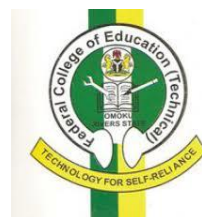


National Gallery of Art Book of Readings



*A multi-disciplinary Book of the National Gallery of Arts, in
Collaboration with Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo,
Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Federal College of Education,
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National Gallery of Art Book of Readings

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January, 2026

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART BOOK OF READINGS

National Gallery of Art Book of Readings (NGABOR) is a multi-disciplinary academic publication.

The mission of the Book of Readings is to:

- a. Provide reliable and current information to those involved in acquiring practical training and full studio practice in the research area of Art, culture and Tourism.
- b. Create an avenue for addressing topical issues in general art practice through appropriately designed research/studies.
- c. Present information to a broad readership in the various disciplines of Arts, ranging from: Graphics, Painting, Ceramics, Textiles, Sculpture, Art History, Art Education, Drama, Dance, culture and Tourism, etc.

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REMARKS PRESENTED BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, ON THE 8TH EDITION OF THE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON NIGERIA ART HELD AT THE RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, MKPOLU, PORT HARCOURT

Protocol The Honorable Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy, distinguished members of the National Assembly, respected Directors of Parastatals, leaders of the Visual Arts Community, innovators and entrepreneurs, scholars and students, partners from the private sector and international agencies, members of the press, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the 8th Edition of the NGA National Symposium on Nigerian Art – a forum dedicated to dialogue, bringing innovation and transformation in the visual arts. The theme of this year’s symposium, “Forging Frontiers: Uniting Art, Artificial Intelligence, and Entrepreneurship in Advancing the Nation’s Visual Art Industry,” implores us to examine the evolving intersections between creativity, technology, economic empowerment, and national cohesion. This is not just a meeting of minds; it is a convergence of forces shaping the future of Nigerian art. Unity, first and foremost, remains the bedrock of our progress as a people. Our art has always reflected the diversity and richness of our culture. In response to this, our agency, through the combined efforts of the Education, Human Resource, and Planning & Research Departments, is developing the Visual Arts Enterprise Development Initiative (VAEDI). This will support young artists with mentorship, business training, seed funding, and incubation opportunities. Ladies and gentlemen, the visual art industry is not a fringe sector. It is a pillar of Nigeria’s cultural diplomacy, youth employment strategy, and soft power potential. But for it to thrive, we must build a supportive ecosystem that unites tradition with innovation, and creativity with commerce. This symposium provides the platform to do exactly that. I urge us to engage deeply—to challenge assumptions, explore partnerships, and commit to practical outcomes that will move our sector forward. In conclusion, I thank all art scholars and participants for honoring our invitation and wish them a fruitful deliberation.

Thank you.

Ahmed Bashir Sodangi

Director-General of the National Gallery of Art (NGA), Nigeria.

GOODWILL MESSAGE

GOODWILL MESSAGE AT THE 7TH STAKEHOLDER FORUM ON NIGERIA'S VISUAL ARTS, HOLDING ON MAY 7, 2025 AT THE RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY, PORT HARCOURT.

PROTOCOL

Please permit me to title my goodwill message thus: "The Trinity of Art, Artificial Intelligence and Entrepreneurship for a Renaissance of Nigeria's Visual Arts and Boosting the Nation's Creative Economy".

As we participate in this stakeholder forum, I believe that the convergence of Art, AI, and Entrepreneurship will be a game-changer for Nigeria's visual arts and creative economy. By harnessing the power of Art, leveraging the potential of AI, and fostering entrepreneurial spirit, we can unlock new opportunities, drive innovation, and propel Nigeria's creative industry to new heights.

This trinity will enable our artists to push boundaries, experiment with new forms of expression, and reach global audiences. It will also create new business models, jobs, and revenue streams, contributing to the nation's economic growth and development. I look forward to witnessing the incredible works of art, innovative solutions, and entrepreneurial successes that will emerge from this synergy that is the focus of this forum. Together, let us unleash the creative potential of Nigeria and make our mark on the world.

Wishing you all the best in this forum. As a university, we will continue to support this trinity even after this forum.

Thank you.

Prof. Isaac Zeb-Obipi
Vice-Chancellor
Rivers State University
Nkpolu-Oroworukwo
Port Harcourt.

Royal Father's Speech

Stakeholders Forum: National Gallery of Arts, held on 7th May, 2025 at the Rivers State University State Senate Building, Port Harcourt.

Distinguished guests, esteemed artists, cultural custodians, scholars, ladies and gentlemen, It is with a profound sense of responsibility and great honor that I address you today as the Royal Father of the Day at this significant Stakeholders' Forum of the National Gallery of Art, at Rivers State University, Senate Building.

I commend the organizers of this programme and extend warm greetings from Ke Kingdom. Ours is one of the oldest settlements in the Niger Delta, a place where culture and tradition are deeply interwoven with daily life. My presence here today affirms that our society is being steered in the right direction by recognizing the role of art in shaping our future. As a traditional ruler and custodian of culture, I recognise the vital role institutions such as the National Gallery of Art play in safeguarding the soul of our nation. Our art, history, and heritage are not relics locked away in time; they are living testimonies of who we are our values, struggles, triumphs, and aspirations.

The National Gallery of Art has, over the years, become a beacon of cultural preservation and artistic expression. It is where the brushstrokes of our ancestors meet the visions of today's artists. This dialogue between past and present must be nurtured, protected, and handed to generations yet unborn.

The Place of Art in Society

Art is not a luxury. It is a veritable means of expressing imagination, emotions, beliefs, and spirituality. It communicates the ideas and values of a people, while preserving their experiences for future generations. Through painting, sculpture, textiles, oral traditions, and performance, art becomes a repository of human creativity and memory. Visual art in particular provides a voice without words. It evokes emotion, inspires imagination, and reflects society's soul. It is rightly said that a people who cannot express or communicate their tradition are at risk of losing it to strange and wild doctrines. This truth is more relevant today than ever.

Our Call to Action

Against this backdrop, I urge all stakeholders—government, private sector, and cultural custodians to invest deliberately in promoting our heritage. We must document our stories, restore our artefacts, digitize our treasures, and celebrate indigenous knowledge systems. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through our palaces, which should serve not merely as ceremonial spaces but as centers of heritage preservation and innovation. Our palaces must open their doors to exhibitions, archives, and cultural programs that inspire pride and continuity.

We live in a time of unprecedented change, where technology such as Artificial Intelligence is reshaping economies and societies. Let us not be left behind. Instead, let us harness innovation to protect, project, and globalize our cultural identity.

The Spirit of Culture

Culture is the spirit of a people. It gives us identity, cohesion, and strength. It is our sacred duty to ensure that this spirit remains vibrant, respected, and passed on. We must resist cultural erosion and instead embrace the uniqueness that makes our communities rich and diverse.

To our youth: art is your inheritance and your voice. Use it courageously. Create boldly. Let your imagination reimagine Nigeria and tell our stories with pride.

Conclusion

Let me commend the National Gallery of Art for its dedication, and the organizer's for convening this significant forum. May our collective efforts light the path to a more culturally grounded, confident, and united future.

I thank you all.

May our heritage continue to blossom and flourish.

**His Royal Majesty, King Agolia Cookey Aboko Benebo XII
Amanyabo of Ancient Ke Kingdom and Chairman,
Degema Traditional Rulers Council**



RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY

8th National Symposium on Visual Arts.

May 8, 2025

Dr Nyesom Ezenwo Wike Senate Building,
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt.

Theme: “Unleashing a New Renaissance in Nigeria’s Visual Art Sector:
Boosting and Redefining the Nation’s Creative Economy”.

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Prof BB Fakae

Distinguished guests, respected scholars, artists, students, ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great honour and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you today as Chairman of this very important occasion—the **8th National Symposium on Visual Arts**. I commend the National Gallery of Art for convening this timely gathering, and I warmly welcome all participants who have come together in the shared pursuit of advancing Nigeria’s visual art sector.

The theme of this symposium—“Unleashing a New Renaissance in Nigeria’s Visual Art Sector: Boosting and Redefining the Nation’s Creative Economy”—could not be more appropriate for our time. Nigeria stands at a critical crossroads where diversification of the economy is no longer optional but essential. In this context, visual art must be recognised not merely as a cultural expression, but as a strategic economic resource.

Visual art holds immense potential as a driver of economic development. It is a powerful industry capable of generating employment, empowering our youth, stimulating innovation, and contributing meaningfully to

national income. When properly supported, the visual arts can evolve into what I often describe as an “oil-spinning profession”—one that helps reduce overdependence on oil and opens new frontiers for sustainable growth.

Beyond its economic value, visual art plays a transformative role in society. It fosters creativity, promotes social cohesion, preserves cultural heritage, and serves as a tool for personal and collective expression. In an era defined by rapid technological change, the intersection of creativity and technology presents unprecedented opportunities for Nigerian artists to compete globally and tell our stories on our own terms.

I am particularly encouraged that this symposium addresses not only economic empowerment but also the therapeutic and holistic value of the visual arts. Art has the capacity to heal, to educate, and to inspire—qualities that are indispensable in building a resilient and inclusive society. As stakeholders—policymakers, educators, artists, and industry players—we must move beyond rhetoric to action. This means investing in arts education, strengthening institutional support, embracing technology, and creating enabling environments where creativity can thrive as both a cultural and economic force.

In closing, let me emphasise that the future of Nigeria’s creative economy depends on how seriously we take the visual arts today. If we nurture this sector with vision, commitment, and collaboration, it will not only enrich our culture but also strengthen our economy and redefine Nigeria’s place in the global creative landscape.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and a successful symposium.

Thank you.

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