

NO THOUGHTS
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“Behind the Door” Giulia Berto

Feature by Smita Sharma, April 1, 2014

Behind the Door

Every metropolitan city in today’s world is overpopulated with rents constantly on the rise. The vital space for human beings is shrinking, bringing people closer to each other, but not essentially face-to-face. The dwelling space is becoming smaller and more suffocating to live. With the advance of technology and electronics, people are connecting with each other but not much in person. Facing up to this scenario, it is often seen that the inhabitation of old industrial spaces is becoming a social phenomenon.



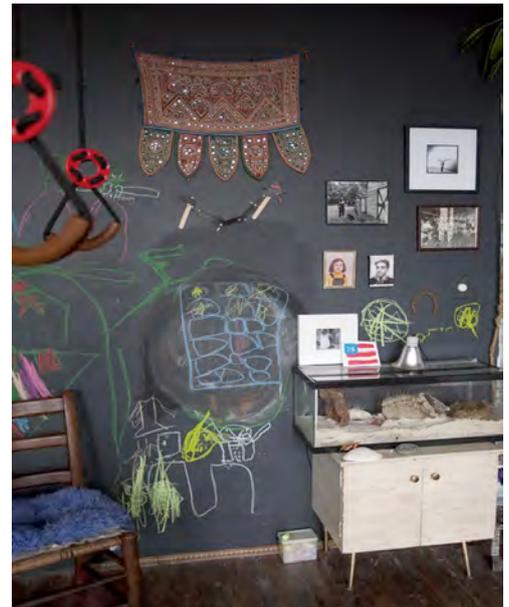
Italian photographer, Giulia Berto’s ongoing documentary project “*Behind the Door*” is set in a converted warehouse at 83 Meserole Street in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York City. Built in 1920 when Williamsburg was a hub for manufacturing, and formerly a sewing factory, the building where the photographic project takes place, is a large brown brick box that stands four stories high. During the days when the factory was in operation, it made cosmetics and utility bags made of cotton, rayon and vinyl for nearly sixty years before it closed down in the late 1990’s.

Williamsburg has gentrified over the past 30 years and is now a desirable residential neighborhood. The former sewing factory, like most of the old buildings in the area, has been converted into loft apartments carved from the raw factory space. Berto moved to New York City in August 2012 and was immediately attracted by its large space. Says Berto, “I was attracted by old style run-down

look of the building which became my home. The project was born out of the desire to slow down, observe and analyze the surroundings, in this case the domestic space.”



With visual storytelling based on environmental portraits, candid moments and still life images of the tenant’s personal belongings, “*Behind the Door*” narrates the story of the multiple lives hidden from view, beating to a different tempo behind each door of the building.



Conceived with a large format film camera (4” x 5”), the project is an anthropological observation. It explores how human beings relate to and interact with the intimacy of the home space, a place in which space and individuals are deeply interlaced; the former becoming a reflection and metaphor of the latter’s personality, ambitions and desires. By giving a window to a vibrant microcosm, “*Behind the Door*” reveals a diverse group of creative spaces that are as unique as the individuals that reside in them.



Giulia Berto a freelance photographer and videographer has been involved in a broad scope of projects, from short music documentaries and multimedia pieces to photojournalism and commercial photography. In Turin, Italy, at the beginning of 2008, she founded the “*giuliensemble*” collective along with artist Giulia Forgiione. During the following years they made several short films, which they screened at film festivals and art exhibitions around the world such as *31 Moscow Film Festival*, *Celeste Prize International*, *24 Torino GLBT Film Festival* and *Cologne OFF VI*.

After a bachelors degree in *Biology* and a *Masters in Evolution of Animal and Human Behaviour* from Italy, Berto moved to London and changed her career to photography. In June 2013 she graduated from the *Documentary Photography and Photojournalism Program* at the International Center of Photography, New York.