

Information file about the action

Title : « Art makes school »

Nancy Metz Academy

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Classes involved : Term BEP VAM et Term BEP LC

Subject : aesthetic education

Date : june 2006

Summary :

« Art makes school » is an original cross-border project organised and funded by the Saarbrücken Ministerium für Bildung Kultur und Wissenschaft , the regional board of cultural services from Lorraine and an association called Œil de Forbach.

Two classes from Lorraine and 6 classes from Sarre were selected to participate in this project from 10 to 16 October 2005. It took place in a coton wool spinning mill in St Ingbert, around Saarbrücken, in Germany.

During a week, our pupils met French and German artists and together, they worked and made artistic projects. They used different technics: painting, sculpture, video,

Les techniques et pratiques artistiques proposées sont très variées : peinture, sculpture, vidéo, silk screen print, fresco, set up...

Pupils from Bertrand Schwartz vocational high school made a set up with the help of Thomas Rentmeister, a sculptor from Berlin.

This experience was followed by an exhibition introducing both the pupils' and the artists' works. We finished with a private viewing and a festive night : special moment where pupils, artists, teachers and families confronted their ideas and exchanged point of views.

This project allowed pupils from vocational schools to discover an artistic practice and to tackle the creation process, which was out of their concern before.

It made us work differently, far from the school, and far from our habits, rules and landmarks. It also made us work in another country with a different culture. We talked about Europe through culture and Art.

Key-words

STRUCTURES	DEVICES	THEMES	SUBJECTS
Vocational high school	Art and cultural project class (PAC) Partnership	Art and Culture	ART

Lxicon. Links

You can access the addresses by clicking..

- « *Kunst macht Schule* »: ***annex 2 - Kunst macht Schule.***
1) *the poster*
2) *Projektbeschreibung (in German)*
Ministerium für Bildung Kultur und Wissenschaft:
66117 Saarbrücken :
t.goerlinger@bildung.saarland.de
b.theisen@bildung.saarland.de
p.sahed@bildung.saarland.de
- Oeil Gallery* : Oeil Gallery and Castel Coucou
association.oeil@wanadoo.fr
<http://www.oeil-castel.com>
- Set-up* : *Work organized in a given space.*
The word set up comes with practices and research in Contemporary Art.
The set up is the artist's will to extend his investigation field from the workshop to the audience. Links appear between many things and their context.
Few names of artists using this technic, this demarche, this way of expression :
Charles Simonds - Mario Merz - Joseph Beuys - Hans Haacke - Daniel Buren Nils Udo - Anselm Kiefer - Christian Boltanski - Annette Messager - Louise Bourgeois - Rebecca Horn - Bruce Naumann - Martin Greed - Kader Attia ...
- Thomas Rentmeister* : ***annex 1 - Thomas Rentmeister***
1) *The project (in German) and the artist's photograph*
2) *His exhibitions (in German)*
3) *An article about the artist : Art Presse (in French)*
4) *his website* : <http://www.thomasrentmeister.de>
- St Ingbert* : *photos file 1 2 3 4*
Place : Alte Baumwollspinnerei 66386 St. Ingbert :
werner.deller@t-online.de
- Destruction* : *photos file 6 7 8 9 10 11*
- Building* : *photos file 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24*
- Sabrina* : *photos file 25 26*
- Light* : *photos file 27*
- Sound* : *music CD Sound*

Writing about the action

Title : « Art makes School »

Nancy Metz Academy

Vocational High School Bertrand Schwartz 54340 POMPEY

Cross border cultural project

« *Art makes School* » / « *Kunst macht Schule* »

I SUMMARY

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II CONTEXT

This project is in line with different actions already in place in Bertrand Schwartz Vocational High School in Pompey. Their goal is simple : bring a cultural opening to an underprivileged audience (cinema, drama, heritage, contemporary art).

On the other hand, we are well aware that feeling rejected from all these cultural practices, not knowing them, can sometimes lead to violence. It is therefore necessary to implement actions capable of making it easier for them to know and appropriate cultural places and events.

In 2005, we implemented two artistic workshops with a local cultural partner : Gérard Philippe Theater (T.G.P.) favoring an artistic practice and an aesthetic opening on the world of drama.

This experience aroused interest and motivation among the school. We therefore decided to go further and to reinforce the cultural dynamic in our school.

In 2006 we kept our partnership with the TPG, devoting our research to street drama and

III THE ACTION

The first step in the project was to :

- Meet the artists, the teachers, the French and the German partners,
- Organize the workshop week,
- Define the artist's needs for the project,
- Choose a theme and a working method.

We asked the pupils to collect several objects : A large amount of usual, unusual, emotional, strange objects of different shape and material. It was asked as a game and everybody had to search attics, basements, dumps... Under the puzzled eyes of teachers, and neighbours, broken open pieces of furniture, chipped tableware, old scratched vinyls, sleighs, skis, bike wheels, garden tools, watering cans, cardboard suitcases, teddy bears, computer carcasses started piling up in the playground, all this raising interrogations

Second step in the project :

The cultural class :

During a week, one class goes to a place ready to welcome them and to offer them cultural installations and resources corresponding to the project.

The pupils are intensively immersed in the chosen cultural activity.

Proposed spot : and old sewing factory in **St Ingbert** near Saarbrücken. Beautiful and very big industrial place.

Warm welcome from our german partners and the artist Thomas Rentmeister who quickly seduced our pupils by showing his work and his artistic demarche.

The theme was « Destruction Construction » and it was well accepted by the pupils too.

They tackled the very physical destruction phase with enthusiasm, pleasure, rage and violence. Break, tear to pieces, destroy, knock down, hammer, explode, rip off became a liberating and cathartic activity.

The construction phase, conceptual, intellectual, creative was slower, laborious, uncertain and faltering.

After discussing, they decided to assemble and gather all the scattered elements in one sculpture expressing the world chaos.

New work, conceptual, abstract, disconcerting, more difficult, doubtful, time and energy consuming. Pupils were easily discouraged, ready to abandon.

Collective researches : Find technical solutions to assemble elements, but also for volumes, colours, scenography, light and sound.

Correct, rectify, comment, argue, fight for ideas, listen to others, accept them, and always find solutions, be active, inventive, creative...

They needed to find a title to their work and it was called « **Sabrina** » refering to the devastating hurricanes of 2005. Dramatic Theme they tried to lighten with humour thanks to Christmas lightnings and sweet music (child tales).

Last Step : The exhibition

1st confrontation with the media, the audience, friends, family, artists and teachers.
Communicate, comment, argue, justify, accept the others' remarks, contradiction and criticism.
Trial of detachment from the work.
Evaluation of the result, the work done.
Satisfaction of the work done, the difficulties overcome, the challenge took up.
And proudness for this piece of art.

4 AFTER THE WORKSHOP

There is a strong link between all the pupils who took part in this workshop.
They naturally met to exchange souvenirs, photos and to keep in touch with the different partners of the project.

They also wanted to keep in touch with Thomas Rentmeister, they consult his website, follow his exhibitions and his artistic career.

This experience also made them more curious, and more eager to discover ART in general, and contemporary art in particular. We can even say they developed a sense for art.
They now ask to go out for exhibitions, visits, museums.

Some of them want to continue this artistic discovery. In this experience, they found they had unlimited and unsuspected resources.

5 THE EDUCATIONAL ASPECT

It was initiated by the study of images in my class (2de BEP), This sequence lasted 6 weeks, the climax being the visit of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Strasbourg in April 2005.

During these lessons, we tackled some important notions regarding Art and images : composition, centring, plans, main lines, contrast, perspectives, vanishing point... That is all the elements needed to understand and appropriate a language and its codes. Whether it is cinema, ads, comics, painting, the analysis is made around 2 main poles : indication / connotation. This to develop their readiness to criticize.

Parallel to this, they studied a series of masterpieces to get the keys of Art History and to be able to refine their personal opinion.

Pupils that were chosen for the project « *Kunst macht Schule* » got another approach of themselves and of Contemporary Art :

A better self-image.

Vocational school often means school failure. These pupils showed they were capable of leading an ambitious and demanding project, which at first sight was far above their skills- from beginning to end, without neglecting any steps : understanding of the «philosophy» of the action, analysis, realisation (destruction/ construction) and exhibition.

They made clear that they were exactly like other pupils, able to succeed in difficult tasks.

Initiation to contemporary Art and to its demarche.

This contemporary creation made it possible to fill the gap between a form of expression considered as elitist and the pupils who ignored it or rejected it by lack of culture or self-underestimation of their skills. The “out-of-school” frame made this project successful thanks to the participants’ greater autonomy.

VI THE CROSS-BORDER ASSET

As fundamental as the educational aspect, it corresponds to a concrete experience of Europe, especially Germany. This the result of common things : an artistic project, its conception and its realisation by a cross-border group of people and the differences : culture, language, educational system, being and the way you see others and the world.

We can talk about a success because everybody managed to adapt outside school. Neither their different cultures nor their different languages slowed down this project, initiatives were numerous despite their weakness in the other language. Pupils realized they had many things in common and that their nationality was never a barrier which prevented them from doing and working together : A concrete Europe, creative, human, with a different look on the other.

VII PUPILS IMPRESSIONS

Audrey : *«I liked this experience a lot. It is so different from what we usually do in a vocational school. We made something unique. We are satisfied and even proud of what we were able to produce ».*

Estelle : *«It’s nice to meet an artist .It’s a way of life, a way of working and thinking. We were so impressed by his artistic work[Thomas Rentmeister] »*

Joddy : *«Yes...Thomas explained his work thanks to photos and catalogues. It’s very surprising to see how he distorts and twists consumption products. It’s funny, provoking, and poetical»*

Geoffrey : *« It is different from all the projects we have in vocational school...It’s very interesting to go abroad and to see a different culture...In fact it’s very interesting to*

discover another country through a project. For me, it's a good european and artistic experience»

Estelle : *«It's true! I don't speak German, but language was no obstacle. We communicated thanks to gestures and at the end we understand each other easily by working together».*

Joddy : *«As far as I'm concerned, I really liked the artistic adventure which started as a mysterious game. We had to collect many objects to make a sculpture in Germany. Then we decided to work together on the theme - destruction /construction –and to picture Chaos».*

Estelle : *«Thomas never imposed his ideas on us. He guided us and helped us realised what we had collectively decided to make».*

Audrey : *«We were surprised by the result as we didn't think we were capable of doing it».*

Joddy : *«We made an interesting piece of Art because the message is powerful !Me, I feel like going on. I really like contemporary art ! »*

V CONCLUSION

« Kunst macht Schule » was an enriching experience on a cultural, artistic and psychological level but also if we consider the changes that occurred for all the participants at a personal level. An artistic workshop is a unique, satisfactory occasion to be confronted to a creation process, to explore other worlds, other ways of thinking, it needs other skills than the ones you usually use in vocational schools : imagination and creativity. This experience made these kids more self confident. They got a positive image of themselves, it gave them autonomy, strength and will to face the future.

Working outside school in another country contributed to this success. I think it's sometimes necessary to change frames, places, landmarks and to create a « destabilizing » climat to have action and reactions from the pupils and to make them dig for other skills, other ways to adapt, other unheard-of resources.

Anne LEBLANC
june 2006

L'EST REPUBLICAIN 2006

ANNEXES

Annex 1 : Thomas Rentmeister

Annex 2 : KUNST MACHT SCHULE, German presentation

Annex 3 : photos