

Art and social work

Towards a sociological analysis

G rard Creux[1], Le GRAIN asbl, 16th October 2012

Can artistic activities help social workers rediscover their enthusiasm for their profession? How do social workers make use of art? What do they hope to gain from these uses? Does art provide a form of escape? Can it provide a means of re-appropriating familiar codes to find new ways of connecting with service users?

This article is concerned specifically with the presence of 'Art' in the field of social work, and more precisely with the ways in which professionals in this field make use of art. What do they seek to gain from activities which might be classified as 'tools', and more broadly speaking what does this tell us about the evolution of contemporary social work? These are the key questions to which I shall attempt to offer some response.

Studying the relationship between art and social work is not simply a matter of analysing the utilitarian dimension of artistic practice, or the benefits of such activities for service users; it requires us to deconstruct the dynamic that links these two social spaces. What does art bring to social work and, conversely, what can social work bring to art? All too often reflections on utility are uni-directional, focusing exclusively on the contribution of art to social work or vice versa.

The use of art in social work can perhaps primarily be attributed to the belief that art intrinsically represents certain 'superior', sacred values, and that its use by social workers will necessarily have positive effects for service users. Here are a few examples: a specialised educational support worker offered blind adults the chance to discover photography. He reports that this activity "allowed me to bring out the individuality of everyone involved," adding that "the act of taking a photograph is about finding pleasure in confronting one's own reality... It can also be about the search for meaning in the acceptance of one's own blindness. Because understanding our place in the world is also a question of analysing the way we see the world, and ourselves." [2] An educational specialist working with young children decided to use painting to "organise creative expression sessions which would attract children and seek to encourage the development of their personalities [...]. After ten years of creative work, my professional methods continue to evolve, nourished by new discoveries, questions and ideas." [3] Such examples are legion. What most interests us here is that when social workers embark upon an artistic activity for the benefit of their 'patients', 'service users' or 'clients', or simply for persons experiencing social, mental or physical difficulties [4], they temporarily assume the role of director, master of an artistic workshop, choirmaster, sculptor etc. It is this phenomenon which merits further examination. However, in order to identify potentially fruitful avenues for reflection we first need to conduct a critical re-examination of our basic assumptions about art and social work, taking care to avoid the use of concepts derived exclusively from either field.

Furthermore, this article does not aim to offer any value judgement on such activities. It is not my intention to offer an apology for the use of art in social work, nor to recount the marvellous adventures of people with disabilities or social difficulties. The approach adopted can trace its lineage back to the principles established by Pierre Bourdieu[5]: sociological research can often help us to reveal the underlying assumptions beneath the explicit intentions of individuals, assumptions not evident to the individuals themselves.

I have therefore chosen to focus more on social workers who apply artistic practices in the field of social work [6], rather than the users of such services, the clients at whom these artistic activities are aimed. This approach is motivated by a desire to maintain a certain distance from some of the reflections on this subject which are regularly proposed from the perspective of 'service users', and which are open to debate. Indeed, as Christophe Pittet points out, "artistic and cultural practices can, in some cases, promote the expression of individuality and act as a catalyst to creative action, allowing individuals to regain a sense of control over the direction which they wish to impose on their life. However we run a very real risk of aestheticizing poverty by seeking to channel violence, as seen in the determination of public authorities to empower the victims of social inequalities." [7].

It seems important to recognise at this early stage that art, and indeed social work, are social constructs which exist independently of individual consciousness - to echo the theoretical position set out by Emile Durkheim. The social conditions which give rise to these two phenomena would appear to be the ideal starting point for this examination.

The art problem: what exactly are we talking about?

It seems evident that any examination of artistic strategies in the field of social work must first establish a clear definition: not of art itself, but of what constitutes art. This is not a question of proposing an objective definition of art, and in any case such questions lie well beyond the boundaries of sociology. We start from the principle that the term 'art' is understood to cover everything which is socially recognised as art by the artistic establishment (critics, gallery curators etc.) Nonetheless, a definition of this type runs the risk of only encompassing works produced within the artistic establishment. It is thus necessary to expand our definition of what constitutes art. When sociologists venture into the field of artistic production, they all too often fall into the trap offered by such narrow definitions of art, as Jean Duvignaud has noted: "to define the artistic experience as something sacred is to fall under the spell of that illusion of joyous communion that tight-knit groups and sects offer to their members; it means investing the 'originators' with a real importance and significance which they never had in the eyes of the first sociologists." [8] And as Jean Dubuffet reminds us, "so-called 'art of the mentally ill' has no more validity as a category than 'dyspeptic art' or 'art of people with knee conditions'." [9] Nonetheless, the sacralisation of art seems to offer the perfect starting point from which to explore the use of artistic practices in the field of social work. It is the fact that art intrinsically implies a belief in positive virtues that a sociological explanation becomes possible, going further than simply describing an activity.

However, in the interest of finding a way into this problem, Pascal Nicolas-Le Strat suggests that we make a clear distinction between matters of "artistic creation" and "artistic activity." He argues that: "if a researcher puts the creator and the act of creation and the centre of his considerations, he necessarily introduces a blind spot into his reflections which he will never be able to conquer. Creation is a phenomenon - an issue - which lies beyond the scope of his expertise, alongside ideas such as beauty, truth and authenticity." [10] Simply put, sociology should concern itself more with what is generally known as 'artistic activity', in the broadest possible sense, in order to achieve a better understanding of a multitude of artistic practices, and not limit its investigations to practices defined and recognised in advance as 'art'. Nonetheless, the very notion of 'artistic activity' remains hard to pin down. It is an 'emergency idea', to borrow Nicolas-Le Strat's phrase, coined in attempt to reflect the plurality of art, our primary focus. It is from this perspective that we must approach the artistic practices implemented by social workers in the professional sphere. It is thus not artistic production, or the end product, which interests us; our task is to focus on the conditions of production of artistic activities, beginning by deconstructing the physical context of implementation.

Analysing and deconstructing contemporary social work

Taking a few key points in the history of social work, there is an argument to be made that the rationalisation of this field over the course of the 20th century has given rise to a certain disenchantment among social workers.

Let us first take a moment to look at the concept of rationalisation. Max Weber made this concept of 'rationalisation' a key theme of sociology. What he proposed was the construction of a theory of societal evolution, as instrumental reason gradually expands its influence over all forms of social life. As Weber himself put it: "Since asceticism undertook to remodel the world and to work out its ideals in the world, material goods have gained an increasing and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history. Today the spirit of religious asceticism - whether finally, who knows? - has escaped from the cage. But victorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations, needs its support no longer." [11]

Earlier in its history, social work may have been driven by considerations of 'religious asceticism', but now it appears to be much more a product of 'mechanical' reason. By way of an example, Michel Chauvière's most recent work revisits the theme of the 'clinical' dimension of social work. He notes that "the clinical approach is a much as question of directed perspective and language as it is one of structured thought. It opens the door to a new approach." [12] Chauvière thus bemoans the fact that the clinical approach is now relegated to a secondary role in social work, in favour of practices subject to behavioural norms and guided by economic considerations.

Following in the theoretical footsteps of Max Weber, we might suggest that social work has been transformed from a "value rational action" (historically defined), i.e. an action defined "the conscious belief in the unconditional intrinsic value - whether this be understood as ethical, aesthetic, religious or anything else - of a specific form of behaviour in itself, regardless of its result,"[13] into an 'instrumentally-rational action' "determined by expectations as to the behavior of objects in the environment and of other human beings; these expectations are used as "conditions" or "means" for the attainment of the actor's own rationally pursued and calculated ends." [14] In the latter scenario, the means deployed are consistent with the objectives pursued, and individuals act neither on affective grounds (and certainly not out of emotion) nor on grounds of tradition. Actions are judged by their success, assessed on the perceived coherency of the results desired and the resources deployed to obtain them.

Such rationalisation necessarily has consequences, and Max Weber clearly discusses the harmful effects of 'disenchantment'. Weber's analysis links the increasing 'standardisation' of the world with the loss of meaning in the modern experience of life. As he puts it, "It is the destiny of our era, with its characteristic rationalisation and intellectualisation and, above all, the disenchantment of the world, that precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have withdrawn from the public sphere." [15]

This observation seems particularly apposite in the context of social work. While clinical support may appear to be a fundamental element of social work, nowadays it is increasingly under threat from the culture of results and targets. To borrow Weber's terminology, we are witnessing a transition from value rationalisation to instrumental rationalisation. This shift has not been without consequences for the day-to-day experience of social workers. One of the key responsibilities of a social worker is to contribute to improving the life of a given group or individual. Yet this action remains superficial. "In doing this, a social worker does not 'make' society". [16] Thus social workers, in their increasingly hermetic professional sphere, become what we might term 'social technicians', or to borrow Pierre Bourdieu's expression, "the right hand of the State." [17] As Bourdieu puts it: "Social workers have a very complicated relationship with the people with whom they work, a relationship based on mistrust. If you read *La misère du Monde* ['The Weight of the World'], there are some quite pathetic testimonies from social workers who know very well that their work is useless, and who spend half of their time trying to convince themselves that they aren't useless, and the rest of the time trying to persuade those people who they are paid to convince." [18] Some sociologists, such as Michel Autes [19] see this 'paradoxical' situation as justifying the very existence of social work.

Nonetheless, this does not allow us to account for the 'uneasiness' felt by social workers, as described by François Abbaléa. He remarks that "the points of reference for social workers, the markers by which they used to be able to measure themselves, nowadays seem to be surrounded by a sort of halo and a fog which makes their navigation unsteady and unsettling. Even more so since the very people who demand a revolution in values and a greater allegiance to the objectives of the institution are more often than not utterly incapable of producing a new plan of action which is ethically sound and practically enforceable." [20]

The term 'uneasiness' is perhaps not entirely germane, as it is more of a vague feeling than a precise concept. I prefer the term 'disenchantment', which is a logical extension of Weber's theoretical approach, and which allows us to make the case for a generalised disenchantment which touches many social workers to varying degrees. Working from this hypothesis, how can we approach the link between social work and artistic strategies?

Artistic strategies as acts of resistance?

Let us return to the concept of art itself, recontextualised in the light of modern society. I have already

posited the idea of a transition from value rationalisation to instrumental rationalisation in social work, leading to a generalised 'disenchantment' among social workers. Any discussion of the relationship between art and rationalisation necessarily leads us to the theories of the Frankfurt School, and particularly Theodor W. Adorno's contention that art is in a state of struggle with the rationality imposed by the world, all the while using the resources offered by this rationality to construct works of art. As Adorno puts it, "art is the refuge of mimetic behaviour," [21] adding that "the fact that art, something mimetic, is possible in the midst of rationality, and that it employs its means, is a response to the faulty irrationality of the rational world as an overadministered world [22]... Art represents truth in a double sense: it maintains the use of its aim, which has been obscured by rationality, and it convicts the status quo of its irrationality and absurdity." [23] This view has interesting consequences for our own observations in the field, for if the position adopted by social workers using artistic strategies in the 'overadministered world' of social work can be described as 'consensual', should we not in fact see this as something of a get-out clause? Even Herbert Marcuse saw art, in spite of its idealistic limitations, and against an increasingly totalitarian backdrop, as a form of permanent yearning, a true nostalgia, for a golden age of human happiness. He suggested that art "might be the most visible form of 'resurfacing of the repressed'," [24], adding that "Art can do nothing to halt the rise of barbarism" [25] because "it cannot change the world, but it can help to change the consciousness and the impulses of men and women capable of changing the world." [26]. In other words, without going so far as to suggest that the methods used by social workers are becoming 'one-dimensional' (in the sense intended by Herbert Marcuse [27]), we can discern the potential importance of this theory in our particular area of interest: the artistic strategies of social workers contribute to the 'reenchantment' of social work, and as such serve as acts of resistance in the face of the changes shaping social work. The term 'reenchantment' is here used to denote a dynamic opposed to the 'disenchantment' described by Max Weber.

Artistic strategies as a form of resistance?

Pursuing this reasoning, and continuing to engage with the ideas of the Frankfurt School, we might usefully ask ourselves the question: by using artistic strategies, do social workers become 'troublemakers' in the face of the secular, managerial dynamic of modern social work? Taking the definition offered in the Petit Robert dictionary [28], resistance (in the context of human action) is an "Action which seeks to neutralise an effect." In our context, the effects to be neutralised are primarily related to the phenomenon of rationalisation. Indeed, if we accept that there is a sense of disenchantment affecting social workers, then we might consider artistic practices as acts of resistance to the new conditions of social work. Jean Duvignaud has thus described theatre [29] as "a revolt against the established order." [30]

It has already been observed [31] that while certain social workers may believe that 'the time for rebellion' is over, this mind-set, embodied in the concept of 'resistance', is still present in the social workers I have encountered who have opted to employ artistic strategies. Cloé, a social services assistant, explains that there is no "deference" to authority in her team:

Cloé: I wouldn't say that we were subversive in our acts, but we can kick up a fuss, we say what we think, we're not afraid, seeing as there's no chance of promotion. I think that helps a lot, because we're not obliged to try and win over our employer, we don't care, there's nowhere for us to go so there's no... we're not deferent, we don't care. That's how it is. But like I said, that doesn't mean there are acts of rebellion. Although we have taken action, we've taken some pretty serious action. We went on strike to protest about flexible employment contracts, things like that. We've taken some actions which may have been perceived as subversive, with certain behaviour that you don't get with the administrative staff.

Alexandra, a family finance advisor, describes a similar attitude:

Alexandra: social workers are a bit... well, sometimes I get the impression we're seen as killjoys, not killjoys maybe but... that we're looking to catch people out, to criticise, we're a bit... sharp. And it's true that this time, by refusing what was going on I thought "damn it, yet again I'm going to look like someone who just doesn't want to work, who's holding things back, who's afraid of change." So saying no means taking a stand, and it means calling into question... well, calling your own abilities into question, perhaps not into question but saying "no, I don't agree with that." It's a personal position first and foremost, and yes that can cause problems..."

However it did become clear, during the interviews and subsequent analysis, that the term 'resistance' was not appropriate here, as it carries a subtext of power relations which were not really in evidence between social workers and their managerial hierarchy (with superior status and the responsibility for rationalising the sector). The relationships social workers described with their immediate superiors allowed us to explore this issue further.

We have noted that those social workers who have artistic practices consider line-management relations as being "constructive" while those who do not, on the other hand, consider them as being "restrictive."^[32] It does seem difficult to set up artistic projects without the approval of the management, whatever the type of organisation.^[33] Myriam, a special-needs educator, emphasises:

Myriam: for the drama activities, it was me who coordinated them and, I mean, we were free to... we had the go-ahead from our boss, but we managed the activities.

However, respecting line management is not enough. Maintaining good relations remains essential. Among the people we met, Karine, an educator, provided a perfect illustration of the constructive aspect of line-management relations. She talked to us about the "excellent relations" she has with her head of department:

Karine: it's true that I have excellent relations with my management, relations of trust, so it is true that there was little chance, little risk, sorry, of it being turned down. After all, it was feasible in terms of budget, so as I had the full confidence of my management, I was half way there already, you could say. So it's true that in that respect, compared to some of my colleagues, you could say that I am quite lucky. To give you an example, recently my head of department came to see me for the birth of my son. I don't think everyone is that lucky. Because she knows very well that once I get back to work, well, work is work, but we can still have some contacts outside of work, you see. She knows very well that I can make the distinction. But it is true that I am quite lucky in that respect. I have a management that trusts me and I have good relations.

Karine also raised the fact that her head of department had "helped a lot during her training" and had then "allowed some space and given responsibility" to her. Thanks to that, she has been able "to make high-speed progress".

In another context, we have Anne, a monitor, who mentions her respect for the rules and procedures, something that has certainly been reinforced by the fact that she once served for a time as acting manager:^[34]

Anne: I accepted to be acting manager for a while because I see it as a form of recognition, too, and I went back to my job afterwards and I insist on it, I mean that I respect the rules and procedures.

It should be noted, however, that the fact of considering them as being "constructive" does not necessarily mean that they are perceived as being "positive". Chloé, for example, a welfare assistant, highlights the generation factor (implying that new social workers more easily accept the new rules of the game which they have learned during their training)^[35] when she explains that she is in a role of resistance, notably against the things that come down from her management:

Cloé: What I see, at least in my generation, I'm 50, it is true that in my generation, we try to resist, we try to resist a whole load of stuff, it wears you out, it wears you out.^[36]

If it is necessary to obtain management approval to set up an artistic project, does this link not make the idea of art as a form of "resistance" or as subversive somewhat implausible, if we base ourselves on Théodor W. Adorno, as it remains necessary in such conditions to maintain "good relations"?^[37] Social workers conducting artistic practices are not entirely backed by their hierarchy, however. In our interviews, we noted a number of significant points characterising artistic activities as what would perhaps best be called "hints of resistance": they may be a "political project", subversive or may also trigger certain fears within the institutions. For example, Michelle, a welfare assistant, explained to us on the subject of the "Théâtre de l'Opprimé" that there was a desire to change things:

Michelle: our idea is to get through to people in decision-making positions on the Local Council, that's the main thing, it is a political project, after all.

Question: is it seen as being a political project?

Michelle: at least I see it that way, with the idea of changing the way things are, yes, in that respect. (...) but we bring the political message in gradually, we didn't talk about it in the beginning.

She also denies having "followed her management". In fact, when her interview is analysed, we notice that she made use of her management, if anything, relying in particular on superiors who were in favour of the project[38] yet stressing that the activity must be "disturbing".

On a much smaller scale, this time, Tiphaine, a medical-psychological assistant, explained to us that in setting up her plastic arts workshop, she was taking a big risk, in this case in terms of the "team spirit". In other words, if there is resistance, it is not only from management, but also from work colleagues:

Tiphaine: it is a risk, it's subversive, it really is, because although everyone is happy and we did our exhibition, everyone is happy now, but in the way... I tell you, the pictures aren't on the walls, it's terrible when you think about it. Everything has been hidden, it's all been destroyed, it's all been destroyed.

Question: destroyed?

Tiphaine: I see photographs that we did, that I had decorated a bit, and they have gone and cut bits out of them. That's the state of mind... we mustn't get in the way, that's the way I feel it. Oh, no...

On several occasions, Tiphaine notes the lack of "recognition" of her work and that of the residents. This lack of recognition is also something that she associates with the fact that this output is not always understood within the institution, and more particularly by her colleagues. However, while for certain social workers, setting up these activities can prove to be something of a struggle, that does not mean that such practices are intrinsically a form of "resistance". We would suggest that these activities are not organised independently from the rest of the organisation, which therefore legitimises them to some extent. It is difficult to imagine an activity being organised without authorisation from above. For example, welfare assistant Léone told us that she had to stand by her opinions:

Léone: the regional manager was right behind me at the beginning, but we did end up having our differences at one point, and I had to stick to my positions, get my arguments across and, well, in the end it was a bit of a battle.

However, social workers do have sufficient room for manoeuvre (exploiting institutional "areas of uncertainty") to "scare" people at times, or at least to have that possibility. We would suggest that when social workers give them a critical practical dimension, artistic practices become part of the social work game.

Finally, we noticed one recurring feature in our interviews, that of the "fear" of the institutions when faced with artistic projects. However, those fears are not always the same. Anne, for example, explained:

Anne: as far as the management is concerned, even if I scare them a bit at times, because I am always into projects that are challenges, well, it can scare people. Having said that, it's a question of trust. My manager does have a fair amount of trust in me, she knows how I work, that I will not do just anything. When I work with partners, they are people I know and I have all the guarantees I need beforehand. So, yes, as far as management is concerned, when I work on a project, I work with her. In any case, she gives the go-ahead. I'm not opposing the management. She gives the go-ahead for what I'm doing; for what I propose. There is always the approval from the management.

Question: do they always accept, or are there things that are not accepted?

Anne: well, there are times when I get a slap on the wrist, when she realises that the theatre or the stage is not accessible and we have to carry the wheelchairs...

Even if Anne pinpoints a "fear" that is more technical in nature, we can suggest that by taking this type of risks, she can disrupt the workings of the institution. Nadine, a special needs educator, pointed out that she works in a difficult institutional context:

Nadine: things needed sorting out in there, clearing out, there were a lot of other problems. And then, I think they were very, very afraid of these cultural activities. I really found myself all on my

own, I had no contact with colleagues, I was working alone, I didn't take part in any team meetings, in any institutional meetings, I was completely on my own. I did get some support from some colleagues, as usual, there are always some people who are... it's a home that has always worked very much like that, you know how institutions are, and it is repeated again and again for years, but not anymore, because there have really been some changes that have put an end to it, but anyway...

Taking all the information studied, would it not be more appropriate to speak of « collaborative resistance », paradoxical as the term may seem, in order to situate artistic activities as being another way of doing social work while fitting into a logic that complies with the usual expectations of social work. This aspect of the work would therefore be seen as containing a "critical" dimension, meaning that it aims to make a positive or negative judgement of the established order and process within the field. Léone, a welfare assistant, illustrates this perfectly:

Léone: I feel that we have a tendency to complain, all the same, and to be caught up in a system and even feed it a bit, I think. It's perhaps easy to talk about it where I am for the moment, but still, in our department we could get stuck in that sort of system very easily, too. But I do think you need a head of department, it's very, very, very, very important, really, to help fight against it. To create a particular way of working. I think that in our department, our boss creates a special dynamic that helps us to cope with instructions that aren't right for us, we get around them, rather than... and we still keep a good relationship with the management, that's what's funny about it. While the others, in other departments, it isn't like that at all, and they are in conflict, and yet they apply, they apply the instructions to the letter and they find themselves in conflict with the manage... with the regional management. We don't apply certain instructions and we are on pretty good terms, so that, I find that it's interesting to see that.

This is the point raised by Alexandra, for example, a consultant in social and family economy who stresses the importance of making a stand, yet while remaining focused on the broader mission:

Alexandra: I have had possibilities to say no, to make a stand, but I knew that, well... in the hope that my boss would back me up, and it was the case, and then the group of social workers agreed with me, too. So I try to hold out as well as I can. Having said that, I'm just like anyone else, I have a boss who... I report to, I have assignments to carry out, so I am obliged to follow instruction, but when I can say no and give my arguments, I do it. Because that is part of being a social worker, too, we have our role to defend, to stand up for our way of seeing things.

However, as Zygmunt Bauman noted after reading Théodor W. Adorno, "(...) the creators of culture need managers if they wish (as is the case of most of them, determined to 'improve the world') to be seen, heard and listened to, if they want to have a chance of completing their task/project. In other words, they run the risk of marginality, impotence and being forgotten. The creators of culture have no other choice than to live with this paradox. No matter how vehemently they rail against the pretensions and interference of the manager's, they must find a modus co-vivendi with the administration, at the risk of becoming a misfit otherwise. They have the choice between managers pursuing different goals and nibbling away at their creative liberty with differing intents - but certainly not between accepting and turning them down. This is because the paradox in question comes from the fact that, no matter how ill they might speak of each other, creators of culture and managers are destined to share the same house and take part in the same adventure. Their rivalry is fraternal"[39]. In other words, these practices cannot emerge in concrete terms without the "complicity" of the administration, otherwise the result is "failure", as happened to Myriam, a special-needs educator:

Myriam: we organised an art exhibition in our project, but it didn't fit into the mould, so we got taken to pieces.

Question: into the mould, which one?

Myriam: into the mould of the institution, I mean, into the standard template.

So, although the points we have just raised do show artistic practices from a slightly subversive angle, we should note that this was not a systematic intention on the part of the social workers we interviewed. The dimension of pleasure at work was particularly present in these artistic practices. For example, Aristide, a special-needs educator, stresses the indefinable nature of the emotion he feels:

Question: you mentioned artistic emotions, what is an artistic emotion for you, from your point of view? You mentioned that about what the other children do, about painting, about autistic children?

Aristide: yes, yes, yes and then also about the children I have worked with outside. Er... it's difficult to define, I have memories of objects, of photographs of objects that have stayed with me, where with relatively little in the way of tangible... resources, the object they produce did something to you, something quite unique... yes, an emotion that was not... that was really linked to the object, the object or at least what it represented, both in terms of its form and its... yeah, I can send you a photo...

In conclusion

In our opinion, the question of the relationship between social work and art must be addressed in the light of broader changes in social action. These changes are linked to the political and economic developments of the past thirty years. Neoliberal policies have had a great influence on the way support is provided to service users, who are now held responsible for their situation and must be "got back to work" by the activation policies social workers must apply. Although the aim is not to know whether these policies are "effective", we have noted that they come into conflict with the professional ethics of social workers. In these conditions, artistic practices may fulfil a twofold function for these professionals, as a means of escape and, at the same time, as a way of re-appropriating social work and finding another way of helping users.

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Notes

[1] Doctor of sociology and research associate at the Institut Régional du Travail Social de Franche-Comté, author of a thesis on the artistic strategies used by social workers in their professional work.

[2] Eric Pol-Simon, 'Perte de vue, prise de vue. L'acte photographique: support dans l'accompagnement d'adultes atteints de cécité', *Le Sociographe*, n°6, September 2001, p.33-46

[3] Sylviane Compan, 'Expression créatrice, émergence de l'être', *Le Sociographe*, n°7, September 2001, p.54

[4] For the purposes of this article we will not dwell on the semantic significance of the different terms used to denote people with whom social workers deal professionally.

[5] Pierre Bourdieu, *Questions de sociologie*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1984, p.19-36

[6] Gérard Creux, *Pour une analyse des conduites artistiques des travailleurs sociaux en milieu professionnel*,
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[7] Christophe Pittet, 'Les arts de la scène dans le champ de l'insertion professionnelle, soutien à l'expression ou support de normalisation', in *L'Observatoire, 'L'art peut-il être utile au social?'*, n°70, 2011, p.56

[8] Jean Duvignaud, *Sociologie de l'art*, Paris, Éditions PUF, 1984, p.22

[9] Quoted by Emmanuel Daydé in 'L'art brut ou la fête des fous', *Dada*, n°128, avril 2007

[10] Pascal Nicolas-Le Strat, *Une sociologie du travail artistique : artistes et créativité diffuse*, Paris, Éditions L'Harmattan, 1998, p.24

[11] Max Weber, *L'éthique protestante et l'esprit du capitalisme*, op. cit., p.224

[12] Michel Chauvière, *L'intelligence sociale en danger. Chemins de résistance et propositions*, Paris, La Découverte, 2011, p.211

- [13] Max Weber, *Économie et société*, Tome 1, Les catégories de la sociologie, op. cit., p.55.
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- [16] Jean-Marie Domenach, Patrick Giros, Hubert Lafont, Philippe Meyer, Paul Thibaud, Paul Virilio, 'Le travail social, c'est le corps social en travail', *Esprit*, n° 4-5, April-May 1972, p.795.
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- [18] Pierre Bourdieu, 'La sociologie est un sport de combat', documentaire de Pierre Carles, 2001
- [19] Michel Autes, *Les paradoxes du travail social*, Paris, Éditions Dunod, 1999, p.72
- [20] François Aballéa, 'Crise du travail social, malaise des travailleurs sociaux', *Recherches et Prévisions*, n° 44, 1996, p.11-22, p.21
- [21] Theodor W.Adorno, *Théorie esthétique*, Paris, Éditions Klincksieck, 1974, p.77.
- [22] Ibid.
- [23] Ibid.
- [24] Herbert Marcuse, *Eros et civilisation*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1963, p.131.
- [25] Herbert Marcuse, *Contre-révolution et révolte*, Paris, Éditions Seuil, 1973, p.152.
- [26] Herbert Marcuse, *La dimension esthétique : pour une critique de l'esthétique marxiste*, Paris, Éditions Seuil, 1979, p.45.
- [27] Herbert Marcuse, *L'homme unidimensionnel*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1968.
- [28] Version numérique 2008.
- [29] Précisons que Jean Duvignaud s'intéresse essentiellement au théâtre occidental.
- [30] Jean Duvignaud, *Les Ombres collectives : sociologie du théâtre*, Paris, Éditions PUF, 1965, p.566.
- [31] My research is based on empirical observation, with interviews of 22 qualified social workers who have used artistic activities in a professional context, and a questionnaire filled in by a sample of 668 qualified social workers, of whom 60% had used artistic activities professionally.
- [32]
- [33] Irene, a social services assistant for the Social Security authority, observes that "it's an institution with a reputation for being pretty uptight (...) doing something like that without the approval of the hierarchy wouldn't be easy."
- [34] On this point see Seymour Lieberman, 'Les effets des changements de rôles sur les attitudes' in Henri Mendras et Marco Oberti, *Le sociologue et son terrain : trente recherches exemplaires*, Paris, Éditions Armand Colin, 2000, p.218 à 229.
- [35] During lectures and classes with social work students, and particularly educational specialists and social service assistants, it soon becomes clear that they are not taken in by this. We might also have reason to suspect that the academic level of these students is often more advanced than the level of the qualification which they will ultimately receive; many of them already have professional experience or experience in higher education, endowing them with a cultural capital that helps them to appreciate the context and politics of their training.
- [36] Cloé provides an example of an act of 'resistance'. Her employer, the County Council, attempted to impose a 'dashboard' system to monitor the activity of its social workers. Systems of this nature are often used in other institutions, particularly the medical sector with PMSI programmes (Medical Information Systems). Cloé felt that the aim of this system was to measure the number of services users seen by social workers. In her own words: "They're obsessed with that, obsessed with knowing what we're doing, what we're not doing, they want... well it's true that the elected councillors are everywhere now, at all levels of the organisation, it's terrible, and they're just determined to control what we're doing, they're obsessed with it, so they came up with this system which was no worse than any other system I've seen, but it was just impossible, I think it's just impossible to build a system like that, impossible. You were supposed to record the type of interview you conducted, then what it was about, when really when you're meeting with people as a social worker it's not easy to precisely define the nature of the discussion. And then they wanted us to record precisely how much time we spent talking about housing issues, it was impossible, it's impossible so we just made it up, we told them that we were just making stuff up so ultimately they gave up on it. But at the start they really wanted to impose this thing, so there were some of us who resisted that. We didn't fill it in. And there were no punishments, there were some threats but nothing came of it."

[37] In the manner of Raymond Bourdon when he talks about 'good reasons', I have no intention of attempting to establish a definition of what 'good relations' might mean.

[38] We may be reminded here of Pierre Bourdieu's comments on social systems: "the more you understand the way they work, the more you understand that the people who make these systems work are manipulators as much as they are manipulated, which doesn't mean that they don't manipulate the system, in fact often they are better at manipulating it because they are manipulated themselves, without realising it." Speaking to Pierre Carles in 'La sociologie est un sport de combat', documentary film, 2001.

[39] Zygmunt Bauman, *La vie liquide*, op. cit., p.74-75.

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