



2026

Where We Are in Film:

Analyzing LGBTQ inclusion from top film distributors

glaad  MEDIA INSTITUTE

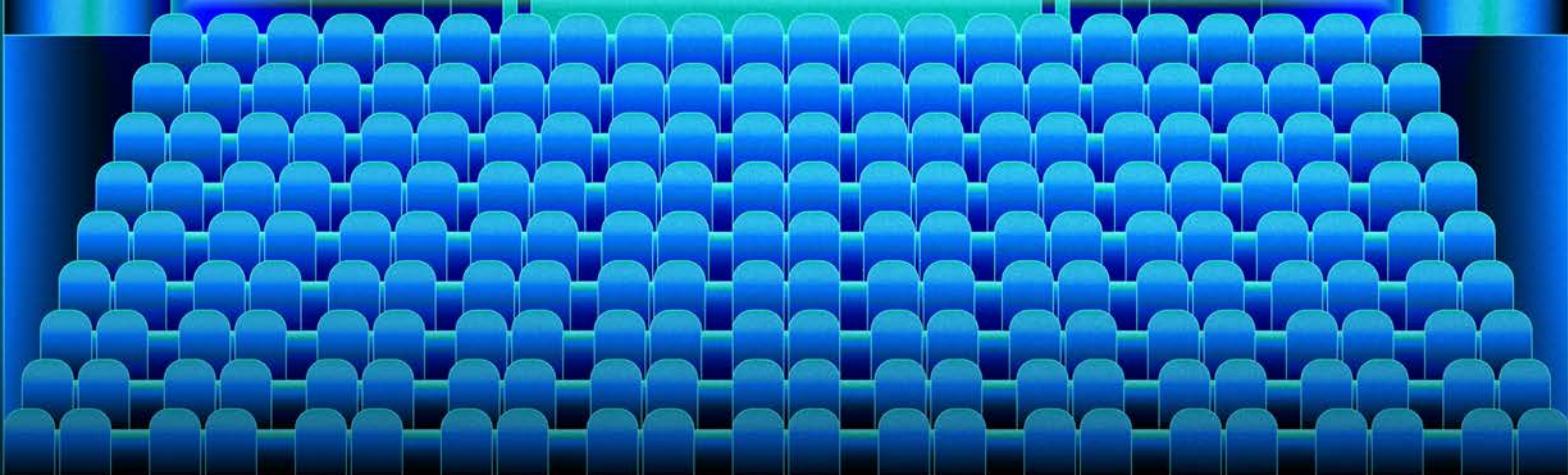


Table of Contents

From the desk of Sarah Kate Ellis, GLAAD President and CEO	03
From the Desk of Megan Townsend	05
Executive Summary	07
The Vito Russo Test	08
Overview of Findings	09
Observations and Recommendations	13
A24	17
Amazon MGM Studios	21
Apple TV	25
Lionsgate	29
NBCUniversal	33
Netflix	37
Paramount Skydance	41
Sony	45

The Walt Disney Company	49
Warner Bros. Discovery	53
Documentary Film	57
Additional Distributors	58
Methodology	62
Where We Are in Film Findings, Year Over Year	64
Acknowledgments	68

Film Studios Are Leaving Money on the Table By Failing to Invest in LGBTQ Stories

A letter from GLAAD CEO and President Sarah Kate Ellis

For over a decade, GLAAD has meticulously tracked the state of LGBTQ inclusion in film. Our award-winning research has produced a measurable shift in representation – an almost 70 percent increase in the percentage of LGBTQ-inclusive films from the first study in 2013 to the one released just last summer. In that time, our work has also fundamentally changed the cultural expectation for mainstream theatrical releases.

Yet this progress is being threatened.

We are in an era of increased censorship efforts – including most recently and outrageously the Federal Communications Commission opening an inquiry for public comment on whether TV ratings should warn audiences about LGBTQ families and transgender and nonbinary characters in TV programming. It is clear that our advocacy must evolve to meet the gravity of this moment. In this report, we are expanding even further beyond reporting on visibility data and digging deeper into evaluating characters and storytelling.

“LGBTQ stories are good for business – period. While this administration and its retaliatory arms have spent the past two years leveraging legal rulings and political pressure to discourage diverse and inclusive storytelling, these efforts are in direct opposition to reality.”

Today, we launch *Where We Are in Film*. This reimagined study aligns our research with our legacy of two decades of television reporting, allowing us to laser-focus on evaluating the narrative importance of LGBTQ characters, the identities represented and excluded, and how our stories are told. By prioritizing the quality of storytelling and who gets to be central to the plot, GLAAD will continue to identify opportunities and drive progress for the nuanced, diverse and meaningful stories our community deserves.

LGBTQ stories are good for business - period. While this administration and its retaliatory arms have spent the past two years leveraging legal rulings and political pressure to discourage diverse and inclusive storytelling, these efforts are in direct opposition to reality. With purchasing power conservatively estimated at \$1.4 trillion in the U.S. alone and as trusted voices in the film space, film distributors would be foolish and shortsighted to overlook the necessity of LGBTQ stories and queer audiences on their bottom line.

Yet, we continue to see decreases year-over-year in multiple categories. The overall percentage of films is down to 20.4%, a 28% decrease in percentage of inclusive films in just three years from the record high 28.5% of films in our 2023 study. Further, the majority of LGBTQ characters appeared in smaller roles. The number of characters has decreased year over year from 181 to 112, and it is worth noting some specific drops. There were zero transgender characters counted in the 225 films released by ten top distributors last year. LGBTQ characters were also completely absent from animated/family films. Our research also found a concerning drop in LGBTQ characters of color, down to 30% of all LGBTQ characters from 36% in the prior study. This is the lowest percentage of LGBTQ characters of color this study has counted in nine editions.

Americans spend half their day – 12 hours – consuming media, but in 2026 that media has never been so divided. The way people get their news, the content they see, the sources they trust, the cultural references and touchstones are all disparate. We no longer live in a monoculture with a mass general market. Audiences have more options than ever for their attention and they are looking for brands and titles that speak to them, their friends and family, and their interests. It's clear that the real "risk" is not inclusion, but rather exclusion. Efforts to make a character more universal and "for everyone" do the exact opposite – these characters become so diluted and watered down that no character or story becomes specific or resonant enough with audiences to breakthrough and inspire action (whether that be purchasing a ticket, a subscription, or spreading the word). Consumers may turn away from film and look toward other media, but it isn't too late yet to win them back.

Television has seen huge success with telling LGBTQ stories. In just the past year, *Heated Rivalry* has dominated every aspect of pop culture and topped out at 95 times the average series demand globally; *Stranger Things* broke viewership records for Netflix and spawned success with merchandise across a number of industries including selling over 3.16M copies of fan favorite lesbian character Robin's tie-in novel; the *Malcolm in the Middle* revival *Life's Still Unfair* was the biggest debut of the year for Disney+ and Hulu. Film is leaving money on the table by not following their example.

Our GLAAD Media Institute is a resource for any studio, production company, creative, or distributor telling an LGBTQ story and looking to reach queer audiences. In fact, the films tracked in the previous three editions of this study for which GLAAD consulted on story, character, and/or design showed a 68% increase or 1.7 times higher watch time than those for which GLAAD solely did promotional efforts.

“Television has seen huge success with telling LGBTQ stories. Film is leaving money on the table by not following their example.”

LGBTQ people and our allies make up the majority of this country, 64% of all US adults are in or are active supporters of the LGBTQ community per Gallup and MRI-Simmons reporting.

These audiences are interested in continuing to invest in franchises, merchandise, experiences, and brands that stick to their values and stand up for what is right. GLAAD is here to be your partner in that.

Thank you for your support,



SARAH KATE ELLIS
President & CEO, GLAAD

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Kate Ellis".

LGBTQ Audiences Drive Culture, Studios Can't Afford to Ignore this Growth Audience.

A letter from GLAAD's Senior Director of Entertainment Research & Analysis

Companies that wish to successfully grow need to win LGBTQ audiences' eyes and dollars.

Right now, Gen Z represents the largest share of moviegoers at 39% of the North American Audience in 2025 ([Comscore PostTrak](#)). More than 1 in 5 (23%) of American adults under 30 are LGBTQ and overall 9% of American adults are part of the community ([Gallup](#)). This has continually increased over the years, the LGBTQ community has grown nearly 160% since Gallup began tracking in 2012. This means LGBTQ audiences are one of the most quickly developing growth segments for businesses and it is becoming increasingly unlikely that a company can succeed on a mass scale without speaking to LGBTQ audiences and consumers.

Further, LGBTQ audiences are specifically setting the narrative on entertainment. LGBTQ adults are 34% more likely to be influential in conversations around film than the general population, and 38% more likely to be influential in TV. LGBTQ adults are 51% more likely to be influential in conversations on videogames – a hugely noteworthy stat as more games are being adapted into films across multiple studios. We are trusted tastemakers and word-of-mouth representatives who should be included in both storytelling and marketing.

“**LGBTQ audiences are one of the most quickly developing growth segments for businesses and it is becoming increasingly unlikely that a company can succeed on a mass scale without speaking to LGBTQ audiences and consumers.**”

Studios should be paying attention to this dedicated audience – and paying attention across verticals as we see queer characters and stories cultivating engaged and eager fandoms who invest across music, video games, merchandise, audiobooks and more.

While most of this study found concerning decreases, horror films were one bright spot where we saw significant inclusion with successful titles like *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, *The Parenting*, *Companions*, *Weapons* and more.

In fact, every theatrically released LGBTQ-inclusive horror film tracked in this study with budget information available made back over double their production budget at the box office. Nielsen polling reports that the top film genres for LGBTQ audiences are horror films and sci-fi or fantasy stories, so, this should be a top priority for studios as they develop new titles and assign production and marketing budgets.

In last year's study, GLAAD pointed to midbudget films (\$15-90 million production budget) and indie studio labels as being a place where we saw significant success and possibility. In that study, more than a third of inclusive films (37%, though not all films share budget publicly so this number is likely higher) fell into that midbudget space. This year only 19 of the 46 LGBTQ-inclusive films reported their budget, but 11 of those (58%) were mid-budget films, with standouts including *Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale*, *After The Hunt*, and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. Further, looking at all 2025 released films, mid-budget films on average saw more success with those titles on average making over three times their production budget back - proving that audiences are interested in original and new stories. This space is both more successful and more inclusive.

In 2026, we've seen a number of notable deals for LGBTQ-inclusive indie films that likely were made at a midbudget price point be acquired out of festivals including *Club Kid* (A24) as the first major deal at Cannes this year, *Leviticus* (NEON), *I Want Your Sex* (Magnolia), and *Lunar Sway* (TLA Releasing and Optimale Distribution). Warner Bros. Discovery recently launched a new indie distribution label and just last month Focus Features, the arthouse label of NBCUniversal, released *Girls Like Girls*. While there is no way of knowing exactly how distribution and film will continue to change amidst ongoing proposed deals and consolidation, it's clear that studios will need to create a balanced slate and mid-budget titles remain a huge growth space.

GLAAD is a trusted partner to many festivals and is on the ground engaging around inclusive content, and can spotlight great titles for acquisition to interested distribution companies. Our GLAAD List, a project in partnership with script hosting website The Black List, also includes a number of LGBTQ-inclusive scripts that are ready to be optioned and developed now. Films already released from this list include Paramount+'s *Three Months*, *Anything's Possible* (Amazon), NBCUniversal's *Knock at the Cabin*, and *Before I Change My Mind* (Epic Pictures).

“Mid-budget films included standout LGBTQ stories. This space is both more successful and more inclusive - proving audiences are interested in original and new stories.”

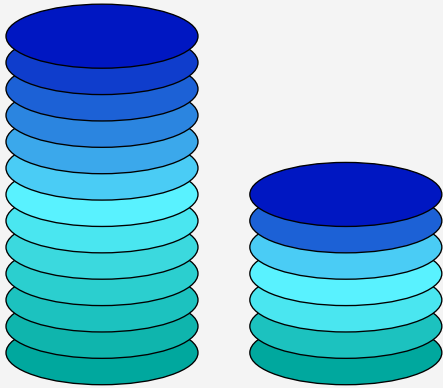
GLAAD remains a dedicated partner and a unique center of excellence who can activate at any point in the production lifecycle to create impactful LGBTQ stories and connect with key audiences. We know that this moment is challenging, but we're here for the long haul as we celebrate our 40th anniversary. We look forward to continuing to partner with creatives across film and every form of media to continue to tell impactful and entertaining queer stories that will win studios new success and new audiences.

Thank you,



MEGAN TOWNSEND
Senior Director, Entertainment
Research & Analysis

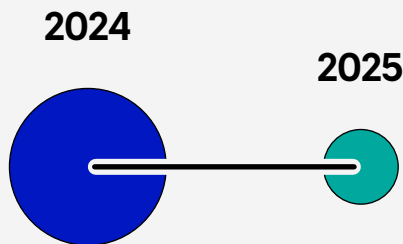
Executive Summary



There were 225 films released in 2025 by the 10 distributors whose slates were tracked in this study (A24, Amazon Studios, Apple TV, Lionsgate, NBCUniversal, Netflix, Paramount Skydance, Sony Pictures Entertainment, The Walt Disney Company, and Warner Bros. Discovery). Of those 225 films, 46 contained LGBTQ characters (20.4%). **This is a decrease from the 23.6% inclusive films (59 of 250) counted in 2024.**



Four LGBTQ characters had a disability (4%). **This is a decrease of three characters from the previous study.**



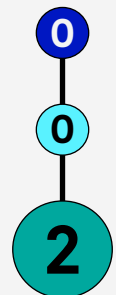
GLAAD counted a total of 112 LGBTQ characters in these 46 films, **a decrease of 69 characters from the 181 LGBTQ characters in 2024 inclusive films.**

Of the 112 LGBTQ characters counted, **59 (53%) are women, 46 (41%) are men, and seven (6%) are nonbinary characters that were not explicitly transgender.**



There were **zero transgender characters counted in the 2025 slate of films.**

For the first time in three years, this study includes LGBTQ characters living with HIV. There are two characters living with HIV counted in one film, *Fairyland* (Lionsgate).



Of the 112 LGBTQ characters, 34 (30%) are characters of color, **a decrease from the 36% counted the previous year.**

Of the 46 LGBTQ-inclusive films, 10 (22%) contain bisexual+ characters, **a decrease from 25% of 2024 films.** Only 11 (10%) of the total LGBTQ characters are bisexual+.

The Vito Russo Test

Taking inspiration from the Bechdel Test, which examines the way women characters are portrayed and situated within a narrative, GLAAD developed its own set of criteria to analyze how LGBTQ characters are included in a film. The Vito Russo Test gets its name from celebrated film historian and GLAAD co-founder Vito Russo, whose book *The Celluloid Closet* remains the bedrock for analysis of early LGBTQ portrayals in Hollywood film. These criteria can help filmmakers create more multidimensional characters while providing a barometer for LGBTQ film representation.

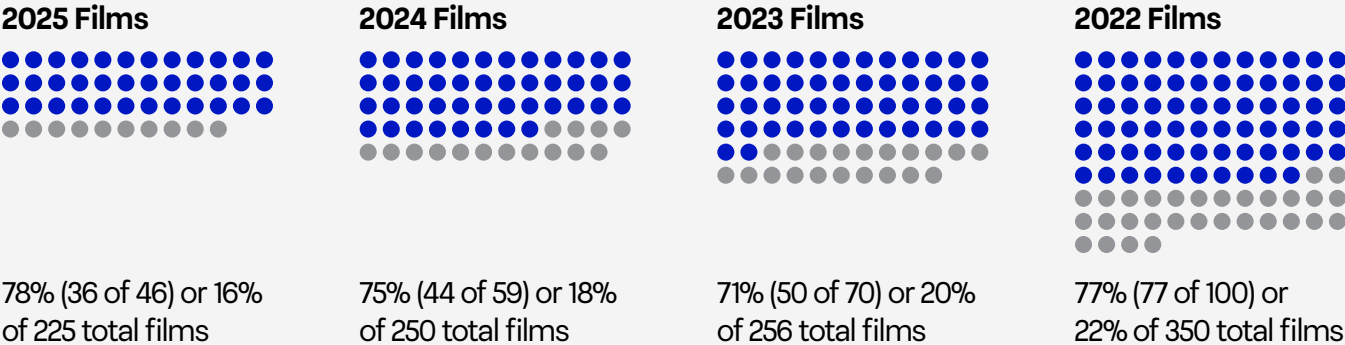
However, as several past tracked films prove, simply including significant LGBTQ characters does not guarantee that a film is free of problems or tropes and inoffensive in its portrayals. In 2022, GLAAD expanded the Vito Russo Test to discount those films which may have included significant LGBTQ characters who were central to the film’s plot but whose stories were offensive and objectionable.

This test remains an evaluation of the minimal representation expected, and also provides a standard bar for a greater number of films to reach and ultimately exceed. Passing the Vito Russo Test is a first step, rather than the finish line.

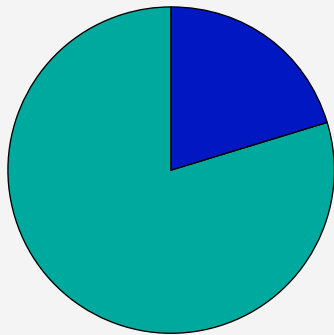
For a film to pass the Vito Russo Test, the following must be true:

- 1. **The film contains a character that is identifiably lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer.**
- 2. **That character must not be solely or predominantly defined by their sexual orientation or gender identity (i.e. they are comprised of the same sort of unique character traits commonly used to differentiate straight/cisgender characters from one another).**
- 3. **The LGBTQ character must be tied to the plot in such a way that the character’s removal would have a significant effect, meaning the character is not there to simply provide colorful commentary, paint urban authenticity, or set up a punchline. The character must matter.**
- 4. **The LGBTQ character’s story must not be outwardly offensive (avoids defaulting to well-known tropes or stereotypes with no further development). In films with multiple LGBTQ characters, at least one character must pass this point for the film to pass the test.**

% of LGBTQ-inclusive films that passed the Vito Russo Test, By Year



Overview of Findings

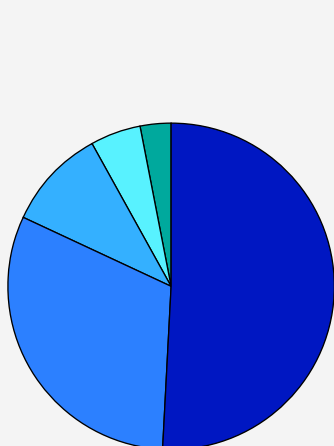
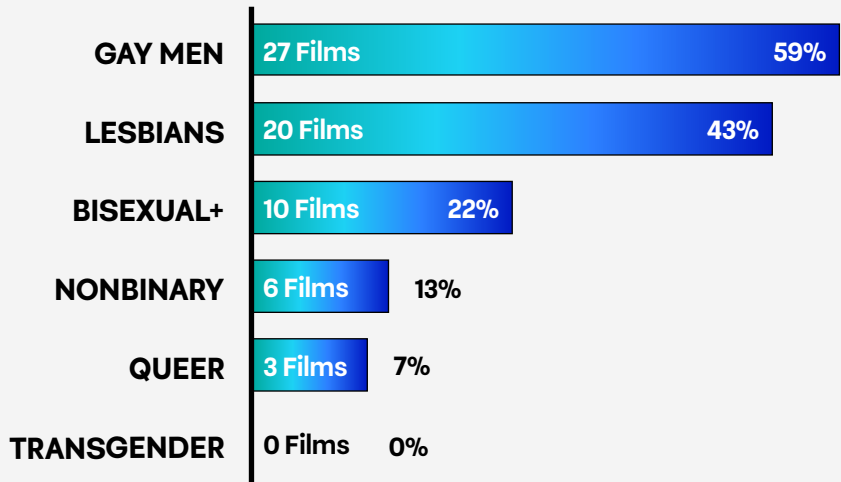


46 films with LGBTQ characters 20.4%

179 films without LGBTQ characters 79.6%

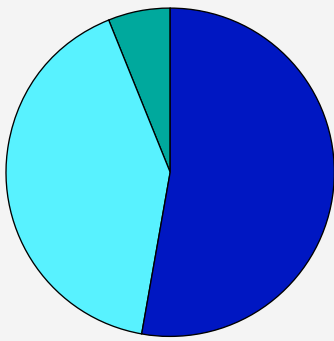
Of the 225 films released theatrically and direct to streaming in 2025 by the 10 distributors tracked in this study, 46 films featured LGBTQ characters (20.4 percent). This is a decrease of 3.2 percentage points from the previous year, and 8.1 percentage points lower than 2022 films' record high of 28.5 percent.

Of the 46 LGBTQ-inclusive films released in 2025, 27 included gay men (59%), 20 included lesbians (43%), 10 included bisexual characters (22%), three included queer characters that don't fall specifically into other labels (7%), six included nonbinary characters (13%), and zero included trans characters.



Identity	# of characters	% of characters
GAY MEN	57	51%
LESBIANS	35	31%
BISEXUAL+	11	10%
QUEER	6	5%
UNDEFINED SEXUAL ORIENTATION	3	3%

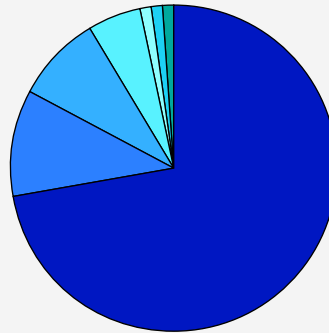
Of the 112 LGBTQ characters counted, 57 are gay men (51%), 35 are lesbians (31%), 11 are bisexual+ (10%), six are queer (5%), and three have undefined sexual orientations (3%).



Identity	# of characters	% of characters
LGBTQ MEN	59	53%
LGBTQ WOMEN	46	41%
NONBINARY	7	6%

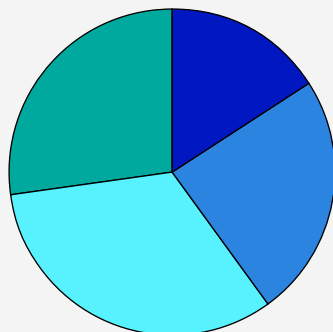
Of the 112 LGBTQ characters counted, 59 are men (53%), 46 are women (41%), and seven are nonbinary characters (6%). One of the nonbinary characters is also intersex (*Fixed*, Netflix).

Of the 112 LGBTQ characters counted, 34 are characters of color (30%). Of all the LGBTQ characters, 76 are white (68%), 11 are Black (10%), nine are API (8%), six are Latine (5%), six are multiracial (5%), one is indigenous (1%), and one is Middle Eastern/North African (MENA) (1%). Two further characters are non-human (2%).



Identity	# of characters	% of characters
WHITE	76	68%
BLACK	11	10%
API	9	8%
LATINE	6	5%
MULTIRACIAL	6	1%
INDIGENOUS	1	1%
MENA	1	1%

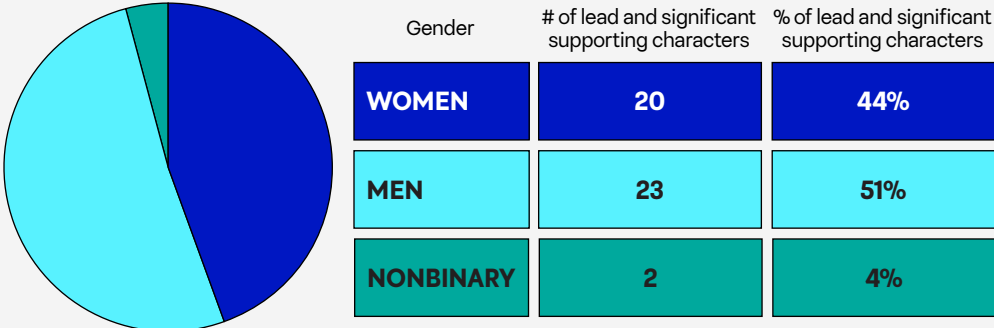
*two additional characters are non-human



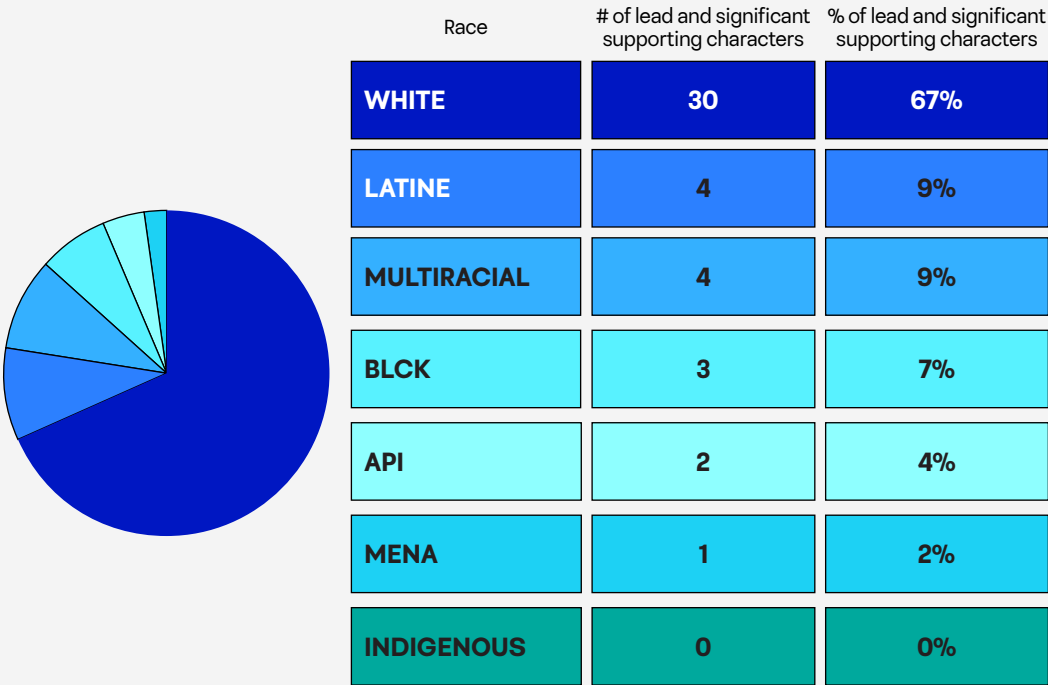
Narrative Significance	# of characters	% of characters
LEAD	18	16%
SIGNIFICANT SUPPORTING	27	24%
SUPPORTING	37	33%
BACKGROUND	30	27%

Of the 112 LGBTQ characters, 18 are classified as lead characters (16%), 27 are significant supporting characters (24%), 27 are supporting characters (33%), and 30 are background characters (37%). In total, 60% of LGBTQ characters fell into the smaller categories of supporting or background characters.

There were **zero transgender characters** counted within the 112 LGBTQ characters.

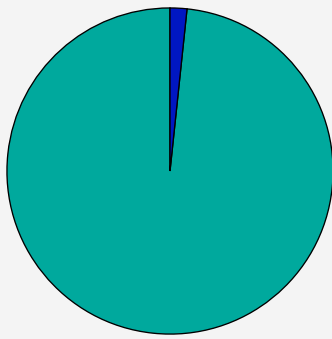


Of the 45 LGBTQ characters that are either leads or significant supporting characters, 23 (51%) are men, 20 are women (44%) two are nonbinary (4%).



*one additional character is non-human

Of the 45 LGBTQ characters that are either leads or significant supporting characters, 14 are characters of color (31%). In total, 30 of these characters are white (67%), four are Latine (9%), four are mulitracial (9%), three are Black (7%), two are API (4%), and one is MENA (2%). One further character is non-human.

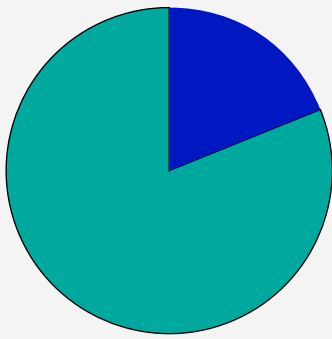
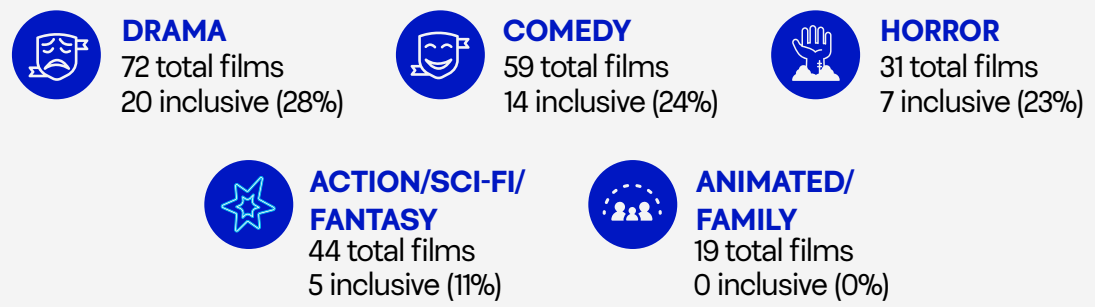


2 LGBTQ Characters Living with HIV 2%

110 Characters Not Living with HIV 98%

Of the 112 LGBTQ characters counted this year, **four characters had a disability (4%)**. **Two of those characters were living with HIV.**

In 2025, drama was the most inclusive genre of film by both percentage and raw number.

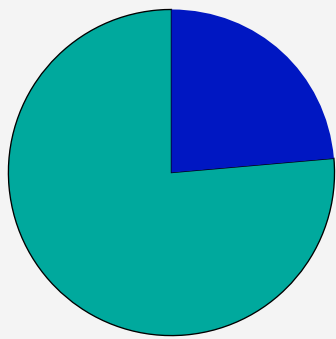


31 films with LGBTQ characters 19.1%

194 films without LGBTQ characters 80.9%

Of the 225 films tracked in 2025, 162 were theatrical releases. Of those theatrical films, 31 were LGBTQ inclusive (19.1%).

Of the 225 films tracked in 2025, 63 were streaming direct releases. Of those streaming films, 15 were LGBTQ inclusive (23.8 percent).



15 films with LGBTQ characters 23.8%

48 films without LGBTQ characters 76.2%

Observations and Recommendations

LGBTQ characters are disappearing – and this is largely affecting LGBTQ characters of color.

This study marks the third year in a row of decreases in LGBTQ inclusion from a previous record high. In 2025, 20.4% of films from 10 top distributors included LGBTQ characters. This is a decrease of 3.2 percentage points year-over-year, and a drop of over eight percentage points from the record high of 28.5% tracked in 2022 films. This the lowest percentage found since GLAAD added streaming services to the methodology that same year. Further, this decrease in representation of LGBTQ characters is significantly affecting LGBTQ characters of color.

Representation of LGBTQ people of color dropped to only 30% of LGBTQ characters last year, a six point decline. This is the lowest percentage of LGBTQ characters of color this study has counted in nine editions, the previous low point was in 2016 films where only 20% of LGBTQ characters were characters of color. Studies have proven that Black and Latine audiences bring in significant money at the box office, yet their stories are being left out of queer titles. Films like *Hedda*, *After the Hunt*, and *The Parenting* included LGBTQ people of color in leading roles, but this was definitively an exception rather than the norm.

Trans inclusion is non-existent.

Recent editions of this study have found that almost all transgender characters counted were either portrayed offensively and/or were cast inauthentically, with cisgender actors portraying trans characters. In 2025, zero films across the 10 distributors tracked included trans characters.

Given the current attacks on the trans community, it is extremely disappointing that studios have either released films that cause harm to the transgender community or excluded trans characters entirely, neither of which increases the familiarity and acceptance we know is the result of authentic and inclusive media representation. The misrepresentation and exclusion of transgender characters and stories in entertainment, while politicians and anti-LGBTQ activists are fixated on targeting trans people through misinformation, anti-trans legislation, and violence, is unconscionable.

It's also a poor business decision by these studios, given that a supermajority of Americans (79%) agree that everyone deserves to be represented in media, including movies, TV, and video games. If film studios continue to ignore trans people and stories — particularly in content made for Gen Alpha, Gen Z, and Millennial audiences, who are both more likely to personally know a trans person and who are driving the box office today – these companies risk declining relevance with audiences and the loss of key demographics essential for industry sustainability.

After two years of invisibility, a film from a top distributor featured LGBTQ characters living with HIV.

In 2023 and 2024 films, there were zero LGBTQ characters living with HIV, but in 2025, Lionsgate's *Fairyland* included a lead character living with HIV. The prior inclusive film was Paramount+'s *Three Months*. *Fairyland* tells the story of a father and daughter in San Francisco during the 1970s and 1980s, following their evolving relationship from her childhood through college. The father is openly gay and is later diagnosed with HIV. His daughter remains by his side towards the end of his life, and the two are able to make peace with the issues they had with each other over the years. This story was told with care and nuance. While the film deserves praise, *Fairyland* also reflects a broader trend in HIV storytelling that often centers historical narratives about white gay men during the early years of the epidemic. There remains a significant opportunity for film studios to tell contemporary stories about people living with HIV across communities and experiences, including stories centered on joy, intimacy, family, romance, and everyday life. We encourage studios to expand the range of HIV narratives being told and invest in nuanced, intersectional stories similar to what audiences have seen on TV with titles like *Pose*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, *Dear White People*, *Cris Miró*, *Looking*, and more.

The majority of LGBTQ characters were counted in supporting roles – LGBTQ characters were least likely to appear as leads.

This year, GLAAD updated our methodology to move from tracking screentime to instead counting narrative significance of the character in the film; classifying characters as either leading roles, significant supporting characters, supporting characters, or background characters. The largest group of LGBTQ characters were counted as supporting (33%), or a character who is not a significant player in the film's overall plot, but whose contributions rise above that of a background character. The next largest group counted were background characters (27%), defined in this study as a character who appears briefly and contributes no impact to the overall story; then significant supporting (24%), a character who makes a significant contribution to the film's story/plot and is prominently featured; and leading roles (16%) the film's protagonist, an undisputed lead or co-lead, in dead last. In many cases LGBTQ characters existed in smaller roles only to support the straight protagonists, this was especially prevalent in romantic comedies and action films.

The films with LGBTQ characters playing the leads included interesting and nuanced portrayals. Amazon MGM Studios *Hedda* queered classic literature and was beloved by critics. Sony's *Blue Moon* showed a queer artist and received an Oscar nomination, while their reboot *I Know What You Did Last Summer* queered a beloved horror franchise and made back double its production budget. A24's *Sorry, Baby* centered on a friendship between a nonbinary lead and their lesbian best friend and became a critical darling on the indie award circuit. When our stories are centered, those films are seeing success.

LGBTQ characters flourished in horror films – at all levels of narrative significance.

Though horror has historically been a mixed bag for LGBTQ characters with notable heroes but also offensive victim and villain roles, several queer characters made a great impact in 2025 horror releases. Sony's reboot of *I Know What You Did Last Summer* made one of the final girls bisexual, as was a main character in the studios' video game adaptation *Until Dawn*. Both characters survived their films. Warner Bros. released *The Parenting* on HBO Max, which starred a gay couple who survived the film and got to lead their own story. Warner Bros. also released two horror films that each made back over three times their production budget at the box office, *Companions* and *Weapons*. Both films included gay couples in supporting roles in the film, though both couples did ultimately end up dying - and specifically in *Weapons*, quite brutally.

Nielsen research cites horror as a favorite genre of LGBTQ audiences. Studios should be considering this as they continue to greenlight films in the genre. In a year when so many films didn't even make back their budget, all tracked LGBTQ-inclusive horror films tracked in this study made back over twice their budget.

There is no LGBTQ inclusion in the Animated/Family genre in 2025 films.

GLAAD had counted significant decreases in inclusion within animated and family films each of the last two years. This year there was a complete absence with not a single film from ten top distributors in the animated/family genre including LGBTQ characters in 2025. Gallup polling shows that 23% of American adults under 30 are LGBTQ, and the Williams Institute reports that 18% of LGBTQ American adults are raising someone under 18 years old in their household, an estimated 5 million children in the U.S. If studios continue to reject reality - that LGBTQ young people and families exist - they are leaving money on the table as this audience and their allies will find interesting stories that reflect their real world on platforms beyond the theater or a streaming service.

Sequels and franchises are minimizing LGBTQ roles or leaving them out completely.

Five years ago, it was beginning to seem that larger franchises were more regularly including LGBTQ and other diverse characters in their film universes. Marvel's *Eternals* and *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* included gay and lesbian characters, respectively. DC's *Birds of Prey* included lesbian and bisexual representation. Yet that progress has been completely erased in the last few years; there were no Marvel or DC films that included LGBTQ representation in 2025. Other franchises are also toning down queer representation in their newest releases. Netflix's *Fear Street* trilogy was centered on a lesbian love story in 2021, but the fourth entry, *Fear Street: Prom Queen*, does not include any queer characters. *Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy* had a smaller role for gay character Tom than his previous appearances. *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery* gave protagonist Benoit Blanc a boyfriend in a small role, yet there was no mention of Blanc's partner or identity in the newest *Knives Out*, *Wake Up Dead Man*. These tentpole films and franchises will see audiences dwindle if they don't continue to include meaningful LGBTQ characters in future iterations.





Naomi Ackie and Eva Victor as Lydie and Agnes in *Sorry, Baby*

A24

A24

GLAAD's *Where We Are in Film* tracked films distributed theatrically under A24 in the 2025 calendar year.

17 Total films released in 2025 under studio and official imprints

5 Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

29% Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

3 Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Summary

A24 is one of the most inclusive studios tracked in this year's study at 29% of total annual films including LGBTQ characters. However, it is worth noting that this does mark a nearly halved slate compared to the studio's 2024 releases, of which 56% included LGBTQ characters.

Critical darling *Sorry, Baby* showed exceptional LGBTQ representation, creating realistic and nuanced queer characters who were defined by more than their queerness. Romance films *Materialists* and *Eternity*, though both focusing on heterosexual love triangles, included queer people living within the world of these films, as did the Italian drama *Parthenope*. The majority of LGBTQ people shown in A24's slate were queer women and nonbinary people, showcasing stories that are often excluded or sidelined.

History

Founded in 2012 by arthouse film executives Daniel Katz, David Fenkel, and John Hodges, A24 Films began distributing original films in 2013. Previous LGBTQ-inclusive films from A24 include GLAAD Media Award winners *Moonlight* (2016) and *The Inspection* (2022), and GLAAD Media Award nominees *Lady Bird* (2017), *Bodies Bodies Bodies* and *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022), and *Love Lies Bleeding*, *Problemista* and *Queer* (2025).

Sorry, Baby

Widest Release: 338 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

Bittersweet dramedy *Sorry, Baby* follows protagonist Agnes before and after the “bad thing” in her life, a sexual assault by a professor during grad school. Much of Agnes’ arc is shown in relation to her best friend Lydie. Through the non-linear storytelling, we find out that Lydie grew into her queerness in grad school and now lives in New York with her partner Fran, who is nonbinary, and by the end of the film, they have a child together (the titular “baby” of the film). Additionally, during a part of the film when Agnes is called to serve jury duty, she fills out a form for her gender and purposefully creates a new bubble in between male and female; she then fills in both this new middle bubble and the female bubble. Though Agnes’ gender identity is not the sole focus of the movie, this scene casually illustrates her own relationship with gender. Overall the film focuses on deep relationships and the ability of kindness to overcome trauma. Exploring these themes with queer characters made the message of community even more relevant and connected with audiences across the board.



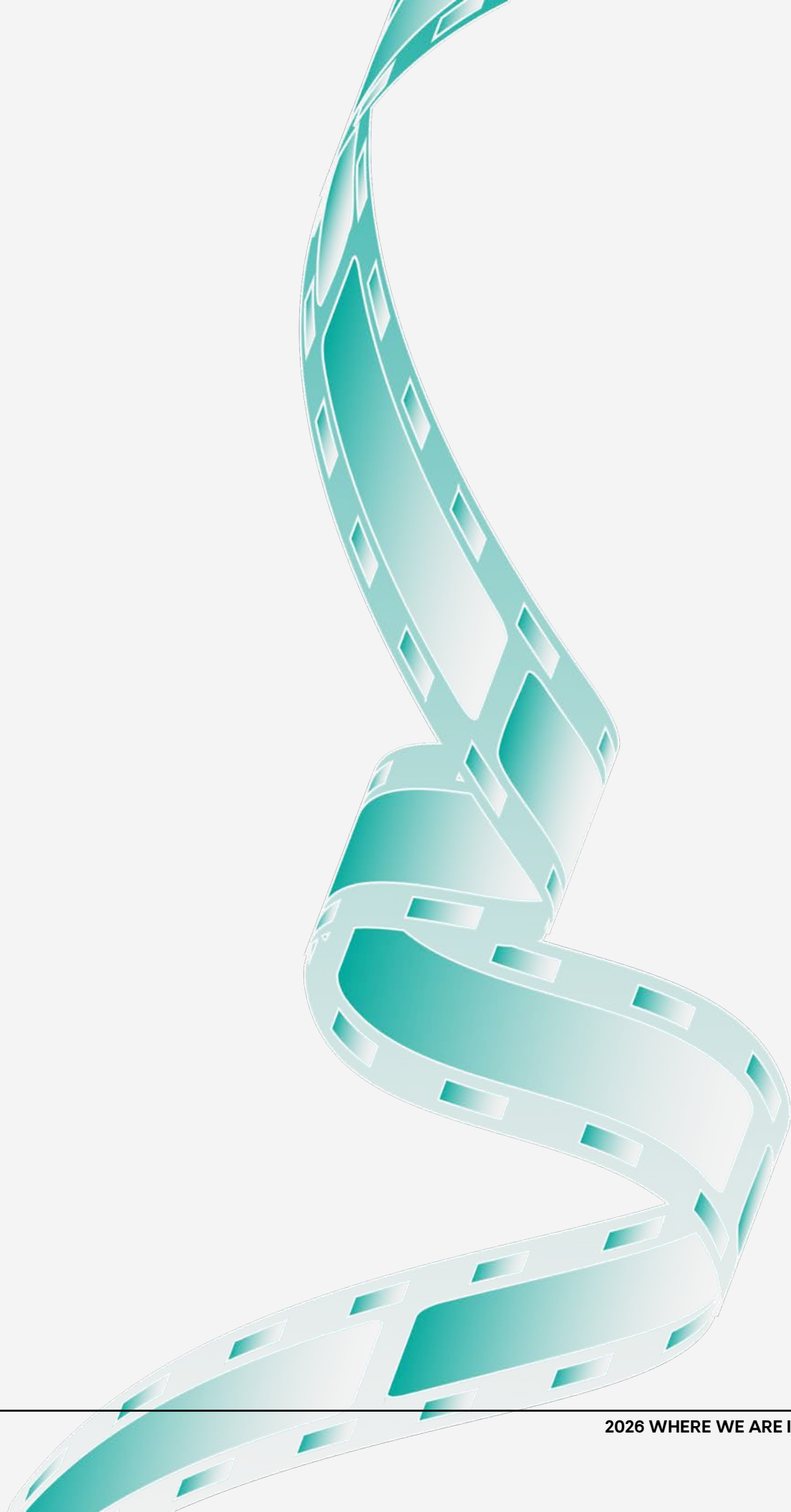
Sorry, Baby was the only A24 film to feature an LGBTQ lead or significant supporting character. *Eternity* follows a woman who must choose which man to spend the afterlife with. At one point in the film, she talks through this decision with her neighbor Karen, a woman who discovered she was a lesbian later in life but didn't live as her true self until the afterlife. The film also has a casual reference to one of the romantic leads briefly sleeping with other men until he realized it wasn't for him. The protagonist of the romcom *Materialists* is a matchmaker; in a montage of difficult clients to match, one of the highlighted clients is a Black lesbian republican.

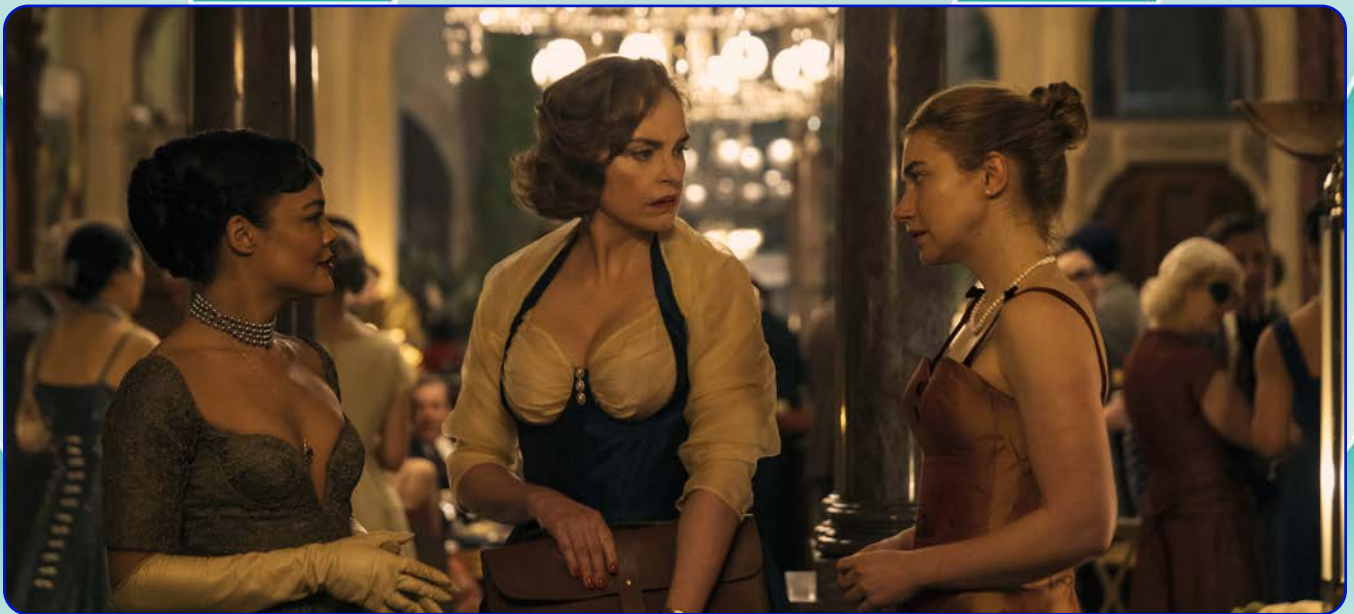
Parthenope, an Italian drama set in the 70s and 80s, also featured casual inclusion. The titular Parthenope is a young woman who has many suitors. One of the only men not in love with her is author John Cheever, who admits he only is attracted to men. During a brief scene, Parthenope's female drama teacher also kisses her, but it is unclear if Parthenope returns the affection, as she is otherwise only seen with men. The dark comedy *Eddington* which is set during the height of the COVID pandemic included a brief moment of blink-and-you'll miss it inclusion, where someone during a virtual city council meeting had they/them pronouns listed on their Zoom screen.

Opportunities Ahead:

A24 has released several inclusive films already this year. In 2026, A24 released *The Moment*, a satire from Charli XCX about the *brat* era, which included her gay stylist and cameos from out including like Julia Fox and Bowen Yang playing versions of themselves; and the gay kink romance *Pillion* which followed the developing relationship between a shy man and the leader of a biker gang who takes him on as a submissive. One of the biggest purchases out of Cannes Film Festival was A24 acquiring the rights to *Club Kid*, from out filmmaker Jordan Firstman, starring himself as a club promoter who finds out he has a son.

A24 will be releasing *Elden Ring* in 2028, a film adaptation of the fantasy game of the same title. The source material contains storylines with queer implications and an optional same-gender romance, though given the problematic plots of many characters, we would prefer to see this film include queer characters in other storylines.





Tessa Thompson, Nina Hoss and Imogen Poots as Hedda, Eileen and Thea in *Hedda*

Amazon MGM Studios

Amazon MGM Studios

GLAAD's *Where We Are in Film* tracked films distributed theatrically and via streaming platform Prime Video under Amazon MGM Studios in the 2025 calendar year.

24 Total films released in 2025 under studio and official imprints

6 Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

25% Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

5 Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Summary

Since adding streaming films to our methodology three years ago, Amazon MGM Studios has consistently put out a number of films with LGBTQ characters in leading roles, and it is exciting to see that this year is no exception.

Amazon MGM studios released two inclusive theatrical releases, and four of the direct to Prime Video titles were inclusive films. Both theatrically released films included lead LGBTQ characters. *Hedda* took a classic 19th century play about a straight white woman and turned it into the story of a bisexual Black woman. *After the Hunt* also featured a queer Black protagonist who had a nonbinary partner. The comedies *Oh. What. Fun.* and *Maintenance Required* featured queer supporting characters in their casts. The crime-comedy *Another Simple Favor* and thriller *Play Dirty* also included LGBTQ characters, but both fell into unfortunate tropes.

History

Amazon MGM Studios (previously Amazon Studios) and the streaming service Prime Video began distributing original content in 2013, and introduced original films in 2018. Amazon finalized its acquisition of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) in 2022 and in 2023, they formed the entity Amazon MGM Studios Distribution, shuttering United Artists Releasing (UAR). In 2024, Amazon MGM Studios joined the Motion Picture Association (MPA), becoming its seventh member.

Amazon and UAR's previous LGBTQ-inclusive films consist of GLAAD Media Award winners *Transparent: Musical Finale* (2019), *Uncle Frank* (2020), *Anything's Possible* (2022), *Red, White, and Royal Blue*, *Bottoms* (2023), and *My Old Ass* (2024); GLAAD Media Award nominees *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women* and *God's Own Country* (2017) *Brittany Runs a Marathon* (2019), *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* (2021), *My Policeman* (2022), *American Fiction* and *Cassandra* (2023).

After the Hunt

Widest Release: 1,238 Theaters

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

After the Hunt is a drama about the aftermath of an allegation of sexual assault on a college campus, following how that affects the relationship between grad student Maggie and her mentor Alma. Maggie's partner is a law student named Alex, who is nonbinary. Others at the university, including Alma, often misgender Alex and don't take their identity seriously. At one point, Alma accuses Maggie of dating Alex just to make herself seem more interesting. Though it is noteworthy for a film with a cast of this caliber to have a queer lead and a nonbinary love interest, the film itself often gets bogged down in its commentary on identity politics rather than fleshing out these characters to create a compelling story.

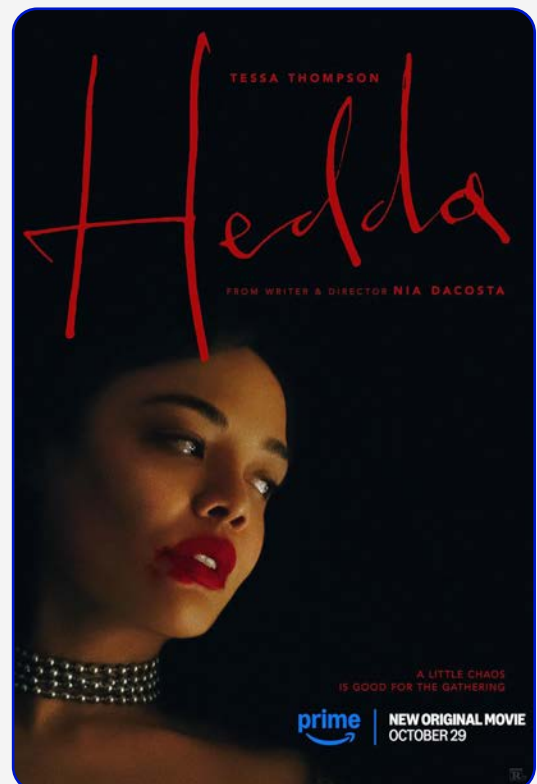


Hedda

Widest Release: 10 theaters

Vito Russo Test: **Pass**

This adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* reimagines Hedda as a bisexual woman, and her ex-lover Eilert Lovborg as a woman, Eileen Lovborg. In the film, Hedda is newly married to a man, but still invites Eileen to a massive party she is hosting. Eileen shows up, as well as her new lover Thea. The film proceeds to follow the drama of the party, with Hedda sabotaging Eileen and Thea's relationship, as well as burning Eileen's manuscript. While the play ends with Lovborg and Hedda both dead, the film has a more ambiguous ending. Eileen survives her gunshot wound and Hedda appears as though she may attempt to drown herself, but the last shot is on Hedda's face, smiling. The film's creative team was wise to reimagine this ending to avoid killing the queer women when making the changes to queer the original text, a welcome step forward, and deftly balanced telling messy and flawed stories without sanitizing or flattening these complex characters.



The Christmas comedy *Oh. What. Fun.* follows a family who undervalues their matriarch and the work she does around making the holidays special. One of the family's daughters is Taylor, who brings a different girlfriend to Christmas every year. The family mocks her for being a serial monogamist, but the jokes never turn to anything about her orientation. Romantic comedy *Maintenance Required* features Jordan, a gay man who is best friends with the male romantic lead. Though Jordan is a consistent presence in the film, his character isn't defined outside of his friendship with the male lead and being gay.

The thriller *Play Dirty* features two small gay roles: Nick and Boscoe are two men tied up in the crime world; one as a club owner and one a henchman for the boss. However, both men die fairly early on in the film. The only confirmation of the relationship is Nick mourning Boscoe's death and then almost immediately after, he dies himself. *Another Simple Favor* also fell into unfortunate tropes, with a gay man's identity only being revealed after his death. Further, and more egregiously, the final twist of the film included a reveal that the protagonist was drugged and raped by one of her sisters, an unknown and distanced triplet named Charity. Sexual assault is about power, and not identity, so we have not counted Charity in our tally. It's disheartening that this film showcases this kind of harmful content as its big act three twist.

Opportunities Ahead:

One of the most exciting upcoming films from Prime Video is the as-yet-undated *Red, White & Royal Wedding*, the sequel to the GLAAD Media Award-winning hit romcom *Red, White & Royal Blue*, which will see the return of couple Prince Henry and Alex Claremont-Diaz. The film's plot is largely still unknown, but the cast have shared that it will center around the wedding of Princess Beatrice, the younger sister of Prince Henry. The streamer is also moving into production on the series finale film for *The Summer I Turned Pretty*, a hit YA series which included bisexual and nonbinary characters, who should be included in the movie as well.

Several announced films under Amazon have not announced any public updates in recent years, we hope to see those projects still move forward. This list includes a film adaptation of the *Fun Home* Broadway musical, which was itself based on Alison Bechdel's autobiographical graphic novel; *Ex-Husbands*, a gay divorce comedy produced by and starring Billy Eichner; and *To Be Real*, a queer comedy written by Billy Porter that follows three high schoolers who decide to go to their first New York City Pride. *Crying in H Mart*, an adaptation of the memoir from bisexual Japanese Breakfast frontwoman Michelle Zauner, is said to be officially on hold with Zauner saying she remains "optimistic" about the project. Amazon also has the rights to adapt a number of novels with queer characters, including *I Am Pilgrim*, *Alice + Freda Forever*, and *I Am Not Your Mexican Daughter*.



Julianne Moore as Kate in *Echo Valley*

Apple TV

Apple TV

GLAAD's *Where We Are in Film* tracked films solely distributed by Apple TV either in theaters or directly onto their streaming platform in the 2025 calendar year.

6 Total films released in 2025 under studio and official imprints

1 Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

17% Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

1 Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Summary

For the second year running, Apple TV counted only one film in its slate with LGBTQ inclusion, but, also for the second year running, that film included a thoughtful portrayal of a queer protagonist. In 2025, Apple released *Echo Valley*, a thriller following the consequences of a lesbian widow trying to clean up her daughter's mess.

Note: Films distributed by Apple TV do not share theatrical release numbers publicly and the company declined to provide this information for this study. As such, there is no information cited in this study about the company's widest theatrical release.

History

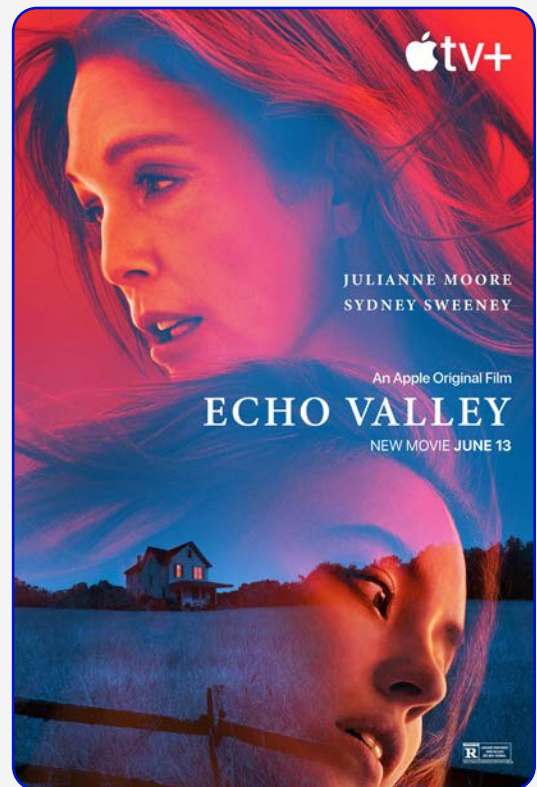
Since 2016, Apple Inc. has been producing and distributing original content. In 2019, Apple launched its streaming service Apple TV+, which offers a selection of original films and television series. In 2025, they renamed the company to Apple TV. Previous LGBTQ-inclusive releases from Apple TV include *Palmer* (2021), *Causeway* (2022), and GLAAD Media Award nominee *Fancy Dance* (2024).

Echo Valley

Widest Release: Unknown

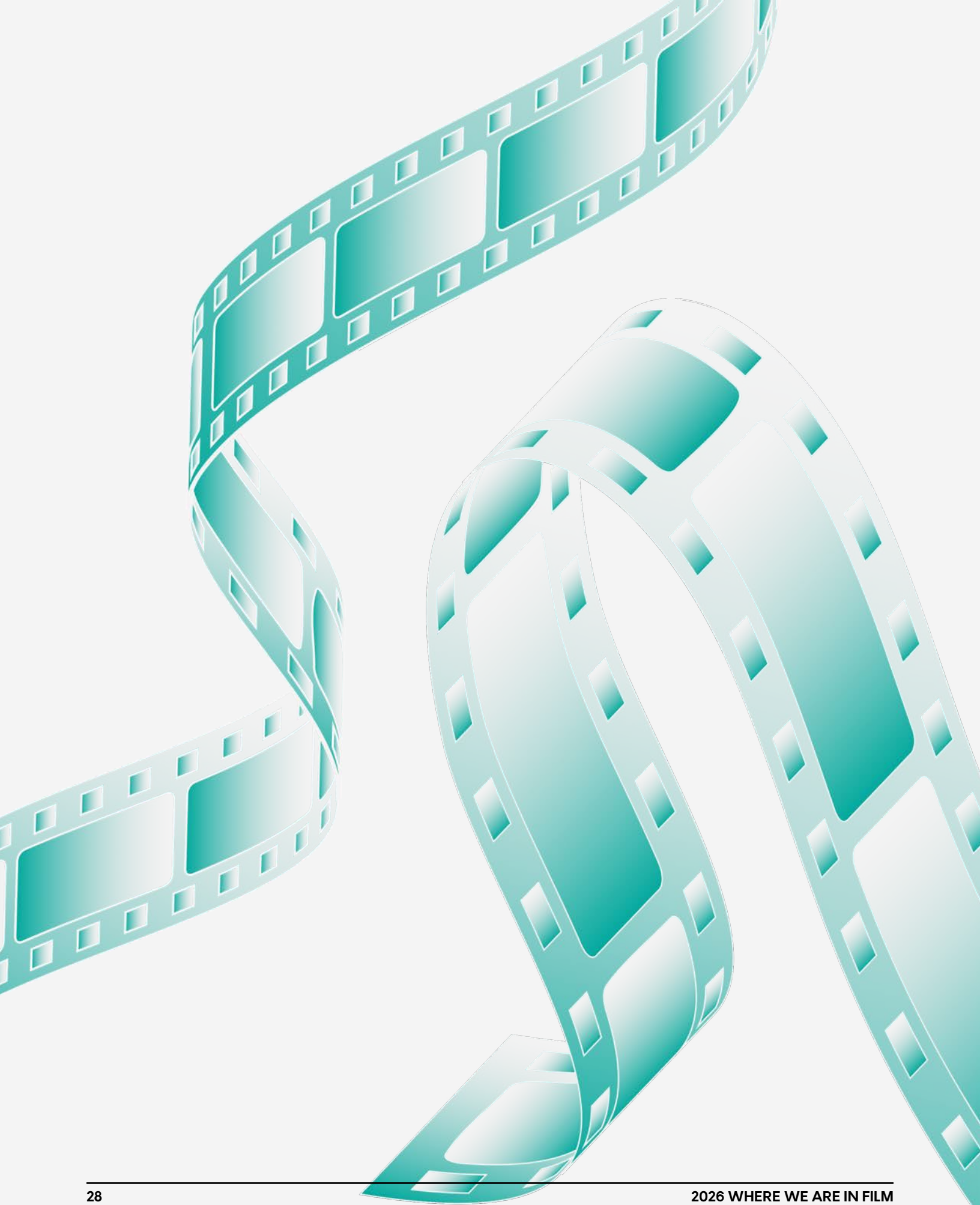
Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

This thriller follows Kate, a farmer who recently lost her wife. Near the start of the film, Kate's daughter Claire shows up seeking Kate's help for trouble she has gotten into involving drugs, her boyfriend, and a body. Kate agrees to help Claire, but this uncovers a web of lies her daughter has spun. Kate goes to her friend Leslie and her wife for help, showing that though Kate is a widower she has other lesbian friends and a community surrounding her. Though the film mostly focuses on Kate's relationship with Claire, it paints her identity as a natural lived part of who she is and establishes her moments of humanity through her grief for her wife.



Opportunities Ahead:

Apple Original Films holds the rights for an adaptation of the 2022 novel *Disorientation* which included a number of LGBTQ supporting and side characters who should make the jump from page to screen when the film moves forward. The company is also developing murder-mystery *The Wives* starring and produced by Jennifer Lawrence. Though plot details are being kept secret, there are reports that the film is inspired by the *Real Housewives* reality TV franchise, which has included a number of queer housewives as well as queer friends and family who have regularly appeared.





Corey Fogelmanis and Miles Guterrez-Riley as B and Nathan in *I Wish You All the Best*

Lionsgate

Lionsgate

GLAAD's *Where We Are in Film* tracked films distributed theatrically under Lionsgate as well as their subsidiary Grindstone Entertainment Group in the 2025 calendar year.

32 Total films released in 2025 under studio and official imprints

3 Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

9% Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

2 Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Summary

Considering its larger slate, it is disappointing that such a small number of the films released under Lionsgate were LGBTQ-inclusive. However, of the three inclusive films, all released under the Lionsgate banner, it is worth noting that two of these titles were exceptional LGBTQ-led stories.

Fairyland, the only film in this study featuring characters living with HIV, followed a father and daughter in San Francisco in the 1970s and 1980s as she grows up alongside the queer community with her gay father, who is eventually diagnosed with HIV. *I Wish You All The Best* is a coming-of-age story about a nonbinary teen as they fall in love and learn to accept themselves. Both films were nominated for GLAAD Media Awards and told exceptional stories. Several other Lionsgate films made subtextual hints or implications about characters being LGBTQ, but ultimately shied away from making those stories explicitly clear. We hope to see this change in future years.

History

Lionsgate was founded in 1997 and has since acquired Grindstone Entertainment Group, Summit Entertainment, and Starz Inc. In 2023, Lionsgate acquired Entertainment One and merged with Screaming Eagle Corp. After the deal closed in 2024, Lionsgate and Starz Entertainment have spun off into separate companies.

LGBTQ-inclusive films previously released by Lionsgate include the *The Pillow Book* (1997), *Gods and Monsters* (1998), *But I'm a Cheerleader!* and *Urbania* (2000), *Happy Endings* (2005), *Precious* (2009), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012), *American Ultra* and *Freeheld* (2015), *Bombshell* (2019), *Joy Ride*, *The Blackening* (2023), and *The Radleys* (2024).

Fairyland

Widest Release: 31 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

This coming-of-age drama follows Alysia and Steve, a father and daughter who move to San Francisco after Alysia's mother passes. In San Francisco in the 1970s and 1980s, Steve is able to live as an openly gay man. Much of the film surrounds the relationship between Alysia and Steve, as she has a less traditional family structure than her peers. Steve dates several men over the almost two decades covered in the film and is an active part of a larger queer community. As the film moves into the 1980s, Steve and others are diagnosed with HIV. The film ultimately depicts the emotional impact of the epidemic on Steve, his daughter, and their broader community, as she remains by his side through the end of his life. It is meaningful to see a portrayal of a gay father living with HIV depicted with care, complexity, and humanity, particularly given how rarely these stories appear in mainstream film.



I Wish You All The Best

Widest Release: 40 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

Based on the novel of the same name, *I Wish You All The Best* follows B, a nonbinary teenager who is kicked out of their house after coming out to their parents, and goes to live with their sister and her husband. Over the course of the film, B finds their first love in bisexual classmate Nathan, and finds community at their school, work, and at home with their sister. The film demonstrates that when queer youth are supported, they are better equipped to make it through the hard times. Having a support system and a queer community is essential; the film shows the joy that B discovers once they are accepted as their true self.



The rest of Lionsgate's slate paled in comparison to these two titles. The other inclusive film, *Everything's Going to Be Great*, included Les, a teen boy who is part of a family who own the local stage theater. As with his father, Les is obsessed with theater and often hallucinates film and stage stars who appear to give him advice, including queer figures Noel Coward and Tallulah Bankhead. While Les is briefly bullied for being perceived as gay because of his interest in theater and his fashion and he does repeatedly assert that vaginas are gross, the film never actually confirms that Les is gay or shows any kind of real romantic interest for him at all. This also happened in other titles, where a character is bullied for being perceived as gay but the film never gives any kind of confirmation of their identity. *Freaky Tales* included a group of punk teens being called homophobic slurs by neo-nazis, but did not have openly queer punks. In dystopian film *The Long Walk*, one of the main characters, Pete, is teased by the other boys about doing lewd acts with other men. Though Pete confirms he does not have a girlfriend, there is never any explicit confirmation of his sexual orientation. None of these characters were counted in GLAAD's tally. It is concerning that these films are seemingly more comfortable portraying homophobic violence than including actual LGBTQ characters and stories.

Opportunities Ahead:

This fall, Lionsgate will release the highly anticipated *The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping* adaptation. The source novel includes queer character Clerk Carmine, one of the adoptive fathers to lead character Haymitch's love interest, Lenore Dove. This character's story, and Haymitch's support when he learns of Clerk Carmine's long-term relationship with another man, should be included in the film.

There are a number of potential Lionsgate titles that have seemingly stalled with no news in recent years. The company has announced a film adaptation of *The Guncle*, based on a novel that follows a formerly famous gay man who takes in his niece and nephew after his sister's death. A director was attached to the project in 2022. Lionsgate is also reportedly developing a sequel to the 2022 hit horror-comedy *The Blackening*, written by and starring out talent Dewayne Perkins. *Ride*, a biopic of queer astronaut Sally Ride, was previously in development with Lionsgate. As two other projects about Ride's life and career are coming to audiences – the 2025 documentary *Sally* and the upcoming limited series *The Challenger* with Kristen Stewart portraying Ride – it's clear that there is interest in her story, we hope to see this reinvigorate the *Ride* biopic.



Michelle Dockery, Arty Froushan, and Dominic West as Mary Crawley, Noel Coward, and Guy Dexter
in *Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale*

NBCUniversal

NBCUniversal

GLAAD's *Where We Are in Film* tracked films distributed theatrically under Universal Pictures and Focus Features, as well as original films released on streamer Peacock in the 2025 calendar year.

26 Total films released in 2025 under studio and official imprints

4 Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

15% Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

2 Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Summary

NBCUniversal released four LGBTQ-inclusive films in 2025. Two of them, *Downtown Abbey: The Grand Finale* and *Honey Don't*, were from Focus Features and featured significant LGBTQ characters who matter to the plot. The other two, Universal Pictures' sequel *Wicked: For Good* and Peacock's *Bridget Jones: Mad About The Boy* still featured queer characters from their original properties, but both these sequels counted less LGBTQ content than prior franchise films.

History

Universal Pictures was founded in 1912, making it one of the oldest film studios in the country. Universal merged with NBC in 2004, and was purchased by Comcast in 2011. In 2016, NBCUniversal acquired Dreamworks Animation, and in 2020, they launched their streaming service Peacock.

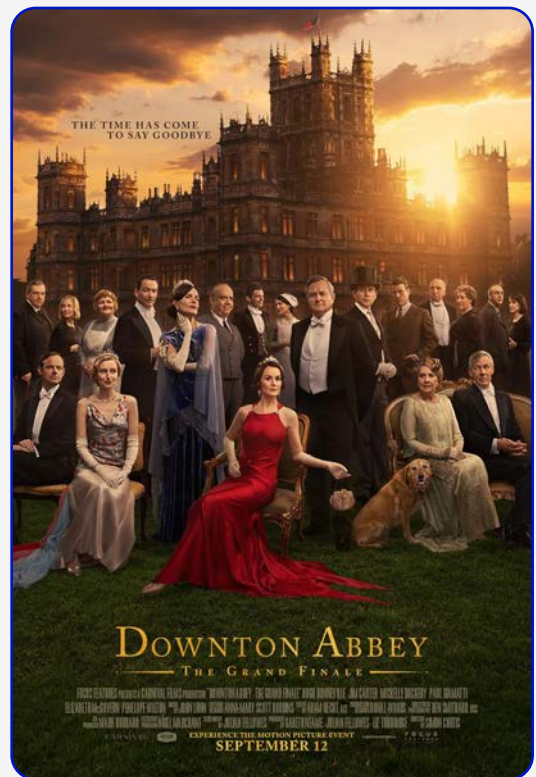
Universal did not release any LGBTQ-inclusive films until the 1990s. Highlights since that time include *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar* (1995), *Mulholland Drive* (2001), *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World* (2010), GLAAD Media Award winner *Bros* (2022), and GLAAD Media Award nominees *Blockers* (2018), *Nope* (2022) and *Knock at the Cabin* (2023), which was adapted from a GLAAD List script. Focus Features has released several notable LGBTQ-inclusive films, such as GLAAD Media Award winners *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), *Milk* (2008), *The Kids Are Alright* (2010), *Pariah* (2011), *Boy Erased* (2018); GLAAD Media Award nominees *Kajillionaire* (2020), *Tár*, *Spoiler Alert* (2022), *Drive-Away Dolls* and *Housekeeping for Beginners* (2024).

Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale

Widest Release: 3,711 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

The third and final installment of the *Downton Abbey* films continued to expand its representation from the first two films. Gay butler Thomas Barrow was introduced in the *Downton Abbey* series, and had a significant role in the first film, and a larger role still in the second film, with the introduction of Guy Dexter, an actor who became Barrow's lover. In this third film, Barrow and Dexter are living in London and working with famous queer playwright Noel Coward. Coward gets invited to Downton to help save Lady Mary's reputation amongst high society, and Dexter and Barrow join him. None of the drama in the film comes from the identity of these three men, they are simply there to save the Crawley family's reputation. The inclusion of multiple gay men who are allowed to be happy and joyful in a period piece is an exciting development and a high note to end the series on.



Honey Don't!

Widest Release: 1,338 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

This is the second in a trilogy of lesbian b-movies from filmmakers Ethan Coen and Tricia Cooke. The film follows the titular Honey, a private investigator who is looking into the homicide of a woman. Honey is a lesbian and develops a sexual relationship with police officer MG. Honey and MG are sleeping together for the majority of the film, until Honey's niece goes missing. Honey suspects it is her abusive boyfriend and seeks MG's help to find her niece. However, Honey ultimately learns that MG is the one holding her niece hostage and the murderer in her case. MG's motive is that she holds a grudge against the women who find themselves in abusive relationships, with either an institution or a man. This twist presented a lesbian character as a killer who had a gendered philosophy which blamed abuse on women. While the film did feature a number of lesbian characters, this framing around the villain felt like an odd and unwelcome direction to take this film.

Honey Don't also features a supporting gay character who hires Honey to investigate his boyfriend cheating on him. The boyfriend is revealed to have been cheating and he dies shortly thereafter.



Both of the other inclusive Universal films were sequels in existing franchises. *Wicked: For Good*, the follow-up to 2024's musical adaptation of *Wicked*, briefly included Pfannee, the gay character introduced in the first film. His role was greatly reduced in the second film and no further LGBTQ characters were introduced. *Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy* is the fourth film in the *Jones* series. Once again, Bridget's friend Tom is featured, but due to the size of the ensemble cast, Tom has very little to do. While it is welcome that these films included the previously introduced gay characters, it would have been nice to see larger roles for them or new LGBTQ characters introduced.

Opportunities Ahead:

In June of 2026, Focus Features released Hayley Kiyoko's *Girls Like Girls*. The film is an adaptation of a book of the same name, a continuation of the story from the 2015 music video. The film follows Coley, a teenage girl coping with the loss of her mother and struggles to connect with her father at the same time as she begins to develop feelings for her friend, Sonya.

Early in 2026, NBCUniversal executives confirmed in press that *Mamma Mia 3* is officially in development with all three father figures expected to return. Gay character Harry has yet to have a love interest in the film series; this presumably final movie should pay off that development and give him a partner and relationship on par with those of the other dads in the film series.

Universal Pictures is partnering with Mattel for a theatrical live-action *Monster High* film. The larger franchise in both TV and film has included Frankie Stein as a central character, a nonbinary teenager who is the child of Frankenstein's monster – they should be included in this newest entry to the franchise universe. NBCUniversal holds the rights for *All That Heaven Allows*, a biopic about beloved actor Rock Hudson who contracted HIV and then had to deal with the fallout of that in his life and career. At a time when stories about people living with HIV remain limited in mainstream film, this project has the opportunity to help reduce stigma and broaden public understanding through thoughtful, multidimensional storytelling. Another adaptation, *Darius the Great is Not Okay*, has not had any publicly announced news in several years. The novel and its sequel center around the life of Iranian-American teenager Darius and his relationship with his family, growing up, and getting his first boyfriend. Universal is also developing a film in the *Archie* comics universe which should then include queer character Kevin Keller.



Luca Marinelli as Nicky and Marwan Kenzari as Joe in *The Old Guard 2*.

Netflix

Netflix

GLAAD's *Where We Are in Film* tracked films solely distributed by Netflix in theaters or released directly onto their streaming platform in the 2025 calendar year.

36 Total films released in 2025 under studio and official imprints

9 Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

25% Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

9 Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Summary

This year's lineup of Netflix films included several titles with casual LGBTQ inclusion. Gay immortal lovers Nicky and Joe returned in *The Old Guard 2*, one of the titular Nonnas in *Nonnas* was a lesbian, and a nonbinary intersex dog was introduced in *Fixed*, though the handling of that storyline left much to be desired. In romance films *Champagne Problems*, *My Oxford Year*, *The Life List* and *A Merry Little Ex-Mas*, LGBTQ characters supported the protagonists and were significant to the narrative. However, there were no films in this genre that had LGBTQ leads nor were any queer love stories front and center. The one LGBTQ lead character counted was Benoit Blanc in *Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery*, and that was solely due to his sexual orientation being confirmed in a previous film in the series as this one excluded his personal life entirely. Overall, Netflix released several films with significant supporting roles for LGBTQ characters, but there was a noticeable lack of LGBTQ characters leading their own stories.

Note: Films distributed by Netflix do not share their theatrical release numbers publicly and the company declined to provide this information for this study. As such, there is no information cited in this study about their widest theatrical release.

History

In 2007, Netflix launched its streaming platform after nearly a decade of its DVD-by-mail rental service. Netflix has distributed original films since the release of *Beasts of No Nation* in 2015. As of 2022, half of the total film library available in the U.S. are Netflix original titles. The Netflix DVD service was officially shuttered in 2023.

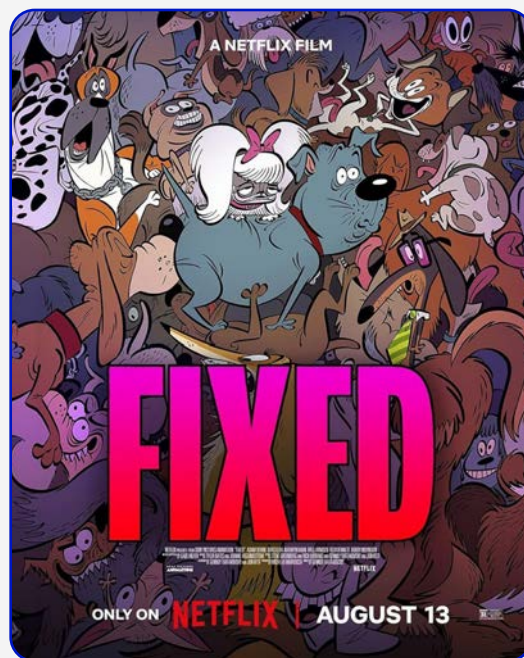
Standout inclusive titles from Netflix include GLAAD Media Award nominees and recipients *The Boys in the Band*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Half of It*, *The Old Guard*, *Alice Júnior* (2020), *Tick, Tick... Boom!*, *The Mitchells Vs. The Machines*, *Single All the Way*, *The Fear Street Trilogy* (2021), *Do Revenge*, and *Wendell & Wild* (2022), *Nuovo Olimpo*, *Nyad*, *Rustin*, *Nimona* (2023), and *Good Grief* (2024).

Fixed

Widest Release: Unknown

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

Fixed is an adult comedy, which follows a dog, Bull, and his dog friends on a sexually charged adventure in the hours before Bull is to be neutered. This leads the characters to “The Humphouse,” an equivalent to a strip club where the dogs meet the club bouncer, Frankie. Lucky, a friend of Bull’s, hits it off with Frankie and the two hook up. Lucky then brags to his friends about Frankie, specifically focusing on the character’s having multiple sets of genitals, and referring to Frankie with they/them pronouns. It is commendable that this raucous comedy included a nonbinary and intersex character (voiced by nonbinary and intersex actor River Gallo), but it is unfortunate that the character was crudely reduced down to their genitalia. There is so little representation of intersex people in media, and it’s profoundly disappointing that this film leans into a factually inaccurate trope – there are many ways to have an intersex body, but the way it is portrayed in this film is not one of them.



The Old Guard 2

Straight to Streaming Release

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

The sequel to 2020’s *The Old Guard* continues to follow the same group of immortals from the original film. This includes Joe and Nicky, two men who have been lovers for centuries and continue to be together in the sequel. Though there is a point of tension between the two when Joe is discovered to be lying about secretly still meeting up with disgraced immortal Booker, they resolve this issue and clearly still love one another. Though Joe and Nicky had slightly less screentime than in the original film, it is still beyond necessary to see casual queer inclusion in big budget superhero films like this. Further, their relationship spanning across history shows audiences that LGBTQ people have always and will always exist.



There was a plethora of casual inclusion in Netflix's films this year. For the most part, though these characters were in supporting roles to straight protagonists, they also had their own plots and agency in the story. In *Champagne Problems*, as the two leads are fighting over who inherits a champagne business, the gay character Roberto is the one who ultimately seals the deal. In *My Oxford Year* and *The Life List*, queer characters Charlie and Nell respectively discover and grow to love themselves over the course of the films. *A Merry Little Ex-Mas* included the gay fathers-in-law to the protagonist and in *Nonnas*, which follows a restaurant with a team of older Italian women chefs, the character Teresa reveals she left a convent because she fell in love with another woman.

All of these characters are interesting in their own right. However, especially on a streaming platform which produces so many romantic films, it is a glaring omission that not a single film included a central LGBTQ romance. Further, the only film that counted an LGBTQ lead character was counted primarily on a technicality: *Wake Up Dead Man*. The previous film, *Glass Onion*, included a short scene revealing that Benoit Blanc had a male partner, but there was no mention of him or anything about Benoit's life in this newest film. It is disappointing to see another Netflix series, *Fear Street*, essentially erase its queen inclusion. The original *Fear Street* trilogy featured lesbian lead characters and a queer love story that spanned over centuries, whereas 2025's *Fear Street: Prom Queen* did not include any explicit LGBTQ characters. It's worth noting that the previous three *Fear Street* films were from a different director - who also co-wrote all three - than the newest title, an example of how inclusion is still too often only happening when an individual creative prioritizes diverse storytelling.

Opportunities Ahead:

In July of 2026, Netflix will premiere *Heartstopper Forever*, the film finale to the hit queer TV series *Heartstopper*. The film will pick up after the third season finale, and continue to follow queer couple Charlie and Nick and the lives of their friend group, which includes several LGBTQ characters, as they grow up and move on from high school. Netflix is set to release the relationship comedy *The Fifth Wheel* later in 2026; the film follows four high school friends attempting to reconnect as adults and is written by couple Paula Pell and Janine Brito and starring out actor Fortune Feimster this year.

At Cannes Film Festival, Netflix acquired *La Bola Negra*, an epic film from queer directors Los Javis, which spans the lives of three different gay men through the decades all the way back to 1932. Netflix also has the rights to *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, an adaptation of the bestselling novel, which follows the life and loves of a famous bisexual woman. The most recent update on the film is that actor and filmmaker Anna Kendrick is set to direct.



Katy O'Brian, Glen Powell, and Martin Herlihy as Jenni Laughlin, Ben Richards, and Tim Jansky, *The Running Man*

Paramount Skydance

Paramount Skydance

GLAAD's *Where We Are in Film* tracked films distributed theatrically under Paramount Pictures as well as original films released on streamer Paramount+ in the 2025 calendar year.

11 Total films released in 2025 under studio and official imprints

1 Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

9% Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

1 Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Summary

Unfortunately, only one film in this distributors' annual slate included LGBTQ content, Paramount Pictures' *The Running Man*. It was a welcome update to see a high-octane action film include a lesbian character, especially as this was an update from source material of a male character. However, the character's ultimate death – falling into a decades long trope known as Bury Your Gays – was an example of the type of considerations that need to be made when swapping a character for one of a minority background. Though this particular film was one where the majority of supporting characters die, it is still something to be aware of. Not all aspects of a story will be appropriate or have the same impact as when the character is a white man.

It is disappointing that there was no further representation in Paramount Skydance's slate, particularly in some of the places that audiences would likely expect stories like the *Star Trek* franchise which has become more inclusive in both film and TV in recent years.

History

Paramount Pictures was originally founded as the The Famous Players Film Company in 1912, before merging with Lasky Company and Paramount to officially form Paramount Pictures in 1916. Paramount Pictures was acquired by The Viacom Network in 1994, which then re-merged with CBS in 2019 to become Paramount Global in 2022. In 2025, Paramount Global merged with Skydance Media to become The Paramount Skydance Corporation. There is currently an ongoing proposed deal for Paramount Skydance to purchase the competing megastudio, Warner Bros. Discovery.

Paramount's first LGBTQ-inclusive releases came in the mid-nineties with *Home for the Holidays*, *Clueless*, *The Brady Bunch Movie* (1995), *Brain Candy* (1996), *Kiss Me Guido*, *In and Out* (1997), *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and *Election* (1999), *The Next Best Thing* (2000), and *The Hours* (2002). Paramount's more recent LGBTQ-inclusive films encompass GLAAD Media Award nominees *Star Trek: Beyond* (2016), *Rocketman* (2019), *Scream*, *Three Months*, *Monster High: The Movie* (2022) and *Mean Girls* (2024).

The Running Man

Widest Release: 3,534 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

The Running Man, based on the Stephen King novel of the same name, follows Ben, who enters a competition television series where he has to survive as the entire country tries to kill him. There are two other contestants who enter the competition at the same time as Ben; one of them is Jenni Laughlin. Laughlin was originally a man in both the source book and the 80's film, but in this version, she is a woman who is very clearly attracted to other women, seen leaving the audition with her arm around another woman and partying in a strip club when she's on the show. Unfortunately, as happens to nearly all of the competitors on *The Running Man*, Laughlin is killed by spectators. It was notable that her inclusion was a new representation from the source material, but it would have been exciting to have a queer character who had a larger presence in the narrative.

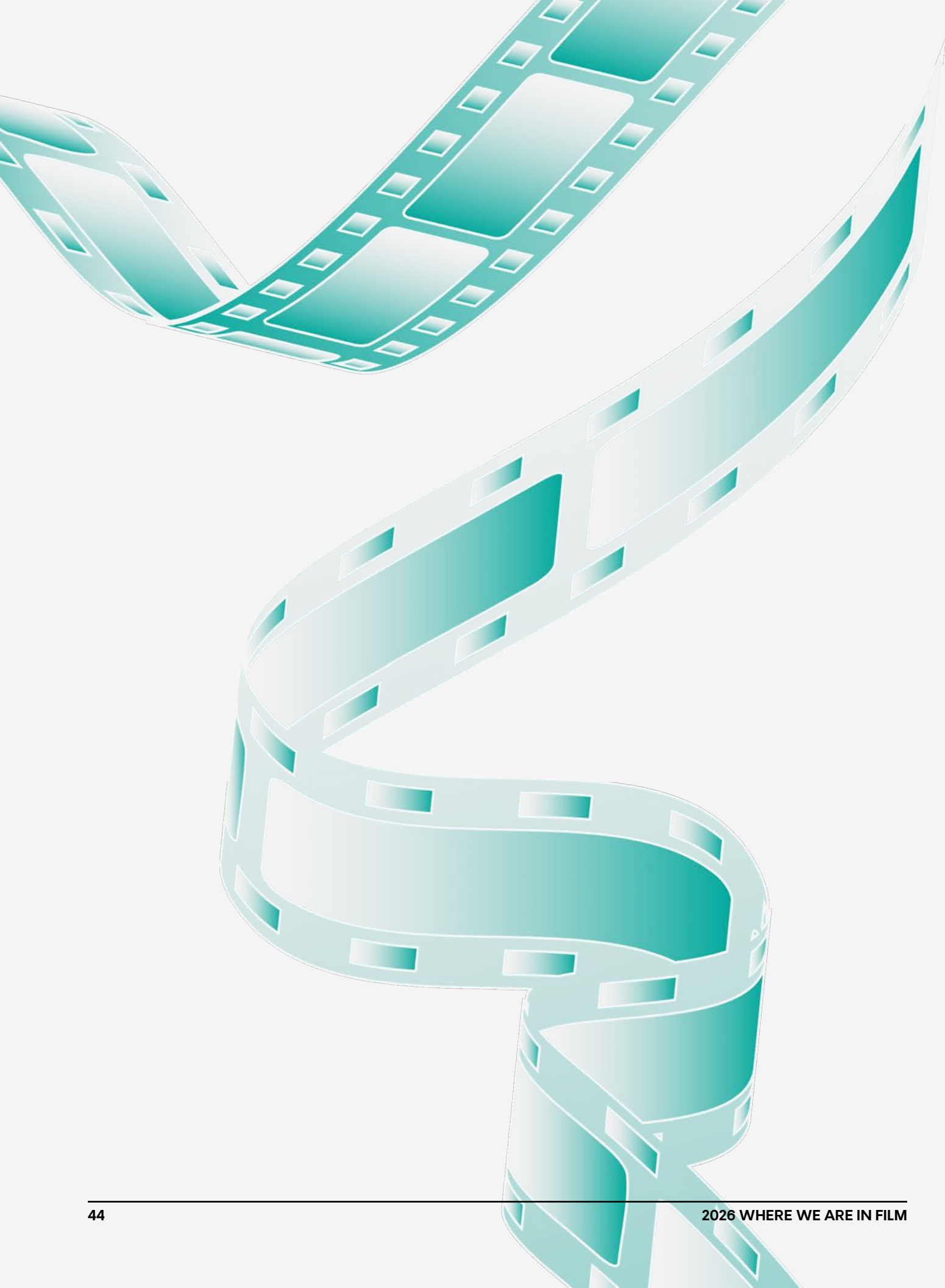


Opportunities Ahead:

In early 2026, Paramount released *Scream 7*, the next film in the ongoing hit horror series which continued to feature queer character Mindy Meeks-Martin. Development is already underway on *Scream 8* which will presumably see Mindy's return and which has the potential to see her life and relationships further built out.

Later in 2026, Paramount will release the movie *Street Fighter* based on the game series of the same name. The franchise has a problematic history with offensive LGBTQ plots; those characters are best left on the cutting room floor of this adaptation. We encourage Paramount to introduce new queer characters to this franchise. LGBTQ gamers are 1.4x more likely to drive sales of games than non-LGBTQ gamers, this support would translate to tickets at the box office.

The status of the announced future slate of Paramount is largely unclear as things will likely change significantly if the company's acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery clears regulatory hearings and becomes final. Paramount had previously announced a plan for huge expansion in their theatrical output in addition to any formerly WB-owned productions that would now be put into the studio's calendar. Some of the inclusive titles which have long been listed as in development at Paramount, but for which no recent news has been announced, include *Quincenearex*, about a genderfluid teenager planning their Quince, *Rosaline Palmer Takes the Cake* which features a bisexual protagonist, and adaptations of *Nevermoor*, *Harbinger*, and *Tracy Flick Can't Win*. Paramount has dated their adaptation of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* for February 2027. The novel contains a gay married couple that is essential to the ensemble.





Chase Sui Wonders as Ava in *I Know What You did Last Summer*

Sony

Sony

GLAAD's *Where We Are in Film* tracked films distributed theatrically under Sony Pictures and Sony Pictures Classics in the 2025 calendar year.

- 29** Total films released in 2025 under studio and official imprints
 - 7** Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
 - 24%** Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
 - 6** Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test
-

Summary

After the findings of last year, GLAAD made note of the lack of LGBTQ lead roles across Sony's slate. This year, Sony rose to that challenge. Of the seven inclusive films Sony released, five of them featured LGBTQ leads - the most of any distributor this year. These include the *I Know What You Did Last Summer* reboot from Sony Pictures and *Blue Moon*, *Eleanor the Great*, *On Swift Horses*, and *The Choral* from Sony Pictures Classics. These films span a wide variety of genres and it is exciting to see LGBTQ people step into the leading roles in these films. The other two Sony Pictures films which include LGBTQ characters were horror films *Until Dawn* and *Heart Eyes*, which included a significant supporting bisexual character and background queer characters respectively. This inclusion in the horror genre is welcome, especially as all characters survived. Sony has provided a diverse slate of LGBTQ characters in film, a welcome presence in a year where so many studios chose to pull back on inclusion.

History

What is now known as Sony Pictures was first founded as Cohn-Brant-Cohn (CBC) Film Sales in 1918, then was renamed Columbia Pictures in 1924. In the late 1980s, the studio launched TriStar pictures, which was its own entity until Sony purchased it in 1989. Sony Pictures launched indie label Sony Pictures Classics in 1992. In 2021, Sony acquired anime streaming service Crunchyroll from WarnerMedia and AT&T. Currently, Sony Pictures Entertainment distributes films from its many imprints including Columbia Pictures, TriStar Pictures, Sony Pictures Classics, Sony Pictures Animation, Screen Gems, Affirm Films and Crunchyroll.

LGBTQ-inclusive highlights from Sony include GLAAD Media Award nominees *A Man Called Otto* (2022), *Shortcomings* and *Anyone But You* (2023), as well as *Our Ladies* (2021), *Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance with Somebody* (2022), and *Dumb Money* (2023). Sony Pictures Classics has released high-profile LGBTQ-inclusive films, notably the documentary *The Celluloid Closet* (1995), based on GLAAD co-founder Vito Russo's book of the same name, which explores the rich history of LGBTQ representation in cinema. Other inclusive films from Sony Pictures Classics include GLAAD Media Award winners *Call Me By Your Name*, *A Fantastic Woman* (2017), and *Parallel Mothers* (2021); as well as GLAAD Media Award nominees *Pain and Glory* (2019) and *I Carry You With Me* (2021).

Blue Moon

Widest Release: 689 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

This drama follows lyricist Lorenz Hart at Sardi's in 1943 on the opening night of *Oklahoma!*, which was written by Hart's former writing partner Richard Rodgers and his new lyricist Oscar Hammerstein. In the film, Hart is bitter about the success of *Oklahoma!* and finds himself drinking heavily, talking to anyone who will listen about his new ideas. Hart speaks of Elizabeth, a young woman he is seemingly infatuated with and inspired by, who eventually joins Hart at the bar. When speaking with her and others, he casually mentions his sexuality and calls himself an "equal opportunist" when it comes to men and women, though many of the characters seem to assume he is gay. In another scene he openly flirts with a young male delivery person and invites him back to his apartment for a late-night drink. In real life, Hart was heavily rumored to be gay and deeply closeted. Given the ambiguity of the portrayal onscreen and the fact that only rumors exist about his real life, GLAAD counted the character as queer without a more specific label.



I Know What You Did Last Summer

Widest Release: 3,206 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

The fourth film in the *I Know What You Did Last Summer* series follows a new group of young adults who get mysterious threatening notes after accidentally murdering someone. One of the new protagonists is Ava, who leaves town after the accident and returns for her friend's engagement party. On the way home, Ava sleeps with another woman, Tyler, in the airport bathroom. It turns out that Tyler is a podcaster investigating the murders. Ava also almost sleeps with Milo, her ex-boyfriend, but calls it off due to their past. Ava's bisexuality is presented casually and naturally, and is just another facet of her identity. Ava is also one of the two members of the core group to survive the killings, and Tyler is among those victims killed. Casual queer representation, especially when depicting Gen Z in films, accurately reflects the world around us, and it was exciting to see this franchise choose to include a prominent bisexual character.

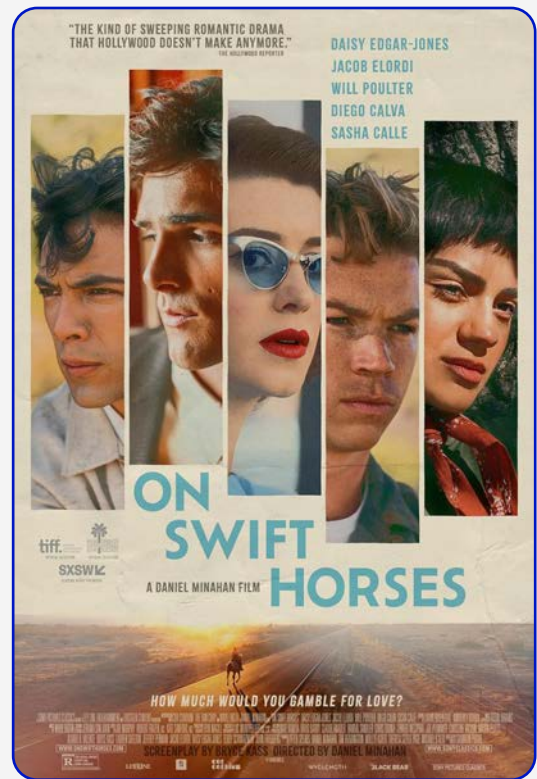


On Swift Horses

Widest Release: 755 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

Based on the novel of the same name, *On Swift Horses* takes place in the 1950s and follows newlywed couple Muriel and Lee, and both of their relationships with Lee's brother, Julius. Over the course of the film, it's revealed that both Muriel and Julius are gay. Julius goes to Nevada and falls in love with Henry, another man working at the same casino as him. Muriel and Lee buy property in San Diego, and Muriel shares a kiss with another woman, Gail, at the horse races, who shows her a hotel in San Diego where the queer community gathers. After the hotel gets raided, Muriel starts up an affair with her neighbor, Sandra. Though Julius and Muriel have separate journeys with their queerness, there is a moment of connection at the end of the film at the queer hotel bar, where they both spot hundreds of notes from queer lovers to one another through the years. This story shows that LGBTQ people have always been in history and the powerful connection of that shared bond.



These were not the only Sony films to have LGBTQ leads. Sony Pictures Classics' (SPC) *Eleanor the Great* follows the friendship between the titular Eleanor and a student journalist, Nina, who is doing a project on Eleanor. Nina very casually mentions that she is a lesbian and Eleanor takes that in stride. This is the only time her sexual orientation is mentioned. In SPC's *The Choral*, a small British town is shaken up when a new choir director Dr. Guthrie moves to town from Germany. There are many rumors about Guthrie, including that he is gay. Guthrie bonds with Robert, the pianist, and it is revealed that Robert is also gay, as a girl bemoans the fact that he doesn't like women. Both characters' sexuality are subtly revealed and not the major focus of either character's plot or conflict.

Until Dawn followed six teens who keep having to repeat the night in a haunted bed and breakfast, where they all die and then wake up again at the start of the night. One of the group, Nina, is currently dating a man named Abe but her friends casually mention her ex, Julia. Nina's casual bisexuality is welcome in the genre, especially since Nina makes it to the end of the film alive. *Heart Eyes* follows a killer who only murders couples, and the newest two people targeted by the killer. While the majority of characters and couples killed by *Heart Eyes* are straight, there are a few short scenes of queer couples on dates that *Heart Eyes* tries (and fails) to attack.

Opportunities Ahead:

The third and final film in the *Spider-Verse* trilogy, *Beyond the Spider-Verse*, will be released in 2027. In the series' previous film (2023's *Across the Spider-Verse*), Gwen had a "Protect Trans Kids" sticker in her bedroom. This film has an opportunity to expand this message of support for trans youth to include actual trans characters.

Filming is set to begin this year for the adaptation of the video game *Horizon Zero Dawn* which included a queer character, Aloy, in the source game. Sony has a number of other undated adaptations that have long been in development which should feature LGBTQ characters based on source material including *The Wedding People*, *The Hazel Wood*, *The Broken Earth* Trilogy, and *The Diabolic*, as well as additional video game adaptations, *Metal Gear Solid* and *Ghosts of Tsushima*, which have an opportunity to improve upon existing LGBTQ characters in the source material.



Misato Morita and Brendan Fraser as Yoshie and Phillip, *Rental Family*

The Walt Disney Company

The Walt Disney Company

GLAAD tracked films distributed theatrically under Walt Disney Studios labels as well as original films released on streamers Disney+ and Hulu in the 2025 calendar year.

30 Total films released in 2025 under studio and official imprints

5 Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

17% Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

3 Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Summary

Of the five LGBTQ-inclusive films, three were theatrically released through the Searchlight branch of Walt Disney Studios and two were direct to streaming on Hulu.

Several films on Walt Disney's slate demonstrated casual inclusion of LGBTQ people within the worlds of their respective films. Searchlight dramedies *Is This Thing On?* and *Rental Family* both featured their protagonists interacting with LGBTQ people in the modern world, while the period drama *The Testament of Ann Lee* included a gay man. Hulu's *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* had two bisexual women leads, but unfortunately fell into outdated tropes for bisexual people.

History

Brothers Walt Disney and Roy Oliver Disney founded the animation studio in 1923, which adopted its current name in 1986. Today, The Walt Disney Company distributes and markets the majority of content under the Walt Disney Studios labels including Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Animation Studios, Pixar, LucasFilm, Marvel Studios, Searchlight Pictures and 20th Century. In 2019, Disney completed acquisition of many assets of 21st Century Fox including 20th Century Fox's film and TV studios. The same year, the company launched its streaming service Disney+ and acquired a majority stake in Hulu, officially claiming overall ownership in 2023.

Notable LGBTQ-inclusive releases from the now shuttered Disney-owned Touchstone Pictures include *Ed Wood* (1994), *Sweet Home Alabama* (2002), *Under the Tuscan Sun* (2003), and *Kinky Boots* (2006). 20th Century's previous LGBTQ-inclusive releases include *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), *Making Love* (1982), *Silkwood* (1983), *The Object of My Affection* (1998), *The Family Stone* (2005) and GLAAD Media Award winner *Love, Simon* (2018). Searchlight Pictures' LGBTQ-inclusive highlights include GLAAD Media Award nominees *Kinsey* (2004), *Battle of the Sexes* (2017), *The Favourite* and *Can You Ever Forgive Me* (2018).

Highlights from the merged company include GLAAD Media Award winners *Happiest Season* (2020), *Eternals* (2021) and *Fire Island* (2022), GLAAD Media Award nominees *Plan B* (2021), *Crush*, *Better Nate Than Ever*, *Trevor: The Musical*, *Zombies 3* and *Strange World* (2022), and *All of Us Strangers* and *Theater Camp* (2023).

Rental Family

Widest Release: 1,925 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

Rental Family follows Phillip, an American actor living in Japan, who gets an unconventional job at the Rental Family company where he is hired to pose as a loved one for clients. While he is uncertain of this job, Phillip's first role is to pretend to marry Yoshie, a woman who wants to have a traditional wedding to a man for her parents' benefit. Phillip nearly doesn't go through with the wedding, but when he finally does, he sees that he was "marrying" Yoshie so she could be with her real wife, another woman. Seeing how he helped this lesbian couple get to live their lives more freely inspires Phillip to continue with this job and help others. Though Yoshie and her wife are relatively smaller roles, their presence is the motivating reason that then drives the full plot of this movie, and also paints the world of *Rental Family* as one with queer people who deserve happiness.



Other casual inclusion in Walt Disney's slate included the Searchlight dramedy *Is This Thing On?*, which follows a man who finds joy in stand-up comedy. In addition to including a gay couple in his friend group, the film also showcases both real and fictional LGBTQ comedians. In the period drama *The Testament of Ann Lee*, protagonist Ann's brother William is gay, and is seen in bed with another man. That relationship is short lived, however, as Ann starts a religious order based on celibacy and William joins. In the biopic *Swiped*, following the founding of Tinder and Bumble, a gay couple who met on Tinder are shown briefly. Though none of these films included leading roles, their inclusion shows that LGBTQ people exist in the words of the past, present, and future.

The one film that did include LGBTQ protagonists was a remake of the horror film *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*. It is the story of a nanny, Polly, who has intentions to ruin the life of Caitlin, the mom of the family she's working for. Many aspects of the plot were changed for this reboot, including that both women are bisexual. While this could have been an improvement on the text, Polly uses her sexuality as a way to manipulate and gaslight Caitlin, in a way that causes Caitlin to be doubtful of her own daughter's coming out. There is a history of bisexual characters using their sexual orientation in these transactional or manipulative ways to get or maintain power and access, and sadly, this film fell into that trope.

Opportunities Ahead:

Disney's indie label Searchlight is developing a comedy with out *Las Culturistas* hosts Matt Rogers and Bowen Yang co-writing and starring. The film is inspired by a multi-part podcast series detailing the story of two Americans who try to get into Berghain, the most exclusive nightclub in the world, which is a queer-centric space. Searchlight is also developing *Again Again Again* with Joel Kim Booster, which will follow Gus, the best man at his best friend Maggie's wedding, as the whole event is thrown into chaos when Gus' ex-boyfriend Hal shows up; and an adaptation of the documentary *Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood* which tells the story of Scotty Bowers, who ran a gas station whose employees doubled as sex workers, often for closeted Hollywood Elite.

Marvel is set to release a third *Black Panther* film in 2028. The second film in the series affirmed the romantic relationship between Dora Milaje warriors and royal guards Ayo and Aneka. We hope to see these characters return and see more development of their relationship. The MCU's super team-up films, *Avengers: Doomsday* and *Avengers: Secret War*, will see the reappearance of a number of established superheroes from Marvel films and series and integrate the X-Men into the MCU. The announced cast includes Loki, whose bisexuality was confirmed in his solo TV series, but these films have the opportunity to pull in a number of other LGBTQ Marvel heroes including Wiccan (star of TV hit *Agatha All Along*), Phastos, Ayo and Aneka, and more.

A new *Beauty and the Beast* spinoff film *Gaston* is currently in development. The 2017 film made it explicit that Gaston's sidekick LeFou was queer and that he had developed feelings for Gaston, before ultimately realizing that he deserved better. Though it is unclear how closely this film will follow the established universe, the film nevertheless has the opportunity to better develop LeFou as a character rather than a caricature.

Hocus Pocus 3 is in development at Disney. The franchise's second film included a short cameo from drag queens; this newest film should consider introducing other original LGBTQ characters as queer fans have long been a leading driver in the cult hit's ongoing popularity. A sequel to *Romy and Michele's High School Reunion* was reported as in development at 20th Century Studios. The first film has become a cult classic and many fans have read coded references into several of the characters. It would be a welcome update for any present day sequel to include explicitly LGBTQ characters. Finally, there are a number of literary adaptations announced as in the works across Disney, many of which include LGBTQ characters. These include *Beach Read*, *Seconds*, *Tender is the Night*, *The Tourist*, *A Manual for Cleaning Women*, and *Whalefall*.



Nik Dodani and Brandon Flynn as Rohan and Josh in *The Parenting*

Warner Bros. Discovery

Warner Bros. Discovery

GLAAD's *Where We Are in Film* tracked films distributed theatrically under Warner Bros. as well as original films released on streamer HBO Max in the 2025 calendar year.

14 Total films released in 2025 under studio and official imprints

5 Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

36% Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

4 Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Summary

Warner Bros. Discovery counts the highest percentage of inclusive films of all distributors this year at 36% of the studio's total annual releases. Four theatrical Warner Bros. movies and one HBO Max straight-to-streaming film included LGBTQ characters. HBO Max's *The Parenting*, a horror-comedy that follows a gay couple who accidentally set up their meet-the-parents weekend at a haunted Airbnb, was the only film with lead queer characters. The distributor did also include queer characters in the horror films *Companion* and *Weapons*, though both titles did have some problematic issues. There was also bisexual inclusion in *Mickey 17* and a brief appearance of a nonbinary character in the Oscar-winning drama *One Battle After Another*.

History

In 1910, Warner Features company was founded by four Polish immigrant brothers. In 1923 Warner Bros Pictures Inc. was officially established as a film production studio. In 2020, Warner Bros. launched their streaming service HBO Max and in 2022 the company merged with Discovery Inc. to form Warner Bros. Discovery. Currently, Warner Bros. Discovery is the subject of an acquisition bid by Paramount Skydance. That deal is still moving through regulatory processes and has not yet closed.

Warner Bros. introduced one of film's earliest recognizable gay-coded characters in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). Other inclusive films released throughout the decades include *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975), *The Color Purple* (1985), *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1997), *Alexander* (2004), *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, *V For Vendetta* (2005), *J. Edgar* (2011), *Tammy* (2014), *Storks* (2016), *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018), *Birds of Prey* (2020), *In the Heights* (2021) and *The Color Purple* (2023). HBO Max's previous LGBTQ-inclusive original films include GLAAD Media Award nominees *La layenda nedra*, *Unpregnant* (2020), *Am I Ok?*, and *Sweethearts* (2024).

Companion

Widest Release: 3,285 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

Companion follows couple Josh and Iris as they meet up with Josh's friends in a vacation home. However, it's revealed that Iris is a "Companion," a robot designed to be the perfect girlfriend. Also at the cabin are Eli and Patrick, a couple that look perfect from the outside, but it is revealed Patrick is also a Companion robot. Patrick chooses to remain with Eli as he does genuinely love him, even mourning Eli after Iris murders him. Josh reprograms Patrick to be in love with him, but ultimately, Patrick remembers his love for Eli and tasers himself to thwart Josh's plans. Eli and Patrick were the secondary leads of the film and it is great to see this type of film about relationships including queer people (and robots). We do wish that either characters would have survived the film.



The Parenting

HBO Max

Straight to Streaming Release

Widest Release: 3,285 Theatres

Vito Russo Test: **PASS**

The Parenting follows couple Rohan and Josh as they plan a weekend in the country to introduce their parents to one another. Rohan also has plans to propose to Josh on the vacation. However, the house they have chosen for a getaway is haunted and the group accidentally summons a demon, which leads to moments of confusion and fright, including the possession of Rohan's dad. Throughout the film, there are misunderstandings and moments of tension, but it's clear that both Josh and Rohan are supported by their parents and the only trace of homophobia in the film comes from the demon as opposed to any of the parents toward their gay sons. The film showed a queer couple anchoring this movie and let them be the central couple and driving impetus of the narrative, all while being comedic forces.



Some of Warner Bros. most successful and acclaimed films this year included queer characters. The horror film *Weapons* revolves around the mysterious disappearance of a class of children. The principal of the school is Marcus, who halfway through the film is revealed to have a husband, Terry. Unfortunately Marcus gets cursed by a witch and, under this possession, violently bludgeons Terry to death before he is killed himself. While it was good to see gay people in this world so casually, it is unfortunate that both their deaths were so brutal and that Terry's death was caused by his partner. Best Picture winner *One Battle After Another* included Bobo, a school friend of the protagonist Willa, who was nonbinary. Bobo is a very minor character in the film, but unfortunately plays an important part in reporting Willa to the authorities. They are the only of Willa's friends to betray her. *Mickey 17* included queer characters on its space colonization mission. One of the soldiers on the spacecraft is Kai, who is introduced with a female partner, who then quickly dies. After that Kai makes advances toward Mickey. Including a casually bisexual character in a futuristic film is a step in the right direction, but it would have been even better to see more of Kai's romance with her girlfriend just as much as audiences saw the main straight romance.

Opportunities Ahead:

Warner Bros.' recently acquired adaptation rights to *The Land of Stories* franchise by out actor and writer Chris Colfer. The six-novel series included LGBTQ characters as part of the world, with the prequel series *A Tale of Magic...* including more central queer characters. As these books make the jump to screen, we hope to see those characters included in meaningful ways.

The DC Universe film *The Authority*, which likely would have included Apollo and Midnighter, two of the first openly gay characters in DC Comics, was recently announced to be officially paused with James Gunn saying "Maybe some day. Not soon." about the status of the film. There has been no updates shared on *Constantine 2*, another announced DCU film, about bisexual occult detective and antihero John Constantine.

While many projects have been previously announced as in development at Warner Bros. Discovery, the status of those titles is largely unknown as the company is in the midst of being potentially acquired by Paramount Skydance, though this deal still faces regulatory approval hearings which could stop or change the terms of the deal.

A number of LGBTQ-inclusive titles have long been in development at Warner Bros. but have not publicly announced news in recent years. These include *Camp*, which takes place at a queer summer camp; an untitled biopic on gay Vietnam veteran Oliver Sipple; *We Were There, Too*, which focuses on marginalized communities in Chicago; *The Hunger*, a remake of a vampire film from the 80s; and *When Katie Met Cassidy*, a queer romance about a woman discovering her sexuality. As this deal moves forward, we hope to see these titles either move forward into active production or for the rights to be released and allow another company to acquire and ultimately distribute these titles to audiences worldwide.

Documentary Film

While GLAAD only counts scripted films and characters in its official tally, that does not diminish the power of LGBTQ representation in unscripted and documentary storytelling. Several of the major distributors tracked in this study released LGBTQ-inclusive documentaries in 2025.



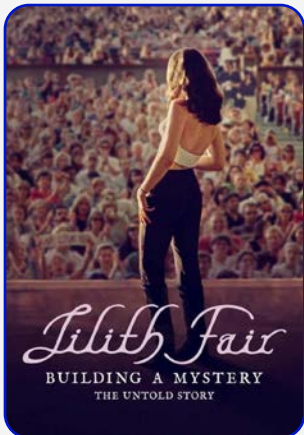
Apple TV

Apple TV previously released inclusive documentaries *The Velvet Underground* (2021), which explores the titular band and features queer artist Andy Warhol, and *Girls State* (2024), which included a queer woman at the political event. In 2025, Apple TV released *Come See Me in the Good Light*, an Academy Award-nominated and GLAAD Media Award-winning documentary, which follows prolific queer poet Andrea Gibson as they recount their life up to and including their diagnosis of terminal cancer. The film also speaks to Gibson's impact on the LGBTQ community and their relationship with their wife Megan Falley.



Netflix

Netflix has consistently been a premiere documentary distributor since its inception. Highlights of LGBTQ-inclusive documentaries on Netflix include *Tig* (2015), *Disclosure*, *Mucho Mucho Amor: The Legend of Walter Mercado* (2020), *Pray Away* (2021), *Stay on Board: The Leo Baker Story* (2022), *Will & Harper*, and *Outstanding: A Comedy Revolution* (2024). In 2025, Netflix released *I'm Your Venus*, a documentary about the chosen and biological family of ballroom legend Venus Extravaganza, and their work to reopen her murder case and solve the mystery of her death. There was also LGBTQ inclusion in *Twister: Caught in the Storm* and *The New Yorker at 100*.



The Walt Disney Company

Walt Disney and its subsidiaries have released LGBTQ-inclusive documentaries including GLAAD Media Award winner *Changing the Game* (2021), *Queenmaker: The Making of an It Girl* (2023), *Elton John: Never Too Late* and *Child Star* (2024). In 2025, Hulu released *Lilith Fair: Building A Mystery*, which documented the famous music festival over the years and included exclusive interviews with queer musicians Brandi Carlile and The Indigo Girls.

Additional Distributors

While this study only tracks films from 10 major distributors, independent distribution companies are putting out incredible LGBTQ-inclusive films that are breaking boundaries and deserve recognition. The following are some highlights of inclusive films from other distributors.



Black Bear Pictures

Black Bear Pictures has served as a production company since 2011 when it was founded by Teddy Schwartzman. They have production credits on several LGBTQ-inclusive films including *The Imitation Game* (2014), *I Carry You With Me* (2020), *Nyad* (2023), and more. Black Bear began distributing films in 2025 with *Christy*, a GLAAD Media Award-nominated drama about the real life of Christy Salters, a professional boxer, who was a lesbian and ended up leaving her abusive husband and marrying another female wrestler.



Bleecker Street

Bleecker Street films was founded in 2014 by former Focus Features co-CEO Andrew Karpen. Highlights LGBTQ-inclusive releases from Bleecker include *Disobedience*, *Collette*, and *McQueen* (2018), and *Supernova*, *The World To Come* and *Together Together* (2021). In 2025, Bleecker released GLAAD Media Award-nominated film *The Wedding Banquet*, a remake of the 1993 Ang Lee film of the same name. As in the original, this film follows two queer couples, where they stage a plan to have one man marry one woman to appease their families and to pay for a fertility treatment.



Blue Harbor Entertainment

Blue Harbor Entertainment was founded by Amanda Sherwin, Mike Messia, and Seth Needle in 2023 to facilitate theatrical, digital, and streaming releases of new films. In 2025, Blue Harbor released GLAAD Media Award-winning film *A Nice Indian Boy*, a romantic comedy about a gay Indian man introducing his white boyfriend to his family and the drama and hijinx of planning their wedding.



Fox Entertainment Studios

Fox Entertainment Studios was created in 2019 from assets not acquired by the Walt Disney Company when it purchased 21st Century Fox. Though Fox Entertainment primarily distributes television, they additionally distribute independent films. In 2025, Fox Entertainment partnered with event management platform GATHR to release *Ponyboy*, a GLAAD Media Award-nominated film about a nonbinary, intersex person over the course of 24 hours as they journey through New Jersey to escape from the mob.



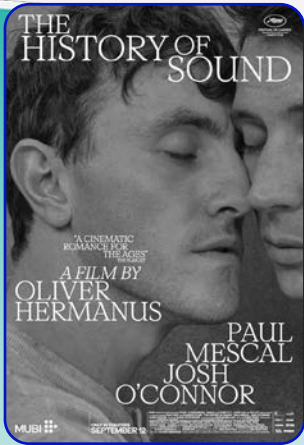
Independent Film Company

The Independent Film Company (formerly IFC Films) was founded in 2000 and has been producing and distributing independent cinema ever since. LGBTQ-inclusive highlights of IFC's catalogue include *Weekend* (2011), *Jenny's Wedding* (2015), *A Kid Like Jake* (2018), *Vita and Virginia* (2019), *Summerland* (2020), *The Novice*, *The Nowhere Inn*, *Moffie* (2021), and *Monica* (2023). In 2025 IFC distributed the zombie horror-comedy *Queens of the Dead* where performers and producers of a drag show have to avoid the zombie apocalypse, and *Hot Milk*, following a young queer woman who goes to the coast of Spain with her ill mother.



Magnolia Pictures

Magnolia Pictures was founded in 2001 and focuses on independent, documentary, and international films. It is a subsidiary of 2929 Entertainment. Highlights of Magnolia's LGBTQ-inclusive releases include GLAAD Media Award nominated and winning films such as *Tangerine* (2015), *The Handmaiden* (2016), *Swan Song* (2021), *Anais in Love* (2022), *Blue Jean*, *Kokomo City*, and *Little Richard: I Am Everything* (2023). In 2025, Magnolia released *Plainclothes*, the GLAAD Media Award-winning film that followed a police officer tasked with targeting gay men, only to have his own affair with another man that opens up his world.



Mubi

Mubi is a global streaming service as well as a theatrical distributor. It was founded in 2007, and expanded its distribution to the United States in 2016. Past LGBTQ-inclusive releases from Mubi include *Passages*, *The Five Devils* and *Rotting in the Sun* (2023), *Crossing* and *The Last Year of Darkness* (2024). In 2025, Mubi released *The History of Sound*, a GLAAD Media Award-nominated romantic drama that follows an early 20th century love affair between two men as they record and archive folk music together. Mubi also released *Mother Father Sister Brother*, a film composed of vignettes of family members – including a pair of twins, one of whom is a trans woman.



RLJE Films

Founded in 1981 as Image Entertainment, RLJE films focuses on horror and thriller independent releases. It has been a subsidiary for AMC since 2018. Previous LGBTQ-inclusive films from RLJE include *All Cheerleaders Die* (2013) and *It's a Wonderful Knife* (2023). In 2025, they released the GLAAD Media Award nominee *Clown in a Cornfield*, which followed a group of teens being terrorized by a secret group disguising themselves as clowns. The group included gay teens Cole and Rust who had secretly been dating and became a public couple by the end of the movie.



Roadside Attractions

Roadside Attractions was founded in 2003 as an independent distribution company. Lionsgate bought a minority stake in Roadside in 2007. Previous LGBTQ-inclusive films from Roadside include GLAAD Media Award winners and nominees *I Love You Phillip Morris* (2010), *Dear White People*, *The Skeleton Twins* (2014), *Judy* (2019), *Benediction*, *Firebird* (2022), and *Moving On* (2023). In 2025, Roadside Attractions released GLAAD Media Award-winning musical *Kiss of the Spider Woman* which follows an imprisoned gay man who makes a connection with his revolutionary cellmate and tells him the plot of his favorite movie. Roadside also released GLAAD Media Award nominated film *Twinless* which follows a support group for twins who have lost their twin, where straight man Rocky and gay man Dennis strike up an unconventional friendship.



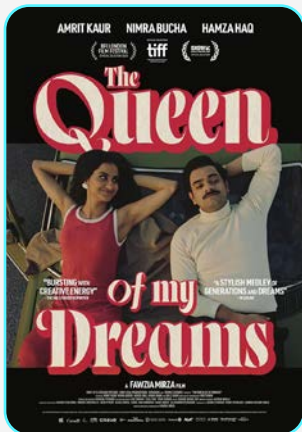
Strand Releasing

Founded in 1989, Strand Releasing set out to specifically distribute LGBTQ films. Though they have since broadened their scope, Strand continues to highlight LGBTQ stories. Previous inclusive films include *The Living End* (1992), *Yossi and Jagger* (2002), *Mala Mala* (2014), *Monsoon, Straight Up and José* (2020), *Twilight's Kiss*, *Cicada*, *The Winner*, *Minyan* (2021), *Girl Picture* (2022), *The Blue Caftan*, *Mutt* (2023), and *High Tide* (2024). In 2025, Strand released GLAAD Media Award nominee *Cactus Pears*, an Indian film that follows a man who returns to his hometown after living in the city and reconnects with his childhood best friend as their relationship turns romantic. Strand also released GLAAD Media Award nominee *Young Hearts*, a Dutch film that follows two young teen boys whose burgeoning friendship turns into young love.



Vertical Entertainment

Vertical Entertainment was founded in 2012 as a digital and theatrical distributor. Past LGBTQ-inclusive nominees include GLAAD Media Award winning film *Other People* (2016) and GLAAD Media Award nominees *The True Adventures of Wolfboy* (2020), *Breaking Fast* (2021), and *Our Son* (2023). In 2025, Vertical released GLAAD Media Award nominee *Griffin in Summer*, a coming-of-age story following young gay teen Griffin as he tries to put on a play and develops feelings for the pool boy his mom hired. Vertical also released *My Mother's Wedding*, a film that follows three sisters who return home for their mother's wedding, one of which is a Navy officer who is married to another woman.



Willa

Willa is an independent distribution company founded in 2017 by Elizabeth Woodward. In 2025, Willa teamed up with Product of Culture to release GLAAD Media Award-nominated film *The Queen of My Dreams*. The film follows a young Pakistani-Canadian lesbian who travels to Pakistan after the death of her father, who has a complicated relationship with her mother, as more is revealed of her family through flashbacks.

Methodology

In this study, GLAAD centered its research and analysis on 10 top studio distributors, including any majority owned subsidiary distribution labels and streaming services. These distributors were chosen based on a combination of theatrical box office grosses, Nielsen rankings, breadth of original programming, and cultural and media recognition factors to cover the widest swath of film programming available to and viewed by American audiences. This study examines films released in the 2025 calendar year (January 1 – December 31) in the United States that were distributed under official studio banners and imprints as reported by The Numbers, Box Office Mojo, the studios and their official channels, and other relevant entertainment reporting sources.

The 10 distributors examined are, in alphabetical order:

- **A24**
- **Amazon MGM Studios**
- **Apple TV+**
- **Lionsgate** (this includes Lionsgate and Grindstone Entertainment Group)
- **NBCUniversal** (this includes Universal Pictures, Focus Features, and Peacock)
- **Netflix**
- **Paramount Skydance** (this includes Paramount Pictures and Paramount+)
- **Sony Pictures Entertainment** (this includes Sony Pictures, Sony Pictures Classics, and Crunchyroll)
- **The Walt Disney Company** (this includes Walt Disney Studios, Disney+, and Hulu)
- **Warner Bros. Discovery** (this includes Warner Bros. and HBO Max)

GLAAD did not include any theatrical re-releases or special events such as filmed live events or TV finales in this count. Additionally, films which first premiered on a linear television channel were not counted in this tally. GLAAD did not count unscripted films in its official tally; instead, there is an editorial section highlighting these stories.

Beginning with the 2023 film study, GLAAD extended its methodology to evaluate the overall annual slate of releases, both theatrical and streaming, of these distributors.

For the purposes of this study, GLAAD included studio or label distributed films which were either released theatrically in the U.S. and those streaming originals which were ordered from the company's U.S. production wing. Films which were not released theatrically in the U.S. and were ordered, developed, and produced by international hubs operating separately from the primary studio were not included, though some of those films are available to watch on streaming services in the U.S. This type of independent content production is not currently a common practice in the majority of U.S. based studios. GLAAD included scripted feature films which had an official run time of 65 minutes or more. The total number of films that met our criteria from the above distributors in the 2025 calendar year was 225.

Each film was researched and reviewed for inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ) characters. Characters were quantified based on story elements present in the film itself (for example, explicitly stating their identity, discussing and/or showing their relationship or partner, romantic history, and/or expressing attraction, use of they/them pronouns, and more.). The total number of LGBTQ characters was recorded for each film, as well as those characters' importance in the film's narrative, race/ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The films were also reviewed for the presence of anti-LGBTQ language, jokes, and stereotypes. Such issues must be considered in context and will be highlighted in the qualitative analysis where applicable, but this language is not quantified in this study.

Each LGBTQ character was assigned a ranking to describe their importance to the film’s overall narrative. Those categories were:

- **Lead** – The film’s protagonist, an undisputed lead or co-lead.
- **Significant supporting** – A character who makes a significant contribution to the film’s story/plot and is prominently featured. They have multiple defining personality traits and/or story beats within the film.
- **Supporting** – A character who is not a significant player in the film’s overall plot, but whose contributions rise above that of a background character. They have some definable personality trait and/or story beat within the film.
- **Background** – A character who appears briefly and contributes no impact to the overall story, these may be speaking or nonspeaking characters.

Each film was assigned to one of five genre categories:

- **Animated/Family**
- **Comedy**
- **Drama**
- **Fantasy/Sci-Fi/Action**
- **Horror**

The “Family” category includes animated and children’s films rated PG and under. The category of “Fantasy/ Science Fiction/Action” includes films not rooted in reality rated PG-13 and above. In the instance of films that straddled genres, categories were determined based on the predominant genre suggested by both the film’s content and its marketing campaign.

GLAAD’s methodology is anchored in categorizing characters based solely on what is presented on screen as part of the film and/or through wide and commonly held cultural knowledge of a real-life figure. In cases where an LGBTQ actor or personality appeared as themselves and that was made clear within the film, GLAAD counted those characters in its tally. If the talent was not specifically identified as themselves in their scenes (e.g. as a cameo), GLAAD did not count those characters based on the actor’s identity. This delineation was made to create a similar comparison to how all other characters are counted, i.e. by what is made clear on screen rather than an actor’s real life identity, source material like a book, TV series, or comic, or confirmation which comes solely through outside press confirmation. If previous films in a franchise have made it explicitly clear that a character is LGBTQ, GLAAD continues to count this character in future films in the franchise.

In large crowd scenes such as a bar or party environment where the camera briefly pans over attendees, GLAAD did not count any LGBTQ characters in its tally who either did not have a speaking role in that scene and/or who did not appear in other scenes in the film. This ensures that findings were not falsely inflated by films which included scenes at LGBTQ bars or events but do not further include those characters. Where there was an explicitly LGBTQ character in a non-speaking role in less populated scenes, that character was counted.

We recognize that not all audiences will agree with some of the films determined to be LGBTQ-inclusive and vice versa.

Prior to this year’s study, each distributor received a grade based on their studio’s quantity, quality, and diversity of LGBTQ representation.

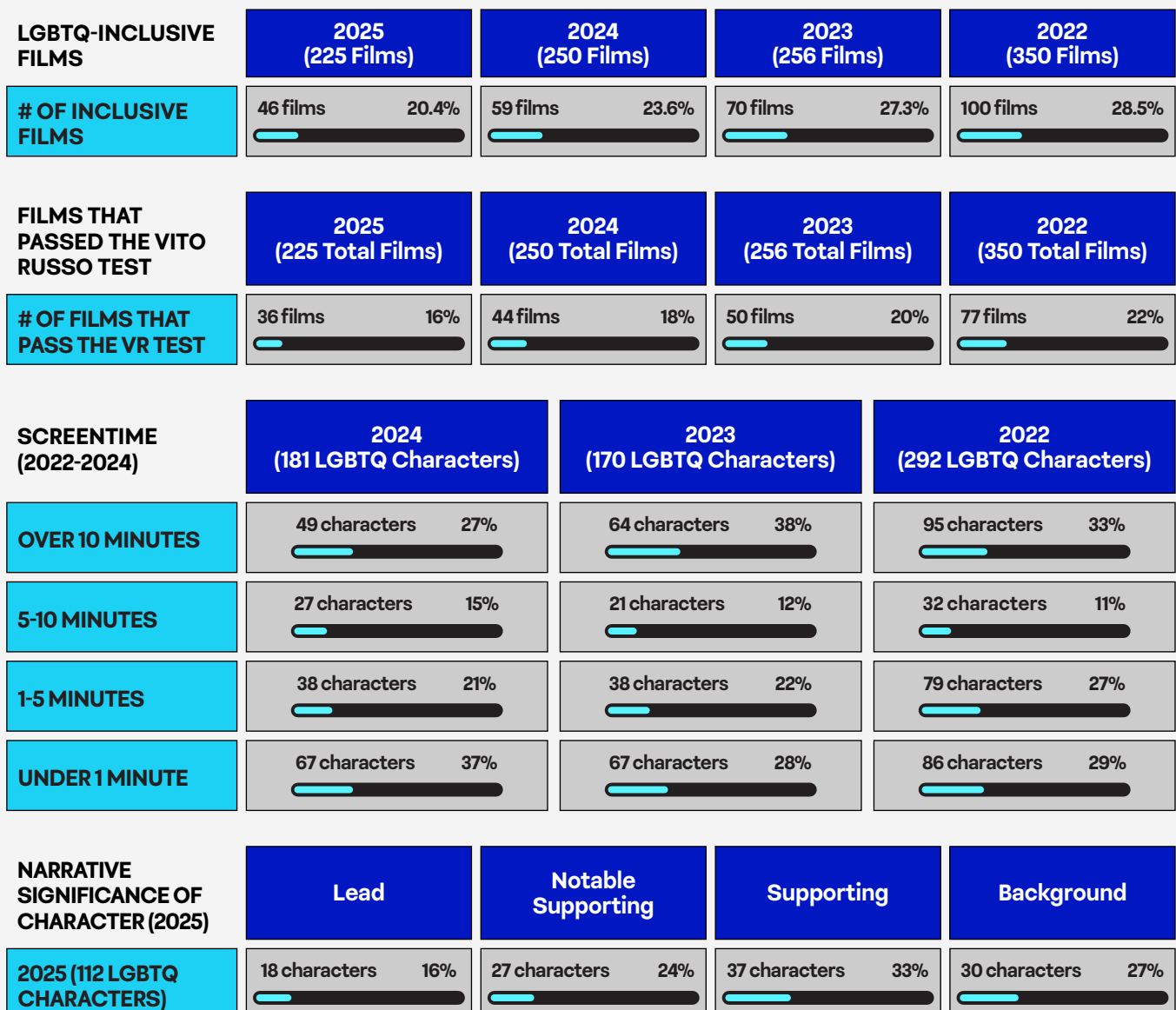
Where We Are in Film Findings, Year Over Year

In order to better analyze how LGBTQ representation in film is changing, GLAAD looks at both the current year and how these statistics have changed over time. This section

delineates the trends of LGBTQ representation in film year-over-year across a number of key demographics and categories. The below data begins in 2022, the year GLAAD expanded its methodology and began tracking streaming services and the current ten distributors.

Note: Prior to 2023, GLAAD included documentary films in its official tally. Starting in 2023, only scripted films are included in the totals.

Note: Prior to 2026, this study was called the *Studio Responsibility Index*.



LGBTQ CHARACTERS BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION	2025 (112 LGBTQ Characters)	2024 (181 LGBTQ Characters)	2023 (170 LGBTQ Characters)	2022 (292 LGBTQ Characters)
GAY MEN	57 characters 51%	79 characters 44%	82 characters 48%	148 characters 51%
LESBIAN	35 characters 31%	74 characters 41%	50 characters 29%	89 characters 30%
BISEXUAL+	11 characters 10%	19 characters 10%	26 characters 15%	23 characters 8%
QUEER	6 characters 5%	5 characters 3%	5 characters 3%	19 characters 17%
STRAIGHT	0 characters 0%	0 characters 0%	1 characters 1%	12 characters 4%
UNDEFINED	3 characters 3%	4 characters 3%	6 characters 4%	1 characters <1%

LGBTQ CHARACTERS BY GENDER	2025 (112 LGBTQ Characters)	2024 (181 LGBTQ Characters)	2023 (170 LGBTQ Characters)	2022 (292 LGBTQ Characters)
LGBTQ MEN	59 characters 53%	87 characters 48%	95 characters 56%	163 characters 56%
LGBTQ WOMEN	46 characters 41%	90 characters 50%	67 characters 39%	119 characters 41%
NONBINARY	7 characters 6%	4 characters 2%	8 characters 5%	10 characters 3%

TRANSGENDER-INCLUSIVE FILMS	2025 (225 Total Films)	2024 (250 Total Films)	2023 (256 Total Films)	2022 (350 Total Films)
# OF TRANS-INCLUSIVE FILMS	0 films 0%	2 films 1%	2 films 1%	12 films 3%

LGBTQ CHARACTERS OF COLOR	2025 (112 LGBTQ Characters)	2024 (181 LGBTQ Characters)	2023 (170 LGBTQ Characters)	2022 (292 LGBTQ Characters)
# OF TRANS-INCLUSIVE FILMS	34 characters 30%	66 characters 36%	78 characters 46%	117 characters 40%

LGBTQ CHARACTERS BY RACE/ETHNICITY	2025 (112 LGBTQ Characters)	2024 (181 LGBTQ Characters)	2023 (170 LGBTQ Characters)	2022 (292 LGBTQ Characters)
WHITE	76 characters 68% 	115 characters 64% 	88 characters 52% 	173 characters 60%
BLACK	11 characters 10% 	19 characters 17% 	29 characters 33% 	50 characters 29%
LATINE	6 characters 5% 	12 characters 7% 	14 characters 8% 	17 characters 6%
API	9 characters 8% 	18 characters 10% 	14 characters 8% 	26 characters 9%
MENA	1 character 1% 	9 characters 5% 	17 characters 10% 	19 characters 7%
INDIGENOUS	1 character 1% 	3 characters 35% 	0 characters 0% 	2 characters 1%
MULTIRACIAL	6 characters 5% 	2 character 1% 	4 character 2% 	3 characters 1%
LGBTQ CHARACTERS WITH A DISABILITY	2025 (112 LGBTQ Characters)	2024 (181 LGBTQ Characters)	2023 (170 LGBTQ Characters)	2022 (292 LGBTQ Characters)
# OF LGBTQ CHARACTERS WITH A DISABILITY	4 characters 4% 	7 characters 3% 	2 characters 1% 	11 characters 4%



Acknowledgments

About GLAAD

GLAAD is the world's largest LGBTQ media advocacy organization. GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBTQ acceptance. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love.

The GLAAD Media Institute provides training, consultation, and actionable research to develop an army of social justice ambassadors for all marginalized communities to champion acceptance and amplify media impact.

Journalists and media interested in speaking to a GLAAD spokesperson, please reach out to press@glaad.org.

Those interested in learning more about the GLAAD Media Institute and its services including consultation, research, education, media and cultural competency training and more, please visit glaad.org/institute.

Acknowledgments:

Megan Townsend

Project Lead

Senior Director, Entertainment Research & Analysis, GLAAD Media Institute

Raina Deerwater

Lead Author & Researcher

Associate Director, Entertainment Research & Analysis, GLAAD Media Institute

Elizabeth Fernández, Federico “Roho” Yñiguez

Art Direction

Federico “Roho” Yñiguez

Design

Heidi Spillum

Web Layout

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