



# CHE KOTHARI

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“...IT IS MY MISSION TO CONITNUE TO SET THE CULTURAL BAR FOR EVERYTHING I PUT MY HANDS ON....QUALITY, INTEGRITY, POSITIVITY AND HAVING FUN ARE THE WAYS I DELIVER...”

- Che Kothari

## WORK EXPERIENCE



### HIGHTOP STUDIO

**Co-Founder / Co-Creative Director**

**2002 - Present**

Founded in 2002 by Che Kothari & Ryan Paterson, at the time students of photography and new media respectively at Ryerson University's School Of Image Arts, Hightop Studio works in a range of media including photography, design, interactive, video, web design and management, event production and consultancy. Coming from artist backgrounds to operate in a largely commercial sphere, Hightop's members often occupy the grey area between art and commerce but try to stay grounded in artistic practice as much as possible. Hightop has always prided itself in producing innovative and impacting creative for a growing number of clients. Kothari & Paterson also continue to collaborate on their own personal projects and have lectured, exhibited and held workshops extensively. Most recently, Hightop completed a half hour video for War Child Canada encouraging active global citizenship among youth, which is being shown in high school classrooms across the country.

#### Responsibilities:

- Creative Direction
- Chief Photographer
- Marketing, Promotions, Brand Outreach / Job Acquisition
- Project Management
- Staff Management
- Financial Management
- Studio Management

Select Client List:

Sony / BMG, Harbourfront Centre, FIDO, Red Bull Canada, Nike, Kappa Canada, Ryerson University, Canada Goose, Much Music, SexTV, The City Of Toronto, Manifesto Festival, Style In Progress, The University of Toronto, GSUS Sindustries, 4REAL TV, Laidlaw Foundation, What's The 411, War Child Canada, District Six Music, The Remix Project, REMG, Luminato Festival, The Harmony Movement, plus many local Canadian businesses and artists.

Select Events Produced:

Sept 17 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup> , 2008	Manifesto Festival, City-Wide, Toronto
Sept 20 <sup>th</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2007	Manifesto Festival, City-Wide, Toronto
July 27-29 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	Global Hip Hop Workshops. Harbourfront Centre, Toronto
June 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	ONE DROP vol 2. El Mocambo. Toronto
June 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	When Men Cook, Father's Day Fundraiser, Alexandra Park. Toronto
June 12 <sup>th</sup> -13 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	IGNITE Youth Arts Forum, Key Note Speaker & Showcase, Toronto
May 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	ONE DROP, vol 1. Crosstown, Toronto
Mar 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	DJ ?uestlove, Crosstown, Toronto
Mar 17 <sup>th</sup> – April 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2007	Jamel Shabazz Exhibition, Thrush Holmes Empire, Toronto
March 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	Kodak Lecture Series with Jamel Shabazz, Ryerson, Toronto
Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2006	NYE FUCK YEAH. 3 Room Event, Toronto.
July 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2006	C-Rayz Walz. El Mocambo, Toronto
July 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2006	Vast Aire. El Mocambo, Toronto
Jan – Nov 2005	Big Norm Show Monthly Comedy Show. El Mocambo. Toronto
Dec 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	Gifted, Holiday xmas art sale/party. El Mocambo. Toronto
May 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	Function Vol 6. Release Party. Quo Nightclub. New York City
April 29 <sup>th</sup> 2005	Function Vol 6. Release Party. The Drake Hotel, Toronto
Feb 17 <sup>th</sup> 2005	Function Magazine Fundraiser. Fez Batik, Toronto
Jan 13 <sup>th</sup> 2005	We Want The Funk 2. El Mocambo, Toronto
Jan 6 <sup>th</sup> 2005	Back to the Grind. Reilly's Pub. Toronto
Nov 25 <sup>th</sup> 2004	Function Magazine Fundraiser. Roxy Blu, Toronto
Oct 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2004	WORD Festival. Mississauga Valleys Community Centre
Sept 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2004	Function Magazine Fundraiser. Andypoolhall, Toronto
August 6 <sup>th</sup> 2004	We Want The Funk. The El Mocambo, Toronto
Oct. 19 <sup>th</sup> 2003	Function Magazine Fundraiser. The Mockingbird, Toronto
Sept 28 <sup>th</sup> 2003	HYPE. Art, Dance & Music Festival. AGO, Toronto
July 9 <sup>th</sup> 2003	Bassis Special Event with PSIDREAM (British Columbia)
May 8 <sup>th</sup> 2003	Lush @ Hush. Clubnight. Lush Nightclub, Toronto
April 1 <sup>st</sup> 2003	Bassis Special Event, 1 <sup>st</sup> Year New Media Exhibition
Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> 2003	Collage One Year Anniversary. Unamas Nightclub, Toronto
Sept 9 <sup>th</sup> 2005	Neksis Magazine Launch Party, Milano Restaurant. Toronto

Aug 17<sup>th</sup> 2002  
Apr 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 2002

Bohemian Ethic, one day outdoor arts festival, Guelph  
Maximum Exposure. Featured over 200 artists. Toronto



**IGNITE THE AMERICAS**  
**Executive Director**  
**2008**

Ignite The Americas Youth Arts Policy Forum was an initiative that brought together young artists, industry professionals, policy experts and government authorities from 30 countries across the Americas to Toronto for one week to explore and develop effective ways to amplify the power that arts and culture has in building social inclusion and generating economic opportunities.

Responsibilities:

- Developed mission statement, objectives, strategies of execution, project management framework, measurable outcomes, inclusivity strategy, and follow through plan with 2 partner NGO Executive Directors and the Internal Relations Director of Canadian Heritage and his staff
- Outreach, recruitment, hiring and management of a staff of 10 leaders in Toronto, as well as one regional coordinator from each of the following countries: Jamaica, Colombia, USA, Brazil & Canada
- Engaged all stakeholders (local youth arts community, Canadian Heritage, The Governor General's Office, The Inter-American Committee on Culture of the Organization of American States, staff members, volunteers and youth participants from across the hemisphere) in meaningful dialogues of process and inclusion and ensured their voices and needs were being met throughout the project
- Worked closely with core team to develop and implement the overall vision and mandates with respect to program design and community partnerships
- Worked closely with core team to ensure a quality experience was had with all guests of the program, including the youth delegates, policy-makers, industry leaders, community visit hosts, and staff and also opened the forums dialogue with a personal greeting and short speech
- Setup and co-facilitated a visit of Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, The Governor General of Canada at the forum

- Participated in multiple debriefs in regards to the forum and its process and still currently working on the development of a process legacy to be past on to our partners hosting 2009's forum in Brazil
- Presented the forum's findings with a 10 minute presentation, a 12 page report and a 3 minute video at the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of Cultural Ministers of the Organization of American States and Highest Appropriate Authorities on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in Bridgetown Barbados

Please view full website and blogs: <http://www.ignitetheamericas.ca>

Please view video documentation of the project: <http://www.ignitetheamericas.ca/video>

# MANIFESTO

## **MANIFESTO COMMUNITY PROJECTS INC.**

**Founder / Executive Director**

**2007 – Present**

Manifesto Community Projects is a youth-led organization devoted to fostering collaboration in Toronto's artist community in order to provide powerful platforms and resources for growth and exposure. The focal point of its activities is the annual city-wide Manifesto Festival of Urban Music & Art, in addition to a variety of community initiatives including workshop programs, art exhibitions, and fundraising events. Manifesto's main objectives are to: create a platform where community members can share resources, knowledge, and experience to have a greater impact and have the opportunity to collaborate; celebrate and showcase local talent on a large scale to nurture the growth and exposure of youth arts, facilitate networking and inter-generational communication; and act as a united front of community leaders in acquiring adequate funding and support.

### Responsibilities:

- Work closely with Manifesto's board of directors and executive team to develop and implement the overall vision and mandates of the organization, with respect to program design, community initiatives, and any other activities undertaken by the organization.
- Work with Managing Director to build and maintain partnerships with other organizations with respect to strategic alliances and fundraising
- Oversee staff acquisition process and management, and provide motivation and guidance to staff in pursuit of the organization's mandates and successful operations
- Assure the organization's mission and programs are consistently presented in a strong, positive, relevant, and clear manner
- Work with Director of Operations to develop long term financial plans and projections
- Work with Creative Director to design new programs and initiatives

### Select Projects:

### Town Hall Meetings

The purpose of these meetings are to actively engage the community on decisions shaping the festival and activities, in order to represent the current needs of the youth arts community, voiced through these discussions. This also acts as a networking opportunity for members of the community to meet with others who maybe in a similar line of work or study, and exchange information and knowledge. Che is a key player in organizing and leads the meetings.

Please view video of a 2007 Town Hall meeting: <http://www.themanifesto.ca/cyanforum>

### The Big Norm Show

As part of the 2007 Ignite Youth Arts Forum, Manifesto produced an edition of The Big Norm Show, a theatre style comedy variety showcase that creatively intertwined performances with dialogue on youth arts and culture and addressed the varying needs young artists are facing. This took place at the Gladstone Hotel with a capacity room in attendance. Che was the lead director and producer of this showcase.

### Project Positivity

For seven days in August, Manifesto in partnership with Red Bull Canada, brought renowned NYC photographer Jamel Shabazz and paired him with a team of four local photography mentors, with a goal to teach 18 young people from across the GTA skills such as shooting, computer editing, printing, and curating. After the program, all of the students work hung along side an exhibition and book launch of Shabazz's in a high-end gallery on Queen West. Che was the lead producer of this initiative.

Please view Project Positivity Online: <http://www.redbull.ca/positivity>

### 4-day annual festival

The festival is filled with a rich variety of events providing a cross-section of urban music and the arts, starting by paying respect to the roots of our diverse cultures and ending with imagining and planting seeds for its future. The program includes engaging and entertaining components such as: film screenings, art exhibits, street performances, art installations, an outdoor urban arts market; dance showcases and a huge outdoor concert at Toronto's civic heart, Nathan Phillips Square. By reaching over 11000+ people over 4 days, The Manifesto Festival aims to celebrate and nurture the gifts our young bright minds possess, uniting our community, and bringing an incredible, inspiring show in the City of Toronto. Che worked with and managed all staff and executed all the mandates of the organization through the festival.

Please view Festival Press here: [http://www.themanifesto.ca/2007Festival\\_OnlinePress.pdf](http://www.themanifesto.ca/2007Festival_OnlinePress.pdf)

## Luminato Streetscape

Following the blockbuster event at Nathan Philips Square, Manifesto Community Projects was invited to produce a large portion of Luminato 2008's outdoor street art exhibition entitled Streetscape. Spanning both Regent Park and the Parliament St. Slip the Manifesto programming includes, mentorship's, and 8-week workshop series and meaningful employment opportunities for local youth as well as world class display opportunities for emergent and established street artists. Che was a key player in forming and negotiating the partnership, hiring and managing the execution staff.

Please view full outline: <http://www.luminato.com/festival/eng/events/ID34/index.php>



## **EARWAKS.COM**

**Managing Director / Co-Creative Director / Events Director  
2003 - Present**

Earwaks isn't just another music and lifestyle website. Earwaks is that slick cat you spot on the street rocking their own styles with gusto, who opens your mind to new forms, flavours, and sounds you've never seen or heard before. That person who awes you with their individuality, enthusiasm, knowledge, and passion. That person that reminds you you've got soul. Earwaks is thousands of voices, tastes, and opinions sifting through culture to unearth hidden gems. Earwaks is that missing link in the mediascape, a brand without borders, a content leader among Canadian music and lifestyle independent media as well as a leader in Toronto's urban eventscape.

### Responsibilities:

- content management and scheduling
- senior photographer
- supervising video producer
- conduct interviews with internationally renowned artists
- recruiting and managing a team of 20+ creative and editorial staff
- executing an events schedule with high profile featured artists
- promotions, marketing and brand outreach
- partnership development
- advertising and sales

Select Features:

Spoken Word Video Featuring Kamau:

<http://earwaks.com/life/3358/spoken-kamau.html>

Video and Photoshoot featuring beatboxer Killa Kela:

<http://earwaks.com/beats/3722/kill-kela.html>

Photo Essay, Article and Video on Style In Progress:

<http://earwaks.com/hiphop/1136/style-in-progress.html>

Photo essay and article on India:

<http://earwaks.com/life/1036/india-in-pictures.html>

Photo essay and article on women in Hip Hop:

<http://earwaks.com/life/450/all-bgirl-school.html>

Photo, Video and Article on Zaki Ibrahim:

<http://earwaks.com/beats/396/zaki-ibrahim.html>

Video PSA, Photoography & Article on Skate4Cancer:

<http://earwaks.com/life/2526/skate-4-cancer.html>



## **CYAN (CANADIAN YOUTH ARTS NETWORK)**

**Founding Member, Board Member**

**2007 - Present**

CYAN bridges the divide between arts practitioners, funders and policy makers and establishes a diverse yet collective voice for young artists. Our mandate is to create, manage, and distribute information to help build capacity in the youth arts sector; to leverage diverse partnerships in order to support and advocate for youth arts; to act as an intermediary for the youth arts sector in Canada.

### **Responsibilities:**

- brand development and creative direction
- long-term strategy and vision
- outreach, promotions and networking
- forming partnerships
- event co-ordination
- attend monthly meetings

## **CHE KOTHARI PHOTOGRAPHY**

**Professional Freelance Photography**

**2000 - Present**

Known for being one of the most prolific portraitists in Toronto, Che's photography has graced the covers of many street publications in Toronto. Some highlights in his photography career include: a long list of portrait sessions with celebrity heavyweights, fashion spreads in internationally distributed publications; working for high profile companies as the documentation director of major events; and numerous exhibitions of his work.

### Select List of Celebrity Portraits:

John Cho (of Harold & Kumar), Bob Rae, Ice Cube, Common Sense, K-OS, Faith Evans, T.I., Juelz Santana, Lloyd Banks, Phife Dawg & Ali Shaheed Muhammad of A Tribe Called Quest, Talib Kweli, Chingy, Ziggy Marley, Letoya Luekkett, Beenie Man, Sizzla, Sean Paul, Damian Marley, K'Naan, Kardinal Offishal, Zaki Ibrahim, Dj Cash Money, M1 of Dead Prez, Guru or Gang Starr, Killa Kela, Pete Rock, Thunderheist, and many more Canadian personalities.

Select List of Publications Featured in:

Applied Arts Magazine, Redbull Music Academy City Guide, Exclaim Magazine (1 cover), Readers Digest, Mass Appeal, Mugshot Magazine, Pound Magazine (1 cover), Urbanology Magazine (6 covers), Under Pressure Magazine, Surfaces & Symbols, Inside Mississauga, Soccer Italia Magazine, Grind Magazine, Tribe Magazine, Neksis Magazine, Now Magazine (2 covers), Eye Magazine (5 covers), Byte Magazine , Guelph Mercury Newspaper, Function Magazine, Ryersonian Newspaper, The Eyeopener, and more.

Select List of Exhibitions:

2009:

CONTACT Festival Preview Show, Burroughes Gallery, Toronto  
SNAP!09, The National Ballet School, Toronto

2008:

US vs Them, Well & Good Gallery, Toronto  
TIFF exhibition, C5 Lounge at The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto  
Heineken Presents Bon Fiyah, Reign, Toronto  
Positivity, Corridor Gallery, New York  
Luminato Festival, Streetscape, Outdoor Photography Installation, Regent Park Toronto  
Chinadoll, JDilla Tribute, Toronto

2007:

RISE, Sketch Fundraiser, Burroughes Gallery, Toronto  
Foundation, Whippersnapper Gallery, Toronto  
IGNITE, Youth Arts Expo, Gladstone Hotel, Toronto  
CONTACT Festival, Well & Good Gallery, Toronto  
Good People, Now Lounge, Toronto

2006:

20/20 Vision. M-ONE-11, Toronto ON  
Good People, Now Lounge, Toronto  
Kick up your heels - Harbourfront Centre, Toronto

2005:

Culture Shock. Harbourfront Centre. Toronto ON.  
All Bgirl Series 2 - El Mocambo, Toronto

DANCEMUTHAFUCKADANCE - XPACE, Toronto  
Fresh Jive Art Show - Loop Clothing, Kitchener  
Toronto Outdoor Art Show - Nathan Phillips Square  
Hero's & Icon's.4 artist show. Base Gallery, Toronto  
Maximum Exposure 2005 – 121 Bond Street. Toronto  
Flaunt it! Group shot at the Yorkdale Centre, Toronto  
Group Show – Whippersnapper Gallery, Toronto  
Earwaks.com Anniversary Show – Stralight, Waterloo  
Works from Portfolio Seven Publication – 121 Bond Street, TO

2004:

Solo Show – Exhibition of over 30 works – El Mocambo - Toronto  
Aritzia Store Front window Display – Queen West, Toronto  
El Mocambo Nightclub - 2nd Floor. Stills display.  
Group Show - Om Summer Solstice Festival - Ontario  
Group Show Unite! – El Mocambo –Toronto  
Presidents Exhibition – Best Of Maximum Exposure Show  
El Mocambo Nightclub - 2nd Floor. Stills + video installation.  
Maximum Exposure 2004 – 121 Bond Street. Toronto  
Group Exhibition at 80 Spadina – Toronto

2003:

Solo Exhibition at Berkley Street Café – Toronto  
Solo Exhibition at Ebar – Guelph, ON  
Group Exhibition at Design Exchange – Toronto  
Red – Bluffs Gallery (Scarborough) Juried Show (Contact 2003)  
Maximum Exposure 2003 – 121 Bond Street, Toronto

2002:

Unamas Nightclub. Stills display and video projection  
Element NightClub. Stills display and video projection. Weekly.  
Rockwood Art Gallery. Stills Display.  
B-sides Nightclub. Stills display and video projection.  
Pokeypalloza Festival. Stills display.  
Bohemian Ethic 2002, A Day of Fresh Art. Stills Display.  
Ebar Nightclub. Stills Display. Event photography.  
OM Summer Solstice Festival. Stills display.  
Alive – Bluffs Gallery (Scarborough) Juried Show (Contact 2002)  
Maximum Exposure – 121 Bond Street. Toronto.

2001:  
Café Aquarius Restaurant. Stills Display.

2000:  
Power. Art-in-Guelph Gallery. Juried Show



**FUNCTION MAGAZINE**  
**Co-Managing Editor / Co-Creative Director of Vol. 6.**  
**2004 - 2005**

Function Magazine is an annual publication created and distributed by the student body of Ryerson University's Image Arts program. The magazine is presented in a fine art context with ideas, aesthetics and concepts derived from the diverse and creative minds of young image-makers. The Magazine began and continues to be run entirely by the students, for the students. It provides a medium to display student work, as well as feature interviews with acclaimed international artists. The content itself is created by the three branches of the Image Arts Program [ Film, New Media, Photography ] and presents both still and dynamic imagery across the printed page and on an accompanying DVD.

Responsibilities:

- building and managing a team of volunteers
- fundraising \$22 000
- acquiring and editing submissions
- production of magazine and DVD
- coordination of large release event
- marketing and distribution of product.

**KAPPA CANADA**  
**Marketing Assistant**  
**2004**

Kappa is considered the most fashion driven soccer lifestyle brands today and is enjoyed by different genres of people for its fabrics, designs, quality and fit.

Responsibilities:

- produce or manage production of all marketing materials
- creative direction of company
- photography
- website management
- develop and implement marketing strategies

## EDUCATION

**Ryerson University, Toronto, ON**  
**2001-2005**

School of Image Arts - Still Photography  
4 year course, Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree.

Please view Ryerson Image Arts Website: <http://imagearts.ryerson.ca/>

## BOARDS, GROUPS, & FELLOWSHIPS

- DiverseCity Fellows, 9 month leadership program hosted by Toronto City Summit Alliance & Maytree Foundation (2009)
- Mobile City, City of Toronto & Milan Photography Competition, Juror (2008)
- City Of Toronto, Community Arts [Creative City Culture Plan] Working Group (2008)
- Racism. Stop It! National Video Competition by Canadian Heritage, Juror (2007)
- Ignite Youth Arts Forum, Youth Advisory Committee Member (2007)

## AWARDS & OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Toronto Youth Cabinet, Building Community Through Art Award 2008
- Aroni Image Award for Manifesto 2007 (<http://www.aroniawards.com/>)
- Honorable mention for Series Hold Up at Maximum Exposure 2004
- Invited Member of the Golden Key International Honors Society
- Bridgestone Tires Photography Competition Winner 2003 & 2004
- Ryerson's Dean's List
- Ryerson University Entrance Scholarship
- Ontario Scholars Award
- High School Graduation Optimist Award
- Terry James Communication Award
- Grade 12 English and Business Proficiency Awards
- Grade 11 Academic Top Student Award
- Most Sportsmanlike Award, Guelph Soccer League

## AFFILIATIONS

- Wellandgood.ca – Official Artist
- Thelegendsleague.com – Featured Artist
- sixdegreemedia.com – Featured Artist
- MvRemix.com – Featured Artist
- Them.ca – Official Artist

## MENTORSHIPS, WORKSHOPS, LECTURES, PANELS, SPEECHES, PRESENTATIONS

- Selam Youth Group, Photography Workshop (2009)
- Ignite The Americas, Findings Presentation at OAS CIC Authorities Meeting, OAS headquarters, Washington, USA (2009)
- Reasoning Radio Show, Kingston Jamaica, "Music in the education system" discussion panelist (2009)
- Dorest Park, Youth Council, Artist Talk (2009)
- YouthScape Conference, Institutional Change Theme, Workshop Leader, Banff Alberta (2009)
- Metropolitan Preparatory Academy, Full day Photography Workshop (2008)
- Ignite The Americas, 10 min Speech at OAS 4<sup>th</sup> Cultural Ministerial, Barbados (2008)
- Centre For Spanish Speaking People, Photography Workshop (2008)
- North By North East, Music Conference, 'Let Let me in', Panelist (2008)
- Positivity, Artist Panel, with guest moderators Talib Kweli, Danny Simmons, & Jamel Shabazz, NYC (2008)
- DesiFest, Yonge & Dundas Square, Guest Host (2008)
- Mobile City, City Of Toronto Youth Photography Program, Speech at Winners Exhibition (2008)
- Asian Heritage Month, Peel District School Board, Artist Talk for 411 Initiative For Change (2008)
- Regent Park Focus/Luminato Photography Workshop w/ Jamel Shabazz (2008)
- Camp Bellaleo - Councilors In Training – Photography workshop (2008)
- South Asian Heritage Month – India Photo Lecture (2008)
- My City My Story, Photography Mentor (2007-8)
- The Remix Project, Photography Mentor, William Nguyen (2008)
- The Remix Project, Managing Director Mentor, Connect The Dot Website (2007)
- Regent Park Focus/Pathways to Education, Luminato Photography Workshop (2008)
- Ryerson University, Artist Talk (2007)
- Appleby High School, Photography Lecture (2007)
- Red Bull MET, Photography Workshop (2007)

## REFERENCES

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**More references available promptly upon request**