

2022

Studio Responsibility Index

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2021 OVERALL FINDINGS, BY STUDIO

LionsgateRATING / **FAILING**

0%

8 TOTAL FILMS / 0 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

Paramount PicturesRATING / **FAILING**

0%

6 TOTAL FILMS / 0 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

Sony Pictures EntertainmentRATING / **INSUFFICIENT**

13%

15 TOTAL FILMS / 2 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

United Artists ReleasingRATING / **INSUFFICIENT**

44%

9 TOTAL FILMS / 4 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILM

Universal PicturesRATING / **INSUFFICIENT**

30%

10 TOTAL FILMS / 3 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILM

Walt Disney StudiosRATING / **INSUFFICIENT**

42%

12 TOTAL FILMS / 5 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

Warner Bros.RATING / **POOR**

12%

17 TOTAL FILMS / 2 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

From the Office of the President & CEO, Sarah Kate Ellis

GLAAD launched its first *Studio Responsibility Index* (SRI) in 2013 after seeing the progress driven by our studies and work to hold the TV industry accountable for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) storytelling.

In the past ten years, we have seen significant progress in mainstream film's inclusivity, propelled forward by the data and insights of our SRI studies and ongoing partnerships with top studios and creatives. GLAAD has worked to ensure Hollywood is creating and promoting inclusive storytelling while eliminating harmful depictions. From GLAAD's first SRI to this year's milestone tenth edition, the percentage of LGBTQ-inclusive films has grown by 50 percent or 1.5 times as GLAAD has set industry priorities and best practices.

In the decade since this report's founding, there have been a number of notable milestones for queer inclusion on the big screen. Audiences welcomed the first out gay hero to the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Phastos, and his husband in *Eternals*. The gay teen romcom *Love, Simon* was the first film of its kind to come from a major studio and was then supported by a robust national ad campaign. Queer people have been empowered to lead the jokes in raunchy comedies like *Blockers* and *Booksmart*, and LGBTQ characters are part of the world in all-ages film like *Onward* and *The Mitchells vs. The Machines*. After putting pressure on the industry in our earliest SRI's, we've seen a necessary drop in films that include gay panic, anti-LGBTQ slurs, and LGBTQ people as punchlines. Hollywood history was made when *Moonlight* became the first LGBTQ film to win the Oscar for Best Picture, and recently our own GLAAD Media Awards have expanded categories to reflect the booming growth in outstanding LGBTQ-inclusive films.

All these storytelling wins are reflective of and tied to progress made in the real world.

While it is difficult to determine the exact population of the LGBTQ community, as we are still excluded from the U.S. Census, the majority of reputable researchers and polling organizations who have found methodologies for tracking community demographics agree that the LGBTQ community is growing - quickly. In 2022, Gallup reported a record high percentage of the population are LGBTQ, including 1 in 5 Gen Z Americans (20.8 percent). That

number is roughly double the percentage of the same group from just five years ago (2017) and indicates that, as more of Gen Z reaches 18 and is included in these surveys, the percentage of LGBTQ Americans will continue to grow.

As Gen Z and Millennials now make up over half the population, and consumers have more programming options than ever, it is clear that studios, creators, and programmers need to evolve if they want to maintain their cultural relevance. They must reflect their audiences by including diverse LGBTQ stories in all genres and across all platforms.

A March 2022 poll conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of GLAAD found that a majority of American adults over 18 (64 percent) believe it is important for entertainment companies specifically to support LGBTQ equality. More than half of adults agree that their purchasing decisions (54 percent) and the entertainment they consume (56 percent) reflects their values and identity. A plurality of adults also agree that entertainment companies have a responsibility to affect positive change in acceptance of LGBTQ people through both the content they release (49 percent) and their advocacy efforts (48 percent) e.g. political donations, hiring practices, public statements, advertising and more.

The Edelman Trust Barometer found that business is the most trusted institution in public life at 61 percent, and it is clear from all social issues surveyed that people want more engagement from major companies across the board. As the LGBTQ community is currently under dangerous legislative attack, with more than 250 anti-LGBTQ bills proposed in 2022 and a number of those bills passing and being implemented in more than a dozen states across the country: it is more necessary than ever that our allies in Hollywood stand beside us, telling inclusive stories and furthering LGBTQ acceptance.

This real world damage and erosion of our rights in recent years is why GLAAD this year announced an expansion to our SRI. GLAAD now includes an evaluation of each studio and their parent company's overall annual efforts on behalf of the community and factors these findings into the studio's grades, alongside the inclusion in their film slates. These efforts can include political giving, public statements made by company leadership, actions taken

to support LGBTQ-inclusive films, and more.

We know that inclusive storytelling drives culture forward. It is crucial that these major cultural institutions are not only creating inclusive content, but also standing behind those LGBTQ stories, characters, and creative teams. Consumers are looking to the companies they choose to support to make choices which align with their values and identities. The LGBTQ community has come to expect that companies will not court LGBTQ people's attention and spending power (estimated at \$1.4 Trillion annually in 2022) while staying silent and/or financially supporting those in positions of power who are actively proposing or furthering efforts to take away our rights and erase LGBTQ people from public spaces.

As we wrap the first decade of this report's life and look to the next decade of LGBTQ representation in films, our reporting will continue to evolve as the larger entertainment industry shifts and introduces new avenues for storytelling. The GLAAD Media Institute works every day as a partner and resource to the studios, executives,

creators and actors who are creating, distributing, and marketing the next generation of iconic queer films. Ultimately, these stories are the ones that will shape the narrative of our lives and community to reach every kind of person around the world.

We know that telling LGBTQ stories is crucial for our survival. A Trevor Project study found that 89 percent of young people said that seeing LGBTQ characters in film and TV made them feel good about being LGBTQ, the most popular sentiment of those listed. Polling from Variety, GLAAD, and others continues to show that seeing LGBTQ images in media is key in growing real-life acceptance for LGBTQ people, the largest factor outside of personally knowing an LGBTQ person.

As our report shows, there is still a huge opportunity for groundbreaking storytelling which highlights the full spectrum of our community and spotlights new voices. Together with our partners in Hollywood and through new pipeline initiatives, our GLAAD List, and more, GLAAD is committed to serving as a resource to help move the needle forward for LGBTQ representation on screen.



Thank you for your support.
In solidarity,

Sarah Kate Ellis,
President & CEO, GLAAD

Executive Summary

Four years ago, GLAAD challenged the studios to reach 20 percent LGBTQ inclusion in major theatrical releases by 2021. The films released in 2020 met that challenge according to last year's report, with 23 percent (10 of 44) of films including LGBTQ characters. Though the overall percentage did slightly decrease year-over-year as more total films were released, the challenge was once again met for 2021 films, with 20.8 percent (16 out of 77) of films including LGBTQ characters. Three individual studios also achieved and surpassed that goal this year: Universal Pictures with 30 percent, Walt Disney with 42 percent, and United Artists Releasing leading the pack with 44 percent of their slate being inclusive.

- There was a **decrease in the percentage of films with LGBTQ characters this year, but an increase in the number of total films**. This year 20.8 percent (16 out of 77) of films from the major studios tracked were LGBTQ-inclusive, as opposed to last year's 22.7 percent (10 out of 44). It is important to note, the 2020 study did have a limited sample due to many theaters shutting down during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There was a **slight decrease in the percentage of characters of color**, down to 39 percent from last year's 40 percent. This is once again short of GLAAD's challenge to reach 50 percent characters of color. Of the 28 LGBTQ characters counted, 11 were characters of color and 17 were white.
- **For the first time in five years, GLAAD counted a transgender character in a major studio release**. The character is Anybodys from Walt Disney's *West Side Story*, who is portrayed as a trans man in this adaptation.
- There was a noted **decrease in screen time for LGBTQ characters** in 2021, with only seven out of 28 (25 percent) characters clocking over 10 minutes of screen time. Four additional characters (14 percent) had between five and ten minutes on screen, while 17 (60 percent) had under five minutes on screen. Of those, six characters (21 percent) were under one minute.
- Once again, there were **zero characters represented who had a disability and zero characters living with HIV**. This is a significant part of the LGBTQ population that is rarely seen on screen and an area we'd like to see improvement from both film and TV.

Methodology

In this report, GLAAD centers its analysis on U.S. theatrically released films from the seven film studio distributors that had the highest theatrical grosses from films released in the 2021 calendar year (January 1 - December 31) as reported by the box office database Box Office Mojo. Those seven studio distributors are:

- Lionsgate
- Paramount Pictures
- Sony Pictures
- United Artists Releasing
- Universal Pictures
- The Walt Disney Studios
- Warner Bros.

This report examines films that were distributed theatrically during the 2021 calendar year (January 1 - December 31) in the United States under the official studio banners and imprints as reported by Box Office Mojo, the studios, and other relevant entertainment reporting sources. GLAAD did not include any theatrical re-releases or special events such as filmed live events in this count. Films distributed by these studios' "art house" divisions were analyzed separately and are not part of the parent studio's final assessment. The total number of films released by major studios that met our criteria is 77.

GLAAD separately analyzed the films released under four smaller studio imprints, often referred to as "art house" divisions. This was done to compare the quantity and quality of LGBTQ representations in these studios' releases directly to parent companies. These specialty films are typically distributed and marketed to a much smaller audience than that of their major studio counterparts. These distinctions were defined by the reporting of Box Office Mojo and other relevant entertainment industry databases. The total number of films that met our criteria is 36.

These "art house" divisions include:

- Focus Features
- Roadside Attractions
- Searchlight Pictures
- Sony Pictures Classics

Each film was researched and reviewed for inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) characters. The total number of LGBTQ characters was recorded for each film, as well as each character's race/

ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability status based on what was presented in the film.

The films were also reviewed for the presence of general LGBTQ content and anti-LGBTQ language or "humor." Such language must be considered in context, and so was not quantified in this report. Additionally, each film was assigned to one of five genre categories:

- Comedy
- Drama
- Family
- Fantasy/Sci-Fi/Action
- Documentary

The family category included animated and children's films rated PG and under. The category of fantasy/science fiction/action also included horror films and action 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 and its marketing campaigns.

We recognize that not all audiences will agree with some of the films determined to be LGBTQ-inclusive and vice versa. GLAAD's methodology is anchored by categorizing characters as LGBTQ based 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 this year's report, GLAAD will include new evaluations of four key areas of action with regards to the studio distributor and their parent company's (if applicable) support or harm to the LGBTQ community in the preceding calendar year (January 1 - December 31, 2021). These four areas include:

- Donations made by a studio or the studio's parent company (if applicable), including PACs of those entities, to anti-LGBTQ elected officials, defined as those who sponsor or co-sponsor anti-LGBTQ legislation that harms LGBTQ people, sign into law – or refuse to veto – anti-LGBTQ legislation, vote "yes" on anti-LGBTQ legislation, speak out against the LGBTQ community including the use of anti-LGBTQ slurs, support for anti-LGBTQ legislation, or otherwise giving a platform to anti-LGBTQ rhetoric.
- Public advocacy efforts by a studio or the studio's parent company (if applicable) around pro-LGBTQ or anti-LGBTQ legislation.

- LGBTQ-inclusive public communications by a studio or the studio's parent company (if applicable).
- Actions taken by a studio or the studio's parent company (if applicable) to support LGBTQ-inclusive titles domestically and internationally.

Examples of the actions categorized in these groups include statements by businesses and/or creative leadership on public platforms, ceasing business contracts and/or real estate development in areas proposing and/or passing anti-LGBTQ legislation, donations to LGBTQ organizations and associated events, investing in diversity programs to foster and incubate new LGBTQ talent, marketing LGBTQ-inclusive titles at a comparable level to non-inclusive titles, and supporting LGBTQ characters and stories in international markets including speaking out against anti-LGBTQ alterations or censorship of titles and willingness to withhold release, among other actions considered.

GLAAD used the following sources for looking up political donations: OpenSecrets.org, Accountable for Equality Action, and various state campaign finance databases. GLAAD additionally asked each studio to provide further information about their efforts and used additional reporting from the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index.

Based on the overall quantity, quality, and diversity of LGBTQ representation in the studio's slate of films, as well as a studio and parent company's public actions and communications with regard to the LGBTQ community, a grade will be assigned to each major studio distributor: Excellent, Good, Insufficient, Poor, or Failing.

Please note: Prior to the 2017 report, GLAAD assigned studios scores on a four-point scale of Excellent, Good, Adequate, or Failing. In 2020, due to the unique disruption to theatrical distribution the COVID-19 global pandemic, GLAAD did not issue traditional grades to the studios in last year's study, but rather, all studios received a rating of "Not Applicable."

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. Some examples of films that have passed the Vito Russo Test in prior years but still contain offensive content include *Zoolander 2*, *Hazlo Como Hombre*, *CHiPS*, and *The Gentlemen*. All of these films included significant LGBTQ characters intrinsically tied to the film's plot, but whose stories were objectionable.

As we have seen the industry change in recent years with more LGBTQ characters appearing on screen, it is clear that it is time for us too to change and update our test. In the vein of constant evolution, this year we have introduced a fourth point in the Vito Russo Test.

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

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

2021 56% (9 OF 16) OR 12% OF 77 TOTAL FILMS



2020 90% (9 OF 10) OR 20% OF 44 TOTAL FILMS



2019 73% (16 OF 22) OR 14% OF 118 TOTAL FILMS



2018 65% (13 OF 20) OR 12% OF 110 TOTAL FILMS



2017 64% (9 OF 14) OR 8% OF 109 TOTAL FILMS



2016 39% (9 OF 23) OR 7% OF 125 TOTAL FILMS



2015 36% (8 OF 22) OR 6% OF 126 TOTAL FILMS



2014 55% (11 OF 20) OR 10% OF 114 TOTAL FILMS



2013 41% (7 OF 17) OR 7% OF 102 TOTAL FILMS



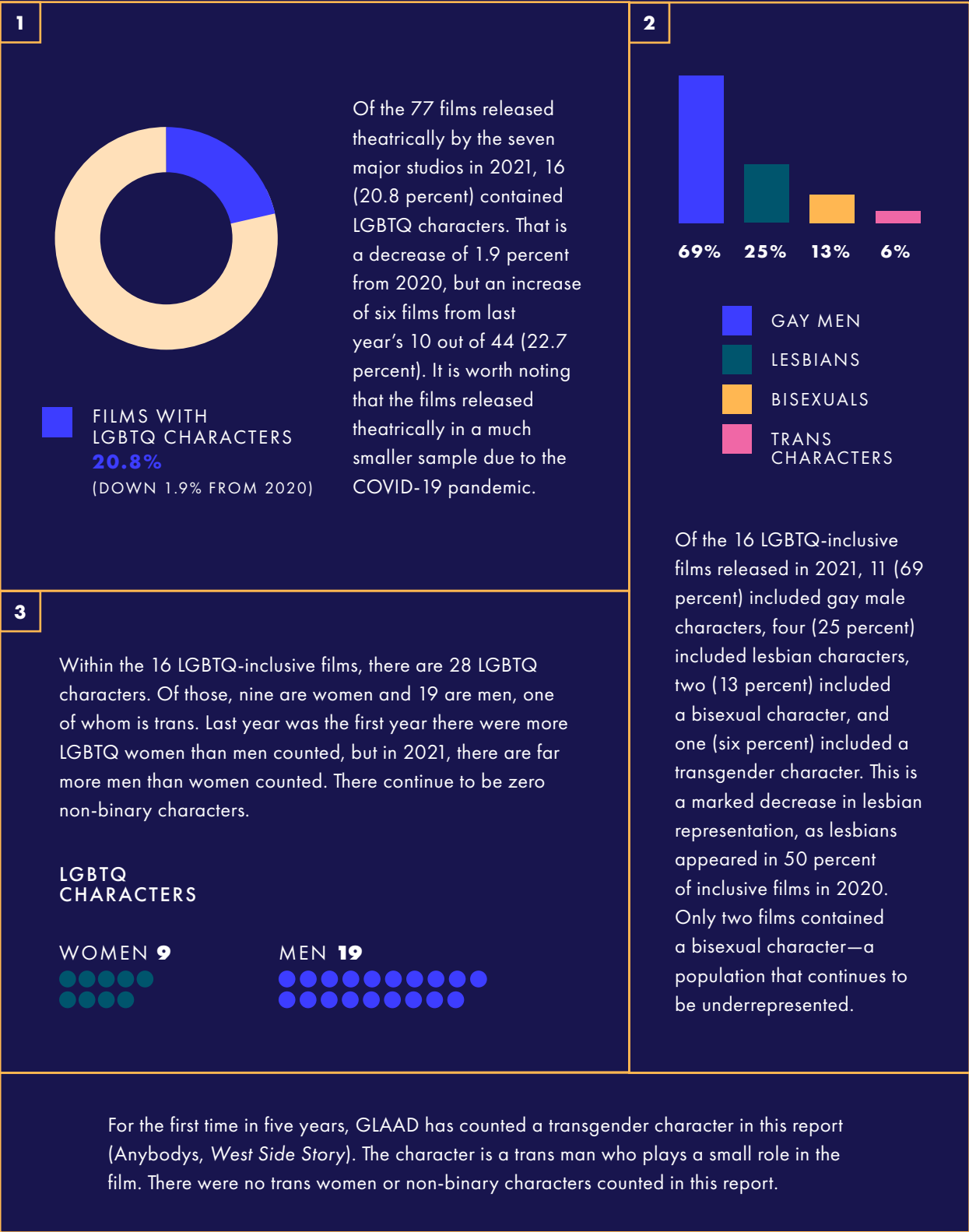
2012 43% (6 OF 14) OR 6% OF 101 TOTAL FILMS



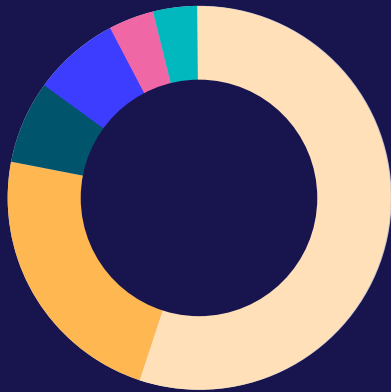
For a film to pass the Vito Russo Test, the following must be true:

- 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.

Overview Of Findings



4



WHITE	LGBTQ CHARACTERS 61%
BLACK	LGBTQ CHARACTERS 18%
LATINX	LGBTQ CHARACTERS 7%
API	LGBTQ CHARACTERS 7%
MULTIRACIAL	LGBTQ CHARACTERS 4%
MIDDLE EASTERN	LGBTQ CHARACTERS 4%

There was a slight decrease in LGBTQ characters of color this year. Of the 28 LGBTQ characters counted, 11 (39 percent) were characters of color. That is a decrease of one percent, but an increase of three characters from 2020. It is 18 percent lower than 2017's record high of 57 percent characters of color. Of the 28 LGBTQ characters, 17 were white (61 percent), five were Black (18 percent), two were Latinx (seven percent), two were Asian/Pacific Islander (seven percent), one was multiracial (four percent), and one was Middle Eastern (four percent).

5

Consistent with last year's findings, GLAAD found zero LGBTQ characters with disabilities.

6

This year, Drama was the most inclusive genre by percent, with six out of 18 films (33 percent) being inclusive. In terms of numbers, Genre (Fantasy/Action/Sci-Fi/Horror) films had the most LGBTQ inclusive films (8 out of 35).



DRAMA
18 TOTAL /
6 INCLUSIVE (33%)



COMEDY
8 TOTAL /
2 INCLUSIVE (25%)



GENRE
35 TOTAL /
8 INCLUSIVE (23%)



FAMILY
13 TOTAL /
0 INCLUSIVE (0%)



DOCUMENTARY
3 TOTAL /
0 INCLUSIVE (0%)

7

Among the studios, United Artists Releasing had the highest percentage of inclusive films at 44 percent (four out of nine). Walt Disney had the highest number of LGBTQ-inclusive films at five out of 12 (42 percent).

5 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS:

WALT DISNEY STUDIOS - (12 TOTAL/42 PERCENT)

4 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS:

UNITED ARTISTS RELEASING - (9 TOTAL/44 PERCENT)

3 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS:

UNIVERSAL PICTURES - (10 TOTAL/30 PERCENT)

2 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS:

SONY - (15 TOTAL/13 PERCENT)

WARNER BROS - (17 TOTAL/12 PERCENT)

0 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

LIONSGATE - (8 TOTAL)

PARAMOUNT - (6 TOTAL)

GLAAD also tracked four "art house" subsidiary studios – Focus Features, Roadside Attractions, Searchlight Pictures, and Sony Pictures Classics – to compare content to their mainstream parent studios. Of the 36 films released by the art house studios in 2021, seven (19 percent) were LGBTQ-inclusive. This is a consistent percentage with 2020's findings, though an increase of three films.

Observations & Recommendations

GLAAD offers the following insights on how studios can both improve depictions of LGBTQ characters and erase outdated tropes and stereotypes.

GLAAD HAS REPEATEDLY NOTED AN ISSUE WITH THE LACK OF MEANINGFUL SCREEN TIME FOR LGBTQ CHARACTERS IN RELEASES FROM MAJOR STUDIO DISTRIBUTORS.

The previous year actually saw improvement in this metric with half of LGBTQ characters clocking more than ten minutes of screen time in movies like *The New Mutants*, *Freaky*, *Fantasy Island*, and *The Broken Hearts Gallery*. Unfortunately, this year we've noted a decrease, with only seven of the 28 (25%) LGBTQ characters counted in 2021 surpassing ten minutes of screen time, including characters in *Our Ladies*, *Eternals*, *The King's Man*, *Jungle Cruise*, and *In The Heights*. The majority of LGBTQ characters fell under five minutes of total screen time at 17 of the 28 (60%), with six of those being under one minute (21% of total LGBTQ characters). This growing separation of near equal numbers of characters hitting under one minute and over ten minutes, with few characters falling in between, demonstrates the opportunity for more LGBTQ characters to be included in ensemble and lead roles. There is a wide variety of stories waiting to be told and opportunities for inclusion in films where an LGBTQ character is a meaningful part of the plot - and for unambiguously marketing and promoting those movies as being both great stories and inclusive of underrepresented characters.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FIVE YEARS, GLAAD COUNTED A TRANSGENDER CHARACTER IN A MAJOR STUDIO RELEASE.

This character is Anybodys in *West Side Story*. Prior to this, the last transgender character GLAAD counted was an offensive caricature in the 2016 film *Zoolander 2*, a non-binary model named All portrayed by Benedict Cumberbatch. Polls show that approximately 31 percent of Americans say they personally know someone who is transgender, compared to nearly 90 percent who know someone who is lesbian, gay, or bisexual. However, when focusing on Americans under age 30, that number jumps from 31 all the way up to 50 percent of people who say they personally know someone in their daily lives who is transgender. It is noteworthy that Anybodys' character was part of a tentpole film seen by broad audiences, including those who may not actively choose to see films with leading LGBTQ characters. Negative media coverage and outright misinformation about transgender people has led to the introduction of a record-breaking number of anti-trans legislative proposals, and has made it more important than ever that Hollywood ensures the stories of trans characters make it to screen. While TV has made amazing leaps in this space, film has lagged behind. GLAAD and 5050by2020's *TRANSform Hollywood*, a free, in-depth digital guide offering tips and best practices for collaborating with trans storytellers and fostering a more trans-inclusive production environment, is a first step resource available for productions beginning this work. GLAAD is also available as a trusted and proven resource, as well as a route to find amazing transgender storytellers and actors to hire. Creators should also screen *Disclosure*, a Certified Fresh documentary available on Netflix which explores and contextualizes the last 100 years of trans representation in TV and film and the impact of those stereotypical portrayals on how society views trans people and how trans people view themselves. It is essential viewing for everyone, but especially anyone creating stories with transgender characters.

MAJOR STUDIO FILM CONTINUES TO FALL BEHIND REPRESENTING REALITY, AS ONLY TWO FILMS (2.6 PERCENT OF ALL FILMS) INCLUDED BISEXUAL CHARACTERS THIS YEAR.

These characters are Kay and Catriona in Sony's *Our Ladies* and Rasputin in Disney's *The King's Man*. In reality, bisexual people represent the majority of the LGBTQ community at just over 50 percent. These three characters represent 11 percent of all LGBTQ characters, and one of them is overtly offensive by falling into stereotypes which portray bi characters as hypersexual, deviant, and self-destructive. In the previous year's study, only one film included a bi+ character (Warner Bros.' *Birds of Prey*). This ongoing minimalization and erasure of bi, pan, and other stories has a legitimate impact on bisexual+ people. Population studies continue to show that bisexual people are less likely to be out than gay or lesbian people and report significantly higher levels of minority stresses, which are often exacerbated by societal misunderstanding of their identities and lives. As the bisexual population continues to grow amongst Gen Z and Millennial adults, the generations who make up half the U.S. population, it would be a smart business decision for studios to quickly adjust their programming slates to be more reflective of the audience consuming their films, subscribing to their streaming services, and purchasing access to experiential events and merchandise.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THREE YEARS, GLAAD DID NOT COUNT A SINGLE INCLUSIVE FILM IN THE KIDS AND FAMILY GENRE.



This is down from the previous year with Pixar's *Onward*, which included a lesbian cyclops cop voiced by out actor Lena Waithe. This is a drastically different picture from television, where a significant boom of LGBTQ-inclusive family content allowed GLAAD to introduce a second GLAAD Media Award category for programming in the space and expand the categories to ten nominees each. LGBTQ families and parents exist around the world and deserve to see themselves reflected in the movies they see with their families. As cultural acceptance has grown, LGBTQ youth are more empowered than ever to live authentically at younger ages, and deserve to see age-appropriate, affirming, and truthful representations of themselves in film. The small moments of LGBTQ-inclusivity in modern studio films are not enough, and must become bigger, more significant moments with meaningful LGBTQ characters and stories in order to reflect the modern world.

LIONSGATE®

Summary of 2021 Findings

8	Films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints
0	Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
0%	Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
0	Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

	2021	Failing
N/A	2020	
	2019	Insufficient
	2018	Failing
	2017	Failing
	2016	Failing
	2015	Adequate
	2014	Adequate
	2013	Adequate
N/A	2012	Not Tracked

Frank Guistra founded Lionsgate in 1997, and in the 25 years since, the studio has produced and distributed major blockbusters including the *Twilight*, *Hunger Games* and *John Wick* franchises. Lionsgate is the parent company of Summit Entertainment and owns a 50 percent stake in Pantelion, which specializes in films for Latine audiences, and whose films are frequently distributed by Lionsgate.

Lionsgate's first inclusive film was *The Pillow Book* (1997), in which Ewan McGregor plays a bisexual man. The studio's other LGBTQ-inclusive films include *Gods and Monsters* (1998), *But I'm a Cheerleader!* and *Urbania* (2000), *Lost and Delirious* and *All Over the Guy* (2001), *Happy Endings* (2005), *Precious* (2009), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012), *American Ultra* and *Freeheld* (2015), *Un Padre No Tan Padre* (2017), and *Bombshell* (2019).

Chaos Walking

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,132 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

Based on the book of the same name, dystopian adventure film *Chaos Walking* follows a young man in a society where seemingly every woman has died due to mysterious circumstances in an alien war. In this world, the protagonist Todd is raised by two men, Ben and Cillian, after the death of his mother. Though there has been external confirmation from author Patrick Ness that Ben and Cillian are in a romantic relationship, this is not clearly shown on screen. The two men share a bed, but no physical intimacy – their sharing a bed largely seems more due to their small house than out of a desire to be together. When Cillian dies early in the film, Ben is visibly upset, though there is no real indication if he is upset due to a lover dying or a friend and co-parent dying.

Though the intent may have been there to make Ben and Cillian a couple, intent is not enough, and more on-screen confirmation is needed. In a world with supposedly no women, two men raising a son together is not enough for them to be considered to be explicitly queer as an orientation rather than together as a circumstance of their society. Adding physical affection or a declaration of love between the two of them would have been a small detail that would have gone a long way.

Corporate Action

Lionsgate was one of the companies that moved select productions out of North Carolina in 2016 in response to the discriminatory HB2 bill which targeted transgender people. Lionsgate received a 100 on the 2022 Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index with points awarded for workforce protection policies including sexual orientation and gender identity, inclusive benefits for same-sex partners and for transgender people, and the existence of an LGBTQ focused employee resource group. Lionsgate also recently expanded the gender identity section in their on-set inclusivity trainings. The company has also introduced a supplier diversity program for vendors which requires qualifying suppliers to be majority owned, operated, and controlled by people from five underrepresented communities including LGBTQ business heads. No anti-LGBTQ political donations were found by Lionsgate or its parent company in 2021.

Opportunities Ahead

Lionsgate, like many other studios, is teaming up with streamers more frequently to release new films. LGBTQ-inclusive 2022 releases include *My Fake Boyfriend*, starring Keiynan Lonsdale as a man who invents a fake boyfriend for social media but ends up falling for a real man in his life, which was released by Amazon Prime in 2022. Gaming film *1Up*, starring Ruby Rose and Hari Nef, also went straight to streaming on Amazon this summer.

In 2021, Lionsgate announced an adaptation of novel *The Guncle*, which follows a gay man living in Palm Springs who has to take care of his niece and nephew after a tragic accident. Lionsgate has plans for another *John Wick* sequel, which has the potential to include the character of The Adjudicator, played by non-binary actor Asia Kate Dillon, and confirm their gender identity explicitly in the film. There is also an adaption of video game series *Borderlands* in the works, which has the opportunity to include LGBTQ characters from the original games.

In 2019, it was announced that out filmmaker Joey Soloway would direct a biopic of famed lesbian astronaut Sally Ride. It was also announced that comic book *Memetic* from out writer James Tynion IV would be made into a feature film. The comic features a gay disabled protagonist in the horror genre, a severely underrepresented demographic. Though no news has broken about any of these projects recently, we hope to see them all grace theater screens within the next few years.

Roadside Attractions

Summary of 2021 Findings

6 films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints

1 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

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

Howard Cohen and Eric d'Arbeloff founded Roadside Attractions in 2003. Lionsgate bought a portion of the studio in 2007, and the company continues to release independent films. Memorable LGBTQ-inclusive films the studio previously released include *I Love You Phillip Morris* (2010), *Dear White People* (2014), *The Skeleton Twins* (2014), *Hello, My Name is Doris* (2016), *Whitney* (2018), and *Judy* (2019).

Joe Bell

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE:
1,094 THEATERS



Joe Bell tells the true story of Joe, a man who walked across the country and talked to schools about anti-LGBTQ bullying after his son Jadin died by suicide. Jadin is a gay teen and audiences see his life through flashbacks of him coming out, his experiences with being bullied, and his eventual death. Jadin also appears as a phantom on Joe's journey. At the film's conclusion, Joe is killed when a car accidentally hits him during his cross-country walk. Though Jadin's lived experience is the impetus for the whole film, the story is very much centered on Joe's journey to develop acceptance as a straight man rather than on Jadin's story.



The Famous Players Film Company (founded in 1912) merged with the Lasky Company and Paramount to form Paramount Pictures in 1916. The Viacom Network acquired Paramount in 1994, re-merged with CBS to become ViacomCBS in 2019, and renamed itself Paramount Global in February 2022. In 2018, Paramount additionally became the first major studio to sign a multi-picture film deal with Netflix, although future Paramount films will stream on Paramount Global’s recently rebranded streamer Paramount+. The studio has released big budget franchises such as *Indiana Jones*, *Transformers*, and *Mission: Impossible*.

Paramount began releasing LGBTQ-themed or inclusive films in the mid-nineties and early aughts, with films like *Home for the Holidays* (1995); *Clueless* (1995); *The Brady Bunch Movie* (1995); *Brain Candy* (1996); *Kiss Me Guido* (1997); *In and Out* (1997), a box office hit that received substantial press for a kiss between Kevin Klein and Tom Selleck; *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999); *Election* (1999); *The Next Best Thing* (2000); and *The Hours* (2002). More recent inclusion was highlighted in *Star Trek: Beyond* (2016), which features Hikaru Sulu, a gay man of color with his husband and daughter; the Elton John biopic *Rocketman* (2019); and the comedy *Like a Boss* (2020) which featured Billy Porter in a supporting role.

Summary of 2021 Findings

6	films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints
0	total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
0%	percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
0	number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

	2021	Failing
N/A	2020	
	2019	Insufficient
	2018	Insufficient
	2017	Poor
	2016	Poor
	2015	Failing
	2014	Adequate
	2013	Failing
	2012	Adequate

Corporate Action

In 2021, Paramount Pictures' LGBTQ initiatives for employees included a company-wide conversation for National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day with the Los Angeles LGBT Center and the American Red Cross on efforts with the ADVANCE Study to change the discriminatory FDA policy which bars blood donations from all men who have had sex with men. The company announced plans for a new initiative called "Content for Change" which will examine racial diversity in programming, and was founded by Paramount Global company BET. The program has since been picked up at all labels across the company and will soon expand to include further communities. In 2020, Paramount Global joined over 250 other businesses that signed onto HRC's and Freedom For All American's Business Statement Opposing Anti-LGBTQ State Legislation.

While Paramount Pictures was not individually included in the 2022 Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index, the Paramount Global company received a 100. The company has volunteer opportunities with local LGBTQ centers, an active LGBTQ employee resource group, and the release of a public video highlighting LGBTQ employees as part of the company's "Proud to Be" series. In 2021, no anti-LGBTQ political donations from Paramount Pictures were found. Parent company Paramount Global donated more than \$25,000 to anti-LGBTQ politicians.

Opportunities Ahead

In January of this year, Paramount released the newest film in the *Scream* franchise, which features out actor Jasmin Savoy Brown as queer character Mindy. Paramount has since announced that there will be a sequel coming out in 2023, which will feature Mindy among the returning cast members. In September, Paramount released an adaptation of Angie Thomas' *On The Come Up*, which follows Bri, a sixteen-year-old girl who dreams of being one of the world's greatest rappers. The film includes out actor Miles Gutierrez Riley as Bri's friend Sonny, a gay teen who strikes up a relationship with another rapper, Milez.

After several changes to creative teams and scheduled release dates, the next *Star Trek* film is set to hit theaters in December 2023. The film will bring back the crew from the previous films, which includes John Cho as Sulu. 2016's *Star Trek: Beyond* briefly introduced his husband and family; we hope to see more of this relationship in the next sequel. Additionally, several *Star Trek* television series have introduced dynamic fan-favorite LGBTQ characters in recent years, and their film counterparts should follow suit by introducing new LGBTQ characters as well as potentially including some of those TV characters where the franchises may overlap.

The Tony Award-winning musical *Spamalot* is getting a feature film adaptation at Paramount. The original musical cast included gay characters Lancelot and Herbert. Though the humor surrounding those characters should be updated for today's audiences, their inclusion is necessary. In 2023, Paramount will release *Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves* based on the roleplaying game "Dungeons and Dragons." Given the popularity of the game within the LGBTQ community, we hope to see on screen representation in the film, especially as the film is set to star out actor Justice Smith.



Sony Pictures

Tallulah Greive as Orla, Sally Messham as Manda, Abigail Lawrie as Finnoula, Rona Morrison as Chell and Marli Siu as Kylah, *OUR LADIES*

Summary of 2021 Findings

15 films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints

2 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

13% percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

1 number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★★★★★	2022	Insufficient
N/A	2020	
★★★★★	2019	Poor
★★★★★	2018	Insufficient
★★★★★	2017	Poor
★★★★★	2016	Failing
★★★★★	2015	Adequate
★★★★★	2014	Failing
★★★★★	2013	Good
★★★★★	2012	Adequate

The film studio was founded as Cohn-Brandt-Cohn Film Sales in 1918, renamed Columbia Pictures in 1924, and began to truly build prestige in the '20s by association with director Frank Capra, producing some of the biggest movies and celebrities of Hollywood's Golden Era. Coca-Cola briefly acquired the studio in the '80s, launched TriStar pictures, and Columbia/TriStar was its own operation until Sony purchased it in 1989. Today, Sony releases films from Columbia, Tristar, Sony Pictures Animation, Screen Gems, and Affirm. In April 2021, Sony signed deals with Netflix and The Walt Disney Company (Disney+ and Hulu) to host films on those streaming platforms after their theatrical runs.

Sony Pictures' earlier years have a rocky history with LGBTQ-inclusive films. The 1962 political thriller *Advise and Consent* featured a subplot where a Senate chairman is blackmailed over an affair with another man, leading to his death by suicide, and LGBTQ groups including GLAAD denounced vilifying portrayals of lesbian and bisexual women in TriStar's *Basic Instinct* (1992). More recent LGBTQ-inclusive films from Sony include *Philadelphia* (1993); *Threesome* (1994); *As Good as it Gets* (1997); *Rent* (2005); *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* (2011); *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* (2013); *Rough Night* (2017); *The Girl in the Spider's Web* (2018); and *The Broken Hearts Gallery* (2020).

Escape Room: Tournament of Champions

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,815 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

While this film does not include any explicitly LGBTQ characters, the ensemble cast does include a character named Brianna played by Indya Moore, a trans and non-binary actor. There is no confirmation of Brianna's gender identity or sexual orientation in the film prior to the character's death. As such, GLAAD did not include this film in its tally.

A Journal for Jordan

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,500 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

A Journal for Jordan follows a romance between Dana and Charles, the latter of whom is in the military, as they try to build their family. When Dana first meets and falls for Charles, she talks to a group of friends about it, which includes Ciro, a gay man. Ciro doesn't have much of a plot beyond encouraging Dana's relationship with Charles and does not receive further character development past being her friend who happens to be gay. While it was a nice moment of small inclusion, it was a missed opportunity for the film to not give Ciro any further defining features past acting as a sounding board for the straight protagonist.

Our Ladies

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 25 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

Based on the novel *The Sopranos*, this film follows five Catholic Scottish teen girls in 1996 over the course of one day as they travel to Edinburgh for a choir competition and then return home. One of the girls, Finnoula, breaks away from her friends to explore the city - more specifically, a lesbian bar. At the bar she runs into Kay, the school's rich head girl, who Finnoula had previously antagonized. The two bond and Kay shares that she has had a threesome with a man and another woman, and Finnoula admits that she would like to be with a woman. Upon returning home, Kay and Finnoula share a kiss at a local club. The friend group is supportive except for one girl who worries that people will now think she is gay by association for being friends with a queer woman. The film ends with text cards sharing updates on all five girls; Finnoula and Kay were the only ones who made it out of their small town.

For a film that focused on five main characters, it was exciting that one of them was queer and got to have a romance with a classmate, arguably the strongest romantic relationship of the movie. It was also nice to see Finnoula's friends be happy for her and excited to hear the details of her new relationship. It's important that the queer main characters were comfortable in their own sexuality and were able to share such a formative moment together. We wish the film had played in more theaters in the U.S. as its theatrical run was limited to larger cities.



Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,346 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

While some news outlets have read the character Pigling Bland as gay, GLAAD did not count the character in its tally. Pigling is a more flamboyant character who also occasionally wears makeup, but nothing further is provided in the story about the character.

Venom: Let There Be Carnage

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,225 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

The story at the center of the *Venom* films is protagonist Eddie Brock's relationship to the alien parasite Venom who lives inside his body. Throughout the film, there are jokes and references to the two of them being a couple; they have a "break-up," Venom "comes out" as who he is, someone refers to Eddie and Venom needing "couples therapy" and the resolution of the film involves them on a beach watching the sunset. However, these scenes played more as a joke than an actual queer romance; Eddie is still in love with his ex, Anne, and Eddie and Venom's relationship is never explicitly romantic, regardless of the several jokes and allusions throughout the film.

Corporate Actions

In 2020, Sony Pictures Entertainment joined over 250 other businesses that signed onto HRC's and Freedom For All American's Business Statement Opposing Anti-LGBTQ State Legislation. Sony Corporation has also joined the coalition of Businesses in favor of passing the Equality Act. Both Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc. and parent company Sony Corporation of America received top scores of 100 on the 2022 Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index. This score was earned by offering inclusive benefits, employee protection policies which include both sexual orientation and gender identity, an LGBTQ employee resource group and "distinct efforts of outreach or engagement" with the community. Sony Pictures also has a supplier diversity program, which partners with the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce and L.A. LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce, and aims to increase diversity of ownership in their vendors. In 2021, no anti-LGBTQ political donations were found from Sony Pictures. Parent company Sony Corporation donated more than \$10,000 to anti-LGBTQ politicians.

Opportunities Ahead

Sony will release *I Wanna Dance With Somebody*, a biopic of iconic singer Whitney Houston, in December of this year. Robyn Crawford, Houston's best friend, wrote in her 2019 memoir *A Song for You: My Life with Whitney Houston* that she and Houston were in a long-term romantic relationship. This is a golden opportunity for Sony to increase representation while shining a spotlight on this important, but less known, facet of Houston's life. Out singer Lance Bass will create a film based on his experiences with superfans of *NSYNC, telling the story of two best friends following the band on their summer tour. As it comes from Bass himself, as well as *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* creator Rachel Bloom, there is plenty of opportunity for queer content in the film.

Sony will adapt the science fiction series *The Broken Earth* trilogy into films. The books contain several LGBTQ characters, including Alabaster, who is gay, Innon, who is bisexual, and Tonkee, who is trans. Sony is also planning a live adaptation of the '80's anime *Robotech*. The original series includes Lancer, a character who was understood to have had a drag persona before drag was in the mainstream, when at night he became a popstar named Yellow Dancer. Hopefully, Lancer makes the leap over to the new adaptation and his story is updated for today's audiences.

Sony Pictures Classics

Summary of 2021 Findings

10	films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints
2	total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
20%	percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

Sony Pictures Classics (SPC), Sony Pictures Entertainment's independent film division, has acquired, produced, and distributed independent, documentary, and arthouse films since 1992. The studio has released multiple high-profile LGBTQ films since its launch, including the documentary *The Celluloid Closet* (1995), which is based on GLAAD co-founder Vito Russo's book of the same name and explores LGBTQ representation throughout the history of film to its release; *My Life in Pink* (1997); *Kill Your Darlings* (2013); *I'm So Excited!* (2013); *Love Is Strange* (2014); *Grandma* (2015); *The Meddler* (2016); GLAAD Media Award winners *Call Me By Your Name* and *A Fantastic Woman* (2017); *Pain and Glory* (2019), and more.

Julia

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 288 THEATERS

This documentary following chef Julia Child contains several mentions of the LGBTQ community. At one point, Julia's husband Paul was accused of being gay by the government. The film also discusses Julia's relationship to the gay community and her friendship with her lawyer, Bob Johnson. She had initially not known that he was gay, but when Bob passed of AIDS-related complications, Julia became an outspoken advocate for the community and used her platform to shine a spotlight on the need for care and funding for HIV and AIDS research and patients.



I Carry You With Me

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 111 THEATERS

Based on a true story, this GLAAD Media Award-nominated drama tells the story of Iván, who is currently a chef in the U.S. but lived the first few decades of his life in Mexico. The film shows Iván falling in love with another man, Geraldo, while balancing the relationship he has with his young son. When Iván's family finds out about his relationship with Geraldo, he is forbidden to see his son. This prompts his decision to take the perilous journey to the United States, where he could be able to live more freely as an out gay man and pursue his dreams of becoming a chef. In the future, we see Iván and Gerardo still together, and Iván achieved his career dreams of opening a restaurant. However, bittersweet reality hangs in the air, even while it seems everything is going well. It remains impossible for Ivan to see his son unless he returns to Mexico, and because he is undocumented, he may be unable to return to the U.S. if he does.

This film encompasses the complexity of being a gay immigrant in this country; it shows the joy of falling in love, as well as the pain of family being just out of reach due to prejudice or unjust laws. This real-life adaptation of Iván and Gerardo's story is a necessary look into the lives of undocumented LGBTQ people in this country.



Parallel Mothers

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 111 THEATERS

This GLAAD Media Award-winning film centers on the titular mothers, Janis and Ana, who meet in the hospital when they both happen to give birth at the same time. After a few months, Janis takes a DNA test and discovers that the child she's been raising is actually Ana's. Janis loves this child, so she keeps the truth from Ana, even when Ana returns to her life and shares that her child has died. The two grow closer despite Janis' secret, and the closeness develops into a romance when they sleep together and begin raising Janis' child together. When Janis eventually tells Ana the truth, Ana is understandably upset, taking the child and leaving. However, at the end of the film, the two become close again. Janis is pregnant with another child from Antonio, the father of her first child, but is still affectionate with Ana. The ending, and the film as a whole, highlights non-traditional families and showcases how two women can raise children together, accompanied by friends, partners and community.

Additionally, midway through the film, Janis, who works as a photographer, does a photoshoot with a model who is trans. Janis tells the model that it's about time she was on the cover of a women's magazine. It is a minor inclusion, but still important, showing trans people in the fabric of this world.

United Artists Releasing

Benny Safdie as Joel Wachs and Alaina Haim as Alana, *LICORICE PIZZA*

Summary of 2021 Findings

9 films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints

4 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

44% percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

2 number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★★★★★☆☆☆☆	2021	Insufficient
N/A	2020	
★★★★★☆☆☆☆	2019	Insufficient
N/A	2018	Not Tracked
N/A	2017	Not Tracked
N/A	2016	Not Tracked
N/A	2015	Not Tracked
N/A	2014	Not Tracked
N/A	2013	Not Tracked
N/A	2012	Not Tracked

United Artists Releasing (UAR), founded as Mirror in December 2017 and rebranded in February 2019 on the centennial anniversary of United Artists' founding, is a distribution venture between Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, Annapurna Pictures, and MGM's Orion Pictures. The studio is owned 50-50 by MGM, which was acquired by Amazon in a merger with MGM in March 2022, and Annapurna Pictures. UAR will continue to operate as a label with Amazon, who will continue to partner with the company to support theatrical releases on a case-by-case basis. Previous LGBTQ-inclusive releases by UAR include GLAAD Media Award nominee *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women* (2017); GLAAD Media Award nominee *God's Own Country* (2017); *Every Day* (2018); *Anna and the Apocalypse* (2018); GLAAD Media Award-winning comedy *Booksmart* (2019); and *Valley Girl* (2020).

House of Gucci

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,477 THEATERS
VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

Based on a true story, this film follows the initial romance between Patrizia Reggiani and Maurizio Gucci, which ultimately devolved into a fight over control of the fashion brand Gucci. In the very beginning of the film, Patrizia walks into a party with a man who is very affectionate with other men in the room. At one point he is dancing with another man until Patrizia pulls him away. Later in the film, out designer Tom Ford joins the Gucci company. While Ford is gay in real life, the film does not include any portrayal of his life outside of work. GLAAD did not include this character in its tally.

Licorice Pizza

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 786 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

Licorice Pizza takes place in the San Fernando Valley in the '70s, following the relationship between teenager Gary and 25-year-old Alana. Toward the third act of the film Alana tries to distance herself from Gary and become more serious by volunteering for city councilman Joel Wachs, who is running for Mayor. Wachs is closeted and asks Alana to join him for a dinner date with his boyfriend Mark as a cover to avoid suspicion that he is gay. Though Mark is upset that his boyfriend won't publicly be seen with him, Wachs insists he must remain in the closet to run for office.

Ultimately, their story, and a discussion Mark has with Alana about the price of love, inspires Alana to return to Gary, thus serving to further the straight plot. It is notable, however, that Joel Wachs is a real political figure, who came out during his 1999 Mayoral run. While it's creditable that *Licorice Pizza* did not erase his sexuality, they could have done much more with the character.

No Time to Die

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,407 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The most recent installment in the *James Bond* franchise briefly confirms the sexual orientation of the tech mastermind Q. During one scene, Bond and Moneypenny interrupt Q at home, where he is preparing dinner for a date with an unnamed man. Q's use of male pronouns for his date is the only confirmation of his sexuality and the moment moves on within the blink of an eye. It is disappointing that the film did not delve further into Q's life when it had the opportunity to introduce his romantic interest as more than just a throwaway line. Actor Ben Whishaw, who plays Q and is gay himself, expressed disappointment in how small of a moment it was. "I think I thought, 'Are we doing this, and then doing nothing with it?' I remember, perhaps, feeling that was unsatisfying," he told *The Guardian*, regarding the afore-mentioned scene.



Respect

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,207 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This biopic of Aretha Franklin includes a brief moment at the beginning of the film where two men are shown flirting at a party. These men never appear again nor are they named or given a purpose besides showing the environment young Aretha found herself in. *Respect's* out screenwriter, Tracey Scott Wilson, mentioned that Aretha's sister Carolyn was queer, and there was originally a scene in the film which addressed that, but the scene was ultimately cut from the final product.

Corporate Actions

MGM's Orion Pictures was relaunched in 2020 with a stated mission to elevate films and storytelling from underrepresented communities. The company is an inaugural member of the GLAAD List Founder's Circle, a group of production companies, studios, and streaming services that are dedicated to driving cultural change and amplifying LGBTQ studios. Alana Mayo, President of Orion Pictures, is a member of GLAAD's Board of Directors. MGM has an active LGBTQ employee resource group. GLAAD did not find any donations from UAR or MGM Holdings to anti-LGBTQ politicians in 2021.

Opportunities Ahead

This summer's *Anything's Possible*, a teenage love story between a trans girl and her boyfriend, was released through MGM on Amazon Prime in July. This film is from a script originally featured on The GLAAD List and is Billy Porter's directorial debut. Orion will be releasing the comedy *Bottoms*, from out Shiva Baby filmmaker Emma Seligman. The film follows two awkward queer high school girls who start a fight club to impress and date cheerleaders. A third *Legally Blonde* film is still in the works from MGM, penned by Mindy Kaling and Dan Goor, both of whom have included central LGBTQ characters in their television series. The original *Legally Blonde* featured a character who was revealed to be gay as a plot twist; a sequel should include more fleshed out queer characters, as the film is beloved by the community. Now that Amazon owns MGM, the future distribution of their films will be split between theatrical releases and streaming exclusives.



Ben Platt as Evan Hansen and Nik Dodani as Jared Kalwani, *DEAR EVAN HANSEN*

Summary of 2021 Findings

10	films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints
3	total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
30%	percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
3	number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★★★★★☆☆	2021	Insufficient
N/A	2020	
★★★★★☆☆	2019	Insufficient
★★★★★☆☆	2018	Good
★★★★★☆☆	2017	Insufficient
★★★★★☆☆	2016	Insufficient
★★★★☆☆☆☆	2015	Adequate
★★★★☆☆☆☆	2014	Adequate
★★★★☆☆☆☆	2013	Adequate
★★★★☆☆☆☆	2012	Adequate

Universal Pictures was founded in 1912 and is one of the oldest operating film studios in the United States. Universal merged with NBC in 2004, Comcast purchased the new NBCUniversal in 2011, and Universal acquired DreamWorks Animation from 20th Century Fox in 2016, releasing their first film under that umbrella in February 2019. Universal's previous releases tend to focus on mass appeal films such as *Jaws*, *E.T.*, the *Bourne* series, and the ongoing *Fast and the Furious* franchise.

Universal only began to release LGBTQ-inclusive films in the 1990s, and its 1991 adaptation of *Fried Green Tomatoes* removed most of the novel's lesbian content. Universal's many highs and lows in LGBTQ representation encompass films such as *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar* (1995), *Mulholland Drive* (2001), *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry* (2007), *Bruno* (2009), *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World* (2010), *Kick-Ass 2* (2013), *Riddick* (2013), *Legend* (2015), *Neighbors 2: Sorority Rising* (2016), *Blockers* (2018), *Last Christmas* (2019), *Good Boys* (2019), and *Freaky* (2020).

Candyman

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,569 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

Candyman follows a couple, Anthony and Brianna, as Anthony is taken over by the infamous Candyman. Early on in the film, audiences meet Brianna's brother Troy and his boyfriend Grady who come over to their house, where Troy tells the notorious Candyman legend. Later, once Brianna leaves Anthony, she

stays at Troy's house and he provides a support system for her. There is also a short scene where five high school girls summon Candyman as a joke, and one is implied to be a lesbian. The girls only appear in this quick moment and do not survive the scene. While it is unfortunate that this queer character had such a brief appearance before dying, the scene does make sense given the genre. It is worth noting that both members of the gay couple, including Troy, a gay Black man, survive the events of the film.

Dear Evan Hansen

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,364 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The film adaptation of the Tony Award-winning musical features Jared, played by out actor Nik Dodani, a character who plays an expanded role compared to the stage show. Jared is gay in the film, and discusses a boy he hooked up with at camp in his first scene. Jared is a family friend of the lead, Evan, and ends up helping him craft fake emails to make it seem like Evan and recently deceased classmate Connor were best friends. Jared insinuates that people will think Connor and Evan were lovers, and a portion of the song "Sincerely, Me" includes Evan insisting that he and Connor were not gay.

In the *Dear Evan Hansen* novelization, the character of Connor is revealed to be bisexual, but was not included in this adaptation. Given that Connor dies early on in the film, this omission was an understandable decision given the problematic history of "Bury Your Gays" trope. Jared's expanded role and backstory in the film was a sign that this school includes queer people, reflecting reality as about one in five Gen Z adults identify as part of the LGBTQ community. While it is worth celebrating Jared's inclusion, we would have liked to see more of his life outside of helping Evan.

Halloween Kills

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE 3,727 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This entry in the *Halloween* franchise shows infamous killer Michael Myers continuing his murdering spree. Two of his victims are a gay couple named Big John and Little John. The Johns are seen as a couple in their home – which happens to be Myers' childhood home – before he breaks in and kills them. They are significant to the plot in that they provide a link to Michael's home, where the climax of the film takes place. It is important to note that Michael did not kill them because they are gay; he is known to kill anyone who lives in that house. However, it is still unfortunate that they do not survive the film.



Corporate Actions

NBCUniversal runs NBC Out, one of the only LGBTQ focused verticals from a major media company. The company signed on to a Business Coalition of companies who supported passing the Equality Act and issued a public statement praising a Supreme Court decision in 2020 which ruled that workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity violates the Civil Rights Act. In 2020, Comcast NBCUniversal joined over 250 other businesses that signed onto HRC's and Freedom For All American's Business Statement Opposing Anti-LGBTQ State Legislation. Comcast NBCUniversal received a top score of 100 in the 2022 Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index with points awarded for inclusive benefits, employee safety policies that specify coverage for sexual orientation and gender identity, an active LGBTQ employee resource group, and more. The company also has introduced a supplier diversity program to evaluate the vendors they employ. In 2021, Comcast NBCUniversal was a financial supporter of LGBTQ groups and events, including GLAAD. No anti-LGBTQ political donations were found from Universal Pictures. Parent company Comcast/NBCUniversal donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to anti-LGBTQ politicians.

Opportunities Ahead

Billy Eichner's long anticipated romantic comedy *Bros* was released this fall. The film follows two men who attempt to stay in a committed relationship and boasts a primarily LGBTQ cast. Also released in 2022 was romantic comedy *Marry Me*, which featured a lesbian character Parker, the lead's best friend.

There is plenty of opportunity to include queer characters in Universal's upcoming films including *Talent*, a script by lesbian producer and writer Lena Waithe and starring queer actress Cynthia Erivo as a struggling songwriter. There will also be a third *Mamma Mia* film, which has the chance to include a significant plot for gay character Harry. While there have been no updates on *All That Heaven Allows*, the Rock Hudson biopic from out director Greg Berlanti, we hope to see this project move forward, as stories of characters living with HIV are almost entirely absent from major studio releases in recent years.

Focus Features

Summary of 2021 Findings

13 films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints

2 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

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

Focus Features was founded in 2002 by USA Films, Universal Focus, and Good Machine, and produces both its own films and independently acquired films. Focus's expansive inventory of popular LGBTQ-inclusive films include GLAAD Media Award-winners *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), *Milk* (2008), *The Kids Are All Right* (2010), *Pariah* (2011), *Boy Erased* (2018), and GLAAD Media Award nominee *Kajillionaire* (2020).

Stillwater

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,611 THEATERS

This drama follows Bill, a father who is attempting to clear his daughter Allison's name after she was accused of murdering her girlfriend abroad. Though the film could have easily leaned into stereotypes of people in rural areas as being homophobic and had Bill disapprove of his daughter, Bill stood by Allison the entire film and eventually proved her innocence. Allison's innocence also went against the stereotype that often portrays queer women as devious or self-destructive, and simply showed her in love and caught up in an unhealthy relationship. Though the overall story was much more Bill's than Allison's, his acceptance of Allison's sexuality is significant and was a welcome inclusion.

Limbo

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE 213 THEATERS

This film follows a group of refugees in Scotland waiting for their asylum claims to be processed. Farhad, one of the refugees, is from Afghanistan and looks up to Freddie Mercury as an idol. Further into the film, Farhad admits to protagonist Omar that he cannot be himself back home. Omar later confesses that he's never met someone like Farhad, and Farhad replies that he too has never met anyone like himself. Though vague, this dialogue implies that Farhad is gay and is looking for asylum in another country to escape violence or anti-gay persecution.





Lia McHugh as Sprite, Barry Keoghan as Drui, Kumail Nanjiani as Kingo, Bryan Tyree Henry as Phastos, Gemma Chan as Sersi, and Richard Madden as Ikaris, *ETERNALS*

Summary of 2021 Findings

12	films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints
5	total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
42%	percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
2	number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★★★★★	2021	Insufficient
N/A	2020	
★★★★★	2019	Poor
★★★★★	2018	Failing
★★★★★	2017	Poor
★★★★★	2016	Failing
★★★★★	2015	Failing
★★★★★	2014	Failing
★★★★★	2013	Adequate
★★★★★	2012	Failing

Walt Disney is one of the most recognizable studios in the world, with a sweeping international brand that extends far beyond the film industry. The company releases films from Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Animation Studios, DisneyNature, Pixar Animation Studios, Lucasfilm, Marvel Studios, and Touchstone Pictures. In March of 2019, Walt Disney Studios acquired 21st Century Fox, took ownership of 20th Century Fox (renamed 20th Century Studios), 20th Century Fox Animation, Fox Studios Australia, and Fox Searchlight (renamed Searchlight Pictures). They shut down other studios such as Fox 2000 and Blue Sky Animation as part of the acquisition. Since launching streamer Disney+ in November 2019, the studio has experimented with releasing films on the service in lieu of or alongside theatrical release.

Compared to other studios tracked in this report, Walt Disney Studios historically has a particularly poor reputation surrounding LGBTQ inclusion. Some LGBTQ-inclusive releases from Touchstone Pictures include *Ed Wood* (1994), *Sweet Home Alabama* (2002), *Under the Tuscan Sun* (2003), and *Kinky Boots* (2006). *Lucasfilm’s Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985) combined gay Japanese writer Yukio Mishima’s autobiography with parts of his fiction novels, including his love for another man, but was never officially released in Japan due to protests, and was released under Warner Bros. in the U.S. Some of Disney’s more recent inclusive films include *Delivery Man* (2013); *Muppets Most Wanted* (2014); *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) and *Onward* (2020). 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); *Independence Day: Resurgence* (2016); *Love, Simon* (2018); and *The New Mutants* (2020).

Cruella

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,922 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

Though several press outlets reported that Artie, Cruella's friend and fashion co-conspirator, was gay based on statements by the actor or attributes of the character, there is no confirmation of this in the film. Artie displays a style and mannerisms which media has in past used to code a character as gay, e.g. an interest in fashion, over-the-top clothing, and wearing costume makeup, and he decries being "normal," but given that he neither states his identity nor expresses romantic or sexual interest in another man, GLAAD did not include him in our tally.

Eternals

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE 3,980 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The GLAAD Media Award-winning film *Eternals* tells the story of a group of beings sent to watch over the Earth and help humanity to evolve, and is notably the first Marvel film to feature an out gay hero.

This group of heroes includes the gay character Phastos, the inventor and innovator of the group. As the heroes struggle with the weight of their mission, Phastos retreats to live in solitude, disappointed that humanity's search for knowledge led to the Hiroshima bombings. When the rest of the Eternals find him to help face a new threat, Phastos is living a content suburban life with his husband, Ben, and their son, Jack. Phastos expresses that his faith in humanity has been restored through his love for his family and at Ben's urging, Phastos agrees to go with the Eternals on their mission to save the planet in service of saving his family. Showing a family with two fathers – one Black and one Muslim – as one of the greatest aspects of humanity sends an important message, especially given that Phastos, Ben and Jack all survive the film and remain a family unit and will likely return for sequels in the franchise. We urge additional superhero films to follow in *Eternals'* footsteps of including meaningful LGBTQ characters and families in their ensembles.

Free Guy

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,165 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

Free Guy aptly follows Guy, a non-playable character (NPC) in a video game who develops his own thoughts and free will. Over the course of the film, other NPCs join Guy in thinking for themselves. A barista who makes the same drink every day begins making her own espresso drinks, and a "bombshell" character who has been the arm candy of criminal men states "maybe I don't have to be with any guy." At first it was unclear if that was a throwaway line or if the character truly didn't want to be with men anymore, but later on in the film, she tells the barista that she's amazing, and later the two are seen holding hands and embracing. At the very end, the barista's arm is around the bombshell, indicating that they are a couple. Even though the pair ending up together was a fun detail, it was so small that it could be literally categorized as "blink-and-you'll-miss-it" representation. It would have been easy to add a kiss between the characters, or a verbal confirmation of their relationship. Instead, it is a detail most viewers likely missed.

Jungle Cruise

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,310 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

Inspired by the popular Disneyland ride, *Jungle Cruise* follows Dr. Lily Houghton as she's led down the Amazon by her guide Frank Wolff in search of the Tree of Life. Joining Lily is her brother MacGregor, who is very upper-class, physically weak, well-dressed, and not one for wilderness exploration. Midway through the film, Frank asks MacGregor why he is accompanying his sister, and he explains that she has stood by him when no one else in their family has, specifically referring to when he was supposed to marry a woman, but his "interests lay elsewhere." He states, "friends and family turned their backs, all because of who I loved." Frank takes this in stride, and no one in the film judges MacGregor differently for his sexuality. Though it is a step in the right direction to see a gay man in a mainstream adventure comedy, it would have been nice for the film to expand upon his identity past the one scene that confirms it, and perhaps provide a love interest for MacGregor. A sequel has been announced to be in development, and should expand on MacGregor's story.



The King's Man

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,180 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This prequel to the *Kingsman* films delves into the origins of the Kingsman organization starting in WWI. The film features many historical figures, including Rasputin. This version of Rasputin is portrayed as someone who is hypersexual; he is often seen with a woman on each arm, but still references having had sex with men. While audiences see him kissing and touching women, he's never shown in a romantic moment with another man and is killed halfway through the film. Rasputin is portrayed as a lecherous character whose asserted queerness seems to be more in service of clarifying how wild and over-the-top he is rather than any real facet of his identity. The film would have done better to cut any references to his queerness entirely rather than introduce it as a joke.

The Last Duel

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,065 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

The Last Duel, set in medieval France, features group sex scenes with one of the protagonists Jacques Le Gris, his friend Pierre d'Aleçon, and several women. During both scenes neither man touches the other. Though the women are seen sexually interacting with one another – at one point in the background while Jacques and Pierre have a conversation – they are never fleshed out enough as characters for it to be clear whether this stems from their own desires or is simply to please the men. When the women call Pierre to bed, it indicates that the latter is true and he is the object of their sexual desire, not each other. As such, no characters were counted in GLAAD's tally.

West Side Story

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,820 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

In the original musical and film adaptation of *West Side Story*, the character of Anybodys is a girl who is trying to join the gang The Jets. However, in the 2021 version, this character is portrayed as a transgender man, who spends the majority of the film reminding the Jets he is a boy as they constantly misgender him. It's exciting to see a trans character in a high-budget release from a major studio which received significant critical attention, given that trans characters have been invisible from this report in the past five years. However, this is merely a first step; it would have been wonderful to see Anybodys as a fully fleshed out character beyond just his gender identity, and to see more trans characters have life and scope beyond just who they are as trans individuals. Additionally, more trans characters deserve to have their gender affirmed, and not mocked and disregarded by the other characters in the film.



Corporate Actions

In 2021, Disney and Pixar made the queer Pixar short *Out* free to watch on YouTube after its Disney+ launch. That same year, Marvel Studios released the film *Eternals* and did not make cuts that would have lessened or censored the story of Phastos and his husband. The film was subsequently banned in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar. In Indonesia, the film was released with all love scenes, both between the gay couple and the film's straight couples, cut out. Additional content with LGBTQ+ stories were released by the studio that year. As more films begin to include LGBTQ characters with substantial stories, we hope to see more studios standing bravely behind their storytelling and creatives, even if it may potentially mean a loss of profits in some places.

In 2021, Disney released an evergreen line of merchandise in recognition of Pride Month with funds benefiting LGBTQ organizations globally and launched the first Disney+ Pride celebration special. In 2020, The Walt Disney Company joined over 250 other businesses that signed onto HRC's and Freedom For All Americans' Business Statement Opposing Anti-LGBTQ State Legislation. They joined the coalition of Businesses in favor of passing the Equality Act. The Walt Disney Co. received the top rating of 100 on the 2022 Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index. This rating was earned by offering employee benefits that are inclusive of same-sex partners and cover transgender health care, workplace safety policies inclusive of orientation and gender identity, an active LGBTQ employee resource group, and other overall "Efforts of Outreach or Engagement to the Broader LGBTQ Community." The company also has a supplier diversity program for vendors and supports policies for more diverse gender expression for employees. In 2021, Disney was a financial supporter of several LGBTQ organizations, including GLAAD, and events including the 32nd GLAAD Media Awards which streamed on Hulu. Parent company The Walt Disney Company donated more than \$25,000 to anti-LGBTQ politicians. In 2021, no anti-LGBTQ political donations were found from The Walt Disney Studios.

Opportunities Ahead

In June of this year, Pixar released *Lightyear*, which features a lesbian character with a wife and child. Walt Disney Animation released family adventure film *Strange World* this fall which will include Ethan, a co-lead who is gay and has a crush on a boy in his school. Having a gay teen protagonist in a family film is a huge step in the right direction for the genre, and an example we'd like to see more studios follow.

The opportunity for inclusion within the Marvel Cinematic Universe is only growing. America Chavez, a lesbian hero in the comics, appeared in this spring's *Doctor Strange and the Multiverse of Madness*, and we hope to see her identity as a proud Latina lesbian expanded on in future films. This summer's *Thor: Love and Thunder* brought back Valkyrie and Korg, who are both explicitly queer in this film and this fall's *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* includes a very brief moment of affection between characters Aneka and Ayo. Fans also hope to see the return of Phastos and husband Ben in any upcoming *Eternals* sequels. The MCU has the opportunity to both include more queer heroes in the ensemble and put them front and center in the narrative.

Searchlight Pictures

Summary of 2021 Findings

7 films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints

2 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

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

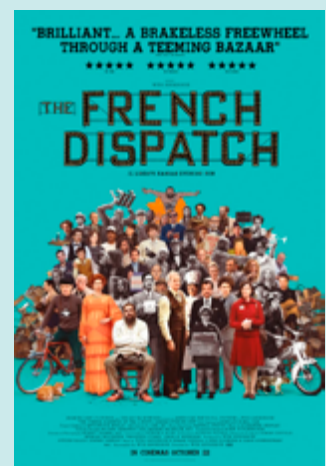
Searchlight Pictures was created in 1994 as a subsidiary of 20th Century Fox and was called Fox Searchlight until the 2019 Disney merger, when it received its current name. The studio continues to release and distribute independent and foreign films in the United States. Searchlight Pictures has launched several prominent LGBTQ-inclusive films, including *Boys Don't Cry* (1999), *Kinsey* (2004), *Battle of the Sexes*, *The Shape of Water* (2017), and *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* (2018).

The Eyes of Tammy Faye

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1,352 THEATERS

This film is based on the true story of televangelists Tammy Faye and Jim Bakker, chronicling their rise to fame and fall from it. Throughout the film, Tammy Faye shows empathy towards the gay community when her counterparts in the faith movement do not. There is a scene in the film where she interviews a Christian pastor who was recently diagnosed with HIV, in an attempt to humanize him to the public and put a face to the crisis, and subsequently gets reprimanded by the network. She also argues with Jerry Falwell Jr. over the church's condemnation of gay people.

There is part of the film that implies that Jim is gay or bisexual, as he is seen playfully wrestling with another man, and allegations later surface about his sexuality. Though Jim denies the allegations, the film purposefully paints his sexual orientation as a mystery, not confirming or denying the truthfulness of these acts.



The French Dispatch

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,180 THEATERS

The French Dispatch is split up into several vignettes. The final story follows food journalist Roebuck Wright, who is set to write about the police commissioner's dinner and ends up being caught up in a kidnapping attempt. Roebuck mentions his sexuality in passing at the beginning, blaming his poor directional sense on "the curse of the homosexual." Later on, when interviewed on a talk show, he speaks more seriously about how he was arrested on the charge of "love." The film takes place in an unknown period of mid 20th century, where being gay was a criminal act. While it would have been interesting to see more of Roebuck's sexuality, the inclusion of his identity helped round out the character and paint a better portrait of a gay, Black journalist at the time.

Warner Bros.

Daphne Rubin-Vega as Daniela, Dascha Polanca as Cuca, and Stephanie Beatriz as Carla, *IN THE HEIGHTS*

Summary of 2021 Findings

17 films released theatrically in 2021 under studio & official imprints

2 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

12% percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

1 number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2021	Poor
N/A	2020	
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2019	Poor
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2018	Insufficient
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2017	Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2016	Poor
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2015	Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2014	Good
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2013	Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2012	Adequate

Warner Bros. was founded by four Polish immigrant brothers as a movie theater business in the early 1900s, and in 1923 formed into a film production studio. In April 2022, WarnerMedia merged with Discovery, Inc. to form Warner Bros. Discovery. Some of the studio's most famous films include *Casablanca*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Goodfellas*, the blockbuster *Harry Potter* franchise, and multiple DC Comics adaptations.

In one of Warner Bros.' most memorable films, *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), Sal Mineo played the tragic character Plato, one of film's earliest notable gay-coded characters. Other LGBTQ-inclusive Warner Bros.' films from the twentieth century include *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975), *The Color Purple* (1985), *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), and *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1997), nearly all of which were based on external source material that included LGBTQ characters. More recent LGBTQ-inclusive films include *Alexander* (2004), *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (2005), *V For Vendetta* (2005), and *J. Edgar* (2011), *Tammy* (2014), *Storks* (2016), *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018), *Isn't It Romantic* (2019), and *Birds of Prey* (2020).

In The Heights

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,509 THEATERS
VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

In the film adaptation of the Tony Award-winning musical set in Washington Heights, Daniela and Carla, two characters from the play who work in the hair salon, are shown as a couple. They wake up in bed together, repeatedly display physical affection, and call each other pet names. This small change from the stage musical signals that the community in the film is an LGBTQ-inclusive one and that Daniela and Carla – two queer women – are integral to that community. As more adaptations make it to the big screen, studios should take note that there is an opportunity to expand upon the stories of characters that may not have been fully explored in the source material.

The Matrix Resurrections

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,552 THEATERS
VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

The Matrix films have long been regarded as a trans allegory, and the newest addition from trans filmmaker Lana Wachowski, recognizes this sentiment. *Resurrections* comments on this in a scene where people discuss a fictional version of *The Matrix*, and one character theorizes that it's about trans politics. Though the film features this symbolism, and the cast includes trans actor Leo Sheng, there are no explicitly trans characters featured in the film. There are also a few hints of queerness: an embrace between characters Freya and Niobe, and one between characters Lex and Bugs. While both could possibly be read as confirmation of their respective relationships, ultimately there was not enough material given for them to be read as explicitly romantic gestures. At one point, the character Berg mentions that Neo's look "totally works for [me]" which could be read as either a confirmation of his sexuality or simply him admiring Neo's new aesthetic. Ultimately, the content was not enough for GLAAD to count any LGBTQ characters in this film as part of its tally.



Reminiscence

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,652 THEATERS
VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This science fiction film is based around a machine that can show people their memories and let them relive those precious moments. During a montage that introduces the technology in the beginning of the film, there is a brief moment where the voiceover says, "who wouldn't want to be reunited with a loved one?" Onscreen, a man in the machine relives tender romantic moments with another man. The scene is only a few seconds long, a clear case of "blink-and-you'll-miss-it" representation, and their five second appearance adds nothing of substance to the film.

The Suicide Squad

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,019 THEATERS
VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

The Suicide Squad is the next entry in the DC Extended Universe and features multiple characters who are confirmed as queer in other franchises. While previous films and series have included bi identities for Harley Quinn and Peacemaker, both members of the main ensemble of *The Suicide Squad*, their sexualities are not discussed here. Harley's only relationship shown on screen is with a man, and Peacemaker's bisexuality was only confirmed in a separate series months after this film was released. Watching *The Suicide Squad* with no external context, no LGBTQ characters are specifically seen as such on screen. GLAAD urges further DC films to follow the lead of their television and comic book counterparts, where several leading characters are unambiguously portrayed as queer.

Corporate Actions

WarnerMedia was owned by parent company AT&T through mid-2022, and subsequently was acquired by Discovery Inc. Going forward, they will be evaluated as Warner Bros. Discovery and will move forward as a part of that company. Though the company is under new leadership today, our report will focus solely on the information from the 2021 calendar year, under AT&T's ownership.

AT&T has previously signed on to briefs sent to the Supreme Court in support of LGBTQ equal rights and has donated to LGBTQ groups, most significantly supporting The Trevor Project's work. In 2020, WarnerMedia joined over 250 other businesses that signed onto HRC's and Freedom For All American's Business Statement Opposing Anti-LGBTQ State Legislation. AT&T joined the coalition of Businesses in favor of passing the Equality Act. In 2021, AT&T received a top score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index for inclusive benefits, healthcare, workplace protection policies, and having an active LGBTQ employee resource group. The company also has a supplier diversity program to evaluate the vendors the company does business with. WarnerMedia launched a production diversity policy in 2018 which includes an annual report on DEI efforts by the company and has run talent programs to help underrepresented directors and writers enter the industry pipeline for several years. WarnerMedia financially supported LGBTQ events and organizations, including GLAAD, in 2021. In 2021, no anti-LGBTQ political donations were found by WarnerMedia. Parent company AT&T donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to anti-LGBTQ politicians.

Warner Bros. has continued and expanded their working relationship with anti-trans activist and *Harry Potter* author JK Rowling with the *Fantastic Beasts* franchise and *Harry Potter* video games. This year a spokesperson noted they are "proud to be the studio to bring her vision, characters, and stories to life now – and for decades to come." As Rowling continues to incite hate and misinformation about transgender people through op-eds, interviews, and social media – recent bill proposals have quoted her directly – the studios' continued support and validation of her is particularly dangerous and irresponsible.

Opportunities Ahead

WarnerMedia is releasing a musical adaptation of the Broadway show *The Color Purple*. Though the previous film adaptation erased the queerness of main character Celie, the musical features her romance with Shug Avery, and the new adaption should as well. Additionally, the sequel to *Crazy Rich Asians* remains in development, as well as an announced spinoff film, and these projects will hopefully include gay character Oliver from the original film and give him a larger storyline.

There are several upcoming films slated within the DC Universe for WarnerMedia. Two of their most popular characters, Harley Quinn and Wonder Woman, are bisexual in the comics, though that representation has yet to be fully translated onscreen (though Harley's bisexuality was briefly referenced in 2020's *Birds of Prey*.)

This spring, WarnerMedia released *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore*, the latest iteration of the *Harry Potter* franchise. Though waves of press reported ahead of release that there would be confirmation that Dumbledore is gay, the moment itself turned out to be insignificant and was ultimately banned in several countries. Furthermore, the larger issue remains that the *Harry Potter* franchise continues to financially benefit JK Rowling, whose ongoing hateful and incorrect comments about the transgender community are dangerous and harmful. Any connection to Rowling actively harms the LGBTQ community, despite any small moments of inclusion in the film itself.

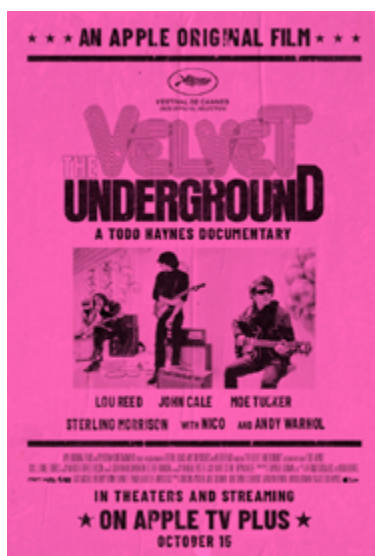
GLAAD previously spoke about the inclusion of trans character Alysia Yeoh in the upcoming *Batgirl*, though the film was shockingly canceled this summer and will not be released though filming had completed. Horror comedy *The Parenting*, which centers on a gay couple meeting each other's parents, will be released on HBO Max as opposed to a Warner Bros. theatrical release. *Camp*, following a romance at a queer teen summer camp and directed by Billy Porter, will also get an HBO Max release.

Streaming
Video

&

Additional
Distributors

Streaming Video



Apple TV+

Apple Inc. has produced and distributed original content since 2016 and launched its streaming service Apple TV+ in 2019. The streamer offers a selection of exclusive film and television series called Apple Originals. In 2021, Apple released the documentary *The Velvet Underground*, which touched on gay culture and Lou Reed's queerness. They also released *Palmer*, about a cisgender straight man growing close with a gender-nonconforming child and eventually raising them, however, this movie fell into the trap of focusing on the straight man's redemption more than anything else. Apple also released the filmed musical *Come From Away*, which features a gay couple in the ensemble.



Amazon Prime Video

Amazon Prime Video and in-house Amazon Studios have distributed original content since 2013 and original films since 2018. In May 2022, Amazon acquired Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, allowing MGM to continue operating as a label alongside them. Previous LGBTQ-inclusive releases from Amazon include GLAAD Media Award winners and nominees *Brittany Runs a Marathon* (2019) and *Uncle Frank* (2020). In 2021, Amazon released GLAAD Media Award nominee *Everybody's Talking about Jamie*, a film that was originally slated to be a Disney release, but was moved to the streamer. The musical film follows a young man discovering the art of drag and the community that grows to surround him. Amazon also released documentaries *My Name is Pauli Murray*, about the queer trailblazing civil rights activist and *Mayor Pete*, which followed out gay politician Pete Buttigieg on his run for President.

Streaming Video



HBO Max

Newly launched in 2020 by parent company WarnerMedia, HBO Max encompasses an extensive library including Warner Bros.' theatrical releases and original films. Previous LGBTQ-inclusive releases include GLAAD Media Award nominees *La Layanra Negra* (2020) and *Unpregnant* (2020). In 2021, HBO Max released documentary *LFG*, which followed the U.S. National Womens' Soccer team's fight for equal pay. Out athlete Megan Rapinoe was a central focus of the doc, speaking on her experience as a gay woman in the league and her relationship with WNBA player Sue Bird. The streamer also released the documentary *Eyes on the Prize: Hallowed Ground*, a continuation of docuseries *Eyes on the Prize*, following the Black liberation movement and highlighting how it intersects with the queer and trans movements. HBO Max also released heist film *Locked Down*, where one of the protagonists has an affair with another woman, though she is reunited with her male partner by the end.



Hulu

Hulu has released original films since its 2017 documentary *Batman and Bill*. The streamer was acquired by Disney in 2019 and handled previously scheduled theatrical releases when the 2020 pandemic shuttered theaters which greatly increased their content and included GLAAD Media Award-winning film *Happiest Season* (2020). In 2021, Hulu released GLAAD Media Award-winning documentary *Changing the Game*, which follows four transgender teen athletes across the country, looking at their daily lives, families, and communities. Comedy *Plan B* came out on Hulu in 2021, and followed two best friends on a quest for the morning-after pill. Midway through the film, it's revealed that one of the friends has a crush on another girl. Hulu also released biopic *The United States vs Billie Holiday* about the infamous bisexual singer, which delves into her relationship with Tallulah Bankhead. However, the film noticeably cuts back on the physicality compared to Holiday's relationships with men.

Streaming Video



Netflix

Netflix has been distributing original films since *Beasts of No Nation* in 2015, and in the wake of the pandemic shutting down theaters in 2020, has purchased and released several films originally scheduled for theatrical releases. Notable LGBTQ-inclusive highlights include GLAAD Media Award nominees and recipients *Tig* (2015), *The Boys in the Band* (2020), *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (2020), *The Half of It* (2020), *Alice Júnior* (2020), *Disclosure* (2020), *Mucho Mucho Amor: The Legend of Walter Mercado* (2020) and more. In 2021, Netflix released its adaptation of Jonathan Larson's autobiographical musical *Tick, Tick... Boom!*, which includes Michael, a gay character with HIV and Larson's best friend, as well as the community of queer people surrounding Larson. Another notable 2021 Netflix project is *The Mitchells Vs. The Machines*, an animated family film that follows queer filmmaker and daughter Katie, along with the rest of the Mitchell family, as they attempt to subvert a robot apocalypse. Last year also saw the release of the *Fear Street* films, a trilogy of horror films that told a love story between two women in both the 90s and the 1600s; Christmas film *Single All the Way*, about a young man who pretends to date his best friend, while his family sets him up with a new handsome man, forcing him to choose; and documentary *Pray Away*, a look into the so-called "conversion therapy" movement of the '70s told from the survivors and ex-leaders' perspective. All of the above films were nominated for GLAAD Media Awards. Other LGBTQ-inclusive films include *Bruised*, *Carnaval*, *Good on Paper*, *Lulli*, *Moxie*, *Operation Hyacinth*, *Sentinelle*, and more.



Paramount+

Paramount's streaming service launched in 2014 as CBS All Access and introduced original programming in 2016. As CBS re-merged into Viacom to form ViacomCBS in 2019 (now Paramount Global), the company expanded its library of content to include Paramount Pictures and officially relaunched as Paramount+ in 2021. Last year, Paramount+ released the short documentary and GLAAD Media Award recipient *Coded: The Hidden Love of J.C. Leyendecker*, which explored the untold story of the titular illustrator, highlighting both how he coded his queerness into his art and its influence on popular culture. Hopefully in the future, Paramount+ will create meaningful feature-length LGBTQ stories as well.

Additional Film Distributors



Bleecker Street

Founded in 2014 by former Focus Features co-CEO Andrew Karpen and named after Focus Features' street address, Bleecker Street is a NYC-based American film distribution company. Past LGBTQ-inclusive films from Bleecker include *Disobedience*, *Collette*, and *McQueen* (2018). In 2021, Bleecker Street released *Supernova*, a film about a gay couple that takes a road trip across the UK for their last chance to make memories as one of them suffers from Alzheimer's. They also released *The World to Come*, a romantic drama set in rural New York in the 1800s between two women, Tallie and Abigail. Unfortunately, the film falls into the "Bury Your Gays" trope, as Tallie dies at the end of the film, and their relationship is defined by tragedy. In 2021 Bleecker Street released comedy *Together Together* which stars Patti Harrison as Anna, a surrogate, and includes her friend Jules, a queer coworker. Dramedy *Indian Sweets and Spices* also contains a minor gay character, Nitin, who is out and accepted by his family.



Dark Star Pictures

Founded in 2017 by Breaking Glass Pictures executive Michael Repsch, Dark Star Pictures is a new-age North American distribution company that specializes in producing unique, targeted content and servicing distribution companies and producers in theatrical, digital, and festival spaces. The company began releasing films in 2018. This year, Dark Star released GLAAD Media Award nominated film *Tu Me Manques*, based on a true story of a man who lost his lover, and put on a play with an all-queer cast dedicated to his memory, which resulted in cultural change in his home country of Bolivia.



IFC Films

IFC films has distributed independent films since its founding in 2000, such as genre films (including horror and thrillers) through their IFC Midnight branch, and festival favorites from Sundance Selects. Some LGBTQ-inclusive films from IFC over the years include *Weekend* (2011); *Jenny's Wedding* (2015); *A Kid Like Jake* (2018); *Vita and Virginia* (2019); and *Summerland* (2020). In 2021, IFC released *The Novice*, a thrilling drama following a young queer rower who would do anything it takes to make the team. They also released *The Nowhere Inn*, a music mockumentary following queer musician St. Vincent and queer filmmaker and musician Carrie Brownstein as versions of themselves. The movie included a storyline where St. Vincent started dating Dakota Johnson (also playing a version of herself). *Benedetta*, a sexploitation film from IFC and Paul Verhoven, follows a nun who believes she is a saint and begins a sexual relationship with another nun in the convent. The film received a mixed response from the queer community, many calling the film exploitative of lesbian sex for shock value. In 2021 IFC distributed the drama *Moffie*, which tells the story of two soldiers in South Africa who have an intimate relationship despite the homophobic and violent regime they work under. Other LGBTQ-inclusive films released by IFC include *The Dry*, *We Need to Do Something*, and *Werewolves Within*.

Additional Film Distributors



Indican Pictures

Founded by Randolph Kret and Shaun Hill, Indican Pictures is an American entertainment company that acquires and distributes independent feature films spanning many genres to a broad range of entertainment outlets. In 2021, Indican released GLAAD Media Award-nominated drama *Gossamer Folds* which tracks an unlikely friendship between a young boy and a trans woman, emphasizing how they both change each other's lives for the better.



Magnolia Pictures

Magnolia Pictures was founded in 2001 and is a subsidiary of 2929 Entertainment, specializing in independent and international releases. Past LGBTQ-inclusive highlights include *Tangerine* (2015), *The Handmaiden* (2016), *Whose Streets* (2017), and *Skate Kitchen* (2018). In 2021, they released GLAAD Media Award-nominated film *Swan Song*, which details a gay retired hairstylist who escapes his Ohio nursing home to style a now deceased client, eventually delving into how his past led him to this moment. Magnolia also released *Two of Us*, a French film about two older women in a relationship and how an accident brings their families into the know.



Momentum Pictures

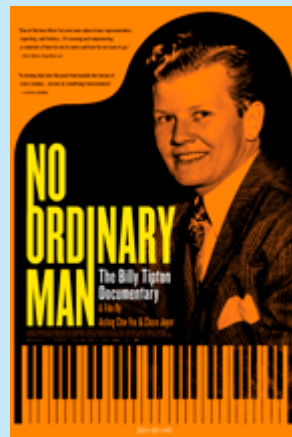
Previously a leading independent distributor in the UK and Ireland as a brand of Canadian company Alliance Films, Momentum Pictures is a film distributor and has since 2013 been a subsidiary of Entertainment One which is in turn a subsidiary of Hasbro. In 2015, Momentum Pictures embarked on a joint venture with Orion Pictures to acquire films for distribution in North America and internationally. Momentum released GLAAD Media Award-nominated film *Port Authority* in 2021, which follows a young man who moves to New York, falls in love with a trans woman, and in turn learns about the ballroom world.

Additional Film Distributors



NEON

Founded in 2017, NEON has released a number of successful and far-reaching independent films. This includes the critically acclaimed sapphic French romance *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* (2019) as well as drama *Ammonite* (2020). In 2021, NEON released GLAAD Media Award and Academy Award-nominated animated documentary *Flee*, which depicts a man's journey as a refugee and his love story with his boyfriend. NEON also released *Ailey*, a documentary that paints a portrait of iconic dancer Alvin Ailey, his contributions to the art form, his identity as a gay Black man, and his eventual HIV diagnosis and death. Out actress Kristen Stewart starred in NEON's historical drama *Spencer*, which followed one horrific weekend in the life of Princess Diana (Stewart). The film includes Maggie as one of Diana's hairdressers who happens to be in love with the Princess. When she eventually confesses these feelings, Diana meets her with nothing but kindness.



Oscilloscope Laboratories

Oscilloscope Laboratories is an NYC-based independent feature film company founded by Adam Yauch and THINKFilm executive David Fenkel (who later co-founded A24). Oscilloscope signed a deal with Warner Bros. Digital Distribution in 2009 and is currently headed by Dan Berger. In 2021, they released GLAAD Media award nominated documentary *No Ordinary Man*, which tells the story of trans musician Billy Tipton through the lens of trans performers and artists.



Strand Releasing

Strand Releasing started in 1989 as a distribution company specifically for LGBTQ films, but have since expanded their repertoire to encompass a greater range of films while not losing sight of their LGBTQ-inclusive roots. Past inclusive films include *The Living End* (1992); *Yossi and Jagger* (2002); documentary *Mala Mala* (2014) which traverses Puerto Rico's queer and trans community; GLAAD Media Award nominee *Monsoon* (2020); *Straight Up* (2020); and Guatemalan drama *José* (2020). In 2021, Strand released GLAAD Media Award-nominated film *Twilight's Kiss*, which chronicles two older men in Hong Kong who begin a relationship, and delves into the reality of being gay in your elder years. Strand also released romantic drama *Cicada*, which follows a young bisexual man's struggle to overcome his childhood trauma while he falls for a young Black man recovering from a shooting. Another 2021 Strand film, *Minyan*, follows a young Jewish man in the '80s coming to terms with his sexuality and his place in the community.

Additional Film Distributors



Utopia

Co-founded by filmmaker Robert Schwartzman and Cole Harper in 2018, Utopia is a film production, distribution and sales company that focuses on independent and documentary cinema. In 2020, Utopia launched technology platform Altavod, which gives filmmakers full control to distribute their films, and division Utopia Originals, which specializes in the development, packaging, and sales of film and television projects. In 2021, Utopia released *Shiva Baby*, a GLAAD Media Award-nominated dark comedy that follows a young bisexual woman who has a series of uncomfortable encounters with the older man she's sleeping with for money and his wife, as well as a girl she used to hook up with in high school.



Vertical Entertainment

Vertical Entertainment has distributed independent films in theaters and on demand since its 2012 founding. Past LGBTQ-inclusive films include GLAAD Media Award-winning *Other People* (2016) and GLAAD Media Award-nominated *The True Adventures of Wolfboy* (2020). In 2021, Vertical released *Breaking Fast*, a GLAAD Media Award-nominated romantic comedy between a Muslim man who just ended a relationship and an American man he meets on the first day of Ramadan.



Wolfe

Founded in 1985, Wolfe Releasing is the oldest and largest North American distributor of LGBTQ films. Previous studio releases include 2004's *Brother to Brother*, an unprecedented exploration of Black gay culture during the Harlem Renaissance; *Tomboy* (2011); GLAAD Media Award nominees *Boy Meets Girl* (2015) and *Naz and Maalik* (2015); *An Almost Ordinary Summer* (2020); and *Good Kisser* (2020). In 2021, Wolfe released GLAAD Media Award-nominee *The Obituary of Tunde Johnson*, which follows a young gay Black man who is forced to relive the day he was shot over and over again. They also released *Milkwater*, a film about a young woman who decides to be a surrogate for a gay man and features a rich queer ensemble.

Acknowledgements

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

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