



Photo by Lucy Azubuike. Image courtesy of the artist.

El Anatsui Nigeria/Ghana

El Anatsui, a native of Ghana, is renowned for his rich, colorful textiles woven from found objects including bottle caps and debris from consumer products.

Artist Profile:

Born in 1944 in Anyako, Anatsui earned his BA in art from the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, in 1969. He began teaching at the University of Nigeria in 1975 and went on to head the Fine and Applied Arts Department from 1998 to 2000. He now holds the title of Professor of Sculpture. His works reference both Abstract Expressionism and indigenous African textiles. In his early pieces, Anatsui was inspired by African ideographs, which appear commonly on cloths worn at funerals. Wooden food trays carved with these symbols created an abstract effect. Over the decades, Anatsui has explored other media in his art, including newspapers, scrap wood and metal. More recently, Anatsui turned to installation art, creating large tapestries that were highlights in the 1990 and 2007 Venice Biennale, and the exhibition *Africa Remix* which toured Europe and Asia. His work is in the public collections of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., the Museum for African Art, New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the British Museum, London, the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Denver Art Museum. He is represented by the Jack Shainman Gallery in New York.

Patrons:

Funds from Native Arts acquisition fund, U.S. Bank, Douglas Society, DAM Volunteer Endowment, African-American Outreach Committee and private individuals.*

*African-American Outreach Committee and private individual donors include: Richard and Theresa Davis, Alex Cranberg and Susan Morris, Geta and Janice Asfaw, Saron and Daniel Yohannes, Lee McIntire, Milroy and Sheryl Alexander, Dorothy and Richard Campbell, Wayne Carey and Olivia Thompson, Morris Clark, Rebecca H. Cordes, Kenneth and Rebecca Gart, Tim and Bobbi Hamill, Kalleen and Robert Malone, Meyer and Geri Saltzman, Ann and Gerry Saul, Mary Ellen and Thomas Williams, Nancy and James Williams, Forrest Cason, First Western Trust Bank, Howard and Sandy Gelt, Gene Osborne, Boettcher Foundation, John and Eve Glesne, The Schlegel White Foundation, Jeffrey and Nancy Balter, and Tamara Banks.

Installation Location:

In 2008, the DAM Native Arts Department commissioned *Rain Has No Father?*, a 13 ft., 2 in. tall by 19 ft., 9 in. wide tapestry, which Anatsui created out of found liquor bottle tops and copper wire. The new acquisition will be displayed as a part of *Embrace!* and will hang in the Hamilton Building's fourth-level African Gallery.

Previous Work:



L to R: *Rain Has No Father?*, 2008. Found bottle tops with copper wire. Funds from Native Arts acquisition fund, U.S. Bank, Douglas Society, DAM Volunteer Endowment, African-American Outreach Committee and private individuals. *Open(ing) Market*, 2004. Metal tins and wood. Collection of the artist.