

Teaching materials

Analysis of the Artwork

Reflections

by

Clémentine Brulmans

Click on the title of the artwork above
to be directed straight to the online video
(hyperlink)

Questions :

1. The artistic approach to History

At school, you are probably more used to exploring topics linked to the Second World War and the culture of remembrance mainly through historical sources in textbooks or through testimonies of people who lived at that time.

- Do you think there is particular value in complementing this traditional approach by engaging with history through the artistic work of a student your age, such as Clémentine?
- Does Clémentine's presentation make us aware, for example, of perspectives on history that are usually rarely taken into account, but that you consider important for understanding the meaning that history can have for our time today? Justify your point of view.
- What role can art play in passing on memory when those who experienced these events are no longer there to testify?
- How can a work created today by young people help to prevent such forms of violence from happening again?
- What difference do you see between "learning History" and "feeling memory" through an artwork?
- Can you name other artistic works that have made you reflect on history in a way that is different from history books? Why, in your view, can art allow us to see history from another angle?

2. Destroying in order to create

Decisive moments in Clémentine's creative process involved breaking mirrors into pieces and tearing keys off the keyboard.

- Why do you think some creative ideas can emerge precisely when we break or destroy objects?
- Have you ever had an experience where you had to destroy something in order to create

something new?

3. The broken mirror: what the shards reveal

Clémentine chooses to cover the screen in her work with fragments of shattered mirror.

- What double meaning is she trying to express with this broken mirror in the context of online hate speech? Analyse the possible meanings of this artistic choice.
- Have you ever witnessed – in your life, in your surroundings or even in an imagined situation – a moment when criticism, a rumour or a comment seemed to “break” someone inside? How was this person able to rebuild themselves, even just a little? Describe what this situation makes you think about.

4. Who am I behind the screen?

The broken mirror in Clémentine’s work also symbolises our fragmented identities in the digital world.

- In what ways can the internet sometimes distort who we are – like a mirror that reflects a false image? Give a personal or imagined example.
- In your opinion, how does social media transform the way young people see themselves – their bodies, their personality, their value? Analyse an example.
- If you had to represent your digital identity through an object (mirror, shadow, mask, voice...), which one would you choose? Why?

5. The broken hand: suffering on both sides

Clémentine represents the hand that writes as “broken”.

- What is she trying to express through this artistic metaphor?
- How do you understand the idea that those who attack others may also be suffering? Have you ever observed a moment when a person’s anger or pain was turned against other people?

6. The psychology of those who attack others

Clémentine says that “the people who write these messages are not necessarily doing well either”. In your view, what emotions or vulnerabilities can push someone to insult another person online?

7. The shadow keyboard

The keyboard on which the hand writes its hateful messages is painted completely black by Clémentine, “without letters”, as if erased. What does this artistic choice symbolise for you?

8. Moral responsibility behind the screen: bodiless violence

In Clémentine’s work, the black hand of the person attacking writes without ever seeing the reaction or the impact of their hateful words on the person targeted. Do you think the

absence of a visible face changes the moral responsibility of those who write online?
Explain your position.

9. When words hit: understanding the impact of online violence

In *Reflets*, Clémentine shows that violent words never remain on the screen: they shatter like mirror fragments and strike directly at the person who reads them. Her work reminds us that behind every comment, there is a body, a face, a sensitivity. It invites us to ask: what happens to those who receive these attacks?

- What feelings do you think a person targeted by a violent message might experience (shame, anger, fear, confusion...)? Choose one and explain how it can affect their daily life.
- A hateful message – even a very short one – can trigger many different emotions (shame, fear, anger, sadness, isolation, confusion...). Which feelings can you identify, and can you give, for each one, an example – real, from literature, or imagined – that shows how this emotion can leave a lasting mark?

10. The artwork as an encounter

To create the plaster imprint of her hand, Clémentine's work includes the help of Livia, a classmate, creating “an extra connection”.

- How can collective creation or mutual help influence the way a work carries a social message? Give a concrete example.
- Have you ever experienced a situation in which mutual help – giving or receiving support – enriched a project you were involved in? Describe this experience and explain how this collaboration changed the result or the way you experienced the project.
- In your life – at school, in your family, in your activities, or in society in general – are there “spaces”, let us call them “windows” in a metaphorical sense, that allow you to discover the work, ideas or emotions of others? Describe a concrete example or, on the contrary, a context where these windows are missing, and explain how this affects relationships.

11. Becoming an ally online

Clémentine's work reminds us that online, every action counts: we can hurt... but we can also protect. This raises an essential question:

Imagine a concrete situation where you witness online violence. Can you suggest at least three possible forms of support – technical, relational and collective – and give a precise example for each? Can you identify a way of acting that allows you to support the person targeted without putting yourself in danger?

12. Mental health as an act of resistance

In her work *Reflets*, Clémentine shows that digital violence does not only break screens: it also affects bodies, minds and emotions – both for those who receive the messages and for those who write them. This vulnerability, highlighted by the shattered mirrors, raises an essential question: how can we protect our mental health in a world that constantly demands our attention?

In real life as well as online, everyone has emotional limits. How can you recognise your

own – tiredness, digital overload, hypersensitivity – and take care of yourself? Suggest a simple method.

13. Memory and new forms of hatred

The racist, antisemitic or sexist messages studied by Clémentine's class are not new.

- In your opinion, how do these online messages repeat very old mechanisms that have already been observed in history? Identify the processes you recognise and explain why they are dangerous.
- In what ways do the forms of violence and exclusion that we see today on social media differ from those observed during the Second World War? Think about the methods used, the tools, the reach of the messages and their consequences, then explain what this comparison teaches you about our time.

14. Exploring and classifying forms of digital violence

Echoing Clémentine's work – who chose the computer as the central support to represent online violence – let us explore concretely the forms that these attacks can take in the digital world:

- Research and collect screenshots of different forms of digital violence that can be found today on the internet or on social media (you can anonymise names if necessary).
- Based on your observations, create your own typology: group these acts of violence into several categories. For each screenshot, indicate which category it belongs to and why.
- If you identify other forms of digital violence that you had not thought of at the start, add them: give this new category a name and explain what characterises it.
- Which of these forms of violence seems to you the most frequent today? Why?

15. Virality: amplifying or repairing

In Clémentine's work, the screen covered with fragments of mirror shows how a violent message can reach, wound and fragment a person – sometimes well beyond a single interaction. On social media, this violence can be amplified even more when a hurtful message goes viral and is shared thousands of times.

In your view, how could a platform encourage a more respectful culture? Give two concrete measures.

16. Public figures: between admiration and violence

Let us now apply the message of Clémentine's work to the following situation: some artists, athletes or content creators receive waves of hate after a failure or a public statement. Why does fame make attacks easier – and sometimes more cruel? Analyse a media example.

17. Reinventing social media: what if you were the architect of the digital world?

If you could completely rethink how a social network works – as if you were its engineer, artist or architect – what new rules, options or forms of expression would you invent to

make exchanges more respectful, more human and more supportive? Describe three innovations you would propose and explain why they would really change users' experience.

- Step 1 – Find a name and a design for the interface. Invent a name for your platform. It can be serious, poetic, technical or funny. The interface design (logo): on paper or tablet, create the home page of your imagined social network. Create a slogan that sums up the spirit of the network.
- Step 2 – Define the values. Which values form the basis of your network? Write an ethical charter explaining the principles of the network. Examples: respect, creativity, transparency, mutual support, diversity, slowness ("slow media"), humour...
- Step 3 – Imagine new features. Suggest at least three innovations:
 - new tools to prevent insults;
 - reward systems for kind behaviour;
 - filters that transform aggressive comments;
 - discussion spaces moderated by users;
 - avatars that change according to behaviour;
 - "slow writing" options to encourage reflection;
 - discussion rooms that are not based on "likes" or the race for popularity;
 - spaces for artistic or sound expression...
- Step 4 – Describe a user's experience. Tell the story: what happens when someone logs in? How do they post? How do they respond to conflict? How do people feel when they use it?
- Step 5 – Present your prototype. Present your network in the form of:
 - a mini-poster,
 - a diagram,
 - a narrative text,
 - or even a short role-play.

"Reflection room": a message can only be sent after a 10-second pause.

18. Accessible art for an inclusive society

Clémentine works with raw, simple, accessible materials (screen, keyboard, plaster, mirror, etc.). Do you think art needs to remain accessible in order to be a space for democratic participation? Explain your point of view and its implications.

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