



UNFURLING  
DNLING



# UNFURLING

presenting

Photographs and Poetry

by

SANDRA & AMARA  
OBIAGO

June-August, 2014

The Wheatbaker

Lagos, Nigeria

Cover photo:

Unfurling, 2009  
Gicl e Print on Matte Canvas  
38inches x 58inches  
Sandra Mbanefo-Obiako

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# Introduction 1







# Introduction

Welcome to UNFURLING, a mother-daughter exhibition of photography and poetry. At 18 and 50 years of age, Amara and Sandra's unique creativity meets at counterpoint, sometimes flows in the same direction, and then suddenly wraps itself around unique points of intersection.

UNFURLING is an attempt by both Obiagos to reflect on the ebb and flow of the human spirit from different generational vantage points, yet always seeking artistic truth.

While Sandra's perspective is tempered by years of creating visual poetry through film, Amara's fighting spirit is fresh, impetuous and unapologetic.

UNFURLING fleetingly touches on two artists' exploration of thought, space and memory and shows us how light can be reflected through architecture, an expression, or indeed a man-made or natural pattern.

The section on poetry is a spiritual journey that is charged with energy and chaos, "sturm und drang", the tension of creative anguish and liberating expression. A free fall into creativity.

We are grateful to the Wheatbaker for supporting and hosting UNFURLING, and dedicating its important hospitality platform to nurturing the best of Nigerian talent. The exhibition is also supported by Ruinart, the world's oldest champagne house with a longstanding tradition of global art patronage. We are also grateful to the Global Energy Group for their longstanding and unflinching support to the artists and the larger Nigerian creative community.

We hope that UNFURLING opens us all up to tapping more honestly into our own personal creative recesses.



# Visual Fidelity

Looking at these photographs made by Sandie and Amara, I am struck first of all by their honesty. By honesty I mean a visual fidelity to their individual ways of seeing, nothing contrived just a refreshing lack of self-consciousness that they have in common.

I almost wish that Sandie had not even captioned her pictures. Her studies of textures lead us into the essence of her subjects, be they wood, fabric or plants with clarity that I think makes words hardly necessary. The fleeting glimpses that she gives us down unknown passageways, invite the viewer along in an optimistic pursuit of light.

The depth and breath of Amara's images reveal her exploration of visual possibilities. Her portraits vary from the intense challenge of youth in, '...lie to me' through the hesitant uncertainty of adolescence in, 'breaking ice' to the mature 'Kind heart' which she presents to us with classic Rembrandt lighting. The confidence with which she presents abstract pictures 'Azuka' and 'la fuite' leaves me eager to see more.

For anyone who has been into Sandie's parent's home or has met Amara's mother, it is no surprise that neither of them could escape being artistic. Their decision to share these images with us is happy confirmation of that.

Jide Adeniyi Jones  
Photographer & Writer



## Unveiled

Endings beautifully wrapped in beginnings...beginnings tucked away in endings. Life has never been one long road... Recoloured over and again from birth pangs and new life. Reborned continuously. Carrying in us the hope and fear of yet another cycle unfolding.

Unfurling..through doorways and hidden paths our transition to another reveal. Here we are. Gently pulled into wisdom of two amazing poets. It is not photography..it is not poetry. It is light in a



simple and pure form. By seeing through their eyes we are lifted through the truth of two worlds and find ourself making peace with where we are... they have photographed and written with mirrors... made abstract portraits of us... each and every one.

We are unfurling. We are the unveiled.

TY Bello  
Photographer & Musician





# Love of life

Anyone familiar with Sandie's earlier career as film-maker, campaigner and passionate advocate of Nigerian culture will recognize the sensitivity in this exquisite, intriguing collection of photographs and poetry that she and her daughter have put together: the generosity of vision, the fascination with landscape, with form and texture, the sheer love of life.

Jenny Richards,  
former Deputy Director, tve







## Symbolic and Symbiotic

These images transcend the humans, nature and situations they capture at different times and various locations. They bridge the dichotomy of how we live and relate with our environment, and gently guide our eyes to look inward and reflect, slowing us down to review life and meditate on everything's existence.

The duo of mother and child's photographs here don't only show, they also tell, which is a rare achievement in photography.

The works reveal a careful training of the camera on objects and subject matter with almost superhuman patience, until the right light and the perfect shadow and the desired expression fall in place before the photo is made.

These works by mother and daughter are symbolic and symbiotic, yet each photographer's work has its own unmistakable DNA, each speak for itself and invite the viewer to travel to distant and near places to witness what the photographer saw. If a picture is worth a thousand words as they say, Sandra and Amara Obiako's pictures are worth uncountable words.

Victor Chikhamenor  
Writer, Photographer & Visual Artist



Pg 6

Swag, 2011  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg 8-9

Watch, 2009  
Photographic print On Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg10-11

Look into My Eyes and Lie to Me, 2012  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
48 inches x 21 inches  
Amara Obiago

Pg12-13

Patterns, 2007  
Giclee Print on Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg14-15

À Travers, 2010  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
39inches x 29inches  
Amara Obiago

Pg16-17

Memory, 2013  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

# People 2



# Bold Step

Photography and poetry is private and personal art for me. It is part of my inner musing when I am quiet and alone. Coming from a film background, which is a group art form, I have always felt solace and comfort in retreating into myself and creating with no one around.

Unfurling is a bold step for me. Sharing my artist heart in a new way. Still and raw. Revealing my words which I weave together when I retreat. My poems are my most spiritual and subjective expression. Letting go of my activism. Releasing my critical curating. Forgetting my editorial pen. It is kind of like free fall sport. Taking a plunge and waiting to see how the ripples spread. It is a conscious effort to remind myself of the good gifts in life – amidst all the chaos and squalor. Forgetting the underbelly of our collective mistakes. And seeing how close hope really is. Light and life. Breathing, feeling, tasting and exhaling. The promise of new beginnings. Being quiet and just being. Free falling into creativity.

Sandra Mbanefo Obiako













# Time Place Memory

Before I take a photograph, I hold my camera against my chest and I think. I try to pick out part of a scene, the part of the scene that may not be obvious to others present. I do it subconsciously. I pick out an object, a smile, a pose... really a distinct moment in time that can never be reproduced.

I was told I do this as a way of self-identification in each scene. I believe this to be true. In every image there is a small part of me, a mirror that reflects a certain time, place, memory and thought.

Amara Obiako























Pg20-21

Following the Path, 2008  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo-Obiabo

Pg22-23

Kind Heart, 2010  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 29 inches  
Amara Obiabo

Pg24-25

The Boys, 2012  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
48 inches x 21 inches  
Amara Obiabo

Pg26-27

Breaking Ice, 2012  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
38 inches x 58 inches  
Amara Obiabo

Pg28-29

Making the Right Choice, 2009  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 29 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo-Obiabo

Pg30-31

Espoire, 2009  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 52 inches  
Amara Obiabo

Pg32-33

Proud, 2012  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Amara Obiabo

Pg34-35

Pensive, 2010  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 29 inches  
Amara Obiabo

Pg36-37

United, 2013  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 29 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo-Obiabo



# Patterns 3



























Pg40-41

Adire Blue, 2007  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo-Obiago

Pg42

Adire Cross Over II, 2007  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo-Obiago

Pg43

Adire Cross Over I, 2007  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo-Obiago

Pg44-45

Adire Yellow, 2007  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo-Obiago

Pg46-47

Azuka, 2010  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
38 inches x 58 inches  
Amara Obiago

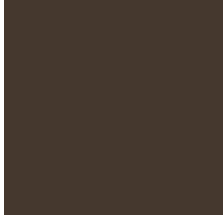
Pg48-49

Untitled II, 2010  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
18 inches x 24 inches  
Amara Obiago

Pg50-51

Let the World see your Beauty, 2010  
Giclee Print On Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Amara Obiago

# Space & Light 4









عنوان الصلاة  
Handwritten Arabic text on a plaque.



























Pg55

Kaibido, 2009  
Giclée Print on Matte Canvas  
38 ½ inches x 58 ½ inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiako

Pg57

Passageways, 2009  
Photographic Print  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiako

Pg58-59

Just look up, 2009  
Photographic Print  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiako

Pg61

Opportunity, 2009  
Photographic print on Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiako

Pg62-63

Past Glory, 2010  
Photographic print on Aluminium Dibond  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiako

Pg64-65

City Dreams, 2008  
Giclée Print on Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 52 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiako

Pg66-67

Hope, 2010  
Giclée Print on Matte Canvas  
38 ½ inches x 58 ½ inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiako

# Nature 5



















































Pg70-71

Growth, 2009  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg72-73

Aspiration, 2009  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg74-75

Nest, 2010  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 52 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg76-77

Nest II, 2010  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
18 inches x 24 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg78-79

Links, 2010  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg80-81

Experience, 2010  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg82-83

Hibiscus, 2011  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Amara Obiago

Pg85

Power and Promise, 2009  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg86-87

River Niger, 2010  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Pg88-89

Untitled, 2009  
Giclee Print On Matte Canvas  
18 inches x 24 inches  
Amara Obiago

Pg90-91

Our Destiny, 2008  
Photographic Print  
39 inches x 26 inches  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiago







Poetry 6





## Repopulation

I must repopulate my life.  
Move back in to my skin.  
Take control.  
Look out of my windows  
Eyes of my soul  
And begin to live.  
Again.

I must migrate back  
Into the land of my dreams  
My hopes and desires.  
Not stay  
Like an accomplice,  
A stewardess,  
A conductor on someone else's vessel,  
Looking yearningly out at sea  
Hoping to berth.

I must get off this path leading away and  
make my way  
back to myself.

I must plant my own garden.  
Plan my own seasons.  
Anticipate my own harvest.  
Create my own.

Instead of committing my life hours  
To others' causes.

I must repopulate my life today.



Dante Obiogo



## A different day

Who am i?  
I can't quite remember  
I see a vision of someone in the mirror  
And have to ask myself again  
Who really am i?  
What moves me?  
What makes me laugh?  
Cry?  
Scream?

I told myself today that I would have a good day.  
I actually told myself  
That today  
would be different  
I would do all the things I love to do...  
But what are those things?  
I don't seem to remember.  
Let me think really deeply.  
I love to read.  
I love to spend time with my kids  
I love to visit friends  
I love to work on my photos.  
write  
create  
decorate  
experience new things  
Today is going to be different  
No dragging  
No moaning  
No wishing  
No missing  
No whining  
self doubt  
Self pity  
Self criticism  
Today is going to be different  
Dear Lord  
please help me live  
a different day  
today.





## cherish

I cherish

The melody of your smile

The colour of your peaceful listening

The beauty of your quiet giving

The serenity of thoughts shared

## Happy Rest Madiba

Madiba  
Great spirit  
You have given all  
And now we have to release you  
to rest.  
Its truly been a very long road to freedom.  
I feel your sorrow and deep loneliness  
Your splintered family  
Who cannot agree  
as they clamor for recognition.  
I guess its normal that  
As the great iroko tree falls  
The termites and insects feeding on its roots and leaves  
Are bound to feel disturbed and fight back  
As they are suddenly exposed  
With the great thud of a fallen giant on the forest floor.

Your great sacrifice  
Came at a huge cost  
The family quarrels  
The fights  
The pain  
The constant glare of the media

Now  
Let the stillness you deserve  
Surround you with peace and joy  
I want you to know  
That we have released you  
We thank you for your painful legacy  
Which has given hope and inspiration to millions  
Thank you for taking the path less traveled  
Though it cost all you had  
Though you lost so much  
You also gained so much through the lives you set free  
The generations you empowered



And the peace and dignity you were finally able to bring  
Through your suffering and pain  
To a nation and a world torn apart by color  
Thank you for your stubbornness  
And for not letting go of your convictions and dreams  
Despite all.

As Maya Angelou wrote so eloquently  
"I know why the caged bird sings"  
your life was a song  
a beautiful melody  
which traveled around the world  
on the wings of hope and humanity  
and continues in all our hearts today.  
As we release you we wish you a  
Happy flight  
A happy landing on the other side  
Where there will be no more pain and tears  
Our prayers surround you as you rise  
On the wings of dawn.  
Happy rest Madiba.



## Harmattan

I  
Coming out of my  
air-conditioned cocoon this morning  
A dry crisp blast of cool air greets me  
I step out onto the verandah  
And sit on grey dust-basked chairs  
Forget about a tidy wipe  
Feel the grey power  
The wind whispers through  
leaves laced with fine sand  
A world of quiet chilly repose.  
My dogs look at me with wet eyes of  
winter wistfulness  
Begging to come into the warmth of our kitchen.

ii  
Harmattan  
a time of cool reflection  
cast off the crushing humid blanket  
that engulfs and suffocates us all year  
To exhale and think

iii  
Harmattan stealth settles and loosens  
the tight bandage  
wound around our wounded national psyche  
What a relief it is to trek through morning haze  
cover thin cotton shirts  
With woolly blue and red jumpers,  
elbow frayed  
and drink hot oyinbo tea  
laced with double portion of sugar and milk heaped in  
when office clerks look away  
With knowing smiles

iv

We should make Harmattan our  
national environmental sanitation days!  
Instead of once a month  
lump them all together  
when the tide turns windy  
When desert cool descends on  
heated urban frenzy  
reflect on what needs to be  
distilled  
charred  
burned  
sieved  
scraped  
melted  
off our national soul  
we need Harmattan retreats  
national health spas that scrub away  
the toxins clogging up our African arteries

v

Brought out of our daily hell fire  
like roasted groundnuts  
ready to be husked  
we need to blow away  
our paper thin skin  
of worthless respectability  
and get to the real crunch of the matter  
analyze our baked and bent  
roasted and seared backs  
our wasted intelligence  
our wayward unruliness.

vi

Blow on us, Earth Spirit  
as you scoop us into your  
weathered hand and rub us  
free of stubborn selfishness  
blow off our fake accents  
shine-shine veneer  
sophisticated arrogance  
ostentatious loud intolerance  
our inhumanity  
wrapped in old newspapers with  
faded "giant of Africa" headlines.  
Lay bare our  
"you've got a long way to go – baby"  
naked shame

vii

cooling off in flat baskets  
our salty essence  
the aroma of our hard, dry, round and nutty flavored  
character  
our Bantu beauty  
our aromatic ancestry  
rises

Harmattan,  
The time when we burn  
our bush  
And watch  
New amazing green shoots  
of a renaissance Africa  
primordial rhythm  
color and cacophonous character  
accentuated by laughter  
reverberate  
and rise



## Home

The smell of home  
The soft feathery feel of my pillow  
Dresser littered with  
Pens, buttons, perfume, candle...  
Each reminding me of  
Far away places  
And the happiness in bringing  
Home a fragment  
a scent,  
a reminder of travels  
And grateful homestead returns  
I sit in my favourite chair  
Look out on lush tropical beauty  
And dream  
On worn familiar armrests.



## Rain Song

I

Oh sweet rain  
i awake  
black night thunder  
tropical rhythm flashes  
drumming against patterned dreams

Rain dance!  
my heart leaps back to sweet schooldays  
early morning lightning  
thunder clap reverberating through high ceilings  
heralding cool dripping  
splashing through shallow pools of soft grass  
warm wet bare foot laughter  
clay cooled vapor rising from red earth  
heady mornings bringing renewal  
re-birth.

On rain nights  
insects drone and crash against steamy security lights  
mouthwatering delicacy – nostalgic crunch

II

Today I live in an urban jungle  
rain dance becomes rain dirge.  
floods cover cavernous potholes  
ready to ambush worn tires.  
miserable cars come to an exhausted spluttering stop  
slow death in choking tail light traffic






laboriously crawling along  
wet hours punctuated by struggling window wipers  
rolled up trousers of commuting office clerks  
expensive Sunday hairdos covered  
by dripping black plastic bags  
soaking stranded passengers  
all 500 bodies pushing to occupy 35 seats  
of a Lagos metro bus with one tail light missing  
tempers flaring, abuses raining  
carbon choking fumes  
a body lies sprawled out on the curb of a 6 lane highway  
is it a beggar adrift in village memories?  
a tired area boy sleeping off a crack head operation?  
or a down trodden graduate  
finally giving up jobless hell hole days?  
giving up and letting go?  
groaning wipers, uneven struggle to keep up with  
intensifying sheet rain  
pelted . Unrelenting.

|||

I close my eyes to mega city blues  
My heart skips in childhood rain dance  
fast winged bird flight  
mist rising through smoky breeze  
leaves rustle and bow to yet another wave  
sweet Spirit filled rain  
let me rise on soft  
wings unfurled.



## This gift



This gift  
this force that works through me  
like a mighty power  
that surges through  
my veins  
my mind  
my being  
this gift  
which is given to me  
for free  
gratis  
like a transparent  
shroud  
a blessing and memory  
to cover my days  
to use and  
express.

This gift  
is like a mighty wave  
that washes over me,  
drenches me and lifts me  
beyond my power  
to another consciousness  
and leaves me astounded,  
a little exhausted  
but always exhilarated.

This gift  
that was breathed into me  
lets me see  
deeper  
to a depth of no sound  
lets me discern  
clearer  
to a place of no color  
and lets me  
feel

To a height where sense  
breath  
sight and taste  
become  
one quiet heartbeat.

This gift  
astounds  
brings admiration  
and tears  
as it touches the softest  
most vulnerable  
core of those in its path.

I am astonished and  
realize in quiet wonder  
that what my  
hands  
mind  
voice can create  
is ultimately not mine.

This gift  
that I have been given  
for free  
i pray it works in me  
and rises through me  
that I release myself  
to its essence  
its purpose  
and its path.  
that i don't claim nor maim it  
but instead release  
its silent fragrance  
to  
touch

heal  
restore  
reunite  
refresh  
realign.  
that this mighty power  
that is at work in each of us  
be realized and then  
released  
that this force  
this natural current that flows to  
the ultimate magnetic source  
that we  
succumb  
and allow it to  
flow.



## When was the last time?

When was the last time  
you lay under a tree  
actually placed yourself on mother earth  
put your head, arms and body  
on living grass  
and looked up?

Its an amazing feeling.  
how cool the shady shade  
cool and porous  
a breeze softly descending  
leaves moving in unison  
to a silent rhythm.

Slow down  
and make space  
in your clutter  
to look, feel and really see  
stop the blur  
take a moment  
to lie under a tree  
and look up.

## Reflecting the sunrise

I watched the mountain peaks this morning  
they wore pure golden caps  
glistening in the clear morning light

And I thought  
reflecting a sunrise  
is really quite simple.

Stand in the path of the sun  
and don't move.  
as the sun rises  
its rays will  
soak my head in  
a glorious glow  
like a crown





My mind will be on fire  
wearing a golden crest

If I don't move  
the rays will bathe  
over my entire being  
bit by bit  
until I am bathed in light.

The trick is  
don't move out of the direct rays  
of the sun.





## Azuka

by Amara Obiako

She carries the world on her shoulders  
embellished by the patterns she flaunts on her back  
As if the load was meant for her alone  
In everything she stands  
truly and utterly flawless

# Look into my eyes and lie to me

by Amara Obiako

I dare you  
I double dare you

Look into my eyes  
Look into them and deceive me

Let us live in the same world  
Let us experience the same things

But in the end  
Don't lie to me  
In the end  
Don't tell me  
it was not what it seemed



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Watching the World Go By  
2010

Page 100-101  
Gift  
2012

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2011

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Warmth  
2011

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2010

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Shade  
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Enchanted Garden  
2012  
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Azuka  
Photo & Poem by Amara Obiago

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Look Into My Eyes & Lie To Me  
Photo & Poem by Amara Obiago



Joe Obiogo



# Amara Obiago

Sophia Amara Obiago (b. 1995) is a first year International Affairs student at the George Washington University in Washington DC, with a focus on Languages (English, French & Spanish) and Economics. In 2013 she graduated with honors from Collège Alpin International Beau Soleil in Villars, Switzerland, receiving her International Baccalaureate Diploma. Amara grew up in Nigeria and attended St. Saviour's Primary School, and later the French School Lycée Louis Pasteur in Lagos from 2005-2010.

Amara is a serious minded young leader with a strong, competitive and critical mind. She served as a school prefect, and performed as a solo singer throughout high school. In 2012, she was chosen to speak for her school at a TEDx talk on how to learn languages ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=GVOhJbmbTE#!](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=GVOhJbmbTE#!))

Amara's interest in photography started around 8 years of age when she began avidly taking photos with disposable cameras and her Sony Ericsson phone; later she continued with a small digital IXUS Sony camera, before inheriting her mother's Canon 5D three years ago.

In 2010 she volunteered at the African Artists Foundation, a Nigerian NGO, and helped set up painting and photography exhibitions. This inspired her to take her photography more seriously, and when she got back to school, she started a photography club with a classmate. They organized a photo exhibition for parents before the school Christmas concert in 2011, and within half an hour, sold all their photos in aid of the school charity, an orphanage in Tanzania.

Amara has a keen entrepreneurial spirit and seeks to use her creativity to address the world's problems. Recently EnviroAfrica, a company focused on trading emissions reductions in Sub-Saharan Africa, used her photos as publicity materials at the 2012 UN Climate Change Conference in Doha.

This is Amara's first exhibition of photographs in Nigeria.

# Sandra Mbanefo Obiago

Sandra Mbanefo Obiago (b. 1964) is a multi-faceted artist and founder of the African Art Spectrum, a creative enterprise which promotes and nurtures African Art and Culture including exhibitions, films, photography, performance and publications. African Art Spectrum combines Obiago's passion and experience as a writer, photographer, poet, art collector, curator, and award winning filmmaker.

She founded and ran Communicating for Change from 1998 to 2012 in Nigeria, focusing on media for development, documentary film, and photo-journalism. She is a social activist and her campaigns, films, radio programs and publications have touched on themes such as human rights, women's empowerment, health, HIV & AIDS, environment, democracy and good governance. She worked as a Television Technical Director for Limelight Studios and as a Producer/Reporter for the European Business Channel in Switzerland before setting up an African Communications Network for the international headquarters of the World Wide Fund for Nature, where she worked from 1991-1998.

Obiago has focused on developing Nigeria's creative industries, organizing conferences, workshops, and symposia for Nigeria's growing film industry and creative sector; she was the organizer & convener of The Future of Development Film in Africa Conference in Lagos, Nigeria in 2005 & 2008 in collaboration with the Ford Foundation, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the Nigerian Copyright Commission, the Pan African University and the Television Trust for the Environment (tve). She helped develop a course on Media Enterprise at the Pan African University (Lagos Business School) and was a free-lance instructor from 2007-2009. She is an experienced creative industry expert, liaising with key stakeholders in the private, public and civil society sectors, and working with interest groups from ministerial levels down to grassroots communities.



From 2010-12, Obiako produced and co-directed a 5-part documentary film series, *Red Hot: Nigeria's Creative Industries*, featuring 17 artists from the film, music, performance and visual arts sectors. She also worked as Associate Producer on the film adaptation of the book *Half of A Yellow Sun*, starring Chiwetel Ejiofor (*12 Years A Slave*), Thandie Newton, (Crash) Anika Noni Rose (*Dream Girls*), Onyeka Owenu & Genevieve Nnaji which was released at the Toronto Film Festival in September 2013.

Obiako is an avid art collector and pioneered a new initiative called *The Collectors' Series* working with art patrons to showcase Nigerian art. Since 2011, she developed an art & hospitality brand for the Wheatbaker boutique hotel, growing their corporate collection and curating quarterly exhibitions and artistic events. Some of her exhibitions include *Collectors Series I*, showcasing the stunning photography by Kelechi Amadi-Obi and Yetunde Ayeni Babaeko and paintings by Duke Asidere, *Making History* book launch and exhibition featuring antique Nigerian art, *Lagos Sandbank City*, the launch of a book on the history of Lagos, and *Duality*, showcasing the paintings and stained glass work of Isaac Emokpae. Her Wheatbaker exhibitions have also provided an important platform for artists based in the Diaspora to present in Nigeria and have included contemporary metal sculptures by Billy Omabegho, *Flow*, showcasing the biomorphic clay & cloth sculptures of Nnenna Okore, and the paintings of Raoul Olawale da Silva and Polly Alakija.

In 2013, she introduced art exhibitions to *Temple Muse* a premium design and luxury platform, curating numerous shows including *Amusing the Muse* presenting Victor Chikhamenor's art work, *Metal Fusion* showcasing 2 and 3-D metal sculptures by Alex Nwokolo, Fidelis Odogwu, Uche Peters & Billy Omabegho, *Mother Tongue* featuring paintings and sculptures by Chidi Kwubiri, an exhibition of works by Nigerian Master printmaker,

Bruce Onobrakpeya, and recently Affinity, presenting the sculptures of Kenny Adewuyi and water colors by Chinwe Uwatse.

Besides being involved in many community initiatives, she has served as Sunday school teacher since her teens. She served as a trustee of the Convention on Business Integrity (CBI), one of Nigeria's foremost business ethics organisations. She was a member of the Advisory Council of the Nigerian National Film Institute and has served as a member of the jury of the Nigeria Media Merit Awards and the African International Film Festival (AFRIFF) awards. Obiako is a Fellow of the Aspen Institute African Leadership Initiative for West Africa (ALIWA) and continues to mentor many young Nigerian artists. She attended executive education courses at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and received an M.A. in Telecommunications from Michigan State University, and a Bachelor of Education degree in English and German from the University of Manitoba, in Canada. She is happily married with three children.



# Sponsors



The Wheatbaker as part of the Legacy Hotel Group, has keenly supported Nigerian arts and culture since opening its doors in 2011. The hotel's commitment to celebrating the best of Nigerian creativity saw it dedicate its walls to showcasing exceptional traditional, modern and contemporary art. The Wheatbaker has hosted world class art exhibitions including The Collectors' Series showcasing Duke Asidere, Kelechi Amadi Obi & Yetunde Ayeni Babaeko (2011), Making History showcasing Ancient Nigerian Art (2012), Sequel 1a showcasing the sculptures of Olu Amoda, Billy Omabegho's metal and wood sculptures (2012), The WW Independence series by WhiteSpace, featuring Tayo Ogunbiyi, Karo Akpokieme, Folarin Shasanya, Hakeem Salaa, Toyosi Faridah Kekere-Ekun (2012-13) and Flow showcasing ceramic and mixed media sculptures and installations by Nnenna Okore (2013), paintings & sketches by Polly Alakija (2013), photography by Lakin Ogunbanwo and paintings by Isaac Emokpae (2014)



Ruinart is the oldest established Champagne House exclusively producing champagne since 1729. Founded by Nicolas Ruinart in the Champagne Region in the city of Reims the house is today owned by the parent company LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SA. As a patron of contemporary art and design, Maison Ruinart can be found all over the world, wherever the artists of today have the freedom to express themselves and exhibit their work. Ruinart is a proud sponsor of many international art events including Masterpiece London, Art Basel Hong Kong & Miami, MiArt, and PAD Paris & London.



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GEC, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility over the past two decades, actively supports and promotes Arts, Culture and People Initiatives in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. GEC aims to nurture, sustain and showcase the best of Africa's immense creative energy with a special focus on the visual arts, dance, drama and theatre.



# Special thanks

We gratefully acknowledge our many friends, family members, colleagues, partners and donors who provided unending support and inspiration for this project. We would also like to thank the following individuals for their immense support:

Ann Ogunsulire

Diana & Victoria Nwandu

Frank, Alice & Christopher Mbanefo

Gerald Gultig

Global Energy Group

GNO Studios

Isaac Emokpae

Jenny Richards

Jess Castellote

Jide & Kathrine Adeneyi-Jones

Joe, Dante & Manuela Obiabo

Marlies Allan

Mosun Ogunbanjo

Mozella Ademiluyi

Nike Davies Okundaye

Peter & Nkechi Madiebo

Philip Mmuo

Ruinart

Simon Grindrod

Stella Unubreme

Swiss Consulate

The Wheatbaker

Toki Mabogunje

TY Bello

Victor Ehikhamenor

And we thank God our Creator for being the source of all Light, Love and Inspiration

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Photo page 96-97: Dante Obiago

Photo page 122: Joe Obiago

Design & Layout: Adeyinka Akingbade

Contributions: Jide Adeneyi-Jones, TY Bello, Victor Ehikhamenor, Jenny Richards

Project Assistant: Sophia Amara Obiago

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