

Week 3

El Anatsui: Studio Process

1. How far is the studio from the university campus?
2. Why does Anatsui insist on silence in the studio?
3. About how many bottle caps can be in one “block”?
4. Why does he take photographs of different arrangements?

Grammar Time!

How do you re-write the underlined segments in *Passive Voice*?

Anatsui's work, located at the museum's front entrance, welcomes the public into the museum.

It invites viewers to reflect on questions around materiality, history and the power dynamics that underlie notions of wealth and value.

It also asks viewers to consider the following: whose ambition does this work allude to?

El Anatsui: Palettes of Ambition

What doesn't make _____ of _____ magnetic? Everything about it.

The first thing for me is the _____. You want to explore the individual pieces and understand how they're made up, but the more you step back, the more you see the _____, the shapes, and the undulations and _____. There are stories embedded in the work, and these stories are _____.

In 2023, we installed El 's * of _____ * in the museum's _____, and it was the most significant acquisition of the museum in the last _____ years.

El _____ is a sculptor who studied in _____, Ghana, and is currently based in _____. He is one of the leading figures in contemporary _____ and expands the definition of sculpture by working with _____ materials.

His practice is unique because he sources found _____ bottle _____, which he bends and threads together with _____ wire. This process creates monumental, _____-like sculptures that are both _____ and fragile.

El Anatsui participated in the _____ Carnegie International, where he transformed the _____ of the Edward Larrabee Barnes Building. The Carnegie International happens every _____ years and is the museum's most important exhibition.

After the exhibition ended, we invited Anatsui to produce a new _____, sited in the museum's _____. It would be one of the first artworks visitors see as they cross the _____ into the museum.

Installing _____ of _____ involved art _____, conservators, and the _____ team. One half of the process is the _____ of the work, and the other half is the _____.

El Anatsui allows the _____ of the work to decide how it is _____. Its flexible nature allows it to be conceived in many _____, as the material _____ and fills the space with _____.

The artwork has many _____—details you only notice up _____. It pulls you in and invites closer _____.

When looking at the sculpture, it feels like a _____ on the artist's practice and an entry into the museum's living _____.

The artwork invites people into the . **It's like someone standing in the lobby saying,** “. Come a little bit _____. Even _____.”

El Anatsui: Palettes of Ambition:

1. Why do you think it is important to celebrate sustainability in art?

2. What are some other ways art can be more sustainable?

3. Think about the team that helped assemble the installation. How might this play on the idea of “protecting the environment”?

Act 1: The Red Moon

The Turbine Hall reminds me of a ship. I was thinking about motion and the idea of the red sail. This work addresses a history of encounter and the movement of ideas and people.

El Anatsui

The first hanging on the **ramp** resembles a majestic sail billowing out in the wind. Ships have transported people and goods around the world since ancient times. During the transatlantic slave trade, enslaved African peoples were sold and exchanged for gold, sugar, spirits and other commodities. They were then taken across the ocean towards the Americas, with many labouring on sugar plantations that fuelled the alcohol industry. Later, spirits produced in the Caribbean would be shipped to Europe, and from there to Western Africa. The bottle tops used in this commission derive from a trade network of present-day commodities rooted in colonial histories.

This red and yellow sail might announce the beginning of one such journey across the unforgiving waters of the Atlantic Ocean. At the height of the transatlantic trade in the 18th century, sailors would sometimes use the moon to guide their journeys. Its gravitational **tug** as Earth's natural satellite also sets the rhythm of the ocean's tides. Here, red bottle tops form the outline of a red 'blood' moon, seen during a lunar eclipse. Elemental forces **interweave** with human histories of power, oppression, dispersion and survival.

🔊 ramp [ræmp]
noun

🔊 pente f, rampe f

[in road works] 🔊 dénivelation f

🔊 tug [tʌg] (pt & pp tugged, cont tugging)
transitive verb **Conjugaison**

1. [handle, sleeve] 🔊 tirer sur
[load] 🔊 **Conjugaison** tirer, **Conjugaison** traîner

2. NAUTICAL 🔊 **Conjugaison** remorquer

🔊 interweave [ˌɪntəˈwi:v] (pt 🔊 interwove [-weʊv] OR

🔊 interweaved)

intransitive verb **Conjugaison**

🔊 **Conjugaison** s'entrelacer, **Conjugaison** s'entremêler

Act 2: The World

I use multiple elements to talk about the world: not a world made up of just one culture, but a world shaped by all of us coming together.

El Anatsui

The sculpture in front of the Turbine Hall bridge is composed of multiple layers. They suggest a loose **grouping** of human figures, suspended in the air in a state of movement. When viewed from a particular position on the bridge, the fragmented shapes converge into the single circular form of the Earth. The circle echoes the red moon of the sail as a fellow **celestial** body. Anatsui has a longstanding interest in the fragment as a symbol of renewal and restoration. He has said that 'breaking is not destruction but a necessity for reforming.'

As separate elements, the group of restless human forms might imply dispersion through the migration and movement of people across the globe, both forced and voluntary. When viewed together, the fragmentary circle gestures towards new formations of collective identities and experiences. Anatsui also plays with the tension between transparency and opacity. The **ethereal** appearance of the figures is achieved using thin bottle top seals wired together to create a semi-transparent, net-like material.

 **grouping** [ˈgruːpɪŋ]
noun

 **grouperment** m

 **celestial** [siˈlestʃəl]
adjective

(literal & figurative)  **céleste**

 **ethereal** [iˈθiəriəl]
adjective

[fragile]  **éthéré, délicat**
[spiritual]  **éthéré, noble**

Act 3: The Wall

Tate & Lyle sugar was the only brand we used during my childhood in the Gold Coast. I came to understand that the sugar industry grew from the transatlantic trade and the movement of goods and people. My idea is to play with all these elements.

El Anatsui

In this final act, a monumental black wall stretches from floor to ceiling. Anatsui's interest in walls is rooted in the ancient story of the earthen wall of Notsie (present-day Togo). Built by King Agokoli to confine and oppress his subjects, a revolutionary uprising by the Ewe people led to the wall's destruction and the Ewe's escape. As well as structures that constrain and encircle, Anatsui also speaks of the productive quality of walls as '... an attempt to hide things. They provoke curiosity and curiosity might get imagination out to the other side.'

Facing the yellow back of the sail, the wall might suggest an arrival at shore. Metal pools rise from the ground at the base of the wall, resembling crashing waves and rocky peaks. For Anatsui, the use of black refers to the continent of Africa and its global diaspora, charged with the potential of **homecoming** and return. Moving behind the wall reveals an edifice of **shimmering** silver, covered in a multi-coloured mosaic. As lines and waves of blackness and technicolour meet, they echo the collision of global cultures and hybrid identities that Anatsui invites us to consider throughout the commission.

🔊 homecoming ['həʊm,kʌmɪŋ]

noun

[to family] 🔊 [retour](#) m au foyer OR à la maison

[to country] 🔊 [retour](#) m au pays

🔊 'The Homecoming' ([Pinter](#)) 🔊 'le Retour'

🔊 shimmering [ʃɪmərɪŋ]

adjective

[light] 🔊 [scintillant](#)

[jewellery, silk] 🔊 [chatoyant](#)

[water] 🔊 [miroitant](#)