

A QUEER COUNTRY



INDIECAN ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS "A QUEER COUNTRY" BY RAN BANGO AND LUAR KLINGHOFFER BAR DOV
IN ASSOCIATION WITH PETER DUMPHY & CHARLOTTE ARDEN WITH HARRIET DAVIES AND LISA MORGENTHAU



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NORTH AMERICAN DISTRIBUTOR

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Short synopsis

A Queer Country explores the development of Israel's buzzing LGBTQ community in Tel Aviv – recently crowned the gay capital of the world – and what this means in a religious state. Using interview access to Tel Aviv's mayor, who is controversially credited with pioneering its LGBTQ scene, the film uncovers how liberal attitudes are often at odds with the country's religious laws.

Despite hosting one of the world's largest gay Pride events each year, Israel's LGBTQ citizens face an uphill battle to achieve political victories such as the right to marry. They face continued violence – as demonstrated at Jerusalem Pride 2015.

Interweaving the personal and political, the film builds an intimate portrait of Israel and its internal struggle between liberal and conservative attitudes, often drowned out by the conflict at its borders.

The very question of Israel being an LGBTQ "champion" is controversial; some accuse the country of "pinkwashing". This is an allegation that promoting LGBTQ culture is a way of detracting from human rights violations in the Palestinian Territories. Some people believe you cannot celebrate the rights of some minorities while ignoring others' lack of them.

The documentary raises these questions and seeks to answer them by telling the true story of how Israel's LGBTQ community came into being.



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Longer synopsis

The documentary explores the dichotomy that weaves its way through all aspects of Israeli life – a nation governed by Orthodox civil law, and yet, one which hosts the world’s biggest gay Pride. In daily life, two very different worlds exist shoulder to shoulder.

Investigating this apparent contradiction, the film takes director Lisa Morgenthau and producer/reporter Harriet Davies on an extraordinary journey into Israel’s Bohemian side, and into the social revolution that challenges the foundations of the Jewish state.

Harriet and Lisa began their journey in Israel two years ago, when they met the first gay man to adopt and get divorced. They heard his heartbreak when the Orthodox authorities refused his divorce money (a decision later overturned by the Supreme Court). They went on to meet pioneers who are trying to reconcile LGBTQ identity and religion in Israel.

These include the mayor of Tel Aviv, Ron Huldai, a huge promoter of the city’s LGBTQ community, who explains his political decision to create an environment of liberalism and tolerance in Israel’s second city; members of a Kibbutz who are part of a movement to reform Judaism along socially liberal lines; the mother of a young man killed by anti-LGBTQ violence who has gone on to campaign inspirationally for the LGBTQ community.

The film also examines the idea that Israel’s progress on LGBTQ rights is “pinkwashing” – a claim that Israel promotes its LGBTQ community as a cynical means of detracting from the conflict with the Palestinians. The film explores some of the claims thrown up by the pinkwashing believers and seeks to answer them through the experience of Israel’s LGBTQ community itself.

It challenges the assumption that everything Israel does is inherently connected to the conflict. However, it also questions the legitimacy of Israel’s claim to “embrace” its LGBTQ community and the Israeli government’s wish to publicize its LGBTQ record abroad whilst still refusing to allow gay marriage. It highlights the conflict at Israel’s heart: the desire by many for a truly liberal social code and a deep belief by many that Israel must be defined as a Jewish state. Can these visions of Israel ever truly be reconciled?

Looking at the history of the LGBTQ movement within Israel, the filmmakers unveil the struggles within the LGBTQ community and establish the facts about Israel’s LGBTQ movement as it is today.

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Production Crew

Lisa Morgenthau – Director / DOP

Lisa qualified in History of Art and Aesthetics from Leeds University and is a post\graduate in Graphic Design at Central St Martins. She has worked as an Art Director/ Copywriter in advertising for 7 years, working at Saatchi & Saatchi, Havas and BETC.

She left advertising to retrain in Documentary Directing at the National Film and Television School.

A Queer Country is her directorial debut in documentary.

Harriet Davies – Producer / Reporter

Harriet achieved her Diploma in Multimedia Journalism at News Associates, a London\based college accredited by the National Council for the Training of Journalists.

She began working as a financial journalist in 2009. She worked at ClearView Financial Media and the Financial Times Group. She went freelance in late 2013, splitting her time between finance journalism and work on A Queer Country. She is based in London and has a Masters and BSc in Economics from the University of Sussex.

Luar Klinghoffer Bar Dov – Editor

Growing up between Europe, South America and the Middle East, Luar started editing at 13, commencing her film studies while she was in High School.

She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film from Eicar, The International Film school of Paris in 2012, where she also specialized in Directing and Set Dressing. She is currently based in London, freelancing primarily as an Editor with a variety of clients and projects.

IMDB title page: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3962380/>



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Production Company

GIZMO FILMS

Gizmo Films is an established and award-winning UK based film production company with a number of exciting current projects in production and development, as well as those completed. Productions range from full feature length films for theatrical release to one-off and documentary series primarily for Television output.

The company has made numerous documentary films for TV including major broadcasters such as the BBC, Channel 4, and Discovery and has produced 3 full-length feature films since 2012.

Website www.gizmofilms.com

Twitter @gizmofilms

Facebook <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm5366537/>

Charlotte Arden Producer

Charlotte is involved in developing and producing a number of documentary and feature films at Gizmo Films. She recently co-produced 'War of Words' \ a documentary about the art of Battle Rapping, and has just completed producing the feature film 'Mad To Be Normal' starring David Tennant, Elisabeth Moss, Gabriel Byrne, Michael Gambon \ and tells the fascinating story of world-renowned Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing and his unique community at Kingsley Hall, East London, during the 1960's.

Charlotte is responsible for all aspects of production management such as facilitating current productions/co-productions and sourcing finance and investment, as well as the marketing and distribution of current and past productions.

Peter Dunphy Executive Producer

As the Executive Producer and Company Director of Gizmo Films, Peter Dunphy is responsible for funding, budgeting, financial control and general management of the company.

Peter has been involved in the financing of a number of high quality documentaries and feature films. His principal role has been to facilitate the funding, structuring, budgeting and financial management of productions, as well as the negotiation and procurement of distribution and sales. Peter also works as an executive in a specialist field of private equity.

Prior to entering the film production industry, he was the CEO of a global financial recruitment company, where he managed numerous private equity financing deals, acquisitions and disposals.

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IMDB <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm5366537>

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Pre7release media coverage

WWW.JEWCY.COM ARTS & CULTURE

Watch 'A Queer Country' Kickstarter

An investigation into Tel Aviv's vibrant gay community By [Jillian Scheinfeld](#) / January 30, 2014



London-based Jewish director/producer team "Lisa and Harriet" have a pretty great Kickstarter out called, "A Queer Country," which investigates Israel's burgeoning gay population and what it's like to be a LGBT in a highly religious, but liberally motivated country.

The duo spoke with tons of Israeli citizens; among them Ron Huldai, mayor of Tel Aviv and Asaf Bar Ilan, a commander in the IDF. From crazy techno clubs to the army, they explore the ensuing liberalism in Israel, as well as the speculated "pinkwashing," which means that Israeli's tout their gayness with pride as to downplay their own human rights violations.

Definitely looks like it would be a fascinating watch – if you help them finish production on [Kickstarter!](#)

A Queer Country has been selected for the following festivals:

Near Nazereth Festival 2016, Israel, 2016 (Participant)

Sydney World Film Festival, Sydney, 2016 (Official Selection)

The Women's Film Festival, Philadelphia, 2016 (Official Selection)

New Filmmakers, New York, 2016 (Official Selection)

Hollywood International Independent Documentary Awards, Los Angeles, 2016 (Official Selection & Winner).

My True Colors Film Festival, New York, 2016 (Official Selection).