

There are no homosexuals in Iran

On September 24, 2007 at Columbia University, former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said, "In Iran, we do not have homosexuals like in your country." While today some occidental countries accept gay and lesbian marriages, in Iran, homosexuality is still punishable by death. This sanction prohibits homosexuals to live their sexuality. Their only options are to choose transsexuality, a practice tolerated by law, but considered as pathological, or to flee. In Denizli, a small town in Turkey, hundreds of Iranian gay refugees transit: they put their lives on pause waiting to join, one day, a host country where they can freely live their sexualities. In this context of uncertainty where anonymity is the best protection, this work questions the fragile identity and gender concepts. It tries to give back to those people a face that their country has temporarily stolen. My intentions were not to victimize my subjects. It is true that the political situation is dramatic and their past full of difficult memories. Despite that, I tried to focus on their current situation and the hope that it evokes. It is a promise to freely experience their sexual orientation and their love, beyond the gender. My images are light, constructed of simple elements, sometimes festive. The ensemble tends to create a paradox with the gravity of the topic and the subject's precarious situation. Between images of hidden or uncovered faces, my series illustrate the difficulty that these people encounter to reinvest the identity space they were deprived of.

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