

2023

# Studio Responsibility Index



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

Last year, GLAAD released the milestone tenth edition of its annual *Studio Responsibility Index (SRI)*, which tracks the quantity, quality, and diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) characters in theatrical film slates from major studios. Over the last decade, the percentage of LGBTQ-inclusive films grew by 50 percent, or 1.5 times, in large part due to GLAAD's annual study, alongside work with studio leadership and creatives.

We know that the stories told in those films have been an inextricable part of a culture-shift seen and experienced by the LGBTQ community with support for LGBTQ people and acceptance at an all-time high. More people are now empowered to live authentically and openly; 1 in 5 members of Gen Z are LGBT per Gallup. MRI-Simmons polling found that LGBTQ-inclusive entertainment is important to over 2 in 5 of all American adults. Their July 2023 study showed that half of American adults say they like to see transgender or nonbinary characters in film and TV, and 42 percent of American adults agree it is important to them that the content they watch include characters who represent the LGBTQ community.

Hollywood has accelerated acceptance for LGBTQ people worldwide with stories including *Blockers*, *Love, Simon*, *Booksmart*, *Strange World*, *Bros*, *Fire Island*, *Anything's Possible*, and many more.

Hollywood has accelerated acceptance for LGBTQ people worldwide with stories like those seen in this and previous editions of our *SRI*, including *Blockers*, *Love, Simon*, *Booksmart*, *Strange World*, *Bros*, *Fire Island*, *Anything's Possible*, and many more.

The runaway success of the new queer rom-com *Red, White, & Royal Blue* proves that LGBTQ stories are a win for the bottom line when paired with meaningful marketing and publicity budgets—the

title was the number one movie worldwide on Prime Video in its opening weekend and sparked a “huge surge of new Prime membership” sign ups per reporting by Amazon.

As GLAAD looks towards progress needed in the next decade of LGBTQ films with this 11<sup>th</sup> edition of our annual study, there is incredible opportunity for outstanding, groundbreaking, and diverse characters and stories.

As audiences have more choices than ever on what to watch, these stories will continue to change culture and win those audiences as subscribers and theatergoers.

It's no secret that the entertainment industry at-large is in a time of consequential change. The first decade of GLAAD's *SRI* focused on films which were released theatrically from major studio distributors. As studios experiment with new models of distribution for films and audiences' habits to continue to evolve, this was the time to update our study to also track the quantity, quality, and diversity of LGBTQ people from major streaming services reaching mass audiences. GLAAD analyzed the 2022 slates of ten top studio distributors and their subsidiary labels to see where LGBTQ characters are being featured and identify priorities for increasing and improving LGBTQ storytelling.



**LGBTQ stories are a win for the bottom line when paired with meaningful marketing and publicity budgets.**

**For the first time, three studios have earned a grade of “Good” based on the quality, quantity, and diversity of the distributor’s LGBTQ-inclusive films—A24, NBCUniversal, and The Walt Disney Company.**

As the scope of this study widened, it became clear that this edition would also feature a notable first. For the first time, three studios have earned a grade of “Good” based on the quality, quantity, and diversity of the distributor’s LGBTQ-inclusive films—A24, NBCUniversal, and The Walt Disney Company (No studio has ever received an “Excellent” rating). In particular, The Walt Disney Company, the only distributor tracked which owns multiple streaming services, saw significant improvements against previous tracking because of streaming originals—including the GLAAD Media Award-winning *Fire Island*, *Crush*, *Zombies 3* and more.

The outstanding LGBTQ characters and stories found in this year’s study are not possible without the work of talented writers, actors, directors, and crew on all levels, GLAAD firmly stands in solidarity with the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) and the Writer’s Guild of America (WGA) in their efforts and contributions to fair and accurate storytelling integral to the LGBTQ movement. It is crucial that The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) reach a fair deal with striking writers and

creators—that these talented creatives can return to work as soon as possible, so that the progress made in LGBTQ representation remains on track.

As we look to the next decade, Hollywood must deepen its work by investing in talent and resources to improve inclusive storytelling and marketing, as well as ensuring studio distributors use the power of their brand and platform to stand as an ally against discrimination and hate—something research has proven both consumers and employees want to see.

GLAAD research shows that seven in 10 non-LGBTQ adults believe companies should publicly support the LGBTQ community. Further, U.S. employees 18-34 are 5X more likely to want to work at a company that publicly supports and demonstrates a commitment to expanding and protecting LGBTQ rights. American consumers are also interested in purchasing from companies who support the community and are twice as likely to buy or use a brand if the brand publicly supports and demonstrates a commitment to expanding and protecting LGBTQ rights per polling from the Edelman Trust Institute. Hollywood needs to stand with the community.

**Hollywood needs to stand with the community.**

While some studios and parent companies continued to donate to anti-LGBTQ politicians at negligible levels or not at all, parent companies for NBCUniversal and The Walt Disney Company both contributed significant donations to anti-LGBTQ lawmakers and committees in states that are increasingly hostile for LGBTQ people. These donations are a disappointing step from companies who created outstanding LGBTQ stories. Of note, Disney suspended all political donations in Florida in March of 2022. We'd like to see all corporations reexamine their political giving strategies to align with their overall stated inclusion efforts and impactful storytelling.

The GLAAD Media Institute (GMI) continues to serve as a unique center of excellence and a resource to the creative community and our partners at studio distributors and production companies. Of those inclusive films tracked in this year's study, our GMI consulted on the content of 11%. Five of these titles were released theatrically and made a combined global box office of over \$450 million. Our team looks forward to an eventual return to storytelling when all parties are fairly supported and strong partnerships throughout the next decade of great LGBTQ movies that will change culture.

As this year's SRI shows, there is significant work to be done today if distributors hope to be in a better place and remain relevant to a quickly growing population when the SRI closes its second decade in 2033.

**The GLAAD Media Institute (GMI) continues to serve as a unique center of excellence and a resource to the creative community and our partners at studio distributors and production companies.**



Thank you for your support.  
In solidarity,

**Sarah Kate Ellis,**  
President & CEO, GLAAD

## 2022 OVERALL FINDINGS, BY STUDIO

**A24** RATING / **GOOD**

36%

14 TOTAL FILMS / 5 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

**Amazon Studios** RATING / **FAIR**

34%

35 TOTAL FILMS / 12 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

**Apple TV+** RATING / **POOR**

18%

11 TOTAL FILMS / 2 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

**Lionsgate** RATING / **FAILING**

17%

6 TOTAL FILMS / 1 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

**NBCUniversal** RATING / **GOOD**

24%

37 TOTAL FILMS / 9 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

**Netflix** RATING / **FAIR**

22%

107 TOTAL FILMS / 24 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

**Paramount Global** RATING / **FAIR**

29%

24 TOTAL FILMS / 7 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

**Sony Pictures Entertainment** RATING / **INSUFFICIENT**

21%

38 TOTAL FILMS / 8 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

**The Walt Disney Company** RATING / **GOOD**

41%

59 TOTAL FILMS / 24 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

**Warner Bros. Discovery** RATING / **INSUFFICIENT**

42%

19 TOTAL FILMS / 8 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

## Executive Summary

As the *Studio Responsibility Index* moves into its second decade, the methodology has been expanded to reflect changes in how films are distributed today. This year, GLAAD is counting 10 studio distributors in this report, including key streaming services as well as rolling up the arthouse labels of major studios to their parent company. The 10 distributors tracked in this report are: A24, Amazon Studios, AppleTV+, Lionsgate, NBCUniversal, Netflix, Paramount Global, Sony Pictures Entertainment, The Walt Disney Company, and Warner Bros. Discovery.

- The 10 distributors combined released 350 films in 2022. **Of those 350 films, 100 (28.5 percent) contain an LGBTQ character.** This is the highest number and percentage recorded in the 11 years GLAAD has conducted this study, though it must be considered that the number of films tracked has exponentially increased this year under new methodology.
- GLAAD counted 292 LGBTQ characters across the 100 LGBTQ-inclusive films. Of those characters, **117 (40 percent)** are characters of color. This is a slight increase from last year's percentage.
- Of the **292 LGBTQ characters counted, 163 of them were men, 119 were women, and 10 were nonbinary.** Seven of the women characters and six of the men characters were transgender.
- This is an increase in the percentage of women, though parity has still not been reached. This marks a record high number of nonbinary characters found in a single year.
- **Twelve** of the 350 films GLAAD counted included transgender characters, a record high for this report.
- **Over half of LGBTQ characters (56 percent, 165 of 292) clocked under five minutes of screen time.** Of the 292 LGBTQ characters, 86 (29 percent of total LGBTQ characters) had less than one minute of screentime. While 95 characters (33 percent) clocked over ten minutes, 32 (11 percent) were between five and ten minutes, and 79 (27 percent) clocked between one and five minutes.
- **Eleven LGBTQ characters (four percent) were counted with a disability.** This is a record high for this report, but still vastly underrepresents the actual population of queer people with disabilities. **Only one of those characters was living with HIV.**

## Methodology

In this report, GLAAD centered its research and analysis on ten studio distributors including any subsidiary distribution labels and majority owned streaming services, which were chosen based on a combination of theatrical box office grosses, Nielsen rankings, cultural and media recognition factors, and breadth of original programming. This report examines films released in the 2022 calendar year (January 1 - December 31) in the United States which were distributed under official studio banners and imprints as reported by Box Office Mojo, the studios and their official channels, and other relevant entertainment reporting sources. The ten distributors examined are in alphabetical order:

- A24
- Amazon (this includes Amazon Studios, Amazon Prime, United Artists Releasing and MGM)
- Apple TV+
- Lionsgate
- NBCUniversal (this includes Universal Pictures, Focus Features, and Peacock)
- Netflix
- Paramount Global (this includes Paramount Pictures and Paramount+)
- Sony Pictures Entertainment (this includes Sony Pictures, Sony Pictures Classics, and Crunchyroll)
- The Walt Disney Company (this includes The Walt Disney Studios, 20th Century Studios, Searchlight Pictures, Disney+, and Hulu)
- Warner Bros. Discovery (this includes Warner Bros. and Max)

GLAAD did not include any theatrical re-releases or special events such as filmed live events in this count. Additionally, films which first premiered on a linear television channel were not counted in this tally. For the purposes of this study, GLAAD included feature films and documentaries which had an official run time of 65 minutes or more. The total number of films that met our criteria from the above distributors in the 2022 calendar year was 350.

As film releasing patterns have expanded in recent years, streaming services owned by major studio distributors have begun distributing original films in addition to building a library of externally owned titles. As streaming services gain increased legitimacy through critical acclaim, high profile talent acquisitions, industry reporting, and original film outputs similar to theatrical distributors, this year GLAAD has expanded its methodology to include key streaming services in its evaluation.

In previous editions of this study, GLAAD analyzed the films released

under smaller studio imprints and “art house” divisions separately from the theatrical releases of their parent label. This was done to compare the quantity and quality of LGBTQ representations in these studios’ releases directly to those from parent companies, which typically receive wider release. As the film industry and distribution cycle evolve, GLAAD will now evaluate the overall annual slate of releases, both theatrical and streaming, from all labels of a company as one unit with one overall grade.

For the purposes of this study, GLAAD included studio or label distributed films which were either released theatrically in the U.S. and/or which were ordered from the company’s U.S. production wing. Films which were not released theatrically in the U.S. and which were ordered, developed, and produced by international hubs that operate separately from the primary studio were not included, though some of those films are available to watch on streaming services in the U.S. This type of independent content production is not currently a common practice in U.S. based studios and was seen primarily from Netflix.

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 those characters screen time, race/ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The films were also reviewed for the presence of anti-LGBTQ language, “humor,” or stereotypes. Such issues must be considered in context and will be highlighted in the qualitative analysis where applicable, but this language is not quantified in this report.

Each film was assigned to one of six genre categories:

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

The family category includes animated and children’s films rated PG and under. The category of fantasy/science fiction/action includes 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 campaign.

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 in categorizing characters based solely

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

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

Based on the overall quantity, quality, and diversity of LGBTQ representation in a company’s total slate of films, a grade was then assigned to each distributor: Excellent, Good, Fair, Insufficient, Poor, or Failing.

Please note: The previous five editions of this study graded studios on a five point scale of Excellent, Good, Insufficient, Poor, or Failing. Prior to the 2017 report, GLAAD assigned studios scores on a four-point scale of Excellent, Good, Adequate, or Failing. The expansion of graded rankings has been made in service of allowing further nuance in evaluating a distributor’s overall quantity, quality, and diversity of LGBTQ inclusion in its annual slate.

In 2020, due to the unique disruption to theatrical distribution from the COVID-19 global pandemic, GLAAD did not issue traditional grades to the studios in that year’s study, but rather, all studios received a rating of “Not Applicable.” In last year’s report, each studio’s grade included an additional evaluation of a studio and parent company’s public actions and communications with regard to the LGBTQ community. That material has not been considered in grades this year.

## Vito Russo Test

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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.

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.

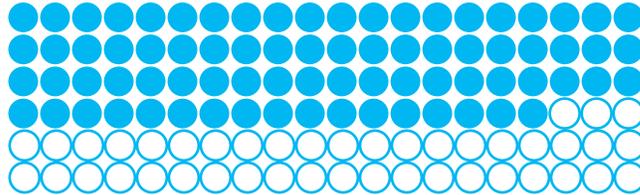
## For a film to pass the Vito Russo Test, the following must be true:

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

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

**2022** 77% (77 OF 100) OR 22% OF 350 TOTAL FILMS



**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



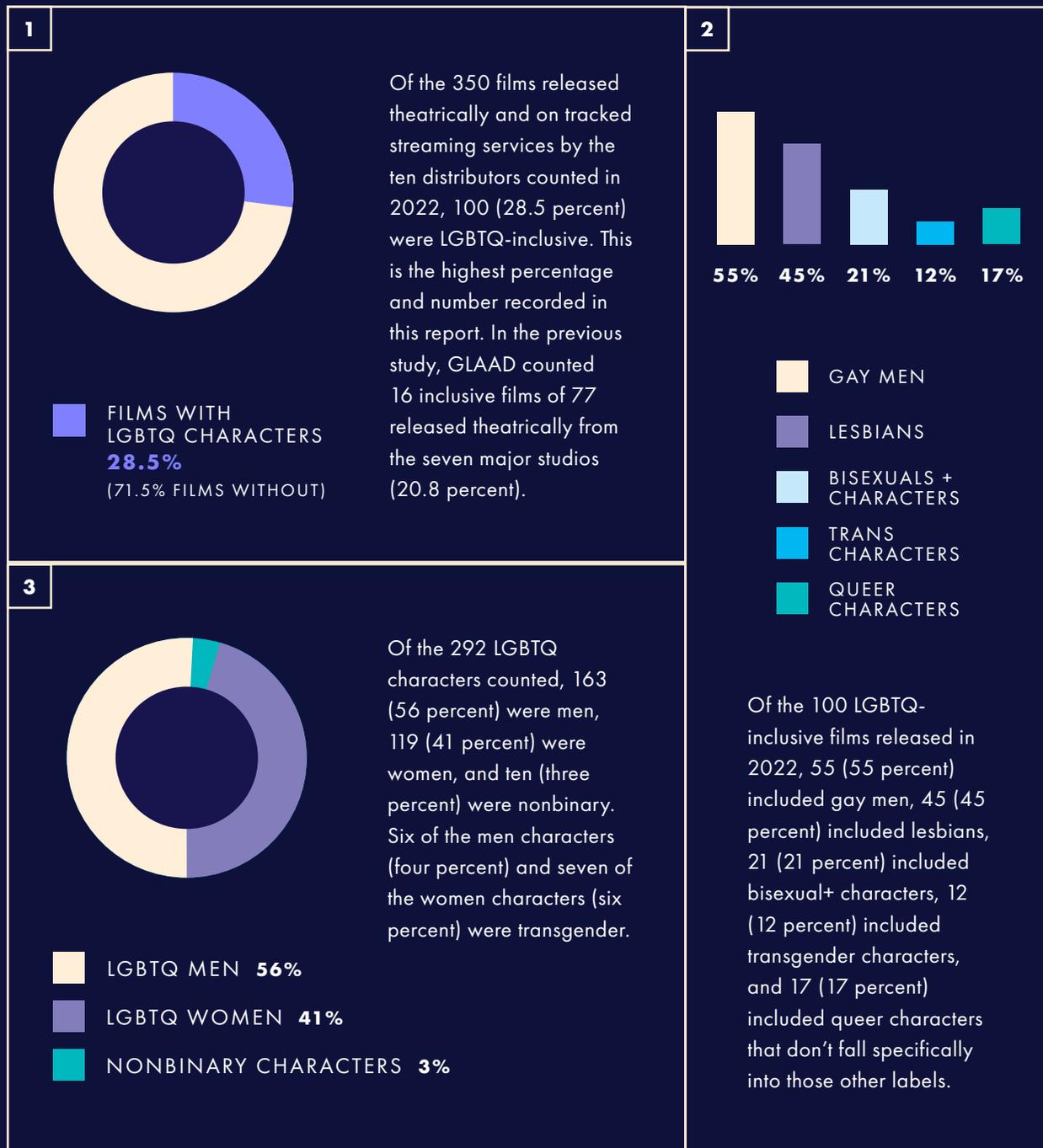
**2013** 41% (7 OF 17) OR 7% OF 102 TOTAL FILMS



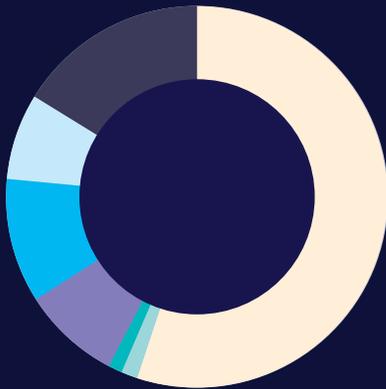
**2012** 43% (6 OF 14) OR 6% OF 101 TOTAL FILMS



# Overview Of Findings



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- WHITE LGBTQ CHARACTERS **59%**
- BLACK LGBTQ CHARACTERS **17%**
- LATINE LGBTQ CHARACTERS **6%**
- API LGBTQ CHARACTERS **9%**
- MULTIRACIAL LGBTQ CHARACTERS **7%**
- INDIGENOUS LGBTQ CHARACTERS **1%**
- MENA LGBTQ CHARACTERS **1%**

Of the 292 LGBTQ characters counted, 117 (40 percent) are characters of color. Of all the LGBTQ characters, 173 (59 percent) are white, 50 (17 percent) are Black, 17 (six percent) are Latine, 26 (nine percent) are API, 19 are multiracial (seven percent), three are MENA (one percent) and two are indigenous (one percent). Two further characters (one percent) are non-human.

5

Of the 292 LGBTQ characters found this year, GLAAD counted eleven (four percent) characters with disabilities.

6



- OVER 10 MINUTES **33%**
- 5-10 MINUTES **11%**
- 1-5 MINUTES **27%**
- UNDER 1 MINUTE **29%**

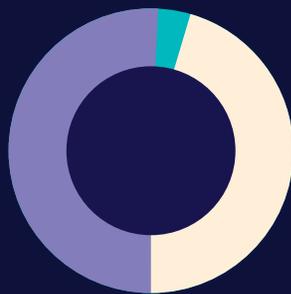
Of the 292 LGBTQ characters, 95 (33 percent) appeared in over ten minutes of screentime, 32 (11 percent) had between five and ten minutes of screentime, 79 (27 percent) had between one and five minutes of screen time, and 86 (29 percent) clocked under one minute.

7

This year, comedy was the most inclusive genre of films by percentage, while drama was the most inclusive by number. This was the first year GLAAD began counting horror as a singular category; previous reports included it as part of the fantasy/fantasy genre category.

- COMEDY**  
73 TOTAL FILMS / 32 INCLUSIVE (44%)
- DRAMA**  
83 TOTAL FILMS / 33 INCLUSIVE (40%)
- HORROR**  
32 TOTAL FILMS / 7 INCLUSIVE (22%)
- ANIMATED/FAMILY**  
39 TOTAL FILMS / 8 INCLUSIVE (21%)
- DOCUMENTARY**  
73 TOTAL FILMS / 12 INCLUSIVE (16%)
- ACTION/SCI-FI/FANTASY**  
50 TOTAL FILMS / 8 INCLUSIVE (16%)

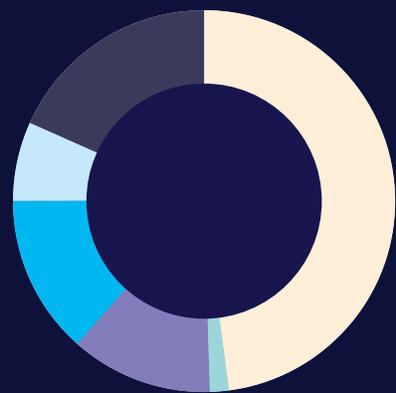
8



Of the 95 characters that had over ten minutes of screentime, 45 were men (47 percent), 48 were women (51 percent), and two were nonbinary (two percent).

- LGBTQ MEN **47%**
- LGBTQ WOMEN **51%**
- NONBINARY CHARACTERS **2%**

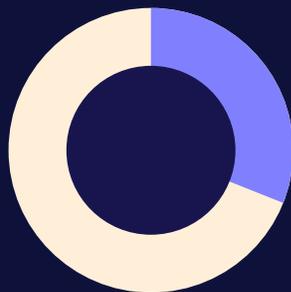
9



- WHITE LGBTQ CHARACTERS **47%**
- BLACK LGBTQ CHARACTERS **19%**
- LATINE LGBTQ CHARACTERS **4%**
- API LGBTQ CHARACTERS **14%**
- MULTIRACIAL LGBTQ CHARACTERS **13%**
- INDIGENOUS LGBTQ CHARACTERS **0%**
- MENA LGBTQ CHARACTERS **2%**

Of the 95 characters that had over ten minutes of screentime, 45 (47 percent) were white, 18 (19 percent) were Black, four (four percent) were Latine, 13 (14 percent) were API, 12 (13 percent) were multiracial, two (two percent) were MENA, and no characters with over ten minutes of screentime were indigenous. One additional character was non-human.

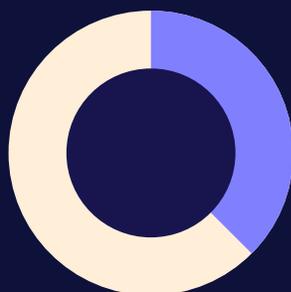
10



Of the 350 films released in 2022, 164 (47 percent) were theatrical releases. Of those theatrical films, 45 (27 percent), were LGBTQ inclusive.

- THEATRICAL FILMS WITH LGBTQ CHARACTERS **27.4%**  
(72.6% FILMS WITHOUT)

11



Of the 350 films released in 2022, 186 (53 percent) were streaming releases. Of those streaming films, 55 (30 percent) were LGBTQ inclusive.

- STREAMING FILMS WITH LGBTQ CHARACTERS **29.5%**  
(70.5% FILMS WITHOUT)

# Observations & Recommendations

## LGBTQ characters played leading roles in films across many genres.

After decades of LGBTQ characters in major studio films being relegated to supporting roles or side characters, there was a huge increase in LGBTQ characters who were front and center in their own narratives in this year's report. Of the 100 films with LGBTQ characters, 56 of them (56 percent) featured LGBTQ characters with over ten minutes of screentime. Standout films with major LGBTQ characters include A24's award-season sweeper *Everything Everywhere All At Once*, as well as the studio's *Aftersun*, *Bodies Bodies Bodies*, and GLAAD Media Award-winning drama *The Inspection*. Disney's *Strange World* centered a young gay Black man on a family adventure, while its streamer Hulu released queer romantic comedies *Fire Island* and *Crush*. Amazon debuted the GLAAD List script *Anything's Possible* with a young Black trans woman as the romantic lead. Max's drama *The Fallout* included two queer girls at the center of the film, and Paramount Plus' *Three Months* followed a gay teen awaiting his HIV test results. Universal's romantic comedy *Bros* boasted a central gay love story and a multitude of LGBTQ characters in the larger ensemble, while Focus Features' releases *Spoiler Alert* and *Tár* had gay leads. Netflix had a queer teen girl lead in *Do Revenge* and a trans boy save the day in *Wendell & Wild*. GLAAD urges all studios and distributors to build on this exciting progress, and to continue telling meaningful, diverse and impactful stories that center nuanced and autonomous LGBTQ characters.

## Films featuring sizable LGBTQ ensembles finally hit big and small screens.

For years, GLAAD has called for films featuring multiple LGBTQ characters. In real life, rarely is there only one person who is part of the LGBTQ community in a group of friends or family, and this needs to be reflected on screen. This year, GLAAD Media Award-winning romantic comedies *Bros* and *Fire Island* both not only featured gay romance, but diverse friend groups and chosen families of queer people. Horror comedy *Bodies Bodies Bodies* showcased several queer characters in its Gen Z ensemble, and coming-of-age drama *Three Months* showed the lead with new and old queer friends who helped shape his life. This film was particularly notable for showing LGBTQ people of different generations. The sense of community, support, education and found family is a defining hallmark of the LGBTQ experience and we're excited to see some of these stories beginning to be explored further. GLAAD also urges studios to invest in ensemble films spotlighting LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ women, and trans people, as those communities are lifesaving and still often unexplored in film.

## Transgender representation, though still lacking, is at a high point in this report's history.

Given the addition of streaming services and the consolidation of studio labels in this report's methodology, it's understandable that the numbers would increase across the board. Still, it is exciting to see 12 films with transgender characters in this year's report, up from one last year, and zero in the five years before that. Beyond the numbers, several of the films counted were authentic and nuanced portrayals of trans people. Amazon's teen romance *Anything's Possible*, Billy Porter's directorial debut from a GLAAD List script written by trans writer Ximena García Lecuona, depicted a young trans woman falling in love in high school; Sony's *A Man Called Otto* showed a trans teen boy help an old man believe in humanity again; Max's documentary *Santa Camp* showed a trans man as Santa Claus talking to a young nonbinary child who wanted a binder for Christmas; and the Netflix doc *Stay on Board: The Leo Baker Story* profiled Leo Baker, a trans skateboarder, sharing his journey. All these films showed different and exciting portrayals of trans people's lives. Yet, this barely scratches the surface of the storytelling that is possible to fully reflect the diversity of identity and experience of trans people. Though there is far more trans representation than in the past, these 12 films still only represent 12% of all LGBTQ films tracked in 2022, and 0.4% of all films released for the year. In an era where trans youth and adults are constantly attacked by anti-LGBTQ politicians and put in harm's way by inaccurate reporting and rhetoric in media, we need even more stories that humanize trans people, center trans people's voices, and show the trans community as everyday people trying to live their lives.

## Bisexual representation is up, but still far below the actual population.

For the past several editions of this report, bisexual+ characters have been largely absent from major studio films, with roles that were often small at best and offensive at worst. This year, 21 (21 percent) of the 100 LGBTQ inclusive films counted included bisexual+ characters. Though there were some standouts such as the lead roles Hulu's romantic comedy *Crush*, Sony's Whitney Houston biopic *I Wanna Dance With Somebody*, and Max's *The Fallout*, there were far less significant bi+ characters in film compared to gay and lesbian characters. Surveys have continually shown that over half of LGBTQ folks are bisexual+, and film needs to catch up to the reality of reflecting this sizable community and underserved audience.

## While there were welcome increases in LGBTQ screentime, there was also a less welcome trend continued in films this year of ambiguous LGBTQ subtext or representation which was only clear to audiences aware of outside press or source material.

Several high-profile films released in 2022 stopped short of telling LGBTQ stories and instead used subtext that audiences could read into if they wanted to, or small symbols that would only be clear with outside context beyond the film. For example, Warner Bros.' *The Batman* showed Catwoman tenderly caressing another woman's face, and calling her baby, but solely referred to her as her friend, and the woman died before their relationship could be explored. Marvel's *Doctor Strange and The Multiverse of Madness* gave America Chavez a pride flag patch on her jacket, but her actual identity was never discussed or even casually alluded to. America is one of the loudest and proudest lesbian characters in Marvel comics, and several iterations of Catwoman in comics and on TV, including Max's *Harley Quinn*, depict her as explicitly bisexual. Several films also contained minimal shots of presumed queer couples in montages or brief moments, where if the camera had lingered for a second, or if they were given dialogue, their sexual orientation could have been confirmed. These characters are worth further investment, as simply implying queerness is not enough. GLAAD did not count those characters in its tally.

## In a worrying industry trend across film and TV, LGBTQ content is being removed from streaming services.

A disturbing industry-wide trend across film and television for the past several months has seen large conglomerates removing content from their streaming services for the tax write-off. This includes a number of 2022 films tracked in this report; Disney+ removed *Better Nate Than Ever*, which had a young gay protagonist; Hulu removed *Darby and the Dead*, which featured a trans teen girl in the ensemble; and Max removed *Moonshot*, which included a supporting lesbian couple. Film is one of the most powerful mediums for LGBTQ people to see themselves reflected, across the globe, and to see a world in which they are thriving, particularly in a political climate that targets them. Film also has a unique long lasting power; LGBTQ cinema of past decades still has enormous impact today, from *Paris is Burning* to *Desert Hearts* to *The Birdcage* to *But I'm a Cheerleader* and beyond. These stories being told and then swiftly removed from public consumption is damaging to the art of cinema and the communities it represents. Further, removing the work of LGBTQ creatives prevents them being able to further their careers and build their reputations. These writers, actors, directors and beyond are losing a pivotal part of both their art and their ability to advance in the industry by taking on larger roles and bigger projects.

## The percentage of LGBTQ characters of color slightly increased YOY but there is still work to be done, especially among Latine LGBTQ characters

The overall percentage of LGBTQ characters of color rose to 40 percent (117 of 292) and several of those characters appeared in leading roles. Both friendship and romance between AAPI gay men was at the heart of *Fire Island*; *Anything's Possible* centered a Black trans girl finding love; *Strange World* saw a young Black boy on an adventure with his family and his relationship with a Latine boy. In fact, of the 95 characters who had over ten minutes of screen time, 49 (52 percent) of them were POC. However, there are some communities missing in these numbers. Only 17 (six percent) of all LGBTQ characters were Latine, and only four (four percent) of the 95 characters with over ten minutes of screen time were Latine - and all of them were from streaming services (Netflix's *The Bubble*, *Senior Year*, *Wendell & Wild*, and Hulu's *Fire Island*.) There were additionally only three characters who were Afro-Latine (categorized as multiracial), a population that is severely underrepresented in both English and Spanish language media. The 2021 MPA THEME Report reported that the Hispanic/Latine population is a key audience overindexing in both streaming views and box office tickets. If studios want to retain this audience's crucial buying power, their stories can no longer fall by the wayside. Additionally, out of all 292 LGBTQ characters, only two were indigenous, neither of whom had over ten minutes of screen time. The stories of LGBTQ people of color can be uniquely impactful and studios must invest in breaking new ground with this storytelling.

## Only 11 LGBTQ characters were counted with a disability, vastly underrepresenting the reality of the LGBTQ population who are living with disabilities.

This comes to under four percent of all 292 characters. According to a 2019 study by the Movement Advancement Project, LGBTQ people are more likely to have a disability than the general population. Two of five transgender adults and one in four lesbian, gay, or bisexual+ adults reported having a disability per their reporting. We hope to see representation expand for those with seen and unseen disabilities who are part of this community. Furthermore, only one character in one film (*Three Months*) was living with HIV. Though *Three Months* itself told a fascinating and heartfelt story about the stigma of HIV, there is room for so many more stories. With all the scientific advances in HIV prevention and treatment, audiences deserve to see new films about people living their everyday lives with HIV in every time period, especially in the present and future.

## There were a few standout LGBTQ stories in the kids and family space, but this should be seen across all distributors.

After the previous report's disheartening lack of inclusive kids and family content, it is exciting to see so many films from major studios include vibrant LGBTQ characters in films made for younger audiences. Disney's *Strange World* and *Lightyear* were both nominated for GLAAD Media Awards, as was Disney+'s *Zombies 3* and Netflix's *Wendell & Wild*. LGBTQ characters being included in - and especially leading some of these stories - is more impactful and necessary than ever as laws are placed into effect that directly target LGBTQ youth, and specifically trans youth.

# A24



Stephanie Hsu as Joy Wang/Jobu Tupaki, *Everything Everywhere All at Once*



# A24

This is GLAAD's first year counting A24. This tally includes all theatrical releases from A24. All A24 Films counted this year were released theatrically.

## SUMMARY OF 2022 FINDINGS

14	Films released theatrically in 2022 under studio & official imprints
5	Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
36%	Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
5	Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## STUDIO RATING OVER TIME



## SUMMARY

Indie powerhouse A24 released several commercially and critically successful films that contained LGBTQ characters leading the story, not just in supporting roles. Academy Award-winning genre bender *Everything Everywhere All at Once* centered on a mother and queer daughter's relationship throughout space and time. It was nominated for a GLAAD Media Award, alongside fellow A24 releases *Bodies Bodies Bodies* and *The Inspection*, the latter of which took home the GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Film – Limited Release. There were also LGBTQ leads in *Aftersun* and *The Whale*, though *The Whale* was heavily criticized for its depiction of fat bodies. Overall, despite some missteps in smaller film *Funny Pages*, A24 has solidified itself as a leader in telling groundbreaking and nuanced LGBTQ stories.

## HISTORY

Arthouse film executives Daniel Katz, David Fenkel, and John Hodges launched A24 Films in 2012 and began distributing films in 2013. That same year, the studio entered co-distribution deals with DirecTV Cinema and Amazon Prime. In 2016, the studios' name was abbreviated to A24 and in October 2018, A24 and Apple announced a multi-year non-exclusive partnership. Then, in November 2019, the studio entered into a premium cable television broadcast deal with Showtime networks, covering all film releases through November 2022. A24's previous LGBTQ-inclusive films include GLAAD Media Award winner and Oscar history-maker *Moonlight* (2016) and GLAAD Media Award nominee *Lady Bird* (2017).

Considering the quality, quantity, and diversity of films distributed under A24, **GLAAD has given A24 a GOOD grade.**



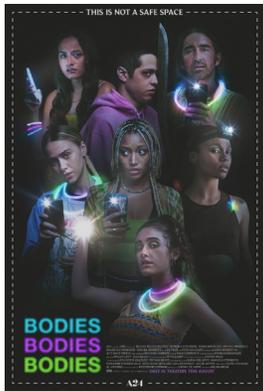
## AFTERSUN

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE:  
97 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This drama follows a father, Calum, and his daughter, Sophie, on a vacation, and is mostly told in flashbacks from Sophie’s perspective. The few moments we see of Sophie in the future include her in bed with another woman and caring for their child. In flashbacks to her as an

11-year-old, there are shots of her curiously looking at other girls and boys in a pool, and she kisses a boy one night. There is also a scene where Sophie spots two teen boys kissing and simply watches, not telling anyone. The whole film is tinged with the curiosity of coming into one’s own at that age. Most of the movie’s focus is on the relationship between Sophie and Calum. Sophie’s queerness in the future is not a focal point of that timeline, simply a facet of her life. This film sets a good example of how to include a protagonist’s queerness explicitly in a narrative, even if it is not the central theme of the film.



## BODIES BODIES BODIES

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE:  
2,541 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated horror comedy film follows a group of friends alone in a house when the titular game “bodies bodies bodies” turns deadly. The protagonist is a young woman named Sophie, and the film opens with a scene of her making out with her girlfriend, Bee. As the story

progresses, bridges are burned between the characters, including the revelation that Sophie and another girl in the group, Jordan, were sleeping together behind Bee’s back. The queerness of all three characters is simply a dimension of this world; all of the characters in *Bodies Bodies Bodies* are deeply flawed, the queer ones as well as the straight ones. There is also a moment in the film where Emma, a character whose boyfriend was found dead, tries to kiss Sophie. She is immediately rebuffed, with Sophie claiming Emma thinks everyone is in love with her and is doing this to get what she wants, as opposed to any actual attraction to Sophie. In a film with many queer characters in the ensemble, Sophie and Bee end up surviving the night, avoiding the “Bury Your Gays” trope. The queer characters were allowed to be just as messy as the straight ones, and played the biggest roles in this movie, without ever equating their flaws to their queer identities.



## EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,220 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated, Oscar-winning, and genre-bending film uses the multiverse to tell the

story of a family; protagonist Evelyn Wang, her husband Waymond and her daughter Joy. At the start of the film, Joy is seen with her girlfriend, Becky. When Evelyn introduces Becky to her father, Joy’s grandfather, she uses the word “friend” instead of “girlfriend,” which adds to the building resentment between mother and daughter. The majority of the movie takes place as Evelyn hops through universes having been warned of Jobu Tupaki who will end all things. She finds out that Jobu is simply another universe’s version of Joy, and over the course of the film, the two fight, discover each other, and eventually reconcile. Their relationship is the crux of the film. At the film’s end, one of the signs that the two have gotten closer is Evelyn introducing Becky as Joy’s “girlfriend” to her father this time. The film also occasionally shows a universe where Evelyn and tax preparer Dierdre are in a romantic relationship, though both women are presumed straight in the main universe.

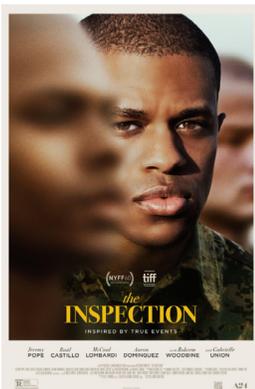
Having such a critically and commercially successful and awarded film center the relationship between an immigrant mother and her lesbian daughter was such a bright light in cinema in 2022. This is the kind of film GLAAD hopes to see more of in the coming years.

## FUNNY PAGES

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 43 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This film follows a young comic book artist named Robert and his misadventures. At one point, his male art teacher strips naked in front of Robert and forces him to sketch his body. Immediately after, he follows Robert down the road before being killed by a vehicle. Later, Robert lives with two older men with an unclear relationship, and walks in on one of them masturbating to a comic book while the other is asleep with his genitals exposed. This is another in a long line of films which includes a trope of older male characters crossing boundaries or preying on younger men. GLAAD did not count any of these characters in its tally.



## THE INSPECTION

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 144 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-winning semi-autobiographical film follows Ellis French, and is loosely based on filmmaker Elegance Bratton's personal experience joining the Marines and his relationship with his homophobic mother. Ellis is

gay but hides it to join the military during the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" era as a last resort when he sees few other options for his future. Eventually, the other men find out he's gay and mercilessly bully him. Ellis finds comfort in his drill instructor, Rosales, and the two bond and have moments of physical affection, though Rosales later denies any form of relationship with Ellis. When Ellis graduates from boot camp, his mother offers him a place to stay and tells him that girls will love him as a Marine. Ellis refutes that the army did not make him straight. Surprisingly, the same men who had been his tormentors support him, claiming him as one of their own. Ellis says that he hopes his mother can one day love all of him.

This film, though at times tragic, showed a nuanced portrait of a gay Black man based on real life experiences. Ellis as a protagonist was the heart of the film and created a strong narrative of being true to oneself despite the prejudices in both family and the military.



## THE WHALE

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1,721 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The Whale follows protagonist Charlie as he struggles with his health and tries to heal a strained relationship with his daughter, Ellie. Charlie is gay, and part of his depression is linked to his former love Alan, who died by suicide. The film makes references to

this throughout, and includes a religious missionary character who attempts to convert Charlie to his church and fixates on "saving" him. There are a few instances of anti-LGBTQ language in the film where Ellie calls a poet a "fag" and someone comments "dyke" on her Facebook post. The crux of the film has less to do with Charlie's sexuality and more to do with him being obese and constantly overeating, a portrayal that several activists have critiqued. While having a fat gay protagonist lead a movie which also won multiple awards would generally be a step in the right direction, the portrayal and discussion of his size leaves much to be desired.

## X

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,920 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This horror flick follows the cast and crew of a pornography movie as they film at a farm owned by an elderly couple who slowly begin killing off the cast and crew. There is a scene midway through the film where Pearl, the elderly wife, crawls into bed with Maxine, one of the actresses who is asleep in only her underwear. Pearl caresses Maxine's naked back. It's initially unclear if the gesture is one of desire or jealousy, but as the rest of the film plays out, and Pearl is shown coveting youth, as well as the backstory provided in the prequel *Pearl*, it's clear that Pearl isn't queer, but rather has a nefarious desire to be young and beautiful again.

## OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

There are several upcoming films from A24 that are set to include LGBTQ characters and stories. *Problemista* is an upcoming comedy, written by and starring out comedian Julio Torres, that features a cast of LGBTQ actors including James Scully, Spike Einbinder, Larry Owens, Kelly McCormack, and Megan Stalter. The film, just like Torres' other work including *Los Espookys*, is sure to contain queer content. Out actor Kristen Stewart will play the lead in *Love Lies Bleeding*, an upcoming romantic thriller focusing on a bisexual bodybuilder in the late '80s. A24 will also be releasing upcoming musical comedy *Dicks* from out creators and stars Josh Sharp and Aaron Jackson, which will feature a cast including out actors Bowen Yang and Nathan Lane, the latter playing Sharp and Jackson's gay father.

Upcoming teen comedy *Y2K* will include trans actor Lachlan Watson, drama *Tuesday* will include nonbinary actor Lola Pettigrew, and horror film *I Saw The TV Glow* has a cast that includes out actors Justice Smith, Brigitte Lundy-Payne, Phoebe Briders, and Lindsey Jordan. Though none of these films have confirmed LGBTQ content in them as of now, this impressive range of queer talent would be remiss to not also have representation within the films themselves.



amazonstudios



Eva Reign and Abubakr Ali as Kelsa and Khal, *Anything's Possible*



# AMAZON STUDIOS

In the past, GLAAD had counted films released by the theatrical distributor United Artist Releasing in this report. This year, GLAAD is counting films distributed from parent company Amazon Studios, streamer Amazon Prime Video, and United Artists Releasing, whose parent company, MGM, was acquired and brought under control of Amazon Studios in 2022.

## STUDIO RATING OVER TIME

	<b>2022</b>	<b>FAIR</b>
	<b>2021</b>	INSUFFICIENT
	<b>2020</b>	N/A
	<b>2019</b>	INSUFFICIENT

## SUMMARY OF 2022 FINDINGS

- 35** Total films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 12** Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 34%** Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 8** Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## THEATRICAL

- 18** Total theatrical films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 4** Total number of theatrical LGBTQ inclusive films
- 22%** Percent of theatrical LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio theatrical releases
- 2** Number of theatrical films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## STREAMING

- 17** Total streaming only films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 8** Total number of streaming LGBTQ inclusive films
- 47%** Percent of streaming LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio streaming releases
- 6** Number of streaming films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## OF THE 12 LGBTQ INCLUSIVE FILMS,

2 WERE  
AMAZON  
STUDIOS

8 WERE  
AMAZON  
PRIME VIDEO

2 WERE  
UNITED ARTISTS  
RELEASING

Considering the quality,  
quantity, and diversity  
of films distributed  
under Amazon Studios,  
GLAAD has given  
Amazon Studios a  
FAIR grade.

### SUMMARY

Amazon continues to release high-profile film content onto its streaming platform Amazon Prime Video. Many of these contain LGBTQ leads, including GLAAD Media Award-winning teen drama *Anything's Possible*, a GLAAD List script honoree starring a Black trans woman, and *My Policeman*, a GLAAD Media Award nominee that tells a decades-spanning gay love story. There are also several films tracked with supporting LGBTQ characters, such as *The People We Hate at the Wedding* and *Something from Tiffany's*. However, there were still opportunities to flesh out LGBTQ characters into larger roles. United Artists Releasing's two LGBTQ-inclusive films, *Bones and All* and *Women Talking*, both left something to be desired with their portrayals of a gay man and trans man respectively.

### HISTORY

Amazon Prime Video and in-house Amazon Studios began distributing original content in 2013, followed by original films in 2018. Amazon began negotiations to acquire Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) in May 2021, allowing MGM to continue operating as a label alongside them, and entered into a deal with Universal Pictures to bring their films to Prime Video and IMDb TV after a window on Universal-owned Peacock. The acquisition of MGM was finalized in March 2022, placing United Artists Releasing (UAR)— a distribution venture between MGM Studios, Annapurna Pictures, and MGM's Orion Pictures— under the control of Amazon Studios. However, in March 2023, Amazon folded UAR into MGM, citing "newfound theatrical release opportunities." In May of this year, Amazon Studios created Amazon MGM Studios distribution, an international film and tv distribution unit for Amazon and MGM projects.

Previous LGBTQ-inclusive films from Amazon include GLAAD Media Award nominee *Brittany Runs a Marathon* (2019); GLAAD Media Award winner *Transparent: Musical Finale* (2019); *Chemical Hearts* (2020); GLAAD Media Award winner *Uncle Frank* (2020); GLAAD Media Award nominee *Everybody's Talking about Jamie* (2021), and *My Name is Pauli Murray* (2021). UAR's past inclusive films encompass 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 winner *Booksmart* (2019); *Valley Girl* (2020); and *Licorice Pizza* (2021).

**Note:** Films distributed by Amazon Studios do not share their theatrical release numbers publicly and the company declined to provide this information for this report, as such these cannot be cited in this report.

# AMAZON STUDIOS



## CATHERINE CALLED BIRDY

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: UNKNOWN

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

Based on the novel of the same name, this film follows the titular Birdy as she navigates 13th Century England and its rigid restrictions for women. Birdy's close friend is a boy named Perkin. Midway through the film, she begs Perkin to marry her so she is not forced to be with a man she does not wish to marry. Perkin refuses, saying he does not wish to marry any woman. Birdy asks if he would marry a man and Perkin's ensuing silence confirms that he is gay in an unaccepting era. Perkin serves as Birdy's confidant throughout the film, and is significant to her narrative, though his character is still a relatively small role. At the movie's end he is seen talking and laughing with another boy, a hint of a potential romance in his future. Though Perkin was a nice inclusion in a period piece, we'd have liked to see his story be further fleshed out.



## MY POLICEMAN

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: UNKNOWN

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated drama follows the relationship between husband and wife Tom and Marion, and a museum curator named Patrick. The film takes place in two timelines, the 1990s and the 1950s. In the '90s, Marion takes in and cares for Patrick as he is in ill health, much to Tom's chagrin. In flashbacks, it is revealed that Patrick and Tom had a physical and romantic affair in the '50s. While Tom and Patrick are involved, Tom maintains a relationship with and eventually marries Marion. When Marion finds out about the affair, she reports Patrick to the police and Patrick is sentenced to time in prison while Tom is fired from the police force. Tom declares his love to Marion and they vow never to speak of it again. In the present, Marion confesses to reporting Patrick and tells Tom that Patrick was the love of his life, and he should be with him. She leaves Tom, and the film ends with Tom and Patrick embracing. This film is honest about the horrors and laws facing gay men in mid-century Britain, while still providing the protagonists with a relatively happy ending. It also padded out the world with more LGBTQ characters; Marion has a closeted lesbian coworker. Though the film often centers the straight woman and is not groundbreaking in its tale of white men in a forbidden romance, it still is a thoughtful story that celebrates gay love.

# AMAZON PRIME VIDEO



## 1UP

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This film about an all-women Esports team includes Sloane, the protagonist V's best friend, who is a trans woman. Sloane very casually discloses that she's trans and it is not a major focal point of the film, just one aspect of her character. However, Sloane's role in the movie is very much the sidekick to V; she doesn't get a romantic interest like V, and at the end of the film, even though Sloane is the one who wins the gaming competition, V gets the credit for making the sacrifice that gets the team the win. Sloane does casually reference both men and women being attractive. It's commendable to include a bi trans woman in this comedy about gamers, but it would have been a cut above to see more depth and nuance from Sloane as a character.



## ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This young adult film was based on a GLAAD List script written by trans woman Ximena García Lecuona, and earned a GLAAD Media Award. The movie follows a love story between

Kelsa, a Black trans girl, and Khal, a cisgender Muslim boy, who begin a relationship in high school. The film is very clear about Kelsa's identity, as she makes videos talking about being trans. Khal is explicit in his attraction toward her, and faces blowback from his transphobic friend Otis, who calls him gay for being into Kelsa. As the two begin dating, Kelsa's friend Em, who had feelings for Khal, lies about Kelsa attacking her in a locker room, which leads to more transphobic outrage. However, Kelsa has a strong support system in her family, her other friends, and Khal, and though she pushes them away and there are misunderstandings, she is well loved and supported by her community. In the end, Em admits she lied and Khal gets into a fight with Otis. Though Khal and Kelsa confess their love for each other, they end up mutually breaking up because they are going to different colleges.

This film can serve as an example for how to center trans women in nuanced and intentional romance films, just as cis people regularly are, while still acknowledging the realities of living as a trans teen in modern day relationships and contexts. It's notable that none of the transphobia faced was physical violence and that Kelsa retained agency throughout the film. More movies should follow *Anything's Possible's* lead by centering trans protagonists of color who have strong voices and agency in their own stories.



## DON'T MAKE ME GO

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This drama follows a father, Max, and his daughter, Wally, on a road trip to Max's college reunion in hopes of reintroducing Wally to her mother. At the reunion, Max

reunites with his friend Guy and Guy's husband Samuel. Though Guy is a minor character, he stays at Max's side as a support system during the reunion and beyond, when Max experiences a devastating loss and goes through chemotherapy. This film is a decent example of casual inclusion in a larger narrative.

## I WANT YOU BACK

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

There are no LGBTQ characters in this romantic comedy, but a child that protagonist Emma teaches mentions that his dad is cheating on his other dad with another man. The child brings this up multiple times in the movie, though we never meet these dads. Additionally, Emma proposes a threesome with her ex and his new girlfriend, but it's clear the two women are not attracted to each other, and do not end up following through on the act.

## MY BEST FRIEND'S EXORCISM

STRAIGHT TO  
STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This teen horror comedy follows two best friends, Abby and Gretchen, and their other friends Glee and Margaret. Early on in the film, Gretchen is possessed by a demon and sets out to ruin her friends' lives. This includes planting a fake love note in Glee's locker that she says is from Margaret. With encouragement from Gretchen, Glee confesses her love to Margaret, with Margaret responding "I'm not a dyke. But I guess now we know you are." Glee is distraught by this and demon-possessed-Gretchen uses this as an opportunity to try to poison her while exclaiming "God hates gays." Glee survives the poisoning, and eventually, the demon is exorcized from Gretchen. This interaction is not the only homophobic scene in the film: Margaret calls Gretchen and Abby holding hands (as friends) "so queer," and a still closeted Glee says "that's gross"; Margaret's boyfriend encourages the girls to "bond" sexually so he can watch. It's unfortunate that the one queer character in this film was constantly shamed for it, by the demons and humans alike. Many fans have read the relationship between Gretchen and Abby as queer, too, but the two say they love each other "like sisters" and both talk about their crushes on men.



## MY FAKE BOYFRIEND

STRAIGHT TO  
STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This romantic comedy of errors follows lead character Andrew as he is determined to not get back together with his ex-situationship, Nico. To help him get over Nico, Andrew's friend

Jake creates a fake social media presence for "Cristiano," Andrew's titular fake boyfriend. This, over the course of the film, goes awry when Andrew's friends and family demand to meet Cristiano, and when Andrew actually develops feelings for a real man, Rafi, but has to keep this charade going. By the end of the film, the truth finally comes out about "Cristiano" and Andrew and Rafi get their happy ending. It's exciting to see a romantic comedy with a Black gay lead that delved into the gay dating scene, and included supporting characters beyond the romantic interests, such as a nonbinary trainer at Andrew's gym, and his lesbian coworker.



## THE PEOPLE WE HATE AT THE WEDDING

STRAIGHT TO  
STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This comedy follows an estranged family reuniting for their sister's wedding. One of her siblings is Paul, who has a boyfriend, Dominic. Early on in the film, it's

clear that Dominic wants to open up their relationship while Paul wants to remain monogamous. When they go to London for the wedding, Dominic surprises Paul by arranging for them to stay at the home of Alcott, a handsome older gay professor. After a night out, the three disastrously attempt a threesome, which results in Dominic breaking up with Paul. Dominic tries to go after Alcott, but Alcott is more interested in Paul. At the wedding, when Paul is still distraught from his breakup, it is revealed that his now-dead father was never accepting of Paul's sexuality, but his mother forced him to pretend to be on the threat of leaving him. This hurts Paul and temporarily damages his relationship with his mother, but they make up by the end of the film. Paul is very much a main character in the film and his relationship drama is given as much weight as any other characters. It would have been nice to see Paul in a relationship at the end of the film like his sisters were, but he still got to have his major moments.



## SOMETHING FROM TIFFANY'S

STRAIGHT TO  
STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This Christmas romantic comedy follows Rachel and Ethan, who, through a series of misunderstandings, leave their respective significant others to fall in love with one another. Rachel's

best friend is Terri, who is married to another woman, Sophia. Terri has significant screentime and is an active presence in Rachel's life. Terri and Sophia's marriage is portrayed tenderly and the two are seen showing physical affection in most of their scenes. Though they are not the main characters of this film, including a prominent Black lesbian couple is a commendable step and their characterization rises beyond typical inclusion of the "best friend" archetype in romantic comedies.

## UNITED ARTIST RELEASING

### THE SOUND OF 007

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This documentary about the songs for James Bond films features a brief appearance by nonbinary singer Sam Smith, who performed the title track for *Spectre*. They appear for under a minute, as they are not one of the main talking heads in the film.

### YOUR CHRISTMAS OR MINE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This Christmas romantic comedy does not feature any LGBTQ characters. However, main character James does pretend to be gay to avoid advances from his girlfriend's aunt. His portrayal of a gay man isn't offensive and no one is homophobic, but it is disappointing to have a character fake being gay when there are no actual queer people in the movie.

### BONES AND ALL

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,727 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This cannibalistic romance focuses on couple Lee and Maren as they fall in love and eat other humans. There is a scene midway through the film where Lee approaches a man at a carnival and flirts with him. Lee takes the man out into a corn field where they engage in brief sexual activity before Lee violently murders and begins to eat him. The man is clearly sexually interested in Lee before this, though Lee's actions seem to come from a place of desiring the man for food rather than for sex. GLAAD did not count Lee in the final tally for this reason. It is later revealed that the man from the carnival had a wife and kids. It is disappointing that the only explicitly queer character in this film was both closeted and brutally murdered.

### WOMEN TALKING

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 707 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This drama centers around a group of women in a religious community who all share their stories of sexual assault and abuse. There is one transgender character in this film, Melvin, a trans man who was sexually assaulted by his brother. He is constantly misgendered and deadnamed throughout the film and remains silent for the majority of the time until the end when one of the women, Agata, uses his correct name and he thanks her. Though there was an attempt at trans inclusion in this film, it is disappointing that this minor character was constantly invalidated and was defined solely by his identity and trauma. However, much of Melvin's role was as a caretaker for children; a trans man competently and kindly watching over children is an important narrative during this climate of attacks on trans people, specifically regarding their relationship to children.

## OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

Amazon's adaptation of best-selling gay romance novel *Red, White & Royal Blue* premiered on Amazon Prime video this summer. The film is a love story between the President's son and the Prince of England and already has a huge LGBTQ fanbase. This fall, the streamer will release *Cassandra*, following the story of "Cassandra, the Exotico," a gay wrestler in the 1980s. Billy Eichner's "big gay divorce comedy" *Ex-Husbands* will get an Amazon release. Drag king Murrury Hill is on the cast list for *Grand Death Lotto*, an upcoming action comedy from Amazon.

Amazon has an adaptation of *Alice + Freda Forever* in the works, based on the true story of a woman who killed her lover. This film should be treated with respect and nuance, and avoid falling into tropes seen in villainous queer women. Amazon has the rights to hit Broadway musical *Fun Home*, based on Alison Bechdel's graphic memoir about her relationship with her closeted father and lesbian self-discovery.

This summer, MGM will release *Bottoms*, a teen comedy following two lesbian students who start a fight club to get with popular girls. The film hails from out *Shiva Baby* director Emma Seligman. MGM will be adapting the novel *Erasure* which features a gay brother of the protagonist in the book.

The Apple TV+ logo is centered in the top section of the page. It features the white Apple logo on the left, followed by the text "tv+" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The background is a dark, moody image of a woman's face, which is partially obscured by the logo.

Apple tv+



Jennifer Lawrence as Lynsey, *Causeway*



# APPLE TV+

This is the first time GLAAD is counting Apple TV+ in its tally. GLAAD is counting films released theatrically from Apple TV+ as well as their originals directly released onto the platform.

## SUMMARY OF 2022 FINDINGS

11	Total films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
2	Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
18%	Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
1	Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## STUDIO RATING OVER TIME



## SUMMARY

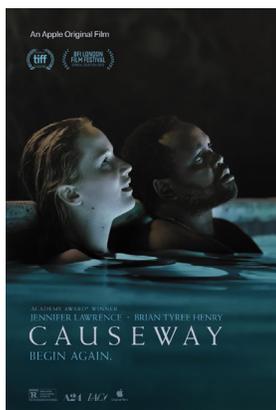
Though Apple TV+ currently only has a small slate of original films, many have received critical acclaim and boasted all-star talent rosters. Consequently, it is disappointing that more films did not have LGBTQ representation. While *Causeway* painted an intricate portrait of a disabled lesbian, every other film in Apple's library was "blink-and-you'll-miss-it" in terms of the LGBTQ representation. Even in *Causeway*, only one line confirmed the lead's queer identity. GLAAD hopes to see more LGBTQ-inclusive projects from Apple in the future.

## HISTORY

Apple Inc. has been producing and distributing original content since 2016. In November 2019, Apple launched its streaming service Apple TV+ which offers a selection of original production film and television series called Apple Originals. Apple TV+ then pivoted to incorporate a catalog of non-original movies and television programs, announcing its first acquisition in 2020. Apple TV+'s previous LGBTQ-inclusive films include *The Velvet Underground* (2021), *Palmer* (2021), and *Come From Away* (2021).

**Note:** Films distributed by Apple TV+ do not share their theatrical release numbers publicly and the company declined to provide this information for this report, as such these cannot be cited in this report.

Considering the quality, quantity, and diversity of films distributed under APPLE TV+, **GLAAD has given APPLE TV+ a POOR grade.**



## CAUSEWAY

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: UNKNOWN

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This drama follows Lynsey, a soldier who suffered a brain injury in Afghanistan and has returned home to New Orleans before she can be deployed again. Lynsey strikes up a friendship with James, a mechanic who was seriously

injured in a car crash. At one point, a persistent man hits on Lynsey at a bar and James pretends to be her boyfriend until the man leaves. Later, Lynsey tells James that she wouldn't have a boyfriend, she would have a girlfriend and James accepts this. Later on in the film, James opens up to Lynsey about his car accident and his own role in it. Lynsey hugs him and then kisses him. She pulls back and says that it was a mistake, and that she only kissed him because she felt sorry for him. James is angry and the two don't speak for a period, until they reconcile at the end of the film. Though Lynsey kisses James, it is clearly an act of pity rather than romantic or sexual desire. It is disappointing Lynsey's only moment of physical affection was with a man. However, a complex and nuanced lesbian main character, especially a disabled veteran, is a story rarely told.

## LUCK

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: UNKNOWN

Vito Russo Test: FAIL

This animated film features a few background shots where it looks like there could be LGBTQ couples, but these scenes are too brief to be confirmed or counted per GLAAD's methodology.

## SPIRITED

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: UNKNOWN

Vito Russo Test: FAIL

This musical contains a crowd scene with many presumed couples, and it could be inferred that there are two men and two women on dates together, but the couples are never singled out nor explicitly confirmed to be romantic. Thus, no characters were counted in GLAAD's tally.

## THE SKY IS EVERYWHERE

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: UNKNOWN

Vito Russo Test: FAIL

In this coming-of-age drama, there is a brief moment that features a shot of two women kissing. Protagonist Lennie is describing the people around her, and the audience sees two women kissing, though the shot is immediately covered by a man and woman kissing. It's disappointing that the only representation is mere seconds of a queer couple, only to instantly be overshadowed by a straight couple.

## OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

Apple TV+'s upcoming projects include *Project Artemis*, a space race film from out director Greg Berlanti. The cast includes out actor Jim Rash, whose character is described as "fashionable, chic, and flamboyant." Upcoming film *Argylle* counts out actor Ariana DeBose in its cast, though there are no details about her character publicly available. GLAAD hopes to see more Apple TV+ content include LGBTQ characters in the future so the service more accurately represents modern day media consumers and audiences.

# LIONSGATE



Brian O'Halloran and Rosario Dawson as Dante and Rebecca, *Clerks III*



# LIONSGATE

In the past, GLAAD had counted films released by the theatrical distributor Lionsgate with Roadside Attractions included as an owned subsidiary. This year, GLAAD is counting films distributed under Lionsgate, but does not include releases from Roadside, which Lionsgate owns a minority stake in and does not oversee operations of day-to-day.

## STUDIO RATING OVER TIME

	<b>2022</b>	<b>FAILING</b>
	<b>2021</b>	<b>FAILING</b>
	<b>2020</b>	N/A
	<b>2019</b>	<b>INSUFFICIENT</b>
	<b>2018</b>	<b>FAILING</b>
	<b>2017</b>	<b>FAILING</b>
	<b>2016</b>	<b>FAILING</b>
	<b>2015</b>	<b>ADEQUATE</b>
	<b>2014</b>	<b>ADEQUATE</b>
	<b>2013</b>	<b>ADEQUATE</b>
	<b>2012</b>	N/A

Considering the quality, quantity, and diversity of films distributed under Lionsgate, **GLAAD has given Lionsgate a FAILING grade.**

## SUMMARY OF 2022 FINDINGS

<b>6</b>	Total films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
<b>1</b>	Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
<b>17%</b>	Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
<b>0</b>	Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## SUMMARY

Considering the quality, quantity, and diversity of films distributed under Lionsgate, GLAAD has given Lionsgate a **Failing** grade.

Unfortunately, the only film with LGBTQ representation from Lionsgate was a brief moment in *Clerks III* where the protagonist's deceased wife mentioned the men and women she slept with in heaven. It reads as more a throwaway joke than real representation. GLAAD urges Lionsgate to make efforts for solid and meaningful LGBTQ representation in future projects.

## HISTORY

Canadian businessman Frank Guistra founded Lionsgate in 1997. Over 25 years later, the studio has produced and distributed major blockbusters such as *Twilight*, *Hunger Games* and the *John Wick* franchises. Lionsgate also owns a variety of subsidiaries such as Summit Entertainment.

An early inclusive Lionsgate release was *The Pillow Book* (1997), in which Ewan McGregor plays a bisexual man. Additional LGBTQ-inclusive films from Lionsgate 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*, *Freeheld* (2015), *Un Padre No Tan Padre* (2017), and *Bombshell* (2019).

## CLERKS III

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1,089 THEATERS

Vito Russo Test: FAIL

*Clerks III* continues to tell the story of Dante and Randal working at the convenience store and their attempt to make a movie about their experiences. Part of the film includes Dante grieving his ex-wife, Becky, who appears in several of Dante's dreams. During one of them, she lists all the famous dead people in Heaven that she is having sex with, including Cleopatra. Becky's bisexuality is played more as a joke than real development, feeding into the notion that being bisexual means a person is inherently promiscuous.

## THE UNBEARABLE WEIGHT OF MASSIVE TALENT

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,036

Vito Russo Test: FAIL

There were no LGBTQ characters in this film, but a couple references to the LGBTQ community. Nicholas Cage, as himself speaking to a hallucination of himself, talks about playing a "gay uncle" as a film role to be taken seriously. He also passionately kisses the hallucination of himself, but that is more an expression of self-love than any actual queer identity. Cage also expresses trepidation for a moment about if a rich businessman will ask for sexual favors, but that does not occur.

## OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

This summer saw the release of horror comedy *The Blackening* which was written by and co-stars out comedian Dewayne Perkins, whose character Dewayne is also gay in the film. Another summer comedy film was *Joy Ride*, which includes nonbinary character Deadeye in the ensemble.

There are several Lionsgate major franchises that could feature LGBTQ characters, including the *John Wick* films, that have included nonbinary actor Asian Kate Dillon in the past, and have the chance to revisit their character or introduce a new queer character into the franchise. *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*, the prequel to the wildly popular *Hunger Games* series, contained minor queer characters in the book and has the opportunity to introduce more into the film series.

In past iterations of the *Studio Responsibility Index*, GLAAD has pointed to upcoming LGBTQ-inclusive projects including *Memetic*, a horror film starring a hard of hearing gay man; *Ride*, a biopic of Sally Ride; *The Guncle*, a dramedy following the gay uncle of his deceased sister's children; and more. GLAAD hopes that all of these projects still get produced and distributed by Lionsgate, as they promise interesting and new LGBTQ stories.

NBC  UNIVERSAL



Luke Macfarlane and Billy Eichner as Aaron and Bobby, *Bros*



# NBCUNIVERSAL

In the past, GLAAD had counted films released by the theatrical distributor Universal Pictures in this report, while counting arthouse distributor Focus Features separately. This year, GLAAD is counting films distributed under Universal Pictures and Focus Features, as well as streamer Peacock, as one overall brand.

## STUDIO RATING OVER TIME

★★★★★☆☆	<b>2022</b>	<b>GOOD</b>
★★★★☆☆☆	<b>2021</b>	INSUFFICIENT
★★★★★★	<b>2020</b>	N/A
★★★★☆☆☆	<b>2019</b>	INSUFFICIENT
★★★★★☆☆	<b>2018</b>	GOOD
★★★★☆☆☆	<b>2017</b>	INSUFFICIENT
★★★★☆☆☆	<b>2016</b>	INSUFFICIENT
★★★☆☆☆☆	<b>2015</b>	ADEQUATE
★★★☆☆☆☆	<b>2014</b>	ADEQUATE
★★★☆☆☆☆	<b>2013</b>	ADEQUATE
★★★☆☆☆☆	<b>2012</b>	ADEQUATE

## SUMMARY OF 2022 FINDINGS

- 37** Total films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 9** Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 24%** Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 9** Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## THEATRICAL

- 31** Total theatrical films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 8** Total number of theatrical LGBTQ inclusive films
- 26%** Percent of theatrical LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio theatrical releases
- 8** Number of theatrical films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## STREAMING

- 6** Total streaming only films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 1** Total number of streaming LGBTQ inclusive films
- 17%** Percent of streaming LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio streaming releases
- 1** Number of streaming films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## OF THE 9 LGBTQ INCLUSIVE FILMS,

## 4 WERE UNIVERSAL PICTURES

## 4 WERE FOCUS FEATURES

## 1 WAS PEACOCK.

Considering the quality, quantity, and diversity of films distributed under NBCUniversal and its labels, **GLAAD has given NBCUniversal a GOOD grade.**

### SUMMARY

This year saw a vast improvement for LGBTQ inclusion in NBCUniversal films. Within the theatrically distributed films from Universal, both *Bros* and *Nope* were GLAAD Media Award nominees, with *Bros* taking home the award for Outstanding Film – Wide Release. *Bros* featured a diverse and sizeable LGBTQ cast, while *Nope* boasted a Black lesbian lead. Both films premiered in thousands of theaters and included queer people front and center, which is what GLAAD has been advocating for since this report's inception. There is still room for improvement within Universal films, such as the *Jurassic World* franchise's inclusion of a character that may be read as queer via subtext but whose sexuality is not explicitly confirmed in the film.

Universal's arthouse label Focus Features released GLAAD Media Award nominees *Spoiler Alert* and *Tár*, both with queer leads. *Spoiler Alert* is a heartfelt drama centered on a gay couple, while *Tár* gives viewers an extremely flawed lesbian anti-hero. Focus has a rich history of promoting LGBTQ films and this year is no exception. Streamer Peacock only released one LGBTQ-inclusive film this year, queer slasher *They/Them*. Though the movie featured a diverse cast of LGBTQ characters, the messaging of the film sadly missed the mark.

Universal is setting an example by having LGBTQ leads in major studio wide released films, which play in big cities and small towns around the globe, and for queer representation in each of their subsidiaries as well. We hope to see this continue and increase in volume over the next several years, especially in stories highlighting the full diversity of the LGBTQ community including race, gender, ability and more. As Peacock grows, we also hope to see further inclusive movies announced in their original film slate.

### HISTORY

Universal Pictures is one of the oldest film studios in the United States, founded in 1912. In 2004, Universal merged with NBC to form NBCUniversal, which was purchased by Comcast in 2011. NBCUniversal owns Focus Features, a film production and distribution company that was founded in 2002 by USA Films, Universal Focus, and Good Machine. Universal acquired DreamWorks Animation from 20th Century in 2016 and released their first film under that umbrella in February 2019. The studio'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 did not begin releasing LGBTQ-inclusive films until the 1990s, and its 1991 adaptation of *Fried Green Tomatoes* removed the majority of the novel's lesbian content. Universal's LGBTQ representation has had its many highs and lows, as shown in 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), and *Last Christmas* and *Good Boys* (2019), *Freaky* (2020), and *Dear Evan Hansen* (2021). Focus Features has an expansive inventory of LGBTQ-inclusive films, including GLAAD Media Award winners *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), *Milk* (2008), *The Kids Are Alright* (2010), *Pariah* (2011), *Boy Erased* (2018), GLAAD Media Award nominee *Kajillionaire* (2020), and *Stillwater* (2021).

# UNIVERSAL PICTURES



## AMBULANCE

WIDEST RELEASE: 3,412 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

*Ambulance* is an action thriller that follows brothers Danny and Will on a bank heist that goes awry, causing them to hold a police officer and paramedic hostage in an ambulance. The FBI Agent assigned to this case is Clark, who the audience meets in couples therapy with his husband Kyle. In the therapy

session, Kyle talks about Clark being more present in his work than in their relationship. Clark, proving Kyle's point, leaves therapy early to rush to the scene of the ambulance heist. That is the last we see of Kyle, but Clark becomes a more central figure to the plot as it's revealed he and Will are old friends from college and Clark tries to negotiate with Will and Danny. The casual inclusion of a gay FBI agent in this film is a notable one, though it could have gone further by resolving or even referencing back to Clark and Kyle's marriage.



## BROS

WIDEST RELEASE:  
3,356 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

Widely marketed as being among the first major studio gay romantic comedies, GLAAD Media Award-winning *Bros* features a love story between two men alongside a rich and diverse LGBTQ ensemble. Bobby, a historian and podcaster who struggles in relationships, meets

Aaron, a lawyer who hates his job and isn't looking for anything serious. The film examines ideas around masculinity within the gay community with Bobby confessing he feels he sometimes has to tone down his femininity and energy to make others comfortable. The film also delves into LGBTQ history, with Bobby fulfilling his dream of opening up a museum of queer history and the romantic climax of the film taking place at the museum. *Bros* is unashamed to show and discuss gay sex and explores some of the real conflicts within the queer community. Though the film mostly centered white gay men, the cast included members of the community of all identities. Ideally, this film is a jumping off point for more big raunchy romantic comedies that feature queer people from all backgrounds in the leading roles.

## JURASSIC WORLD: DOMINION

WIDEST RELEASE: 4,691 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

The third film in the *Jurassic World* franchise brings back several characters from the original *Jurassic Park* films while introducing a plethora of new players. One of the new characters, Kayla, is a former Air Force pilot who joins the team. There are a few brief moments that may imply that Kayla is queer; she says she likes redheads and is disinterested when notoriously handsome Ian Malcolm unbuttons his shirt. There is a brief scene at the end where she is explaining their heroic story to a redheaded woman that could be interpreted as flirting, but it's all too short and ambiguous to confirm her queerness. There could have easily been even one extra line or scene to confirm that Kayla is queer, but sadly, *Jurassic World: Dominion* failed to do so. The previous *Jurassic World* film, *Fallen Kingdom*, made headlines for cutting dialogue which would have confirmed a different woman character to be queer.



## MARRY ME

WIDEST RELEASE:  
3,643 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

*Marry Me* is a romantic comedy between global pop superstar Kat and ordinary teacher Charlie. Charlie's best friend and coworker Parker is revealed to be a lesbian at the start of the film when she

mentions bringing her girlfriend and her girlfriend's ex to Kat's concert. A third colleague at the school is Jonathan, another Kat fan. At one point, Parker kisses Jonathan as a distraction tactic and he is clearly disgusted, heavily implying he is also gay. Parker ends up being an important character in the film, though after her breakup with her girlfriend, she isn't given another love interest. At the end of the film, there is a montage of happy couples, which included a brief appearance by a lesbian couple, but it would have been stronger to have Parker in there as well.



## NOPE

WIDEST RELEASE: 3,807 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated sci-fi film from acclaimed director Jordan Peele tells the story of siblings OJ and Emerald when a suspicious object is spotted in the sky above their family's ranch. Emerald makes a few remarks

throughout the film that confirm her identity as a lesbian—she mentions her “little girl” at home, jokes about sleeping with her female therapist, and gets distracted flirting with a woman at a store. The main plotline, centered on fighting the aliens and saving the farm, leaves no room for on-screen romance for any of the main characters, including Emerald, but because of this, Emerald remains on the same footing as her straight counterparts - rather than being the only character refused a relationship. Most importantly, *Nope* gives audiences a Black lesbian as the hero and “final girl” of a blockbuster horror film.

## FOCUS FEATURES



## DOWNTON ABBEY: A NEW ERA

WIDEST RELEASE: 3,830 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The second film continuation of TV series *Downton Abbey* continues to feature gay butler Thomas Barrow. In the previous film, he found a romantic interest in another man, Ellis, but in *A New Era*, he received a letter from Ellis announcing his engagement

to a woman. Thomas tells this to the housekeeper, Mrs. Hughes, who is understanding, and while neither of them explicitly mention Thomas' sexuality, Mrs. Hughes calls him very brave. Over the course of the film, a movie star, Guy Dexter, stays at Downton. He repeatedly flirts with Thomas and at one point asks Thomas to come to Hollywood with him and take care of him the way a wife would. Thomas wrestles with this decision, but eventually resigns from his post at Downton to go off with Guy, giving this gay period-piece character a happy ending with another man. The dialogue is all presented through subtleties of the era, yet Thomas is surrounded by support, even in upper class 1920s England.



## HONK FOR JESUS: SAVE YOUR SOUL

WIDEST RELEASE: 1882 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This mockumentary is a satire of megachurches and follows couple Lee Curtis and Trinitie as they try to reopen their church after Lee's sex scandal. The scandal involved him taking advantage of several young men

while preaching rampant homophobia. There is a scene that shows Lee trying to have sex with his wife, but he is unable to complete the act unless it is anal or oral. He also flirts with the sound man on set, Basil, and offers to give him a job in the church, but Basil brings up his boyfriend and quickly leaves. Lee is also confronted by a former victim and, over the course of the film, abandoned by his congregation. The film heavily calls out the deep hypocrisy within homophobic megachurches, yet still feeds into the toxic narrative that the people who propagate lies about the LGBTQ community are always gay themselves.

## MRS. HARRIS GOES TO PARIS

WIDEST RELEASE: 1001 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This film follows the titular Mrs. Harris as she falls into the world of fashion in 1950s Paris. It contains a brief appearance by Christian Dior, who had several little-known male partners in real life. Given that this part of his identity was not addressed in this film, GLAAD did not count Dior as queer.



## SPOILER ALERT

WIDEST RELEASE: 738 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated autobiographical drama follows gay couple Michael and Kit through their relationship, from its beginnings to its complications to Kit's eventual cancer diagnosis and death. The film also features

several other LGBTQ characters, including Michael's roommate Kirby, her girlfriend Jo, and Michael's friend Nick. *Spoiler Alert* is riddled with pop culture references, from Michael realizing he was gay as a kid watching *Days of Our Lives* to the couple bonding over *RuPaul's Drag Race*. At the start of the film, Kit isn't out to his parents and Michael goes along with this, but eventually Kit chooses to come out and his parents are more than accepting. Over the course of the film, Michael becomes closer with Kit's family and remains close with his parents following his eventual death. The film doesn't shy away from the relationship issues plaguing the couple, including Michael's jealousy of Kit's co-worker, but once Kit is diagnosed with cancer, the two remain strongly together and in love until Kit passes away. The film is a tender story about gay love persevering in the hardest of circumstances.



## TÁR

WIDEST RELEASE: 1090 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated psychological drama follows esteemed conductor Lydia Tár at the height of her fame and her meteoric downfall. Lydia has a wife and daughter as a self-described "U-Haul lesbian,"

but her unmitigated power and ego make her harmful to others in the community. In an early scene of the film, she puts down a queer person of color and makes advances on other women. The film also reveals pieces of a dark past where Lydia mentored and then turned on a young woman, Krista, who died by suicide after Lydia blacklisted her from the music industry. Lydia is often seen with her assistant Francesca who clearly has lingering feelings for Lydia. When Lydia denies, Francesca, a higher up position with the orchestra, Francesca quits and helps orchestrate Lydia's ousting from the industry by revealing the truth about Krista, which directly leads to Lydia's downfall.

There are so often stories of toxic geniuses in this culture, and they are normally straight men. *Tár* flips the script by showing a lesbian who embraces masculinity and traditional ideals of power, and betrays both other women and queer people. Lydia is not endorsed by the film and her actions are shown as harmful. Though it can contribute to untrue rhetoric to show this abusive person as queer, the film also shows other queer characters surrounding her, and Lydia's narcissism and abuse of power comes from her ego and status, not her sexual orientation.

## PEACOCK



### THEY/THEM

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING  
RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This horror film set in a so-called “conversion therapy” camp follows a group of queer campers as the staffers are slowly murdered. Though this film offered a diverse cast of LGBTQ protagonists, the film ultimately fell flat by feeding

into the very narrative the film tries to dissect. *They/Them* is shown through the eyes of Jordan, a nonbinary teen who resents being sent to this place by his family. The film also shows other trans, gay, and lesbian members of the camp, as well as the staff. The staff includes Gabe, a “honeypot” meant to seduce gay men, as well as a “straight” couple where both members are clearly concealing their true sexualities. When the staff begins getting killed off, the campers band together and find out that the camp’s nurse, Molly, is the killer, and has been plotting revenge ever since she herself was a camper. This framing positions a queer person as the ultimate villain, rather than the real villains who staff and promote these camps and carry out the practice of “conversion therapy.” It is commendable to have such an array of LGBTQ people who lead this story as the campers, but that was not enough to redeem the film. The film missed an opportunity to highlight the way that non-LGBTQ people are the ones committing horrors by endangering LGBTQ people, and how that reflects the real world, but the film skirted this, and ultimately failed to deliver the message of the true horrors of conversion therapy.

## OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

Universal released *Knock at the Cabin* this February, which tells the story of a gay couple and their child forced to make a horrible decision. The film began as a GLAAD List script and was directed and adapted by M. Night Shyamalan. There are also plenty of announced upcoming films from Universal that could include LGBTQ characters. The film *Talent*, starring out actress Cynthia Erivo and penned by out writer Lena Waithe, has the potential to add queerness to the story of a songwriter returning home. The third *Mamma Mia* movie should expand the role of gay character Harry and give him a love interest. Likewise, the third *Happy Death Day* movie has the opportunity to expand the role of gay character Tim. The *Wicked* stage musical has long been admired by queer audiences and could pad the world of Oz with queer characters.

In 2019, Universal announced a Greg Berlanti-helmed biopic of Rock Hudson, *All that Heaven Allows*, which would dive into Hudson’s career, identity, and HIV diagnosis. There hasn’t been news on the film since its announcement, but GLAAD hopes to see this necessary and important film make it to theaters. There has also not been an update on the adaptation of YA novel *Darius the Great is Not Okay* since 2019. The sequel to the original book confirmed that Darius is gay.

In February, Focus Features released *Of An Age*, a queer love story between a ballroom dancer and his friend’s older brother. Focus also released the documentary *Every Body* in June which tells the stories of three intersex individuals and their advocacy for their community. In February of 2024, the label will release dark comedy *Drive Away Dolls*, a “lesbian road trip comedy” where two girls accidentally cross paths with criminals on their way to Tallahassee. Peacock has announced the *Community* movie, which will feature returning queer character Dean Pelton and has the potential for further inclusion in the beloved TV show continuation.

There are plenty of inclusive films coming in 2023 and beyond, from Focus Features specifically, and GLAAD urges Universal Pictures to take the same route, and commit to further increasing and diversifying the already rich LGBTQ representation that was seen in 2022.



# NETFLIX



Maya Hawke and Talia Ryder as Eleanor and Gabbi, *Do Revenge*



# NETFLIX

This is the first time GLAAD is counting Netflix. GLAAD is counting domestically ordered Netflix originals released directly to their platform, as well as films that received theatrical distribution under the streamer.

## STUDIO RATING OVER TIME



## SUMMARY OF 2022 FINDINGS

**107** Total films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints

**24** Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

**22%** Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

**18** Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## THEATRICAL

**19** Total theatrical films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints

**4** Total number of theatrical LGBTQ inclusive films

**21%** Percent of theatrical LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio theatrical releases

**3** Number of theatrical films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## STREAMING

**88** Total streaming only films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints

**20** Total number of streaming LGBTQ inclusive films

**23%** Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive streaming films of total streaming releases

**15** Number of streaming films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Considering the quality, quantity, and diversity of films distributed under Netflix, GLAAD has given Netflix a FAIR grade.

## SUMMARY

Netflix is the largest streaming distributor of any other tracked in this report. The distributor released over a hundred films on its platform in 2022 and their content has a massive global reach. Some of these films spotlighted exciting LGBTQ characters including a trans boy as a hero in animated film *Wendell & Wild*, a queer lead in buzzy teen comedy *Do Revenge*, and an intimate portrayal of a trans skateboarder in *Stay on Board: The Leo Baker Story*.

While these highlights are impressive, a majority of Netflix films relegated LGBTQ characters to supporting roles, specifically in straight romances, as opposed to having queer people lead their own stories. *Hello Goodbye and Everything in Between*, *Love and Gelato*, *Love in the Villa*, and *Purple Hearts* were just a few romantic films that included an LGBTQ friend of the protagonist that didn't get their own developed story. While casual inclusion is commendable, featuring significant LGBTQ characters with their own love stories is long overdue.

There were a couple disappointing instances of inclusion where the LGBTQ content bordered on offensive; *Blonde* portrayed two bisexual men in a relationship with Marilyn Monroe as blackmailers and manipulators and comedy *Me Time* made its gay characters the butt of the joke. In this day and age, storytellers need to do better by the community.

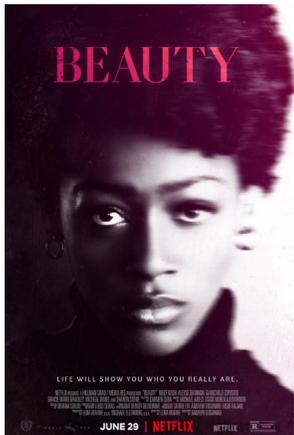
Given the amount of content released each year by Netflix, GLAAD urges the streamer to invest in even more high quality LGBTQ stories where queer characters are the lead and have agency over their own lives and fully marketing those films to connect with audiences who may be overwhelmed by choice.

## HISTORY

Netflix Inc. launched its streaming platform in 2007 and has been distributing original films since 2015's *Beasts of No Nation*. After the COVID pandemic shut down theaters in 2020, the streamer had purchased and released several films originally scheduled for theatrical release. By 2022, Netflix original productions (film and TV) now account for half of its library in the United States.

LGBTQ-inclusive highlights from the streaming giant in past 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), *The Old Guard* (2020), *Alice Júnior* (2020), *Disclosure* (2020), *Mucho Mucho Amor: The Legend of Walter Mercado* (2020), *Tick, Tick... Boom!* (2021), *The Mitchells Vs. The Machines* (2021), *Single All the Way* (2021), *Pray Away* (2021), *The Fear Street Trilogy* (2021), and more.

**Note:** Many Netflix films had theatrical runs before going to the streaming service which were widely reported on, GLAAD has counted those titles as theatrically released films. Netflix does not share their theatrical release numbers publicly and the company declined to provide this information for this report, as such these numbers cannot be cited in this report and are listed as "Unknown."



## BEAUTY

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This film, which many have interpreted as an allegory for the life of late singer Whitney Houston, follows Beauty, a young singer who is offered a lucrative contract and wrestles with the cost of fame. Beauty has a girlfriend, Jasmine, and is warned by both her parents

and executives that being queer will tank her career. Her parents and the industry at large are both shown to be a toxic presence in this film and their homophobia is a clear part of that narrative. Beauty also briefly has a flirtation with her male neighbor. Though having a queer Black lead is an exciting step in the right direction, it would have been preferred to have more depth to Beauty and Jasmine's relationship and insight into Beauty as a character.

## BLONDE

WIDEST RELEASE: UNKNOWN

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This biopic of Marilyn Monroe made headlines regarding its unfair treatment of the iconic actress. The film shows her cycling through different men in her life who constantly put her down. Two of these men are Cass Chaplin and Eddy Robinson who, together seduce Marilyn and begin a romantic and sexual relationship with her. Cass and Eddy often refer to each other as "us" but do not show any physical affection with each other, only with Marilyn. When the relationship ends, Cass and Eddy show Marilyn's new boyfriend photos of her naked, an act of malice to ruin her relationship. That's the last they are seen until Eddy calls Marilyn near the end of the movie, bereaved that Cass has died.

It is clear that Eddy and Cass cared a great deal for each other and that they were in a triad relationship with Marilyn. However, the film shied away from showing any physical intimacy between the two men despite their confirmed relationship. It also portrays them as manipulative toward Marilyn, feeding into negative bisexual stereotypes. Unfortunately, the actualities and the nuance of two men and a woman in a relationship together were fully glossed over in favor of focusing on the abuse Monroe faced.



## BRAZEN

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

Brazen is a romantic thriller about Grace Miller, a popular mystery writer whose sister, Kathleen, a teacher moonlighting as a dominatrix, who is murdered. Grace must team up with Kathleen's neighbor, the handsome

detective Ed Jennings, to solve the murder and get justice for her sister. One of the students in Kathleen's class, Rand, is in the closet. Rand is in a relationship with Richie, who runs the webcams for the cam site Kathleen worked on. At one point in the film, Rand is the primary suspect in the investigation, but is ultimately cleared of the blame when it is discovered that he is gay and was with Richie at the time of the murder. While there is queer representation in this film, the queer characters have no agency over their own stories. Grace learns they are gay through Richie's cousin and then tells Ed. Rand is also severely injured by the actual killer, and is last seen beaten and bruised in a hospital bed. While it is positive that Grace and Ed did not out Rand to his father, the complete stripping of agency from Rand's character is disappointing, as it feels like the queer characters are just a prop to further the plot rather than actually realized characters.



## THE BUBBLE

WIDEST RELEASE: UNKNOWN

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

*The Bubble* is a satirical comedy about filming a movie inside a quarantine bubble during a pandemic. One of the actors in the fictional film, Dieter, is looking for a romantic partner early in the film, and finds one of the employees at the hotel, Anika. However, Anika turns him down at first as she wants to build a real relationship before they have sex. Dieter, unfulfilled in his desires, later propositions two other set workers,

one man and one woman. The moment is not just played for laughs and Dieter seems earnest in his ask, although both turn him down. While a casual inclusion of bisexuality is certainly welcome, the queer representation in such a large ensemble film could have been greater. Furthermore, Dieter has only one brief moment that shows interest in men, and then it is never mentioned again, with him fully focusing on women for the remainder of the film. It would have been preferable for him to be a fully realized bisexual character, rather than just one offhand comment of his sexuality.



## DO REVENGE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated twisty teen comedy focuses on protagonists Drea and Eleanor who use each other to get revenge on their respective enemies. Drea's target is her ex Max, who leaked Drea's nudes, and Eleanor's is Carissa, a girl who outed her at summer camp and spread rumors that Eleanor was a predator. Part of the revenge scheme is for Eleanor to seduce and then humiliate Max. However, during this,

she develops feelings for his sister, Gabbi. As the film progresses, the big plot twist reveals that it was in fact Drea who started the rumor about Eleanor at camp, a fact that she has since forgotten, and Eleanor has been enacting her revenge on Drea this whole time. The conflict between the two mounts, and at the climactic end, Drea reveals Eleanor's true identity but then apologizes for her past behavior. The two agree they have a sick and twisted friendship to be cherished and both enact revenge on Max. The film also ends with Eleanor and Gabbi together romantically.

This film paid homage to teen movies of the last few decades while including a queer protagonist and allowing her to be as complex and interesting as the straight protagonist. It also had a queer ensemble including Gabbi, Clarissa, and a quick role of a male student who was interested in Max. Overall, this wildly popular Gen Z film didn't shy away from portraying the queerness of modern teens.

## ENOLA HOLMES 2

Widest Release: UNKNOWN

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

While this film contains no LGBTQ content, there is a brief scene where Enola needs to be in disguise and so trades clothes with a boy on the street. While often, films have used men wearing women's clothing as a cheap punchline, in this case the boy seemed happy to be wearing Enola's clothes in the seconds he was on screen, but, there was ultimately not enough development of the character to tally.



## FALLING FOR CHRISTMAS

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This Christmas themed romantic comedy follows heiress Sierra and her influencer boyfriend-turned-fiancé Tad on a ski vacation that goes horribly wrong. Sierra has a personal assistant, Terry, who very much

falls into the role of the stereotypical gay assistant. After a series of unfortunate events, Sierra falls for local lodge owner Jake and breaks up with Tad on Christmas morning. In response, Tad invites Terry on the trip planned for their engagement. At the end of the film, Jake chases down Tad’s car, thinking Sierra is in it, and confesses his love. Tad rolls down the window and says, “I’m very flattered, but I have other plans” before winking at Terry. This moment confirms that Tad invited Terry as more than a friend. However, it would have been exciting to see more than a wink confirming their romance. The casual inclusion of a bisexual man of color as one of the major characters is a welcome addition to this romantic comedy. There is also a brief scene where two men attend a fundraiser as a couple.



## GLASS ONION: A KNIVES OUT MYSTERY

WIDEST RELEASE: UNKNOWN

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This second film in the *Knives Out* series confirmed the sexual orientation of lead character Benoit Blanc. In an early scene, Blanc is in the bathtub when a voice calls to him. Later, when

that scene is revisited in flashback, it is made clear that Phillip, Blanc’s live-in partner, is calling for him when someone is at the door. Phillip is a brief inclusion, but shows that Blanc has a male significant other. With the popularity of the *Knives Out* films, there is an opportunity for more focus on Blanc and Phillip’s relationship in the future.



## HELLO, GOODBYE, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This teen romance tells the story of Clare and Aiden, a couple who have plans to break up before college. Aiden, however, plans one last magical date to

convince Clare that they should stay together. Clare’s best friend is Stella, a lesbian who is harboring a long-time crush on classmate Tess. Though the focus of the film is very much on Clare and Aiden, the thread of Stella’s crush on Tess is an active subplot and ends with Stella and Tess kissing at a party and getting together. Though it would be more exciting to see a Black lesbian couple like Stella and Tess at the center of their own film, including their romance in this film was a nice addition to the straight romance.

## HUSTLE

WIDEST RELEASE: UNKNOWN

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

There was no LGBTQ content in *Hustle*, though there were tired gay panic jokes. In one scene where basketball scout Stanley is trying to recruit Spanish player Bo to play for the 76ers using Google Translate, Bo thinks Stanley is making sexual advances on him. There is also a scene where another player trash talks Bo on the court, making jokes about Bo being a “Boa” and unhinging his jaw for oral sex. Both of these moments were unnecessary.



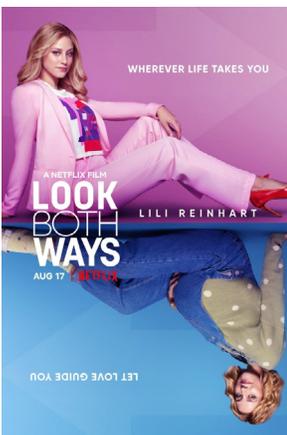
## I BELIEVE IN SANTA

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

*I Believe in Santa* is a romantic comedy in which a single mother, Lisa, who hates Christmas, discovers that her new boyfriend Tom loves Christmas and still believes that Santa is real. Throughout

the couple's entire journey audiences also see Assan, Tom's best friend and co-worker. Assan's sexuality is included in his introduction, and then is no longer brought up once the main straight romance plot takes over. However, while Assan does not find love himself, he plays an integral role in the love story of Tom and Lisa, rather than falling entirely into the background. Ultimately, this film is a good example of including casual queer representation while forming a fully realized character.



## LOOK BOTH WAYS

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This romantic comedy follows lead character Natalie's life in two parallel realities after she takes a pregnancy test on the night of her graduation. In one path, she gives birth to a daughter and raises her in her Texas hometown. In the

other, she moves to Los Angeles with her best friend Cara to pursue a career in animation. Cara is a lesbian and lives with her girlfriend. She is a significant character and is a source of constant support to Natalie in both realities, pushing past the best friend trope. The casual inclusion of Cara is admirable, especially because her sexual orientation is not the focal point of her character, rather an unspoken and singular facet of her identity.

## LOVE AND GELATO

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This romance follows a young woman who goes to Italy to follow her late mother's wishes and finds herself in a love triangle with two young men, Lorenzo and Alessandro. Lorenzo has two mothers, Martina and Chiara, who he is close with. One of the sources of conflict between the two men is that Alessandro never defended Lorenzo when a classmate used a slur toward his moms. Though it is exciting to see queer families in this genre, Martina and Chiara were a very small part of this film.



## LOVE IN THE VILLA

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This romantic comedy follows Julie, who booked a villa when she was still with her ex, only to find she is now stuck sharing it with an attractive stranger. At the beginning of the film, Julie is seen talking to her coworker Rob who encourages her to go on the

trip. There is a moment where we see Rob at home with another man, and it's clear they are in a relationship and live together, though the other man has no lines. While Rob is in the beginning of the film, his character is quickly discarded after the first 30 minutes. This film scrapes by passing the Vito Russo test only because without Rob's encouragement, Julie wouldn't have gone on vacation nor started her prank war that leads to her romance, and so he is the driving force of the plot. However, his actual role is very minor.

## LUCKIEST GIRL ALIVE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

Based on Jessica Knoll's novel of the same name, *Luckiest Girl Alive* delves into lead character Ani's past and present as a school shooting survivor. In the novel, part of the shooter's motivations stem from being bullied for being gay. The film however changes the shooter's motives. While typically, a film erasing gay characters from the source material is harmful, the reverse is true in this case. Changing the identity of the shooters makes it so they avoid the dangerous trope of gay men perpetuating violence in response to homophobia.



## A MADEA HOMECOMING

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This new film in the *Madea* series includes a plot where Madea's great-grandson Tim comes home from college with his roommate, Davi. Throughout the first half of the movie it's implied that Tim is

dating Davi as they both talk about hiding secrets from their respective families. Tim's great-uncle Joe makes several jokes about them being "roommates" that border on offensive, as his role is very much the uncouth uncle. Midway through the film, Tim comes out to his family and they are supportive and not surprised. It's important to note that there is no blatant offensiveness surrounding Tim being gay. However, quickly after this, Davi's big secret is revealed, which is not that he's gay, rather that he is dating Tim's mom, which Tim didn't know about. It's unfortunate that Davi dating an older woman is treated the same as being gay, and that the film played on the belief that Davi was gay for a plot twist and shock value. Tim being met with acceptance from his family is the saving grace of this film.

## ME TIME

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This comedy follows a stay-at-home Dad who gets a week away from his family with his childhood best friend. The film includes a few scenes at various parental events at the children's school. One of the PTA dads is Stew, who the others make fun of and dub "Combover Stew." He mentions his male partner, and though he is a subject of mockery, it's not for being gay. Still, the only gay man in the movie solely existing as the butt of a joke is not a good look. There is also a woman at the PTA, Bethany, who mentions her female partner. Bethany is not as derided as Stew, but is still generally portrayed as a stick in the mud. Though there may have been intent for casual inclusion, having both LGBTQ characters portrayed as jokes or unlikeable was not the way to go about this decision.

## THE NOEL DIARY

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

There is one brief moment of inclusion in this Christmas film. The lead is having a book signing at the start of the film and a gay couple are in line to get their book signed. They appear for roughly 10 seconds and have no significant influence on the plot.



## ORGASM INC: THE STORY OF ONETASTE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This documentary follows the rise and fall of OneTaste, a sexual wellness company that developed a cult-like mentality and mistreated their workers. Audrey

Wright, a former employee and self-identified queer woman, speaks on the toxic culture at OneTaste, how people were forced into non-consensual sexual situations and how her queerness isolated her; she was shamed for being more masculine-presenting than the other women. She also collaborated with the FBI to confirm CEO Nicole Deadone's identity and helped bring down the company. Audrey is an important voice in the film, not only providing the only queer commentary on this company for women's pleasure, but also being one of the key figures that exposed Nicole's exploitative practices.



## A PERFECT PAIRING

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

*A Perfect Pairing* is a romantic comedy that follows LA wine executive Lola and rugged sheep farm manager Max. Lola quits her job and flies to Australia to secure a contract with a wine label looking to go international. In the

process of trying to get the deal, Lola offers to work on the sheep farm where she stays in the workers quarters with employees Breeze, Kylie, and Sam. From Sam's first introduction, we learn that she is engaged to a woman, as her plans to FaceTime her partner are ruined when Lola accidentally shorts out the power. Sam starts as an antagonistic character, hazing and teasing Lola, but the pair ultimately end up as friends. Throughout the film, we hear more about Sam's relationship and the film's conclusion takes place at Sam's wedding. This is one of the few straight romantic comedies that includes a queer kiss and a substantial queer romance. While the final scene at Sam and Heidi's wedding still centers Lola and Max, they don't make the whole event about themselves, waiting until they are alone to have their moment. Ultimately, this portrayal of a queer indigenous character that is significant to the plot and fully developed is a good example of including queer characters in a straight story.

## PURPLE HEARTS

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

*Purple Hearts* is a romantic comedy following Luke, a conservative marine, and Cassie, a liberal musician, who agree to a marriage of convenience and commit insurance fraud for the military spouse benefits. The film features one queer character, Nora, Cassie's co-worker and friend who uses they/them pronouns. Though this casual inclusion is commendable and the character is portrayed by a queer non-binary actor, Nora is primarily relegated to the background and would benefit from being further fleshed out.

## THAT'S AMOR

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

*That's Amor* is a romantic comedy that follows protagonist Sofia after she breaks up with her boyfriend and moves back in with her mother. Her mother signs them up for a cooking class and drags Sofia along, where she meets Matias, her new love interest. The cooking class they join is meant for couples and one of the pairs in the class is Todd and David, a gay couple. The pair mostly serves to fill out the cooking class and show its diversity, and the portrayal does fall into some stereotypes. They wear matching shirts and Todd repeatedly mentions his attraction to the young instructor Matias. Overall, while the queer representation is present, Todd and David function more as set pieces than actual characters.



## THE ROYAL TREATMENT

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

*The Royal Treatment* is a romantic comedy between a New York Italian hairdresser, Izzy, and Prince Thomas of the fictional country Lavania. Their love story begins when Walter,

Thomas' butler, mistakenly hires Izzy to cut Thomas' hair. Izzy is then hired to do the hair at Thomas' wedding in Lavania, but romance blossoms between the two. Walter is present throughout many scenes in the film and is Thomas' most trusted advisor. In one integral scene in which Thomas is unsure whether or not to pursue Izzy, Walter reveals that he was once in love with a man named Richard but had to give him up. Walter urges Thomas not to make the same choice, because "What does life mean without love?" It is commendable that Walter is an older gay man, a demographic less often seen in media. His story could have been improved by a reunion with Richard, which would have pulled the story together and given the one queer character a romance. Still, Walter's inclusion was overall positive, as Walter is shown as a trusted advisor, and is integral to the plot of the film.



## SENIOR YEAR

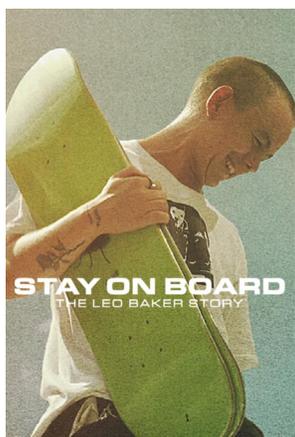
STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

*Senior Year* is a comedy about Australian transplant Stephanie Conway who, after a disastrous bullying prank, is put in a coma in 2002. Stephanie wakes up 20 years later in an entirely new world and decides she's going to finish out her senior year of high

school. One of the ways that Stephanie is shown to be caught in the past is how she speaks of the queer community. She does learn to be respectful over the course of the film, shown in a scene where she has to be told to stop calling things "gay" as an insult. One of her friends from high school, Martha, is now out as a lesbian, although Stephanie doesn't find out until midway through the film. Martha says anti-gay jokes made high school in the 2000s awful and now, as the principal, she wants to make sure it is not that way for other students.

A number of the students that Stephanie goes to school with are also queer including Yaz, a gay man who is Stephanie's cheerleading teammate and becomes her close friend, and Lance, the popular girl's boyfriend, who is described as "gender bendy" and is bisexual+. Martha and Yaz both play key roles in the film and are able to fully embrace their sexualities. While Yaz is somewhat stereotypical, ultimately the queer characters are important to the narrative, and inject both fun and wisdom into the story.



## STAY ON BOARD: THE LEO BAKER STORY

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This documentary chronicles Leo Baker's lead-up to the 2020 Olympics while he attempts to balance the pressure of being true to himself as a well-known trans athlete in the gendered

world of competitive skateboarding. Leo's inner circle includes a number of queer and trans skaters and supporters, who are given ample screen time to examine their own connection to Leo's story. This includes Leo's girlfriend Melissa Bueno-Woerner and fellow trans skater Cher Strawberry, who creates a queer skateboarding company, GLUE, with Leo and their friend Stephen Ostrowski. The documentary also features queer professional skateboarder Alexis Sablone, but she does not discuss her sexuality or relationships and is therefore not counted in GLAAD's tally.

*Stay On Board: The Leo Baker Story* opens a necessary and vital conversation during a heightened time of public misinformation over transgender athletes in both professional and amateur sports. This documentary sets an excellent example of how to tell a nuanced and unique trans story that reflects a singular personal narrative without spending too much screen time on the protagonist's medical transition, and by adding commentary on how gendered expectations harm everyone, athlete or not.



## WENDELL & WILD

WIDEST RELEASE: UNKNOWN

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated stop motion animated film follows Kat, a 13-year-old orphan enrolled in a sinister girls school. She meets and eventually befriends Raúl, an artist at the school and a trans boy.

Siobhan, the villain's daughter and one of the mean girls at school, deadnames Raúl and immediately apologizes. We also meet Raúl's mom, who is on the phone with her boss clarifying that she has her son to feed, fiercely defending his identity. Raúl shows Kat a picture of when he would hang out with the mean girls and he is pre-transition in the photo. Kat doesn't react to the photo, simply telling Raúl that he is less annoying than those girls.

A key moment of Kat and Raúl's plan to defeat the demon Belzer is having Raúl paint a mural of him and his mother, reminding Belzer what is important in life. It's worth noting that Raúl has a wonderful relationship with his own mother who supports him. Overall, it was exciting seeing a Latine trans kid save the day and be a major character in a film aimed at kids and family audiences, showing that trans kids are heroes and artists.



## WHITE HOT: THE RISE & FALL OF ABERCROMBIE & FITCH

STRAIGHT TO  
STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This documentary explores Abercrombie & Fitch's pop culture dominance in the late 1990s and early aughts chronicling

its successes and controversies, including its discriminatory and exclusionary marketing and hiring practices. The narrative largely focuses on gay former CEO Michael Jeffries' alleged sexist, racist, and homophobic behavior, which led to a 2003 class-action lawsuit and a 2015 Supreme Court case. Anderson Cooper is briefly shown reporting on one of these cases. The documentary also highlights the retailer's public and private relationship to the queer community, interviewing gay former employees Savas Abadsidis, Mark Beard, and Benoit Denizet-Lewis, as well as activist Benjamin O'Keefe, who filed a petition against the company. It is important to note that gay photographer Bruce Webber, who was primarily responsible for shaping A&F's "homoerotic" aesthetic, was sued for sexual harassment; Webber settled the suits and did not admit guilt to the charges. Both Webber and Jeffries refused to comment on this documentary. *White Hot: The Rise & Fall of Abercrombie & Fitch* comes to a close with a discussion of Abercrombie's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts, spotlighting the company's 2021 Pride campaign.

## OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

Netflix has several projects in the works that feature LGBTQ characters. In June, Netflix released *Nimona*, based on the popular graphic novel of the same name by out author ND Stevenson. The fantasy animated film includes a gay love story between presumed "villain" Ballister Boldheart and knight Ambrosius Goldenloin. Netflix is also home to the upcoming adaptation of popular novel *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, which has a bisexual lead character as well as further LGBTQ characters in the ensemble, including Evelyn's romantic interest Celia and her lifelong friendship with Harry, a gay man.

Netflix will release *Rustin* in the fall, a high profile biopic of civil rights activist Bayard Rustin who was gay and helped organize the March on Washington. In the film, he will be portrayed by out actor Colman Domingo. There are sequels set for *The Old Guard*, the 2020 GLAAD Media Award-nominated action film which featured a gay couple, Joe and Nicky, in the main ensemble of immortals. There is also a sequel in the works for *Knives Out*, which has the opportunity to delve deeper into Benoit Blanc's identity as a gay man and flesh out his relationship with his partner, Phillip, as well as introduce new LGBTQ characters.

Given that so many Netflix films are aimed at younger audiences, from kids and family content to teen romances, it would be remiss not to include LGBTQ stories from these generations. One in five members of Generation Z identifies as LGBTQ and that reality should be represented on screen.

# Paramount



Jasmin Savoy Brown as Mindy Meeks-Martin, *Scream*



# PARAMOUNT GLOBAL

In the past, GLAAD had counted films released theatrically by distributor Paramount Pictures in this report. This year, GLAAD is counting films distributed under Paramount Pictures as well as streamer Paramount+.

## STUDIO RATING OVER TIME

	<b>2022</b>	<b>FAIR</b>
	<b>2021</b>	FAILING
	<b>2020</b>	N/A
	<b>2019</b>	INSUFFICIENT
	<b>2018</b>	INSUFFICIENT
	<b>2017</b>	POOR
	<b>2016</b>	POOR
	<b>2015</b>	FAILING
	<b>2014</b>	ADEQUATE
	<b>2013</b>	FAILING
	<b>2012</b>	ADEQUATE

## SUMMARY OF 2022 FINDINGS

- 24** Total films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 7** Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 29%** Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 5** Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## THEATRICAL

- 14** Total theatrical films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 3** Total number of theatrical LGBTQ inclusive films
- 21%** Percent of theatrical LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio theatrical releases
- 3** Number of theatrical films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## STREAMING

- 10** Total streaming only films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 4** Total number of streaming LGBTQ inclusive films
- 40%** Percent of streaming LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio streaming releases
- 2** Number of streaming films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## OF THE 7 LGBTQ INCLUSIVE FILMS,

3 WERE  
PARAMOUNT  
PICTURES

4 WERE  
PARAMOUNT+

Considering the quality, quantity, and diversity of films distributed under Paramount Global and its labels, **GLAAD has given Paramount Global a FAIR grade.**

### SUMMARY

Given Paramount’s lack of inclusive films in 2021, it is exciting progress to see LGBTQ inclusion in its 2022 slate. The addition of lesbian character Mindy to the *Scream* franchise opened the door for further inclusion in the sequels, and LGBTQ characters were a welcome sight in award season flick *Babylon* and simultaneous streaming and theatrical film *On the Come Up*.

As for Paramount+, certain films such as *Blues Big City Adventure* and *The In Between* had brief inclusion and would have benefited from further fleshing out their LGBTQ characters. A huge standout in Paramount+ was the young adult film *Three Months*, which focused on a gay teen getting tested for HIV and was a GLAAD List script. Stories surrounding those living with HIV are incredibly underrepresented across all forms of media, and *Three Months* is an excellent example of the content GLAAD strives to make commonplace to erase the stigma around HIV.

Overall, GLAAD encourages Paramount to expand its representation in blockbuster films and major franchises, particularly as it comes to including more diverse characters, and to create more films like *Three Months* where LGBTQ characters lead the narrative.

### HISTORY

The Famous Players Film Company, founded in 1912, entered a three-way merger in 1916 to form Paramount Pictures. In 1994, the Viacom Network acquired Paramount. Paramount’s streaming service launched in 2014 as CBS All Access, introducing original programming in 2016. As CBS re-merged into ViacomCBS in 2019 (now Paramount Global), the company expanded its library of content to include Paramount Pictures and officially relaunched its streaming service as Paramount+ in 2021. Paramount also became the first major studio to sign a multi-picture deal with Netflix in 2018, although current Paramount films stream on Paramount+.

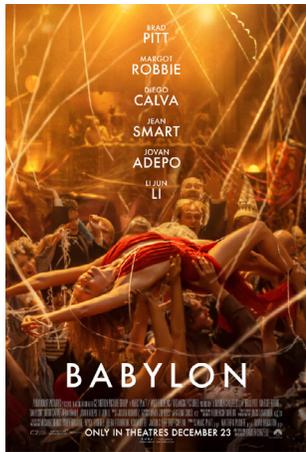
Starting in the mid-nineties and early aughts, Paramount began releasing LGBTQ-inclusive films, including the comedy *In and Out* (1997), which received substantial press for a kiss between Kevin Kline and Tom Selleck and remains in the top 10 highest grossing LGBTQ films alongside *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999). There were numerous LGBTQ-themed films from this time period such as *Home for the Holidays* (1995), *Clueless* (1995), *The Brady Bunch Movie* (1995), *Brain Candy* (1996), *Kiss Me Guido* (1997), *Election* (1999), *The Next Best Thing* (2000), and *The Hours* (2002). In 2016, Paramount released *Star Trek: Beyond*, which showed Hikaru Sulu with his husband and daughter; this intersectional inclusion in a large and recognizable franchise was a groundbreaking step in the right direction for representation. Paramount’s recent LGBTQ-inclusive films include GLAAD Media Award nominee *Rocketman* (2019), *Like a Boss* (2020), and the GLAAD Media Award recognized short film *Coded: The Hidden Love of J.C. Leyendecker* (2021).

# PARAMOUNT PICTURES

## BABYLON

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,351 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS



This epic old Hollywood homage follows fictional key players in the '20s and '30s film industry. One of the lead characters, Nellie LaRoy, is an aspiring actress from New Jersey who develops a relationship with the supporting character Lady Fay Zhu. Zhu's introduction in the film is her singing a song about performing sexual acts with another woman, but Nellie LaRoy's sexuality remains unclear until later in the

film. The two grow closer and share physical intimacies, including a passionate kiss in the rain. However, tabloid speculation about the pair's relationship eventually gets Zhu ousted from the industry altogether. She goes on to find success in Europe, one of the few characters in the film whose story does not end in tragedy. Nellie, however, enters a torrid and tragic romance with protagonist Manny and dies alone in a hotel room at 34. In a film that showcased the unpleasant underbelly of Hollywood, seeing Zhu, a prominent queer character of color, receive the closest to a happy ending, even after her exile from Hollywood, was a pleasant surprise. The film also featured several group sex scenes with characters of various genders, but no specific characters and sexualities are clarified within those scenes.

Often, queer and POC voices are omitted from old Hollywood narratives. Though the film was not the consummate example of queer and POC characters, showing queerness in this time period, especially through a queer woman of color, takes a step in the right direction towards equal representation.

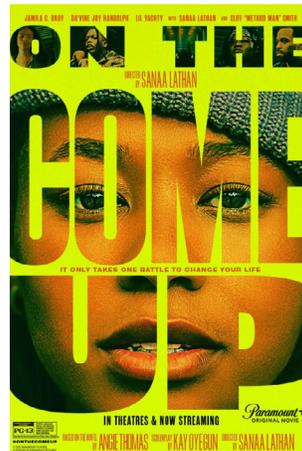


## ON THE COME UP

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 603 THEATERS

SIMULTANEOUS STREAMING RELEASE ON PARAMOUNT+

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS



Based on the young adult novel of the same name, this drama follows Bri, a young rapper on the rise. Sonny, one of Bri's close friends, is a gay teen who discusses how hard it is to be out at school. Later on in the film, Bri goes to Atlanta with Sonny, her manager Supreme, and Supreme's son Miles, a rapper under the name Milez. Miles and Sonny form a romantic relationship; Miles asserts his dad is accepting of his sexuality,

but his rap persona Milez has to uphold a straight and masculine demeanor. The film addresses this homophobia in the rap world while still having concrete gay characters in a relationship. The one misstep is that Bri's Aunt Pooh was a lesbian in the book, but her sexual orientation isn't made clear in this film; there's just one moment where she is called a slur by a bystander without any actual context. This marks a missed opportunity to show a Black lesbian as a major positive figure in this film.

## SCREAM

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,666 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The fifth film in the iconic *Scream* franchise sees a few old favorites return, while adding a new central ensemble to the *Scream* world. One of the newly introduced characters is Mindy Meeks-Martin, a lesbian teen who is the niece of original *Scream* character Randy Meeks. Mindy serves as the meta pop culture brain of the group and often dons pride apparel. At the final climactic party scene, Mindy announces she's probably going to hook up with another girl, Frances, who she is later seen kissing. Mindy survives the film, and has an expanded role in the sequel. Having an already out Black lesbian outlasting the events of a horror film is an exciting development for such a popular film franchise.

## PARAMOUNT +

### BLUE'S BIG CITY ADVENTURE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

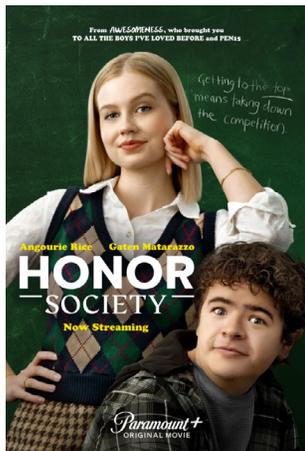
VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This *Blue's Clues* movie follows Blue and Josh as they go to New York so Josh can audition for a Broadway musical. There is a brief moment during a montage where one man gives another man flowers, to which he responds, "Aw, for me?" The scene lasts two seconds, and could be easily missed, but is still a positive inclusion of a gay couple in a children's film.

### HONOR SOCIETY

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS



This comedy follows the titular Honor as she tries to get into Harvard by derailing the lives of three other students who might receive a letter of recommendation over her.

One of them is Travis, the closeted star athlete. Instead of outing him or engineering some other malicious scheme, Honor convinces him to sign up for the school play to set him up with Gary, the head of the theater club. Gary is out, and

a significant character in the film, as so much of the movie's plot revolves around the theater club. Travis' girlfriend is jealous of Travis kissing another girl in the play, so Gary plays the female lead in drag instead. Then, Travis' girlfriend becomes jealous of Honor, causing Travis to finally break up with her and come out as gay. His ex then threatens to out him to his father, but Travis beats her to it, coming out to his father himself. His father is supportive and tells Travis he's always known. Then Travis gets to kiss Gary in the play, and again later as the credits roll at the end of the movie.

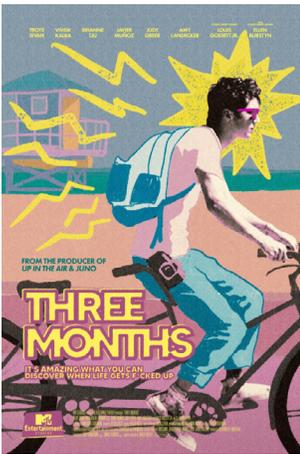
For a film that had several dramatic twists and spiteful plots afoot, it is notable that the gay characters had agency and a genuine romance and that filmmakers avoided defaulting to a stereotypical "outing threat" as the easy story option. He also had a happier romance than the straight protagonists.

### THE IN BETWEEN

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This film follows a romance between protagonist Tessa and her boyfriend Skylar, who dies at the start of the film, which then spurs an attempt to initiate contact with his spirit. Tessa's friend Shannon has a crush on their classmate, Judd. However, she sees Judd kissing another boy at a party. Judd and the other boy are not major players in the film, and Shannon quickly moves on to another crush. Additionally, Tessa's stepmother Vickie mentions that she has been in love with a few men, and maybe one woman. The line is said with significance, but not further explored by the narrative. In the future, when studios want to make characters queer, this should be committed to and, when pertinent, expanded upon, rather than brushed past.



## THREE MONTHS

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING  
RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

*Three Months* is a coming-of-age story that centers on the three months it takes the main character Caleb to find out if he is living with HIV or not after he gets a text from a former hook-up saying he has tested positive for HIV. Audiences follow Caleb's journey of getting

tested, joining a support group, and even forming a summer romance of his own. Caleb meets Estha in the support group and they form a bond; both of them have parents who do not approve of their sexuality. The two become closer and Caleb shows him clips of Pedro Zamora on *The Real World*, which has been helping Caleb come to terms with his potential diagnosis. Caleb and Estha eventually kiss and are intimate without engaging in sex. The next day, Estha tests negative but tells Caleb they shouldn't see each other anymore. The film also focuses on Dara, Caleb's lesbian best friend who is hooking up with Suzanne, their older boss who is married to a man and has kids. This ends poorly, with Suzanne's husband barging in on them and Suzanne saying Dara meant nothing. Though both Caleb and Dara had flings that did not end well, the film ends with them happy, riding a bike together with Caleb's results, which are never stated.

This film shows the realities of messy young queer love and provides many instances of chosen family, through the support group, Dara and Caleb's relationship, and Caleb's relationship with his grandmother. The movie also sends a powerful message about how an HIV diagnosis is not the end of the world and people living with HIV have long and healthy ongoing lives, goals, and dreams of their own, same as anyone else. It also importantly notes that HIV is not relegated to older generations, still exists in the world today, and should not be ignored when telling queer stories of any time period. HIV testing has also seen its advances to shorter diagnosis times with an HIV test that can provide instant results in one minute, to an oral swabs that can be purchased over the counter, to the 4th generation HIV test which can diagnose within 14 days after an exposure. Films like *Three Months* create opportunities for us all to engage in conversation about HIV that helps us understand and address HIV stigma.

## OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

Paramount is home to several iconic franchises that have introduced LGBTQ characters. As mentioned, *Scream*'s Mindy plays a more significant role in *Scream 6*, and we are excited to see her in the following sequels. An upcoming *Star Trek* film is still in development at Paramount, and GLAAD hopes to see the return of Sulu and his husband and child, or any of the multitude of LGBTQ characters in the *Star Trek* television series. GLAAD hopes that this film will move forward and continue the ever-increasing representation in the *Star Trek* franchise. In October 2025, Paramount will be releasing an animated *Avatar: The Last Airbender* film. The spinoff of the *Avatar* series, *The Legend of Korra*, featured a queer romance with the two lead women, and the *Avatar* novel *The Rise of Kyoshi* revealed that the titular role is bisexual; the same inclusion can and should be brought to any film in the *Avatar* franchise.

Paramount+ will be releasing the adaptation of *Mean Girls: The Musical*, which features prominent gay character Damien. Paramount is also set to release an adaptation of *Spamalot*. The stage show portrayed Lancelot and Prince Herbert as gay. Though it was a tad outdated in its humor, their inclusion and updated language in this new adaptation is key. The studio will also be releasing the new musical *Quinceañera*, which follows a nonbinary Latine teen determined to have their quince.

There are also several book adaptations in the works that feature LGBTQ characters in the source material, including *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, *Harbinger*, *Rosalie Palmer Takes the Cake*, and more.



**SONY**  
**PICTURES™**  
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Mack Bayda, Tom Hanks, and Cameron Britton as Malcolm, Otto, and Jimmy, *A Man Called Otto*



# SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT

In the past, GLAAD had counted films released theatrically by Sony Pictures in this report, while counting arthouse distributor Sony Pictures Classics separately. This year, GLAAD is counting films distributed under Sony Pictures, Sony Pictures Classics, as well as Sony’s anime-focused streamer Crunchyroll as one overall brand.

## STUDIO RATING OVER TIME

★★★★★	<b>2022</b>	<b>INSUFFICIENT</b>
★★★★★	<b>2021</b>	INSUFFICIENT
★★★★★	<b>2020</b>	N/A
★★★★★	<b>2019</b>	POOR
★★★★★	<b>2018</b>	INSUFFICIENT
★★★★★	<b>2017</b>	POOR
★★★★★	<b>2016</b>	FAILING
★★★★★	<b>2015</b>	ADEQUATE
★★★★★	<b>2014</b>	FAILING
★★★★★	<b>2013</b>	GOOD
★★★★★	<b>2012</b>	ADEQUATE

## SUMMARY OF 2022 FINDINGS

- 38** Total films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 8** Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 21%** Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 6** Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## THEATRICAL

- 30** Total theatrical films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 8** Total number of theatrical LGBTQ inclusive films
- 27%** Percent of theatrical LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio theatrical releases
- 6** Number of theatrical films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## STREAMING

- 8** Total streaming only films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 0** Total number of streaming LGBTQ inclusive films
- 0%** Percent of streaming LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio streaming releases
- 0** Number of streaming films that pass the Vito Russo Test

# OF THE 8 LGBTQ INCLUSIVE FILMS,

4 WERE  
SONY  
PICTURES

4 WERE  
SONY  
CLASSICS

0 WERE  
CRUNCHYROLL

Considering the quality, quantity, and diversity of films distributed under Sony and its labels, **GLAAD has given Sony an INSUFFICIENT grade.**

## SUMMARY

Highlights of Sony’s wide theatrical releases include a trans teen shining in *A Man Called Otto* and the exploration of Whitney Houston’s sexuality in the biopic *I Wanna Dance With Somebody*. It would have been exciting to see more films beyond the drama genre include LGBTQ representation in wide releases.

Sony Picture Classics is known for documentaries and international films, and both these genres had LGBTQ-inclusive films last year. From bisexual leads in *Return to Seoul* and *Hytty nro 6* to LGBTQ inclusion in music documentaries, Sony Pictures Classics tells many LGBTQ stories. Sadly, Sony’s streamer Crunchyroll contained no LGBTQ-inclusive films, despite the fact that the anime fanbase is full of eager queer consumers.

Overall, GLAAD hopes to see more LGBTQ inclusion in Sony’s future comedy, family, and animated slates to parallel their recent dramatic releases.

## HISTORY

Founded as Cohn-Brant-Cohn Film Sales in 1918, the film studio was renamed Columbia Pictures in 1924. It began to garner prestige in the 1920’s for producing some of the biggest films and stars of the classic Hollywood era, as well as its association with director Frank Capra. For a brief period in the ‘80s, the studio was acquired by Coca-Cola and launched TriStar pictures. Columbia/TriStar was its own entity before Sony purchased it in 1989. Since 1992, Sony Pictures Classics, Sony Pictures Entertainment’s specialty film label, has acquired, produced, and distributed independent, documentary and arthouse films. In April 2021, Sony entered into multi-year deals with Netflix and The Walt Disney Company to host films on their streaming platforms, Disney+ and Hulu, after their theatrical runs. Legendary Entertainment reached a distribution deal with Sony to distribute its future slate of films in November 2022, however, this deal does not include Warner Bros.’ *Dune* and *MonsterVerse* films. Currently, Sony distributes films from its many imprints including Columbia, Tristar, Sony Pictures Classics, Sony Pictures Animation, Screen Gems, and Affirm.

The political thriller *Advise and Consent* (1962) included a subplot where a Senate chairman is blackmailed over an affair he had with another man prior to his death by suicide, and TriStar’s *Basic Instinct* (1993) led to LGBTQ groups, including GLAAD, denouncing vilified portrayals of lesbian and bisexual women. Sony Pictures Classics has released multiple high-profile LGBTQ films, such the documentary *The Celluloid Closet* (1995), based on GLAAD co-founder Vito Russo’s book of the same name, which explores LGBTQ representation throughout the history of cinema. Additional LGBTQ-inclusive films from Sony Pictures Classics include *My Life in Pink* (1997); *Kill Your Darlings* (2013); Pedro Almodóvar’s *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); GLAAD Media Award nominee *Pain and Glory* (2019), *Greed* (2020), GLAAD Media Award winner *Parallel Mothers* (2021) and more.



## A MAN CALLED OTTO

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,957 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated film follows Otto, a man who is angry at the world after the death of his wife, Sonya. Slowly, over the course of the film, his hard veneer is chipped away by the kindness

of his neighbors. One of those neighbors is Malcolm, a teen boy who Otto confronts about his paper delivery skills. Malcolm tells Otto that it's one of his many jobs as he saves up for a car. He also confides in Otto that Sonya was one of the first people to support him through his transition, calling him Malcolm before many others did. Otto attempts to take his own life many times in this film, and one of them is interrupted by Malcolm knocking on his door, looking for a place to stay after his dad kicked him out for not being the child he wanted. Otto takes Malcolm in and teaches him about cars the way his own father taught him. This relationship clearly affects Otto in a positive way, bringing out a softer side of him. At the end of the film, when Otto passes away, he leaves his truck to Malcolm, showing the value of their relationship. Though Malcolm was not a lead character, it's very welcome progress to see a young trans man play a pivotal and positive part in the major narrative of this movie.

## FATHER STU

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,705 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This biopic follows the titular Stu as he goes to Hollywood to try to become an actor and instead becomes a priest. At one point, a drag queen on the street blows Stu a kiss and he grins at it; the moment is played to laugh at Stu because he thought she was a cis woman. A more egregious moment is when Stu is auditioning for a role, an agent offers to cast him in return for sexual favors. Stu then threatens the man. Those moments represent the community as jokes at best and predators at worst, which only amplifies anti-LGBTQ sentiment. It is disappointing to see these portrayals in a major film release in 2022.



## WHITNEY HOUSTON: I WANNA DANCE WITH SOMEBODY

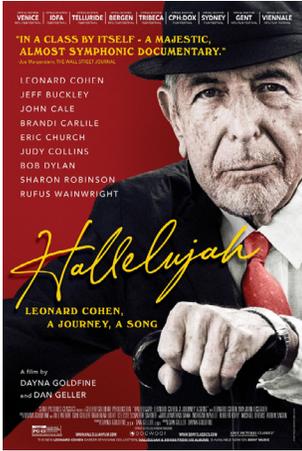
WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,625 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This biopic of legend Whitney Houston follows her rise to fame, her struggles with addiction, and

her personal relationships. One of those is with Robyn Crawford, who was Whitney's lover before her marriage. The film shows the tenderness of that relationship, and how the industry and press encouraged Whitney to end it. When Whitney sleeps with Jermaine Jackson, it causes Whitney and Robyn to fight, with Whitney citing the bible and saying they will go to hell for this relationship. Whitney and Robyn maintain a close friendship, even as she marries Bobby Brown, who Robyn has contentious relationship with. Ultimately, Robyn and Bobby's tensions escalate and Robyn decides to leave Whitney's life. The film also features bisexual record producer Clive Davis, who serves as another concerned party, trying to convince Whitney to go to rehab. His partner is also briefly featured. Overall, the film painted a tragic picture of the beloved singer and treated her queer relationship with respect and gravity.

# SONY PICTURES CLASSICS



## HALLELUJAH: LEONARD COHEN, A JOURNEY, A SONG

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 168 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This documentary highlights the art and cultural impact of Leonard Cohen’s work, particularly focusing on his song “Hallelujah.” Though Cohen has mentioned a latent interest in men in interviews, this facet of his identity was not highlighted

in the documentary. There were, however, several LGBTQ musicians interviewed in the film. The most prominent was Brandi Carlile, who talked about “Hallelujah” and its impact with her own reckoning of her faith with her sexuality. Out singer Rufus Wainright also has a prominent role in the documentary, talking about his cover of “Hallelujah” making huge waves with its inclusion on the *Shrek* soundtrack. Other LGBTQ folks who appeared in the documentary but didn’t fall under GLAAD’s methodology include Clive Davis, Amanda Palmer, and Jeff Wasser, plus archival footage of k.d. lang performing the titular track.



## HYTTI NRO 6/ COMPARTMENT NUMBER 6

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 63 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This drama follows a Finnish student, Laura, and a Russian miner, Ljoha, in a train compartment together and their ensuing relationship and conversation. Laura is seen early on in the film with her lover Irina. She

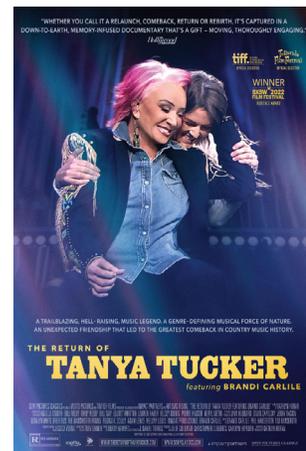
speaks to Ljoha about both the love and the troubles in that relationship, and how Irina was supposed to come on this trip, but had to work; leaving Laura on her own. A romance develops between Laura and Ljoha on the train and the two kiss. This act does not invalidate Laura’s fraught relationship with Irina. Rather it shows the main character as a bisexual woman figuring out where she belongs. Having a queer protagonist in a film set in Russia in the ‘90s could have opened the gates for Laura to face prejudice from the world, particularly from Ljoha, but instead the film gave a nuance to Laura, with her queerness and relationship to Irina simply a facet of her identity.

## JAZZ FEST: A NEW ORLEANS STORY

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 302 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This documentary follows New Orleans’ annual jazz festival and its cultural impact on the city and on music. One of the people interviewed is famous queer musician Big Freedia, who states, “New Orleans is so special because we do accept all walks of life, no matter if you’re Black, white, gay, straight... Freedom of expression and freedom to do whatever they choose to do and love whoever they choose to love and to be themselves... It makes us who we are as people and as a city.” Though this was only about 45 seconds of the film, Big Freedia’s appearance helps round out the full picture of New Orleans. The documentary included pansexual singer Boyfriend, though there was no mention of her sexuality or relationships in the film and she was therefore not counted in GLAAD’s tally.



## THE RETURN OF TANYA TUCKER: FEATURING BRANDI CARLILE

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 350 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This film follows the release of country legend Tanya Tucker’s 2019 comeback album *When I’m Livin’*. The album is written and produced by out lesbian singer Brandi Carlile, who is very much the second lead of this documentary. Carlile touches on how Tucker’s toughness helped shape her ideas of gender and sexuality. She also introduces her wife and child to Tucker, who is very pleased to meet them. Carlile has become a music legend in her own right and this doc is a touching portrayal of her new friendship with her own idol.



## RETURN TO SEOUL

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 350 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This film follows Freddie, a woman who was born in South Korea and then was adopted by French parents as a baby. In the film, her flight to Tokyo is canceled and she decides to take an impromptu

trip to Seoul, where she begins searching for her biological parents. During the film, which takes place over several years, Freddie sleeps with several different men. She also attempts to kiss Tena, a woman who is her makeshift translator and friend in South Korea, who swiftly rejects her. Years later, when Freddie has a boyfriend, she invites another woman to kiss her boyfriend and watches. The film's focus is not on Freddie's sexuality, more on the complex dynamics with her biological parents and South Korea. However, these moments show that Freddie is attracted to women as well as men. Though not a huge part of the story, Freddie's queerness adds a layer to an already complex character, and it is exciting to see a queer lead of a critically acclaimed independent film.

## CRUNCHYROLL

### THE QUINTESSENTIAL QUINTUPLETS MOVIE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This film follows Futaro, a tutor to five quintuplets, one of whom he is in love with. During a conversation he has with one of the quintuplets, an actor named Itsuki, she mentions that the only person she's kissed is another girl while filming a drama. We see that moment briefly in flashback, but Itsuki clarifies she couldn't have done that if she were kissing a man, implying that she is only attracted to men. Therefore, GLAAD did not count Itsuki in the final tally.

## OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

Kay Cannon's comedy *My Ex-Friend's Wedding* will come out in spring 2024. Cannon has a history of including LGBTQ characters in her work, and the film includes Ariana DeBose in the cast. Gay former \*NSYNC member Lance Bass is behind a film following two superfans of the band. The film will be penned with Rachel Bloom, who included several queer characters in her TV series *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*.

Sony has an adaptation of *The Diabolic* in the works, which includes a queer protagonist, Nemesis. The studio also will be adapting the *Broken Earth* trilogy, a best-selling fantasy series which includes queer and trans characters of color in the ensemble. Sony continues to adapt Marvel properties under the *Spider-Man* umbrella. There is a huge opportunity for queer inclusion in these films, as the *Spiderverse* series has a large LGBTQ fanbase and includes many Gen Z characters, who are statistically more likely to be LGBTQ.

Sony Pictures Classics' dramedy *Shortcomings* features out actor Sherry Cola as the lesbian best friend of the lead. SPC also has the rights to Sundance hit *The Persian Version*, which features a queer Iranian screenwriter who tries to understand her mother.

Sony has space in the independent scene, the mid-budget comedy, and the superhero franchise spaces for further LGBTQ inclusion and GLAAD hopes that Sony takes this opportunity to expand and diversify its LGBTQ representation.



# The Walt Disney Company



Jaboukie Young-White as Ethan, *Strange World*



# THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY

In the past, GLAAD had counted films released theatrically by The Walt Disney Studios and 20th Century (and their associated labels) in this report, while counting arthouse distributor Searchlight separately. This year, GLAAD is counting films distributed under The Walt Disney Studios, 20th Century, and Searchlight, as well as original films on streamers Disney+ and Hulu, as one overall brand.

## STUDIO RATING OVER TIME

	<b>2022</b>	<b>GOOD</b>
	<b>2021</b>	INSUFFICIENT
	<b>2020</b>	N/A
	<b>2019</b>	POOR
	<b>2018</b>	FAILING
	<b>2017</b>	POOR
	<b>2016</b>	FAILING
	<b>2015</b>	FAILING
	<b>2014</b>	FAILING
	<b>2013</b>	ADEQUATE
	<b>2012</b>	FAILING

## SUMMARY OF 2022 FINDINGS

- 59** Total films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 24** Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 41%** Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 19** Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## THEATRICAL

- 15** Total theatrical films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 7** Total number of theatrical LGBTQ inclusive films
- 47%** Percent of theatrical LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio theatrical releases
- 7** Number of theatrical films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## STREAMING

- 44** Total streaming only films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 17** Total number of streaming LGBTQ inclusive films
- 39%** Percent of streaming LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio streaming releases
- 12** Number of streaming films that pass the Vito Russo Test

# OF THE 24 LGBTQ INCLUSIVE FILMS,

7 WERE  
WALT DISNEY  
STUDIOS

5 WERE  
DISNEY+

12 WERE  
HULU

Considering the quality, quantity, and diversity of films distributed under the Walt Disney Company and its labels, **GLAAD has given The Walt Disney Company a GOOD grade.**

## SUMMARY

Walt Disney Studios included LGBTQ characters in all five of its Disney theatrical releases. While the LGBTQ representation in some films was groundbreaking in kids and family spaces, such as *Lightyear* and *Strange World*, other films' inclusion was more minor, such as *Doctor Strange and the Multiverse of Madness* and other Marvel properties. Inclusion in Disney's other theatrical labels, Searchlight and 20th Century, was minimal.

As for streaming, Hulu delivered outstanding LGBTQ-centric stories with romantic comedies *Fire Island* and *Crush*, in addition to casual inclusion in several other films including *Darby and the Dead* and *Fresh*. Disney+ released LGBTQ stories that reached a wide kids and family audience such as *Zombies 3* and *Better Nate Than Ever*, but missed the mark in films like *Hocus Pocus 2* and *Turning Red*, which only included "blink and you'll miss it" moments of representation, if any at all. A concerning trend we've seen in the past year is the removal of films from their respective streaming services; *Better Nate Than Ever* and *Darby and the Dead* are two inclusive films that have been fully removed. These stories are a powerful tool to change hearts and minds and for queer youth to feel seen, yet their removal off all platforms means that their impact is essentially erased.

Overall, Disney released several high-profile films that included prominent LGBTQ characters and a diverse cross section of the community, however the company still had a number of films that either missed potential for increased LGBTQ inclusion or had no inclusion at all. This is a huge improvement on the last several years of Walt Disney's films, and GLAAD looks forward to Disney continuing to expand LGBTQ inclusion, with more substantial roles for queer characters in Marvel movies, further animated stories, and more prominent LGBTQ inclusion in their art house divisions.

## HISTORY

Walt Disney is one of the largest and most identifiable film and entertainment companies in the world, boasting an expansive international brand far beyond just films. The company distributes and markets the majority of content produced by a collection of film studios, including Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Animation Studios, Pixar Animation Studios, Lucasfilm, Marvel Studios, Searchlight Pictures, 20th Century Fox Animation, and Fox Studios Australia. In the past few years, they have shuttered studios such as Fox 2000 and Blue Sky Animation, most recently dissolving 20th Digital Studio in 2023. Since launching their streamer Disney+ in November 2019, the studio has experimented with film releases on the service in lieu of or in addition to theatrical release. Also in 2019, Disney reached an agreement with Comcast for majority control of Hulu, with the intent of finalizing the deal in 2024. In 2023, Disney announced its plan to combine Disney+ and Hulu content in a "one-app experience" by the end of the year. Each service, however, will also remain available separately.

Compared to other studios tracked in this report, Walt Disney Studios history is light on LGBTQ inclusion. There were several inclusive releases from Disney-owned Touchstone Pictures including *Ed Wood* (1994), *Sweet Home Alabama* (2002), *Under the Tuscan Sun* (2003), and *Kinky Boots* (2006). Lucasfilms produced *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985), which 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 past inclusive films include *Delivery Man* (2013); *Muppets Most Wanted* (2014); *Beauty and the Beast* (2017); and *Eternals* (2021); and 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); *The New Mutants* (2020) and *West Side Story* (2021). Hulu began producing original films in 2019 and has released GLAAD Media Award-winning films *Happiest Season* (2020), and *Changing the Game* (2021) among others.

# WALT DISNEY STUDIOS



## BLACK PANTHER: WAKANDA FOREVER

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE:  
4,396 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The sequel to Marvel's acclaimed *Black Panther*, *Wakanda Forever* sees the return of the Dora Milaje, the group of women warriors who protect the nation of Wakanda. One of these women is Ayo, the second in command, who moves up to general over the course of the film. She is seen showing affection to

another Dora member, Aneka, and calls her "my love." Aneka later joins head general Okoye as part of the Midnight Angels. The couple mostly appear in ensemble and fight scenes in the film. While it is a nice moment of inclusion, the two characters only have their relationship confirmed briefly at the end of the story. Future Marvel properties have an opportunity to flesh out these queer characters as they have in the comics, which actress Michaela Coel cited as to what drew her to the part, and to take steps to further include Ayo and Aneka's relationship alongside the larger story. *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* also included a brief appearance by out news anchor Anderson Cooper reporting on the conflict between the country and the rest of the globe.



## DOCTOR STRANGE IN THE MULTIVERSE OF MADNESS

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE:  
4,534 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The second *Doctor Strange* film introduces a beloved hero from Marvel Comics, America Chavez. Though America is an out and proud lesbian in the comics, the character in the film is aged down and her sexual orientation is never discussed or brought up, with the exception of a pride flag patch

seen on her jacket. With a large portion of the film being centered on Stephen Strange's relationship with his ex-girlfriend, it is disheartening that there was no mention of America's relationships with women. There is, however, inclusion of America's two moms who are the impetus of her motivations and the key to her mysterious past. Sadly, both women only appear for less than 30 seconds as they get sucked into a portal.

Queer Marvel fans have been excited for America Chavez to be introduced to the MCU for years and she is primed for a larger role in the franchise; we sincerely hope that her future appearances include her full authentic self that has been such a highlight of Marvel comics.



## LIGHTYEAR

WIDEST RELEASE:  
4,255 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST:  
PASS

This *Toy Story* spin-off focuses on the titular Buzz Lightyear on a mission to return to his home planet. Early on in the film, audiences are introduced

to Buzz's friend and commanding officer Alisha Hawthorne. A significant portion of the film's first act shows Buzz testing hyperspeed flight; every time he leaves the planet for a run, mere minutes pass for Buzz while years pass for those who remain trapped on the planet. On his first mission back, Hawthorne reveals that she is engaged to another woman, a fact that is not shocking to Buzz or any other character in the film. Over the course of a montage, we see Hawthorne with her fiancée, who then becomes her wife, and the family they raise together. Buzz, as he stubbornly continues his test flights, returns one final time to find that Hawthorne has died of old age. However, her presence is continuously felt throughout the film, and her granddaughter becomes a major character in Buzz's adventure, as well as providing the emotional motivation behind Buzz's actions. Buzz's love and respect for Alisha and her relationship is the ultimate driving force behind his decision to join today's world and give up attempts to turn back time to where he left from, which would have erased the community built on the planet in his time away.

Including a pivotal Black lesbian character in a film aimed at young audiences is a great step forward for the industry, and we hope to see bigger roles in the future for queer characters of color in kids and family programming.



## STRANGE WORLD

WIDEST RELEASE: 4,174 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This film follows three generations of the Clade family, including Jaeger, his son Searcher, and Searcher's son Ethan, on a subterranean adventure. At the beginning of the film, Searcher casually teases Ethan about Diazo, a boy Ethan has a crush on.

Ethan's feelings for Diazo remain part of the story throughout their adventure: Ethan asks Jaeger's advice on how to ask Diazo out when they are reunited, and Ethan and Diazo are ultimately seen together as a couple at the end of the film. No one in Ethan's family has an adverse reaction to Ethan having feelings for another boy, it is simply accepted as part Ethan's identity and the world surrounding them. Ethan's sexuality is also only one aspect of his character, and his quest for adventure, not his sexuality, is the driving force of the film.

Featuring a queer co-lead in an animated Disney film marketed to children and families is a commendable step toward ever-increasing inclusion, and a young gay man of color leading *Strange World* makes it all the more groundbreaking. *Strange World* was the top grossing new release at the box office on its opening weekend. It was also the top streamed film on Disney+ upon its release and maintained a position in the top films on the service over several weeks, with critics and audiences praising Ethan and Diazo's story. We hope to see more films like *Strange World* from major studios in the future.



## THOR: LOVE AND THUNDER

WIDEST RELEASE: 4,375 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The press surrounding the fourth *Thor* film promised a "super gay" narrative, and while the movie did confirm the queerness of two characters from previous installments, it failed to live up to fan's expectation set by

the press tour. Since 2017's *Thor: Ragnarok*, in which a scene confirming Valkyrie's bisexuality was allegedly cut, fans have been rallying for Valkyrie to be openly bisexual. This film did confirm her bisexuality, as Valkyrie briefly flirts with a handmaiden and continues to reference her lost love. However, in a film so heavily focused on love and romance, there was an incredible missed opportunity for Valkyrie to experience a new romance herself, rather than lament on loss.

The rock-like Kronan, Korg, however, was given a same-sex romantic interest in the form of Dwayne, another Kronan, who appears at the end of the film as the pair performs a Kronan ritual to have a child. Though having two prominent queer characters is a step forward, the film missed an opportunity to take a bigger leap towards LGBTQ inclusion and give a more interesting story to Valkyrie beyond her support of Thor and Jane's mission to reclaim the children of New Asgard and protect their people from the god killer. It would have been powerful to see more of a spotlight on queer romance in a film centered around unconditional love.



## DEATH ON THE NILE

WIDEST THEATRICAL  
RELEASE: 2,890 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

Based on the Agatha Christie novel of the same name, this film follows infamous detective Poirot on yet another troubling case. Set in the 1930s, Poirot is aboard a cruise ship sailing down the Nile to celebrate a

recent wedding when the unexpected murder of the bride turns everyone on the ship into a murder suspect. One of the suspects is Marie Van Schuyler, the bride's godmother, who would benefit financially from her death. In his attempts to solve the case, Poirot uncovers that Van Schuyler and her traveling nurse, Miss Bowers, are secretly lovers. The couple's names are eventually cleared, they both survive the film, and Poirot keeps their secret rather than outing them in a time unfriendly to queer people. These characters were not queer in the original novel, so it's a commendable choice to add inclusion to this film. Yet given that the source material was already altered, a more in-depth look at the character's relationship and increased roles for the pair would have been a welcome addition. However, the characters surviving and not facing any outward homophobia from the protagonist in a period piece is worth noting.



## SEE HOW THEY RUN

WIDEST RELEASE: 2,502  
THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This murder mystery set in London in the 1950s follows an investigation surrounding the murder of American film director Leo Kopernick. One of the suspects is the screenwriter of the film Kopernick was set to

direct, Mervyn Cocker-Norris. Mervyn lives with Gio, a man he claims is his nephew, but moments such as Gio getting upset when Mervyn flirts with another man and Gio calling Mervyn "amore" indicate that the pair are actually secret lovers. However, this is quickly glossed over, as Mervyn is killed partway through the movie. He is one of only three people who die in this film and it is disappointing to have the confirmation of his queerness be so brief and for him to then be an easily disposable victim.

# DISNEY+



## BETTER NATE THAN EVER

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This film follows the titular Nate pursuing his dream of starring in a Broadway show. Throughout the movie, there are several conversations about Nate being “different” than other kids. While that difference is never explicitly

named, there are a number of scenes that, when added together, make it clear that Nate is gay. Nate’s best friend, a girl named Libby, confesses her feelings for him and he tells her he’s “not like that;” Nate’s parents say Nate can have a sleepover with girls because “Nate’s different;” Nate dramatically exclaims “no!” when asked about having a girlfriend; and Libby defends Nate, saying he’s great “no matter who he chooses to love.” While the word “chooses” is the wrong verbiage for talking about sexuality, as it is not a choice, this confluence of scenes clearly delineate Nate’s intended sexuality. Though this is a coming-of-age story, there is a missed opportunity here for Nate to use the word “gay” or “queer,” something rarely done in media aimed at younger audiences. There is also a brief scene where Nate asks a gay couple for directions.

## CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This reimagining of the popular comedy did not include any LGBTQ characters. According to an interview with director Gail Lerner, there was at one point a scene where Harley, a member of the family, was going to come out and be met with nothing but love and acceptance. However, this scene was ultimately cut for run time. As Lerner said, “We had a storyline that the daughter Harley had a coming out story, and it was a story that I really loved... that story lifted out so cleanly that it just told us the other stories are more essential to tell the story of the family.” It is highly disappointing that the only plot that included LGBTQ content was so easily cut and discarded from the film. Additionally, Harley is also a disabled character, and having a queer disabled character in a family film would have been an incredible step forward for an underrepresented population.

## HOCUS POCUS 2

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

The sequel to the hit ‘90s film *Hocus Pocus* sees the Sanderson Sisters return to terrorize Salem once again. Given the vocal queer fanbase of the first film, as well as the lesbian lead in the novelized sequel, LGBTQ fans had high hopes for this film. However, the representation in *Hocus Pocus 2* was minimal. There is a brief moment where Winifred Sanderson flies by two men watching the original *Hocus Pocus*, who might be a couple, but it is unclear from their mere seconds of screentime. There is also a scene where three drag queens impersonate the Sanderson Sisters as part of a larger costume contest the Sisters stumble into. Though seeing drag performers in a children’s film is exciting and necessary, given the current political attacks on drag artists, none of these characters were fully fleshed out. GLAAD ultimately did not count the drag artists in this tally as the art of drag is not necessarily an indicator of the performer’s identity. If there are any future films in the *Hocus Pocus* franchise, they have an opportunity to include the community in significant and impactful roles, especially for a film that follows young adults, a group that is consistently identifying more and more as part of the LGBTQ community. The sequel novel centered a queer teen and her girlfriend and would be an easy story to include in future releases about the new residents of Salem.

## OLIVIA RODRIGO: DRIVING HOME 2 U

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This documentary on singer Olivia Rodrigo featured a few queer musicians; Rodrigo’s drummer, Hayley Brownell, and out musician Towa Bird. Both present themselves in a queer aesthetic, though queerness isn’t mentioned within the documentary itself and audiences don’t get any glimpses into their personal stories or relationships. As such, these ‘characters’ were not counted in GLAAD’s tally.



## TREVOR: THE MUSICAL

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING  
RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This is a recorded version of the off-broadway musical based on the 1994 short film *Trevor*, which led to the founding of the Trevor Project. The musical, set in the '80s, follows 13-year-old Trevor, who is more effeminate

than his peers and who develops a crush on jock Pinky. When his peers find out about his crush, they relentlessly bully him, and his family is also not accepting. Trevor attempts suicide and when he wakes up in a hospital, the nurse he meets there is a man named Jack, who is also gay. Seeing Jack makes Trevor feel less alone and inspires him to keep going forward. The musical showcases a young gay lead and the still relevant struggle of surviving in a world that bullies queer youth.



## SNEAKERELLA

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING  
RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This *Cinderella* re-imagining introduces the character Sami, the best friend of protagonist and sneaker designer El. Early on in the film, Sami makes a reference to her girlfriend and El jokingly prompts "which one?" Sadly, the audience never meets any of Sami's alleged girlfriends, though she is a major

player in the film. This is the only time her sexual orientation is referenced explicitly, however rainbow imagery surrounds her throughout the film. Though it was positive to feature a supporting lesbian character who is important to the plot, it would have been substantial to see her own personality and identity fleshed out more, as she was mostly relegated to being El's sidekick.



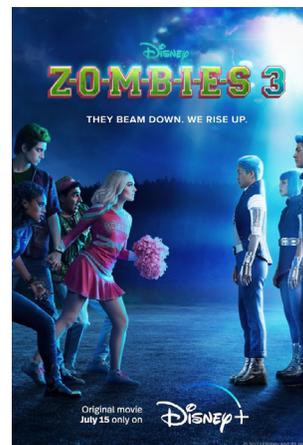
## TURNING RED

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING  
RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

Pixar's *Turning Red* follows Mei, a pre-teen girl who magically turns into a red panda when she feels extreme emotions. One of the core aspects of the film is Mei's relationship with her closest friends, all of whom share the same affection for a

boyband. One of these friends, Priya, is pushed together by Mei-as-the-panda at a party to dance with another girl. Her friends cheer her on, saying "get it girl!" which implies Priya has a crush on the other girl. This moment is all too brief, though the creator did mention it was supposed to be more substantial in press, and it would have been more impactful to see a fleshed out scene confirming Priya's bisexuality.



## ZOMBIES 3

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING  
RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The third film in the *Zombies* franchise introduces aliens to Seabrook High, including A-spen, who is nonbinary and uses they/them pronouns. There is no explicit disclosure or coming out scene for A-spen, but everyone refers to them by

their correct pronouns. A-spen also confesses feelings for male lead Zed. Toward the end of film, sparks fly between A-spen and Willa, a female werewolf, and the two are seen dancing together at the end of the movie. The inclusion of a fully accepted bi+ nonbinary character speaks to a conscious effort to make this film inclusive in ways that many other films have not been. This film focused far more on prejudice against zombies, werewolves, and aliens than any real life bigotry, though the metaphor was clear throughout. More fun, upbeat movies aimed at younger audiences should follow *Zombies 3's* lead in casually including and respecting characters of all gender identities and sexual orientations.

# HULU



## CRUSH

STRAIGHT TO  
STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This high school romantic comedy harkened back to the teen movies of the '90s and early aughts while being unapologetically gay. The film follows Paige as she joins the track team to get closer to her crush, Gabby, and subsequently falls for Gabby's sister, AJ. The

film is seamlessly inclusive; Paige is a lesbian who has been out to her supportive mother since a young age and AJ explicitly calls herself bisexual. There are also a plethora of other queer students at the school, many of whom are presented in a montage of potential romantic partners for Paige. The movie follows a typical rom-com formula, with hijinks, love triangles, and miscommunications leading to Paige orchestrating a grand romantic gesture for AJ, and the two embracing in a climactic kiss in front of the whole school. *Crush's* subversion of a traditionally heterosexual genre while still hitting all the beats of a classic romantic comedy was refreshing, especially given that the characters' sexualities were not a point of conflict. We hope to see more queer teen romantic comedies follow *Crush's* lead.



## DARBY AND THE DEAD

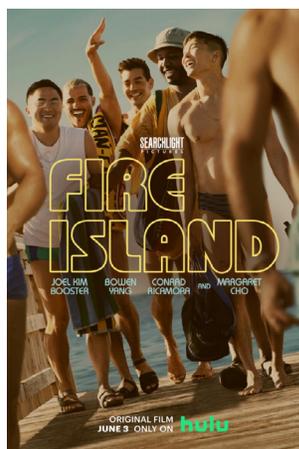
STRAIGHT TO  
STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This supernatural comedy follows the titular Darby, who can speak to the dead. When her friend-turned-enemy Capri dies, Darby reluctantly helps her move on to the afterlife. Throughout this process, Darby becomes friends

with Capri's friends, including Piper, one of the more sarcastic girls in the group. During an early scene where someone asks for a tampon, Piper deadpans "still trans" as to why she doesn't have one. This quick line confirms that Piper is a trans woman very casually, with no negative reactions from her friends, as her identity is already known information. As the film comes from trans filmmaker Silas Howard, it's not surprising that the trans inclusion was done so well.

*Darby and the Dead* also featured other casual mentions of LGBTQ characters, including a dead man who confides in Darby that he wants to apologize to his son for not accepting him as a gay man and who wants to tell his son that he loves him and his husband. There are also several students who use queer vernacular when talking about other people at school, though none of their identities were explicitly confirmed.



## FIRE ISLAND

STRAIGHT TO  
STREAMING RELEASE

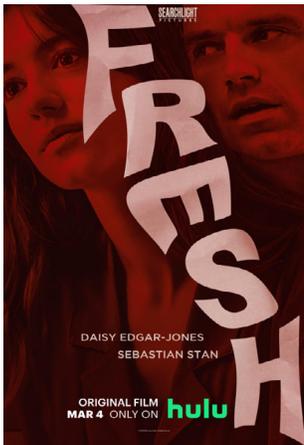
VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

A gay adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* set over the course of a trip to Fire Island, this film provides both comedy and heart from a uniquely queer and AAPI perspective. The main characters of the

film are Noah and Howie,

two gay Asian men who crave different kinds of love. Howie finds a connection early on with sweet doctor Charlie, though Noah has reservations about him because of Charlie's best friend Will, who had been rude and standoffish toward Noah. Over the course of the film, through Noah and Howie's friendship and their burgeoning romances with Will and Charlie respectively, the narrative delves into the nuances of monogamy vs non-monogamy, body standards within the gay community, and microaggressions faced by Asian gay men. The film also explores tougher material; one friend, Luke, is nonconsensually filmed during sex, though this incident leads to Will standing up for Luke and cementing himself as the Mr. Darcy-esque romantic lead of this film. Through all of this, *Fire Island* maintains warmth and comedy. In addition to the protagonists, the film is filled with queer characters, from the main group of "sisters," to the rich mean gays, to the motherly lesbian Erin, who hosts the group each summer. It also examines the racism and class hierarchy of queer culture surrounding the titular island.

*Fire Island* is a movie by queer people for queer people, which shines through in the storytelling. More films should follow this example of queer people writing and producing their own romantic comedies, especially ones that focus on the experiences of queer characters of color.



## FRESH

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This satirical horror follows protagonist Noa as she begins dating Steve, only to discover that he is a killer and cannibal. Noa's best friend, Mollie, whose dating history includes both men and women,

ends up being more significant to the plot than simply a best friend stereotype. She discovers that Noa is in danger and is then held hostage by Steve, and, once freed, saves Noa from being strangled by Steve's wife. Mollie's identity was casually included, though in a film that was heavily focused on gender dynamics and modern dating, it would have been interesting to delve deeper into the nuance of this queer Black woman.

## GOD FORBID: THE SEX SCANDAL THAT BROUGHT DOWN A DYNASTY

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

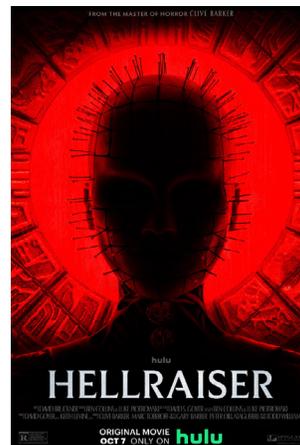
This documentary tells the story of hotel attendant Giancarlo Granda, who became involved with Becki Falwell and her husband, right wing extremist Jerry Falwell Jr. The film delves into the intense harm and homophobia of Jerry Falwell Sr., including blaming gay people for the 9/11 attacks. Throughout the film, the affair between Giancarlo and Becki is described; Jerry would watch the two have sex then masturbate and have sex with Becki himself. He also became involved with Giancarlo's business plans and used this to lord power over Giancarlo, especially when it is revealed that he recorded Giancarlo and Becki's sexual activities without Giancarlo's consent. The film delved into the hypocrisy of Jerry, including many instances of homophobia, while he actively wielded sexual power over another man. The film also included a brief clip of out anchor Anderson Cooper interviewing Giancarlo once the scandal broke.

## GOOD LUCK TO YOU, LEO GRANDE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This film follows the relationship between Nancy, a middle aged woman who is trying to experience sexual pleasure, and Leo, a sex worker she hires to help her achieve this. Leo mentions his other clients, including some men, and toward the end of the film, recounts a story where his mother walked in on him having sex with multiple people and disowned him. Leo never specifically states the genders of the people involved in the group sex, though viewers can imply that perhaps there were multiple genders involved. Overall, there is heavy implication that Leo is queer, but nothing stated specifically to confirm it as being an identity for him beyond just part of his profession.



## HELLRAISER

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This reboot of the 1987 *Hellraiser* follows Riley, a recovering addict who gains possession of a puzzle box that summons the Cenobites, a sect who kills and tortures humans. Riley starts off the film living with her brother Matt and

his boyfriend, Colin. The two are seen in bed together and are physically affectionate, before Matt is captured and killed by the Cenobites. Colin becomes a major player in the film after Matt's death, teaming up with Riley to take down the Cenobites through his grief. Colin is also captured and tortured for a time, but Riley saves him and Colin survives the film. Though we would have liked to see more development of Matt and Colin's relationship before Matt's death, Colin's role as a key character and a survivor of the gruesome events of the film cannot be overlooked. Both characters were vital to the narrative and were defined by more than just their sexual orientation. The film also starred Jamie Clayton, an actress who is trans, as Pinhead, though her character was never specifically indicated to be queer and/or trans.

## LEAVE NO TRACE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This documentary focuses on pedophilia and sexual assault in the Boy Scouts of America. One of the interviewees is lifelong scout James Dale, who was kicked out of the Boy Scouts for being gay and then took his case all the way to the Supreme Court. The documentary notes “it seemed to be more important to exclude gay Scouts and leaders than it was to fix the pedophile problem.” Though James’ talking head moment was brief, and he primarily existed to provide testimony from a gay man, his story was an important inclusion in the film. *Leave No Trace* also included a brief appearance by out anchor Anderson Cooper.

## MACHINE GUN KELLY’S LIFE IN PINK

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This music documentary follows Machine Gun Kelly in his artistic and personal life. The film was made while he was dating actor Megan Fox, who has spoken about her bisexuality publicly. There was a brief appearance by singer Halsey, who is also bisexual. Neither of their sexualities were discussed in the film, though both are publicly recognized members of the community.



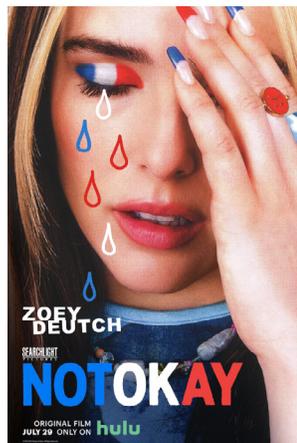
## MATRIARCH

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

*Matriarch* is a dark body-horror film that follows protagonist Laura as she returns to her hometown for the first time in 20 years after an overdose. Laura is seen early in the film having a sexual encounter with another woman, Katrin, and when she goes back to her hometown, she reconnects with her former lover, Abi, who has cancer.

Audiences find out that Abi is part of a cult run by Celia, Laura’s mother, that worships an entity known as the Matriarch. It is revealed that Laura’s father sacrificed himself to have a child born of the Matriarch. In return, the Matriarch gave Celia the power to make everyone in the village young and healthy, including curing Abi’s cancer and reviving Laura after her overdose. By the end of the film, Laura frees the Matriarch, her true mother, which will lead to the death everyone in the village, and then walks into the lake and drowns herself. This film was intentionally gruesome and disturbing. It’s worth noting that the main character’s queerness wasn’t intrinsically tied to the darkness and violence of the film.



## NOT OKAY

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

*Not Okay* is a satire that follows Danni who, on her quest for attention, lies about being present for a terrorist attack just to gain internet clout. Danni works at a magazine with Harper

and Larson, two confirmed queer characters. Early in the film, they go to a queer bowling night and Danni tries to secure an invite by mentioning she once kissed a girl in college, though she isn’t queer herself. Later, once Danni’s lie has earned her prestige, Larson invites her to the same event. Harper, on the other hand, is suspicious of Danni and does some investigating to prove that Danni has been lying the whole time. While Harper is an antagonist to Danni, given that the film itself describes Danni as an “unlikeable female protagonist,” Harper could easily be interpreted as the hero of the film. Overall, Harper is essential to the plot, but remains a side character in Danni’s story.

## ROSALINE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This *Romeo and Juliet* reimagining focuses on Rosaline, the woman Romeo loved before Juliet came along. While the film is framed as a period piece, it uses modern language and takes on a comedic lens, a break in the genre's typical rules. One of Rosaline's closest confidants in the film is Paris, a known character from the original play. However, in this retelling, Paris is portrayed as gay and comments on other men in the town square. At one point, Rosaline convinces Paris to get engaged to Juliet under the guise of concealing his true sexuality, when in reality Rosaline wants Romeo all to herself. The engagement goes awry, as it does in the play, and Paris is very much relegated to the side afterwards. Unfortunately, he never surpasses anything outside of the "gay best friend" role. While the film could have committed to queering Shakespeare and given Paris a love interest of his own, the character was ultimately there as comedic relief for the straight protagonist.

## THE VALET

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This comedy film follows a valet who is bribed to pretend-date an actress as a cover for her affair with a married man. Both the husband and wife hire private investigators to stalk the other, named Kapoor and Stegman respectively. These minor characters grow a begrudging friendship, and there are hints in the end that it could be romantic, as the two move in together and make breakfast, while teasing each other domestically. However, the film doesn't go the extra step to confirm the two men are in a relationship, instead having them call each other things like "dude," "bro" and "roomie." This is a perfect example of a missed opportunity for casual inclusion; it would have been easy to add a line of dialogue or a brief romantic action that confirms their relationship, but *The Valet* left it open to interpretation instead of providing outright representation.



## SEX APPEAL

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This teen sex comedy follows protagonist Avery as she scientifically delves into the mechanics of sex. *Sex Appeal* is casual in its inclusivity; Avery has three moms, two that are divorced and one who remarried another woman.

Avery also has conversations with a gay man, Tristan, and a bi woman, Bianca, when conducting research for her sex app. The school is filled with queer couples and gender-inclusive language is used when talking about sex. Though the majority of the queer characters are in supporting roles, the film, in both Avery's home and school life, paints a realistic portrait of the modern world with its inclusion of LGBTQ people.

## OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

As Disney continues to create films in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, there are many opportunities to include queer characters from the comics and to expand on LGBTQ inclusion in previous films. In this spring's *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3*, Phyla-Vell was introduced in a post credits scene. She is a prominent character and a lesbian in the comics, and if her role is expanded in the MCU, there is opportunity for her identity and romances to be highlighted. Similarly, now that America Chavez is a hero of the MCU, there are many chances to showcase her lesbian identity, which makes up a huge part of her character in the comics. Valkyrie will also likely be featured in several upcoming films, and now that her bisexuality has been confirmed, it can be further explored. Any films that take place in Wakanda or utilize the Dora Milaje have the opportunity to explore Ayo and Aneka's relationship. Phastos from *Eternals* is an additional character audiences want to see more of in future movies. In exciting Marvel news, Disney announced that the upcoming *Deadpool 3* will see the return of queer couple Negasonic Teenage Warhead and Yukio. *Wandavision* also introduced Wanda's twin sons who could also have further roles in future Marvel films. The Marvel comics have rich and in-depth LGBTQ characters; it's long past time for the films to follow suit.

Several sequels to Disney properties are slated, including *Jungle Cruise 2*, which has the chance to expand gay character McGregor's role from the first film and give him a love interest. *Cruella 2* is also on the books. Many read Cruella's friend and designer Artie as queer, and the sequel provides an opportunity to explicitly confirm that identity.

Searchlight released comedy *Theater Camp* this summer, which was co-written by actors, filmmakers, and husbands Ben Platt and Noah Galvin. Platt's character in the film is gay, as well as a plethora of the campers at the titular camp. This winter, Searchlight will release fantastical drama *All Of Us Strangers* from out director Andrew Haigh and starring out actor Andrew Scott and Paul Mescal. The film will spotlight their character's romance, which would be an exciting turn for the genre. This summer, Hulu released *Jagged Mind*, a psychological thriller with a queer couple at the center. The streamer also has an adaptation of *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* in the works; the comics featured multiple queer characters.



WARNER BROS.  
DISCOVERY



Jenna Ortega and Maddie Ziegler as Vada and Mia, *The Fallout*



# WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY

In the past, GLAAD had counted films released theatrically by the distributor Warner Bros. Pictures in this report. This year, GLAAD will continue to count theatrical films from Warner Bros., as well as films released by Warner Bros. Discovery’s streamer Max (known as HBO Max before May 2023.)

## STUDIO RATING OVER TIME

	<b>2022</b>	<b>INSUFFICIENT</b>
	<b>2021</b>	POOR
	<b>2020</b>	N/A
	<b>2019</b>	POOR
	<b>2018</b>	INSUFFICIENT
	<b>2017</b>	FAILING
	<b>2016</b>	POOR
	<b>2015</b>	FAILING
	<b>2014</b>	GOOD
	<b>2013</b>	FAILING
	<b>2012</b>	ADEQUATE

## SUMMARY OF 2022 FINDINGS

- 19** Total films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 8** Total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 42%** Percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 6** Number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## THEATRICAL

- 6** Total theatrical films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 3** Total number of theatrical LGBTQ inclusive films
- 50%** Percent of theatrical LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio theatrical releases
- 1** Number of theatrical films that pass the Vito Russo Test

## STREAMING

- 13** Total streaming only films released in 2022 under studio and official imprints
- 5** Total number of streaming LGBTQ inclusive films
- 38%** Percent of streaming LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio streaming releases
- 5** Number of streaming films that pass the Vito Russo Test

OF THE 8  
LGBTQ  
INCLUSIVE  
FILMS,

3  
WERE  
WARNER  
BROS.

5  
WERE  
MAX

Considering the quality, quantity, and diversity of films distributed under Warner Bros. Discovery and its labels, **GLAAD has given Warner Bros. Discovery an INSUFFICIENT grade.**

## SUMMARY

In theatrical releases, LGBTQ representation was minimal in most films, with small moments in *Elvis* and DC's *League of Super-Pets* including blink-and-you'll-miss it LGBTQ inclusion. The *Batman* included a very ambiguous interpretation of Selina Kyle, and could have easily confirmed her bisexuality to easily center LGBTQ representation, but failed to do so. Unfortunately, the theatrical film with the most LGBTQ inclusion was *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore*, which – despite its inclusion of gay characters – elevates and funds the voice of JK Rowling, who routinely spreads dangerous misinformation about transgender people.

In Warner Bros.' streaming catalog on Max, there was much more inclusion present. From the teen queer characters in drama *The Fallout*, to inclusion in documentaries such as *Call Me Miss Cleo* and *Santa Camp*, these films center diverse LGBTQ stories. There is, however, room for improvement in romantic comedies like *Moonshot* and *Father of the Bride*, where casual inclusion was present but minimal.

Overall, GLAAD hopes to see Warner Bros. Discovery give the greenlight to LGBTQ-centric theatrically released films at the same level it has for streaming. This is especially notable when it comes to the DC properties, where there are several queer characters in the comics and beyond that have yet to make it to the big screen. It's also worth noting that *Batgirl* was one of this report's highly anticipated DC films for its trans inclusion and it is immensely disheartening for that film to get shelved while less inclusive films make it to theaters.

## HISTORY

Founded by four Polish immigrant brothers as a movie theater business in the early 1900s, Warner Bros. evolved into a film production studio in 1923. Warner Bros. merged with Discovery, Inc. to form Warner Bros. Discovery in April 2022. In February 2023, Warner Bros. amended its initial plan to merge Discovery+ with HBO Max, now known as Max. As a result, Max will include "most" Discovery content and Discovery+ will remain an operational stand-alone streaming service. Warner Bros. has produced several acclaimed films, including *Casablanca*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Goodfellas*, the blockbuster *Harry Potter* franchise, and multiple DC Comics adaptations.

One of Warner Bros. most infamous films, *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), featured Sal Mineo as the tragic character Plato, one of film's earliest recognizable gay-coded characters. In the decades since, the studio has released several LGBTQ inclusive films, such as *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. Notably, many Warner Bros. films in the 2010s featured an abundance of unwarranted gay panic jokes and other cheap punchlines, seen in films such as *Get Hard* (2015), *Central Intelligence* (2016), and *CHiPs* (2017). More positive recent LGBTQ-inclusive releases from Warner Bros. include *Alexander* (2004), *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (2005), *V For Vendetta* (2005), *J. Edgar* (2011), *Tammy* (2014), *Storks* (2016), *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018), *Isn't It Romantic* (2019), *Birds of Prey* (2020), *In the Heights* (2021) and more. Max's previous LGBTQ-inclusive films include GLAAD Media Award nominees *La Layenda Nedra* (2020) and *Unpregnant* (2020), as well as the documentaries *LFG* (2021) and *Eyes on the Prize: Hallowed Ground* (2021).

## WARNER BROS.

### THE BATMAN

WIDEST RELEASE: 4,417 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This new iteration of *Batman* includes his infamous foil Catwoman/Selina Kyle. In many iterations of this character, including comic book and TV appearances, Selina is portrayed as bisexual. In this film, there are hints of her sexuality, such as Selina on the phone calling another woman "baby" and at one point, caressing her face. However, later in the film Selina refers to the other woman as her friend and spends most of the movie exploring a sexual and romantic relationship with Batman. If this film had taken this storyline only a minute step forward to confirm Selina's bisexuality, it could have been groundbreaking for big screen representation. Instead, Selina's sexual orientation and relationship with the other woman was left ambiguous. Selina's relationship with Batman was a central point of the film, but confirming Selina as bisexual wouldn't have taken away from that important relationship.

### BLACK ADAM

WIDEST RELEASE: 4,402 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This new film in the world of DC heroes included Quintessa Swindell as Cyclone. Though Swindell is transgender and nonbinary and uses they/he pronouns, Cyclone was never identified through any use of pronouns. *Black Adam* had an exciting opportunity to casually include a nonbinary hero, but unfortunately, the potential was unused.

### DC'S LEAGUE OF SUPER-PETS

WIDEST RELEASE: 4,332 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This animated film follows the pets of popular DC superheroes. In a scene early on in the movie, protagonist Krypto, Superman's dog, is talking about how he gets kicked out of bed whenever Superman has his girlfriend Lois Lane over. Another dog at the park says the same thing happened to him when his owner got engaged. We quickly see the dog's owner and her fiance, both of whom are women. This was a very small moment of inclusion for the film, yet a casual acknowledgement that queer people exist in this universe.

### ELVIS

WIDEST RELEASE: 3,932 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This biopic of the infamous singer tells the story of Elvis Presley's rise and fall at the hands of his manager Colonel Tom Parker. Early on in the film, there are several scenes that show Elvis' effect on women when he does his signature hip-shaking. In one scene, we see glimpses of a young man who is equally affected. He is seen later as well, eyes glued to the TV in his home, with the same attraction to Elvis as the girls. Though this inclusion is brief and wordless, it is important to note that it wasn't only women who fell under Elvis' spell. That said, it would have been exciting to see more from this character. Additionally, the film included an appearance by Little Richard, a real life figure whose self-identification has changed over the years. After calling himself gay at one point, he later turned to the church and insisted on his heterosexuality. Given this, he was not counted here.



## FANTASTIC BEASTS: THE SECRETS OF DUMBLEDORE

WIDEST RELEASE: 4,245 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

The third film in the *Fantastic Beasts* franchise delves into the history of the relationship between Albus Dumbledore and Gellert Grindelwald, with Dumbledore explicitly acknowledging his previous love for Grindelwald within the first five minutes of the film. The story takes place long after their relationship has ended and sets up Dumbledore as a hero on the side of good and Grindelwald as pure evil set to destroy the muggle world. The only time the two physically touch

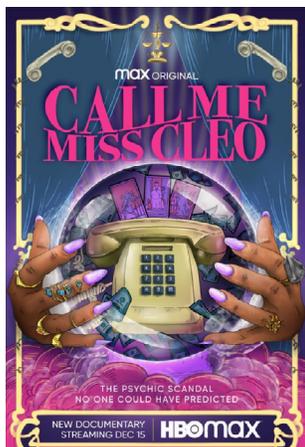
is in battle, when they put their hands on each other's hearts and put down their wands, breaking a magical pact they had made as lovers never to harm one another. The film ends with a straight couple getting married and Dumbledore watching from the outside, alone.

*The Secrets of Dumbledore* feeds into an oversimplification that gay characters have to be perfect or completely evil. Additionally, both men end up alone, as opposed to the straight characters in the film who have ongoing happy relationships. It's an improvement over the past films in the franchise to have such explicit acknowledgement of this central relationship, yet it still leaves much to be desired. While it was initially announced that *Fantastic Beasts* would be a five film series, it has been recently reported that no work has currently been done around a fourth script and it remains unclear whether there will be any future films in the franchise.

More so than simply content, this film marks the third film in this franchise with a script by JK Rowling. For the last several years, Rowling has doubled down on her hateful and offensive remarks about the transgender community, using her massive public platform to spread dangerous misinformation about one of our most vulnerable communities, which leads to direct harm. Putting gay men in her films does not mitigate the immeasurable damage she's done to trans people, and it is shameful that Warner Bros. Discovery continues to work with her.

Warner Bros. Discovery CEO David Zaslav said in 2022 that he is open to continuing to work with Rowling and in April 2023, a *Potter* streaming series was announced to be in production for Max.

MAX



## CALL ME MISS CLEO

STRAIGHT TO  
STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This documentary about the famous TV psychic Miss Cleo portrays her relationship with her lover, Lou, another woman. Matt Sheridan, a trans man who was with Cleo before he

transitioned, is also interviewed. Cleo is shown hosting Pride events and pivoting to focus on LGBTQ advocacy later on in her life. The film includes extensive interviews with out celebrity Raven-Symoné, who discusses Cleo's impact as a personality and as a member of the community. Other cameos by queer celebrities include Anderson Cooper, RuPaul and Matt Rogers. Overall, the film painted a full portrait of Miss Cleo including into her queerness, which was wonderful to see in such a high profile documentary.



## THE FALLOUT

STRAIGHT TO  
STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated drama follows Vada, a teen girl who survives a shooting at her high school, and explores how the tragedy affects her and her peers. During the shooting itself, Vada is trapped in a

bathroom with two other students, Mia and Quinton, the latter of whose brother dies in the shooting. Though Mia, a dance influencer, is not friends with Vada at the start, the two grow closer over the course of the film, bonded by their shared trauma. They drink and partake in drugs together while Mia's two dads are out of town. During one of those nights, they start kissing and sleep together, a first for both of them. Vada doesn't want to ruin their friendship by pursuing anything more, but both girls say they don't regret it. Vada later tries to kiss Quinton, but he says he's not ready for a relationship. The film shows these kids seeking out connection for their mental health when no one else understands what they've been through. Vada and Mia's queerness isn't represented as part of their trauma, simply as a facet of their identity. The film even includes a coming out scene when Vada tells her mom that she slept with a girl and not a boy and her mom accepts this. Vada's friend Nick, who is gay, is also shown in the beginning of the film, but then he and Vada drift apart as he embraces activism after the shooting while she does not. *The Fallout* is a realistic portrait of Gen Z and the devastating effects of gun violence in schools. Showing so many characters, including the protagonist, as queer helps cement the realism of the story and the truth of these young survivors.



## FATHER OF THE BRIDE

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This second remake of 1950 and 1991's *Father of the Bride* focuses on the Herrera family and their daughter Sofia's wedding which her father, Billy, has doubts about. The

other Herrera daughter is Cora, a fashion designer who is fired from her job early on in the movie for making a jumpsuit for a girl's Quinceañera instead of a dress. During the wedding planning, Cora gets along with one of Sofia's bridesmaids, Vanessa, as the two are seen talking together and then dancing at the wedding. Also at the wedding, Billy tells Cora, "I like her" about Vanessa, implying Vanessa as a romantic interest. Though it was a nice small bit of casual inclusion and good to see Cora's family happy for her, the film could have been much more explicit and forthcoming about Cora and Vanessa's romance and painted it in a clearer light.

## MOONSHOT

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: FAIL

This space-set romantic comedy follows Walt and Sophie as they go to Mars to find their supposed loves, while actually falling in love with each other. There is a minor queer couple on their ship, Celeste and Tabby. At the beginning of the film, Tabby wants to get engaged, but Celeste is hesitant. However, over the course of the film, Celeste is inspired to propose to Tabby and the two are joyously engaged. Later, they throw an engagement party on the ship, which then turns into a birthday party for Sophie. Celeste and Tabby are a very small part of the film, simply existing as passengers on the ship. Their party for a queer relationship turning into a celebration of the straight main character is a fitting analogy for their role in this movie. However, it was still a nice piece of casual inclusion to have a lesbian couple aboard the ship.



## SANTA CAMP

STRAIGHT TO STREAMING RELEASE

VITO RUSSO TEST: PASS

This documentary follows the New England Santa Society's training camp and delves into attempts to diversify Santa Claus' image. The film follows Fin, who has spina bifida, Levi, a trans man, and Chris, who is Black, among others.

Chris talks about his mom, a lesbian who we later see with her partner. Levi is married to Heidi, who describes herself as queer. Levi speaks at length about how important it is for kids to see a trans Santa and the film shows this in action when Ally, a kid who uses they//them pronouns, asks Trans Santa (Levi) for a binder for Christmas and Levi tells them how important his own binder was. The film also highlights the backlash against both Chris and Levi, with groups protesting Levi's event for queer youth. Some of the attempts from the Santa Society to be inclusive missed the mark, but overall, the documentary shone a light on Levi's voice and spoke to the importance of trans inclusion from a trans person himself.

## OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

Warner Bros. Discovery has plenty of projects slated that could and should include LGBTQ characters and stories. December 2023 will see the big screen release of *The Color Purple* based on the Broadway musical. The original novel and the musical both showcase a queer romance between lead characters Celie and Shug Avery. While the previous 1985 film adaptation didn't portray their romance, this one, being based on the musical, should put it front and center. Kenya Barris is making a remake of *The Wizard of Oz* and has promised LGBTQ representation in the timeless classic that is beloved by the queer community. There are multiple sequels in the works for the wildly popular *Crazy Rich Asians* film. These films have the chance to expand the role of gay character Oliver from the first film into a more substantial role in the sequels.

There are several sequels and continuations of DC films planned that have the opportunity to expand and introduce queer characters. *The Batman: Part II* is planned for October 2025, and could easily confirm Catwoman's sexuality as opposed to skirting around it. *Joker: Folie à Deux* will introduce Lady Gaga's Harley Quinn. Harley is famously bisexual in the comics, her TV show, and previous DC film *Birds of Prey*. Having a notable bi celebrity like Lady Gaga playing this infamous character is all the more reason for her bisexuality to be a part of her character. WB also has *Static Shock* in development, which includes gay character Rick Stone in the comics and should be featured in any film adaptation.

Max announced the film *Camp* in 2021 that would be directed by Billy Porter and follow the campers at a camp for queer teens. Though there has been no news about this project since its announcement, we sincerely hope this film comes to fruition. Max also will be releasing *The Parenting*, a horror-comedy twist on *Meet the Parents* where a gay couple meeting each other's parents encounter a centuries old evil entity. The streamer has the rights to *Am I Okay?*, the Sundance hit directed by out wives Stephanie Allyne and Tig Notaro, about a woman who realizes she is a lesbian in her 30s.

There are also several films picked up by the streamer that promise to be inclusive, but haven't had an update in years, such as *We Were There, Too*, following queer youth of color in Chicago in the '80s, and lesbian romantic comedy *When Katie Met Cassidy*.

# ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTORS



## KINO LORBER

Founded as Kino International in 1997, the company combined the resources of Kino International, Lorber Films, and Alive Mind Cinema in 2009 to form Kino Lorber. Kino Lorber specializes in art house, documentary, and international films. In 2017, the studio released GLAAD Media Award-nominated South African drama *The Wound*, which follows closeted men during the Xhosa

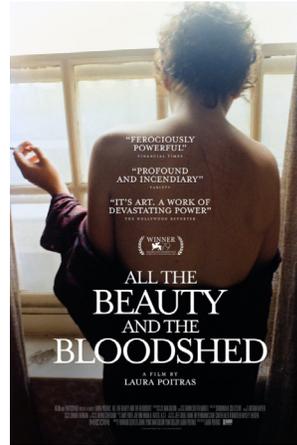
initiation ritual. In 2022, Kino Lorber released GLAAD Media Award-winning documentary *Framing Agnes*, in which a group of trans actors confront the legacy of trans people being forced to choose between honesty and access to gender affirming care, executive produced by GLAAD's Director of Transgender Representation, Alex Schmider. They also distributed queer director Saul William's GLAAD Media Award-nominated film *Neptune Frost*, a sci-fi social justice musical following the relationship between the titular character Neptune, an intersex runaway, and Matalusa, a coltan miner, who together lead a hacker collective.



## MAGNOLIA PICTURES

Magnolia Pictures, founded in 2001, is a subsidiary of 2929 Entertainment and specializes in independent and international releases. Previous LGBTQ-inclusive highlights include GLAAD Media Award winner *Tangerine* (2015), GLAAD Media Award nominee *The Handmaiden* (2016), *Whose Streets* (2017), *Skate Kitchen* (2018), and GLAAD Media Award nominee *Swan Song* (2021). In

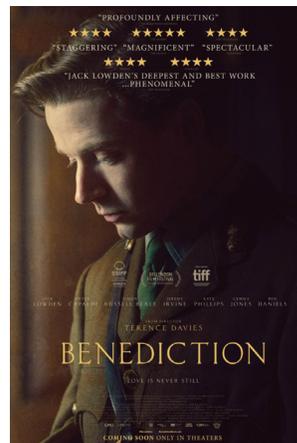
2022, they released GLAAD Media Award nominee *Anaïs in Love*, a French romantic comedy centering on the titular bisexual lead as she becomes enchanted by literacy scholar Emilie, despite having an affair with her husband.



## NEON

Neon was founded in 2017 and has released numerous award-winning and far-reaching independent films. In 2021, Bleecker Street partnered with Neon to create the joint home entertainment distribution company Decal, which launched in February with the Bleecker Street release *Supernova* (2021), an LGBTQ love story. Neon's LGBTQ inclusive highlights include the critically acclaimed sapphic French romance

*Portrait of a Lady on Fire* (2019); GLAAD Media Award and Academy Award-nominated animated documentary *Flee* (2021); Kristen Stewart-led historical drama *Spencer*; and *Ailey* (2021), which paints a portrait of iconic dancer Alvin Ailey. In 2022, Neon distributed GLAAD Media Award-nominated documentary *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*, which tells the story of bisexual photographer and recovering Oxy-Contin addict Nan Goldin and her mission to shame members of the Sackler family pharma dynasty for willfully helping fuel America's opioid crisis.



## ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

Roadside Attractions was founded in 2003 by Howard Cohen and Eric d'Arbeloff. In 2007, Lionsgate bought a minority stake of the studio and the company continues to release independent films. Notable LGBTQ-inclusive films previously released by Roadside include GLAAD Media Award winner *I Love You Phillip Morris* (2010); GLAAD Media Award nominees *Dear White People*

(2014) and *The Skeleton Twins* (2014); *Hello, My Name is Doris* (2016); *Whitney* (2018); and GLAAD Media Award nominee *Judy* (2019). In 2022, Roadside distributed GLAAD Media Award-nominated war films *Benediction*, which paints a portrait of gay World War I era English poet Siegfried Sassoon, and *Firebird*, which follows a troubled soldier in the height of the Cold War in a forbidden queer love triangle.



## OSCILLOSCOPE

Oscilloscope Laboratories is an NYC-based independent feature film company founded in 2008 by Adam Yauch and THINKFilm executive David Fenkel (who later co-founded A24). In 2008, Dan Berger was named president of the company and signed a deal with Warner Bros. Digital Distribution in 2009. Oscilloscope’s previous LGBTQ-

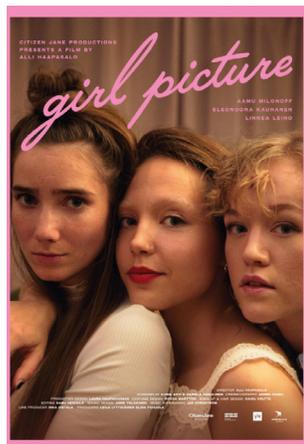
inclusive films include the GLAAD Media Award nominee *No Ordinary Man* (2021), which tells the story of trans musician Billy Tipton through the lens of trans performers and artists. In 2022, Oscilloscope released the GLAAD Media Award-nominated documentary *Sirens*, centering on the first and only all-women metal band in Lebanon, *Slave to Sirens*, whose members wrestle with friendship and sexuality while bringing refuge to Beirut’s youth.



## WOLFE RELEASING

Wolfe Releasing is the oldest and largest North American distributor of LGBTQ films, founded in 1985. Past studio releases include *Brother to Brother* (2004), an unprecedented exploration of Black gay culture during the Harlem Renaissance; GLAAD Media Award nominees *Boy Meets Girl* (2015) and *Naz Maalik* (2015); *An Almost Ordinary Summer* (2020); *Good Kisser* (2020); *Milkwater* (2021); and GLAAD

Media Award nominee *The Obituary of Tunde Johnson* (2021). In 2022, Wolfe Releasing distributed GLAAD Media Award nominee *Death and Bowling*, which focuses on struggling actor X’s lesbian bowling league, *Lavender League Bowling Club*, after the team’s matriarch passes away.



## STRAND RELEASING

Strand Releasing was founded in 1989 as a distribution company for LGBTQ films, but has since expanded their repertoire without losing sight of their queer roots. Previous inclusive films include *The Living End* (1992); *Yossi and Jagger* (2002); documentary *Mala Mala* (2014), which spotlights Puerto Rico’s queer and trans community; GLAAD

Media Award nominee *Monsoon* (2020); *Straight Up* (2020); Guatemalan drama *José* (2020); GLAAD Media Award nominee *Twilight’s Kiss* (2021); *Cicada* (2021) *The Winner* (2021); and *Minyan* (2021). In 2022, Strand Releasing debuted GLAAD Media Award nominee *Girl Picture*, a Finnish coming-of-age film featuring teen lovers Mimmi and Emma as they explore their sexualities.

# ABOUT GLAAD

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

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

Journalists and media interested in speaking to a GLAAD spokesperson, please inquire at [press@glaad.org](mailto: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](http://glaad.org/institute).

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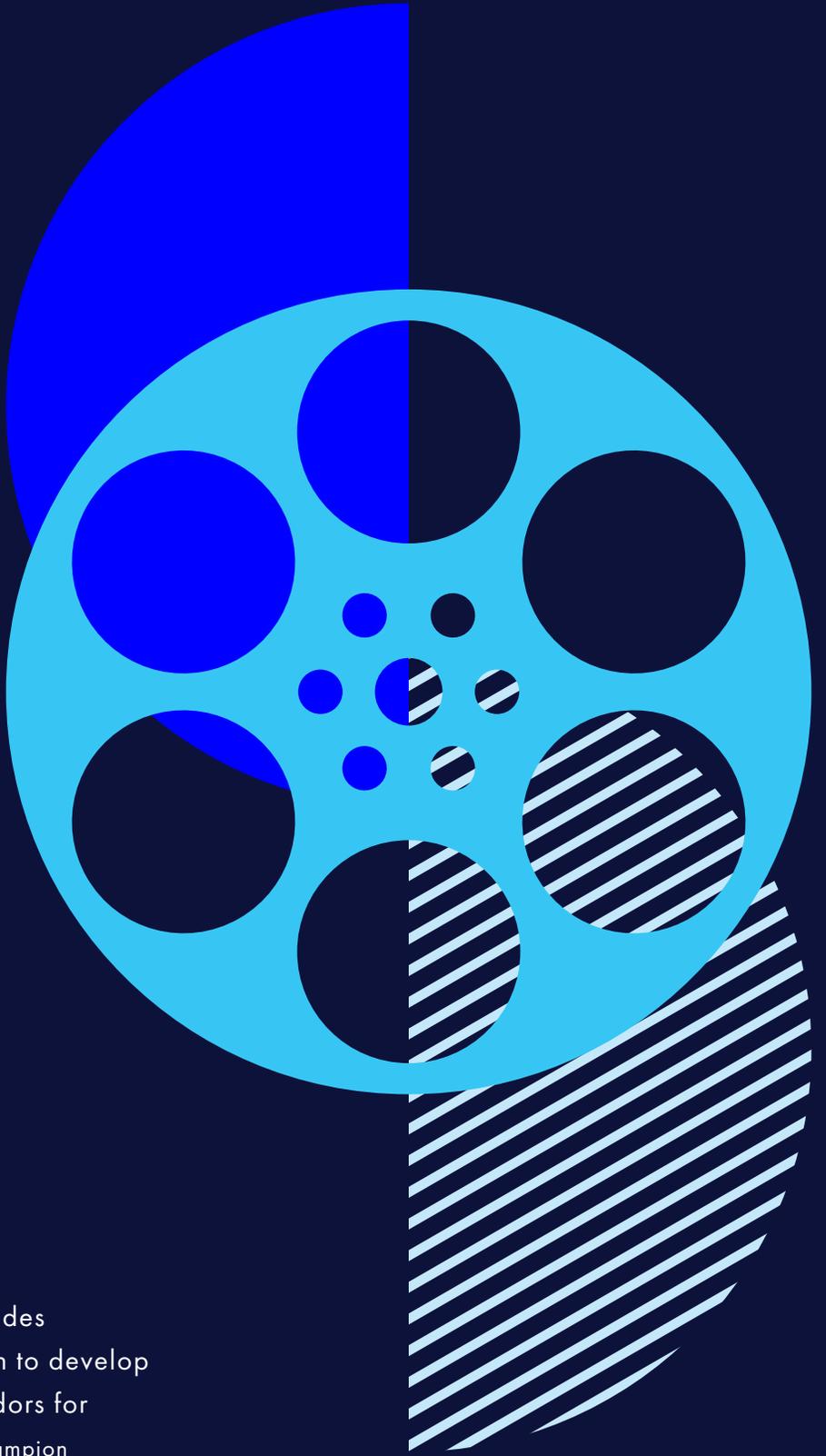
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