

I AM GAY AND MUSLIM - a film by Chris Belloni

— short synopsis —

I AM GAY AND MUSLIM is a documentary focusing on homosexuality and gay rights in the Islamic world.

For this film Chris Belloni spent the major part of 2011 in Morocco, where homosexuality is punishable by law. The film follows a number of Moroccan homosexual young men aged, in their exploration of their religious and sexual identity. The very different men share their personal and emotional experiences on camera.

— technical info —

54 minutes, Color, Stereo, Subtitles English / Dutch / French / Spanish
Exhibition Format: DCP, DVD (NL) DVD (international)
Production Format: HD English, Dutch NL 2012

— contact —

bookings and general inquiries

Stichting Art.1 / Foundation Art.1
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— director's statement —

The past years the Dutch political party 'PVV' led by Geert Wilders has raised a lot of media attention to the Dutch Muslim youths who harass and discriminate homosexuals, hereby stigmatizing all Muslims in the Netherlands. This film has multiple goals.

'I AM GAY AND MUSLIM' aims to raise awareness and break the taboo surrounding homosexuality while exposing a broad spectrum of dilemmas that the men struggle with or have overcome in the past. The Arab spring seems to have awakened in Morocco as well. People wish to live freely and openly. I have decided to portray people who look ahead and are not afraid to state their opinions. Secondly I have attempted to give a platform to people that have no voice in politics and media.

- cast -

(some names have been altered for privacy reasons)

Azar (29)- Was thrown out of his home by his parents due to his homosexuality and spent three months in jail for a false claim of prostitution.

Samir (43)- Father of two children, has repressed his homosexuality for years. Is a devoted Muslim, currently divorced.

Soufian (23) - Studies Technical Engineering, devoted Muslim. Leads a double life. Religion comes first, his sexuality second.

Rayan (21) - Had his 'coming out' with family and friends. Nearly all reactions were positive.

Abdelwahid (19) - Was shadowed by his own father for suspected homosexual activity. Despite his religion and being attracted to men, he refuses to define people as 'Muslim' or 'Gay'.

Sebastien (36) - French teacher, dating Rayan.

- crew -

Directed by
Chris Belloni

Writing credits
Chris Belloni

Camera Bram
Belloni Ruben
Köster

Editing
Ruben Köster
Chris Belloni

Color correction
31pictures

Audio correction
Niek de Wit

Titels
Richard Putman

Editorial department
Anna Hoogenboom
Shayne McCreadie

Location assistant
Rayan

Produced by
Foundation art.1 (Stichting art.1)
in association with
Public Cinema & Belloni Concepts

Music
Theme Song: *Arabian Winds* (artist
unknown).

- biographies -

Chris Belloni (director, writer, producer)

Chris Belloni (1980) comes from a family of four including a twin brother. He grew up in Haarlem, The Netherlands and moved to Amsterdam to study *Political Sciences* and *European Studies* at the University of Amsterdam. He graduated for his masters in 2006.

Chris Belloni has always been a passionate traveler and active in foreign politics. After several trips to India the Middle East, West Africa and South-East Asia and a sabbatical year in Israel, he started on his first film with Chrissy van der Linden. **14 N, 16 W**. A documentary exposing the dire circumstances of physically disabled people in Senegal. In 2007 he ventured to Romania on the eve of their entry in to the EU to interview citizens about their expectations.

After these projects he founded *Stichting art.1*. This foundation is inspired by

the first article of the Dutch constitution, stating that no one shall be discriminated on grounds of religions, race, political or sexual preference or any other standards and this foundation lays the base for his current projects and films.

Bram Belloni (camera and behind the scenes photography)

Bram Belloni (1976) has worked as a freelance photographer for more than 10 years. Having started out principally in commercial photography, he now focuses on editorial photography and film, with a particular emphasis on documentary and portrait photography.

Beside editorial assignments, he works non-commissioned on documentary projects. Driven by great curiosity he tries to understand and document human life in general. Reoccurring themes are popular culture, social conditioning and moral dilemmas. By putting the individual in the center, he wants to explore today's society. How do people deal with the trends of their time? Or; how do 'social issues' manifest themselves on an individual, personal level.

Bram Belloni is based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and is represented by the *Hollandse Hoogte* photographic agency

Ruben Kösters (camera and editing)

Ruben Kösters (1980) studied *Communication* and worked for several television companies before starting his own production company *RKV Video productions* and focusing on social projects and workshops for young adults. He recently joined *Public Cinema*, specialized in government commissioned media productions.