

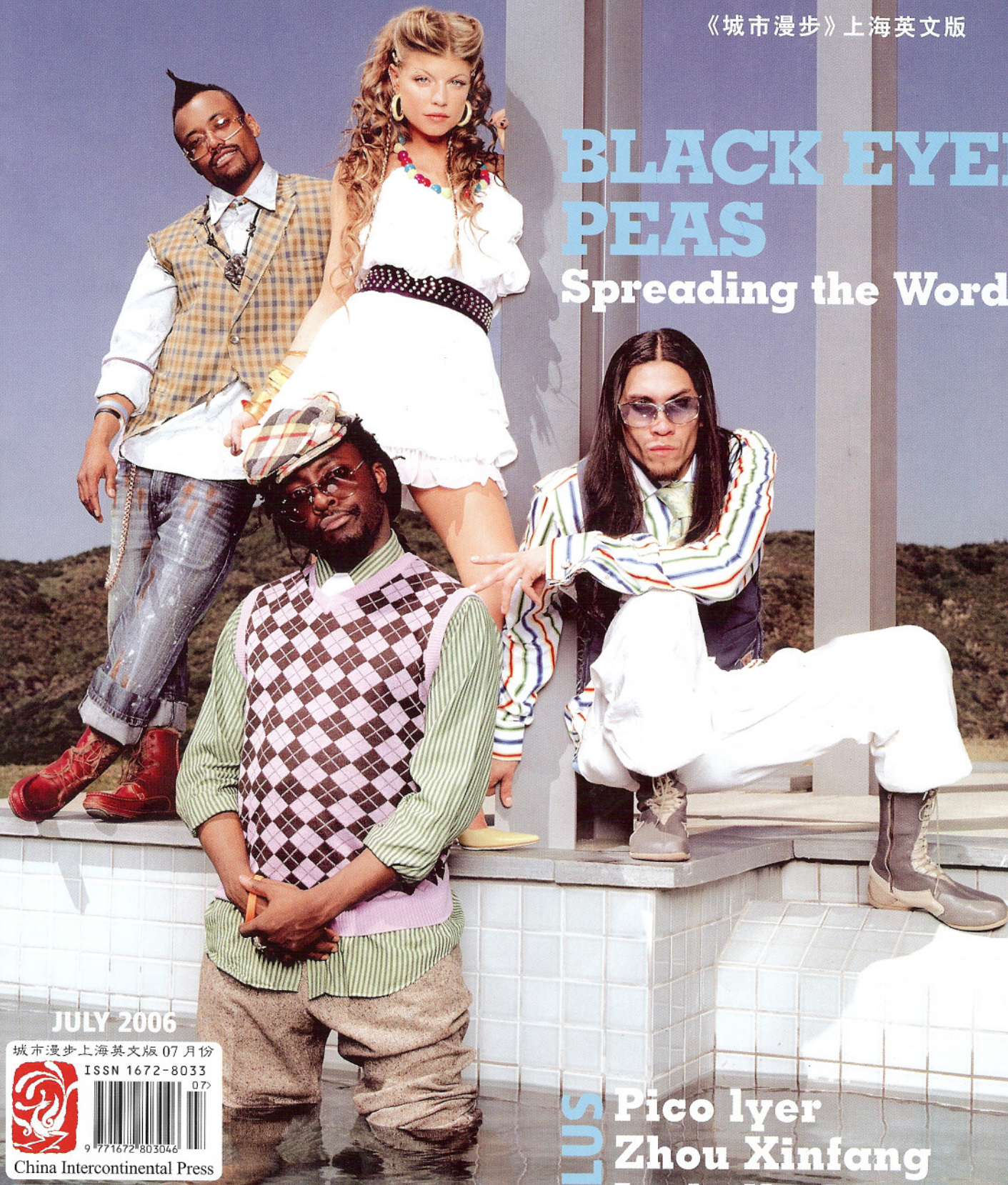
SHANGHAI

# that's

《城市漫步》上海英文版

## BLACK EYED PEAS

Spreading the Word



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# man-ifesto

Shanghai's sexiest menswear store begins with 'Fourplay'

**m**en are notorious for ignoring their underwear. They choose a pair of boxers or briefs and then keep them until the bum wears through. In Shanghai, however, this typically saggy state of affairs is compounded by a simple lack of choice. Even if the fashion forward male wanted to complete his designer look with a top end undergarment, the highest he could reach was Calvin Klein. And for the truly trendy, CK has long been passé.

This paucity of underpants is ultimately what drove Kenneth T to launch Manifesto, Shanghai's first and only retailer of premium, imported underwear, swimwear, and fitness wear for men. "Basically I started this store because I couldn't find anywhere to shop," says the media and branding professional. In truth, it was an absence of choice and the sighting of too many bad briefs at the gym. To the fashionable metrosexual, ill-fitting undergarments are like a traffic accident – you try to look away but can't. "You go into the gym and the underwear ... Well, someone needs to help these men with their underwear."

The boutique's slogan – "Shanghai's sexiest menswear store" – isn't marketing hyperbole. Manifesto's (emphasis on the 'man') spring/summer 2006 collection features low-cut, body-conscious styles from Private Structure, C-IN2, N2N Bodywear and DT Underwear. All four brands – from Malaysia, New York, Los Angeles, and Australia, respectively – are trend leaders making their debut on the Chinese mainland. "Now the trend is to show your skin. If you've got it, flaunt it," says Kenneth. To help men do just that, the designers have worked a selection of 'tents', 'pouches' and 'slings' into their styles to keep things front and center. "It's like the push-up for men!" Kenneth exclaims, showing C-IN2's sling support system.

At Manifesto's recent launch party 'Fourplay', Kenneth graciously offered a peek at his own choice of undergarment (DT's low-rise cotton brief), but otherwise left the flaunting to his models. To play up the brands' active feel, models performed dance and fitness routines, rather than the traditional fashion walk. One model demonstrated yoga in N2N's baby soft Tactel pants and net tank, stripping off the tank part way through. Another model danced in micro-fiber split shorts so tiny Kenneth urged him to wear something additional underneath. "But he was like, 'No, no, no.' He just let it all hang out," Kenneth says, referring to the model's enthusiasm, not a bonus peep show.

The crowd had no trouble catching the spirit, packing the space tighter than a pair of pelvis-skimming swim trunks. Inspired, one celebrant even leapt up on the makeshift stage and stripped down to his (gasp) Calvin Klein's.

Appropriately, the Manifesto boutique is located underground at Shanghai Studio, an exhibit space converted from an old bomb shelter. The shop sits at the end of a winding corridor lined with poster-size brand previews – in other words, chiseled models wearing stylish bits of nothing.

But Kenneth sees Manifesto's role as more than just educating Shanghai's males about quality underpants or giving women something to gape at. As the saying goes, clothes make the man. Well, the same with underwear. "People have a limited view of underwear," he says. "I want to associate it with a healthy lifestyle." ■

Manifesto: Shanghai Studio,  
No 4, 1950 Huaihai Lu,  
by Xingguo Lu (138 1861 6670)  
Mon-Thu 2-10pm, Fri-Sun 2pm-midnight.  
All products available on [www.manifesto.com.cn](http://www.manifesto.com.cn)  
(internet-activated Chinese bank cards accepted,  
delivery charges apply).