



STUDIO RESPONSIBILITY INDEX 2016

The GLAAD Studio Responsibility Index (SRI) maps the quantity, quality and diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in films released by seven major motion picture studios during the 2015 calendar year. GLAAD researched films released by 20th Century Fox, Lionsgate Entertainment, Paramount Pictures, Sony Columbia, Universal Pictures, Walt Disney Studios and Warner Brothers, as well as films released by four major subsidiary studios. The report is intended to serve as a road map toward increasing fair, accurate and inclusive LGBT film representations.

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FROM THE DESK OF

SARAH KATE ELLIS

FOUR YEARS AGO, GLAAD launched the *Studio Responsibility Index (SRI)* to map the quantity and quality of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in films released by the major motion picture studios. Today, we still struggle to find any marked improvement in the representation of LGBT lives on the silver screen.

An unfortunate pattern for several years, there remains very little consistency in representation of LGBT people in film. This lack of consistency is not only seen across each studio's yearly slates (releasing both stand-out inclusive films and problematic representations), but also throughout each studios' year-to-year performance, as we continue to see studios dropping from a rating of "Good" to "Adequate" or "Failing."

What's more, Hollywood films lag far behind other media when it comes to portraying LGBT characters, cementing the industry's reputation as outdated compared to the groundbreaking inclusion seen on streaming series like *Sense8*, *Orange Is the New Black*, and *Transparent*. Given the steady and remarkable changes in the television landscape, both in the quantity and quality of LGBT characters, it is clear that what we once considered "Adequate" from the film industry is no longer adequate at all. Therefore, beginning with GLAAD's fifth *SRI* in 2017, we will be holding these studios to a higher standard that more fully accounts for the groundbreaking inclusion we see continuing to flourish across other entertainment media.

Moreover, the overwhelming majority of LGBT characters that *do* make it to the big screen continue to lack substance and purpose. Too often, LGBT people are included as the setup of a punchline or exist as an isolated token character who never gets the chance to bloom into a fully formed personality. This lack of care can be seen across the swath of LGBT characters found in mainstream films in 2015, and also manifests in a historically low percentage of films that passed GLAAD's Vito Russo Test this year. The film industry must embrace new stories reflective of the actual world if it wants to remain competitive and relevant. Lucky for them, there are plenty more stories to be told.

It is not enough for LGBT characters to simply be present; rather, these characters must be crafted thoughtfully and better reflect the full diversity of the LGBT community. Leaving LGBT people out of the picture – or including them only as a punchline – keeps old prejudices alive and creates an unsafe environment, not only here in America, but around the world where most audiences see these depictions. Hollywood must do better to improve the messages they are sending.

In future versions of this report, major studios' slates will be rated on a five-star scale, from one star ("Failing") to five stars ("Excellent"). This expanded grading system will allow GLAAD to more accurately report on the state of LGBT representation in mainstream Hollywood films. With this and future iterations of the *SRI*, GLAAD will continue to hold Hollywood accountable for the stories they are – and more notably, are not – sharing with audiences across the world.

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

Sarah Kate Ellis
President & CEO, GLAAD

METHODOLOGY

For this report, GLAAD focused its analysis on the seven film studios that had the highest theatrical grosses from films released in 2015, as reported by the box office database Box Office Mojo. Those seven are:

- 20th Century Fox
- Lionsgate Entertainment
- Paramount Pictures
- Sony Columbia Pictures
- Universal Pictures
- The Walt Disney Studios
- Warner Brothers

This report examines films that were released theatrically during the 2015 calendar year (January 1 to December 31) under the official studio banners and imprints. Films released by studio “art house” divisions (such as Fox Searchlight) were analyzed separately and not part of the parent studio’s final tally, as these specialty films are typically distributed and marketed to a much smaller audience than their major studio counterparts. These distinctions were informed in part by the box office reporting of Box Office Mojo and other entertainment industry databases. The total number of films that fell within the research parameters is 126.

GLAAD also analyzed the films released under four smaller studio imprints that are sometimes referred to as “art house” divisions. The total number of films that fell within the research parameters is 46. This was done to compare the quantity and quality of LGBT representations in these studios’ releases directly to parent companies. These divisions include:

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

Each film was researched and reviewed for inclusion of LGBT characters. The total number of LGBT characters was recorded for each film, as well as each character’s race/ethnicity and sexual orientation/gender identity.

The films were also reviewed for the presence of general LGBT content and anti-LGBT language or “humor,” though because such content must be considered in context, the language was not quantified for this report.

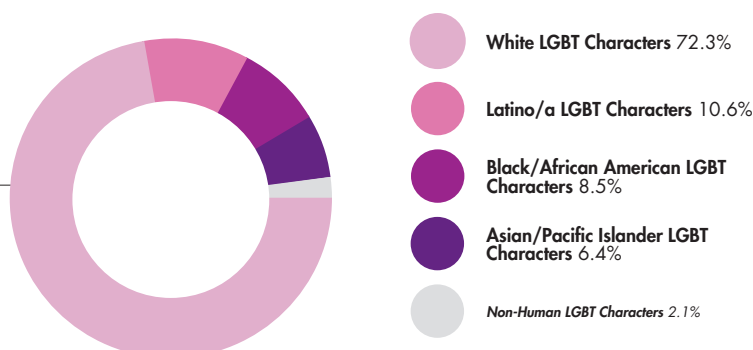
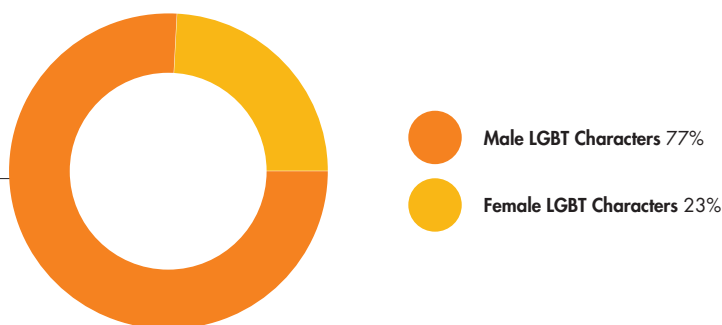
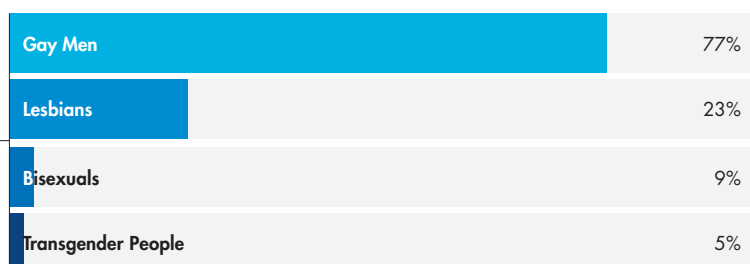
Additionally, each film was assigned to one of five genre categories:

- Comedy
- Drama
- Family
- Fantasy/Science Fiction
- Documentary

The family category included animated and children’s films rated PG and under. The category of fantasy/science fiction also included horror films and action films not rooted in reality rated PG-13 and above. In the case of films that clearly straddled genre lines, categories were assigned based on the predominant genre suggested by both the film and its marketing campaigns.

We must also recognize that some of the films counted here as LGBT-inclusive will not necessarily be seen as such by everyone. Every year GLAAD finds numerous characters that must be subjectively interpreted to be seen as LGBT, require external confirmation of the filmmakers’ intentions, or rely on pre-existing knowledge of source material or a public figure on whom a character is based.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS



- Of the **126 releases** GLAAD counted from the major studios in 2015, **22 (17.5%)** contained characters identified as **lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender**. This is no change from the 17.5% (20 of 114) of films from the same studios we found to be inclusive in 2014.

- Again, **the overwhelming majority of inclusive films (77%) featured gay male characters**, an increase of 12 percentage points from the previous report. Less than a quarter of inclusive films (23%) featured lesbian characters and less than one-tenth (9%) included bisexual characters. This is a near reversal from last year's report, which found 30% of inclusive films featured bisexual characters and only 10% included lesbians. GLAAD counted one trans-inclusive film among all releases by major studios in 2015 (Warner Brothers' *Hot Pursuit*).

- GLAAD counted **47 LGBT characters among all mainstream releases** in 2015, up from 28 last year. Male characters outnumbered females by a ratio of more than three to one (36 to 11).

- The **racial diversity of LGBT characters drastically decreased** in films tracked in 2015 after an improvement the year before. In 2015, 25.5% were people of color, compared to 32.1% last year. Of the 47 LGBT characters counted, 34 were white (72.3%), 5 were Latino/a (10.6%), 4 were Black/African American (8.5%), and 3 were Asian/Pacific Islander (6.4%). One character was non-human (Fabian in Lionsgate's *Un Gallo con Muchos Huevos*).

- As has been the case each year since GLAAD began this report, **comedies were the most likely major studio films to be LGBT-inclusive.** GLAAD identified 27 different studio films as comedies of the 126 tracked, of which 14 (51.9%) were inclusive. By comparison, GLAAD counted 47 films as genre films (action, sci-fi, fantasy/horror), of which only 3 (6.4%) films were inclusive. Additionally, 3 of 35 dramas (8.6%), 1 of 15 animated/family films (6.7%), and one of two documentaries (50%) included LGBT characters.

- The **most inclusive major studio tracked this year was Lionsgate, as 8 of 24 films it released in 2015 (33%) were LGBT-inclusive.** Warner Brothers followed with 5 of 25 films (20%), then Universal with 4 of 21 films (19%), and Sony with 3 of 16 films (19%). Two of Fox's 17 films were inclusive (12%). Neither Disney nor Paramount included any LGBT content in their 2015 slates of 11 and 12 films, respectively.

- Last year, GLAAD began examining the film releases of four smaller, affiliated studios (Focus Features, Fox Searchlight, Roadside Attractions, and Sony Pictures Classics) to draw a comparison between content released by the mainstream studios and perceived "art house" divisions. **Of the 46 films released under those studio imprints, we found 10 to be LGBT-inclusive (22%), a notably higher percentage than the parent studio counterparts.** This is up from the 10.6% (5 of 47) of films from the same divisions that we found to be inclusive in 2014.

THE VITO RUSSO TEST

Taking inspiration from the "Bechdel Test," which examines the way female characters are portrayed and situated within a narrative, GLAAD developed its own set of criteria to analyze how LGBT characters are included within a film. The Vito Russo Test takes its name from celebrated film historian and GLAAD co-founder Vito Russo, whose book *The Celluloid Closet* remains a foundational analysis of LGBT portrayals in Hollywood film. These criteria can help guide filmmakers to create more multidimensional characters while also providing a barometer for representation on a wide scale. This test represents a standard GLAAD expects a greater number of mainstream Hollywood films to reach in the future.

To pass the Vito Russo Test, the following must be true:

1

The film contains a character that is identifiably lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender.

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/non-transgender characters from one another).

3

The LGBT character must be tied into the plot in such a way that their removal would have a significant effect, meaning they are not there to simply provide colorful commentary, paint urban authenticity, or (perhaps most commonly) set up a punchline. The character must matter.

Only 8 of the 22 (36%) inclusive major studio films passed the Vito Russo Test this year, the lowest percentage in this study's history, compared to 11 of 20 (55%) inclusive films released in 2014, 7 of 17 (41%) in 2013, and 6 out of 14 (43%) inclusive films released in 2012. This is a significant drop from the previous year when just over half of the inclusive films passed. There is clearly much room for industry improvement. More films need to include substantial LGBT characters that pass this simple test. However, as several of the films tracked prove, passing this test in no way guarantees that a film is not problematic or offensive in its portrayal of LGBT people.



Amber Heard as Zoe in *Magic Mike XXL* (Warner Brothers)



Taron Egerton as "Mad" Teddy Smith in *Legend* (Universal Pictures)



Julianne Moore and Ellen Page as Laurel Hester and Stacie Andree in *Freeheld* (Lionsgate Entertainment)



Tony Hale as Petey Douglas in *American Ultra* (Lionsgate Entertainment)

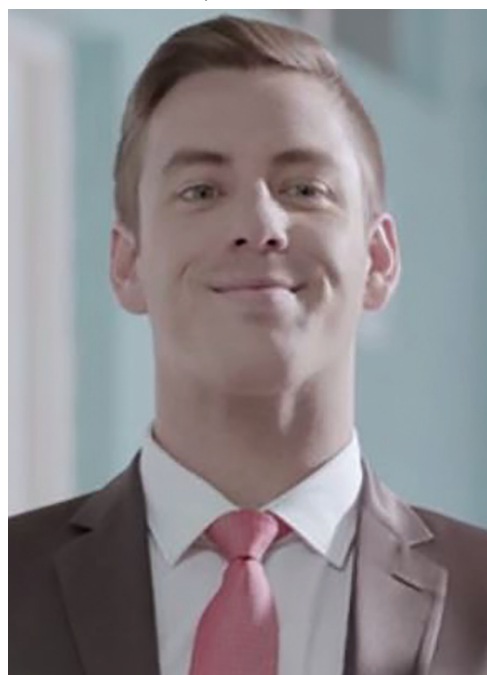
OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



Charley Palmer Rothwell and Tom Hardy as Leslie Holt and Ron Kray in *Legend* (Universal Pictures)



Nick Frost as Bill Whimsley in *Unfinished Business* (20th Century Fox)



Juan Diego Covarrubias as Alvaro in *A La Mala* (Lionsgate Entertainment)

- The majority of LGBT characters in mainstream films remain minor characters, both in substance and screen time, or just cameo appearances. Of the 22 films GLAAD found to be inclusive, 16 (73%) include less than ten minutes of screen time for LGBT characters, with three quarters (12) of those clocking in at less than five minutes. LGBT characters are still too often included only in brief appearances, in service of punchlines or establishing an urban backdrop. **Not only must there be a larger number of LGBT roles, but they must be built with substance and purpose.**
- Four studios received “Adequate” ratings for their 2015 slates (Lionsgate Entertainment, 20th Century Fox, Sony Columbia Pictures, Universal Pictures) while the remaining three (Paramount Pictures, Walt Disney Studios, Warner Brothers) were rated “Failing.” Both Paramount and the Walt Disney Studio completely excluded LGBT characters in their 2015 film slates. Additionally, this marks the first time a major studio has had zero inclusive films since the first year GLAAD introduced this report, which tracked the 2012 releases by six major studios including one with no content. That said, “Adequate” is no longer adequate. Beginning in next year’s fifth annual *SRI*, GLAAD will be holding studios to a higher standard to reflect the quality and quantity of LGBT representation we are now seeing in other media. **Films must do better to include LGBT characters in roles directly tied to plot and which reflect the wide diversity of our community, including people of color, those living with disabilities, and a variety of geographical and ideological backgrounds.**
- The racial diversity of LGBT characters remains dismal across all media platforms, but film sadly took a step back this year with a near seven-percentage point drop in LGBT characters of color. Too often, these characters are isolated tokens, burdened with representing multiple communities through the

view of one person, shutting down opportunities for unique storytelling which would allow a wider audience to see themselves reflected as a real and integral part of the world. There is not just one LGBT experience and there are plenty of diverse and groundbreaking stories about the LGBT community yet to be told.

Creators must tell the stories of our large and diverse community through the eyes of more than one character, thereby creating opportunities for compelling storylines.

- One of the most telling signs that Hollywood film is shockingly far behind other media in terms of depictions of LGBT people is the dearth of transgender characters. While there were no recognizable transgender characters in films tracked in 2014, the lone character found in the 2015 mainstream releases was not an improvement. Warner Brothers’ *Hot Pursuit* included a brief appearance by a transgender woman, who existed purely to give the audience something to laugh at when her identity is revealed. **Filmmakers should examine what message they are really sending when they rely on thoughtless humor to exploit an already marginalized community.**
- This year, there was a noticeable resurgence of outright offensive depictions of LGBT people, which relied on gay panic and defamatory stereotypes for cheap laughs. Among the worst were the Kevin Hart-starring films *Get Hard* and *The Wedding Ringer*, which contain more blatant and incessant gay panic humor than we have seen in a Hollywood film in years. Significant defamatory content predicated on this type of humor was also found in the non-inclusive film *Hot Tub Time Machine 2*. **Humor can be a powerful tool for holding a mirror up to society and challenging the norm, but when crafted without thought, it has much the opposite effect and bolsters ignorance and prejudice.**



2015 RATING
ADEQUATE

2014 RATING
ADEQUATE

2013 RATING
ADEQUATE

2012 RATING
FAILING

17

Films released theatrically
in 2015 under studio &
official imprints

2

Total number of LGBT-
inclusive films

12%

Percent of LGBT-inclusive
films of studio total releases

20TH CENTURY FOX

released 17 films in 2015, of which 2 included
appearances by LGBT people, amounting to 12%.

**ONE OF THESE FILMS PASSED
THE VITO RUSSO TEST.**

RECOGNIZED AMONG HOLLYWOOD'S POWERHOUSE STUDIOS,

the Fox Film Corporation was founded by producer William Fox in 1915, subsequently merging with Twentieth Century Pictures (founded in 1933) in 1935 to form 20th Century Fox. Media magnate Rupert Murdoch bought the studio in the mid-1980s, making it a subsidiary of News Corporation. 20th Century Fox is now part of parent company 21st Century Fox. Among Fox's most famous films are early blockbuster franchises like *Star Wars*, *Alien*, and *Die Hard*.

Aside from Walt Disney Studios, 20th Century Fox has one of the slightest track records when it comes to LGBT-inclusive films, but it includes a few standouts in its repertoire. *Myra Breckinridge* (1970) and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) contain some of the earliest significant transgender characters, though both depictions are arguably more sensationalized than truthful. In 1982, the studio released the drama *Making Love*, which was one of the first (and only) realistically depicted gay love stories ever made by a major film studio. Other inclusive films released over the years include *Silkwood* (1983), *The Object of My Affection* (1998), and *The Family Stone* (2005).

SPY

Widest theatrical release: 3,715 theaters

Spy stars Melissa McCarthy as a dowdy CIA analyst tasked with going undercover to infiltrate the operation of a deadly arms dealer to save the world. In one scene, she runs on stage and interrupts a performance by a techno-styled drag queen to warn the crowd of a bomb on premises. Perhaps this character could have been further defined given more screen time, but as is, GLAAD did not count this character in its tally.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Widest theatrical release: 2,777 theaters

This raunchy comedy follows a group of failed businessmen who travel to Germany in hopes of making a deal that will save their floundering company. Comedian Nick Frost appears as Bill, the presumed intermediary to the deal who turns out to be an assistant. The three men track him down at a gay bar during the Folsom Europe street fair. Leading man Dan is speaking with two disembodied men on the other side of a wall who are encouraging him to perform sexual favors on them (audiences only see the men's genitalia) before recognizing Bill's voice when a third person shows up. Bill, Dan, and his business partners spend the evening partying, and Bill shares that he has turned to anonymous public sex out of insecurity relating to his size and age. While Bill's story is mostly confined to this one night of partying, he does



drive the plot forward by encouraging the men to meet with his boss and close the deal that could save their firm when they are ready to give up. The most that can be said of the film is that it manages to mostly subvert the expected gay panic as Dan simply replies he isn't interested, rather than expressing disgust at a man blatantly hitting on him.

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

Widest theatrical release: 2,797 theaters

This science fiction drama, based on Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, revisits the classic story through the eyes of Igor, Dr. Frankenstein's troubled assistant whom he rescued from the circus. In the film, a closeted nobleman, Baron Bomine, hires Igor's love interest, Lorelai, to act publicly as his consort. Bomine's screen time is limited to one scene lasting less than a minute, as Lorelai explains to Igor that Bomine "prefers the company of men" before she and Igor begin an affair. Bomine's appearance was neither good nor bad, but the brevity of the moment remains too common for LGBT inclusion.



FOX SEARCHLIGHT

8

Films released
theatrically in 2015
under studio &
official imprints

0

Total number of
LGBT-inclusive films

0%

Percent of LGBT-
inclusive films of
studio total releases

Fox Searchlight Pictures, created in 1994, is a subsidiary of 20th Century Fox and specializes in the release and distribution of independent and foreign films in the United States, as well as horror films and dramedies. Fox Searchlight Pictures is responsible for the release of several LGBT-inclusive and Academy Award-winning and nominated films, including *Boys Don't Cry* (1999), about the murder of transgender man Brandon Teena, and *Kinsey* (2004), a biopic of the famed sex researcher.

YOUTH

Widest theatrical release: 149 theaters

Michael Caine stars as retired musical conductor Fred who is on vacation at a luxury resort with his daughter/assistant Lena when her husband leaves her. As Fred tries to console her, Lena spurns his offer with a rant about the ways Fred hurt her mother, including a mention of "experimenting with homosexuality" when he was younger. As Fred never references this in reflections on his own life, but mentions several female love interests, GLAAD did not count this character in its final tally.



2015 RATING
ADEQUATE

2014 RATING
ADEQUATE

2013 RATING
ADEQUATE

2012 RATING
not tracked

24

Films released theatrically
in 2015 under studio &
official imprints

8

Total number of LGBT-
inclusive films

33%

Percent of LGBT-inclusive
films of studio total releases

LIONSGATE ENTERTAINMENT

released 24 films in 2015, of which 8 included appearances by LGBT people, amounting to 33%.

THREE OF THESE FILMS PASSED THE VITO RUSSO TEST.

THE YOUNGEST OF THE FILM STUDIOS THAT GLAAD TRACKS, Lionsgate was originally formed in Vancouver in 1997 but has produced some of Hollywood's biggest blockbusters in recent years. Since its inception, the company has grown significantly through acquisitions of other companies, including Summit Entertainment in 2012, which produced the highly profitable *Twilight* film franchise.

The very first film Lionsgate released was *The Pillow Book* (1997), in which Ewan McGregor costarred as a bisexual man, and the company has had quite a few other notable LGBT-inclusive films since. These include *Gods and Monsters* (1998), *But I'm a Cheerleader* (2000), *Urbania* (2000), *Lost and Delirious* (2001), *All Over the Guy* (2001), *Happy Endings* (2005), *Precious* (2009), *Albert Nobbs* (2012), and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012) through Summit Entertainment.

A LA MALA

Widest theatrical release: 384 theaters

This Spanish-language romantic comedy follows Mala, an actress who works as a seductress for extra cash, hired by women to flirt with their partners in a test of the men's loyalty. She eventually comes to fall in love with someone she was hired to test, who ends their relationship after learning her secret. His assistant and best friend, Alvaro, is openly gay and is clearly flirtatious with several men throughout the film though he never gets a romance of his own. In the end, Alvaro leads the film's climax as he provides Mala an opportunity to apologize and confess her true feelings. Despite falling into the overused "gay assistant" trope, Alvaro is depicted as an integral character, confident in himself, and accepted by the people in his life. However, the lack of a romantic interest for him in comparison to all the straight central characters was a missed opportunity.

AMERICAN ULTRA

Widest theatrical release: 2,778 theaters

Interestingly, the stoner-spy thriller *American Ultra* positioned a gay CIA agent as the film's moral center. In a genre that often only includes LGBT characters as villains or one-note stereotypes, it's refreshing to see a gay character given substance and the same type of humanizing traits as non-LGBT characters. Agent Petey Douglas breaks protocol to provide his former boss with weapons to protect herself and sleeper agent Mike, and later



disregards direct orders, which would have resulted in many civilian deaths and reports the situation to superiors. Petey's orientation is established very organically as just part of his life; he receives a text message with a picture of his partner and their dog asking when he is coming home and saying they miss him. In a workplace-set film that could easily have left out any hint of a personal life, it is notable that the creators made the choice to include an LGBT character as part of the film's world.

CHILD 44

Widest theatrical release: 510 theaters

This film, about the secret hunt for a sadistic serial killer in the 1950s Stalin-controlled USSR, includes a brief subplot about the treatment of gay men at that time. Train station employee Alexander stumbles upon the body of the most recent victim while meeting in the woods with his lover. The police threaten Alexander with jail time and social ruin unless he gives them a list naming "men in this town who have had sex with other men. Men who have had sex with younger men, with boys." Shortly after providing the list (leading to a montage of arrests), Alexander dies by suicide. The police's wrongful conflation of gay men and pedophilia was indicative of the time of Stalin's regime, during which gay men were considered mentally ill and therefore people of interest to be questioned in the case. Overall, the scene has no real effect on the plot.

COOTIES

Widest theatrical release: 29 theaters

Jack McBrayer starred as a member of the ensemble cast of this horror-comedy as Tracey Lacey, one of the teachers at a small town Ohio elementary school who find themselves fighting for their lives after the students are turned into zombies. Lacey is a completely undeveloped character whose only dialogue serves to further the ongoing "is he/isn't he" gay assumptions and jokes. Late in the film, Lacey does come out in response to a speech delivered before the teachers decide to fight their way out, with one of the other instructors responding that she knew all along. This type of "humor" is both extremely worn-out and simply unamusing.

THE DUFF

Widest theatrical release: 2,622 theaters

This teen comedy about the danger of labels included a gay character who appeared solely for a seconds-long punchline. While establishing mean girl Madison as the most popular girl at school, narrator and lead character Bianca says that even gay men want to sleep with her, followed by a shot of an effeminate student saying that he would sleep with Madison "but I wouldn't like it." A series of bloopers and behind-the-scenes moments play during the film's final credits, including a scene of two male teachers sharing a messy kiss in a moment played for laughs. These scenes appear even more outdated

in a movie which encourages viewers to look beyond superficial labels and stereotypes.

FREEHELD

Widest theatrical release: 148 theaters

Freeheld is the only film distributed by a major studio last year to be nominated for a GLAAD Media Award. The feature, starring out actress Ellen Page and Julianne Moore, is based on the 2007 documentary of the same name about New Jersey police Lieutenant Laurel Hester, who fought for her pension benefits to be extended to her partner, Stacie Andree, after Laurel learned she was dying of cancer. Steve Carrell co-stars as Garden State Equality founder Steven Goldstein, who helps rally press around Laurel's fight, and Luke Grimes is her closeted co-worker Todd. While there are several characters' stories unfolding at once, Laurel and Stacie remain at the center, as Moore and Page bring such heart to their characters. *Freeheld* was one of the year's LGBT film highlights.

KNOCK KNOCK

Widest theatrical release: 22 theaters

This film's premise revolves around two villainous women, who have a history of seducing well-off middle-aged men into having threesomes with them before burglarizing their homes and blackmailing the men with threats of exposure to their wives. One of the women remarks that she "wants to get comfortable with having



ARKIN GOODMAN HELMS KEATON LACY HACKIE SEYFRED SOUBEY TOMBS WILDE
**YOU CAN'T
REGIFT
FAMILY**

**LOVE the
COOPERS**
 november 13

[illegible]



ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

10

Films released
theatrically in 2015
under studio &
official imprints

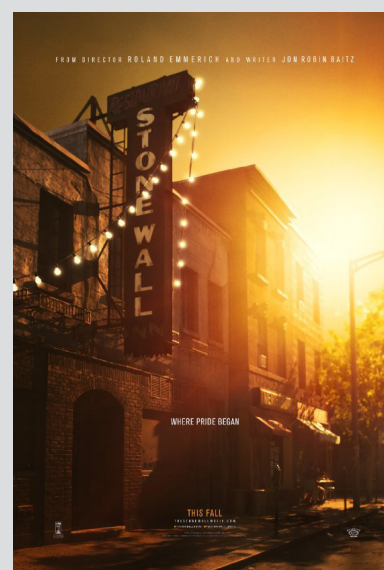
2

Total number of
LGBT-inclusive films

20%

Percent of LGBT-
inclusive films of
studio total releases

Roadside Attractions, founded in 2003 by Howard Cohen and Eric d'Arbeloff, specializes largely in independent films. Then in 2007, Lionsgate bought a portion of the company. Notable LGBT-inclusive films previously released by the studio include *I Love You Phillip Morris* (2010), *Albert Nobbs* (2012), *Dear White People*, and *The Skeleton Twins* (2014).



CHI-RAQ

Widest theatrical release: 305 theaters

Spike Lee's satirical musical, based on the ancient Greek comedy *Lysistrata*, follows the women of Chicago as they withhold sex from their gangster boyfriends in hopes of ending street violence. The film included brothel runner Big Thelma tossing out the line "good thing I'm a d*ke," implying that the strike does not affect her. In later scenes, an older man notes that even those on the "down low" have sworn celibacy, before saying he does not know how he knew that when questioned by the rest of the group. This inclusion-as-a-punchline remains par for the course for too many comedies.

STONEWALL

Widest theatrical release: 129 theaters

It's rare for a Hollywood film to focus entirely on LGBT history, but 2015's *Stonewall* fumbled the

opportunity to shed light on a pivotal moment and went on to fail at the box office. The 1969 riots at the Stonewall Inn in New York City were a series of demonstrations by members of the LGBT community fighting back against a police force that routinely persecuted LGBT people. *Stonewall* instead told a coming-of-age story about fictional gay character Danny, a naïve Midwestern teen who arrives penniless in New York City after being kicked out of his home, with a vague sketch of the riots as a backdrop to his tale. Once he arrives in the city, Danny meets gender non-conforming homeless teen Ray, who also uses the name Ramona. Ray introduces Danny to a group of queer youth who are struggling to survive on the streets, and to the Stonewall Inn - the only gay bar that allows dancing. Finally, fed up by the corrupt cops raiding the mafia-owned bar, Danny throws the first brick through a window and provokes the riots. The film

has been widely criticized for telling a whitewashed version of the riots, erasing many of the real stories of LGBT people of color and women who were instrumental in the rebellion, in order to focus on the fictitious character of Danny. Sadly, audiences may have been left unaware that actual people inspired several of the characters - including Ramona, loosely based on Sylvia Rivera, and early trans advocate Marsha P. Johnson, who appears in the film, but only in a minor role. Their erasure from this turning point in LGBT history was unjustified and unnecessarily revisionist.



2015 RATING

FAILING

2014 RATING

ADEQUATE

2013 RATING

FAILING

2012 RATING

ADEQUATE**12**

Films released theatrically
in 2015 under studio &
official imprints

0

Total number of LGBT-
inclusive films

0%

Percent of LGBT-inclusive
films of studio total releases

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

released 12 films in 2015, of which 0 included
appearances by LGBT people, amounting to 0%.

ESTABLISHED IN THE EARLIEST DAYS

of the American film industry, Paramount Pictures traces its lineage all the way back to 1912 and the founding of the Famous Players Film Company, which was one of three companies that would merge in 1916 and eventually become Paramount. Big-budget, mass appeal franchises is how one would describe many of the studio's most recognizable releases, including *Star Trek*, *Transformers*, and *Mission Impossible*. But if one were to look at Paramount Pictures' most recent crop of films, it may appear that the studio is not particularly fond of taking risks. That has not always been the case.

Starting in the mid-nineties, Paramount released a string of films that were either LGBT-themed or LGBT-inclusive, including *Home for the Holidays* (1995), *Clueless* (1995), *The Brady Bunch Movie* (1995), *Brain Candy* (1996), *Kiss Me Guido* (1997), *Election* (1999), *The Talented Mister Ripley* (1999), and *The Next Best Thing* (2000).

In 1997, the studio partnered with Scott Rudin Productions to release the mass-appeal, gay-themed comedy *In and Out*, which garnered a great deal of publicity for a kiss between lead Kevin Kline and love interest Tom Selleck, and became a box office hit. In fact, *In and Out*, along with fellow Paramount releases *Mister Ripley* and *The Hours* (2002), are three of the top 10 highest grossing gay or lesbian-themed films in the United States.

HOT TUB TIME MACHINE 2

Widest theatrical release: 2,901 theaters

Hot Tub Time Machine 2 included a painfully long gag steeped in gay panic. The men visit the future and find themselves on the set of hit game show *Choozy Doozy*, where contestant Nick must complete a task voted on by the audience. Lou, without realizing that whoever suggests the task must also participate, yells out that Nick should be forced to have virtual reality sex with a man. The two spend a few minutes expressing disgust and discomfort at the idea before the host electro-shocks them into complying. At the last second, Lou uses a lifeline to switch places with Adam Jr., and the scene proceeds off-camera with Adam screaming in pain and his fiancé watching from home. When the men balk, the film tries to make it seem as if it is in on the joke with the host asking, "What's the big deal with the two of you guys sleeping together? You're acting like it's 2010." But the fact that the scene is clearly a moment meant to give the audience some cheap homophobic chuckles rather than anything related to the story or character development makes it clear that the film's creators still find the idea of two men together to be hilarious and strange.



2015 RATING
ADEQUATE

2014 RATING
FAILING

2013 RATING
GOOD

2012 RATING
ADEQUATE

16

Films released theatrically
in 2015 under studio &
official imprints

3

Total number of LGBT-
inclusive films

19%

Percent of LGBT-inclusive
films of studio total releases

SONY COLUMBIA PICTURES

released 16 films in 2015, of which 3 included appearances by LGBT people, amounting to 19%.

ONE OF THESE FILMS PASSED THE VITO RUSSO TEST.

STARTING OUT AS COHN-BRANDT-COHN FILM SALES in 1918, the studio adopted the name Columbia Pictures in 1924. Thanks to its association with Frank Capra in the 1920s, the studio gradually rose in prominence and over the subsequent decades became home to iconic stars such as Cary Grant, Rosalind Russell, and Rita Hayworth. Following a brief period of ownership by The Coca-Cola Company and the spinning off of Tri-Star Pictures (which it subsequently merged with), Columbia Pictures was acquired by Sony in 1989 and is now a subsidiary of Sony Pictures Entertainment.

Overall, Sony Columbia has never had the most impressive track record when it comes to LGBT-inclusive films. The 1962 political thriller *Advise and Consent* did contain a subplot about a Senate chairman who is blackmailed over a past affair with a man (and subsequently commits suicide), but it's hardly held up as a high point in the LGBT cinematic canon. The same can be said for 1992's *Basic Instinct* from Tri-Star Pictures, which was decried by LGBT groups including GLAAD for its defamatory portrayal of lesbian and bisexual women. On a more positive note, Tri-Star Pictures also released popular inclusive films like *Philadelphia* (1993), *Threesome* (1994), and *As Good as It Gets* (1997). In more recent years, parent company Sony Pictures has released *Rent* (2005), *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* (2011), and *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* (2013).

THE NIGHT BEFORE

Widest theatrical release: 2,960 theaters

This comedy follows three friends throwing their last wild party before settling into grown-up life. While high, one of the men, Isaac, accidentally switches phones with a female friend and begins receiving intimate pictures from a man. The film manages to subvert the response of most buddy comedies as Isaac is intrigued, responding with compliments rather than panic and disgust. Later that night, he and the female phone owner meet the man, James, at a bar. James openly flirts with both Isaac and his female friend before eventually leaving with the woman after Isaac walks away. Pansexual singer Miley Cyrus also appears as herself in a brief cameo. For raunchy "bro comedies," the inclusion of a bisexual character and the central character's acceptance of it can be read as a hopeful - if small - sign of progress.

RICKI AND THE FLASH

Widest theatrical release: 2,064 theaters

Rock musician Ricki returns home hoping to repair her relationship with her family, including Adam (the gay son she never accepted), after her daughter's marriage falls apart. At the family's first reunion, she makes some misinformed comments comparing her assumed identity as Ricki to Adam's "decision" to be gay. In the

end, Ricki is introduced to Adam's boyfriend and, much to his surprise, sincerely congratulates them on getting together. While Adam's story is positive overall, earlier in the film, he says identifying as bisexual was "his cover story in college" before coming out as gay. This stereotype of bisexuality being a part of the transition to eventually coming out as gay has a real-life impact on bisexual people, who are less likely than gay or lesbian people to be out due to their identity being treated as a phase rather than a very real part of their life. Transgender advocate and model Carmen Carrera appears in a split-second, non-speaking cameo credited only as "hair stylist," so GLAAD did not count the character in its final tally.

THE WEDDING RINGER

Widest theatrical release: 3,003 theaters

The Wedding Ringer is another in a long line of films to rely on gay panic and the long-running homophobic "sissy" stereotype for laughs. Kevin Hart stars as Jimmy Callahan, a for-rent best man, hired by socially awkward and friendless tax attorney Doug. Doug's flamboyant wedding planner Edmundo is later revealed to be an associate of Jimmy, Dirty Eddie Sanchez, who decided to "flame up" his personality and mannerisms by appearing more flamboyant to help business. When the men visit Eddie at home, they meet his boyfriend, whom Eddie refers to as both his "girl" and a "bitch." At the film's climax, Eddie breaks his flamboyant character by dropping his affected voice and punching the father of the bride in the face after the man calls him a "fairy." The film also contains several prison rape jokes, anti-gay slurs, and an extended montage of Doug and Jimmy dancing together, played for laughs at the idea of two men touching.



SONY PICTURES CLASSICS



SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

18

Films released
theatrically in 2015
under studio &
official imprints

5

Total number of
LGBT-inclusive films

28%

Percent of LGBT-
inclusive films of
studio total releases

Founded in 1992, Sony Pictures Classics (SPC) is the independent arm of Sony Pictures Entertainment, which acquires, produces, and distributes independent films and documentaries. Among the many inclusive films SPC has released since its inception are *My Life in Pink* (1997) about a gender non-conforming child; *The Celluloid Closet* (1995), a documentary about LGBT representations in film based on the book with the same title written by Vito Russo (co-founder of GLAAD); the Alan Ginsberg-centered story *Kill Your Darlings* (2013); Pedro Almodovar's *I'm So Excited!* (2013); and *Love Is Strange* (2014).

THE DIARY OF A
TEENAGE GIRL

Widest theatrical release: 795 theaters

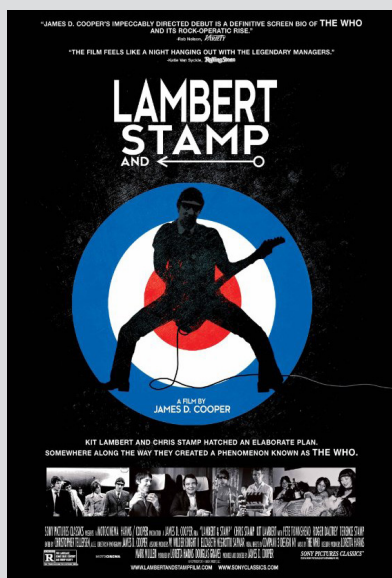
The Diary of a Teenage Girl follows the sexual awakening of 15-year-old Minnie in 1970s San Francisco, whose sexual fluidity is portrayed as just another part of coming to understand herself, her desires, and what love really means. While at a *Rocky Horror Picture Show* screening, she meets Tabatha, a charismatic but troubled 20-something with a drug addiction. Minnie is infatuated with her and the two begin a relationship of sorts, partying and getting high. This leads to a sex scene that would have likely been played for voyeuristic appeal in any other film. Though the relationship does not ultimately work out, Tabatha's being female has nothing to do with the breakup and, indeed, never even occurs to Minnie as an issue.



GRANDMA

Widest theatrical release: 1,061 theaters

One of the year's most impactful films centered on an LGBT character was *Grandma*, which follows outspoken feminist Elle (out actress Lily Tomlin) and her teenage granddaughter, Sage, as they have one afternoon to gather the money necessary for Sage to have an abortion. Elle, who has distanced herself from many friends in her grief over the passing of her partner, Violet, takes Sage on a road trip through her contacts in hopes of acquiring a loan. The visits include a lesbian feminist bookstore, a confrontation with Elle's recently jilted ex-girlfriend, and a visit to transgender tattoo artist Deathy (played by out actress Laverne Cox). It is notable that while an indie imprint distributed *Grandma*, it received a wide rollout playing on more than 1,000 screens, making back ten times its production budget and racking up critical acclaim, including a GLAAD Media Award nomination.



LAMBERT & STAMP

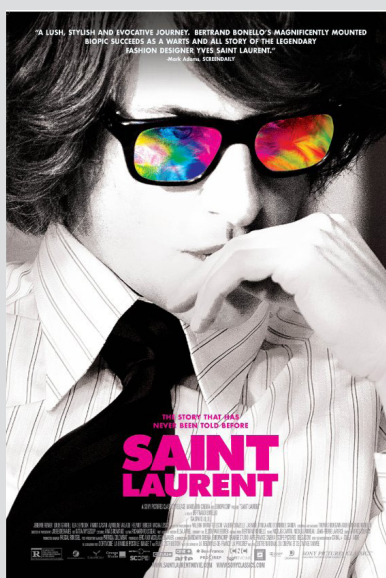
Widest theatrical release: 31 theaters

This documentary tells the story of Chris Stamp and Kit Lambert who, in trying to make a documentary on discontented youth, end up discovering and managing rock legends The Who. Lambert, who was out at a time when being gay was illegal in England, led a somewhat tumultuous life and struggled with drug and alcohol abuse. In the mid-70s, the band amid legal issues, fired both him and Stamp, and Lambert passed away in 1981 at the age of 45. He is well regarded by Stamp and members of The Who and credited with being an integral part of the band's early success as a personal mentor, manager, and studio producer.

SAINT LAURENT

Widest theatrical release: 59 theaters

One of two recent biopics about famed designer Yves Saint Laurent, this film focuses on a period in his life from 1967-76 as his career reached its peak at the detriment to his personal life, including his mental and physical health. The film looks at the stabilizing effects of the relationship between Saint Laurent, who suffered from bipolar disorder, and his then-partner and business manager Pierre Bergé. During this time, Saint Laurent began a four-year affair with troubled



party boy Jacques de Bascher, who led him to harder drugs and alcohol abuse. The film's end fast-forwards to 1989 as he learned that de Bascher had passed away from AIDS-related complications. Saint Laurent died of brain cancer in 2008, days after joining in a civil union with Bergé.

TESTAMENT OF YOUTH

Widest theatrical release: 104 theaters

This British war drama is based on the World War I memoir of the same name written by Vera Brittain, a young woman who abandons her studies to become a war nurse after her brother, fiancé, and closest friends are sent to the front lines. Brittain's brother, Edward, was killed in the line of duty in 1918, shortly after army censors read a letter he had written, which indicated he was gay and had been involved with men in his company. While his orientation only became public knowledge after his death, as researched by a Brittain family biographer, the film does hint at an affection between Edward and fellow officer Geoffrey. In one scene, Vera returns to Edward a letter from Geoffrey she found in his pocket that he says he keeps with him "when I need to hear his voice." He reads her an excerpt, in which Geoffrey addressed Edward as a "dear friend" and says he knows the men would be reunited, "either in this world or the hereafter."





2015 RATING
ADEQUATE

2014 RATING
ADEQUATE

2013 RATING
ADEQUATE

2012 RATING
ADEQUATE

21

Films released theatrically
in 2015 under studio &
official imprints

4

Total number of LGBT-
inclusive films

19%

Percent of LGBT-inclusive
films of studio total releases

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

released 21 films in 2015, of which 4 included
appearances by LGBT people, amounting to 19%.

**TWO OF THESE FILMS PASSED
THE VITO RUSSO TEST.**

OF ALL THE MAJOR FILM

STUDIOS, Universal Pictures, founded in 1912, is the oldest. In 2004, Universal Studios merged with NBC becoming NBCUniversal, which was acquired by Comcast in 2009. Having long focused on mass appeal films, many of Universal's most classic films came from collaborations with director Steven Spielberg and included *Jaws*, *E.T.*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Schindler's List*.

Because of that focus on mass appeal, perhaps it is not surprising that it was not until the 1990s that any LGBT content whatsoever began to appear in Universal films. The 1991 adaptation of *Fried Green Tomatoes* removed much of the source novel's lesbian content, though the 1994 comedic drama *Reality Bites* did feature a prominent gay character.

Universal's other inclusive films have also been a mixture of highs and lows, and include *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) and *Riddick* (2013).

LEGEND

Widest theatrical release: 107 theaters

Tom Hardy stars as twin British gangsters Ronnie and Reggie Kray in this period drama inspired by the true story of their takeover of 1960s London. Ronnie is a paranoid schizophrenic who glories in the violence of the gangster lifestyle, and whose actions inadvertently bring about the downfall of the brothers' criminal empire after he and boyfriend "Mad" Teddy Smith arrange for an incompetent wannabe gangster to kill the brothers' business manager. At one point in the film, the brothers also blackmail a closeted member of Parliament, who was a regular attendee at orgies held by Ronnie, as part of their plan to be acquitted of murder charges. The orientation of the real-life Ronnie has not been consistently identified, as he described himself as gay and bisexual at different times. For the purposes of this report, GLAAD has counted Ronnie as a gay character, as that is what the film asserts. Notably for the time, his relationship with Teddy is also widely accepted by everyone except the brothers' rivals, whose use of anti-gay slurs is positioned as only one more reason for audiences to dislike the group. Many Hollywood films have long linked mental illness and LGBT identities, but *Legend* makes it clear that Ronnie's schizophrenia and hyper-violent personality are not tied to his sexual orientation.



PITCH PERFECT 2

Widest theatrical release: 3,660 theaters

Out Barden Bella singer Cynthia Rose returned in the sequel to the 2012 comedy about college a capella groups. *Pitch Perfect 2* picks up three years later, as the Bellas are about to graduate and are determined to salvage their damaged reputations by winning the World Championships. Cynthia Rose's story is largely limited to the group; but at the film's end, she mentions that she is now engaged and has plans to move to Maine after graduation. Rosie O'Donnell makes a brief cameo as herself. There is a needless joke between the tournament commentators about "ladyboys in the Philippines," demonstrating that while some films are doing better at including gay characters, there are still transphobic jokes making it to the screen.

SISTERS

Widest theatrical release: 2,962 theaters

The Tina Fey and Amy Poehler-starring comedy *Sisters* was written by out *Saturday Night Live* writer Paula Pell and loosely based on her relationship with her own sister, making it even more disappointing that the film's lesbian side characters fell into outdated tropes. Kate McKinnon appears as Sam, a high school friend of the sisters, who attends the blowout bash with her wife, Craig, and their softball team friends. Though none of the scenes were outright defamatory, *Sisters* can be added to the list of comedies

that include LGBT characters only in service of jokes rooted in shallow stereotypes. Had *Sisters* hewed more closely to Pell's real story, the film could have also had a leading lesbian character, which remains incredibly rare, particularly in comedy.

TED 2

Widest theatrical release: 3,448 theaters

Director/writer Seth MacFarlane has never been particularly thoughtful when it comes to the representation of minorities in his work. With *Ted 2* though, he has included some of his most defamatory and cruel transphobic jokes. In one scene, Ted borrows John's laptop and finds pornography featuring trans women. He yells at John, "You sick bastard. Look at this, 'chicks with dicks'! [...] There are no chicks with dicks, Johnny, only guys with tits." John yells back that he has a disease, needs help, and it's a "relief to finally be caught." The two smash John's laptop with a hammer and throw the pieces in the Boston Harbor out of fear someone would see the porn in his web browser history. First, this offensive language dehumanizes transgender women – reducing their lived experience as women to being "guys with tits." Furthermore, this particular scene fetishizes transgender women, while shaming anyone who may be attracted to a trans person. As the majority of Americans continue to learn about trans people through what they see in the media, this type

of defamatory "humor" directly correlates to the disproportionately high levels of hate violence that affects transgender women. The scene easily could have been removed without any bearing on the plot. This film – like most of MacFarlane's work – is designed to appeal to his idea of what straight cisgender males find humorous, but he needs to learn that appealing to one audience does not have to mean insulting and alienating others.

Ted 2 also included the return of minor gay character Guy and introduced his new boyfriend Rick. The two exist more for comic relief than story. Out comedian Kate McKinnon also appeared as herself in a brief *Saturday Night Live* clip.

TRAINWRECK

Widest theatrical release: 3,171 theaters

Comedian Amy Schumer wrote and starred in this comedy about a woman falling in love for the first time. In the film's latter half, while Schumer's character is listing off reasons her boyfriend should not want to be with her, she says she has been with many men and asks how many women he has slept with. He says three, and she replies "Me too! I've slept with three women too." While this led to some outlets describing her character as bisexual, the line is treated more as a throwaway joke than a real indication of her romantic feelings so GLAAD did not count the character in its final tally.



FOCUS FEATURES

10

Films released
theatrically in 2015
under studio &
official imprints

3

Total number of
LGBT-inclusive films

30%

Percent of LGBT-
inclusive films of
studio total releases

Focus Features was established in 2002 when USA Films, Universal Focus, and Good Machine combined into a single company. Focus Features produces and distributes its own features, in addition to distributing foreign films, establishing an impressive track record of critically acclaimed and popular LGBT-inclusive films which include *The Kids Are All Right* (2010), *Pariah* (2011), and *Milk* (2008). Its most commercially successful LGBT-inclusive release to date is the 2006 Academy Award-winning drama *Brokeback Mountain*, adapted from the Annie Proulx novel about the romantic relationship between two men in 1960s Wyoming. In 2013, it released another prominent Oscar-nominated LGBT-inclusive film, *Dallas Buyers Club*, which tells the story of a homophobic cowboy who contracts HIV and begins importing and selling unapproved medication to the LGBT community. In his venture, he meets Rayon, a trans woman also afflicted by the disease, to whom he eventually grows close.

5 FLIGHTS UP

Widest theatrical release: 94 theaters

This drama follows a senior couple over a chaotic weekend, during which they debate selling the Brooklyn apartment they've shared for 40 years. A lesbian couple visits during the open house and makes an offer that the couple considers after reading a letter detailing the women's struggles to adopt over the last six years. The elder couple recognizes similarities between what the women have gone through and their own experience getting married decades ago as an interracial couple. Though the

women only had two minutes of screen time, it was nevertheless a positive moment of inclusion.

THE DANISH GIRL

Widest theatrical release: 440 theaters

Inspired by the novel *The Danish Girl*, a fictionalized portrait of the painter Lili Elbe and her wife Gerda, this GLAAD Media Award-nominated film follows their relationship as it evolves after Lili's transition. As one of the first people who sought access to medical transition in the early part of the 20th century, Elbe faced many obstacles. The film also includes Henry, a minor gay character who strikes up an eventual friendship with Lili. It should be noted that *The Danish Girl* likely brought trans issues to an audience that may not be watching other trans-inclusive entertainment that skews younger like *Sense8* and *Orange Is the New Black*, as the opening weekend numbers revealed that the majority of viewers were over the age of 40.

A LITTLE CHAOS

Widest theatrical release: 87 theaters

This period drama about the female contractor hired by King Louis XIV to design and build an element of the gardens of Versailles included two minor gay characters, the King's ineffectual brother Duke Philippe d'Orleans and his aide/lover. Philippe's wife is aware of the relationship between the men and is accepting of it, though there is obvious tension between her and the Marquis. The characters were neither good nor bad, instead serving no real purpose. This lack of substance remains standard for the majority of LGBT characters.



MAPS TO THE STARS

Widest theatrical release: 66 theaters

Director David Cronenberg's attempt at a satirical drama about the dark and twisted private lives of celebrities features Julianne Moore as washed-up actress Havana Segrand. Havana, who is in therapy for abuse suffered at the hands of her actress mother, is obsessed with the idea of re-launching her career by reprising her mother's star-making role in a remake of her film. At one point, Havana engages in a threesome with a male producer and another woman in an effort to get on the producer's good side, and has a hallucination that the woman turns into her mother. She runs out, and when the man asks what happened, she replies, "I'm sorry, I just got uncomfortable. I guess I'm a lousy d*ke." Given that this threesome seems to be more situational or transactional than representative of genuine interest, GLAAD did not count Havana as a bisexual character in its final tally.



2015 RATING

FAILING

2014 RATING

FAILING

2013 RATING

ADEQUATE

2012 RATING

FAILING**11**

Films released theatrically
in 2015 under studio &
official imprints

0

Total number of LGBT-
inclusive films

0%

Percent of LGBT-inclusive
films of studio total releases

WALT DISNEY STUDIOS

released 11 films in 2015, of which 0 included
appearances by LGBT people, amounting to 0%.

OF THE MAJOR U.S. FILM

STUDIOS, Walt Disney Studios may be the most recognizable, with a well-defined brand identity that has spread across the globe. Certainly, if asked, most Americans could name several Disney titles, as many have left a lasting impression since childhood. In fact, since the first Disney feature film in 1937 (*Snow White*), family entertainment has been a primary focus for the company that continues to this day.

Many of Disney's most famous distribution imprints are best known for animated features, including Walt Disney Animation Studios, Pixar Animation Studios, and the Japan-based Studio Ghibli, for which Disney holds U.S. and international distribution rights. On the live action side, the imprints include Walt Disney Pictures, DisneyNature, Lucasfilm (best known for the *Star Wars* saga), and Touchstone Pictures. Disney also recently acquired Marvel Studios, with whom it released the summer blockbuster *The Avengers* in 2012.

Of all the studios tracked in this report, Walt Disney Studios has the weakest historical record when it comes to LGBT-inclusive films. Touchstone Pictures, however, has released a small handful of films with LGBT characters over the years, including the British comedic drama *Kinky Boots* (2006), Tim Burton's biopic of cross-dressing director *Ed Wood* (1994), and romantic comedies *Sweet Home Alabama* (2002) and *Under the Tuscan Sun* (2003). Perhaps most impressively, in 1985 Lucasfilm produced the film *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, which wove together passages from gay Japanese writer Yukio Mishima's autobiography with parts of his fictional novels, including his secret love for a peer at school. The film was never officially released in Japan following conservative protests over its portrayal of Mishima as a gay man. It was distributed in the U.S. by Warner Brothers.

For the first time since beginning this report, GLAAD did not find any LGBT-inclusive content among Disney's yearly slate of films. As recent successful animated films and TV programs have shown (Oscar-nominated *ParaNorman*, Cartoon Network's *Steven Universe*), LGBT people appearing in "all-ages" programming - animated or not - is not the impossible notion it once was. LGBT people are already part of families and communities around the world, and film of all genres should reflect that.

As sci-fi projects have the special opportunity to create unique worlds whose advanced societies can serve as a commentary on our own, the most obvious place where Disney could include LGBT characters is in the upcoming eighth *Star Wars* film. 2015's *The Force Awakens* has introduced a new and diverse central trio, which allows the creators opportunity to tell fresh stories as they develop their backstory. Recent official novels in the franchise featured lesbian and gay characters that could also be easily written in to the story.



2015 RATING
FAILING

2014 RATING
GOOD

2013 RATING
FAILING

2012 RATING
ADEQUATE

25

Films released theatrically
in 2015 under studio &
official imprints

5

Total number of LGBT-
inclusive films

20%

Percent of LGBT-inclusive
films of studio total releases

WARNER BROTHERS

released 25 films in 2015, of which 5 included
appearances by LGBT people, amounting to 20%.

**ONE OF THESE FILMS PASSED
THE VITO RUSSO TEST.**

STARTED IN THE EARLY 1900S

by four Polish immigrant brothers as a simple movie theater business, following several decades of growth Warner Brothers Pictures was formally incorporated in 1923 as a full-fledged film studio. Since then, Warner Brothers has remained at the forefront of the film business and a pioneer in technologies like synced sound and color film. Over the years, Warner Brothers produced such classics as *Casablanca*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Goodfellas*, and *Blade Runner*.

One of Warner Brothers' most iconic films also contains one of the earliest and most celebrated gay-coded characters in mainstream American cinema: Sal Mineo's tragic Plato in 1955's *Rebel Without a Cause*. Over the subsequent years, there were other notable inclusive films released by Warner Brothers, including *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975), *The Color Purple* (1985), *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), and *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1997). Notably, nearly every one of those films was based on source material that included LGBT characters. More recently, Warner Brothers has also released inclusive films like *Alexander* (2004), *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (2005), *V For Vendetta* (2005), *J. Edgar* (2011), and *Tammy* (2014).

BATKID BEGINS

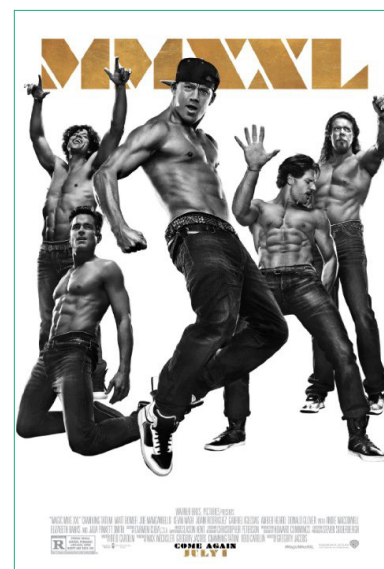
Widest theatrical release: 14 theaters

In this documentary, the city of San Francisco and the Make-A-Wish Foundation team up to turn the city into Gotham for a day to fulfill the wish of a dying child, who wants to become Batman's sidekick for a day. The film included a passing appearance by a lesbian couple with their own children at the parade celebrating Batkid. Though the moment was brief, it was positive nonetheless to include LGBT-led families, which are still all too rare in film.

ENTOURAGE

Widest theatrical release: 3,108 theaters

This film serves as a follow up to the HBO series of the same name, which ended in 2011, about celebrity and the quintessential Hollywood lifestyle. Rex Lee returns as Lloyd, the gay former assistant of lawyer-turned-studio executive Ari, who wants Ari to give him away at his wedding. After ignoring Lloyd and making derogatory jokes every time he speaks, Ari does eventually give Lloyd away in a mid-credits scene likely missed by much of the audience. George Takei, appearing as himself, marries Lloyd and his husband Greg, played by openly gay Olympian Greg Louganis in another of the film's many celebrity cameos. None of these characters have any influence on the plot.



GET HARD

Widest theatrical release: 3,212 theaters

One of the most problematic films in several years, the gay panic-exploiting comedy *Get Hard*, amounts to a nearly two-hour prison rape joke. Wealthy hedge fund manager James (Will Ferrell) is sentenced to 10 years in prison for fraud and embezzlement. James then hires his car washer Darnell (Kevin Hart) to train him to survive in jail based on the absurd assumption that Darnell must be an ex-convict because he is black. In one of the most egregious sequences, Darnell decides that James will not be able to defend himself effectively in prison and so must learn to perform oral sex in the hope of finding someone to protect him in exchange for sexual favors. The men go to a popular gay spot, and James meets with a man in the bathroom. After finally hyping himself up enough to go through with giving the man a blowjob, James hits his head on the stall and the man leaves. James returns to their table to tell Darnell, who has been joined by a man who is hitting on him, that they need to leave after his failure. The two have an innuendo-laden conversation about “going home and getting hard.” As James and Darnell walk out, the entire restaurant applauds them, thinking they are a couple, and the man who had been speaking with Darnell dreamily (con’t from *Get Hard*) says, “I want what they have.” This is just one of many scenes in the film predicated

on the idea that sexual contact between two men is repulsive, and further, the assumption that men experiencing sexual violence and rape is inherently funny.

GLAAD’s *Studio Responsibility Index* has repeatedly found that the film industry still relies on outdated and offensive depictions of LGBT people for comedic value, and this film is just another example of that. Entertainment that relies on stigmatizing marginalized communities for cheap laughs prolongs prejudices and creates real-world consequences for those who can least afford being targeted.

HOT PURSUIT

Widest theatrical release: 3,037 theaters

This film includes the only transgender character counted in a major studio release in 2015, and she exists only for a few seconds as a punchline. During the opening montage, Reese Witherspoon’s character, Rose, is seen as a child riding in the backseat of her father’s patrol car. Her father arrests a beautiful woman, who climbs in next to Rose. She tells the woman that she is pretty, and the woman in a deep masculine voice replies, “Thanks, baby. You are too!” To complete the joke Rose turns away, widening her eyes while making an uncomfortable face. The film also includes several jokes about Rose dressing in butch clothing. In one scene, she and Daniella, who is being escorted to court as a protected witness, pretend to be a lesbian couple, awkwardly

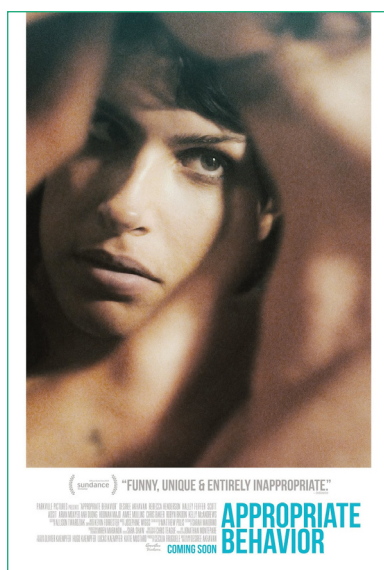
groping each other to distract a man who finds them trespassing on his property.

MAGIC MIKE XXL

Widest theatrical release: 3,376 theaters

This sequel picks up three years after the original, as Mike reunites with the Kings of Tampa dancing group as they plan to end their careers on a high note by performing at a stripping convention. On the road trip to the venue, the men meet a photographer named Zoe who initially seems interested in Mike before telling him she is currently “not going through a guy phase.” Though Mike brings her onstage for his final dance, the film leaves the two at a place of friendship rather than insisting on a romantic ending. Zoe is portrayed by bisexual actress Amber Heard, who spoke in the press about working with the film’s writers to make her character bisexual. The film also includes a minor gay drag queen character who hosts an amateur show where the Kings perform. While the film heavily suggests a sexual past between female characters Rome and Paris, GLAAD did not count these characters in its final tally.

ADDITIONAL FILM DISTRIBUTORS



FILM MOVEMENT

Film Movement was launched in 2002 as a distributor for exceptional independent and foreign films. The studio previously released several LGBT-inclusive films including the Polish drama *In the Name Of* (2012) about a gay priest who struggles with his vows after he finds himself attracted to a country boy named Lukasz; Australian film *Little Sparrows* (2010) about three sisters, including one who is figuring out her identity; 2004's Canadian dramedy *Wilby Wonderful* about a small town in the wake of a sex scandal; and the 2014 GLAAD Media Award-nominated Taiwanese film *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?* about repressed optometrist Weichung, who is unsatisfied with his marriage when he bumps into a former male flame who stirs up forgotten emotions. In 2015, Film Movement released the German film *The Chambermaid* about timid hotel maid Lynn who hires a female dominatrix to help her explore relationships and intimacy. The company also released *Breathe*, a French film exploring the obsessive friendship and intimacy between two lost teenage girls.

GRAVITAS VENTURES

Gravitas Ventures was launched in 2006 to distribute entertainment content through video on demand systems and online. In 2011, the company expanded its focus with its

first theatrical release. Last year, it released the GLAAD Media Award-nominated feature *Appropriate Behavior* about a Persian-American bisexual woman struggling to reconcile her identities. Gravitas also distributed the comedy *Addicted to Fresno* (2015), from out director Jamie Babbit, starring Natasha Lyonne as a lesbian hotel maid who helps her recovering sex addict sister cover up an accidental murder.

IFC FILMS & SUNDANCE SELECTS

Under the AMC Networks umbrella, IFC Films distributes independent films and documentaries, while its IFC Midnights arm releases films in the horror and thriller genre. Another AMC Networks property, Sundance Selects, focuses on the distribution of independent films, documentaries, and foreign films. The company's most successful and critically acclaimed LGBT-inclusive films include the 2011 drama *Weekend*, about two men who begin a relationship shortly before one of them has to leave the country, and the controversial but critically acclaimed French lesbian coming-of-age drama *Blue is the Warmest Color* (2013). Last year, the company released the documentary *Do I Sound Gay?* which explored whether there is such a thing as a "gay voice." Other 2015 LGBT-inclusive releases include *The Duke of Burgundy*, about





the sadomasochistic relationship between two women; *Match*, starring Patrick Stewart as a bisexual dance teacher at the prestigious Julliard school; and the lesbian wedding dramedy *Jenny's Wedding*.

MAGNOLIA PICTURES

Magnolia Pictures was formed in 2001 and is now owned by Todd Wagner and Mark Cuban as a holding of 2929 Entertainment. The distributor specializes in foreign and independent films with some pictures also released under the Magnet Releasing label. Magnolia's past LGBT-inclusive releases include *Life Partners* (2014) starring Leighton Meester and Gillian Jacobs as best friends (one gay, one straight) trying to get their lives in order. In 2015, Magnolia released the GLAAD Media Award-nominated film *Tangerine*, about two transgender sex workers on a fateful Christmas Eve in Los Angeles. The company also distributed the documentary *Best of Enemies* about bisexual author Gore Vidal.

OPEN ROAD FILMS

Open Road Films was launched in 2011 as a joint project by the U.S.'s two largest theatrical chains, AMC Theatres and Regal Entertainment Group. Last year, it released the GLAAD Media Award-nominated film *Dope* which had two theatrical runs in 2015. *Dope*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, follows three nerdy best friends (including butch lesbian Diggy) whose lives are turned upside down after discovering a cache of drugs.

STARZ DISTRIBUTION

Starz Distribution, formerly IDT Entertainment and Starz Media, was founded in 2003 as an arm of Starz Inc. designed to produce and acquire original programming content, feature films, anime, and other filmed entertainment. Previous LGBT-inclusive releases include the documentary *To Be Takei* (2014), about the life of actor and advocate George Takei. Last year, the distributor released the drama *Boulevard* for a limited run. The film starred late

actor and comedian Robin Williams as Nolan, a man coming out late in life who starts reevaluating his dreary life after befriending a sex worker.

STRAND RELEASING

When Strand Releasing was founded in 1989, its primary focus was the distribution of LGBT-inclusive films. In recent years the independent distributor has branched out, releasing non-LGBT films as well, while maintaining a focus on foreign films. Some of the highlights among the many inclusive films released by Strand are *The Living End* (1992), about a gay movie critic and a drifter who go on a dangerous road trip; *Stonewall* (1995), a fictionalization of the Stonewall riots; *Yossi and Jagger* (2002), about two Israeli army officers who have to hide their love for each other, as well as the sequel *Yossi* (2013); and *Lilting* (2014) about the bond formed by a British man and the Chinese-Cambodian mother of his deceased partner. Last year, Strand released the GLAAD Media Award-nominated documentary *Mala Mala* exploring Puerto Rico's drag and transgender communities over a three-year period. Additional films include *Futuro Beach*, *Cupcakes*, *Gerontophilia*, *Guidance*, *Xenia*, *Drown*, and *The Summer of Sangaile*.

THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

Founded in 2005 by brothers Bob and Harvey Weinstein, The Weinstein Company produces and distributes films and creates content for television. Its most significant inclusive films to date include *Transamerica* (2005, released in conjunction with IFC Films), in which a transgender woman discovers she has a long-lost son, as well as *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2008), *A Single Man* (2009), *Philomena* (2013), and the critically acclaimed Alan Turing biopic *The Imitation Game* (2014). In 2015, Weinstein released the GLAAD Media Award-nominated period drama *Carol*, based on Patricia Highsmith's novel *The Price of Salt*. The film, which has picked up over 180 award nominations, explores lesbian sub-culture in the 1950s through the relationship between affluent Carol and shop girl Therese as they fall in love despite apparent differences in class and background. The novel was notable in the 1950s as one of the few inclusive works that had

the possibility of a happy ending for its queer characters, defying the social constructs of the time. Another 2015 inclusive release was *Burnt*.

WOLFE RELEASING

Established in 1985, Wolfe Releasing is the oldest distributor in North America to solely focus on LGBT-inclusive cinema. The company distributes independent films that tell stories of the LGBT community. Though the company has an impressive roster of films, a few are particularly noteworthy. The 2004 drama *Brother to Brother* is about an interracial gay couple who meet an older gay man in Harlem, telling them about gay life during the Harlem Renaissance. The French drama *Tomboy* (2011) follows a gender non-conforming child who decides to live as a boy after moving to a new neighborhood, and *Reaching for the Moon* (2013) is a biographical film about the relationship between Brazilian architect Lota de Macedo Soares and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Elizabeth Bishop. As with 2014, Wolfe did not release any films theatrically last year. However, it did distribute several LGBT-inclusive films through digital on demand and DVD/Blu Ray. These included the GLAAD Media Award-nominated feature *Boy Meets Girl*, about a trans woman living in small town Kentucky looking to fall in love. Other releases include *The Girl King*, *Liz In September*, *Of Girls and Horses*, *All About E*, and *In the Grayscale*.

IT IS UNSURPRISING that smaller studios, which don't often have the budget to compete for box office attention against the majors, are still distributing the majority of stand-out LGBT-inclusive films. These movies are given limited reach, often only playing on screens in major cities, and audiences only find these features if they go specifically looking for them. Given the groundbreaking LGBT stories we are now seeing in other entertainment media, mainstream major film releases appear more and more outdated as they continue to include us only in service of punchlines or to add authenticity to an urban setting.

As we approach the fifth anniversary of the *SRI*, it is clear that the current rating of "Adequate" is inadequate in grading Hollywood's failure to include authentic LGBT characters and storylines. GLAAD will continue to hold film studios accountable for the stories these companies choose to tell on our screens. Lucky for them, we still have plenty of stories to be told.

GLAAD's Entertainment Media Team

GLAAD's Entertainment Media Team not only works with entertainment-related media platforms to encourage fair, accurate, and inclusive representation of LGBT people, but also to combat problematic content and instances of defamation in these industries. This process involves reading scripts, viewing rough cuts, pitching story ideas, consulting with writers and producers, working with talent to better inform them about portraying LGBT characters, and arranging entertainment-related events and panels. GLAAD also promotes LGBT-inclusive projects through GLAAD's newsroom, social media, the weekly LGBT TV listings, "Must-See LGBT TV," and through its annual GLAAD Media Awards.

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Entertainment Media Interns

GLAAD's Entertainment Media Interns join the Programs Team in researching and monitoring LGBT-inclusive content on television and in film. They assist in conducting research for the *Studio Responsibility Index*, *Where We Are on TV* report, and contribute to GLAAD's newsroom.

Ferdinand Botha

California Institute of the Arts – Class of 2016

Grace Delmar

Biola University – Class of 2016

Katie Levine

University of Southern California – Class of 2017

Raina Deerwater

Emerson College – Class of 2016



GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBT 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.

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