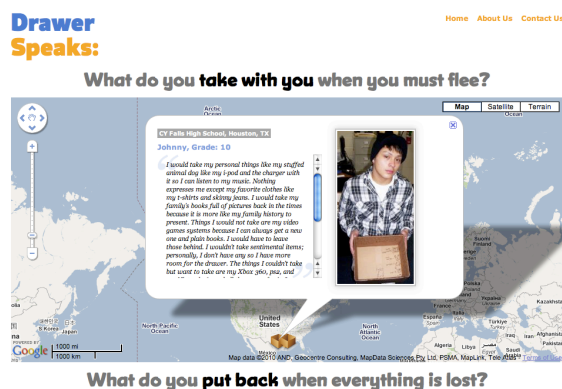


Louisiana Artists to Share Work, Resilience in Exhibits in Wroclaw and Berlin

New Orleans artist Jana Napoli and a group of alumni from the YA/YA high school arts group she founded have been invited by the U.S. Embassies in Warsaw and Berlin to present to the people of Poland and Germany the Louisiana story of loss and the courage it takes to rebuild.

Two exhibits – “Floodwall” (www.floodwall.org) and “Drawer Speaks” (www.drawerSpeaks.org) will be on display at the National Museum in Wroclaw, Poland (formerly Breslau) from 15 July-5 September 2010. They will then move to Berlin, where they will be mounted on a boat that visits various city neighborhoods through 15 October.



The “Floodwall” installation by Napoli, comprising 350 drawers, is a poignant testimony to the cataclysm that devastated New Orleans five years ago: on 29 August 2005, the city was ravaged by the hurricane Katrina and the subsequent failures of federally built levees. Some 1.3 million people were forced to leave their homes, 1836 died. In an effort to commemorate the tragedy of the city and its residents, Napoli collected hundreds of drawers spread among the debris in water and mud, and reassembled them to create an installation intended as a monument to the victims. She explains “These drawers are simultaneously full and empty: they no longer contain – as they used to – clothes, lingerie, cutlery, love letters, but they are filled with the memory of time and place.”

“Drawers Speak” invites students to consider “What do you take with you when you must flee?” and “What do you put back when everything is lost?” They then create drawers from cardboard boxes, with the contents drawn to represent their most prized possessions. Students from all over the world are invited to post their thoughts and designs on the project Web site; a selection of their drawers will also be on display as part of the exhibit

In performance: The *Drawer Speaks Project* and performance workshops in dance and theatre will accompany the exhibits. YA/YA alumna and visual and performing artist Carlos Neville of New Orleans has been named U.S. Envoy. YA/YA alumni artists Gentelle Pedescleaux of Baton Rouge and Madania Graves and Turron Patterson of New Orleans will join Neville in leading cultural and civic workshops and performances.

In solidarity: In each city, artists and students are invited to contribute drawers to both projects. The Louisianians, who understand recovery from flood waters well, also plan initiatives supplying hands-on help to those whose homes and lives were damaged by the recent flooding in Wroclaw.