

For Immediate Release Please

Arts World Financial Center & Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Present

**FLOODWALL**

**A Multi-media, Site-specific Art Installation of Flood-ravaged Belongings  
That Tell the Story of the New Orleans Diaspora**

**Free, January 4 thru February 9  
On the Liberty Street Bridge of the World Financial Center**

NEW YORK - *Floodwall*, a multi-media, site-specific art installation composed of more than 350 household drawers salvaged from trash heaps found in the neighborhoods flooded by Katrina, will be on exhibit on the Liberty Street Bridge of the World Financial Center (West Street overpass; enter at One World Financial Center, 200 Liberty Street), January 4 through February 9, 7am to 11pm daily.

*Floodwall*, created by New Orleans artist Jana Napoli, preserves a small part of what the levees could not. Moved to action by the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina, Ms. Napoli collected hundreds of drawers from the flooded and abandoned neighborhoods in the days and months that followed. In this site-specific installation, the drawers sit upright along a 230-foot-long platform, which spans the length of Liberty Street Bridge - standing like empty luggage without their passengers and flowing like a levee broken in places. Beneath the drawers, placed in intervals along the platform, moving-message LED signs silently repeat the words of the people who have parted with these drawers. Their words reminisce and mourn:

*I thought New Orleans would be a good place to  
go for rain and history, and it was. . . .*

*Having to throw your furniture out in front of  
your house -- your life is sort of taken from you  
and sort of dumped out in your front yard. . . .*

*Floodwall's* backdrop is the inescapable bird's eye view of Ground Zero from the expansive windows that encase the pedestrian bridge. Here, juxtaposed, are the intimate discards of one city and the hallows of destruction of another. The urban



*Floodwall* - a multi-dimensional art installation from New Orleans on the Liberty Street Bridge of the World Financial Center January 4 through February 9

artifacts of the drawers and the displaced voices of their owners speak of a city whose ties to its past have been abruptly attenuated by catastrophic events, and so *Floodwall*, in its quiet excavation of these material bases, ties Downtown New York to New Orleans.

"*Floodwall* is a journey through loss and transformation. It explores to culture and community expressed through the everyday objects of people," said Debra Simon, Executive Director of Arts World Financial Center. "Through found objects and a multi-media interpretive presentation, *Floodwall* speaks of what was lost to Katrina and what remains of New Orleans."

*Floodwall* <[www.floodwall.org](http://www.floodwall.org)> is created by artist Jana Napoli, who, in the fall of 2005, began gathering furniture junked after the floodwaters of Katrina had receded. Ms. Napoli saw the human essence of the disaster, dampened but not dead, reflected in piles of curbside-discarded materials. Sweeping across the city Ms. Napoli collected dresser drawers from the heaps of ravaged belongings in front of flooded homes. In a time of death, destruction, and diaspora, the artist found no shortage of needs to mourn and memorialize.

*Floodwall* is a co-presentation of Arts World Financial Center and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. "I remember being in New Orleans with Jana just weeks after Katrina, pulling drawers from the rubble of one house after another as we imagined the voices of those that escaped - or didn't escape - those homes," said Tom Healy, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council President. "This exhibition brings the essence of those emotions and memories to Lower Manhattan."

"We were driven to create a wailing wall that builds intimate and homely detritus from a world destroyed into a wrenching cry of grief," said Ms. Napoli. "This emotional endeavor quickly grew into a sculptural and historical work allowing the people of New Orleans to tell their own story about what they value and why."

The T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History and New York's Whirlwind Creative have become major partners of *Floodwall*. The World Financial Center Liberty Street Bridge site-specific exhibit of *Floodwall* is designed by Whirlwind Creative.

On Wednesday, January 3, Whirlwind Creative's David Lackey will orchestrate the exhibit installation, which will be a collective effort of artists from the New Orleans Diaspora, some of whom have made their homes in New York. Ms. Napoli and visiting New Orleans artists will be present at the exhibit the afternoons of January 4 through 6 and will speak informally with the public.

*Floodwall*, the exhibit, is complemented by an interactive media archive on its website <[www.floodwall.org](http://www.floodwall.org)> documenting more than 600 salvaged drawers, along with mapping of their provenance, expanded oral history transcriptions, and a photo-archive of the drawers. New Orleans native and media artist Rondell Crier is creating this living database out of his need to document a sense of the magnitude of loss by collecting the minute details of everyday objects.

Jana Napoli is a New Orleans native and painter who was a pioneer in 1986 of the burgeoning New Orleans Arts District when she opened her own gallery in that neighborhood. In 1988, she opened the doors of her studio to the commercial art students of the neighboring vocational high school and YA/YA, the New Orleans-based, acclaimed youth arts collective, was born. *Floodwall* has evolved to engage several emerging young artists of New Orleans whom Ms. Napoli mentored during her years as the founding director of YA/YA.

Arts World Financial Center <[www.worldfinancialcenter.com](http://www.worldfinancialcenter.com)> serves as the leading showcase in Lower Manhattan for visual and performing arts - from the intimate to the spectacular - by artists either emerging or established. With its waterfront Winter Garden as a focal point, the artistic process is made accessible in a free, open and interactive manner to workers, residents and the broader public of cultural consumers. Since 1988, year-round and free to the public, Arts World Financial Center has presented interdisciplinary arts programming with an emphasis on commissioned works, site-specific installations and premieres.

Lower Manhattan Cultural Council <[www.lmcc.net](http://www.lmcc.net)> is a leading voice for arts and culture in downtown New York City, producing cultural events and promoting the arts through grants, services, advocacy, and cultural development programs. The Council created a nine-month residency in Manhattan for 15 Gulf Coast artists displaced from their homes and studios. One particularly compelling result of the Council's Gulf Coast outreach is *Floodwall*.

All events are presented by Arts World Financial Center are free! For information, call 212-945-0505 or click <[www.worldfinancialcenter.com](http://www.worldfinancialcenter.com)>.

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