

## Obidike

In Obidike designer Chika Nwokeh's native Nigeria, storytelling has for centuries been an essential foundational part of cultural and artistic tradition. From historical accounts passed down through generations, to music, art and literature, Nigerian people have communicated their perspective and experiences through a variety of richly vibrant media.

Yes, Chika's truly extraordinary designs dazzle the eye, fire the imagination and exude an aesthetic that is both unmistakably worldly and timeless. But just as importantly, her creations tell a story – a story of giving, sacrifice and dreams deferred, but never abandoned.

### The Story

The eldest of six siblings born into a hard working family in the hustling and bustling city of Lagos, Chika's unique intellectual gifts became apparent at an early age. With every academic achievement, she grew more determined to lead her family out of their struggles and into a new life of opportunity and possibilities.

At the same time, Chika's innate eye for style and deep appreciation for design was beginning to take root, with a little help from her father. "With deep roots in her rural community – no internet, not much TV and very little communication with anyone we didn't personally know," says Chika, during the holidays, my father would bring magazines home. We'd spend time together flipping through the pages of Architectural Digest and Vogue. Our discussions opened my eyes to elements of beauty, style and design from far beyond our borders. It was the start of a life-long passion."

For the time being, however, Chika's passion would be superseded by an irrepressible calling to better the lives of others, and empower her family to transcend the cycle of economic disadvantage. The only question was how. She recalls "My parents always encouraged me to aim high -- that anything was possible with enough effort and determination. My father used to say, 'no matter how big the door, don't be afraid to knock.'"

And knock she did, becoming the first in her family to go to medical school and then taking on an even bigger challenge – postgraduate training in the US. Upon graduation, Dr. Nwokeh, with dauntless determination to both serve humanity and raise up her family, knocked on America's giant door. So began a successful, rewarding career as a doctor of internal medicine in the U.S. - earning the means to put four of her siblings through further education in renown western colleges.

"Opening new doors of opportunity to my family was deeply gratifying, Chika says. "Seeing my siblings realize their potential and achieve their own success meant far more to me than my own professional accomplishments. And it still does."

### From Calling to Passion – from mission to purpose

Even as she focused on her medical career, Chika's creative fire continued to burn, though it had yet to be brought to light. Eventually, having fulfilled her calling to give back and pay forward the opportunities she was afforded, fulfilled, it was time to pursue her passion.

"I think I've always been a designer at heart," Chika says. "Being a doctor was my calling, but creating and adding beauty to this world is my passion."

With the same determination and meticulous care she brought to her practice of medicine, Chika was finally able to devote her time, talent and tenacity to fashion design. The results are as extraordinary as the woman behind them.

Harkening back to the appreciation of fashion and architecture derived from her father's magazines, Chika's designs teem with color, contrast, sumptuous texture and linear interplay. The African landscape and organic elements comele unexpectedly and spectacularly with sequins. Clean, contemporary architectural elements achieve harmonious synergy with rich fabrics and classically inspired hues.

The OBIDIKE collection communicates volumes about its creator as well as the likeminded women who wear it. Old Hollywood glamor meets the cradle of humanity. Success meets selflessness. Giving meets gorgeous. Ethnic tradition meets modern elegance. Inspired meets inspiring.