

# Teaching materials

Analysis of the Artwork

## Open Mind

by

*Camille Rappe*

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 related to the Second World War and the culture of remembrance mainly through historical sources in textbooks or through testimonies from people who lived through 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 Camille?
- Does Camille's presentation, for example, draw our attention to perspectives on history that are often overlooked but that you consider important for understanding the meaning history can have for our present time? Justify your opinion.
- What role can art play in passing on remembrance when those who experienced the events are no longer there to tell us about them?
- How can a work created today by young people help to prevent such forms of violence from recurring?
- What difference do you see between "learning history" and "feeling remembrance" through an artwork?
- Can you name other artistic works that have prompted you to reflect on history in a way that differs from history books? Why, in your view, can art help us to see history from another angle?

#### 2. Giving Wings to Others' Ambitions

The suitcase that Camille enthusiastically identified at the very start of the workshop as the central object of their sculpture did not, in fact, belong to the materials provided. It was a fully functional suitcase we had used to transport creative supplies (hot glue guns, acrylic paints, brushes, etc.)—and which we naturally intended to take back at the end of the workshop. For this reason, it would have been very easy to nip Camille's idea in the bud.

a. Personal and ethical reflection

- Have you ever, on your own initiative, decided to help someone or let them have something so that their idea or project could come to life—even though you could just as easily have said no without needing to justify yourself? If so, describe the situation.
- How do you feel when you help someone realise their vision: pride, doubt, joy, frustration...?
- Helping someone when you are not obliged to do so: is that a simple act of kindness or an act of responsibility? Why?
- In which situations do you think it is right to set aside your own needs to support someone else's project?

b. Societal and political perspective

- Who decides in a society which ideas are allowed to exist and which should be discarded?
- In what way can enabling Camille to implement their idea be seen as a democratic act?
- Can helping become a form of resistance to individualism? Explain.

c. Philosophical approach

- Does an idea belong only to the person who develops it, or also to those who make it possible?
- Can giving something up be an act of freedom?
- What is the difference between “owning” and “caring for”?

d. Citizenship and global responsibility

- How can small gestures of support contribute to a more solidarity-based world?
- Do you think mutual aid should be a personal choice or a shared value promoted by society?
- As a world citizen, what importance would you like to give to solidarity in your life?

**3. The Metaphors of “Journey” and “Departure”**

The starting point for Camille's artistic inspiration lies in their associating the suitcase with the ideas of “journey” and “departure”.

- Which two points of reference nourish this connection: on the one hand in relation to their current experience as a student in the school context, and on the other hand in connection with the memory of the Second World War? What is the fundamental difference between these two forms of “journey” and “departure”?
- Have you ever linked an everyday object to a formative experience in your own life path? Why did this object have particular value for you?
- How does learning about the biography of the young Polish woman Bronislawa C. influence your view of refugees or displaced people in today's world?

**4. Two Metaphors in Tension: The Inside and the Outside of the Suitcase**

The central metaphor in Camille's work is the suitcase. “What comes out of my suitcase—and how?” This question was one of the most important for Camille during the creation of

their work.

- Explain what this suitcase represents, which metaphorical meanings they attribute to the world inside and outside it, and to the moment of opening. Describe how they ultimately constructed the various elements and sections of the train or trail extending from the opening of the suitcase, and explain what each of these elements represents on a metaphorical level.
- How can this suitcase metaphor help you to better understand the situation of people in exile today?

## 5. The Metaphor of the “Shoes”

Camille paid special attention to selecting and artistically shaping the two shoes attached to the outside of the suitcase.

Explain how they justify the various details of this choice and how these elements contribute to the overall meaning of their artistic concept.

## 6. Turning a Dead End into a Solution

When Camille tried to attach the shoes to the suitcase with glue, they encountered a real technical problem: they would not stick at all.

- Describe how this dead end ultimately became a turning point for them, a starting point for a different way of thinking and for developing their work further.
- Have you ever experienced a situation in which failure or a blockage ultimately allowed you to discover a new path or an unexpected idea? How did you experience this?
- Would you go so far as to say that every constraint is a disguised form of freedom? Why or why not?
- How can a society transform a collective crisis or dead end into an opportunity for positive change? Try to illustrate your thoughts with a challenge of our time.
- Can you think of a moment in history when a technical, material, or political blockage led to an unexpected innovation or transformation?
- In what ways can learning to deal with dead ends help build a more resilient and solidarity-based world?

## 7. · The dark shadows of history

Let us take the dark shadows beneath the shoes in Camille’s work as a starting point for the following questions:

- Have you ever experienced, in your surroundings or while travelling, that past traumas – experienced by one person or by an entire group – can leave lasting traces several generations later in the way people live, behave, or pass on their history?
- Do you spontaneously associate something negative with the expression “shadows of the past”? Why?
- In your opinion, how do these traces appear: in bodies, gestures, silence, glances, ways of behaving?

- Can you imagine that some people carry a memory inside them that does not directly belong to them, but has been passed down to them?
- What do you feel towards such traces of the past: empathy, discomfort, incomprehension, respect...? Explain!
- Why do you think some wounds seem to never fully disappear?
- What differences do you see between personal memory, family memory, and collective memory?
- How can a society acknowledge its wounds without remaining trapped in them? What role can school, art, or places of remembrance play in this process?

## 8. · Seeing the shadow in a different light

Let us now consider the metaphor of the shadow from another angle:

- Do you think the shadow can only symbolise fear, pain or guilt, or can it also express protection, calm, coolness, intimacy, remembrance...? Explain!
- Is there a “shadow” in your own life that you do not perceive only in a negative way, but also as an important part of your personal journey?
- Does the shadow exist without light, or are the two inseparable? Can one be imagined without the other?

## 9. · The torchlit remembrance march

In Villeneuve-d'Ascq, Camille takes part in the torchlit remembrance march with their class. This march commemorates the massacre of the civilian population carried out during the night of 1–2 April 1944 by Waffen-SS troops in retaliation for an attack on a military convoy.

- What meaning do the symbols of the torch and the flame have for you?
- Why do you think the town chose these elements as the central symbol of its remembrance march?
- What emotions does the idea of a remembrance march evoke in you, one illuminated only by the glow of flames, accompanied by the steady rhythm of drums, without any words being spoken: contemplation, sorrow, strength, solidarity, tension, hope...? Why?
- How can taking part in remembrance rituals influence your own attitude towards present-day injustices in the world?

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