career standpoint. Also, my ability to speak Chinese and bicultural background couldn't really be leveraged in the U.S. China is a huge, relatively untapped market and developing faster than most Westerners can imagine.

**Anything else to say?**  
You can't study animals at the zoo; you gotta come to the jungle.



**MIKE MOU**  
age 28



The laws sometimes sleep, but never die.