

Urban Nomads

Untitled photograph taken in Sungchu, Ngaba, 2018

I'm Nyema, a photographer and the founder of Nerhi Studio, based in Lhasa. After completing a BA in Fashion Styling and Photography at the London College of Fashion, I'm currently pursuing an MA in Art and Cultural Enterprise at Central Saint Martins. My work focuses on the intersection of culture, identity, and sustainability, often exploring themes of urbanization, tradition, and the changing experiences of young Tibetans. Through both my photography and my design projects, I aim to preserve the cultural narratives of Tibet while promoting sustainable practices, including my current research into repurposing materials for sustainable clothing and handicrafts from Tibet.

This photograph is part of my "Urban Nomads" series, created to explore the evolving concept of nomadism in contemporary life. Captured in Songpan, a remote Tibetan region near the city of Chengdu, the image reflects the tension between rural tradition and the pull of urbanization. The young Tibetan subject gazes toward the city, embodying the curiosity and yearning of youth drawn to urban life, while also questioning the cultural degradation and challenges faced by local communities as they migrate.

Through this staged portrait, I sought to evoke a sense of nostalgia for a way of life that's increasingly out of reach, while also celebrating the spirit of adaptability and resilience inherent in nomadic heritage. The juxtaposition of clothing, designed for both functionality and innovation, mirrors the push-pull of tradition and modernity in today's world. By capturing this moment, I aim to provoke reflection on how we can carry forward the values of our ancestral past as we navigate the complexities of the future, blending the essential elements of nomadic life with the demands of the modern world.

