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**« El Anatsui. Part 1, 2013-2022. » From October 15<sup>th</sup> to November 27<sup>th</sup>.**

**After having promoted his work in prestigious institutions, Galerie RX presents today El Anatsui's first solo exhibition. In collaboration with Benefit Print Project (New York), the artist's creative expression is highlighted through the use of singular prints that demonstrate a desire for new creation. The objective of *Part I / 2013-2022* is to present the results of this unique association, both innovative and revealing for an artist recognized on all continents. Part II is scheduled for 2023, still at Galerie RX.**

Born in 1944 in Ghana, El Anatsui is inspired by his culture to use and rework recycled materials, the remains of everyday objects. Far from the nobleness of marble, or even ceramics, El Anatsui uses bottle caps that he crushes and deforms in several ways, aluminum and usually copper wire to fix the whole. The large sculptures created play with volumes, both for the wall pieces and those installed on the floor, although he likes to give free rein to the installation of his works. What he wants is to use and abuse the medium to its maximum, to push it to its limits in order to get the best out of it. The copper capsules and wires take on the appearance of a piece of canvas as shiny as gold. The idea of using capsules as the primary material for his creations began in 1998. Since then, he has worked with these everyday objects without erasing their origin: "I let the material guide me. If it doesn't say anything, then maybe it wasn't made to say something<sup>1</sup>". It is a process that takes time and El Anatsui is never really sure of the rendering of the sculptures until it is hung. In order to best assist him in making these sometimes monumental sculptures, El Anatsui works with many assistants in his studio. It all starts on the floor. But in order to guide them, it is not unusual for him to stand above, allowing him to adjust the layout of the capsules.

Discovered at the 2007 Venice Biennale, many museums and institutions started to show an interest in his work. At the 2015 Biennale, he was awarded the Golden Lion, a recognition of

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<sup>1</sup> Lucas, Julian, "How El Anatsui Broke the Seal on Contemporary Art", in *The New Yorker*, 11 Janvier 2021  
URL : <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/01/18/how-el-anatsui-broke-the-seal-on-contemporary-art>

his entire career. In the collections of the Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), the Tate Modern and the British Museum (London), and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NY, USA), to mention but a few, El Anatsui ranks as the most renowned contemporary artist from the African continent to date. In 2006, Sotheby's sold one of his sculptures for over \$1.4 million.

Since 2010, Benefit Print Project has been working and collaborating with artists and institutions in Asia, North America and Africa. Their goal is to find a new medium for artists while preserving their artistic vision. They have notably helped Olafur Eliasson David LaChapelle, Lynda Benglis, or Vik Muñoz to produce their work differently.

In 2013, the exceptional collaboration between El Anatsui and Benefit Print Project began. The goal is to present El Anatsui's work via a new medium: print. His sculptures, impose and sometimes require the viewer to look up, adopt a new and much more intimate format. However, these are not simple prints. Each edition is reworked by the artist, and thus has its own uniqueness. El Anatsui will first create unique sculptures for printing. Then, in a second step, the print is used as a new medium for creation. Gluing, cutting by hand, fixing with copper wire: his creative process is identical, only the medium changes. The volumes are not forgotten either in spite of the flatness that a sheet can offer. The assembly of printed aluminum will allow him to create the desired volume. *Checked Key* of 2021 illustrates this new mode of production by showing the work of restructuring a print, cutting as well as an assembly of aluminum maintained by copper wire.