

China's premier sports trade show knows all about "cool running"

The urban art of "pao ku" adds to ispo china's growing momentum.

With the expertise of the world's premier sports exhibition organisers behind it, ispo china was always going to be forward thinking and firmly on trend and part of that is recognising the youth movement that is bringing a range of action sports to the forefront. The addition of the first ispo china Columbia Parkour Festival to the show has naturally created important headlines.

Alongside snowboarding, and skateboarding Parkour is fast emerging as one of the most popular extreme activities in China, resonating through its spiritual discipline as much as the thrill of personally overcoming any obstacle. Born in the 80's from a French military training discipline, Parkour has no limits other than the mental and physical strength of the individual traceur (freerunner) . It this is something that does not rely on complex kit or facilities, therefore acquiring a natural urban cool factor, with freedom of self expression extending to style and fashion. At heart, it cannot be considered a sport, for there is no competitive element, other than self challenge, but the development of the skills and the appeal to spectators has inevitably led to a growing interest in events and public displays of free running. Ispo China is therefore its perfect showcase.

The growing interest in Parkour in China has been challenging the orderly structure of society for literally only about four years, but it's growing fast, with social networking uniting its community and the city playgrounds of Beijing and Shanghai creating perfect backdrops for these highly disciplined yet free spirited urban warriors. Alongside ispo china some of the first Parkour competitions have recently been taking place in Beijing and in March 2010 the first ispo china Columbia Parkour Festival was held, which attracted some of the country's elite in order to promote and support China's growing Parkour movement.

The festival concept was simple, to provide an annual place for Parkour to breathe and grow, Everyone who participated received a complimentary product pack and those that wanted to push limits competitively as a team had the chance to obtain the value of 2,000 yuan in Colombia Jackets, with additional prizes from Zhuarong Yi and other brands as well as access to development funding from Columbia sportswear and ispo china of RMB500 -2,000 per month. With presentations, events and exchanges of creativity and knowledge all part of the festival it is expected that this unique exhibition community will continue to grow each year with the cool movement that is Parkour in China.