

LACMA

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FOWLER MUSEUM AT UCLA

LACMA AND THE FOWLER ACQUIRE KEY CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN SCULPTURE, EL ANATSUI'S *FADING SCROLL*

Joint Purchase Underscores Commitment to Inter-Museum Collaboration



El Anatsui, *Fading Scroll*, 2007

Los Angeles—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the Fowler Museum at UCLA announce the joint purchase, with major support from The Broad Art Foundation, of *Fading Scroll*, a significant work by El Anatsui, one of Africa's most heralded contemporary artists. Recently named by Britain's *The Independent* as one of the fifty greatest cultural figures shaping Africa, Anatsui was born in Ghana in 1944 and has lived and worked in Nigeria since 1975.

Typical of Anatsui's recent work, *Fading Scroll* (2007) is made of various discarded materials, including thousands of metal liquor bottle wrappers and tops stitched together with copper wire. Anatsui transforms these by-products of contemporary life in urban Africa into a sumptuous and stunningly beautiful large-scale "tapestry" or wall sculpture that evolves in each new installation, draping differently to fit the particular aspects of any given space. *Fading Scroll* references traditional African textiles—Ghanaian *kente* cloth in particular—while also embracing interpretative possibilities such as the grandeur of Byzantine mosaics,

the visual richness of Klimt's portrait backgrounds, and Gaudí's architectural decoration.

The acquisition of *Fading Scroll* marks the first time that the Fowler and LACMA have acquired a work of art jointly, and reflects a new partnership for exhibitions, loans, and scholarly exchange. "Both museums are thrilled to partner on this acquisition, which grows the Fowler's and LACMA's investment in African art while also furthering the collaboration between these two institutions" said leaders Michael Govan, LACMA's CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director, and Marla C. Berns, Shirley and Ralph Shapiro Director of the Fowler Museum, in a joint statement. "We are particularly pleased to advance the representation of contemporary African art as well the collaborative nature of Los Angeles museums through the generous support of The Broad Art Foundation."

El Anatsui's work garnered critical acclaim last year in the traveling exhibition, *El Anatsui: Gawu*, at the Fowler Museum, which recently completed its tour at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art, and in the 2007 Venice Biennale. *Fading Scroll* is currently on view at LACMA as part of the exhibition *Tradition as Innovation in African Art*, closing November 2, 2008, and will be included in *Transformations: Recent Contemporary African Acquisitions* at the Fowler from February 22 to June 14, 2009.

About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography—and represent Los Angeles' uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a new contemporary museum on its campus, BCAM. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing transformation project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

LACMA General Information: LACMA is located at 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. For more information about LACMA and its programming, call 323 857-6000 or visit lacma.org.

LACMA Museum Hours and Admission: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, noon-8 pm; Friday, noon-9 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday. Adults \$12; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+ \$8; children 17 and under are admitted free. Admission (except to specially ticketed exhibitions) is free the second Tuesday of every month and on Target Free Holiday Mondays. After 5 pm, every day the museum is open, LACMA's "Pay What You Wish" program encourages visitors to support the museum with an admission fee of their choosing.

About the Fowler

The Fowler Museum at UCLA explores art and material culture primarily from Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas, ranging from the traditional to the contemporary. The Fowler enhances the understanding and appreciation of the arts, cultures, and religions of the world through highly contextualized interpretive exhibitions, publications, and public programming. Its innovative and informative exhibitions and programs are intended for the UCLA community and the people of greater Los Angeles and beyond.

Fowler General Information: The Fowler Museum is located in the heart of UCLA's north campus. Parking is available in campus lot 4, accessible from Sunset Boulevard @ Westwood Plaza. The parking fee is a maximum of \$9. For more information about the Fowler and its programming, call 310 825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu.

Fowler Museum Hours and Admission: Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.; Thursday noon to 8 p.m. Closed Monday and Tuesday. Admission is free.

Image: El Anatsui, (Ghana, active Nigeria, b. 1944), *Fading Scroll*, 2007, Aluminum liquor bottle caps and copper wire, 88 x 472 in. (223.52 x 1198.88 cm), Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Fowler Museum at UCLA, purchased jointly with funds provided by The Broad Art Foundation, Phil Berg, Mary and Robert Looker, and Margaret Pexton Murray, photo © 2008 Museum Associates/LACMA

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