



HISTORY OF 3rd EYE

3rd EyE Unlimited was founded in 1998 by three youth from New Bedford, MA: Amir Hoagland and brothers Ben and Eric Gilbarg. In 1996, a lyric by Method Man of the Wu Tang Clan: "My 3rd EyE seen it coming, before it happened," inspired Ben to get a tattoo of an eye on top of a feathered pen on his arm to symbolize this EyEdea of critical prophecy. Three years later, Amir had a 3rd EyE vision. "Amir called Ben in June 1998, and said that "we should start a company named after your tattoo, 3rd EyE Productions or something..." I thought it was a no-brainer since we had been inspired by creative visionaries in the past, and were already producing a public access tv show part time called "Put Out the Word!" In the same conversation, I said "yeah, and we could start producing the show seriously." Three months later, Put Out the Word! interviewed the founder of Hip Hop Culture, Dj Kool Herc, at a Hip Hop showcase/ DJ Battle in Northampton, MA. In the same year, 3rd EyE and "POTW!" interviewed many big contributors to Hip Hop Culture including: KRS One, Black Eyed Peas, Outkast, Cypress Hill, the RZA, Lost Boyz, Das Efx, Brand Nubian, and more.

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In 1999, Ben began teaching in the Upward Bound program at New Bedford High School. He utilized educational Hip Hop content as a method to engage students who were mostly disconnected to high school curriculum and traditional teaching methods. Some of Ben's students got involved in 3rd Eye through his class and were instrumental in forming a rejuvenated core of 3rd EyE, which now represented two generations madly in love with the effect of Hip Hop in a pivotal time in world history. That core branched out into doing community events and in August of 2000 began the 3rd EyE Open Festival tradition at Buttonwood Park in New Bedford, MA.

The first annual Open was successful and prompted 3rd EyE Unlimited to expand the festival the following year attracting more than 2,000 visitors in its second year. People began to flock from all over to see live graffiti murals being painted, gravity defying breakdancing, basketball tournaments, dunk contests, dj's impressing the crowd, and the live performers providing a social commentary. "We wanted to showcase Hip Hop culture in its purest form. It started in the park, bringing all the art forms of expression together. Many of the younger generations had never seen breakdancing or murals being painted before. They think Hip Hop's what they see on tv and hear on the radio."

3rd EyE, an organization of young adults and teens produced the annual festival and showed that if people think that their city is boring, they should do something about it. Go out and get what you need to do what you love. Hip Hop is making something out of nothing, and we as a unified culture of artists, performers, dancers, athletes, and entrepreneurs showed that."



3rd EyE now is a leader of a youth based-movement spanning many cultures and ages. Its model of relating to youth through a common culture, and getting youth involved in producing big events, videos, music, and art for their peers, has remained on the cutting edge since its existence.