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**“Three cases of identity (re)construction through art interventions:  
the dialogical and the ‘sensible’.”**

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*Warning: What follows is a classical paper format, while our presentation will use a more creative setting, and let the audience experience a participative and artistic performance where to discuss the proposed hypothesis.*

**Introduction and main argument**

• *The ongoing, dialogic process of identity construction* — Identity construction cannot be reduced to discourses, nor to individual responsibility. The latter has been criticized as a mean to exert pressure on employees (Boltanski & Chiapello 1999), installing ‘cages of subjectivities’ (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004) and making work identity uneasy to secure because of the difficulty to demonstrate competences and performance (Alvesson, 2001). The importance of class identity, social positions or functions in the labor process is complemented with experience factors, among them narratives and conversations (Watson, 2009; Kärreman & Alvesson, 2001). Identity construction (IC) is now seen as a set of fundamentally interactive processes (Beech, 2008). Alvesson & Wilmott (2002) suggest two main processes: identity regulation (IR, the discursive practices of identity definition) and

identity work (IW, the interpretive activities involved in reproduction of self-identity). In other words, identity regulation is « an ongoing process in which the individual negotiates the ‘Who am I?’ question amidst social ‘This is who **we** are’ messages » (Kreiner & al., 2006). IR can be either a deliberate, strategic action or a kind of indirect, non voluntary effect (“a by-product”) of more or less visible activities, day-to-day interactions or arrangements (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). It is sourced in managerial practices, in cultural/communitarian groundings and in the multiple heterogeneous discourses in the organization. It exerts a form of control on identities and the ‘insides’ of people. Individuals can more or less actively react to IR discourses or actions, enact them, receive them, (re-)interpret them or even resist them. This reaction process is enacted in the notion of IW. Snow and Anderson (1987) first contributed to define IW as the “range of activities that individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept”. Thus, antagonist forces or ideals drive IC (Wieland 2010; Clarke & al. 2009), and IC is better understood by considering it as a dialogic process between IR and IW (Beech 2008), aimed at giving meaning to doubleness and multiple identities (Learmont & Humphreys, 2012). More precisely, Beech (2008) argues that the dialogic process is made of 1. a series of stimuli (either utterances of others or contextual discourses), which lead to 2. a range of possible responses (from mere acceptance or assimilation to disagreement or conflict, with intermediate positions) and finally have 3. an impact on IC (reinforcement, refinement, reflexivity/significant refinement or rejection).

Based on this dialogic conception of IC, we wonder whether artistic interventions could play a significant role in the IC process, especially through its ability to address the relational, sensible, emotional, and affective dimensions. In other words, our paper intends to better understand the role of experience and the embodiment of sensemaking (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012) in the dialogic process of identity construction. In this perspective, we will focus on cases where art interventions take place in working situations at some crucial moments of IC.

- *Art and the dimension of ‘the sensible’* — It is recognized that art empowers affects and allows the uncovering of subtle, invisible and transient signals that are nevertheless critical (Abrir, 2012; Berthoin-Antal et al., 2011; Strati, 2000). It increases awareness of what moves and prompts us into action (Carr and Hancock 2003). Art also addresses the dimensions of ‘the sensible’. Beyond the sensorial perceptions taken as such, it refers to the experience of subjects within organizations, not only by producing forms but also by reflecting on social relations in an innovative and dialogical way (relational aesthetics, Bourriaud 1998). From a phenomenological and critical standpoint, it is knowledge (Strati, 2007; Carr and Hancock,

2003). Epistemologically, tacit and embodied knowledge is better expressed by artistic or presentational forms while discursive forms are more adapted to explicit knowledge (Taylor & Hansen 2005). Exploring the dimension of the sensible encapsulated in artworks and art interventions allows in particular to better grasp how collective understanding of organizations and their transformations hinge on subjectivity (Abrir 2012, Begon Saint-Genis & Mairesse, 2012). This knowledge is generally recognized as disruptive, because of the heterogeneity of the two words of art and organization (the ‘cultural divide’, Barry and Meisiek, quoted by Berthoin-Antal 2012), the ability of art for “not-knowing” (Berthoin-Antal 2012), or more generally the ability of art and aesthetics for promoting contradictory emotions (Vygotski, 1965-2005) or the ‘mutability of opposites’ (Page et al, 2013). The person of the artist plays a key part in art interventions, as an outsider, qualified as curious, troubling, bringing a fresh look. Not so much bearer of innovative ideas, the artist are recognized for the human quality of their relations and their energy (Berthoin-Antal 2012-a). The dimension of the sensible brought by art is characterized by its subjectification power and by its value sharing (the role of emotions and affects, the construction of subjectivity) and value-adding (Berthoin-Antal, 2012-a).

Our argument is that art, by organizing the co-creation of work-related sensible forms, triggers and performs – in ways we strive at investigating – a collective and dialogic process between IR and IW.

### **Empirical research**

- *Context and methodological approach* — We constructed a comparative methodological design based on three cases of artistic interventions. These three cases have a common denominator: they all take place in a context of crisis in which identities are disrupted. In the Heato case, the artistic intervention begun just after the announcement of the plant closure and during the dispute against it; in the Levi’s case, it began just after employees lost their jobs and were invited to join an outplacement process; in the CreaClothes case, it took place at that moment when unemployed persons were involved in a device of reintegration. This choice was made because we hypothesized that those kinds of crisis contexts could offer a more tangible expression of the dialectics between IR and IW and could give us access to an understanding of the processes of identity work when identity regulation makes suffer. In these three cases, the nature of artistic interventions remain different, in links with three different kinds of artworks: in the Heato case, a photographer socializes himself within the workers’ group and takes pictures of them; in the Levi’s case, a theater stage director writes

and stages a play with the laid-off workers; in the Creaclothes case, a wardrobe master asks to persons in reinsertion to create suits for a play. But in all the cases, artworks are closely linked with a disrupted situation of identities; they also are co-produced between the artist and the workers or unemployed persons, even if the detailed nature and degree of such a co-production is different among the three cases.

For each case, data collection was similar. We collected the words of the artists: their own understanding of their postures and roles, and ways of acting. Meanwhile, we collected the words of the workers/unemployed persons, their experience, and their feelings. After a first analysis of these interviews, we organized discussions between the artists and the workers/unemployed persons in order to understand what they were sharing, what were their convergences or differences in the interpretations of those postures and ways of acting. We also collected documentation (press articles, interviews, documentaries...) for each case. In that sense, several aspects of the artistic interventions were able to be grasped: work, representations and felt of the artist; work, representations and felt of the workers/unemployed persons implied in the situation; the interactions between them; and the trajectories they experienced. Most of all, and what was our main purpose, we investigated how it could be related to the artistic intervention: how the production of an artwork expressed, transformed or accounted for identity issues at work. ‘Art production’ means both the process (organization of the production, collaboration, decision-making processes, choices, evaluation processes...) and the result (the form and its meaning, obvious and hidden; the aesthetics and its comments; the diffusion and its reception).

We will first describe in detail in each case how the artistic intervention was conducted and what were the effects on IC. We will then discuss the general outputs one can draw from the cases.

• *The “HEATO” case: Photography during a downsizing process*

a. The story and the situation — In June 2009, the top management of the international group owning the Heato Company announced the closure of its unique plant in France. It affected more than 200 employees. This announcement came as a shock to the employees, but also to the local inhabitants and politicians, as the company had long been one of the largest employers in the area. During the 1990’s, Heato was known for the quality of its products, but also for the quality of its organizational and social environment. During the 1990’s, the plant was mainly described as innovative, both in terms of products, of processes and of employment and working conditions. At the beginning of the 2000’s, this French company

was sold to an international group: the announced strategy was to penetrate the French market. Several redundancy plans were organized during the 2000's, and the workforce dropped from 800 employees to just over 200.

As soon as the closure was announced, the employees and their union representatives took action to fight back against the decision. Production stopped, the employees occupied the plant, demonstrations associating local inhabitants and politicians were organized, the management rapidly fled the plant, and negotiations began in Paris. At the very beginning of the dispute, the head of a local government authority estimated that this dispute should be publicized nationwide. At the same time, the employee representatives looked for ideas that would play on one of the Achilles' heels of the company, that is to say its reputation, in order to influence the balance of power between them and the top management but without resorting to violent forms of struggle. As mentioned by one of the unionists: *"we had the means to produce a big bang; we had access to sources of gas, but we wanted to avoid that sort of thing, we wanted to obtain wide media coverage of the dispute, but we also wanted to keep the plant in good working order"*. Their diagnosis was that such fights for survival were bound to help workers gain better redundancy packages, providing they managed to reach a nationwide audience, which would put pressure on the top management. It implied obtaining large media coverage. However, there were so many disputes due to plant closure announcements at that time that they almost seemed to be in competition with each other. One of the ideas that emerged that summer, and which was financially supported by the head of a local government authority was to hire a photographer who would cover the conflict and produce postcards that would be used "to send news of the dispute" to a wide range of actors (ministers, journalists, business leaders ...). In this context, a local photographer, who was known locally for his social activism was hired for the project.

b. The artistic intervention — Day in day out, the photographer stayed in the occupied plant for six months. His first idea was to testify to what was happening there. He moved into the plant and gradually met the workers. He began by taking pictures of collective action: *"I wanted to show they experienced that fight"* and to that end, he decided to *"capture the other façade of the fight"*, photographing not only the demonstrations but also the daily life of a dispute. He also took photos, individually or in small groups, when people asked him to do so. Every evening, he printed the photographs at home; and displayed them the next morning, on the walls of a corridor in the factory. Step by step, some of the employees asked him to photograph them, individually, or with their colleagues, or with their families. Most of them wanted to be photographed in front of their work place. At the same time, they explained their

work, described the working conditions, their relationships with their colleagues and with the management. It appears that this day-to-day posting of the photographs on the walls of the plant contributed to create acceptance of the photographer and helped him to socialize with the workers. Then, he tried not to intervene on the environment; as he said, he tried “*to blend into the landscape*”, first doing reportage photos in order to justify his presence. This is confirmed by a unionist: “*he didn’t impose anything on us, he was very discreet, and we had the feeling that he was one of us*”.

The first objective of the postcards including some of those photographs was to communicate on the dispute and to alert the authorities to the consequences of the closure. As one of the employee representatives said, “*with the postcards, we wanted to give news to everybody, especially during the summer and we wanted people to see our fight in another way than the usual pictures in the magazines*”. Designing the postcards was an opportunity to work collectively: the employees chose together the photos to be published and, moreover, worked together to write the accompanying comments: “Our project for the summer? Being laid off!”; “A good worker is a worker on the threatened species list”; “My plant does a great job, we are doing fine”; “And yet they are closing, they always want more”; and finally, “A good worker is a dead worker!”

Two months after the beginning of the dispute, some employees suggested a new idea to the photographer: designing and producing a calendar featuring twelve workers posing naked, like in the calendar of the French rugby team. The female workers refused to pose, saying that they were fed up with all those calendars showing naked girls, and they had a hard job convincing some male workers to accept the challenge. Choosing the photographs and writing the comments was also done collectively. The calendar was a great success: one of the photographs was published in a leading French daily paper; the worker representatives were interviewed on the radio and TV. The fight for media-coverage was won.

c. The effects of this artistic intervention — At first glance, this artistic intervention with its production of postcards and calendars was first of all a tool for establishing a balance of power between them and the management who had decided to close the plant. In fact, it proved a real tool for the media-coverage of the strike and thus contributed to influence the outcome of the negotiation, especially regarding the financial conditions for redundancy. At second glance, one can analyze this artistic intervention as a means to reveal the former deterioration of working conditions, to contribute to re-narcissizing the workers, and to reconstruct a collective.

- **Revealing former deterioration of working conditions:** during the dispute and this artistic intervention, the workers talked a lot to the photographer, especially when posing. During those moments, they began to speak about their working conditions and to exchange together on that critical point. For example, while posing, a worker explained: *“This is where they destroyed a production line before our eyes. It was horrible. The plant manager was very happy. You should have seen it; they smashed everything in front of us”*. They mentioned that they had never spoken together about these working conditions while working. All the testimonies pointed in the same direction: they firstly related to the increasing pressure at work during the past ten years. They explained how the implementation of a new production process four years before had resulted in increased stress at work. They also mentioned the fact that the management practices were harsher, without respect or recognition. They said that the working conditions produced isolation and silos. For example, it was no longer possible to talk to colleagues while working. With the new production system, the first line management banned laughing, comments, or any talking: *“It was like being in prison, whereas before that, it was possible to express oneself”*; *“we were abused, which had not been the case formerly”*. Some employees went on to state explicitly that they were anxious about their future, but they felt relieved to quit the company: *“I should have quit before, but, I was afraid”*. The testimonies then related to all the discourses produced by the management during that time which sounded like betrayals afterwards: *“in 2007, we developed new pre-production, we worked over time to prepare it, and finally the corresponding production volumes were relocated abroad”*. Furthermore, they described all the promises that had not been kept. For example, they explained that they were asked to train Italian workers and to transfer know-how to other plants in Europe *“because we were so competent, so good, and it was presented as a key factor for the future of this plant”*. But at the end of the day, they realized that they had become *“an easy way to relocate screwdriver factory”*. This contributed to discredit all the discourses about performance: indeed most of the sentences the workers used testified to their lack of confidence in their ability to be “good workers”. Furthermore, at the beginning of the dispute, workers often said that the plant was closing because of a lack of skills and competencies: *“because they were no good”*.

- **Re-narcissizing through distancing:** a second point that emerged from this artistic intervention was that it gave the workers a new image of themselves. When they saw the photographs, they all said: *“but, we are beautiful!”* Some women indicated: *“we might be overweight, but on these photos, we look attractive”*; *“I usually hate people taking pictures of me, but I must say that F. made us look beautiful on these photos”*; *“I posed with my children*



*in the workshop, it gave me a nice souvenir*". As for the people who did not want to be photographed, they felt respected by the photographer as he always asked them if they agreed to be photographed beforehand. It might well have been the first time for years that they felt valued in the workplace. The photographs were thus a means to re-narcissize themselves, and this at the very place where they had been previously devalued.

Artistic intervention played an accompanying role at various levels: it allowed the workers to get a comprehensive understanding of their own life events; it offered a rewarding mirror when their feeling of worthlessness was at its peak, it introduced possible internal conflict mediation between the individual and the external conflict. In that sense, the artistic intervention can be seen as a resource helping them to do their mourning work with respect to their former working group.

**- *Reconstructing a work collective:*** as mentioned above, it seemed that in the past it was very difficult to talk about the working conditions and what is more about what progressively appeared to be lies and manipulation. It also seemed that this artistic intervention played a therapeutic role, at least enabling employees to express themselves, that is to say to reinvest IW, whereas at the same time they could express how damaging the former IR practices had been. They even allowed themselves, under the gaze of the photographer, to claim – which was not really “politically correct” – that this redundancy plan could also be seen as a relief. That was the reaction of an expert, a specialist in restructuring, after looking at the photos and talking to the photographer: *“what can be seen in these photographs is the fun side. This is specific to crisis situations. Partying is useful to endure the pain and to build a group. But one can also see a sort of relief in these pictures; here one can see rather that work was a source of suffering”*.

This artistic intervention thus enabled the workers to become aware of the former dysfunctional dialectics between IR and IW. This new stimulus offered by the artistic intervention was both a means to reactivate the workers’ ability to be reflexive in regard to their past experience and to finally work on distancing themselves from the management practices that had imprisoned them. Ultimately, this artistic intervention gave the workers a renewed self-perception and contributed to the production of new narratives about themselves, referring to beauty in a place where everything had become ugly. This new kind of external input helped workers to develop self-identities that were more congruent with their self image. What is more, the artistic intervention produced a new collective project, in the very place where these people had previously felt so isolated. For example, workers witnessed that through this collective work on photographs, they re-discovered each other: *“we talked,*

*we discovered people from another perspective, we realized that we didn't know the people, even in the same workshop; we realized that there were hidden talents"; "new brotherhood ties had been established, people had developed skills that I had never suspected before, some of them took initiatives".* They created an association to manage the calendar budget: it was also a way to gain official recognition from the group constituted within the artistic intervention. However, the work on photographs did not involve all the workers, but a new working group was created for this production.

• *The "LEVI'S " case: a post-closure account of work and identities*

a. The story and the situation — In march 1999, the last French manufacturing Levi's plant is closed in Yser-La Bassée: 541 employees are laid off, out of which 86 % are women. The decision is not only a shock for the employees, but it is also for the whole geographical area. Bruno Lajara undertakes an innovative approach named « documentary theater » and launches a broad research on the economic and sociological dimensions of this restructuring, along with researchers and experts. He first sets up a general meeting where all the workers are invited: he presents his project of creating a writing workshop with all the voluntary workers. 27 of them enroll, under the guidance of a writer, Christophe Martin, and with the financial support from the National Employment Service. «The blue hands », a small collection of short texts, is published in 2011. Bruno Lajara then offers to create a theater play with former workers and his theater company « Viesàvies ». Five of the ex-workers are eventually selected. The play «501 Blues » is performed for the first time in March 2001, and many other performances will take place till 2005, largely relayed by media-coverage.

To better understand what is at stake in this context of plant closure, one must outline the strong structuring and symbolic role of Levi's in its geographical area in the 90's. La Bassée is located in the North of France, in quite a rural, traditional and industrial area, historically dominated by miners. In this context, most of the women living there were housewives, and Levis' implementation in the early 70's may be viewed as an opportunity for them to get a job and to get emancipation. Moreover, Levi's encapsulates a highly symbolic role, referring to the US, to Young people, to rock & roll music, etc., the 501 jean's (which was manufactured in this unique plant in Europe) being emblematic of the brand. And the La Bassée plant was the most productive in Europe, with an average production of 18000 jeans per day. Thérèse, one of the former workers in this plant, who was enrolled as an actress by Bruno Lajara, has been working for 33 years in this plant, first for Rocket, and then for Levi's. She says: *"Levi's bought the plant in 1971, and I've been sold with walls and furniture"*. This opportunity for

emancipation, however, combines with a dose of alienation, due to the nature of work at Levi's, a repetitive, routine work, composed of specialized and atomized tasks (35 workers for manufacturing one jean's): as Bruno Lajara expresses, "*[those women] were not dress-makers, they were fashion-mechanics*". Work conditions were also hard, with high temperatures, heavy noise, a physically tiring work, and a strong pressure to continuously increase production. The staff was mainly masculine, and Thérèse also alludes to sexual harassment, which was then cautiously kept silenced: "*Today I can speak about that, because... I've been told 'you will always remain a simple worker*". In short, getting a job at Levi's leads to a paradoxical combination between alienation and emancipation for those women: "*it was our freedom*", Thérèse concludes, "*especially towards our husbands*".

In such a context, the Levi's plant closure's announcement at the end of 1998 was violent. Thérèse explains: "*They cut off the power, and our director climbed up onto the table and he announced that the plant will probably close, it was not sure [...] Then, I turned over, looked at the girls, and I said 'We're there... We're blasted...' These were my words, I'll never forget it. 'We're blasted'. I immediately understood that it was the end. And it lasted from september to march 1999*". It was a shock especially because several months before, in May 1998, the CEO had visited the plant and told the workers that all was fine.

b. The artistic intervention — Bruno Lajara's intervention takes place in this disrupted context. As an artist, his motivation arises from the willingness to question the possible role of art (esp. theater) in society, to question work and to question the ongoing debate about the end of work, especially in France when the 35 hours law was implemented. The Levi's plant closure sounds like a symbol of the contradiction between the feeling of freedom, rock and roll, subversion, etc. on the one hand, and the reality of layoffs and plant closures on the other: "*I wondered what did 'the end of work' mean... So one day, we decided to work on this issue. It was a broad issue. But one day, I heard about the conflict at Levi's. And I said to my thinking group : 'look, it's interesting [...] We've got a subject !'. Since then, I followed all the conflict through the media, I took some notes, and when the plant was closed in march, in the early summer, I took my car and I decided to meet union representatives there*". Bruno Lajara is a politically engaged artist, and his first reaction to the social conflict that took place at Levi's was to "*knock out American*", hence his astonishment when he heard the women claiming that "*if Levi's plant re-opened, we would come back there... because we love the factory*". This reaction led the artist to change his plan and to work not with professional actors, but with the workers themselves: "*It became so obvious that they had to play, and not professional comedians*". Lajara convinced those women to give him an interview (they were

initially reluctant, shocked by the event and by the type of media coverage) and finally to get the entire list of the workers. He sent a letter to all the 500 workers, inviting them to a first open meeting. 250 of them attended. Despite the initially reluctant reactions, Lajara succeeded in building confidence and dialogue with them, taking time to understand the local context, being respectful for the individuals, thus leading to “*an actual encounter*” between the artist and the workers. After this first open meeting, Lajara implemented a writing workshop with 27 of them during two months, with the support of the National Employment Service, which ensured a retribution for the workers. The workshop led to a short book entitled « The Blue hands », based on a series of anonymous texts written by the 27 women. In a second stage, Lajara decided to transform those testimonies into theatrical writing, and he built « 501 Blues », a theater play, with 5 of the 27. As Lajara puts it, this was really a challenge: “*I didn’t change the way I used to work. I said to them: ‘We take the risk together. 5 of you will play. I’m confident, it’s now up to you. You have to show to the entire world that you are able to be comedians’. For those 5 women, this artistic experience was an opportunity to prove that they were worth, whereas they had always been told that they were worthless, especially after a one-year period of unemployment*”.

c. The effects of the artistic intervention — The artistic intervention by Bruno Lajara triggered off several effects and phenomena in terms of identity.

- The first effect is undoubtedly to have made the women conscious of the former identity regulation process. The ***unveiling of the identity regulation process*** is exemplified by the place of rhythms and physical moves and gestures. The play itself is interesting in its way to account for material and physical disruptions in a restructuring context. It emphasizes many rhythm disruptions: the slow rhythm of the choreography at the beginning of the play, the increasingly frenetic body and gestures rhythms when working on an assembly-line, and back to slow motions gestures of disenchanted workers sweeping the empty factory floor. Bruno Lajara explains why he was astonished, when recording the factory noises, by the synchronization of all workers: “*They all were following the same rhythm in their body. These gestures, this factory, are inside of them. Hence the violence... You cannot disentangle the factory or work with the rest, because they are deeply anchored in their personality... At the factory, you have no education, you are just a vibrato, you are a rhythm. You are just a body without a thought*”. Hence the physical violence of the layoff and of the plant closure which is a radical change in life rhythms. Thérèse’s expression is also revealing: “*When I worked in the factory, I didn’t live, I was a robot*”. The layoff is a violent disruption in these physical, mechanical gestures, and it leaves a huge void. The choreographic dimension of the play

precisely aim at showing that women are not just bodies, but also women, with their personalities and their identities: work gestures are transformed into artistic gestures, into a choreography, thus unveiling a part of the operating identity regulation process. As Lajara puts it, *“we had to show the woman behind the worker. And impressionism was more important than realism. The choreograph turned away from the professional gesture to bring around to dance”*. Another example of what has been unveiled by the artistic intervention is the way some women were able to put into words some deep feelings or secret stories: when Thérèse speaks about sexual harassment for the first time after spending thirty three years in the factory (*“I had never told about having been sexually harassed... never. Bruno was the first to know about it, I was never speaking about that. [the theater experience] has also proved useful for that...”*); or when Thérèse, during the writing workshop, claimed that she hated her job : *“[The artistic experience] has also been useful for that... in those moments when Thérèse, for instance said — and it has been a shock for the other women : ‘I’ve been hating my job for 33 years’. And some others replied ‘you cannot say that, because we’ve lost this job’. But Thérèse said ‘I’ve been hating it’. And she was able to put it into words, to name it, thanks to the writing workshop...”* (B. Lajara).

- **Mourning and repair:** a second kind of effect of the artistic intervention can be perceived in the way the workers were able to mourn over Levi’s and over the job they had lost. Most of them have not been meeting together for more than one year when they took part into the writing workshop, thus preventing them from mourning over their former employer and employment. During the workshop, Bruno Lajara deliberately devoted much time to make them speak about the last day in the factory and *“to write a text about what were their feelings during this particular day... there were tears... and they really were in mourning, because some of them could not have done it before”*. But for Thérèse, the theater experience also reactivated a kind of imaginary identity, the one she was dreaming about when she was young: *“Contrary to the other girls, I realized a dream I had when I was a little girl... But I didn’t dare to speak about it. In our working world, saying that you want to become an actor or an actress, it is not acceptable. And, finally, I was feared, I was afraid of not being able, but, somehow, I have flourished, because I was fulfilling a dream. Long time ago, I already wanted to play... It’s old... with Bourvil, Francis Blanche... I liked them very much. It was really a childhood dream that came true. [...] Bruno asked me if I had a secret dream, and it was the first time I spoke about my secret dream”*.

- **A new working frame:** the artistic intervention was also a moment where the workers progressively learnt a new way of working, within a new framework and with new types of

regulation. The artist explains how, in a first step, he adapted work organization to them: the writing workshop was starting at 9 am, just like it was when they were working at the factory, because it seemed important to get them back to the idea that they had an actual job, even if it was an intellectual and not physical job: *“We took the frames in order to help them to get back on their feet”*. The artist interestingly observes that the women also learnt that an intellectual job may be tiring, but at the beginning, they did not dare to admit that and, above all, did not dare to say to their husbands that they were mentally exhausted. In terms of identity (re)construction, it is worth observing that the group of women had recreated their former habits, their canteen for example. In a second step however, Bruno Lajara warned them that they had to adapt themselves to the particular rhythm of performing arts, focused on the end of the day. The women progressively learnt this new rhythm, and the play « 501 Blues » became a company for them, so much so that, when the number of performances was decreasing, they were afraid of being fired once again. According to Thérèse, *“if I had suddenly stopped 501 Blues, it would have been a second layoff”*. Bruno Lajara stresses the fact that, contrary to their former experience, *“it was well prepared upstream, with a network, an address book, etc. And we turned the logic around when it came to finding a new job. They were in a position of strength and they found a job. In performing arts, you always question, you have to look for work, etc. It is very dynamic, because in performing arts, you are in a voluntary-chosen precarity, with a recurrent questioning for each performance”*.

More fundamentally, one could say that the artistic intervention for those Levi's workers played as an opportunity to take revenge and to feel that they were real, living human beings. Here again, Thérèse's words are emblematic of that, when she claims: *“Yes, because in the factory, you were a number, whereas in « 501 Blues », you were a person, you existed... It was like getting back at everybody, at those in the factory who were telling us that we were good for nothing, that once we were fired, we were not able to do anything... It was a hell of revenge... It's a pity that my father is dead, because he obliged me to stay in the factory for 33 years... One could say, I was proud”*.

• *The “CREACLOTHES” case: repairing identity through work*

a. The story and the situation — Help centers for professional insertion in France are currently meeting an increasing demand for productivity, what threatens their mission: *“There is less and less subsidies, so we have to make more and more money (...) Insertion enterprises have now to answer bids... I had to organize the workshop in a taylorian way. This is not my initial mission, which consist in accompanying people.(...) The commercial logic put on the sites is a*

*problem to me. I'm not at profitable activities. I'm at formative activities".* Laura, a site manager in a women insertion center focused on sewing activities, chose to mix the productive and creative aspects by working for and with Mary, an artist who is concerned with the relations between personal and professional identity. Mary orders a dress for her show, during which she tells her story as a job searcher. By designing and realizing the clothes, the eight women in the insertion center experience a different relationship to the client, to the manager and to themselves.

Professional insertion in France has been a national program since the 80's, as a network of regional sites with a convention with the State who grants the enterprises subsidies. Insertion centers run integration projects for long-term unemployed on the labor market. Their purpose is getting people re-accustomed to normal work in order to find real jobs through dedicated work placement associations. Insertion centers are dedicated to foster identity construction, both personal and professional: *"For insertion sites, putting orders is not central, it is not the goal, it is only a mean to re-mobilize the persons. Making them happy to fulfill the schedule, but letting the less productive ones taking the time they need.... The persons come here to build, they have to build their own professional project"*(Laura, site manager). CreaClothes hosts women with no job for more than two years. The site is focused on a sewing activity and the customization of second-hand clothes. The production is directed toward local businesses, like a race car organizer (sewing special blankets for covering hot engines after the race), or individuals (repair, customizing of old clothes). But besides its client-oriented side, the site emphasizes *"mind openness"*. Drawing on the inherent creativity of sewing the manager has organized a cloth creation challenge. Once a year, around a given theme, the women create their own dress and wear it at the annual *défilé*. It is an opportunity for them to deal with their own image and develop another kind of relation to work. According to the manager, it creates an *"atmosphere of research and exploration"* in which they develop the *"ability to invent, to divert, to imagine"*, far from the *"simple technical gesture to be acquired"*. Most important, they *"create a suit in which they feel good [...] During the fitting moments, things happen on the body level, very intimate issues are discussed. Women see themselves in the clothes"*.

On her side, Mary meets a turn in her own professional life. She had a career as a cultural mediator and founded several non-profit associations aimed at placing artists in various social fields. When she decided to come back to her personal artistic career, she questioned the artist's role in society and wondered about how to co-produce artworks with people. She first followed the official path of regular job seeking and registered in the national system for professional insertion. Public employment services, job interviews, skill assessment ... she

went through the whole mechanism as any unemployed looking for a job. “*During a training course of cultural management, the most important for me was the whole relational, managerial and organizational imagination, which provided me an incredible material on language, relation, belief processes, on how to build oneself with the other, on power relations*”. She sees in that a strong potential for her personal artistic creation and turned her job seeker story into a theatrical performance that she now performs on stage in galleries and art centers. Texts, poetry and acting come along with power-point animated schemas, rebus and drawings. When she meets Laura, the insertion center manager, Mary is in need for a special suit for her performance. She comes to the women ordering the dress she needs, asking them: “*When I am performing on stage, or performing a job interview, who am I? What are my clothes? How to pass as a woman especially when searching for a job?*”

**b. The artistic intervention** — Mary did not pay for the order but she wanted the relationship to be an exchange. Her first action was to film the previous *defile* and deliver to the women the video recording. The creation of the cloth would then be the second part of the exchange. In order to really build the exchange relationship, the cloth had not to be *realized* after Mary’s sketches: it had to be designed and *created* by the women. Thus Mary didn’t come with a model to be realized, she instead demanded the women to invent a dress from scratch, betting it would result in a valuable piece of her own art. She was not only ordering a dress, she was waiting for the women’s work to be part of her art – though not created by her. “*The cloth is the place of a transaction, it forms the exchange and makes it visible, it testifies for the exchange between me and the situation, me and the women*”.

Once Mary’s demand was made, meetings and work sessions occurred on a regular basis. Mary spent five times one or two full days working with the women. The manager was often there too, but not always. The first meeting was dedicated to the presentation of her artistic work and the description of her demand. Then the women worked by themselves. They prepared ideas and sketches, and tested some materials and techniques. Mary came back and they made decisions together onto which the women went on working. Some ideas were left aside, like a small theater in the back of a jacket revealing embroidered schemas. Others were developed, like narrative embroideries. Slowly a dress was designed and realized, and finally presented at the *defile*, worn by Mary. Much of working meeting with Mary consisted in talks and discussions around decisions to be made. When it came to realizing concretely the dress, fitting sessions occurred where Mary was trying up different prototypes and women made adjustments. Permanent choices had to be made about shapes, materials, embroideries, style, colors... In a very different way from usual orders the choices were not imposed by the client.



On the contrary, they were suggested by the workers to the client-artist who in turn could accept them or ask for something different. The artistic “intervention” here is more a collaboration and the construction of a relationship. “*The fact that Mary is an artist stimulates the communication*” explains Laura the manager. The process let the workers participate to the decision-making and the organizing, occasionally countering the manager or the artist’ ideas, what was a locus for identity reinforcement. Dialogue in this process was significantly reported as central, in the full sense of duo-logical relations allowing different motivations to co-exist and collaborate respectfully one of another. Identity here is a complex process of re-assessing the ability to act and to produce according to one’s own motivations, by openly and collectively balancing the organization motives and the person ‘ones.

A specific point was made from the start: as the dress would be used for a storytelling performance, it was stated by Mary, and very soon fully integrated by the women, that the dress would have to “tell a story”. It had to consist of three parts that could be worn separately in order to fit the three parts of the performance. Different steps explored which story to tell on/ with the cloth and how, like the theater or the narrative embroideries. In the end the “story” was summarized in embroidered question marks and bright colored schemas.

The fitting sessions were a significant progress in the relationship, where Mary was being dressed and arranged by the women. She gave her camera to the women in order to be pictured and filmed. In such moments she was literally experiencing through her body the women’s creation which in turn transformed her and her image. These sessions were the moment where decisions were made on a co-decision making basis. The final creation was then realized and presented at the final defile, worn by Mary who did this as a performance, like a part of her usual show.

c. The effects of the artistic intervention — Mary’s artistic intervention and order led to several effects dealing with identity. The first one was making the women aware of the oppressing constraints of their usual working conditions.

- ***The expression of pressing identity regulation process*** was made possible when the artist came with her claiming overtly for the highest women’s quality (capable of artistic creation), and waiting for this quality to express in a dress creation. By contrast, the women expressed how ordinary orders lower them down to technical and specialized executants: “*Orders are passed on Wednesdays to the managers, logically, we’re not there. (...) We are the streamstress; the technical boss gives us the sewing pattern we have to execute, the dressmakers assemble the pieces. (...) You’d better get the right streamstress! Each one has her own experience: broidery, technique, trousers, ... Each has a unique skill in the job*”. The

contrast with client Mary lies in the possibility to invent: *“Until now we worked on an imposed idea; here the starting idea is a text from which we create a model and even more than one”*.

- ***Re-activation of identity work processes:*** Not only was the manager’s regulation pressure unveiled and expressed by the women, but they were able to react to it by strongly claiming for their own capacities and qualities. One example is during a working session, when Laura the manager tries to stop Mary talking about her art, arguing time is running out and things should go ahead:

*“Laura: I can feel attention decreasing. I’d like coming back to the order.*

*Women 1: You’re afraid we fall asleep?*

*Laura: Well ...I know you well, I know about your attention I, I know you (laughters)*

*Women together: Us, we are listening! Yes!*

*Laura: Yes yes no but...””*

In this excerpt we can see how those women 1) immediately identify the normative regulation effort 2) react by criticizing ironically the manager’s perception 3) express their interest in the ‘non-productive’ artist’s talk. The whole sequence demonstrate how their ability to react to the regulation pressure is enacted and give rise to identity work by expressing their own feelings, needs and personalities, in front of and contra the regulating manager.

A second range of identity claim processes, made possible through the artist’ intervention and the corresponding specific relationship to work and work organization deals with the women’s cultural backgrounds. Coming from abroad, badly integrated into French society, their identities are torn apart between two or more cultures. Institution and society pressure implicitly requires them to put aside their multicultural background in favor of a normalization of their language, behaviors and actions. Some of the artist’s actions and behaviors foster the opposite. For example, when Mary brings some drawings for a possible use in cloth design, several women recognized or evoked traditional motives from their own culture. It allows them to re-work these traditions and re-incorporated them into the creation of the dress. Another example is Mary’s deep concern about language and languages and how it allows the women to re-activate and use their repressed mother tongue. During a fitting session, the women comment on her style ‘*elegant*’, ‘*stylish*’... Then Mary addresses one of the women:

*“Mary: You used another word the other day?*

*Woman: I don’t see...*

*Mary: It was a word from your tongue, was it...ka...something?*

*Woman: oh yes! Kayuwoman!”*

The woman then explains the meaning of the word, a mix between English and an African language. Mary concludes *“It’s a good idea to use words from your own tongues. (...) I like*

*this language I hear in the bus. It' a language that catch you up, escapes you, catch you"*. It is worth noticing here the woman herself has erased her own culture when put in a work situation. It is the artist herself who triggers and fosters her reminding of her own culture, inciting her to add it to the work.

- **Personal involvement at work:** a third effect due to Mary's intervention was to bring the women to a new kind of involvement into work, with a lucid consciousness of the imbrication between their own personalities and feelings and their work. The women express how creating at work change their personal lives at home. *"Until now when my boy's trousers were torn I threw them away. Now I can add small pieces, drawings, customize them."* *"For my porcelain puppet, now I can draw a small sketch, a pattern quickly done!"*. This example shows how the interaction between work and their daily lives is made conscious.

The awareness of self-embedment into work appears more strongly when they talk about the specific research working process introduced by creation: *"This is how it works, you draw something and you think of something else and your drawing shifts, this is research"*. *"Ideas... we can use them for other clothes; it works out the logic, it's a bunch of searches in the head. We are permanently seeking, researching; if it doesn't fit we turn to something else, if it doesn't fit we search again"*. They demonstrate ability to self-analysis and reflection when they explain the research process is another way to talk together:

*" – When I got an idea I share it at once I don't keep my ideas for me (...) Even when it seems a little silly and not logic, it comes out.  
– Well... not logic... well, in the sense of, maybe not adapted to the conversation but in the end of the day it'll give ideas to others"*.

During the working sessions with the artist, one woman expressed how her own personal self-consciousness is part of her work: *"Do I sew or do I entertain? Both, I am the clown, I make you laugh"*. This awareness about oneself and one's involvement into work is also expressed in the previous example where the women ironically point the manager's fear that they lose their attention: not only they unveil the manager's untold judgment but they also demonstrate their lucidity onto their own non-intellectual background which could make them non-receptive to the artist' theoretical talk. This quasi-philosophical introspection and lucidity towards themselves and work is further expressed when they talk about the ambient requirement for success, and the anxiety it produces. This underlying pressure can be expressed and tackled: *"I think we constantly worry: will I manage? Did I make the right choice? Will I like it in the end? We always worry"*. This point is emphasized by the similarity with the artist's story as a job seeker: *"It makes us all closer because it is what we live day after day when you look for a job, she lived the same things like us, the same*

*feelings*". The similarity brings the women to the highest existential level: "*We went through it but we're still in it! I think we'll always be. Human beings are like that, always worrying, always asking questions, and always calling oneself into question. Sometimes it seems silly always to think and wonder*".

## **Discussion**

### • *Dialogic interaction between IR and IW.*

In all our three cases, the artistic intervention resulted in a re-activation of individual identity work processes, in two steps: first, recognizing / revealing/ understanding the actual oppressing identity regulation processes; second, a reaction with various identity work processes.

First step: revealing an oppressing regulation — In case one (Heato), the workers were able to tell for the first time about the long-term ongoing destruction process of their working identity and production tool; in case two (Levi's), they experienced with their own bodies the still existing pressure of working rhythms and sounds; in case three (CreaClothes), they were able to describe and criticize the usual work process and its repressing effect on individual capacities. In all cases, the workers themselves pointed out how this oppression was based on ambivalence of feelings or values. In case one the ambivalence resulted from the historical call to innovation (the workers' identity) and the destruction of their competences through the production tool. In case two, the workers expressed on stage how the working conditions were a mix of contradictory feelings between emancipation (for women through work) and alienation (to industrial and inhumane rhythms). In case three, they spoke about the ambivalence in professional insertion processes between requirements for success and low consideration, between hope and despair. This awareness resulted directly of the artworks themselves (picturing individual at work, staging the oppression and the emancipation) or the art production process (based on collaboration, respect and free speech). It enabled reflexivity and identity questioning (re-valuation of one's image, awareness of existential issues, mourning after a part of one's life is over).

Second step: renewing identity work processes — Re-narcissizing the workers, recognizing their high competences and their value in a demanding field (creation), calling to their personal qualities and letting them be themselves at work, were the three main ways in which identity work processes were triggered by the art intervention. Referring to beauty in the place where it was denied, stating a valorizing belief in misjudged and de-valorized people, restoring personality and individual qualities at the center of work: these typical artistic

conceptions introduced by the artists in the workplace were experienced and expressed by the participants as strong identity re-construction actions. Not only it was made possible to counter the oppressing regulation processes at work, but new regulation processes were settled by the art intervention, allowing and reinforcing a constructive identity work. In all three cases, the organization of the art production was based on specific premises that operate a particular de-construction and re-construction of the relationship to authority. The artists, in the three cases, are the leaders and play the role of the managers (of the specific activity they initiate), but they do it in their own understanding of production processes, team management and authority maintenance. The photographer uses a way of co-producing by immersing himself into the workers' culture; he letting the workers self-organizing and deciding even on artistic issues, he apparently disappear as a leader and becomes a provider, but his role is nevertheless crucial: without him and this very specific quality of 'presence-absence' nothing would happen. The theater director, after a phase where he adapts to the uses of the laid-off women, imposes the theater customs, work rhythms and rehearsal requirements. Considering these amateurs as professional actors, he leads them as he would of any acting company: the women progressively entered a new kind of work organization, highly demanding and authoritarian, but at the same time emancipating through the work itself and its co-produced nature. Ordering a dress gives the third artists a very specific position, where she is a client, a manager and a co-worker at the same time. She explains: "*Sometimes I played authority, I said 'no not this' and at the same time the object was built in a dialogue*". If she did not come with a precise project to be realized, neither did she come without intentions. She had objectives and a purpose; she imposed a frame, methods and concepts. She thus enacted a double role of authoritarian regulation (deciding, choosing, requiring, judging the aesthetic and artistic quality) and permissivity (letting the women propose freely, accepting new ideas, exploring unexpected propositions, letting them self-organize). A succession of directing and following steps occurs, where everybody takes the successive positions between active and passive, control and exploration. As for the photographer in case one, the process let the workers participate to the decision-making and the organizing, occasionally countering the manager or the artist' ideas, what was a locus for identity reinforcement. In the three cases, the new work regulation installed around the artistic intervention gives a different place to identity related to work. We argue artistic interventions foster a more actionable, more participative, more disputable forms of authority and regulation (collective evaluation and decision-making processes, multiplicity of intentions taken into consideration), which creates a renewed dialogue between regulation and work identity. We can here bring some light on

the issue of changeable identity in changeful context, calling for ‘liminality’ and bringing in ambiguity and anxiety (Beech, 2011): Beech suggests that three types of “liminal identity practices” can be enacted, experimentation, recognition and reflection. We have seen how these three kinds of practices are fulfilled by participating in art production in those three cases of art intervention. It suggests that the process of identity (re)construction described by Beech could be facilitated by art interventions. They enable a specific form of dialogism, which is needed in order to allow the interaction between IR and IW leading to identity construction (IC).

The reasons and means for installing such a renewed dialogue between IR and IW were expressed by the participants as lying in the art intervention, and especially 1) in the art form itself and its production processes, and 2) in the artists’ purpose and commitment. In order to better understand the nature of this specific kind of dialogism, we will now focus on these aspects.

- *The art form and its role*

Three different art forms were used: photography (portraying), theater (writing, acting and staging) and cloth design for performance. These three art forms explore different dimensions of the ‘sensible’: image, bodies, sound, material and situations. When each art intervention is focused on one of them (image and look for case one; bodies and their presence for case two; materiel and situations for case three), they all consider these different dimensions of the ‘sensible’, through which the materiality of organizational daily life is experienced. Through artwork and its production emotions can be expressed, feeling discussed, opinions exchanged. Beyond the specific characteristics of each artwork, they all presented similarities of three kinds.

***First, all these artworks were distributed outside the workplace*** and submitted to the outside judgment. The photographs were sent as postcards, sold as a calendar; the media commented and evaluated them. The theater play was staged in public theaters, touring for years in France, and was reviewed critically by professionals. The dress was incorporated in the artist’s following shows, displayed in the art world and commented by art critics. Further cloth creations by the same women (scarfs) have been afterwards produced too and exhibited. The fact that the result of the work was evaluated outside the workplace certainly gives a strong positive feed-back to identity feeling and professional value. Not only does it give a value to the persons and their work, but it escapes the closure of the workplace on itself, its dictatorship and the almighty authority of the manager. The outside evaluation introduces a fruitful heterogeneity of judgment, of evaluation and of recognition.

***Second, heterogeneity of the art form itself and its co-creation*** is another recurring feature in the three cases. The creation in the three cases does not result from the single intention or willingness of the artist (or the manager, or anyone). It rather results from a convergent and divergent collection of multiple intentions, projects, and objectives pursued by the artists, the managers and the organization, the workers, the audience,... The form of the artwork is directly linked to this heterogeneity of intentions and expresses it: the workers chose the setting and the pose for the photos, they are the actors and the writers on stage, they design the dress the artist will wear. But the artist shoots the picture and makes it real, the theater director stages the actresses and makes artistic choices, the performer organizes the situation and the relationships in order to create the favorable atmosphere for the kind of creation she expects. Hence the importance of co-creating the artwork: it is not a question of democracy or expression of everyone, but a question of organizing the multiplicity of intentions and the divergence of evaluations around work.

***Third, the artwork is the recipient and the vehicle for agreement.*** Heterogeneity and divergence are difficult to cope with, especially when it comes to decision-making, evaluation or recognition. How to value divergent or contradictory qualities at the same time? This is a traditional feature of art: it accepts infinite interpretations. As it is never fully explored, the meaning of an artwork precisely resides in its polysemy, where everyone can read its own answers. This dialogical nature of art provides a place and a time for ‘agreeing on disagreement’, or ‘experiencing contradiction’ (Vygotski, 1965-2005). This refers to the property of the sensible which is socially shared and distributed among people: the collective agreement is mainly based on agreeing (or disputing) the distribution of the sensible and its meaning for identities, places and roles (Rancière, 2001). An example of such a contradictory experience in work organization is expressed by Laura, the Creaclothes manager. When the workers point out her attempt to constrain them (they would not be able to follow the artist’s talk), the identity work is done through an answer to, a comment on and a critique of the regulation action. But it is not ‘workers against manager’: their reaction is only active and efficient because the manager enters the dialogue and do not close it down when identity work appears. Laura accepts the critique explicitly with a revealing wording: “*Yes yes no but...*”. The ‘yes yes no but’ contradictory validation by the regulator is a metaphor for this agreement around disagreement, or agreement about heterogeneity, that the artists exemplify and carry out personally during their intervention.

The art forms express the experience of and make possible the agreement around multiplicities of divergent intentions, objectives, motives and strategies, gathered and unified

in a single particular production. This space for a constructive interaction is mainly created by the artist, her energy and her commitment.

- *The artist's positioning and intervening*

Holding together the heterogeneity of people at work, of intentions and of objectives, and to unify them in one single production meeting the agreement of all, would not be possible without the artist: in each of the three cases, s/he holds a different, strong and explicit position. The photographer wants to testify: he relies on immersion, (participant-)observation, empathy and understanding in order to account for a collective situation of identity disruption he feels as destructive. Kind of an activist, he considers himself as a citizen playing his part on the social stage, and art is for him a tool for activism: he can be described as a citizen acting as an art activist. The theater director is pursuing a questioning on the role of theater in society. As a citizen who is politically engaged and mobilized by work issues, he wants art and theater to renew its relation to reality and transform it. He uses the critical power of representing the reality by fictionalizing it. What he looks for is to understand, describe and socialize. He could be called a citizen artist (and an activist, in an indirect way). The third can be simply described as an 'artist'. She follows mainly artistic concerns: she wonders about artworks, their form, their production process, and the artist and art activity definitions. She proceeds by immersion, socializing, understanding and empathy. She relies on organizing (the work production) and relations. A common feature connects our three artists: they all rely on immersion, participation, socializing, quality of human relations, understanding and empathy, and they are fully committed to their involvement.

An additional point is worth noticing. The three artists' positions differ in our cases, the effect of the artistic intervention on the artists themselves also differs. The photographer met a deep questioning and doubting about himself and his art. He quitted photography after the experience (and he returned to it after being involved some years later in our research project...). The theater director had his career re-enforced after the play (in a tricky way, he was both acclaimed and punished for it, gaining good reviews but losing a lot of subsidies). The performer refined her artistic positioning and career, and she is still developing new works out of the experience. Reflexivity, reinforcement, refinement: these three effects echo Beech's description of the impact of dialogic actions on identity construction (Beech, 2008). Does this establish a link between the feedback loops from IW to IR and the artist's positioning (art activist, citizen artist, artist)? Is the art intervention a way to move and transform the relationship to management in a direction of better identity construction (within a result oriented activity)?



In this paper, our purpose was to better understand the IC / IR /IW mechanism described by Alvesson & Willmott (2002), and Beech and al. (2008), and especially the dialogic mechanisms and processes between IR and IW. We exemplified a recurrent scheme of intervention which proves efficient for re-activating a disturbed identity work after a too constraining identity regulation. The scheme is made of a co-creation driven by a co-organization of production, regulated by reliance and commitment to human relations, gathering a multiplicity of intentions and motivations in a narrative art form, valued both inside and outside the firm. The artwork acts as a representative and a narrator of the multiplicity (of people, of intentions, of identities), while the artist as the regulator opens and develops an open space for interactions. The function of any space is to distribute in the distance: in the collaborative space opened by the artists, the distance and the proximity between the multiplicities can be perceived, and identification mechanisms can operate. The specificity of the artist's role is to open such a space where a distributed regulation can operate. When a multiplicity and heterogeneity of regulating intentions can co-exist and dialogue within the spaces opened by the artists, *regulation is dialogical*. The artists introduce dialogism (<sup>1</sup>) inside regulation itself, which in turn allows the dialogue between identity regulation and identity work to happen constructively. One consequence of the observed interventions is that, by focusing on the artist's role and position, the dialogue between IR and IW is mainly oriented toward introducing heterogeneity and dialogism within regulation, which seems to fit some previous results about art intervention inducing some forms of distributed leadership (Berthoin-Antal, 2012-a).

Table 1 below summarizes the comparative analysis of the three cases of artistic intervention and tries to typify their intentions and effects in terms of identity.

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<sup>1</sup> Dialogism is here taken in the full Bakhtinian sense of dia-logism: co-existence of heterogeneous logics not reducible one to another.

	<b>HEATO</b>	<b>501 BLUES</b>	<b>CREACLOTHES</b>
Moment of intervention	During a strike for maintaining jobs	Shortly after job loss	During insertion process in job market
Artist's purpose	citizen / art activist Helps workers by mediating their fight	Citizen artist / activist Reflects on theatre role in society, better understanding the place of work	Artist Nurtures her artistic questioning around the 'I' and the 'we'
<b>EFFECTS</b>			
Revelation and Reflexivity	Reveals prevailing regulation  Ambiguity: Innovation / destruction  Identity questioning	Reveals prevailing regulation  Ambiguity: Alienation / Emancipation  Identity questioning (mourning after job loss)	Reveals prevailing regulation  Ambiguity: Pressure / Hope  Identity questioning
Identity (re)work	Re-narcissizing / Beauty valuation	Re-valorization of competences / capacities	Permission to be oneself at work
New dialogical processes	Co-production with the artist / within the collective Reconstruction of the collective through art production	Co-production with the artist / within the collective Transition towards another work organizing / regulation	Co-production with the artist / within the collective Organization based on authority + permissivity
Artist's commitment	Immersion, socialization, understanding (empathy)  Testimony  Account for a collective action	Immersion, socialization, understanding (empathy)  Critique by representing  Fictionalize and stage a real and painful situation	Immersion, socialization, understanding (empathy)  Action-Intervention  Transform work organization by part-taking into art production
Art form	The sensible of the image: Photographs on the workplace (portrays, postcards, calendar)	The sensible of the body Collective narrative, theatre play	The sensible of material and situations Dress for a performer
Result	Outside Diffusion Variety of evaluations (aesthetic, political, personal...)	Public representations (shows) Judgment by the audiences	Staged during performances Judgment by the artworld
Visibility	Creation origins in heterogeneous sources	Creation origins in heterogeneous sources	Creation origins in heterogeneous sources
Sources			
Effects on artistic identity	Questioning identity (disruption in artist's career)  REFLEXIVITY	Recognition and obstacles Identification with the ex-workers when threats on theatre  REINFORCEMENT	Evolution and continuity: nurturing, deepening.  REFINEMENT

**Table 1: Three cases of artistic intervention and their analysis in terms of IW and IR**

## **Concluding remarks**

Starting by investigating how dialogue between IR and IW was re-enacted by several artistic interventions in different contexts, we stressed that dialogue was re-constructed first by awareness about the oppressing and damaging effects of constraining identity regulation (be purely erasing identities, or threatening them, or imposing a rigid and weakening frame onto individual and personalities). We then analyzed how art production processes allowed varied renewed identity work processes able to face such oppressing regulations, like self-esteem, identification by distancing, reflexivity and existential questioning (mourning, philosophy). By studying the role of the artists related to the role of the artworks the artifacts, we also argued that the artist creates a space for dialogism within regulation. This dialogical regulation process, understood as co-existing heterogeneous sources of discourses and practices, is materialized in the artwork, whose value results in gathering a collective agreement through its presentations (both inside and outside the collective). The agreement created by such a dialogical regulation allows the multiplicity of identity work processes to happen and let identity construction be possible within the productive framing of activity.

In that sense, we contribute to answer the question of how do people's identities become meaningful to themselves and others (Beech, 2008), at the crossroad between identity regulation and identity work: beyond the described dialogical process going on between IR and IW (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002), the regulation itself has to be based on dialogism and heterogeneity, which is fostered and exemplified by art and its specific production processes of co-creation.

We could further infer that the heterogeneity of art reflects the heterogeneity of identity itself, which is re-enforced in crisis situations. Because people possess a complex and heterogeneous identity, split in many and activated in different times of their lives, identity construction cannot be reached through a homogeneous and controlling process of regulation. Alvesson and Willmott speak of “quasi-autonomous” processes of identity regulation, resulting of multiple images, ideals of ways of being, and group-controlled processes of regulation impeding the management-controlled regulation (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Artists are very aware of their multiple identities constrained by multiple regulation processes (Menger, 2009; Jeanpierre 2012). They choose the ones they have to enact when intervening, what resonates with the inherent heterogeneity of anyone's identity. When the artist clearly claims for her different identities, it creates a quality of relation and a possibility for identification: *“The fact that I am the client and the artist leads the women to travel the double path between Mary-the-artist and Mary-the-client. Like the path they travel between themselves, what they*

are, and what they are when they look for a job”. The intervening artist would be injecting his or her multiplicity of identities into the production process and translating it into a dialogical regulation, hoping s/he will thus trigger awareness and open possibilities for identity work in response to this dialogical regulation.

Our concluding proposition can thus be stated as follows: in a fruitful dialogue leading to real identity construction, identity work consists in feeding contradictions back into identity regulation processes so that heterogeneous regulation (distributed, divided, discontinuous...) happens, thus reflecting and authorizing the identity's vital heterogeneity. This opens the field for further researches 1) in art and management research: other roles for art, beside opening minds, revealing bodies and emotions in organizations, could be helping transforming the management of work in a sense of better identity construction; and 2) in IR/IW literature: some refinements of IR as making sense for people's identity could be explored, especially concerning its heterogeneous or dialogical aspects.

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