

## THE KENTE ROYAL GALLERY PRESENTS

# NOTES FROM HARLEM

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEKOU LUKE

### WHAT IS NOTES FROM HARLEM ?

NOTES FROM HARLEM is a collection of personal photography, videography, and digital art NFTs captured by Sekou Luke throughout the spring and summer of 2020. These images illuminate Harlem's resilience while experiencing both a global pandemic and the racial justice awakening with the Black Lives Matter movement after the killing of George Floyd. The collection has expanded to include two iconic images of the actor Michael K Williams attending the Malcolm X Day March in Harlem, May 2021. Added to the photographic journey are video collaborations (HARLEM PARADE feat Dnay Baptiste, MERLINA feat Liza Jesse Peterson, THE ALPHA HYMN PROJECT, STILL I RISE feat. Chantal Georges and HOLD FAST TO DREAMS feat Malcolm Merriweather) celebrating the collaborative energy and response to these pandemics. The collection had a pre-release at the Aloft Financial District and Aloft Harlem Hotels where five pieces were sold. The collection was also profiled on NY1 news.

**"A story that reminds us of how resilient New Yorkers are.." -NY1**

### WHY NOW ?

Nearly three years into the COVID-19 global pandemic and approaching the 2 year anniversary of the public murder of George Floyd (May 25, 2020), this exhibit serves as a reminder of the journey we've experienced as a community. Amidst such devastating impact of two pandemics, these portraits affirm that we are a community standing in defiance, dignity and reliance.

### WHO IS SEKOU LUKE ?

Sekou Luke is a Jamaican-born, Harlem-based filmmaker and producer whose creative mediums include over 10 years of directing, filmmaking, photography, acting, and other forms of media & content creation. Sekou Luke is the CEO and founder of Sekou Luke Studio and REBEL Media, whose established creative collaborators include Amazon Prime Video, The Apollo Theater, Harlem Stage, The Billie Holiday Theatre, ROC-United, V-Day, The Schott Foundation, Ford Foundation, Family Values @ Work, Step Afrika, The Creative Genius Report, and PopMatters Magazine.

Focusing on working collaboratively during the pandemic, Sekou has launched REBEL MEDIA, a creative collective and production company with an emphasis on creating visually rich story content that is transformative, community-building, and generative. This collaborative approach has been the primary creative and/or production engine for the launch of projects such as HARLEM PARADE, UNSCRIPTED: CONVERSATIONS WITH CHRISTIAN JOHN WIKANE, FINDING YOUR BIG: THE MASTERCLASS by Olubode Shawn Brown, and MERLINA. MERLINA, the short film written and performed live by Liza Jesse Peterson and co-produced by Nona Hendryx, was the winner of BEST EXPERIMENTAL SHORT in the NEW YORK INDIE SHORT AWARDS 2021 and has been officially selected for THE HARLEM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2021, MONTREAL

### WHERE: THE KENTE ROYAL GALLERY

As one of NYC's only Black owned Harlem based galleries, Kente Royal Gallery (KRG) is an exciting new addition to the cultural landscape of Harlem. The Kente Royal Gallery was born out of the concept that we can approach community building through the spirit of Sankofa which urges us to return to the Motherland Africa and use our traditions to propel us into the future. Inspired by a voyage to Africa in December 2018, Phyllis and Dodji Gbedemah have decided to connect and strengthen the African Diaspora through Art. They were so inspired by the richness of Africa, its culture and people that they could not wait to get started upon their return to New York City. Kente Royal Gallery's vision is to connect the African Diaspora through art.

### WHEN

NOTES FROM HARLEM will be on display at The Kente Royal Gallery for Black History Month from Saturday, February 12 through Sunday, February 27, 2022.

**OPENING RECEPTION - Saturday, Feb 12, 2022 @ 4 PM**

