

Songs from Windows (*Songs from a Window*)

I've always been fascinated by walking beneath lit windows wondering who lives there and how they live their lives. Thinking about people in their apartments creates a staggering feeling of how large and small come together. The individual life stories intertwine creating a larger context. A feeling of both curiosity and exclusion arises. What are people doing in there? One starts to look for small pieces of information, many little clues that together reveal something about people, the times and society. Is there something behind the facade waiting to appear? One day in Malmö I saw a woman on a balcony who started to sing, loud and strong. She was at the same time both self-conscious and self-contained. This scene became the starting point for a performance piece I did at Lilith Performance Studio in Malmö 2007.

In an entire building all lamps were turned off in the windows facing the street. One by one the lamps were then turned on, windows were opened and a song, a poem or a piece of music was performed. The entire facade became a stage and an audience of about two hundred stood outside on the pavement looking up at it. Working with the piece put me in contact with the people living there, their talents, literary ambitions, drug habits, newborn babies and life crises. It felt as if the entire interior of the building was lit up from within and for a long time afterwards I thought of the building in a very special way, like a section of an ant hill behind a pane of glass, in the manner that is used to display the life of ants.

In 2014, in connection with an artist residency in Brazil, I was invited to do a similar performance piece in São José de Barreiro, a community of 3000 situated in the mountains between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The conditions were rather different from those in Malmö. There were no threestoried houses. I didn't speak any Portuguese and needed help to communicate with the participants. I got a lot of help from the organizers of the residency. There was a wish for the projects carried out to have a clear social angle.