

IT'S ALL IN ME

writing immigrant women's history

The presence of immigrant women in the history of Malmö has been virtually nonexistent throughout the past 100 years. The life and work of these women seem to be invisible in the writing of public memory, even though their existence has played a crucial role in the development of Malmö.

IT'S ALL IN ME is an attempt to undo this historical oversight and bring about a collective awareness of the immigrant women living in Malmö.

The concept is simple – we ask the public to listen to their stories and then write them down. The idea is to make history writing a collaborative process, which is ongoing and growing by every contribution of the people of Malmö.

Making History

The project that led to IT'S ALL IN ME was initiated by Parvin Ardalán and Erling Björgvinsson. The goal of the project was to design a method for collecting, remediating and archiving the work and lives of immigrant women and make them visible to the public.

We met two such women who generously shared their stories with us. Through conversation over drinks, through the crafting of migration maps and through long walks in the city of Malmö amazing accounts from their past and present lives were unfolded to us.

We audio recorded most of our activities with the women, mostly as a form of documentation instead of taking notes, but also as a material for prototyping and developing our concept. We spent hours listening to these recordings, to the women's voices and their stories. Some of us started writing down what was being said, so we could remember and recite different parts of the stories to our fellow team members. In doing so, we discovered that transcribing the words of the women's voices was a powerful, intimate and transformative experience. We were listening to their stories through our ears, through our bodies and through our hands. We were manifesting their history in our own unique handwriting. It was simple, inspiring and beautiful – the concept for IT'S ALL IN ME was born.