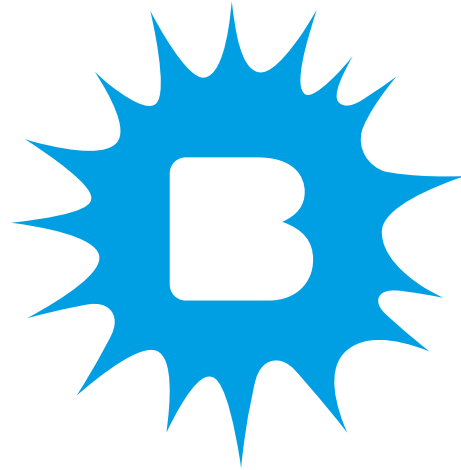


# Press Release



July 2012

***Gravity and Grace: Monumental Works by El Anatsui***  
**On view at Brooklyn Museum February 8 through August 4, 2013**

The first solo exhibition in a New York museum by the artist El Anatsui will be presented at the Brooklyn Museum from February 8 through August 4, 2013. *Gravity and Grace: Monumental Works by El Anatsui* will feature over 30 primarily large-scale works in metal and wood that transform appropriated objects into site-specific sculptures.

Anatsui converts found materials into a new type of media that lies between the bounds of sculpture and painting. In so doing, he combines aesthetic traditions from his birth country Ghana, his home in Nsukka, Nigeria, and the global history of abstraction. His works can take on radically new shapes with each installation. Anatsui gives curators and designers the opportunity to install his art in ways that make use of their particular exhibition space, highlighting the intricacy of each piece.

Included in the exhibition are twelve recent monumental wall and floor sculptures, including *Gli (Wall)*, 2010, and *Earth's Skin*, 2009, which are widely considered to represent the apex of Anatsui's career. The metal wall works, created with bottle caps from a distillery in Nsukka, are laboriously pieced together to form monumental hangings that reveal a shimmering and enticing array of colors, forms, and textures. Anatsui is captivated by the history of use that such materials, whose travels reflect the artist's own nomadic background, retain. In response to a long history of innovations in abstraction, performance, and cross-cultural exchange in both African and Western art history, the artist has created forms that are radically new. *Gravity and Grace* explores the many historical connections between Africa, Europe, and the Americas in a wholly new, African medium.

The exhibition also includes wall reliefs of interchangeable wooden pieces, such as *Amewo (People)*, 1998/2010, which reference the artist's earlier work in wood and bear compositional relationships to the large metal pieces. Anatsui's alchemical transformation of discarded materials raises pressing issues of global consumerism and highlights the blurring of geographic identities.

## **Brooklyn Museum**

200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238-6052  
T (718) 638-5000 F (718) 501-6134  
[www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)

Born in 1944 in Anyako, Ghana, El Anatsui has lived and worked in Nigeria since 1978. After he received a BA and a postgraduate degree from the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana, he was a professor of fine arts at the University of Nigeria. His work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the British Museum, the Centre Pompidou, the Museum of Modern Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum Kunstpalast, and the de Young Museum. He participated in the Venice Biennale in 1990 and 2007, to considerable global acclaim. A version of *Gravity and Grace* toured Japan in 2010–2011 under a different title.

*Gravity and Grace* is organized by interim chief curator Ellen Rudolph, Akron Museum of Art, and made possible by a major grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The Brooklyn presentation is organized by Kevin Dumouchelle, Associate Curator of the Arts of Africa and the Pacific Islands. The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication by Susan Vogel, curator, documentary filmmaker, and former professor of African art and architecture at Columbia University.

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Admission:**

Contribution \$12; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$8. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

**Museum Hours:**

Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; first Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

**Directions:**

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B41, B69, B48.

On-site parking available.