

THE LAB (for installation + performance art)
501 Lexington Avenue New York, NY. 10017. .

Diaspora USA Chapter - An installation by Anne Katrine Senstad.
Curated by Dr Koan Jeff Baysa and Matt Semler.
May 8-20, 2009

Senstad's installation **Diaspora USA Chapter** is based on the remains of from numerous hurricane Katrina damaged shotgun cottages in the Lower 7th ward, St Roch neighborhood in New Orleans, found by Senstad and recreated from memory and documentation. The original derelict cottage installation is the home of Senstad's site-specific memorial installation **The Light House** at KK Projects, curated by Dr Koan Jeff Baysa in 2007/08, and is the source for Senstad's video piece, **Light Writes Always in Plural – Section Three**, 2009. As self referential to the passing of time through re interpretation and the emotional, psychological and healing value of memorials as creative process, the video trilogy **Light Writes Always in Plural – Section One, Two and Three** is projected onto a cardboard box, a suitcase and the wall in the gallery space. *"The items used for the installation are arranged from memory of the remains of that particular cottage I created the original Light House installaituon in, and I have collected objects and paraphernalia from local sources that recreate a social/economic status of the displaced inhabitants, unable to return to their home due to US politics of re placement of peoples after natural disaasters, the lack of governmental support, accountability, responsibility and efficiency towards citizens"*, says Senstad. The walls serve as the exterior of the cottage with a floodwater line and spray painted inspection signature that still remains in New Orleans to this day. TFW (which stands for Task Force Wildcat – a national Guard Unit) with indications of date of inspection, number of dead people found in house, number of dead people removed from the house, and name of agency that performed the inspection. The 4 ft office lights are arranged in a similar pattern as in the projected video and the original Light House installation. The objective of reference to the original installation is based on aesthetics of documentation and archive, self reference as process and re-use of materials as a narrative source for this new installation. Senstad has added traces of ecological and anthropocene commentary in the installation, as a widened criticism, as seen in the painting from the canals of Venice hanging ascrew with the waterline crossing as a dark reminder of the effects of global warming, the broken sunglasses from Tulane University in New Orleans represent the broken future of generations to come with the threats of these global effects, and the repair efforts that are needed.

Hurricane Katrina –August 29th 2005 - As the center of Katrina passed east of New Orleans on August 29, 2005. Though the most severe portion of Katrina missed the city, hitting nearby St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes, the storm surge caused more than 50 breaches in drainage canal levees and also in navigational canal levees and precipitated the worst engineering disaster in the history of the United States. By August 31, 2005, eighty percent of New Orleans was flooded, with some parts under 15 feet (4.5 m) of water. Most of the city's levees designed and built by the United States Army Corps of Engineers broke, including the 17th Street Canal levee, the Industrial Canal levee, and the London Avenue Canal floodwall. Ninety percent of the residents of southeast Louisiana were evacuated. Despite this, many remained (mainly the elderly and poor). The Louisiana Superdome was used as a designated "refuge of last resort" for those who remained in the city, and proved to be disastrous. Many who remained in their homes had to swim for their lives, wade through deep water, or remain trapped in their attics or on their rooftops. Dead bodies floating were a common sight. Approximately 1.5 million people aged 16 years and older left their residences in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama because of Hurricane Katrina. Those who have returned to their homes differ markedly from those who have not in terms of demographic characteristics, labor force status, and income.