

El Anatsui
2006

DAVID KRUT
PUBLISHING



This book is published on the occasion of an exhibition of new work by **El Anatsui**

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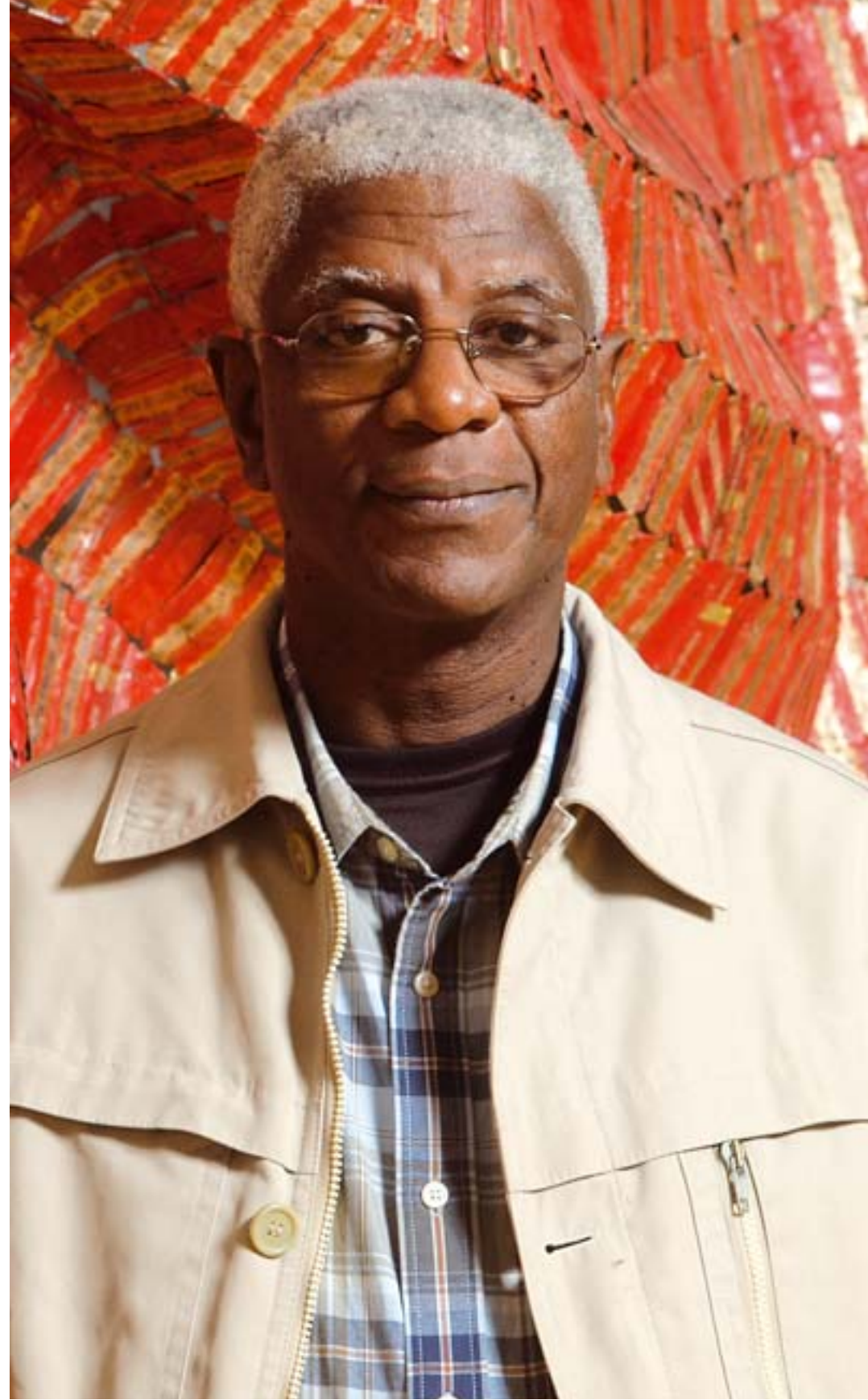
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Right: El Anatsui at October Gallery (2005)
in front of *Flag for a New World Power*
Photo: Andy Keate



Flag for a New World Power (2004) aluminium and copper wire, 500 x 550 cm/197 x 217"

In 1979, October Gallery developed the concept of the *transvanguard*, a planetary avant-garde that extended beyond eurocentric boundaries into all the world's oceans and continents. El Anatsui has helped us, in fact, refine the idea of the *transvanguard* through his work. Using materials, biospheric and technical, from his environment, this innovative artist speaks through and beyond his culture, inventing new forms in a dramatic, vibrant way, causing the marvellous to occur. And it is the marvellous that propels thought... that this artist makes such extraordinary creations, so dazzling to our eyes, from the humble bottle top! But these are not any old bottle tops; they are tough ones from gin, whiskey, hard liquor, 40-proof. Anatsui flattens them, bends them, twists them, pierces them with copper and, in effect, transforms what would be rejected into something of great worth, an alchemical 'gold'. Now collected by major museums and institutions around the world, his 'cloths' hang in the British Museum, London; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the museum kunst palast, Düsseldorf; the de Young Museum,

San Francisco. This exhibition celebrates El Anatsui's sustained, unique contribution to art.

As a pioneer of the *transvanguard*, the October Gallery has searched out and exhibited the work of outstanding artists from around the world. Located in a three-storey Victorian building in the heart of Bloomsbury, the Gallery also hosts talks on science and art, poetry readings, performances and other cultural events. In 1993, Elisabeth Lalouschek, Artistic Director, spotted Anatsui's powerful use of the chainsaw to carve tropical hardwood. The Gallery hosted his first UK solo show in 1995, and in 1998 published the first book on the artist, *A Sculpted History of Africa*, in collaboration with Saffron Books. The Gallery continues to champion his work and promote his extraordinary vision.

Chili Hawes
Director, October Gallery
October 2006

Snapshots from the Past

Notes taken from an interview with Elisabeth Lalouschek, Artistic Director, October Gallery
by Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, Managing Editor, David Krut Publishing



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1 Erosion (1992)
Wood, paint, woodchips, sawdust,
H: 296cm/117". Collection of
National Museum of African Art,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington
DC, USA. 96-36-1.
Photo: Franko Khoury.



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2 & 3 Sasa (2004)
Aluminium and copper wire,
840 x 640 cm/330 x 252".
Collection of the Centre
Pompidou, Paris.
Photo of 3: El Anatsui.

Erosion was created during an Earth Summit Art Workshop in Brazil, with a chainsaw, a tool of such potency as to make curators and audiences sit up and pay attention. In 1993, Elisabeth Lalouschek, Artistic Director of the October Gallery, recalls seeing the artist's chainsaw powerfully tearing through tropical hardwoods. 'The wood was black from burning, the sound of the chainsaw was deafening. At that moment I knew that I had encountered an extraordinary individual, a creator of all possibilities.' *Erosion* featured at the October Gallery in Anatsui's first solo show in London (1995) and was subsequently purchased by the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

2 & 3 Sasa (2004)
Aluminium and copper wire,
840 x 640 cm/330 x 252".
Collection of the Centre
Pompidou, Paris.
Photo of 3: El Anatsui.

Sasa, spanning over eight metres, is the largest of Anatsui's bottle-top cloths to date, and has toured internationally with the major exhibition *Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent*, between 2004 and 2007. Pictured



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5 Hovor II (2004)
Aluminium and copper wire,
304.8 x 365.8cm/120 x 144".
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.
Museum purchase, James J. and
Eileen D. Ludwig Endowment Fund;
Virginia Patterson Fund; Charles
Frankel Philanthropic Fund and
various tribute funds, 2004. 109.
Photo: Joseph McDonald

is the work as installed by Elisabeth Lalouschek at London's Hayward Gallery in 2005 (2) and as installed by the artist at the museum kunst palast, Düsseldorf in 2004 (3). While Anatsui's work had been collected by institutions such as the British Museum several years prior to this exhibition, Sasa brought his work into the full public spotlight, garnering him widespread critical acclaim and sparking a wave of interest and acquisitions. This work was subsequently acquired by the Centre Pompidou, Paris.

4 Gawu (2005)
Installation at the October Gallery,
London.

While *Africa Remix* was at the Hayward Gallery in London, a solo show of Anatsui's work at the October Gallery formed a celebrated element of their *africa05* season. The exhibition was adapted from the touring exhibition *Gawu*, organised by Oriol Mostyn Gallery in Llandudno, Wales. *Gawu* travelled around the UK and Ireland from 2003 to 2005, and then to much acclaim to the United States (2005 – 2007). *Gawu* translates from Ewe as 'metal cloak'.

6 Installation view, Rosanna Orlandi Gallery, Milan (2006)
Photo: Filippo Bamberghi.

Fascinated by the beauty of the cloth pieces, Rosanna Orlandi asked the October Gallery to collaborate



6

5 Hovor II (2004)
Aluminium and copper wire,
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Frankel Philanthropic Fund and
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Photo: Joseph McDonald

Just as cloth that is worn on the body becomes a kind of kinetic sculpture, Anatsui's works often suggest movement and agility. El regards the making and hanging of the cloths as a collaborative process, and in Nigeria his team of studio assistants is integral to the creation, handling, displaying and photographing of the large pieces. During his numerous exhibitions various dramatic manners of hanging these works have evolved. This work is installed in the de Young Museum, San Francisco in such a way that the form drapes straight down to the floor, free of folds or creases.

6 Installation view, Rosanna Orlandi Gallery, Milan (2006)
Photo: Filippo Bamberghi.

Fascinated by the beauty of the cloth pieces, Rosanna Orlandi asked the October Gallery to collaborate



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on an exhibition of Anatsui's work at the Spazio Rosanna Orlandi in Milan. The exhibition was timed to coincide with the Milan Fashion Week and attracted much interest from the press and fashion industry, leading to the purchase of a cloth for the collection of Missoni.

7 Selfridges, London (2005)
El Anatsui in foreground.

To mark *africa05* in London, Selfridges department store exhibited work by El Anatsui in one of their major windows. The floor of the installation was covered in red sand, upon which was installed Anatsui's *Peak Project*, made from the discarded lids of condensed-milk tins, as well as a near-transparent bottle-top cloth *Stained Bedsheet*, hung so that it cast intricate shadows on the walls. The exhibition remained in place for six weeks and culminated in the appearance of El Anatsui with Baaba Maal at the Royal Festival Hall. The renowned Senegalese musician invited the artist and his assistants to work on a bottle-top cloth throughout the course of his concert, which concluded with the triumphant raising of the finished work to jubilant applause.



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8 Man's Cloth and Woman's Cloth (2002)
Aluminium and copper wire,
297 x 374 cm/117 x 147"
and 287 x 292cm/113 x 115".
Collection of the British Museum.

These bottle-top cloths were the first to be shown outside Nigeria, and were exhibited at the October Gallery in 2002, before being purchased by the British Museum with the help of the National Art Collection Fund. When installing the exhibition at the October Gallery, El Anatsui suggested that *Man's Cloth* should be hung relatively flat, while *Woman's Cloth* should be hung to show more intense creasing. As a curator, Lalouschek has worked with Anatsui to explore the potential of the cloths to hang as a series of



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sculptural folds and crevasses, or to stretch out tautly, making the patterns and textures in the cloth more legible.

9 Africa Garden (2005)
The British Museum.
© Trustees of the British Museum

During the spring of 2005, the team of *Ground Force* from the BBC created a temporary *Africa Garden* in the forecourt of the British Museum, as part of the *africa05* festival. The garden recreated three African climate zones, and was maintained for four months by a team of volunteers. Sculptures positioned amongst the foliage included El Anatsui's *Monument*, which he had made in Denmark in 1996.



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10 On Their Fateful Journey Nowhere (1995)
Okpeye wood, height 92 cm/36",
width & depth variable. Collection
of the Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo.
Photo: Norihiro Ueno.

This installation was commissioned by the October Gallery for the first major touring exhibition of contemporary African Art in Japan. *An Inside Story – African Art of Our Time* was curated by Yukiya Kawaguchi, and toured to venues across Japan, including the Setagaya Art Museum in Tokyo.

11 Out There (2005)
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts,
Norwich, UK, 2005.

Anatsui was invited to undertake a residency at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, in 2005. For the project entitled *Out There*, El Anatsui produced *Signatures* (pictured left).

Other notable projects include 'Ancient Wall' (1999) an installation on the Champs Elysées, Paris. In 2004, during a residency at the Eden Project, Cornwall, El Anatsui created *Aziza Passage*, a gateway into West Africa in the Humid Tropics Biome.

October 2006, telephone interview with El Anatsui in Stockholm

by Kate McCrickard in New York City



Photo: Miguel Rio Branco



El Anatsui at his studio in Nsukka, 1997



Photo: Craig Inglis



Photo: Lisa Binder



Ancient Wall (1999) Photo: El Anatsui



Photo: Martin Barlow, Oriol Mostyn Gallery



Photo: El Anatsui



Photo: El Anatsui



Photo: El Anatsui



Photo: Lisa Binder



Leopard Cloth (1993)
Wood relief, mansonia,
camwood, opepe & oyili-oji
162 x 69 cm/64 x 27".
Photo: Andy Keate

KMcC: The artist Atta Kwami commented on the apotropaic shades of silver, gold and pewter in the liquor bottle tops. Was it your intention to embed an apotropaic meaning in the colour schemes of the cloths at all?

El: Kwami comes from a very strong painting pedigree and certainly his sensitivity to colour is considerable but this aside, metals and liquor in many cultures (especially African) have this association with the spiritual, with healing. Just think about the many ways a hand must open metal caps to pour out schnapps for prayers or libations.

KMcC: Have you enjoyed the shift in the process of making your sculpture, from the artist single-handedly working with power tools, to a workshop of up to fifteen hands that work on the labour-intensive construction of the large cloths?

El: Initially I found it problematic to work at a snail's pace, but now I'm very much at home with the shift from power tools where I relied on machines that at times could break

down. The process moves slowly and allows me to do more thinking than making. I have more time and space to step back and contemplate work as it unfolds.

KMcC: Do you assemble every tiny element of the cloth, every bottle top and shaft, before instructing the assistants to begin sewing? Or do you allow some creative input from the workshop?

El: I will say the process is a very fluid and open one. I do not produce drawings because I want the materials to lead me on, not to follow the dictates of any sketch. I could for instance ask the assistant to pick any colour and work with it, or I could impose some restrictions. I could ask for a particular texture or stitch at a point. There are so many variables. Certainly the alternating freedom and restriction means that there are inputs from the workshop. So work develops organically and in most cases in unpredictable ways.

KMcC: So the assistants are in a sense an additional part of the material?

El: They are more a part of the process; they are not all the time just hands. Working this way, I have got to understand both the material and the different touches or styles of each assistant. It is like conducting an orchestra of musicians each with peculiar performing skill.

KMcC: Your work from the *The Missing Peace: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama* exhibit that opened at The Fowler Museum, Los Angeles, June 2006, shows an emphatic shape in the centre of the cloth, with a suggestion of figure and ground I've not seen in the other cloths that incorporate more of an overall design. Is this a new development in the cloths?

El: *The Missing Peace* work (which I entitled *Dzesi*) came about with thoughts about the zero sign, O – which can mean a lot or nothing. And I think is a kind of harking to Adinkra symbols I had worked with earlier. There is this one which is characterised as the king of these signs, which consists of several concentric circles. New textures develop out of the way we

manipulate the material and I think it was possible to arrive at a design like this one because we have developed a stitch which has a lot of flexibility about it, and therefore could be used specifically to configure freer and more organic forms than hitherto.

KMcC: In one of the new works we have here in New York, I see areas of flattened, folded strips that are latticed together in a loose grid, allowing more light to come through.

El: Yes, these are realised from the rings from around the neck of the bottle. I believe that is the G8. This is the assistants' name for the particular pattern; they have this penchant for devising code names for different patterns, textures and stitches. I believe they were working on this pattern at the time of the Scottish summit. The codes are very useful and handy and make communication faster when work is underway.

KMcC: Can you comment on your use of the term *nomadic aesthetic* when describing these cloths?



Dzesi I (2006)
Aluminium and
copper wire.
Photo: Lisa Binder

El: I think the *nomadic aesthetic* developed as a result of the need to address a certain problem; to create works that are packing, storage and transportation efficient or friendly. It applies to work that I have done but more especially to what I'm doing now, which always comes in considerable sizes but can contract, and like a nomad, I can move

around. However, I find that the idea is not only about being able to move them, but also that each time they are moved, they have to be configured afresh, most of the time by other parties apart from the artist. In essence then, this aesthetic is about fluidity of ideas and impermanence of form, indeterminacy, as well giving

others the freedom, or better still, the authority to try their hands at forming what the artist has provided as a starting point, a datum. Though most will try to adhere to the original format, indeed I have seen very engaging results achieved by some collectors who exercised this freedom.

El Anatsui

Contexts Textiles and Gin

Using anything from chainsaws and welding torches to intricate and meditative stitching in copper wire, El Anatsui has, over the forty years of his artistic career, cast a satirical eye over a spectrum of social, political and historical issues, becoming a leading light of contemporary sculpture in the process. Embracing a wildly diverse vocabulary of media, he has worked with materials ranging from tropical hardwood and broken ceramic pots to grain mortars and evaporated milk tin lids, from cassava graters and railway sleepers to driftwood, iron nails and obituary notice printing plates.ⁱ 'Art grows out of each particular situation,' he observed in an interview in 2004,

... and I believe that artists are better off working with whatever their environment throws up. I think that's what has been happening in Africa for a long time, in fact not only in Africa but the whole world, except that maybe in the West they might have developed these 'professional' materials. But I don't think that working with such prescribed materials would be very interesting to me – industrially produced colours for painting. I believe that colour is inherent in everything, and it's possible to get colour from around you, and that you're better off picking something which relates to your circumstances and your environment than going to buy a ready-made colour.ⁱⁱ

It was in the environment around his studio in Nsukka, Nigeria, that Anatsui went searching one day in the late 1990s for a pot monument,ⁱⁱⁱ but instead came across a large bag of discarded liquor-bottle tops. When local distilleries in Nigeria recycle each other's bottles, the aluminum screw caps associated with each brand are discarded in the process. For several months, the caps remained untouched in his studio until the idea came to him to flatten and stitch them together with copper wire. Once the process had begun, he realised that the result resembled a real fabric, and that the colours and alternating stripes of the caps echoed those of West African narrow-strip textiles.^{iv} 'In effect,' he says, 'the process was subverting the stereotype of metal as a stiff, rigid medium and rather showing it as a soft, pliable, almost sensuous material capable of attaining immense dimensions and being adapted to specific spaces'.^v

Over the years, Anatsui has returned often to the reservoir of imagery, technology and metaphor afforded by textiles. Having lived and worked in Nigeria and Ghana, home to some of the most diverse

and vibrant traditions of textile production in the world, he is conscious that the signifying capacity of cloth is particularly potent in West Africa, as he explains:

The scope of meaning associated with cloth is so wide I have not heard it more aptly and succinctly put than by Sonya Clark... that cloth is to the African what monuments are to Westerners. Indeed their capacity and application to commemorate events, issues, persons and objectives outside of themselves are so immense and fluid it even rubs off on other practices.^{vi}

Anatsui's bottle-top cloths certainly reference events, issues, persons and objectives outside of themselves, often in circuitous and unexpected ways. A literal example is the commemorative function served by the naming of both textile designs and liquor brands. 'Ecomog Gin', for example, is named after the regional military intervention forces which brought the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia to an end. The brandy called 'Ebeano' (meaning 'where we are now') references a popular electioneering slogan from the last political polls in Anatsui's home state. In a similar way, narrow strip cloths might be given names such as *takpekpe le Anloga* ('conference at Anloga'),^{vii} be named after a personality or refer to an idea or historical event through specific design elements (as in the patterns of *Liar's Cloth* or the colours of *oyokoman Cloth*).^{viii}

The choice of cloth as a medium itself resonates with the history of contact between Europe, Africa and the Americas. As early as 1469, textiles were traded in West Africa by Europeans seeking to acquire first gold, then slaves.^x Imported silk and cotton cloths were unravelled for reuse by Ewe and Asante weavers who valued in particular the vibrant reds that could not be attained using local dyes. By the 1680s, despite thriving indigenous textile production, cloth constituted over fifty percent of European imports into West Africa, and records suggest that a slave could be purchased in the Bight of Benin with just three to four measures of cloth.^x In the years that followed, as a result of Dutch attempts to undercut Indonesian batik production, European 'wax' resist printed and 'fancy' or roller-printed cotton fabrics found a thriving market on the Gold Coast. Specifically designed and produced in the mills of the Netherlands and northern England to appeal to the demands and aesthetics of their clientele, the cloths often emulated West African textile designs or featured historical events, or current political figures.^{xi}



Photo: Lisa Binder

Considering that liquor was another major commodity traded by Europeans for slaves, Anatsui's bottle-tops take on deeper resonance with histories of international points of contact. From as early as the eighteenth century, bottles of schnapps were being touted along the West African coast, and records from the 1810s suggest that a slave could be acquired in the Bight of Benin with 126 US gallons of the sugar-based spirit *aguardente*.^{xii} By 1885, gin had almost completely replaced cowries as currency in Lagos, and the mere possession of liquor had become emblematic of social status.^{xiii} Spirits from distilleries specifically established in Liverpool to supply exports to Africa, and rum, a by-product of the Caribbean sugar plantations for which Africa had supplied the labour, were highly profitable for European traders, and to a large extent detrimental to the societies into which they were imported.

Anatsui's works gently alert us to the human histories and relationships behind the materials that surround us, interlacing object and metaphor like elements within a cloth. Yet his works are too fluid, too temporal and personal to be described as commemorative or monumental in Sonya Clark's sense. There is certainly a monumentality of scale, with all its accompanying impact –*Sasa* (2004), a work that has toured internationally with the exhibition *Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent*, spans an awesome eight metres. But while commemorative cloths and public monuments literally inscribe on the landscape or wearer a pre-determined narrative for shaping collective memory, Anatsui's works do quite the opposite, inviting counter-narratives and provoking dialectics. Thus what is so sumptuous and evocative to the eye is, at the same time, unforgiving and razor-sharp, and that which is so specifically historical, West African, and personal to Anatsui, has at the same time been profoundly immediate and universal in its impact on the audiences and curators of the international art world. While there are richly textured stories and histories to be traced in his materials and processes, the visuality of his works ultimately defies definition and demands a personal response. For despite the permanence and durability of the metal, the cloths are temporally and spatially ephemeral, taking on new life with every new space, reincarnated by artist, curator and audience, their infinitely variable folds and creases transforming, and transformed by, their changing settings around the world.

Born in 1944 in Ghana, El Anatsui studied Art Education at the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, and went on to become Professor of Sculpture at the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, where he has lectured since 1975. His most recent solo exhibition, Gawu, toured England, Wales and Ireland before opening at the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida in August 2005. He participated in the exhibition Africa Remix, which toured

Düsseldorf, London, Paris, Tokyo and other cities between 2004 and 2007. Since 1993 Anatsui has worked with the October Gallery, London, who have been instrumental in bringing his work to international attention. Collected by major institutions across the world, from the British Museum to the Centre Pompidou, and from the de Young Museum, San Francisco, to the museum kunst palast, Düsseldorf, Anatsui is today recognised as one of the most original and compelling artists of his generation.

Polly Savage
London 2006

A version of this essay appeared in *Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Writings*, Vol 5 No 1 (Spring 2005) pp. 173-175

ⁱWorks by Anatsui in tropical hardwood include *Visa Queue* (1992), *Mammoth Crowd Series* (1993) and *Unfolding the Scroll of History* (1994). *Broken Pot Series* (1979) used fragments of ceramic pots, and large wooden mortars once used to pound grain formed the basis of *On their Fateful Journey Nowhere* (1995), *Adinsibuli Stood Tall* (1995), *Tapper* (1995) and others. In *Peak Project* (1999), Anatsui created a series of cloths by sewing together the lids of evaporated milk tins, which were then arranged as small peaks. *Crumbling Wall* (2000) was built from punctured iron sheets, once used as cassava graters, while railway sleepers found in Cornwall, and made from West African hardwoods, were used to make *Aziza Passage* (2004), the gateway to the West Africa Tropical Biome in the Eden Project, Cornwall. *Akua's Surviving Children* (1996) utilised driftwood found on the shores of Denmark and iron nails produced in a Danish forge that once produced guns for export to West Africa, and *Waste-paper Bag* (2004) was made from discarded obituary-notice printing plates.

ⁱⁱEl Anatsui in an interview with Gerard Houghton in *El Anatsui Gawu*, Oriol Mostyn Gallery, 2003, p. 24.

ⁱⁱⁱPillars of stacked pots, each of which represents a bereavement in the village.

^{iv}Conversation with El Anatsui, 2005.

^vEl Anatsui, *In the Making: Materials and Process*. Cape Town: Michael Stevenson Gallery, 2005.

^{vi}El Anatsui, cited by Atta Kwami in 'Nsukka – A Place to Hide: Towards a Conversation with El Anatsui' in *El Anatsui Gawu*, Oriol Mostyn Gallery, 2003, p. 32.

^{vii}Conversation with El Anatsui, 2005.

^{viii}The yellow and green stripes on the red ground of *oyokoman Cloth* reference an early eighteenth-century conflict between two factions within that lineage. See John Picton, 'Colonial Pretence and African Resistance or Subversion Subverted: Commemorative Textiles in Sub-Saharan Africa' in Okwui Enwezor (ed), *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945 – 1994*. Munich: Prestel, 2001.

^{ix}The first record of European cloth being imported to Africa tells of Bendetto Dei, an agent of the Portinari firm in Florence, arriving in Timbuktu in 1469, where he sought to exchange Lombardian cloth for the gold of the Sudan. See Christopher B. Steiner, 'Another Image of Africa: Toward an Ethnohistory of European Cloth Marketed in West Africa, 1873 – 1960' in *Ethnohistory* Vol 32 No 2 (Spring 1985) p. 91.

^xDavid Eltis and Lawrence C. Jennings, 'Trade Between Western Africa and the Atlantic World in the Colonial Era' in *The American Historical Review* Vol 93 No 4 (October 1988) pp. 942 – 948.

^{xi}See Picton (2001) and Steiner (1985).

^{xii}Eltis and Jennings (1988) p. 943.

^{xiii}Susan Diduk 'European Alcohol, History and the State in Cameroon' in *African Studies Review* Vol 36 No 1 (April 1993) pp. 1 – 42.

**DAVID KRUT PROJECTS
NEW YORK**

**OCTOBER GALLERY
LONDON**

2006



Blema (2006), aluminium and copper wire, 370 x 550 cm/146 x 217"





Between Earth & Heaven (2006), aluminium and copper wire, 230 x 320 cm/91 x 126"



Healer (2006), aluminium and copper wire, 210 x 305 cm/83 x 120"





Dzodze (2006), aluminium and copper wire, 215 x 335 cm/85 x 132"



Takpekpe (2006), aluminium and copper wire, 240 x 340 cm/95 x 134"





Paths to the Okro Farm (2006), aluminium and copper wire, 213 x 345 cm/84 x 136"



Nukae? (2006), aluminium and copper wire, 280 x 400 cm/110 x 158", variable installation





Nane (2006), aluminium and copper wire, 270 x 380 cm/106 x 150"



El Anatsui – Biography

Education

- 1969 Postgraduate Diploma in Art Education, University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana.
- 1965 -69 BA (Art), College of Art, University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana.

Teaching

- 1996 Professor of Sculpture, Fine and Applied Arts Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria (UNN).
- 1998 Head of Department, Fine and Applied Arts Department (UNN).
- 2000 Department (UNN).
- 1982 -96 Senior Lecturer, Fine and Applied Arts Department (UNN).
- 1975 -82 Lecturer, Fine and Applied Arts Department (UNN).
- 1969 -75 Lecturer, Art Education Department, Specialist Training College (now University of Winneba), Winneba, Ghana.

Selected one person exhibitions

- 2006 *El Anatsui*, David Krut Projects, New York, NY, USA (in collaboration with October Gallery).
- El Anatsui: Nyekor*, Spazio Rossana Orlandi, Milan, Italy.
- 2005 *El Anatsui: Gawu*, October Gallery, London.
- Danudo: Recent Sculptures of El Anatsui*, Skoto Gallery (in collaboration with Contemporary African Art Gallery), New York, NY.
- 2003 *El Anatsui: Gawu*, Oriol Mostyn Gallery, Llandudno, Wales, UK.
- 07 An Oriol Mostyn Gallery exhibition touring to Model Arts & Niland Gallery, Sligo, Republic of Ireland, Gallery Oldham, Oldham, England, UK, October Gallery, London, UK, Djanogly Gallery, University of Nottingham, England, UK and the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, Florida, USA, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, USA, Fowler Museum of Cultural History at UCLA, Los Angeles, USA.
- 2002 *El Anatsui: New Works*, October Gallery, London, UK.
- 1998 *A Sculpted History of Africa*, October Gallery, London, UK.
- 1997 *Hakpa*, French Cultural Centre, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 1995 *El Anatsui*, October Gallery, London, UK.
- 1991 *Old and New: An Exhibition of Sculpture in Assorted Wood*, The National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 1987 *Venovize: Ceramic Sculptures*, Faculty of Art and Design Gallery, Cornwall College, Redruth, UK.
- Pieces of Wood: An Exhibition of Mural Sculpture*, The Franco-German Auditorium, Lagos, Nigeria.

- 1982 *Sculptures, Photographs, Drawings*, Goethe Institute, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 1980 *Wood Carvings*, Cummington Community of Arts, Cummington, Mass, USA.
- 1979 *Broken Pots: Sculpture by El Anatsui*, British Council, Enugu and the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- 1976 *Wooden Wall Plaques*, Asele Art Gallery, Nsukka, Nigeria.

Selected group exhibitions

- 2006 *The Missing Peace: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama*, UCLA - 07 Fowler Museum of Cultural History, Los Angeles, USA, touring to Loyola University Museum of Art, Chicago, USA; Rubin Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA.
- 2006 *DAK'Art Biennale*, Dakar, Senegal.
- 2005 *In the Making: Materials and Process*, Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, SA.
- de Young Museum, San Francisco, USA.
- Out There*, Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, Norwich, UK.
- 2004 *Africa Remix*, museum kunst palast, Düsseldorf, Germany and - 07 touring to the Hayward Gallery, London, UK; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan, Moderna Museet, Stockholm.
- 2003 *Africa Informs*, October Gallery, London.
- Biennale de Ceramica dell'Arte Contemporanea*, Villa Groppallo, Vado Ligure, Italy.
- Transfers*, Palais de Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium.
- 2002 *One: The Independent*, Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art, Liverpool, UK.
- 2001 *Encounters with the Contemporary*, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, USA.
- The First Albissola Ceramics Biennale, Museo Civico d'Arte Contemporanea and Museo della Ceramica Manlio Trucco, Albissola, Italy, touring to Musée Ariana, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Africas: The Artist and the City*, Centro de Cultura Contemporania Barcelona (CCCB), Barcelona, Spain.
- News from the Front*, October Gallery, London, UK.
- 2000 *El Tiempo de Africa (Africa's Time)*, Centro Atlántico Arte Moderno, Las Palmas, Canary Islands, Spain.
- Messagers de la Terre, Rur'Art – Espace d'Art Contemporain d'École Agricole Xavier Bernard, Rouillé*, France.
- 1999 *New Colours From Old Worlds: Contemporary Art from West Africa*, October Gallery, London.
- The Independent*, Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art, Liverpool, UK.

- 1999 *Les Champs de la Sculpture*, presented by the City of Paris and organised by the Paris Cultural Affairs Department, Champs Elysées, Paris, France.
- 1998 *Triennale der Kleinplastik*, Stuttgart, Germany.
- 9th Osaka Sculpture Triennale*, Osaka, Japan.
- 1997 *The Poetics of Line – Seven Artists of the Nsukka Group*, The National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution Washington DC, USA.
- 1996 *Transvanguard*, October Gallery, London, UK.
- Container '96 – Art Across Oceans*, Langelinie, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Images of Africa*, Torpedohallen, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa*, Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, Sweden.
- Africana*, Sala 1, Rome, Italy.
- Transforms*, October Gallery, London, UK.
- Group Exhibition*, Avant-Garde Gallery, Kaduna, Nigeria.
- 1995 AKA '95, Bona Gallery, Enugu and Didi Museum, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 8th Osaka Sculpture Triennale*, Osaka, Japan.
- Contemporary African Art*, World Intellectual Property Organisation Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK.
- The Right to Hope*, Johannesburg Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa, touring to Cairo, Amman, Gaza, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.
- An Inside Story – African Art of our Time*, Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo, touring to the Tokushima Modern Art Museum, Tokushima; Himeji City Museum of Arts, Himeji; Koriyama City Museum of Art, Koriyama; Marugame Inokuma-Genichiro Museum of Contemporary Art; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Gifu, Japan.
- Configura 2*, Erfurt, Germany.
- Art In The Shadow*, The Nigerian Pavillion at Africus – 1st Johannesburg Biennale, Johannesburg, SA.
- Uli Art – Master Works*, Skoto Gallery, New York, USA.
- 1994 *5th Havana Biennale*, Havana, Cuba.
- 1993 *Six African Artists*, October Gallery, London, UK.
- New Currents '93 – Avant-Garde Nigerian Art*, Didi Museum, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 1992 *Begegnung mit den Anderen*, University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany.
- AKA '92, Bona Galley, Enugu and Didi Museum, Lagos, Nigeria.
- Arte Amazonas*, Modern Art Museum, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and subsequently touring as *Klima Global* to Staatliche

- Kunsthalle, Berlin and Ludwig Forum, Aachen, Germany.
- 1991 AKA '91, Bona Gallery, Enugu and Goethe Institut, Lagos, Nigeria.
- Works by a Group of African Artists*, The World Bank Art Society Gallery, World Bank Headquarters, Washington DC, USA.
- The Sculptor's Guild of Nigeria Inaugural Exhibition*, Murtala Mohammed Park, Enugu, Nigeria.
- South of the World*, Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea, Marsala, Italy.
- 1990 *The Calabash 1st Art Exhibition*, The Calabash, Lagos, Nigeria.
- AKA '90, The Presidential Hotel, Enugu and Goethe Insitut, Lagos, Nigeria.
- Five Contemporary African Artists*, 44th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.
- Contemporary African Artists: Changing Tradition*, the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, touring to the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Chicago Public Library Cultural Centre, Chicago, Illinois; Washington Project for the Arts, Washington DC; Museum of the National Centre of African-American Artists, Boston, USA, *Achebe Celebration Exhibition*, Continuing Education Centre, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria.
- 1989 *Zeitgenössische Nigerianische Kunst*, Bonn, Bocholt and Mönchengladbach, Germany.
- 1988 AKA '88, Nigerian Union of Journalists' Press Centre, Enugu; Institute of African Studies, Nsukka and the National Gallery of Crafts and Design, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 1987 AKA '87, The Presidential Hotel, Enugu and the National Gallery of Crafts and Design, Lagos Nigeria.
- 1986 *Nigerian-German Prints*, University of Nigeria, Nsukka and the Franco-German Auditorium, Lagos, Nigeria.
- AKA '86 – *Inaugural Exhibition of the AKA Circle of Artists*, the French Centre, Enugu and Goethe Institut, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 1983 *Four Contemporary African Artists*, Mintec Gallery, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
- 1982 *Okike 10th Anniversary Exhibition*, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- 1981 *Drawing on the World*, Billingham Art Gallery, Billingham; Middlesborough Art Gallery, Middlesborough and the House of Commons Gallery, Westminster, London.
- 1979 *Christian Arts in Nigeria*, Holy Trinity Cathedral Hall, Onitsha, Nigeria.
- The Nsukka School*, Art Gallery of the Rivers State Council for Arts and Culture, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
- 1975 *Fabric Wall Hangings, Burnt Wooden Wall Plaques*, The Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria.
- 1974 *Tekarts Expo 5*, Accra Arts Centre, Accra, Ghana.

Selected Public Collections

African Studies Gallery, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria.
Akron Art Museum, Akron, Ohio, USA
Asele Institute, Nimo, Nigeria.
The British Museum, London, UK.
The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, USA.
Centre Pompidou, Paris, France.
Clarks International Art Collection, Somerset, UK.
de Young Museum, San Francisco, USA.
Diamond Bank of Nigeria, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria.
Eden Project, Cornwall, UK.
French Cultural Centre, Lagos, Nigeria.
Ghanaian Embassy, Copenhagen, Denmark.
The Hammermill Collection, Hellebaek, Helsingør, Denmark.
Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA.
International Peoples' College, Helsingør, Denmark.
Iwalewa-Haus, University of Bayreuth, Bayreuth, Germany.
Jordan National Gallery of Arts, Amman, Jordan.
Missoni, Milan, Italy.
Musée Ariana, Geneva, Switzerland.
museum kunst palast, Düsseldorf, Germany.
Museum of Art, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA.
The National Gallery of Contemporary Art, Lagos, Nigeria.
The National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, USA.
Osaka Foundation of Culture, Osaka, Japan.
Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, Florida, USA.
Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan.
The World Bank Art Collection, Washington DC, USA.