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## A KING'S PASSION

A 21ST-CENTURY PATRON OF AFRICAN ART

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Passion, intellectual curiosity, and intuition inspired His Royal Majesty Igwe Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe, over a period of forty years, to collect and support artists from his native Onitsha, southeastern Nigeria, Ghana, the broader West African region, and indeed the African continent. Accompanying the opening of his **Chimedio Museum** to the public—a repository to house and display his personal art collection—this volume chronicles the Obi of Onitsha's journey as a collector and patron, and it is written in an easily navigable language by some of the finest scholars on the subject. It illuminates the many friendships he has forged along the way with several artists, becoming as entangled in the process of making as in acquiring their work, much in the manner of the patrons of the High Renaissance.

This book illuminates not only the Obi of Onitsha's collecting thrust and underlying philosophy, but it also chronicles his relentlessness and successes in restoring marginalized artists to mainstream discourse. In addition, this publication addresses the emerging role of art patronship in Africa and how indigenous collectors are expanding narratives on the art of the African continent. **Lavishly illustrated in full color, the volume** features 119 artists drawn from 10 countries including influential figures like Ben Enwonwu, Uche Okeke, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Ablade Glover, El Anatsui, and **Ludovic Fadairo**.

Carefully selected are 322 masterpieces across a broad diversity of media from the almost 5,000 - ranging from drawings, paintings in oil, acrylic, and mixed media, photography, prints, etchings, and sculpture in bronze, wood and ivory to installations and site-specific commissioned friezes in the royal palace - that underscore the His Royal Majesty Igwe Nnaemeka Achebe Collection as one of the largest and most comprehensive African-owned private collections of African art.

Texts devoted to the main pieces in the collection and biographies of each of the artists represented, whether from the continent or the Diaspora, make this volume a valuable reference work. Special sections are also devoted to the influence of collecting on genres such as portraiture, to Ghanaian artists and to the 60th anniversary of *Things Fall Apart*, the great novel by Chinua Achebe published in 1958 and a milestone in the history of African literature.

This volume fulfils its primary objective to foster research into modern and contemporary art in Africa and is the first real reference on understanding the context of African art collecting, with a particular focus on the period from the 1940s to the present.