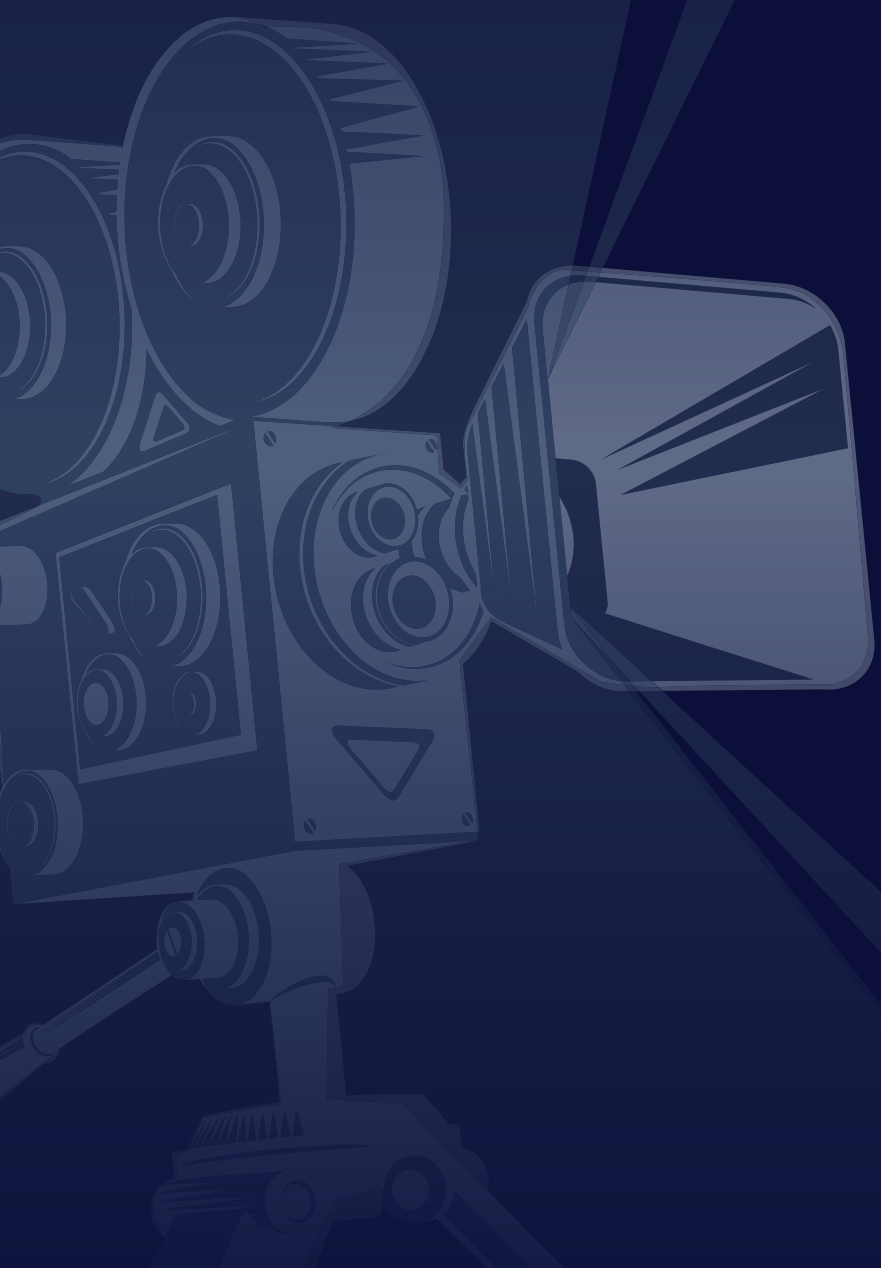


2019

Studio Responsibility Index



Hollywood moves the needle after GLAAD challenge, but opportunities remain.

GLAAD has been tracking lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) inclusion in major studio films since 2012. We know that representation matters, and that mainstream films are one of America's most far-reaching cultural exports. These movies are marketed and accessible to nearly every person in the U.S. and to billions more around the world. But still, LGBTQ characters and stories in film are lagging behind other forms of entertainment.

The *Studio Responsibility Index (SRI)* has shown a pattern of inconsistency from year-to-year in the number and quality of LGBTQ stories – and even sometimes within a single year across a studio's slate. We continue to see that trend in this year's report as 20th Century Fox and Universal Studios included LGBTQ characters in 40 and 30 percent respectively of each studio's 2018 releases, while Disney did not release any inclusive films in 2018. There was additionally a wide variance in the quality of stories told across all seven studios.

This is why when GLAAD released its 2018 *SRI* we called on the seven major film studios to ensure 20 percent of annual major studio releases include LGBTQ characters by 2021, and that 50 percent include LGBTQ characters by 2024. This threshold marks a first step in creating a barometer that will help move the needle on LGBTQ representation in film and guide the studios to improved grades.

In 2018, 18.2 percent of films from the seven major studios contained LGBTQ characters, a huge leap from 2017's all-time low of 12.8 percent. Four of the seven studios hit this 20 percent goal individually this year - 20th Century Fox at 40% (four of 10), Universal Pictures with 30% (six of 20), then Warner Brothers at 22% (five of 23), and Paramount rounding out at exactly 20% (two of 10).

For the first time since GLAAD began this report, two studios have received a "Good" rating in a single year. While the past year saw a substantial uptick in numbers from major studios, the figures are only part of the story.

Outstanding stories with nuanced LGBTQ characters at the center like GLAAD Media Award nominees *Love, Simon*, *The Girl in the Spider's Web* and *Blockers* should serve as examples for studios. These protagonists have agency and development of their own stories; none of them serves as a punchline or a prop for another character's growth. But it also matters who is being included in stories – Hollywood needs to better reflect the full diversity of the LGBTQ community.

Though mainstream releases including *Crazy Rich Asians*, *Deadpool 2*, *Annihilation*, and *Truth or Dare* all featured the stories of queer people of color, the overall racial diversity of LGBTQ characters dropped year-over-year. One way that film continues to lag far behind other entertainment media is the complete lack of transgender characters in any major

release last year. This is a particularly glaring omission when compared to television which in 2018 introduced TV's first transgender superhero on *Supergirl* and the largest cast of series regular actors who are trans on *Pose*.

The uncertain media landscape – particularly in the shifting layout of the major studios following Disney's acquisition of 21st Century Fox – creates a real concern. This consolidation may mean a more difficult path to distribution for films that are not major blockbuster or tentpole releases. Studios may be more hesitant to invest in new types of content, and decisions on what gets green-lit and who is involved are made by a smaller group of people. This is a quickly moving space that GLAAD is closely monitoring and actively working in every day.

The good news is that the studios have plenty of opportunities to release outstanding LGBTQ-inclusive movies with what has already been announced in their upcoming slates. Films have a long lifecycle, so the choices made in the next two to three years are critical as they will have long running effects on the findings of this report and the grades of each studio. GLAAD is a resource at every step of the process in making sure that these projects make it through to the big screen. Our GLAAD Media Institute is driving a culture revolution through education, consultation, and actionable research to help creators and industry leaders be better prepared to produce and market compelling, entertaining LGBTQ characters that do not reinforce harmful and outdated stereotypes.

Furthermore, GLAAD is working to uplift LGBTQ-inclusive projects. At this year's Sundance Film Festival in partnership with The Black List, GLAAD released our inaugural *GLAAD List* highlighting 10 promising LGBTQ-inclusive scripts that we would like to see be made in coming years. We know the unique power of entertainment to change hearts and minds and the impact that nuanced LGBTQ characters can have on audiences.

That is why GLAAD was founded, and why we continue the work today to hold Hollywood accountable for the images they are portraying.




Sarah Kate Ellis
President & CEO, GLAAD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Last year, GLAAD called on the studios to ensure that 20 percent of annual major studio releases be LGBTQ-inclusive by 2021, and 50 percent inclusive by 2024. In 2018, 18.2 percent of films from the seven major studios contained LGBTQ characters, a huge leap from 2017's 12.8 percent. Four of the seven studios hit this 20 percent goal individually (20th Century Fox at 40%, Universal Pictures with 30%, then Warner Brothers at 22%, and Paramount rounding out at exactly 20%).

There was a **significant increase in the number of LGBTQ-inclusive films distributed by major studios** in 2018, up to 20 from 14 in 2017. This also reflects the second-highest percentage of inclusive films (18.2 percent) among all major studio releases since GLAAD began tracking in 2012.

Film continues to lag far behind other forms of media when it comes to inclusion of underrepresented voices – but perhaps **the most glaring way that mainstream film fails to be inclusive is the complete lack of transgender characters** in major studio releases in 2018. There were no transgender characters in major releases the previous year either.

This year's report included more LGBTQ characters in leading roles than in past years. Half of the LGBTQ-inclusive films had a character with more than 10 minutes of screen time. However, **more than half of all LGBTQ characters still had under three minutes of screen time.**

2018 OVERALL FINDINGS, BY STUDIO

20th Century Fox

10 TOTAL FILMS / 4 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

RATING / **GOOD** ★★★★★

40%

Lionsgate

19 TOTAL FILMS / 1 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILM

RATING / **FAILING** ★☆☆☆☆

5%

Paramount

10 TOTAL FILMS / 2 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

RATING / **INSUFFICIENT** ★★★☆☆

20%

Sony

18 TOTAL FILMS / 2 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

RATING / **INSUFFICIENT** ★★★☆☆

11%

Universal

20 TOTAL FILMS / 6 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

RATING / **GOOD** ★★★★★

30%

Walt Disney

10 TOTAL FILMS / 0 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILM

RATING / **FAILING** ★☆☆☆☆

Warner Brothers

23 TOTAL FILMS / 5 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

RATING / **INSUFFICIENT** ★★★☆☆

22%

Introduction	5
Methodology	7
The Vito Russo Test	8
Overview of Findings	9
Observations & Recommendations	10
20th Century Fox	12
<i>Fox Searchlight</i>	16
Lionsgate Entertainment	18
<i>Roadside Attractions</i>	20
Paramount Pictures	22
Sony Pictures	24
<i>Sony Pictures Classics</i>	26
Universal Pictures	27
<i>Focus Features</i>	31
Walt Disney Studios	33
Warner Brothers	35
Additional Film Distributors	40
Acknowledgements	44

Representation Matters

Entertainment has a reciprocal relationship with society – the characters and stories on screen are a reflection of our cultural values (even if just in subtext), and our wider culture is influenced by and can evolve from seeing stories and people that are different from them on screen. Studies have repeatedly shown that in the absence of knowing an LGBTQ person in real life, TV and films with LGBTQ characters foster understanding and acceptance.

A *Variety* survey¹ found that 38 percent of people surveyed cited LGBTQ characters as a “key influence” in their support for the community, and Ellen DeGeneres was cited as doing “more to influence American’s attitudes [...] than any other celebrity or public figure.” Several academic studies dating back to the mid-1990s have also continually proven that inclusive entertainment or news media has a significant effect on viewer’s perceptions of the LGBTQ community.²

GLAAD has seen LGBTQ characters and couples paving the way for culture change as Americans support for marriage equality grew alongside the increase in LGBTQ characters on television.³ And we know how powerful representation is for LGBTQ people personally.

GLAAD works everyday with young people across the country through its Youth Engagement program and with LGBTQ advocates around the globe who have spoken about the power that inclusive storytelling has had on their lives.

Last year’s release of *Love, Simon* sparked a huge wave of audiences sharing their stories of what the film would have meant to them as teens, or feeling empowered to come out after seeing the movie. Stars Keiynan Lonsdale and Joey Pollari spoke out about their decisions to come out while doing the film, with Lonsdale saying to *The Hollywood Reporter*, “You watch something, and depending on how the story is told and how these characters feel to you, it influences your life, it influences how you feel about yourself and people that you meet.” *Love, Simon*’s groundbreaking storytelling and release – which hit over 2,400 theaters around the world, in cities big and small – paid off.

Love, Simon made back more than 3.5 times its production budget at the worldwide box office. The film also garnered critical acclaim with a 91 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes, and a handful of awards including a GLAAD Media Award, three Teen Choice Awards, and an MTV Movie & TV Award for Best Kiss. The film additionally had a successful line of merchandise through Hot Topic in stores and online, as well as a soundtrack that charted in the Top 40 on the Billboard 200, contributing to the film’s total bottom line.

Inclusion is not just the right thing to do; it is also good business.

“1.3 billion tickets each year are not sold to one audience, but rather, to many audiences. Movie theaters build temporary communities one movie at a time. Diversity in storytelling and representation, including LGBTQ people, expands our sense of cultural belonging and expands the moviegoing community at the same time,” John Fithian, President and CEO, National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) told GLAAD in an exclusive statement. “NATO and its members are committed to creating inclusive spaces that expand our audiences, increase ticket sales, and reaffirm the importance of representation on screen.”

According to the MPAA’s most recent *THEME*⁴ report, in the U.S. and Canada people aged 18-39 made up 38 percent of the “frequent moviegoer” audience in 2018 – meaning they went to the cinema once a month or more. This “frequent moviegoer” audience is also responsible for 49 percent of all tickets sold in the U.S. and Canada.

Meanwhile, GLAAD and The Harris Poll’s *Accelerating Acceptance* report⁵ shows that 20 percent of Americans aged 18 to 34 and 12 percent aged 35-51 identify as LGBTQ. Twelve percent of Americans 18-34 identify as transgender or gender non-conforming. A majority of these demographics would also call themselves allies – 63 percent of Americans 18-34 and 53 percent of Americans 35-51. This applies across demographics as well, the University of Chicago’s GenForward Survey⁶ found that one in five Latinx millennials identify as LGBTQ. Latinx people have long overindexed at the box office, representing a larger amount of the ticket buying public than the community’s population makeup.

The Family Equality Council reports⁷ that 48 percent of LGBTQ millennials are actively planning to grow their families, and 63 percent are considering expanding their family by becoming first time parents or having more children. This significant growth in LGBTQ-led families presents an underserved audience that studios who focus on family friendly content should be engaging.

Nielsen's *State of the LGBTQ Moviegoer* report⁸ explicitly states "studios and theaters alike can bolster box office sales by [...] tailoring their promotions and offerings to LGBT moviegoers' entertainment needs." Nielsen found that queer audiences are 22 percent more likely to see a new theatrical release more than once compared to straight audiences.

LGBTQ audiences are also more likely to generate social media buzz and word of mouth recommendations. Forty-nine percent of all LGBTQ moviegoers said they texted, tweeted, or otherwise posted about a film the same day they saw it as compared with 34 percent of straight audiences, per Nielsen. LGBTQ fans are more likely to select both Horror and Sci-Fi genre films as favorites than straight audiences.

Studios should take note of these trends, particularly when promoting and advertising titles that include LGBTQ characters, and let audiences know why they should turn out to their local multiplex.

It is clear that if Hollywood wants to remain relevant with these audiences and keep them buying tickets, the studios must create stories that are reflective of the world LGBTQ people and our friends and family know and make those films accessible in wide release.

GLAAD stands ready to support them.

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- 2.1 Riggle, Ellen, Ellis, Alan L and Crawford, Anne M. "The Impact of 'Media Contact' on Attitudes Toward Gay Men." *Journal of Homosexuality*. February 1996.
- 2.2 Lavina, Marina, Waldo, Craig R, and Fitzgerald, Louise F. "We're Here, We're Queer, We're on TV: The Effects of Visual Media on Heterosexuals' Attitudes Toward Gay Men and Lesbians." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. April 2000.
- 2.3 Cooley, Jonna J. and Burkholder, Gary J. "Using Video and Contact to Change Attitudes Toward Gay Men and Lesbians." *Journal of Social, Behavioral, and Health Sciences*. 2011.
- 2.4 Gillig, Traci K., Rosenthal, Erica L., Murphy, Sheila T., and Folb, Kate Langrall. "More than a Media Moment: The Influence of Televised Storylines on Viewers' Attitudes toward Transgender People and Policies." *Sex Roles*. 2 August 2017.

- 3 Townsend, Megan. "INFOGRAPHIC: LGBT television characters and couples paving the way on the road to marriage equality." GLAAD. 26 June 2013.
- 4 Theatrical Home Entertainment Market Environment (THEME) Report. *Motion Picture Association of America*. March 2019.
- 5 "Accelerating Acceptance." *GLAAD/Harris Poll*. March 2017.
- 6 Duran, Eric. "Latino millennials least likely to identify as heterosexual, survey finds." *NBC News*. 23 July 2018.
- 7 "LGBTQ Family Building Survey." *Family Equality Council*. 6 February 2019.
- 8 "Lights, Camera, Action! State of the LGBTQ Moviegoer." *Nielsen*. 13 January 2014.

Methodology

For this report, GLAAD focused its analysis on the seven film studios that had the highest theatrical grosses from films released in 2018, as reported by the box office database Box Office Mojo. Those seven are:

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

This report examines films that were distributed theatrically during the 2018 calendar year (January 1 to December 31) in the United States under the official studio banners and imprints as reported by Box Office Mojo, the studios, and other entertainment reporting sources. GLAAD did not include theatrical re-releases and special events such as filmed live events in this count. Films distributed by these studio's "art house" divisions (such as Fox Searchlight) were analyzed separately and not part of the parent studio's final tally or grade. The total number of films released by major studios that fell within the research parameters is 110.

GLAAD separately analyzed the films released under four smaller studio imprints that are sometimes referred to as "art house" divisions. This was done to compare the quantity and quality of LGBTQ representations in these studios' releases directly to parent companies. These specialty films are typically distributed and marketed to a much smaller audience than their major studio counterparts. These distinctions were informed in part by the reporting of Box Office Mojo and other entertainment industry databases. The total number of films that fell within the research parameters is 40.

These divisions include:

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

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

The films were also reviewed for the presence of general LGBTQ content and anti-LGBTQ 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/action
- Documentary

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

We recognize that some of the films counted here as LGBTQ-inclusive will not necessarily be seen as such by everyone and vice versa. GLAAD's methodology focuses on counting characters as LGBTQ based on what is presented on screen as part of the film or through wide and commonly held cultural knowledge of a real life figure.

Based on the overall quantity, quality, and diversity of LGBTQ representation, a grade was then assigned to each studio: Excellent, Good, Insufficient, Poor, or Failing. Note: Prior to the 2017 report, GLAAD assigned studios scores on a four point scale of Excellent, Good, Adequate, or Failing.

The Vito Russo Test

Taking inspiration from the Bechdel Test, which examines the way women characters are portrayed and situated within a narrative, GLAAD developed its own set of criteria to analyze how LGBTQ characters are included 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 early LGBTQ 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 minimum standard GLAAD expects a greater number of mainstream Hollywood films to reach in the future.

More films need to include substantial LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ people. Some previous year's examples of films which passed but which still contain offensive content include *Zoolander 2*, *Hazlo Como Hombre*, and *CHiPS*.

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/non-transgender characters from one another.

3 That character must be tied into the plot in such a way that their removal would have a significant effect.

i.e. They are not there to simply provide colorful commentary, paint urban authenticity, or (perhaps most commonly) set up a punchline. The character must matter.

% OF LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS THAT PASSED THE VITO RUSSO TEST, BY YEAR

2018 65% (13 OF 20)



2017 64% (9 OF 14)



2016 39% (9 OF 23)



2015 36% (8 OF 22)



2014 55% (11 OF 20)



2013 41% (7 OF 17)

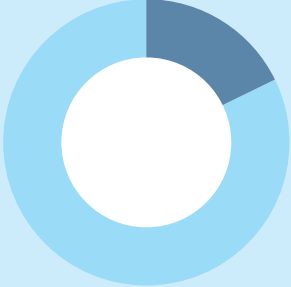


2012 43% (6 OF 14)



Overview Of Findings

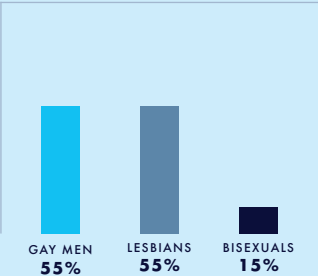
1



Of the 110 films GLAAD counted from the major studios in 2018, 20 (18.2 percent) contained characters identified as LGBTQ. This is a **significant increase of 5.4 percent, and up six films** from the previous year's 12.8 percent (14 of 109 films). This is the second highest percentage of inclusive films found in the seven-year history of this report, second to 18.4 percent of films (23 of 125) in 2016.

■ FILMS WITH LGBTQ CHARACTERS
18.2% (UP 5.4% FROM 2017)

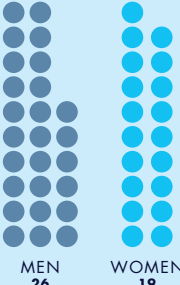
2



For the first time in this report's history, there were **an equal number of films which included gay and lesbian characters**. Gay men appear in 55 percent (11) of inclusive films, a drop from last year's 64 percent. Lesbian representation has increased significantly, up to 55 percent (11) of inclusive films featuring lesbians from 36 in 2017. Bisexual representation remained steady at a low 15 percent (three films). There were zero transgender-inclusive films from the major studios in 2018, a finding consistent with the previous year.

3

LGBTQ CHARACTERS




GLAAD tallied 45 total LGBTQ characters among all mainstream releases in 2018, up from 28 in 2017. Men continue to outnumber women characters, though by a lesser margin than last year. In 2018, of the LGBTQ characters, there were 26 men and 19 women, compared to the 20 men and eight women of 2017's major studio films. There were **no transgender or non-binary characters counted** in mainstream releases this year.

MEN 26
WOMEN 19

For the first time in this report's history, there were **an equal number of films which included gay and lesbian characters**. Gay men appear in 55 percent (11) of inclusive films, a drop from last year's 64 percent. Lesbian representation has increased significantly, up to 55 percent (11) of inclusive films featuring lesbians from 36 in 2017. Bisexual representation remained steady at a low 15 percent (three films). There were zero transgender-inclusive films from the major studios in 2018, a finding consistent with the previous year.

4



■ WHITE LGBTQ CHARACTERS 58%
■ BLACK LGBTQ CHARACTERS 22%
■ ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER LGBTQ CHARACTERS 13%
■ LATINX LGBTQ CHARACTERS 7%

The **racial diversity of LGBTQ characters saw a drop this year**, with 42 percent of LGBTQ characters being people of color, compared to 57 percent in 2017. However, this is still much higher than the 20 percent people of color in 2016. Of the 45 characters counted, 26 were white (58 percent), 10 were Black/African American (22 percent), six were Asian/Pacific Islander (13 percent), and three were Latinx (7 percent).

5

Comedy and drama films were the most inclusive releases at seven each. Genre films (action, sci-fi, fantasy/horror) counted six inclusive films, while no family or documentary films had LGBTQ characters.

- COMEDY: 20 TOTAL / 7 INCLUSIVE (35%)
- DRAMA: 26 TOTAL / 7 INCLUSIVE (27%)
- GENRE: 45 TOTAL / 6 INCLUSIVE (13%)
- FAMILY: 18 TOTAL / 0 INCLUSIVE (0%)
- DOCUMENTARY: 1 TOTAL / 0 INCLUSIVE (0%)

6

6 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS UNIVERSAL (20 TOTAL / 30%)
5 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS WARNER BROTHERS (23 TOTAL / 22%)
4 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS 20TH CENTURY FOX (10 TOTAL / 40%)
2 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS PARAMOUNT (10 TOTAL / 20%)
SONY (18 TOTAL / 11%)
1 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILM LIONSGATE (19 TOTAL / 5%)
0 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS DISNEY (10 TOTAL / 0%)

Universal Pictures had the highest number of LGBTQ-inclusive films at six. 20th Century Fox clocked the highest percentage of the seven studios at 40 percent of annual releases including LGBTQ characters.

GLAAD also separately examined 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 40 films released under those art house imprints in 2018, GLAAD found 14 to be LGBTQ-inclusive (35 percent). This is up from 28 percent (11 out of 40) in 2017. This is the highest percentage GLAAD has found since beginning to track these subsidiary studios.

Observations & Recommendations

LGBTQ characters saw more screen time than in previous years – but there is still progress to be made.

Of the 20 LGBTQ-inclusive films released in 2018, GLAAD found that ten films featured more than ten minutes of screen-time for an LGBTQ character. Several of these films made sure their queer characters had substance and put them in a leading or significant role. Even so, there is work to be done. Though many of these characters told interesting and compelling stories, increased screen time did not always equate to meaningful stories as seen in films like *Green Book* and *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*. Additionally, of the 45 LGBTQ characters counted this year, 26 of them had less than three minutes of screen time with 16 of those clocking in under one minute. There is still plenty of work to be done in elevating queer characters and stories.

The full diversity of the LGBTQ community must be better reflected in wide-release film.

In 2018, 42 percent of the LGBTQ characters GLAAD counted were people of color. This is a fifteen-percentage point decrease from 2017. Hollywood must tell authentic stories of LGBTQ people of color from all walks of life. A notable improvement from 2017's report is the inclusion of Asian-Pacific Islander (API) LGBTQ people. In 2018, API LGBTQ characters made up 13 percent (six) of all LGBTQ characters compared to zero characters in 2017. However, there was a significant drop in Latinx queer characters from 28.5 percent to 7 percent. GLAAD urges Hollywood to quickly move forward in telling stories of LGBTQ characters at the intersection of multiple identities. This also includes more queer characters with a disability, those of different religions, body types, more trans characters, more queer women, characters who are asexual, intersex characters, and others.

Only three films from the major studios counted in GLAAD's report included bisexual+ characters.

Given that bisexual+ people make up the majority of the LGB community, it is disheartening that only three of 20 inclusive films (or 110 total films) included depictions of bi+ characters. Bi+ characters are much more visible in other media, including several of the comic books that inspired recent blockbuster films. Unfortunately, the bisexual identities of those heroes do not always jump from page to the screen adaptation. Several films in this report include women who are only shown in queer relationships in a transactional way – that is, they are only sleeping with another woman to gain something they need, rather than out of any genuine interest. Bisexual men, if included at all, often find their identity challenged. These negative stereotypes and portrayals have a real life impact on bisexual+ people, who are less likely to be out than gay and lesbian people and report higher levels of minority stresses than gays or lesbians.

Of the 110 major studio films released in 2018, GLAAD did not count a single transgender character.

Major studio film is behind the rest of Hollywood when it comes to trans representation. In the year that saw the groundbreaking television series *Pose* put a multitude of trans stories front and center and trans creators behind the scenes, *Supergirl* introduced America to TV's first trans superhero, and *A Fantastic Woman* took home an Oscar; there were still no transgender characters in any major studio film. Just 16 percent of Americans say they know someone who is transgender compared to more than 90 percent who know someone who is lesbian, gay, or bisexual.¹ There is an incredible opportunity for entertainment media to be a leader in this space by sharing and uplifting the stories of trans people, and we'd like to see film catch up to TV in this respect. GLAAD partnered with 5050by2020 to release *TRANSform Hollywood* last year: a free, in-depth digital guide offering tips and best practices for collaborating with trans storytellers and fostering a more trans-inclusive production environment.

Animated and family films must be more inclusive of LGBTQ characters.

None of the 18 films that fell under the category of animated/family film released by major studios in 2018 included LGBTQ characters. This is the first time in five years that GLAAD has not counted a single film in that genre as LGBTQ-inclusive. In 2017, Disney included a gay character in *Beauty and the Beast*, which seemed to be a small step forward towards more LGBTQ characters in family films. However, the lack of any inclusive films in the genre last year seems to indicate that recent inclusive family releases like *Storks* (2016, Warner Brothers), *Angry Birds* (2016, Sony), and *ParaNorman* (2012, Focus Features) may have been anomalies rather than the beginning of steady progress. Meanwhile, television has been introducing more and more inclusive content aimed at younger audiences, leading to the creation of the GLAAD Media Award category for Kids and Family Programming in 2017. LGBTQ people – including families led by LGBTQ parents – are a reality of the world experienced by young people, and it is important that the movies that children and their families go to see in the theater reflect that.

The stand-out inclusive wide release films highlight teenage stories.

Several of the films that passed the Vito Russo test, contained well-rounded queer characters, and provided plenty of screen time for them, are specifically focused on telling the stories of LGBTQ teens and young people. Three of the five nominees in the Outstanding Film – Wide Release category of the GLAAD Media Awards featured gay or lesbian teenagers. *Love, Simon*, which received the award, included three gay teenage characters. GLAAD and The Harris Poll found that 20 percent of American millennials are LGBTQ, so this inclusion is a positive step towards reflecting the real world. This inclusion has also paid off at the box office with *Love, Simon*, *Blockers*, and *Deadpool 2* making back 3.5 or more times their production costs. The MPAA reports that 38 percent of Americans and Canadians 18-39 are “frequent cinemagoers” who visit the theater once or more a month.

¹ “Accelerating Acceptance.” GLAAD/Harris Poll. March 2017.



2018
RATING

★★★★★

GOOD

NICK ROBINSON AS SIMON SHER, LOVE, SIMON

20th Century Fox

Originally the Fox Film Corporation, founded in 1915 by William Fox, the film studio merged with Twentieth Century Pictures in 1935. Fox was then bought by Rupert Murdoch in 1985, where it became part of News Corporation, before the film studio came under parent company 21st Century Fox in 2012. In March of this year, the Walt Disney Studios officially acquired 21st Century Fox, along with select other Fox film and television properties in a \$71.3 billion dollar deal. When the deal was finalized, Disney acquired several film assets under 21st including 20th Century Fox, 20th Century Fox Animation, Blue Sky Studios, Fox Studios Australia, Fox Searchlight, and Fox 2000 Pictures. It was initially announced that Disney would keep Fox 2000 Pictures running, the production company which did *Love, Simon*, but it has since been announced the label will shutter in October 2019.

In terms of LGBTQ representation, Fox has had its ups and downs, but it did introduce two of the earliest depictions of transgender characters in film with the features *Myra Breckinridge* (1970) and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975). Other noteworthy LGBTQ-inclusive films from Fox include *Making Love* (1982), still one of the most realistic gay loves stories to come out of a major studio, as well as *Silkwood* (1983), *The Object of My Affection* (1998), *The Family Stone* (2005), *Independence Day: Resurgence* (2016), and *Alien: Covenant* (2017).

Summary of 2018 Findings

- 10** films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints
- 4** total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 40%** percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 4** number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★★★★★	2018 Good
★★★★☆	2017 Insufficient
★★★☆☆	2016 Poor
★★★☆☆	2015 Adequate
★★★☆☆	2014 Adequate
★★★☆☆	2013 Adequate
★★☆☆☆	2012 Failing

Bohemian Rhapsody

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE IN 2018: 4,000 THEATERS

The long-awaited biopic of bisexual Queen front man Freddie Mercury was released last year after several years of production issues and cast and crew changes. The film made a definite impact; shattering box office records in the music biopic genre and bringing the story of an out character to audiences who aren't necessarily flocking to other queer movies. Unfortunately, the film missed a number of opportunities by not fully exploring Mercury's identity or his relationship with long-term partner Jim Hutton, and largely glossing over his diagnosis as HIV-positive.

For much of the film, Freddie's relationships with men are portrayed as having a negative effect on his life. Those relationships and parties are painted as part of why he is becoming distant from the band or not performing to the standard expected. Though the film does pay off in a sweet moment at the end as Freddie introduces Jim to his family and then later brings him to the Live Aid show, these short moments and the final title card about their relationship lasting through Mercury's death did not give enough weight to what was such a significant part of his life. This is particularly true when contrasted with the screen time the film gave to Freddie's relationship with his previous partner Mary, and the problematic moment of Mary telling Freddie that he is gay when he comes out to her as bisexual.

While it is notable that the film ended on the high note of Live Aid rather than focusing on Mercury's illness and death, we would have liked to have seen the film strike a better balance in including how HIV shaped his story and the advocacy work done in his name after he passed.

In a press statement about removing the film from contention for the GLAAD Media Awards in light of accusations against director Bryan Singer, GLAAD noted: "Bohemian Rhapsody brought the story of LGBTQ icon Freddie Mercury to audiences around the world, many of whom never saw an out and proud lead character in a film or saw the impact of HIV and AIDS in fair and accurate ways. The impact of the film is undeniable. We believe, however, that we must send a clear and unequivocal message to LGBTQ youth and all survivors of sexual assault that GLAAD and our community will stand with survivors and will not be silent when it comes to protecting them from those who would do them harm."

Deadpool 2

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

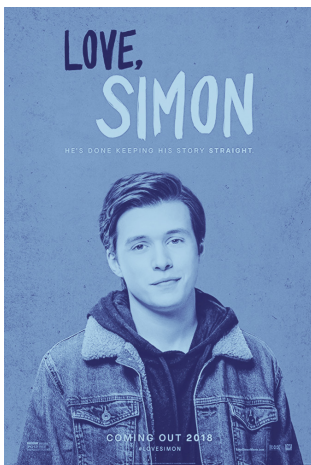
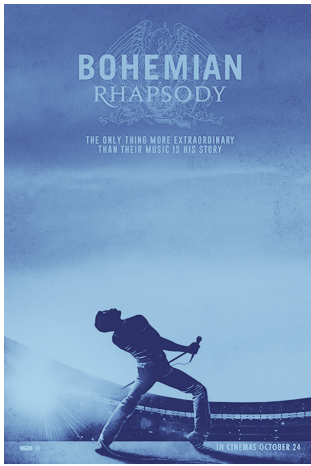
WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,349 THEATERS

The sequel to 2016's *Deadpool* sees the mercenary teaming with returning and new heroes to save a teenage mutant from a time traveling enhanced soldier. The group of heroes includes the returning Negasonic Teenage Warhead (played by out actor Brianna Hildebrand), and her new girlfriend and fellow X-Men teammate, Yukio. The film gave audiences a first for the wide release superhero genre when Negasonic and Yukio clearly state that they are girlfriends. This is a milestone in a genre that has too often rendered LGBTQ characters to be invisible, and earned the film a GLAAD Media Award nomination.

While there has been a long history of LGBTQ characters in comic books, those characters have often not made it to the screen or had their identities erased if they do jump from page to screen. This type of erasure was an issue in the first film with *Deadpool's* pansexuality, a problem that carried through to the sequel. Additionally, X-Force member Shatterstar was a short-lived member of the hero team. While Shatterstar has had a tangled past with different runs of comic books, he has often been portrayed as queer and in a relationship with fellow hero Rictor. Shatterstar did not get any personal development or back story before he was killed.

Star Ryan Reynolds has confirmed that there will be a third *Deadpool* film that will likely focus on the X-Force team as a whole. We hope to see Yukio and Negasonic return in the third movie with an expanded role from their relatively minor presence in this film. This could also be an opportunity for the franchise to finally pay off *Deadpool's* pansexuality, and give him a male love interest.

In December, Fox released *Once Upon A Deadpool* as a PG-13 cut of the film. In order to make the film connect after cutting so much of the R-rated footage, it employed a new frame inspired by *The Princess Bride* with *Deadpool* reading the story to Fred Savage. Multiple sources have classified the film as a re-release rather than a new project. Given that the film had no additional scenes featuring Negasonic and Yukio or any new LGBTQ content, GLAAD did not count *Once Upon a Deadpool* as a separate release in Fox's total films in this tally. This would have misleadingly inflated the numbers for the same content.



Love, Simon

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,434 THEATERS

The GLAAD Media Award-winning film *Love, Simon* made history as the first major studio release to focus on a gay teenage romance, though it is difficult to believe that it took until 2018 for that first to happen.

The film follows closeted high schooler Simon who is blackmailed by a classmate after discovering the emails between Simon and his mystery love interest, Blue. Simon is eventually outed, but in a powerful moment he takes back control of his own narrative, affirms that he “deserves a great love story,” and ultimately inspires Blue (revealed to be his schoolmate, Bram) to come out and the two to get together.

While coming out stories have been told before, *Love, Simon* broke new ground in telling that story in this kind of medium. Having a gay lead and multiple queer supporting characters in a film opening in thousands of theaters around the country and overseas is revolutionary, especially when two of the three gay characters are played by queer Black actors. The movie also covered several aspects of a queer teenage experience including coming out, reactions of family and friends, first love, school, bullying, and the effects of digital culture on young people. It is especially important that the film had a happy ending for Simon and Bram – something that remains entirely too rare for queer characters - and that they shared an onscreen kiss.

One other notable aspect of the film is the way it touches on Simon’s own internalized homophobia and femmephobia in how Simon initially reacts to Ethan, a more femme student who is out and bullied at their school.

Love, Simon is exactly the type of film GLAAD has been calling on Hollywood to release from a major studio since the introduction of this report, and we encourage other studios to follow Fox’s example. It is worth noting that Fox 2000, the company label that produced the film, was shuttered in this year’s Disney acquisition.

“Films like *Love, Simon*, that aren’t tent poles, but also aren’t independent films are gonna find it harder and harder to get released in theaters. It’s why we need GLAAD now more than ever. The fight for equality in our multiplexes is going to get more difficult, not easier.

But that's okay, I'm not worried. Because making movies like *Love, Simon* and the TV shows I'm lucky to be a part of, I get to meet and work with a lot of young people. And unlike the scared kid that I was at that age, they are fearless. And they're going to keep telling stories until every kid of every race and every gender and every sexuality gets to go to the movies and watch their very own *Love, Simon*. And we all can't wait to buy tickets," said director Greg Berlanti at the 30th GLAAD Media Awards.

GLAAD will be keeping a close eye on the state of LGBTQ inclusion in the newly organized Hollywood studio system going forward.

Red Sparrow

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**
WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,064 THEATERS

This spy movie is an example of some of the worst ongoing tropes we have repeatedly seen employed when dealing with queer women. Stephanie is the Chief of Staff to a U.S. Senator, and she is in a relationship with Marta, a Russian woman who is a member of the spy group known as the Sparrows who are trained to infiltrate and seduce to achieve their missions. Marta is killed by her bosses and Stephanie is then blackmailed for fraternizing with a Russian operative and is subsequently murdered herself when she attempts to escape the CIA.

GLAAD did not count Marta as a queer character as her involvement with a woman is only shown as part of a transactional moment – using the woman she is sleeping with to gain something – rather than out of any genuine attraction to women. Though Stephanie was previously married to a man, given her relationship with Marta and comments she makes throughout, GLAAD counted her as a lesbian character. There was also a minor gay character who made a short appearance, and was referred to as “degenerate” rather than given a name. *Red Sparrow* is an example of a film which does pass the Vito Russo Test as Stephanie's meeting with the protagonist is crucial to the plot moving forward, but the story remains problematic.

Hollywood's history of “Bury Your Gays” dates back decades to production codes which required any LGBTQ character's story to only be told as a tragedy. Their story had to end in death or punishment, so the audience would understand that being LGBTQ was not something they should want to be. This trope made headlines over the past four years after an explosion of the issue on

television – largely impacting queer women who were sacrificed to further a more central character's narrative. Creators must do better to interrogate the stories they are telling and understand toxic patterns to which they may be contributing.

Opportunities Ahead

The future of several of the previously announced upcoming Fox films is now unclear following the Disney acquisition of Fox and the subsequent shuttering of production label Fox 2000, which was responsible for *Love, Simon* and several other progressive projects. It is worth noting that one high profile announced film from Fox 2000 is *The Editor*, a novel adaptation set to be directed by Greg Berlanti, about a gay author whose editor is Jackie O. It is not yet known what will happen with the slate of Fox 2000 films, but GLAAD hopes that Disney will move forward with this film or that another studio can pick it up.

An exciting film that remains on the schedule is *Nimona*, set for release on March 5th of 2021. The film is an adaptation of out writer and artist Noelle Stevenson's graphic novel and comic of the same name which includes a romantic history between the two leading men: the villain Ballister Blackheart and hero Goldenloin. This would be a huge step for Disney in releasing a younger skewing queer-focused film, and it already has a built in fan base. Two other ongoing comic adaptations that Disney now owns are *Lumberjanes* and *Goldie Vance*, both GLAAD Media Award winners from BOOM! Studios. *Lumberjanes* follows a group of girls at a supernatural summer camp, including girlfriends Mal and Molly, and Jo, who is transgender and the science master of the group. *Goldie Vance* follows the titular young investigator, including her relationship with her girlfriend. Given Disney's weak history of LGBTQ inclusion, moving forward with these two releases would be huge for both the studio and for the road forward for inclusion in all-ages programming in film.



MELISSA MCCARTHY AND RICHARD E. GRANT AS LEE ISRAEL AND JACK HOCK, CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME?

Fox Searchlight

SUBSIDIARY OF 20TH CENTURY FOX

Summary of 2018 Findings

5 films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints

3 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

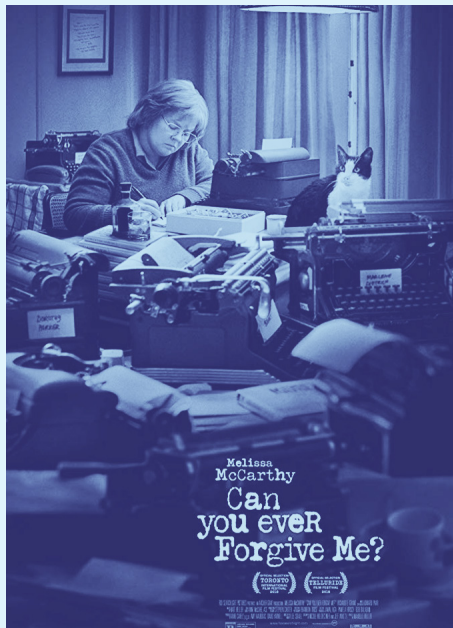
60% percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

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. In March of this year, Fox Searchlight was one of the many Fox properties acquired by Walt Disney Studios. As of now, it seems that Fox Searchlight will maintain a similar slate and brand going forward. Fox Searchlight Pictures has been responsible for the release of several high profile LGBTQ-inclusive films, including *Boys Don't Cry* (1999), *Kinsey* (2004), and *Battle of the Sexes* and *The Shape of Water* (2017).

Can You Ever Forgive Me?

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 555 THEATERS

This biopic is based on the confessional memoir of the same name by Lee Israel as she attempted to save her failing writing career by forging letters from deceased authors and playwrights to make a living. The film's central relationship is the friendship between Israel, who is a lesbian, and her best friend Jack, a gay drug dealer who helps her sell the forged letters she has written. The GLAAD Media Award-nominated film does a remarkable job of including both Lee and Jack's sexualities as part of their stories – they each have several love interests, talk about previous relationships, and much of the film takes place at the iconic New York gay bar Julius – without making their identity the source of conflict of the film or the central focus of their stories. This is the kind of storytelling GLAAD would like to see more of on screens – and critics clearly agree as the film racked up several awards nominations for both writing and acting and holds a 98 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes.



The Favourite

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1,554 THEATERS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated period drama centers on the relationships and royal court tensions between Queen Anne; her friend, lover, and advisor Sarah Churchill; and Sarah's treacherous cousin Abigail Masham as the two women struggle for power and Anne's favor. While Queen Anne is clearly in love with Sarah and eventually falls for Abigail's lies, the motives and feelings of the other women are often not as clear. GLAAD did count Sarah as bisexual in its tally, as she was depicted as having some genuine moments of love and care for Anne as well as for her husband. Even so, it is clear that she was also manipulating Anne's fragile state for her own gains. Abigail was not counted as a queer character as she is never portrayed to have sincere interest in a romance with Anne, something the Queen sees through in the end though she is stuck in the decisions she has made. The film does veer into a stereotype of queer women's relationships that needs to be retired – the transactional relationship – but does improve on some previous takes of the story by including the genuine care shown between Anne and Sarah.



Super Troopers 2

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,125 THEATERS

A sequel to the 2001 original, *Super Troopers 2* reunites the group of Vermont Highway Patrol men to handle the transition of a small French-Canadian town into part of the United States. Unfortunately, some humor of the film should be left with the original from 18 years ago. There is a running gag where a character, Thorny, accidentally takes estrogen and becomes overly emotional and even lactates toward the film's end. Additionally, there are jokes about men being extremely uncomfortable when dared to kiss each other, and hesitant to perform CPR because it would be like kissing a man. There are multiple instances where the Canadian policemen have a sexual freedom that is not shared with the American protagonists. In one scene, the groups go to a brothel and one of the Mounties engages with men and women sex workers. The Canadians offer to share with the Americans who hastily refuse, clearly more uncomfortable with the male sex workers. These are just a few examples of the casual anti-LGBTQ sentiment which undercuts the film, and makes LGBTQ people no more than the subject of punchlines for jokes that weren't funny then or now.





2018
RATING

★

FAILING

LINDA CARDELLINI AS DIANA HYLAND, A SIMPLE FAVOR

Lionsgate Entertainment

The youngest studio tracked in GLAAD’s report, Lionsgate was founded in 1997 by Frank Giustra and Avi Federgreen. In its slightly over two decades, Lionsgate has produced and distributed major blockbusters, and acquired studios such as Summit Entertainment and Pantelion, which focuses on films for a Latinx audience.

Lionsgate started off with releasing the 1997 film *The Pillow Book*, in which Ewan McGregor plays a bisexual man. Other LGBTQ-inclusive films from the studio 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), and *Un Padre No Tan Padre* (2017).

Summary of 2018 Findings

- 19** films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints

- 1** total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

- 5%** percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

- 0** number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★☆☆☆☆	2018 Failing
★☆☆☆☆	2017 Failing
★☆☆☆☆	2016 Failing
★★☆☆☆	2015 Adequate
★★☆☆☆	2014 Adequate
★★☆☆☆	2013 Adequate
n/a	2012 Not Tracked

Opportunities Ahead



A Simple Favor

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,102 THEATERS

Towing the line between mystery and comedy, *A Simple Favor* follows bored mom Stephanie's search after the disappearance of her new best friend, the mysterious Emily. Over the course of the film, Stephanie finds out that Emily has had several different identities – one was as the muse of lesbian painter, Diana. It seemed that Diana and Emily had a sexual relationship in exchange for Diana paying off Emily's debt and tuition. Additionally, in a flashback, Emily comforts an upset Stephanie with a kiss on the lips, and repeatedly calls her "baby." As more is uncovered about Emily, it is clear she sexually manipulates people to get her way, including her husband Sean, Diana, and even Stephanie. There is a lack of feeling or desire toward the women Emily seduces, thus GLAAD did not count her as bisexual. The repeated trope in media of women only sleeping with other women to get something they want or need – thus directly linking their queer relationship with a negative behavior - is one audiences have seen too many times.

Lionsgate is set to release an English-language version of their 2013 Spanish-language hit *Instructions Not Included*. As GLAAD spotlighted in the 2014 SRI, the original film was notable for including a lesbian couple with a significant role in the film. However, it also contained a cheap punchline at the expense of a trans woman. The new version of the film would do well to keep and update the story of the lesbian characters and drop the outdated transphobic gag. An adaptation of Erin Morgenstern's best-selling novel *The Night Circus* is also in the works at Lionsgate. The novel contains two queer characters of color, Chandresh who is gay and Tsukiko who is a lesbian. It is essential that they and their queer identities remain in the film, showing LGBTQ people as an integral part of the fantasy genre.

A new franchise coming from Lionsgate is Peter Jackson's adaptation of *Chaos Walking*, a dystopian young adult trilogy. In the novels, two men, Ben and Cillian, raise protagonist Todd (Tom Holland) in a dystopian world with no women. Author Patrick Ness has confirmed that their relationship is a romantic one. Both these men are listed as cast in the film adaptation (Demián Bichir, Kurt Sutter); their relationship should be a part of the story when it is translated into film, and hopefully expanded upon with more depth. The film was previously announced to have a March 2019 release date, but now the release is rumored to be some time in 2020.

Roadside Attractions

SUBSIDIARY OF LIONSGATE

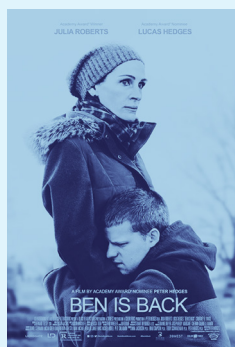
Summary of 2018 Findings

11 films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints

5 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

45% percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

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



Ben is Back

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 162 THEATERS

This drama follows Ben, an addict who is temporarily home for Christmas after months of rehab, and his mother, Holly. In one sequence, Ben and Holly are tracking down people who may have had a reason to steal his dog. Ben goes to the house of an older man, who tries to get him to come inside, but Ben refuses. We find out that the man was Mr. Richman, Ben's old history teacher, with whom he had an "arrangement" to procure OxyContin. When Holly realizes that her son traded sexual acts with an older man for drugs, she pulls over and vomits out of the car. It is disappointing that the only gay person portrayed in the film was a predatory older man and the scene could have been cut entirely.

Finding Your Feet

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 277 THEATERS

The British comedy *Finding Your Feet* follows Sandra, a recently divorced woman, who goes to live with her sister, Bif. At one point in the film, Bif casually mentions having a "thing" with another woman, Prue. Sandra is initially shocked that Bif "swings both ways," but her overall relationship to and opinion of her sister

does not change. Though Bif doesn't have any further romantic relationships and unfortunately passes away of cancer toward the end of the film, the casual inclusion of a bisexual older woman is an important moment.

Juliet, Naked

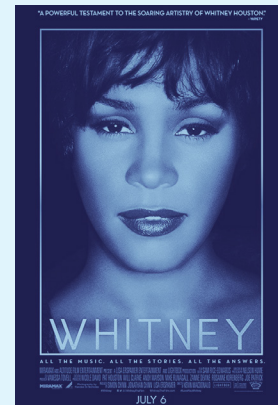
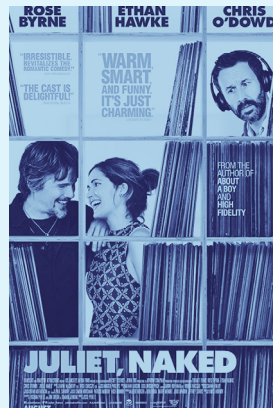
WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 467 THEATERS

Juliet, Naked is a romantic comedy following museum curator Annie, who starts up a correspondence with a has-been musician, Tucker. Annie's sister Ros is an out lesbian who experiences several dating mishaps throughout the film, including a date with a younger woman who is implied to be dating Ros and a man at the same time. Ros also mentions kissing a married woman who she insists is a "repressed lesbian." By the end of the film Ros finds a girlfriend who showed interest in her first, and refers to herself as a "gold star" lesbian. Though it was good to have a lesbian character, Ros' only real trait was her lesbian identity as the character isn't really explored in any depth, and the film makes several biphobic statements about previous women that Ros had dated.

Lizzie

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 240 THEATERS

An interpretation of the true story of Lizzie Borden, *Lizzie* focuses heavily on the romantic and sexual relationship between Lizzie and her family's maid, Bridget. Lizzie's father is abusive toward both of the women in different ways, including sexually assaulting Bridget. After he catches Bridget and Lizzie having sex, he threatens and shames both of them. Lizzie concocts a plan to murder her father and stepmother, and Bridget initially goes along with it, though she gets cold feet and eventually backs out. The murders themselves are very graphic and violent, with Lizzie's naked body being splattered with her parent's blood as she repeatedly stabs them. Bridget confronts Lizzie in the end, reminding her that they do not live in a world or time where the two of them could ever be together. Bridget leaves town, and the film ends with her on a train, thinking of the memories her and Lizzie had together. The film overall presents violence and hopelessness associated with Lizzie and her queerness.



Whitney

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 451 THEATERS

A documentary that dives into the rise, fame, and ultimate tragedy surrounding singer Whitney Houston, *Whitney* also spends time talking about the relationship between Whitney and her friend and rumored lover, Robyn Crawford. Testimonies of Whitney's friends and family say that Whitney and Robyn were in a romantic relationship, though Whitney was dating various men as well. Whitney herself denied it in interviews, but Robyn was an integral part of her life, and footage and interviews showed the connection between the two. A friend described Whitney's sexual orientation as "fluid." Ultimately, according to the film, following an ultimatum from Robyn, Whitney chose to remain with her husband Bobby Brown.

Later in the documentary, a family friend of Whitney asserts that her aunt had molested Whitney at a young age, and that was why she was reluctant to ever come out herself. Linking sexual assault to sexual orientation is a troubling and inaccurate claim.

Overall, the documentary purports to show the queerness of an all-time great in the pop canon, and highlighted the ways that homophobia contributed to her tragic downfall. Out newscaster Don Lemon also makes a brief appearance in archival footage.



2018
RATING

★ ★ ★

INSUFFICIENT

GINA RODRIGUEZ AS ANYA THORENSEN, ANNIHILATION

Paramount Pictures

With its origins dating back to the founding of the Famous Players Film Company in 1912, Paramount Pictures was formed in 1916 when the company merged with two others. Paramount was then purchased by the Viacom Network in 1994 and it currently remains under that banner. In November 2018, Paramount became the first major studio to sign a multi-picture film deal with streaming giant Netflix. Paramount is known for big budget franchises such as *Indiana Jones*, *Transformers*, and *Mission: Impossible*.

Paramount has released several LGBTQ-themed or LGBTQ-inclusive films starting in the mid-nineties, which included *Home for the Holidays* (1995), *Clueless* (1995), *The Brady Bunch Movie* (1995), *Brain Candy* (1996), *Kiss Me Guido* (1997), *Election* (1999), *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999), *The Next Best Thing* (2000), and *The Hours* (2002).

One of the most significant LGBTQ films made by Paramount is the 1997 comedy *In and Out* which received substantial press for a kiss between Kevin Kline and Tom Selleck. The film was a hit at the box office, and joins *The Talented Mr. Ripley* among the top 10 highest grossing LGBTQ films. In 2016, Paramount released *Star Trek: Beyond*, the third film in the new *Star Trek* franchise, which showed that the character Hikaru Sulu had a husband and daughter. The inclusion of a gay man of color in such a large franchise was a huge step in the right direction for representation.

Summary of 2018 Findings

- 10** films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints
- 2** total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 20%** percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 1** number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2018 Insufficient
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2017 Poor
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2016 Poor
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2015 Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2014 Adequate
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2013 Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2012 Adequate

Action Point

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,032 THEATERS

This Johnny Knoxville-led comedy about a defunct theme park dealt in anti-gay jokes that felt decades old, and there is an ongoing insinuation that the enemy of the protagonist is gay as a derogatory term. Overall, the film underperformed at the box office and tanked with a 13 percent critical rating and 26 percent audience score on Rotten Tomatoes, showing that audiences are no longer willing to support projects that rely on these outdated jokes.

Annihilation

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,112 THEATERS

This science-fiction thriller follows the protagonist, Lena, and a group of scientists into an unknown alien climate known as “The Shimmer” that no one has ever returned from. One of the scientists in the core group is Anya Thorensen, who hits on Lena soon after she meets her. Anya’s queerness is portrayed as a very natural part of her character, almost so casually that it could have been missed. Nearly every character in the film dies in the end, including Anya, though her death was more violent than many of the other women in the scientist’s group. Still, her inclusion is notable for the genre and should inspire further LGBTQ characters to be included in science fiction and fantasy films.

Instant Family

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,426 THEATERS

This comedy follows couple Pete and Ellie through their journey of fostering children. They regularly attend a support group with prospective foster parents which includes minor gay couple Kit and Michael, who are looking to foster and adopt as well. Showing two gay men as a couple wanting to adopt is a reflective of the real world and still an important issue to highlight, especially considering that many states still discriminate against queer couples who wish to adopt.



Opportunities Ahead

Rocketman, the biopic of gay icon Elton John, will be released at the end of May. The film will cover the early years in the musician’s career and his partnership with writer Bernie Taupin. The film is produced by both John and his husband David Furnish, which is a promising sign for fans on how inclusive the film will be of John’s sexuality and relationships. Paramount also has several adaptations scheduled of popular properties including *Dungeons and Dragons*, a film based on the immensely popular roleplaying game. There is a large LGBTQ community who plays D&D, and it would be a missed opportunity to not have them reflected in the upcoming movie. While Paramount previously announced a film adaptation of the queer-inclusive Nickelodeon series *The Loud House*, it was this year announced that the film will now be made for Netflix instead. There is no word on Netflix’s plans for theatrical distribution.



2018
RATING

★ ★ ★

INSUFFICIENT

CLAIRE FOY AS LISBETH SALANDER, THE GIRL IN THE SPIDER'S WEB

Sony Pictures

Founded in 1918 as Cohn-Brant-Cohn Film Sales, the studio was renamed Columbia Pictures in 1924. The studio gained prominence starting in the '20s due to its association with Frank Capra and ended up producing some of the biggest stars of the classic Hollywood era. In the '80s, the studio was acquired by Coca-Cola, where the company launched Tri-Star pictures. Columbia/TriStar was briefly an entity, before being purchased by Sony in 1989.

Sony Pictures has a rocky track record when it comes to LGBTQ-inclusive films. A political thriller from 1962, *Advise and Consent*, included a subplot where a Senate chairman is blackmailed over an affair he had with another man, before committing suicide. Tri-Star's *Basic Instinct* (1992) faced opposition from LGBTQ groups, including GLAAD, for its defamatory depiction of lesbian and bisexual women. Other inclusive films from Sony Columbia include *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), *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* (2013), and *Rough Night* (2017).

Summary of 2018 Findings

- 18** films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints
- 2** total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 11%** percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 2** number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2018 Insufficient
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2017 Poor
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2016 Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2015 Adequate
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2014 Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2013 Good
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2012 Adequate

The Girl in the Spider's Web

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,929 THEATERS

Based on the best-selling novel of the same name, *The Girl in the Spider's Web* is an action movie that follows vigilante Lisbeth Salandar as she is being hunted by her villainous sister who is trying to steal nuclear codes Lisbeth has acquired. Early on in the film, Lisbeth is freshly out of bed with Sofia, a woman whom it is clear she has a sexual and romantic relationship with. The two discuss Lisbeth's family and Sofia's jealousy when she believes that Lisbeth might be sleeping with other women. Sofia returns later in the film to help Lisbeth make her escape from a government agent who is hunting her. The film also delves further into Lisbeth's past relationship with journalist, Mikael. Having a bisexual woman at the forefront of an action movie is an exciting step toward more inclusion in the genre, especially in leading roles. The film was nominated for a GLAAD Media Award in Outstanding Film – Wide Release.

Superfly

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,220 THEATERS

A remake of the 1972 Blaxploitation film of the same name, *Superfly* follows drug dealer Youngblood Priest in his attempt to leave behind his life of crime. In the original film, Priest had a girlfriend, Georgia, and a mistress, Cynthia. In the remake, this is changed to Priest, Georgia, and Cynthia in a polyamorous relationship, which is reciprocated on all sides. Georgia and Cynthia kiss and show affection to each other as well as to Priest. There is an extended sex scene in the middle of the film, and though it includes all three of the characters in the relationship, most of the screen time is devoted to each woman with Priest respectively. Though it is a good update to show Georgia and Cynthia as bisexual, the film still mostly conveys their relationship in terms of a male fantasy and how they relate to Priest. Furthermore, Cynthia is killed in a shootout toward the end of the film, and while Priest and Georgia are initially upset by this, the film ends with the two of them happy together on a boat, demonstrating that Cynthia's character was ultimately disposable.



Opportunities Ahead

Sony Pictures Worldwide has acquired the domestic and most of the international rights to upcoming British drama *Ammonite*, starring Kate Winslet and Saoirse Ronan as two women who fall in love. Ideally, Sony will give this film a wide release, as these LGBTQ-inclusive historical dramas are often limited to a smaller run. Bisexual pop star Halsey has signed on with Sony to make a semi-autobiographical film starring herself. The singer has long been outspoken about her sexual orientation, and the film would be incomplete without including her bisexuality. *Spider-Man: Far from Home* is set to release in July, and may possibly include characters from Peter Parker's high school who are LGBTQ. Trans actor Zach Barack has been cast in a role in the film, though it is unknown if his character will be transgender or not. GLAAD's *Accelerating Acceptance* report finds that 20 percent of Americans aged 18-34 identify as LGBTQ – if Peter's school peers are meant to reflect reality, the movie must include LGBTQ students. TriStar, under Sony, picked up romantic comedy *Happiest Season*, co-written and directed by out filmmaker and actress Clea DuVall. The film follows a woman who is planning on proposing to her girlfriend, but finds out the girlfriend is not out to her family. Hopefully, this and hits like *Love, Simon* will lead to more romantic comedies revolving around LGBTQ couples.



Sony Pictures Classics

SUBSIDIARY OF SONY PICTURES

COLIN MORGAN AND RUPERT EVERETT AS ALFRED BOSIE DOUGLAS AND OSCAR WILDE, *THE HAPPY PRINCE*

Summary of 2018 Findings

14 films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints

2 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

14% percent of LGBTQ-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 LGBTQ 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); *Love Is Strange* (2014); *Grandma* (2015); *The Meddler* (2016); *Call Me By Your Name*, *A Fantastic Woman* (2017), and more.

Final Portrait

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 100 THEATERS

Based on true events, *Final Portrait* tells the story of painter Alberto Giacometti painting a portrait of American critic James Lord. Lord, who was gay in real life, is also portrayed as such in the movie, though not

much on-screen. He has phone conversations with a man who seems to be his partner or boyfriend. In one scene he jokes about how a woman would have excited him, if only she were a man, while implying the man next to him is his date. Though it is positive to see a gay man living fairly openly in the 1960s, it would have been great to see Lord talk about his personal life more in the real substance of the film, which are his conversations with Giacometti.

The Happy Prince

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 227 THEATERS

A biopic that follows the last few years of Oscar Wilde's life, *The Happy Prince* takes a look at the esteemed gay playwright after his imprisonment for "gross indecency." The film follows Wilde as he is taken in by his good friends Reggie and Robbie and his continuing toxic relationship with Bosie, his much younger lover who was partially responsible for Wilde's imprisonment. During this time, they lived with a bacchanal of younger men, many of whom Bosie was paying to be intimate with and remain with the men. When Bosie's family cut off his allowance, Wilde lived on and off the streets of France, until his death, with Reggie at his side. The postscript of the film notes how Wilde's work was immortalized, while Bosie died penniless. His memorialization doesn't necessarily change the tragedy of Wilde's life, which the film portrays with a mostly even hand, though sometimes seems to revel in his decline and ill state.



Universal Pictures

Universal was founded in 1912, making it the oldest surviving film studio in the country. Universal merged with NBC in 2004, and the subsequent NBCUniversal was purchased by Comcast in 2011. In 2016, Universal acquired DreamWorks animation from 20th Century Fox, and released their first film under that umbrella in February. Universal often focuses on mass appeal films, including *Jaws*, *E.T.*, the *Bourne* series, and the ongoing *Fast and the Furious* franchise.

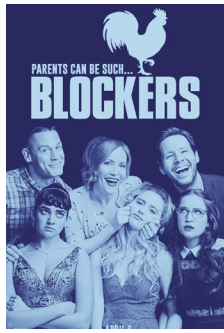
Perhaps due to that focus, Universal did not release LGBTQ-inclusive films until the 1990s. Even then, the 1991 adaptation of *Fried Green Tomatoes* removed the majority of the lesbian content from the novel. LGBTQ representation in Universal films since has been a mixture of highs and lows, including 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), *Get Out* and *Fifty Shades Darker* (2017).

Summary of 2018 Findings

- 20** films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints
- 6** total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 30%** percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 5** number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★★★★★	2018 Good
★★★☆☆	2017 Insufficient
★★★☆☆	2016 Insufficient
★★★☆☆	2015 Adequate
★★★☆☆	2014 Adequate
★★★☆☆	2013 Adequate
★★★☆☆	2012 Adequate



Blockers

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,418 THEATERS

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated sex comedy follows three teenage girls who make a pact to lose their virginity on prom night and their parents who are trying to interfere. One of the girls, Sam, is a closeted lesbian, but agrees to go along with the pact as a way to bond with her best friends before they all leave for college. Early on in the film, audiences meet her crush, Angelica, who is out at school, as Sam spots her across the cafeteria and the music swells. Later, Sam is at home photoshopping herself as Gabrielle next to Xena, and she has a sweet moment at prom with Angelica who came to the dance in a “Galadriel cape” she made for a convention.

In a touching story, Sam’s estranged dad agrees to help the other parents in their attempts to stop their daughters from having sex, but with the reasoning that he knows Sam is gay and he is worried that she will regret going through with sleeping with her date, Chad. Ultimately, Sam comes out to her father who accepts her and encourages her to come out to her best friends. She does and they support her, and then shortly after Sam gets her perfect prom night kiss with Angelica.

Raunchy comedies have a long – and continuing – history of using queer people as just punchlines and stereotypes, but *Blockers* shows that a film can be hilarious, have outrageous, gross and rowdy moments, and still include and respect LGBTQ characters.

Fifty Shades Freed

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,768 THEATERS

The third and final installment in the *Fifty Shades* trilogy sees the return of Christian Grey’s work colleague, Ros Bailey, and her girlfriend Gwen, who audiences met in the second film. Unfortunately, Ros has even less of a role

here than in the second film, and her scenes are largely confined to the opening wedding scene and another background scene.

Green Book

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1,215 THEATERS

Green Book was inspired by the story of real life figure Dr. Don Shirley, a queer Black musician who toured the country throughout the 1960s. The film centers on his tour through the Deep South in 1962, and the friendship he forms with Tony Vallelonga, the white man he hired to be his bodyguard and chauffeur. In a mid-film scene, Shirley is caught by the police in a sting operation having sex with another man at a local YMCA. Vallelonga bribes the officers to let Shirley and the man he was with go. This leads to a disagreement between the two as Shirley says Vallelonga “rewarded” the officers by paying them off when they were wrong for treating him that way. Later, Shirley apologizes to Vallelonga who replies, “I been working night clubs in New York City my whole life, I know it’s a complicated world.” In one earlier moment, Shirley talks about his ex-wife, but considering comments made by Shirley’s family and the overall film, GLAAD counted him as gay in its tally.

The film has been surrounded by controversy as Shirley’s family spoke out in an interview with *Shadow and Act* about being unhappy with the film, calling it a “symphony of lies” and challenging screenwriter Nick Vallelonga’s (Tony’s son) statement that Shirley gave his permission. Shirley’s nephew Edwin said that Shirley “was as open about his sexuality as he thought it was anybody else’s right to know. If you were to ask him, ‘Dr. Shirley, are you gay?’ He might answer, ‘Why? Are you interested?’ If the answer was, ‘No,’ then he’d say, ‘Well, it’s none of your business.’”

Ultimately, it is disappointing that *Green Book* tries to tell a story about racism, but positions the point of view as

being that of Vallelonga rather than Dr. Shirley, whose personal experience would have made for a much more authentic story. This change would have also allowed the film to take advantage of the missed opportunity to explore how being both Black and queer uniquely shaped Shirley's life and career, something which is only ever touched on in the scenes described above.

Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,485 THEATERS

While no actual LGBTQ characters made it into *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*, actress Daniella Pineda revealed during the film's press tour that there was a line cut from the film "for sake of time" which would have revealed that her character Zia is a lesbian. She described the scene, saying, "I look at Chris [Pratt, lead character Owen Grady] and am like, 'Yeah. Square jaw. Good bone structure. Tall. Muscles. I don't date men, but if I did, it would be you. It would gross me out, but I would do it.'" In this case, the decision to cut the line which would confirm her identity while also undermining it was actually for the best; though it seems improbable that such a short line was cut solely for time in a film that runs over two hours. There is a third *Jurassic World* coming in 2021 where filmmakers have an opportunity to bring Zia back with a more developed story, and confirm her identity without leaning into damaging stereotypes.

Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,514 THEATERS

A sequel to 2008's ABBA jukebox musical film *Mamma Mia!*, *Here We Go Again* takes place both in the present day where Sophie is trying to open a hotel to honor her late mother Donna, and in the past, where Donna has summer flings with three men and settles on a Greek Island. The first man Donna sleeps with in flashbacks is Harry, who came out as gay in the first *Mamma Mia* film. In the past, we see him woo Donna, though he refers to her as "the only girl" he thinks he'll ever love. In the present, Harry does not have a husband or boyfriend, but he flirts with a ferry attendant who proceeds to get very flustered. In a post-credits scene, the ferry attendant stares longingly at young Harry and starts singing "Take a Chance on Me." If there are future *Mamma Mia* films, Harry should have a substantial romantic interest, as most all the core straight characters in the film do.

Early in *Here We Go Again*, young Donna sings "When I Kissed The Teacher" with the pronouns changed to be about a woman. Producer Judy Craymer said of this decision, "Because in the song written by ABBA in the '70s, it was obviously a male teacher, and the vice chancellor is a woman, played by Celia Imre, which we thought was part of *Mamma Mia*, the whole blend of empowerment and fun." Despite singing the song with a pronoun change, Donna is only ever shown being romantically involved and interested in men over the course of the film. However, the vice chancellor she pecks during the performance has a considerable reaction to the kiss, singing "What a mad day/Now I see everything in a different light/What a mad day/I was up in the air and she taught me a lesson alright." As such, GLAAD did count her as a queer character in its tally.

Night School

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,019 THEATERS

This comedy follows high school dropout Teddy as he enrolls in night school to receive his GED. Over the course of the film, he eventually bonds with his no-nonsense teacher, Carrie, and the other students. Near the film's end, Teddy believes Carrie is hitting on him, to which she replies, "Fool, I'm gay!" He says he is "getting a different vibe," but eventually does believe her. It is disappointing that Carrie isn't believed at first when she asserts her own identity and that she has no romantic interest in the film, but it is still a noteworthy step forward for the co-lead character of a major studio comedy to be an out Black lesbian.

One joke the film could have done without is a punchline about prison rape. One of the characters in the GED class is in prison, and Carrie says to him, "You need to keep your booty closed, that's what you need to do. You in jail!" These kind of jokes are reductive, making sexual violence and men having sex with men a punchline, and it was especially grating to have the joke delivered by the only queer character.



Truth or Dare

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,068 THEATERS

Truth or Dare follows a group of college students who go to Mexico for spring break and then accidentally fall victim to a curse that will kill them if they do not follow through on their given truth or dare. One member of the group is Brad, who is established as gay from the beginning of the film. Before spring break goes awry, audiences see a moment where he shares a kiss with another man, and terse conversations with his strict father who he is not yet out to. When the group starts getting “truth or dared,” Brad is dared to come out to his dad. Sadly, the audience doesn’t get to see the scene, but Brad reports back to the group that it went well. However, Brad’s next dare shows him forced to hold his father at gunpoint while he begs for his life. A police officer reports to the scene and fatally shoots Brad. Though it is unfortunate that Brad dies, this film is actually one of very few cases where anyone truly can (and does) die as all but one member of the original group are killed. Brad’s inclusion was actually a surprising step forward for the horror genre which has often either left LGBTQ people out of the story or portrayed those characters as villains. It is also an instance of reflecting the real world, as GLAAD’s *Accelerating Acceptance* reports have shown that 20 percent of Americans 18-34 identify as LGBTQ.

Notably, the first character who dies is a very stereotypical “frat guy,” Ronnie. In the first (non-deadly) game of truth or dare, Ronnie dares two girls to kiss, and in retaliation, he is dared to give another man a lap dance. Ronnie is clearly uncomfortable with doing this, but it is important to note that the film made Ronnie’s homophobia and he himself as the butt of the joke, rather than expecting the audience to side with Ronnie in being uncomfortable.

Welcome to Marwen

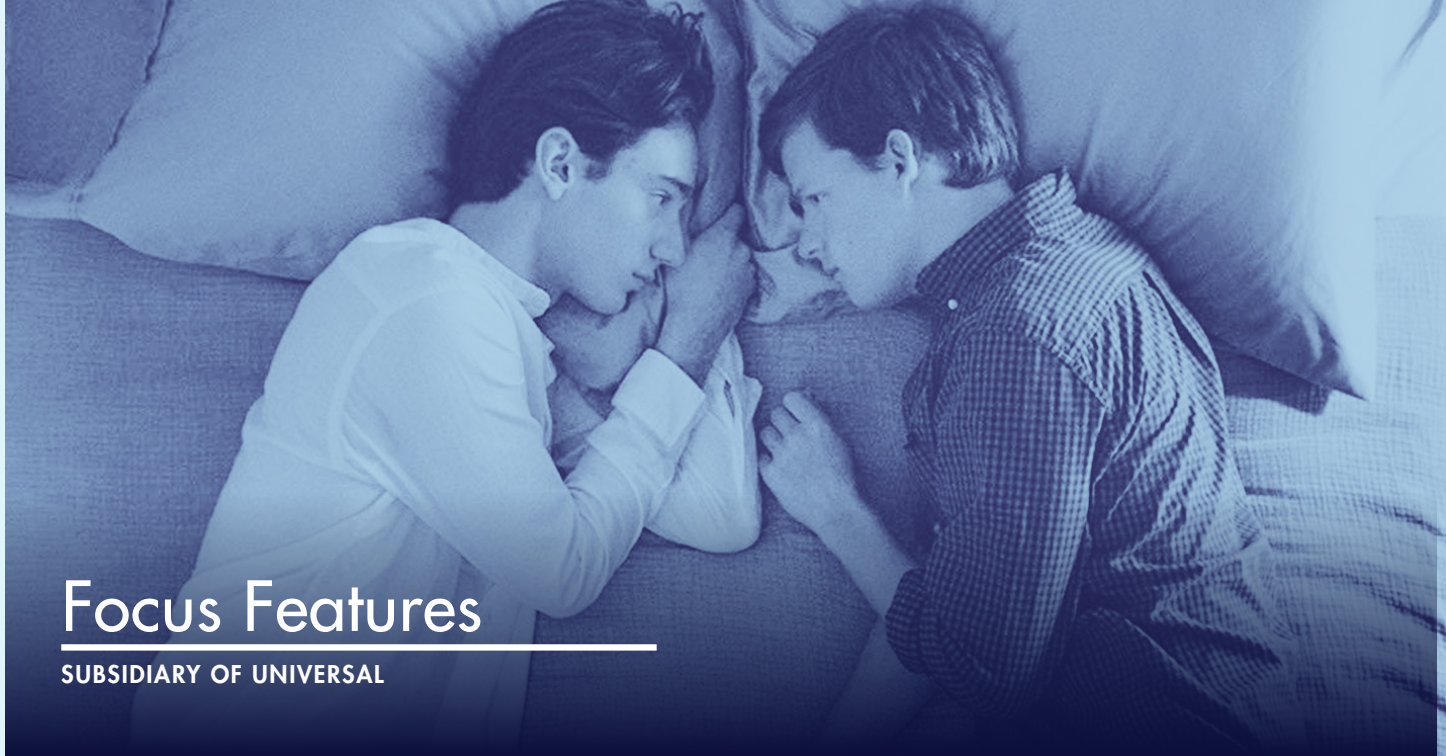
VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1,911 THEATERS

Based on the true story and the critically acclaimed documentary *Marwencol*, *Welcome to Marwen* follows artist Mark Hogancamp who creates his own fantastical world with custom action figures as a way of processing his own trauma. Mark was brutally beaten by a group of men at a bar who hear him talking about wearing women’s high heels. He was so badly injured in the attack that he forgot most of his life, and says the only thing he remembered from the attack is that they called him “queer.” The film makes it very clear that Mark does not actually identify as queer or transgender, though. He says he wears the shoes to feel closer to women, to feel their “essence.” The best that can be said for the film is that it did not use Mark’s interest in wearing high heels as a punchline.

Opportunities Ahead

It was announced this spring that out actor and writer Billy Eichner will write and star in a new romantic comedy for Universal centered on two men who have previously had commitment problems and are now attempting a steady relationship. There is not currently a title or release date known, but *Neighbors* director Nick Stoller is attached to direct, co-write, and co-produce alongside fellow producer Judd Apatow. In addition, out *Love, Simon* director and prolific producer Greg Berlanti is attached to direct and produce a Rock Hudson biopic for Universal. The film, still untitled and with no date, will be adapted from the book *All That Heaven Allows: A Biography of Rock Hudson* which explored Hudson’s life being closeted in Hollywood and his ultimate death of AIDS-related complications in 1985. Blumhouse Productions, which is under a first-look deal with Universal, is developing a horror film from out director and writer Dee Rees about a Black lesbian couple. Details are still thin, and there hasn’t been an update since last fall, but GLAAD is looking forward to this project moving forward.



Focus Features

SUBSIDIARY OF UNIVERSAL

Summary of 2018 Findings

10 films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints

4 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

40% percent of LGBTQ-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 record of critically acclaimed and popular LGBTQ-inclusive films that include *The Kids Are All Right* (2010), *Pariah* (2011), and *Milk* (2008). Its most commercially successful release to date is the 2005 drama *Brokeback Mountain*, adapted from the Annie Proulx story about the romantic relationship between two men in 1960s Wyoming.

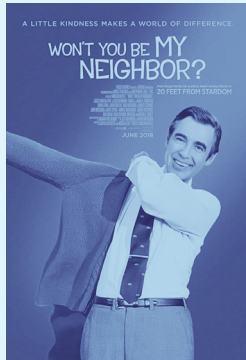


Boy Erased

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 672 THEATERS

Based on the memoir of the same name by Garrard Conley, GLAAD Media Award-winning *Boy Erased* tells the story of Jared, whose pastor father sends him to a so-called “conversion therapy” center, Love in Action (LIA). Once there, Jared sees all the horrors that the leader, Victor Sykes, inflicts on the men and women in the program. After witnessing several incidents of emotional and physical abuse towards the young people in LIA, Jared makes his escape and is rescued in part by his mother, Nancy, and a fellow member of the LIA program. Nancy tells Jared of her regret in sending him to LIA and becomes his ally.

The end of the film takes place four years later and shows Jared living happily as a writer in New York with his boyfriend. An article about his terrible experience at Love in Action brings him to a confrontation with his father, Marshall, who had still refused to accept Jared. Marshall finally takes steps to accept Jared as an out gay man. The film ends with a postscript talking about how “conversion therapy” is still legal in most U.S. States. The film overall sheds light on some of the horrors that are legally inflicted on LGBTQ youth, and how important it is for parents to accept their lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer children.



Mary, Queen of Scots

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 841 THEATERS

This film that follows decades of rivalry between Mary, Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I shows several relationships come and go in the queens' lives. One of Mary's closest confidants is a court musician, David Rizzio, who once says to her, "Is it a sin that I feel more a sister to you than a brother?" Mary's cousin and second husband, Lord Henry Darnley, has an attraction to David and the two men have sex on the night of Henry's wedding to Mary. Henry is later one of a group of men who accuse Mary of committing adultery with David. Rather than admit to his own relationship with David, Henry goes along with signing David's death order, and is one of the many people who brutally stab David to death. Henry is later forced to live under house arrest away from Mary. He is seen briefly with another male lover, but both men are quickly killed as part of a political plot.

Though both David and Henry existed in history, their relationship was an addition of the filmmakers. Given the sensationalized stories, the direct tie between Henry's evil act and his gay relationship, and the ultimate gruesome death of every queer character, we wish the filmmakers had left this idea on the cutting room floor. There is a variety of LGBTQ stories and figures in history that are deserving of their own films and whose stories range from tragic to jubilant. It would be much more interesting to explore those.

Tully

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1,356 THEATERS

Tully is a drama about a mother of three experiencing post-partum depression, and stars Charlize Theron as protagonist Marlo. Early in the film, Marlo runs into another woman, Violet, an ex-girlfriend from her time living in Bushwick. Marlo is now married to a man, Drew, and her bisexuality is presented very casually. She talks later in the film about how in love she was with Violet, a sign that the film isn't trying to pass off her bisexuality as a "phase" from one point in her life. This kind of casual inclusion – where the character's identity is confirmed on screen but not the full extent of their story – is something GLAAD would like to see more films employ in the future.

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 893 THEATERS

This critically acclaimed documentary follows Fred Rogers and the phenomenon that was *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. One of the series regular characters is police officer Clemmons, played by François Clemmons, Mr. Rogers' neighbor who was his good friend. In real life, Clemmons was gay. The documentary talked about how Rogers did not allow him to be open about his sexuality, given that the sponsors in the '60s would not stand for it.

In a talking head, Clemmons talks about Rogers eventually evolving and becoming a sort of father figure to Clemmons.

Recently, an excerpt from a 2015 biography of Fred Rogers (*The Good Neighbor*) surfaced on social media. The segment is a quote from a conversation Rogers had with his friend Dr. William Hirsch, an out gay man. When Rogers is talking about sexuality being measured on a scale, he says, "Well, you know, I must be right smack in the middle. Because I have found women attractive and I have found men attractive." This quote would imply that Rogers was bisexual, though in the documentary Clemmons specifically says that Rogers was straight. Gauging from the documentary contents, GLAAD did not count Rogers as a bisexual character in its tally.



DONALD GLOVER AS LANDO CALRISSIAN,
SOLO: A STAR WARS STORY

Walt Disney Studios

One of the largest and most profitable studios in the world, Walt Disney is also the most recognizable, with a massive global brand expanding beyond just films. The company has focused on family entertainment since the release of their first film *Snow White* in 1937, and is still the leading voice in that genre. The company currently distributes under several imprints including Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Animation Studios, DisneyNature, Pixar animation studios, Lucasfilm, Marvel Studios, and Touchstone Pictures. In March of this year, the Walt Disney Studios officially acquired 21st Century Fox, along with select other Fox film and television properties in a \$71.3 billion dollar deal. When the deal was finalized, Disney acquired several film assets under 21st including 20th Century Fox, 20th Century Fox Animation, Blue Sky Studios, Fox Studios Australia, and Fox Searchlight, and Fox 2000 Pictures. It was initially announced that Disney would keep Fox 2000 Pictures running, the production company which did *Love, Simon*, but it has since been announced the label will shutter in October 2019.

Walt Disney Studios has the weakest history when it comes to LGBTQ inclusion of all the studios tracked in this report. Touchstone Pictures has released some LGBTQ-inclusive films over the years including *Ed Wood* (1994), *Sweet Home Alabama* (2002), *Under the Tuscan Sun* (2003), and *Kinky Boots* (2006). Lucasfilm produced the film *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, which told the story of gay Japanese writer Yukio Mishima, by combining his autobiography with parts of his fiction novels, which includes his love for another male peer. The film never received an official release in Japan due to protests, and was released in the U.S. under Warner Brothers. Some of Disney's past inclusive films include *Delivery Man* (2013), Lady Gaga playing herself in *Muppets Most Wanted* (2014), and LeFou in *Beauty and the Beast* (2017).

Summary of 2018 Findings

- 10** films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints
- 0** total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 0%** percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 0** number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time



Solo: A Star Wars Story

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,381 THEATERS

No LGBTQ characters have been introduced to the *Star Wars* films, and *Solo: A Star Wars Story* is no exception. There has been speculation about the character of Lando Calrissian, a notorious flirt who many fans read as queer. When asked by *The Huffington Post* if Lando was pansexual, co-writer Jonathan Kasdan said, "I would say yes. There's a fluidity to Donald and Billy Dee's [portrayal of Lando's] sexuality. I mean, I would have loved to have gotten a more explicitly LGBT character into this movie. I think it's time, certainly, for that, and I love the fluidity sort of the spectrum of sexuality that Donald appeals to and that droids are a part of."

When viewing the film separate from that quote, this possible sexual fluidity only comes up in terms of Lando potentially being attracted to a female droid. Though there are subtextual moments between Lando and Han Solo that could be interpreted as flirtatious, that alone is not enough to distinguish the character as queer. A man being attracted to droids does not make him pansexual, and we hope future *Star Wars* films will present an LGBTQ character that is actually explicitly queer on screen, not merely discussed in outside press interviews. The most important part of Kasdan's quote is not Lando's "fluidity," it is that it is time for an LGBTQ *Star Wars* character. There are several in the *Star Wars* books if the creators need some inspiration from which to draw.

Opportunities Ahead

With the ongoing Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) films, Disney has plenty of opportunities to introduce LGBTQ characters from the source comic books into its film franchise. *The Eternals*, upcoming from Marvel, has been reported to be looking for an out gay actor to play a gay superhero. Further details are under wraps and Marvel has yet to confirm the story themselves, but having an out superhero in a Marvel film would be a huge step forward for representation and is long overdue for the MCU. In April, the record-breaking *Avengers: Endgame* introduced the first gay character in the MCU, a small role in one scene played by director Joe Russo. Hopefully this can be a stepping stone to out superheroes leading Marvel franchises. *Black Panther* director Ryan Coogler has signed on for a sequel film, and this should include the romantic relationship between Dora Milaje members Ayo and Aneka. Their story was specifically explored in the GLAAD Media Award-winning spin off *Black Panther: World of Wakanda*, and the two have continued to appear in the ongoing *Black Panther* books. A possible *Captain Marvel* sequel could easily introduce audiences to lesbian Latina superhero America Chavez, who works closely with Captain Marvel in certain runs of the comics as teammates on both the A-Force and Ultimates.

Other upcoming Disney projects include *The Jungle Cruise*, an adventure film set in the 1930s based on the popular theme park ride, starring Dwayne Johnson and Emily Blunt. It has been reported through tabloids that Blunt's character's brother will be a gay man named McGregor played by straight British comedian Jack Whitehall, and that the character will play a big role in the adventure. The film was originally set for release this fall, but has now been pushed to July 2020. Hopefully, Disney will be using this time to make sure McGregor's storyline has adequate depth and agency following the backlash they received when sources leaked a description of the character as "hugely effete, very camp and funny."

Disney continues to be the leading distributor of films aimed at young audiences. LGBTQ people are part of the world that young people know – whether being LGBTQ themselves, having LGBTQ friends, or being the child of queer parents. Films that are meant to address this audience must reflect that and include LGBTQ characters and stories. Disney has begun to portray LGBTQ stories on television with *Andi Mack*, *Doc McStuffins*, and have already announced some upcoming LGBTQ-inclusive programming on the streaming service Disney+ (set to launch this fall), but the studio needs to start carrying that inclusion through into their animated and family films. Luckily, they have two great films for this audience already in development with *Lumberjanes* and *Goldie Vance* which Disney inherited in their acquisition of Fox. This is a huge opportunity for Disney to take a step forward and be a leader in the space.



NICO SANTOS AS OLIVER TSIEN, CRAZY RICH ASIANS

Warner Brothers

Started by four Polish Immigrant brothers in the early 20th century as a movie theater business, Warner Brothers became a film studio in 1923. Warner Brothers has produced several classic films including *Casablanca*, *A Clockwork Orange* and *Goodfellas* as well as the blockbuster *Harry Potter* franchise, and several DC Comics adaptations.

One of Warner Brother's most notable films, *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), included one of the earliest and notable gay-coded characters in Sal Mineo's tragic character Plato. In the decades since, other LGBTQ inclusive films from the company include *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 all of those films were based on external source material that included LGBTQ characters. More recently, Warner Brothers has released inclusive films such as *Alexander* (2004), *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (2005), *V For Vendetta* (2005), and *J. Edgar* (2011). The studio's slate in recent years has included a mix of content with some stand outs like *Tammy* (2014) and *Storks* (2016), but also some notable lows like *Get Hard* (2015), *Central Intelligence* (2016), and *CHiPs* (2017) which all traffic heavily in gay panic jokes and other cheap punchlines.

Summary of 2018 Findings

23 films released theatrically in 2018 under studio & official imprints

5 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

22% percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

1 number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2018 Insufficient

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2017 Failing

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2016 Poor

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2015 Failing

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2014 Good

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2013 Failing

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2012 Adequate

Crazy Rich Asians

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,865 THEATERS

This blockbuster romantic comedy with a primarily Asian cast tells the story of an American, Rachel, who is blindsided by her boyfriend Nick's wildly wealthy family. That family includes Oliver (out actor Nico Santos), a designer and the self-proclaimed "poor relation – the rainbow sheep of the family." Oliver does various tasks for the family, and over the course of the film becomes close to Rachel, advising her as to how to win over the family. Oliver gets to live a bit beyond being a prop as the gay best friend to Rachel, but we would definitely like to see him get more development in the second movie. It is particularly notable that Oliver is one of a handful of LGBTQ Asian-Pacific Islander (API) characters GLAAD counted this year, following a year with no LGBTQ API people in mainstream releases.

Detective Chinatown 2

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 115 THEATERS

This comedy sequel follows a group of friends trying to solve a series of murders while everything seems to be going wrong for them. There is one scene where the group is stuck in a bar with a gang of American bikers. The leader of the bikers walks toward Tang who is dressed only in boxers, and forces Tang into dancing with him if he wants to leave the bar undamaged. When he leans in for a kiss, Tang is clearly disgusted and instead the man puts a rose into his mouth. He then has Tang sit on his lap while they squeeze into a photo booth. Tang's friends make fun of him once they all leave and he implores them not to tell anyone what just happened and stresses that he did this for them so they could all get out. The film clearly leans into the idea of gay panic with how ashamed Tang is to dance with the biker, but also reinvigorated portrayals of predatory gay men with the biker (the only actual gay character) existing only as a punchline who pressures Tang into a slow dance despite his clear resistance. The scene would have been better left on the cutting room floor, it had no impact on the overall plot.

Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,163 THEATERS

Author and *Fantastic Beasts* screenwriter J.K. Rowling announced in 2007 that Dumbledore was gay and in love with his best friend and eventual enemy Grindelwald following the release of the final *Harry Potter* novel. Though his relationship was never included in the books, fans were excited to get more insight into Dumbledore's past with Grindelwald in the five-film *Fantastic Beasts* series, which is specifically telling the story of Grindelwald's rise to becoming a dark lord and his eventual defeat at the hands of Dumbledore. But the films continue to hold back from exploring this relationship or even acknowledging it.

In early 2018, director David Yates said that Dumbledore would not be "explicitly gay" in the film which sparked a justified backlash from fans and entertainment critics alike. Rowling followed with a statement that Dumbledore and Grindelwald's relationship will eventually be addressed in the films. In March, Rowling made another comment about Dumbledore and Grindelwald in a featurette on the *Crimes* Blu-Ray, saying, "It was passionate, and it was a love relationship. [...] I'm less interested in the sexual side — though I believe there is a sexual dimension to this relationship — than I am in the sense of the emotions they felt for each other..." Yates added, "This is a story about two men who loved each other, and ultimately have to fight each other. It's a story for the 21st century."

However, the film itself contains only brief scenes about their possible past, though much of it is left to subtext and insinuation. Midway through the film, which takes place in the late 1920s, Aurors confront Dumbledore saying that he is the "only wizard who is his [Grindelwald's] equal" and pressure him to fight Grindelwald. After Dumbledore says he can't, the Auror asks if "this" is the reason and casts a spell to show a flashback of the two men staring at each other. He says the boys were like brothers, and Dumbledore replies, "We were closer than brothers." Later, Dumbledore looks into the Mirror of Erised — an enchanted mirror which shows the "deepest and most desperate desires" of the viewer's heart — and sees a flashback of him and Grindelwald as teens making a blood pact and a flash of present day Grindelwald. At the film's end, Dumbledore recovers the memento created from the pact, and it is revealed that the two had sworn to never fight each other. Presumably, the

next films will focus on Dumbledore's quest to break their pact, so he can fight Grindelwald and ultimately save both the Muggle and Wizarding worlds in 1945.

GLAAD did not count Dumbledore as a gay character in its tally, and will not count him until the films commit to including his identity onscreen. The movie's attempts to downplay and obfuscate his identity remains glaring, and reflects poorly on a franchise that has such a foundational message of love and acceptance. Particularly when contrasted with the statements coming from the creative team about the "love relationship" and "sexual dimension" between the men in an attempt to pacify fans and critics without ever telling the actual story.

If the remaining films in the franchise do not explore Dumbledore and Grindelwald's relationship and the presumably substantial effect that past has had on their present and the men they have become, the *Fantastic Beasts* series will be remembered as one of the most egregious examples of straight washing in modern film. The only way to divorce the impact of their relationship from the story about their confrontation is through intentional erasure and revision. The third film was recently pushed back to November 2021. The filmmakers should use that extra time to consider the opportunity they have here to take a major step forward.

The Mule

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2,787 THEATERS

Clint Eastwood's latest film stars himself as Earl, an old flower farmer who becomes a drug mule for a cartel. On his trips, he encounters various types of people on the road. Earl meets a group of motorcyclists and misgenders one of them; calling her "son" then "ma'am" until she corrects him to say "we're the dykes on bikes." Earl accepts this with a shrug and some mechanical advice. The scene serves no real impact on the plot. There is an ongoing plot in which two DEA agents are getting information from Luis, a man who knows the inner workings of the cartel. The agents taunt him by using jokes about prison rape to scare Luis into giving them information. There are additional scenes where Earl sleeps with two women, but the women are entirely focused on him rather than engaged at all with each other. GLAAD did not count Luis or either of the women in its tally.



Ocean's 8

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,145 THEATERS

The newest in the *Ocean's* franchise involved a plot by an all-women crew of thieves to steal jewels from the prestigious Met Gala. There are several cameos by famous people in the fashion world, including out fashion designers Zac Posen and Alexander Wang. None of the fictional characters portrayed in the film are LGBTQ.

Ready Player One

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4,234 THEATERS

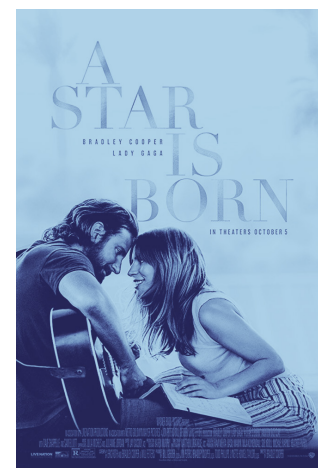
An adaptation of the best-selling novel of the same name, *Ready Player One* takes place in a dystopian future where people spend most of their time living as avatars in a virtual reality world called the OASIS. The film follows main character Wade on a quest to find hidden keys to control the OASIS. He is joined on his quest by his best friend Aech, a supernaturally large, gray man, in the world of the OASIS. There is one scene in the OASIS where Aech decides to "go with it" when a naked woman comes on to him, but the woman turns out to be a zombie who was trying to lure Aech close enough to attack in an homage to *The Shining*. Later on, Wade and the audience learn that Aech in real life is a Black woman named Helen Harris (out actor Lena Waithe). In the book, Helen is revealed to be a lesbian whose mother encouraged her to create a white male avatar in the OASIS so she would not face discrimination. She kicked Helen out after she came out. There was an opportunity for the film to include that Helen is a lesbian while fixing the retrograde homophobia surrounding her character, but that part of her story didn't make it to screen.

A Star is Born

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,904 THEATERS

The third remake of the 1937 film of the same name, *A Star is Born* follow singers Ally and Jackson Maine through their music and relationship. The film begins with Jackson stumbling into a drag bar and seeing Ally sing for the first time. He goes backstage to meet her as well as some of the drag queens (Shangela, Willam), and Ally explains that she is the only non-drag performer put on stage because of her incredible voice. Though



the drag queens seemed to be a large part of Ally's life before Jackson, they only show up once more after that initial sequence, over a FaceTime call wishing Ally good luck at the Grammys. Lesbian singer Brandi Carlile cameos as herself during a performance, and bisexual singer Halsey also has a brief role. However, though Carlile is credited as herself, Halsey is credited as "Music Awards Presenter," thus she was not counted in our tally.

Ally's best friend Ramon greets Jackson at the drag bar, and is clearly in the social circles of the drag queens. It isn't stated if he is queer, and he never shows interest in men or women. Actor Anthony Ramos said of the character, "'Does he like guys, does he like girls?' I played him in a way that the dude doesn't even care. He is who he is." Because this was not made canon in the film and there is no on-screen indication of who he might be interested in, GLAAD did not count Ramon in its tally.

Teen Titans! Go to the Movies

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3,188 THEATERS

Teen Titans Go! To the Movies is an animated film aimed at a younger audience. This is the latest in a long line of DC movies to include the character of Wonder Woman, with no mention of her bisexuality. Though the movie itself didn't dwell on much romance for any character, it is a reminder that Wonder Woman is a staple of this universe, yet her sexuality continues to be erased.

Opportunities Ahead

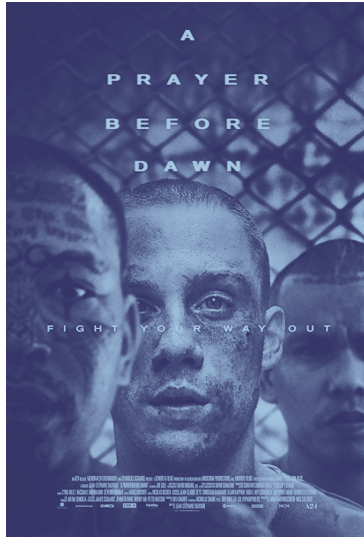
Warner Brothers has several book adaptations coming up this year which could include queer characters. *The Goldfinch* is out in October, and while the book left Hobie (Jeffrey Wright) as an ambiguously gay character, the film has the opportunity to more fully develop his story. November's *Motherless Brooklyn* should include the two minor gay characters, both mob bosses, who had a moment of holding hands in the novel before pulling away when they were found.

A much more worrisome book adaptation is *Doctor Sleep*, a sequel to *The Shining* set to come out in early November. The books include a character named Andi or Snakebite (played in the film by Emily Ayn Lynd), a member of the nomadic psychic cult known as True Knot who feed off the energy of kids with the shining. She has the power to make people fall asleep by suggestion. Andi was molested by her father as a child and formed a distrust of all men, lingering even after she murdered her father and escaped. She first believes herself to be asexual as she isn't attracted to men because of her trauma – a too frequent damaging stereotype held about asexual people. Andi eventually sleeps with True Knot leader Rose who only was intimate with Andi to lure her into the group; she cuts off their relationship and goes back to her boyfriend when Andi attempts to pursue a further relationship. Andi then becomes involved with another True Knot member, Silent Sarey. In the end, Andi is tortured to death and Rose and Silent Sarey are eventually killed as well in another example of the outdated, harmful "Bury Your Gays" trope. Given the number of ways in which her story is grossly mishandled in the source material, it does not seem likely that the film will be able to course correct enough to make this an acceptable character.

February's *Birds of Prey (and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn)* will introduce lesbian Gotham City detective Renee Montoya to the DCEU, played by Rosie Perez. Montoya will be teaming up with Harley (who is bisexual in source comics, though has yet to be portrayed as such in films) and two other heroes to protect a young orphan who is threatened by a crime lord. Montoya has a storied history and has been in several relationships in the comic books, we hope to see some of that background fleshed out here.

While there is no date yet, we are looking forward to Oliver returning in the confirmed sequel *Crazy Rich Asians 2*. Warner Brothers has also optioned several properties which include LGBTQ characters: a musical of *The Color Purple*; a biopic on the Vietnam vet Oliver Sipple who rescued Gerald Ford's wife and was then outed to the press; an adaptation of *The Dreadful Tale of Prosper Redding* which included minor lesbian characters; and Ava DuVernay's *New Gods* will likely include Big Barda (who DuVernay has mentioned as one of her favorite characters). In *DC's Bombshells*, Barda is in a relationship with another woman, though she is married to Mister Miracle in some other comics.

Additional Film Distributors



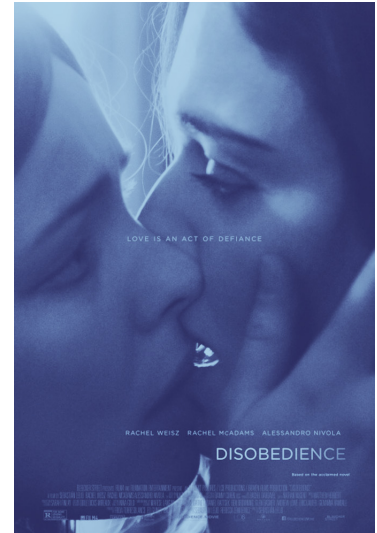
A24

A24 was founded in 2012 and has quickly risen to be one of the most visible indie distributors during awards season. Most notably, A24 released the Academy Award-winning and GLAAD Media award recipient *Moonlight* (2016), which followed a queer Black man through three periods of his life. A24 also released *Lady Bird* in 2017, which featured a gay character in a supporting role. *Lady Bird* and *Moonlight* are two of the highest grossing A24 films. In 2018, A24 released the drama *A Prayer Before Dawn* about a British boxer imprisoned in Thailand who becomes caught up in the violence of the prison. The film includes transgender women prisoners, who are housed separate from the cisgender men imprisoned. Lead character Billy strikes up a romance with one of the women, Fame. Though things don't end well between the two due to jealousy, it is positive that Billy had no qualms about a sexual relationship with a transgender woman, and that Fame wasn't subjected to any violence.



Annapurna Pictures

Founded by out lesbian producer Megan Ellison in 2011 as a production company, Annapurna began distributing films in 2017. One of their first films was GLAAD Media Award-nominee *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women*, which followed a polyamorous relationship between a man and two bisexual women. In 2018, Annapurna released the Oscar-nominated film *Vice*, a scripted story of former Vice President Dick Cheney. The film includes Cheney's daughter Mary, who is a lesbian in real life, and the film includes her coming out scene. *Vice* also portrays Mary's sister Liz, whose anti-LGBTQ beliefs created a rift between the sisters.



Bleecker Street

Founded in 2014 by Andrew Karpen, Bleecker Street has been distributing films since early 2015. In 2018, Bleecker Street released GLAAD Media Award-nominated drama *Disobedience*, a film that follows a forbidden romance between two women in the Orthodox Jewish community of London. The studio also released documentary *McQueen*, which told the story of the life and work of legendary gay fashion designer Alexander McQueen; as well as drama-biopic *Colette*, which focused on the acclaimed queer French author and her fight to have her work recognized under her own name. One of Colette's love interests in the film is called Missy, and is played by Denise Gough, a cisgender woman. Though it is good that the film chose to show Colette's love for a transgender man, it is very disappointing that the film did not use the name Max instead of Missy, as Max was the name used by the historical person, and that the filmmakers did not cast a transgender man to play him. When cisgender people are cast in trans roles, it perpetuates the belief that trans people aren't real, and denies a job to a trans actor who could bring a deeper authenticity to the role. We hope that films take authentic casting seriously when it comes to transgender roles in the future, and GLAAD and 5050by2020's *TRANSform Hollywood* guide can help.

Additional Film Distributors



FilmRise

FilmRise was founded by Danny Fisher, Jack Fisher, and Alan Klingenstein, and the label releases content theatrically as well as on television and streaming channels. In 2018, FilmRise released *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, which won the Grand Jury Prize for U.S. Drama at the Sundance Film Festival. Directed by bisexual filmmaker Desiree Akhavan, *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* follows the titular Cameron, a lesbian teen who is sent to a “conversion therapy” program after being caught with another woman. The film also features the other queer teens Cameron befriends at the camp, and shines a light on the horrors that LGBTQ people are exposed to in so-called “conversion therapy” programs. *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* was nominated for a GLAAD Media Award.



Gunpowder & Sky

Founded in 2016, Gunpowder & Sky is a distribution company, as well as producing and marketing content across several different genres and platforms. In 2018, Gunpowder & Sky released GLAAD Media Award-nominee *Hearts Beat Loud*, a comedy about a father and daughter making music together during her last summer at home. The daughter, played by Kiersey Clemons, has a love story with another woman (Sasha Lane) she meets during class, making a relationship between two Black women played by queer Black women central to the film’s plot.



IFC films

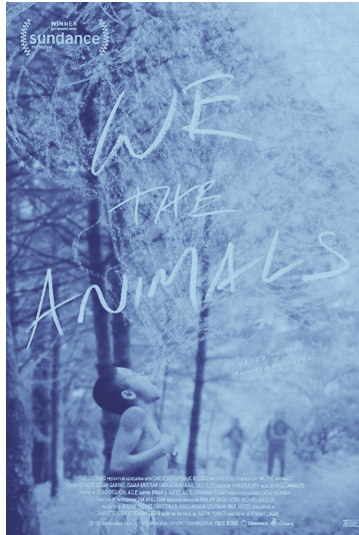
IFC Films releases independent films under its own name, as well as the brands IFC Midnight and Sundance Selects. IFC distributed its first film in 1999, and is going on two decades of independent cinema distribution. Past LGBTQ-inclusive films from IFC include the 2011 film *Weekend*, lesbian drama *Jenny’s Wedding* (2015), and dark mystery *King Cobra* (2016). In 2018, IFC released the GLAAD Media Award-nominated film *A Kid Like Jake*, directed by trans filmmaker Silas Howard, which tells the story of a couple who have questions about the gender identity of their pre-school aged child. IFC also released *Freak Show*, a film about a gay teenager who wishes to make his mark on his new conservative high school. The film also starred Laverne Cox. Documentary *Far From the Tree* was also released by IFC last year, the film is based on author Andrew Solomon’s own experience with his parents not accepting him as a gay son and highlights other strained relationships between parents and children.

Additional Film Distributors



Magnolia Pictures

Specializing in foreign and independent releasing, Magnolia pictures was founded in 2001 and is a subsidiary of 2929 entertainment. Past LGBTQ-inclusive films from Magnolia include *Tangerine* (2015), *The Handmaiden* (2016), and documentary *Whose Streets* (2017). Last year, the studio released *Skate Kitchen*, a coming-of-age story about a group of girl skateboarders in New York, with a prominent lesbian character and some more queer women in supporting roles. Other LGBTQ-inclusive releases include documentary *The Gospel According to André*, about the life of gay fashion designer André Leon Talley, and Lea Delaria plays a lesbian bouncer at a Hooters-esque restaurant in *Support the Girls*.



The Orchard

Beginning as a music distribution company, The Orchard began distributing films theatrically in 2015. They now sit under Sony Music Entertainment. Past LGBTQ-inclusive releases include two 2017 GLAAD Media Award-nominated foreign films: *BPM (Beats per Minute)*, a drama about HIV and AIDS activists in France; and *Thelma*, a thriller centered on a queer woman who develops unusual abilities. In 2018, The Orchard released *We the Animals*, a GLAAD Media Award-nominated film following a young queer Latinx boy coming-of-age surrounded by the toxic masculinity of his family. Other LGBTQ-inclusive 2018 releases include the lesbian dark comedy *Duck Butter*, and Argentinian crime film *El Angel*.



Orion Pictures

Orion Pictures was a large producer and distributor of commercially successful film in the '70s through the '90s with releases including *The Addams Family* and *Robocop*. The company went bankrupt in the late '90s, but began distributing films again in 2013. One of their most notable films was 2017's gay romance *God's Own Country*. Orion distributed two theatrical releases in 2018, and both were LGBTQ-inclusive. Based on the young adult novel of the same name, *Every Day* featured a romantic lead who changes bodies and genders, and is briefly portrayed as a trans boy played by trans actor Ian Alexander. *Anna and the Apocalypse*, a Christmas horror musical with zombies, features an out lesbian character in the main ensemble.

Additional Film Distributors



Samuel Goldwyn

Founded by Samuel Goldwyn Jr., the son of famous producer Samuel Goldwyn, the company specializes in Art House and foreign distribution, releasing films theatrically and on demand. In 2018, the company released GLAAD Media Award-nominated *Saturday Church*, a film about Ulysses, a queer Black 14-year-old who finds family in a group of queer and trans people of color in New York. The film features a queer romance and stars actors Mj Rodriguez and Indya Moore who would go on to star in FX's groundbreaking drama series *Pose*.



Strand Releasing

Founded in 1989, Strand Releasing's original focus was exclusively on LGBTQ films. Now, it has expanded into including other films, while still producing several LGBTQ films and with a focus on foreign movies. Some highlights from Strand over the decades include *The Living End* (1992), the story of a perilous road trip between two men; *Yossi and Jagger* (2002), a romance between two Israeli officers; and 2014's *Mala Mala* which follows Puerto Rico's trans and drag communities. In 2018, Strand released *The Cakemaker*, the story of a German man who forms a bond with the wife of his deceased lover; and *Postcards from London*, the story of a young man in London, who becomes the muse for artists and discovers he has a rare condition.



Wolfe Releasing

The oldest studio to exclusively release LGBTQ films in North America, Wolfe Releasing was founded in 1985. Some of their notable past releases include 2004's *Brother to Brother*, which explored Black gay culture in the Harlem Renaissance; *Tomboy* (2011), which follows a gender non-conforming child in France; and *Naz and Maalik* (2016), which depicts a relationship between two Black Muslim teenage boys. In 2018, some of Wolfe's releases include GLAAD Media Award-nominee *1985*, the story of an HIV-positive young man who comes home to tell his conservative Texan family; *Anchor and Hope*, the story of two lesbian women trying to have a baby; and *Venus*, the story of a trans woman who finds out she has a son. Unfortunately, *Venus* is another example of inauthentic trans casting with a cisgender man portraying a trans woman. For more information on how to better include trans people at every level of storytelling, visit glaad.org/transformhollywood.

Acknowledgements

GLAAD's Entertainment Team includes several key experts working across the organization to ensure inclusive, diverse, and accurate portrayals of the LGBTQ community in film, television, comics, video games, music, and other popular media.

GLAAD's subject media experts in English and Spanish-language entertainment work within The GLAAD Media Institute to accelerate acceptance through storytelling and providing media engagement and representation training and actionable research to activists, community organizations, industry leaders, major businesses, and more.

For journalists interested in speaking to a GLAAD spokesperson, please inquire at press@glaad.org.

For those interested in scheduling a training with the GLAAD Media Institute, please visit glaad.org/institute.

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