

2020

Studio Responsibility Index

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

GLAAD created the *Studio Responsibility Index* in 2013 to track lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) inclusion in major studio films after seeing the progress our TV research had driven in the industry and with creators. Entertainment is America's most widespread cultural export – reflecting the culture that produces it while also having the opportunity to shape culture through nuanced and inclusive storytelling – and wide release major studio films are marketed to and accessible by billions of people across the U.S. and around the world. Yet, LGBTQ characters are still often sidelined or entirely excluded from major Hollywood releases.

While we have seen consistent forward movement in LGBTQ representation on television in recent years, mainstream films continue to lag behind. Every year, this study continues to find a pattern of inconsistency in the quantity, quality, and diversity of LGBTQ stories year over year as well as across single studio's slates. GLAAD's 2019 *Studio Responsibility Index (SRI)* for the first time reported two studios receiving a grade of "Good" in the same year meaning the quality, quantity, and diversity of LGBTQ inclusion was significant. Our 2020 *SRI* tells a bleaker story – that challenges remain.

No studio this year received a grade better than "Insufficient" based on the quality, quantity, and diversity of their full slates – even though GLAAD is reporting a record-high percentage of inclusive films found in a single year across all the studios tracked (a 0.4-percentage-point increase to 18.6 percent).

Admittedly, simple numbers do not tell the full story.

Audiences should be able to see the full diversity of the LGBTQ community reflected in film. This is the second year in a row GLAAD counted a significant decrease in the percentage of LGBTQ characters who are people of color, down to just 34 percent or 17 total characters in mainstream releases. Additionally, this year, for the first time in the *SRI* GLAAD analyzed the disability status of LGBTQ characters and found one gay character with a disability in all major studio releases. For the third year in a row, there was not a single transgender character in a major release while TV has seen groundbreaking shows like *Pose* draw audiences and critical acclaim.

Two years ago, GLAAD issued a challenge - 20 percent of annual major studios releases must include LGBTQ characters by the 2021-year's end, and that 50 percent must include LGBTQ characters by the end of 2024. While the COVID-19 global pandemic has and will continue to have ripple effects across the film business and all businesses, we still believe in this challenge and reaffirm our commitment to holding the industry accountable for telling inclusive stories. Four studios individually hit this 20 percent goal: Paramount Pictures at 33 percent of their annual slate including LGBTQ characters, United Artists Releasing at 29 percent, Lionsgate at 25 percent, and Walt Disney Studios rounding out at 21 percent – though no studio hit the previous years' established record high percentage for a single studio of 40 percent (20th Century, since acquired by Disney).

In GLAAD's most recent *Where We Are on TV* study, we challenged the TV industry to ensure that within the next two years, half of LGBTQ characters tracked are people of color. We are extending that message to the film industry as well. While the studios have previously hit this mark with 57 percent of LGBTQ characters counted as people of color in 2017, the 23-percentage point drop in two years signals a negative trend that needs deliberate correction. The entertainment industry is currently facing a moment of great change as new content platforms are launching, the model of business is being redefined under the global pandemic, and companies are facing a deserved reckoning of their part in the structural and systemic racism of the industry, most particularly towards Black creatives and audiences. We stand alongside our partners in the Black Lives Matter movement and other underrepresented populations to demand that tomorrow's stories include all of us.

This challenge and our previously set benchmarks are key drivers towards ensuring that the entertainment on our screens is actually reflective of the world in which we live and the audiences who consume it. Together, these benchmarks are the first step in creating a barometer that will help move the needle forward on LGBTQ representation in film that will guide the studios towards improved grades.

There has been significant change in the film industry since this report launched in 2013. The layout of the

major studios shifted in 2019 after Disney’s acquisition of 20th Century as a new imprint distributed under their parent company. GLAAD also added this year STX Entertainment and United Artists Releasing to the lineup of major studio distributors quantified in this report based on their release pattern, reach, and slates as compared to the studios traditionally tracked. Despite changes in how consumers view and engage with films, and COVID-19 resulting in the temporary closure of movie theaters across the globe, film releases for wide audiences at cinemas still matter. Several upcoming LGBTQ-inclusive films have been rescheduled for theatrical exhibition, allowing communal experiences for LGBTQ audiences and our allies to see these stories on the big screen – together.

Another change since our first SRI has been the release of several outstanding LGBTQ films from major studios including *Love, Simon*, *Blockers*, *Booksmart*, *Rocketman*, and more, and the increasing frequency of announcements of leading queer heroes in upcoming major releases. The GLAAD Media Institute is working everyday with major studios and streaming services on upcoming LGBTQ-inclusive film productions. These are all exciting signs of the impact of this report these past eight years, and the overall changing cultural conversation about representation spurred on by activists and fans. Though these represent just a handful of projects, there are plenty of opportunities for studios to improve their slates when it comes to LGBTQ-inclusion.

The next year will include the release of several highly anticipated major studio films with leading LGBTQ characters, including the first gay superhero in a Marvel blockbuster (*The Eternals*) and a holiday-themed romcom about a lesbian couple (*Happiest Season*). While we celebrate these moments, inclusion must also be scaled across a company’s slate. This means telling stories that center LGBTQ characters, as well as casual inclusion of LGBTQ characters in all movies. This year’s report noted several instances of this kind of casual inclusion, but unfortunately, many were too minor, almost entirely missed by audiences or so understated as to be relegated to subtext.

Proudly, GLAAD is a resource for and to content creators and marketers. Our GLAAD Media Institute is driving a culture revolution through advocacy and providing education, consultation, research and contextualized analysis, and training creators

and industry leaders to better produce and market compelling, entertaining LGBTQ characters that do not reinforce harmful and outdated stereotypes.

Activists who understood the power of the media and the power of smart, authentic narratives to create real cultural change founded GLAAD. And it is these same guiding principles which remain at the heart and soul of our mission – today and always.



Sarah Kate Ellis

Sarah Kate Ellis,
President & CEO, GLAAD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In GLAAD's 2018 *SRI*, we 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 2019, 18.6 percent of films (22 of 118) from the eight major studios tracked contained LGBTQ characters, a small increase from 2018's 18.2 percent. Four of the eight studios achieved this 20 percent goal individually (Paramount Pictures at 33 percent, United Artists Releasing hit 29 percent, Lionsgate following at 25 percent, and Walt Disney Studios rounding out the group at 21 percent).

- There was a **slight increase in the percentage of LGBTQ-inclusive films** distributed by the studios tracked in 2019, up to 18.6 from 18.2 percent. This marks the highest percentage of inclusive films among all major studio releases since GLAAD began tracking in 2012. However, this finding does not paint the full picture; it must be considered in context with the quality of stories told and the lack of underrepresented LGBTQ identities.
- Mainstream film again lags far behind other forms of entertainment when it comes to representing the full diversity of the LGBTQ community. For the **second year in a row, the percentage of LGBTQ characters of color dropped drastically**, down to 34 percent (17 of 50) from 42 percent in 2018, and 57 percent in 2017. This year, for the first time, GLAAD counted LGBTQ characters with disabilities, only to find a single character who eventually died. Further, the number of queer women dropped year over year from 19 to 16.
- Perhaps the most glaring way that mainstream film fails to be inclusive is the **complete lack of transgender characters in major studio releases in 2019**, for the third year in a row. The one non-binary character in the year before that (2016) existed solely as a punchline.
- This year's report found LGBTQ characters in much smaller roles than the previous year. Only nine LGBTQ-inclusive films included a character with more than 10 minutes of screen time, and **more than half of all LGBTQ characters still had less than three minutes of screen time (56 percent) with the majority seen for less than one minute on screen** (21 characters or 42 percent of all LGBTQ characters).

2019 OVERALL FINDINGS, BY STUDIO

LionsgateRATING / **INSUFFICIENT** ★★☆☆

25%

20 TOTAL FILMS / 5 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

Paramount PicturesRATING / **INSUFFICIENT** ★★☆☆

33%

9 TOTAL FILMS / 3 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

Sony Pictures EntertainmentRATING / **POOR** ★★☆☆

13%

16 TOTAL FILMS / 2 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

STX FilmsRATING / **FAILING** ★☆☆☆

0%

9 TOTAL FILMS / 0 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

United Artists ReleasingRATING / **INSUFFICIENT** ★★☆☆

29%

7 TOTAL FILMS / 2 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

Universal PicturesRATING / **INSUFFICIENT** ★★☆☆

18%

17 TOTAL FILMS / 3 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

Walt Disney StudiosRATING / **POOR** ★★☆☆

21%

19 TOTAL FILMS / 4 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

Warner Bros.RATING / **POOR** ★★☆☆

14%

21 TOTAL FILMS / 3 LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS

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From the desk of Megan Townsend, Director of Entertainment Research & Analysis

Storytelling is the cornerstone of our society – we learn by sharing our experiences, connecting with each other, telling our life stories, and learning about the wider world around ourselves and how to interact with our environments. Popular media is the most impactful tool we use to share those stories on a global scale. Therefore, it is essential that the stories we are exporting include LGBTQ people, and are reflecting the full diversity of our community and experiences. We know that #RepresentationMatters, and getting to know, see, hear from, and connect with LGBTQ people through entertainment continues to be a pathway to greater understanding and acceptance.

Here’s the proof:

GLAAD and Procter & Gamble recently launched the first *LGBTQ Inclusion in Advertising and Media* study¹, a survey measuring the attitudes of non-LGBTQ Americans to exposure of LGBTQ people and images in the media. The survey found audiences are comfortable with seeing LGBTQ characters in films (76 percent of non-LGBTQ respondents), and the findings showed that seeing LGBTQ characters in media is related to greater acceptance of the community. Simply stated, representation does drive cultural change and accelerates acceptance.

Respondents who had been exposed to LGBTQ images in media within the past three months reported far higher percentages of increased acceptance of LGBTQ people in recent years compared to those who had not seen an LGBTQ image in media in the past three months. This ranges from an 11-percentage point difference for non-binary people (41 percent became more accepting in recent years and had seen images in past three months versus 30 percent who had not been exposed to images in the past three months) and transgender people (44 to 33 percent), a 13-percentage point difference for gays and lesbians (48 vs 35 percent), and a 14 point difference regarding bisexual people (45 to 31 percent).

In June 2020, GLAAD teamed with Netflix for a survey² polling over 6,000 adults in Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru) on the impact of inclusive TV and film. A majority of respondents (68 percent) said they had watched a show or film that gave them a better understanding of the LGBTQ community, and 73

percent of non-LGBTQ respondents reported seeing LGBTQ characters and stories on-screen made them feel more comfortable with LGBTQ people. Among LGBTQ respondents, 87 percent feel that film and TV more accurately reflect the LGBTQ community now than just two years ago; showing that change is moving quickly, though respondents specifically highlighted a need for improvement with more storylines featuring LGBTQ parents and families among others. This is particularly noteworthy as 75 percent of LGBTQ respondents reported feeling that entertainment has helped their family to better understand the community. A 2015 *Variety* survey³ found that 38 percent of people polled cited LGBTQ characters as a “key influence” in their support for the community. All these findings continue to align with studies dating back to the 1990s⁴ that have persistently proven that inclusive entertainment or news media has a significant effect on viewer’s perceptions of the LGBTQ community and accelerating acceptance.

Telling meaningful LGBTQ stories is not just the right thing to do, it’s just great business. Our roadmap to success is found in the numbers.

We are a significant audience. GLAAD and The Harris Poll’s *Accelerating Acceptance* report⁵ shows that 20 percent of Americans aged 18-34 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 age groups would also call themselves allies – 63 percent of Americans 18-34 and 53 percent of Americans 35-51. We’ve seen similar findings substantiated across multiple demographics as well; the University of Chicago’s *GenForward*⁶ Survey found that one in five Latinx millennials identify as LGBTQ. The *General Social Survey*⁷ from NORC at the University of Chicago has shown that young people are increasingly identifying as bisexual+ and the most notable growth is among young Black women, with 23 percent of Black women 18-34 in America identifying as bisexual in 2018.

According to the most recent MPA *THEME* report⁸, “frequent moviegoers” or those who go to the theater once a month or more, account for 47 percent of all tickets sold in the U.S. and Canada. Moviegoers aged 18-39 made up 40 percent of this “frequent

moviegoer” audience and were overrepresented among “frequent” purchasers relative to their proportion of the population. This grouping overlaid with the data on the LGBTQ community from the Accelerating Acceptance survey shows that a significant portion of this group is likely LGBTQ moviegoers.

Nielsen’s *State of the LGBTQ Moviegoer* report⁹ 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 at three out of every 10 surveyed respondents. The same study additionally reported that LGBTQ audiences are also meaningful long-term customers with respondents being nine percent more likely than non-LGBTQ audiences to purchase a film on DVD, Blu-Ray or Digital and 22 percent more likely to have a streaming service subscription.

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 to with 34 percent of straight audiences, per Nielsen. The top five genres among LGBTQ audiences are Horror, Sci-Fi or Fantasy, Romance, Drama, and Graphic Novels/Comics per Nielsen. A 2016 study¹⁰ found LGBTQ buying power in the U.S. alone to be \$917 Billion, with recent estimates showing further growth.

Studios must acknowledge these trends, paying particular attention to promoting and advertising titles that include LGBTQ characters, and informing audiences as to why they should consistently and loyally purchase movie tickets and spread the word. Harnessing the power and passion of these audiences can only benefit studios’ bottom lines.

GLAAD works every day to educate, support, and challenge networks, studios, and creators to ensure fair, accurate, and inclusive LGBTQ representations in media. In this changing world, we remain vigilant and focused on the work to be done.



Megan Townsend

Director of Entertainment Research & Analysis,
GLAAD Media Institute, GLAAD

¹ “LGBTQ Inclusion in Advertising and Media.” GLAAD/P&G. 27 May 2020.

² “GLAAD AND NETFLIX CELEBRATE THE LGBTQ CHARACTERS AND SHOWS THAT BRING LATIN AMERICANS TOGETHER ALL YEAR LONG” *Netflix*. 10 June 2020.

³ Lang, Brett. “Ellen DeGeneres Influenced Gay Rights Views More Than Any Other Celebrity (Study).” *Variety*. 30 June 2015.

⁴ Riggle, Ellen, Ellis, Alan L and Crawford, Anne M. “The Impact of ‘Media Contact’ on Attitudes Toward Gay Men.” *Journal of Homosexuality*. February 1996.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ “Accelerating Acceptance.” *GLAAD/Harris Poll*. March 2017.

⁹ Duran, Eric. “Latino millennials least likely to identify as heterosexual, survey finds.” *NBC News*. 23 July 2018.

¹⁰ Oppenheim, Maya. “Number of young black women in US identifying as bisexual has ‘trebled in past decade’.” *The Independent*. 13 June 2019.

¹¹ Theatrical Home Entertainment Market Environment (THEME) Report. *Motion Picture Association*. March 2020.

¹² “Lights, Camera, Action! State of the LGBTQ Moviegoer.” *Nielsen*. 13 January 2014.

¹³ “America’s LGBT 2015 Buying Power Estimated at \$917 Billion.” *Witeck Communications*. 20 July 2016.

Methodology

For this report, GLAAD focused its analysis on the eight film studios that had the highest theatrical grosses from films released in 2019, as reported by the box office database Box Office Mojo. Those eight are:

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

This report examines films that were distributed theatrically during the 2019 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. For the first time, in this year's report GLAAD included STX Films and United Artists Releasing in its quantified tally of major studios.

This decision was made due to the breadth of projects slated, wide release business model, box office and critical success of several films released by these studios, which were comparable to the existing major studios. Twentieth Century released two films in 2019 prior to its being acquired by Walt Disney Studios in March. GLAAD made the decision to include those two films in the Disney slate as studio structure changes were happening dating back to Fall 2018. GLAAD did not include theatrical re-releases and special events such as filmed live events in this count. Films distributed by these studios' "art house" divisions (such as Searchlight Pictures) were analyzed separately and not part of the parent studio's final assessment. The total number of films released by major studios that met our criteria is 118.

GLAAD separately analyzed the films released under four smaller studio imprints, often referred to as "art house" divisions. This was done to compare the quantity and quality of LGBTQ representations in these studios' releases directly to parent companies. These specialty films are typically distributed and marketed to a much smaller audience than their major studio counterparts. These distinctions were best defined by reporting of Box Office Mojo and other entertainment industry databases. The total number of films that met our criteria is 34.

These divisions include:

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

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

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

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

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

We recognize that not all audiences will agree with some of the films determined to be LGBTQ-inclusive and vice versa. GLAAD's methodology is anchored by categorizing characters as LGBTQ based on what is presented on screen as part of the film and/or through wide and commonly held cultural knowledge of a real life figure.

Based on the overall quantity, quality, and diversity of LGBTQ representation in the studio's slate, a grade was then assigned to each major studio: Excellent, Good, Insufficient, Poor, or Failing. Please note, prior to the 2017 report, GLAAD assigned studios scores on a four point scale of Excellent, Good, Adequate, or Failing.

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 the bedrock for analysis of early LGBTQ portrayals in Hollywood film. These criteria can help filmmakers create more multidimensional characters while providing a barometer for LGBTQ representation. This test represents an expectation and standard, providing a roadmap for a greater number of mainstream Hollywood films to reach and surpass.

More films need to include substantial LGBTQ characters that pass this simple test. However, as several of the films tracked prove, passing this test does not guarantee that a film is free of problems, offensive in its portrayals or tropes. Some previous examples of films which passed the test but which still contain offensive content include *Zoolander 2*, *Hazlo Como Hombre*, and *CHiPS*— all included LGBTQ characters tied to the film’s plot, but whose stories were objectionable. **Passing the Vito Russo Test is a first step, rather than the finish line.**

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

- 1 The film contains a character that is identifiably lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer.
- 2 That character must not be solely or predominantly defined by their sexual orientation or gender identity
(i.e. they are comprised of the same sort of unique character traits commonly used to differentiate straight/cisgender characters from one another).
- 3 The LGBTQ character must be tied into the plot in such a way that their removal would have a significant effect, meaning they are not there to simply provide colorful commentary, paint urban authenticity, or (perhaps most commonly) set up a punchline. The character must matter.

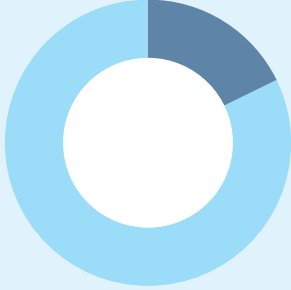
% OF LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE FILMS THAT PASSED THE VITO RUSSO TEST, BY YEAR



Overview Of Findings

1

Of the 118 films GLAAD counted from the major studios in 2019, 22 (18.6 percent) contained characters identified as LGBTQ. This is a **slight improvement of 0.4 percent, and increase of two films** from the previous year's 18.2 percent (20 of 110 films).



FILMS WITH LGBTQ CHARACTERS
18.6% (UP 0.4% FROM 2018)

2

GAY MEN	LESBIANS	BISEXUALS
68%	36%	14%

This year showed a decrease in lesbian and bisexual representation. Gay men appear in 68 percent (15) of inclusive films, an increase from last year's 55 percent. Lesbian representation has decreased significantly, down to 36 percent (8) of inclusive films from 55 percent in 2018. Bisexual representation slightly decreased to 14 percent, a one-percentage point drop but an equal number of films (three). There were zero films with transgender characters from the major studios in 2019, a disappointing finding consistent with the last two years.

3

GLAAD tallied 50 total LGBTQ characters among all mainstream releases in 2019, an increase from 45 in 2018. **Men continue to outnumber women characters**, by an even greater margin than last year. In 2019, of the LGBTQ characters, there were 34 men and 16 women, compared to the 26 men and 19 women of 2018's major studio films. There were **zero transgender or non-binary characters counted** in mainstream releases this year.

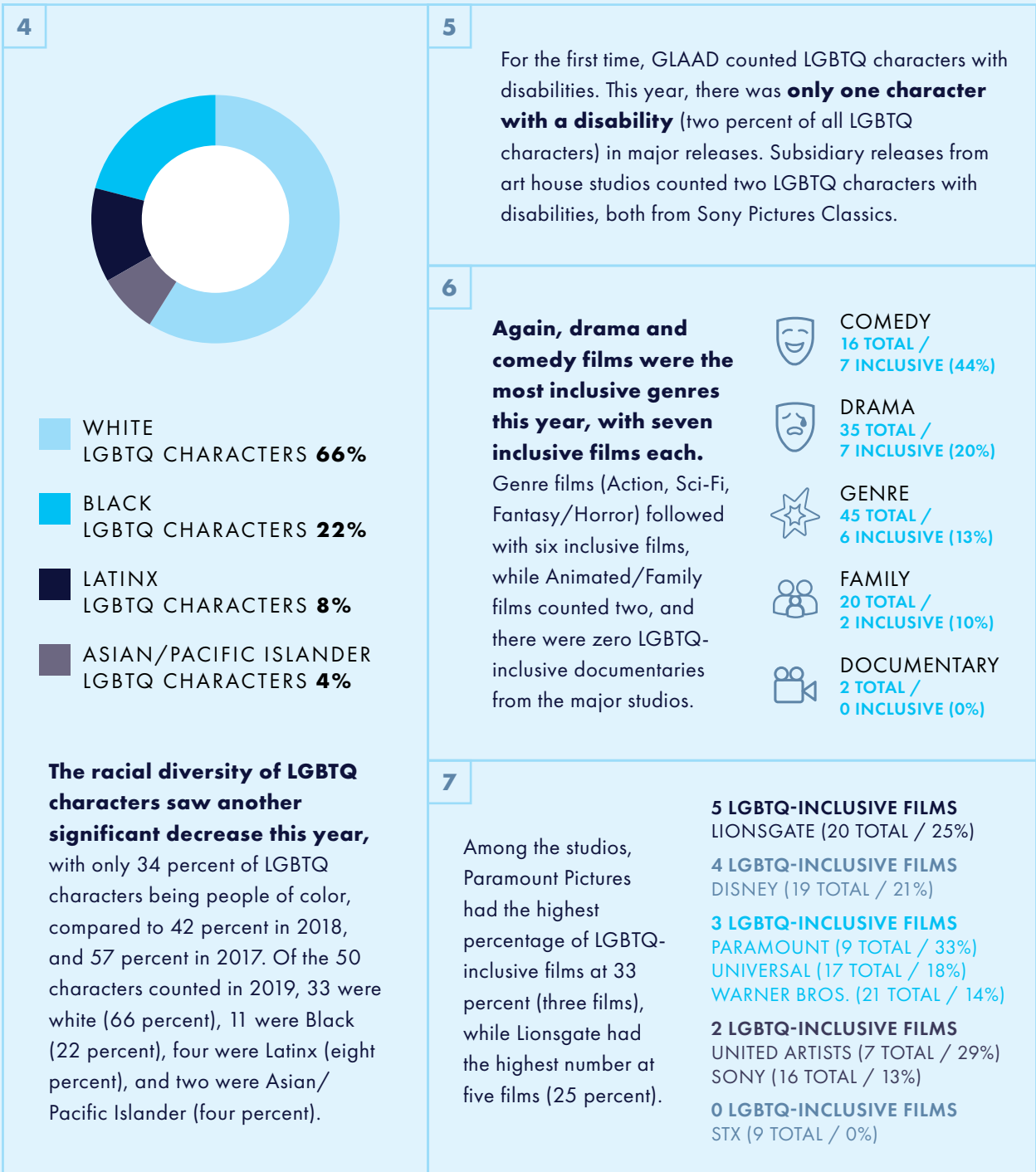
LGBTQ CHARACTERS

MEN 34

●

WOMEN 16

●



Separately, GLAAD examined the film releases of four smaller, affiliated studios (Focus Features, Roadside Attractions, Searchlight Pictures, and Sony Pictures Classics) to draw a comparison between content released by the mainstream studios and perceived “art house” divisions. Of the 34 films released under those art house imprints in 2019, GLAAD found eight to be LGBTQ-inclusive (24 percent). This is a significant decrease from 35 percent (14 out of 40) in 2018. It is also worth noting that all of the LGBTQ characters counted in the subsidiary studios were white men.

Observations & Recommendations

GLAAD OFFERS THE FOLLOWING INSIGHTS ON HOW STUDIOS CAN BOTH IMPROVE DEPICTIONS OF LGBTQ CHARACTERS AND AVOID CRITICAL MISTAKES AND SETBACKS.

A repeated problem found across several films in 2019: LGBTQ characters are too often featured in major blockbuster films in moments so small many audiences could have easily missed them.

Of the 22 LGBTQ-inclusive films GLAAD counted from the eight studios tracked, only nine included an LGBTQ character who had more than ten minutes of screen time. More than half of LGBTQ characters (28 of 50, 56 percent) received less than three minutes of total screen time, with 21 of those appearing for less than one minute. Several LGBTQ characters were so minor that they were not given names. Films like *Rocketman* and *Booksmart* told stories with gay and lesbian leads whose identities were a sizable aspect of the plot, while blockbusters like *Avengers: Endgame* and *Toy Story 4* included more incidental characters in only one scene. While all of those stories have their own impact, there is a huge opportunity existing in the spectrum between these models for meaningful LGBTQ storytelling. The huge waves of press garnered when announcements were made about blockbuster films including LGBTQ characters proves the passion and power of LGBTQ audiences anxious to support – and buy tickets to – these films. Hollywood must feel encouraged and empowered to leverage that interest and buying power by delivering movies that include substantial LGBTQ characters and by unambiguously marketing and promoting those movies.

In 2019, mainstream films significantly regressed in representing the full diversity of the LGBTQ community. This must change.

For the second year in a row, the racial diversity of LGBTQ characters decreased considerably with only 34 percent (17) of LGBTQ characters being people of color (POC) in 2019. This is after a fifteen-percentage point drop the previous year, going from 57 percent in 2017 to 42 percent LGBTQ POC in 2018. Of the 17 LGBTQ characters of color counted this year, only four characters counted more than three minutes of screentime with just one character appearing for more than ten minutes (Pepe in *Perfect Strangers*). In arthouse subsidiary films, which are typically perceived to be more inclusive, the results were even bleaker. All 17 LGBTQ characters counted in 34 films were white, gay men. For the first time this year, GLAAD quantified LGBTQ characters with disabilities and found disheartening news. Of the 50 LGBTQ characters in major releases, one (two percent) was a character with a disability and he ultimately dies (Poe in Lionsgate's *Five Feet Apart*). GLAAD challenges Hollywood to prioritize authentic and meaningful LGBTQ characters and stories highlighting the full community and including LGBTQ characters living at the intersection of multiple identities. More LGBTQ people of color, characters with disabilities, transgender and non-binary characters, those of different religions and faiths, body types, more queer women, characters who are asexual, and others will only fuel Hollywood's future success.

For the second year in a row, only three major studio releases counted in GLAAD's report included bisexual+¹ characters despite bi+ people making up the majority of the community².

Those films are *Bombshell* and *Anna* from Lionsgate, and *Good Boys* from Universal. One positive finding is that this year's bisexual+ characters avoided the transactional trope we've seen too often – that is, women characters only engaging in a romance with another woman to gain something they need (often information or access) rather than out of any genuine interest. Unfortunately, there are zero bisexual+ men this year. This erasure has a real impact on bisexual+ people who are less likely to be out of the closet than gays or lesbians, and report higher levels of minority stresses. Hollywood has an opportunity to lead and drive cultural change by telling compelling stories about fully developed bisexual+ characters.

GLAAD recorded zero transgender characters in the 118 major studio films released in 2019, a finding consistent with the previous two years.

Disappointingly, film continues to lag behind other media as a third straight year passes with zero transgender characters in major releases. Meanwhile, the same time period on TV has seen the premiere of FX's history making *Pose*, television's first transgender superhero on The CW's *Supergirl*, and transgender men stepping into series regular roles on FOX's *9-1-1: Lone Star*, Showtime's *The L Word* and *Work in Progress*. Yet, major studio films continue to leave trans characters out of the story. While the year did include four transgender and/or non-binary actors in major releases - Trace Lysette in *Hustlers*, Indya Moore in *Queen & Slim*, Zach Barack in *Spider-Man: Far From Home*, and Asia Kate Dillon in *John Wick 3* - none of those films established those characters as transgender or non-binary within the film's world. We are pleased to see trans actors being cast in roles that are not explicitly written as transgender. However, for this report, GLAAD did not count those characters in its tally based on what was on screen. Polls show that approximately 20 percent of Americans say they personally know someone who is transgender, compared to nearly 90 percent who know someone who is lesbian, gay, or bisexual. There is incredible opportunity for storytellers to lead change and to accelerate acceptance by sharing and uplifting the experiences of trans people, and we'd like to see film catch up to TV in this respect. GLAAD and 5050by2020's *TRANSform Hollywood*³, a free, in-depth digital guide offering tips and best practices for collaborating with trans storytellers and fostering a more trans-inclusive production environment, is a first step resource available for productions beginning this work. Creators should also screen *Disclosure*, a new documentary available on Netflix, which explores and contextualizes the last 100 years of trans representation on TV and in film as a further resource on best practices and what to avoid.

This year, GLAAD counted two inclusive animated and family films, after having seen zero in the previous year's report. Yet still, the category lags behind the programming boom happening in television for all-ages.

In our previous report for the first time in five years, GLAAD did not count a single inclusive film in the animated/family film genre released in 2018. In 2019, there were two inclusive films in this genre, though the moments are incredibly minor (two dads dropping their child off to camp in Paramount's *Wonder Park*, and two moms escorting their child to school in Disney's *Toy Story 4*). While these are nice moments of casual inclusion, affirming that LGBTQ people exist in all families of every kind, film should look to the boom and success of queer and trans representation in all ages programming happening on TV. With LGBTQ characters in significant roles on series including *Arthur* (PBS), *She-Ra and The Princesses of Power* and *Kipo and the Age of the Wonderbeasts* on Netflix, *Steven Universe* on Cartoon Network and more. LGBTQ families and parents are part of the world experienced by kids, and should be part of the movies they see with their families. And LGBTQ youth, who are coming out at younger ages as cultural acceptance grows, deserve to see age-appropriate positive and truthful representations of themselves in film. These small moments seen these past few years need to progress to more significant characters and stories appearing more regularly.

¹ Bisexual+ or bi+ is an encompassing term for people with the capacity to be attracted to more than one gender. Can include people who identify as bisexual, pansexual, fluid, queer, and more.

² "How many people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender?" Williams Institute.

³ "TRANSform Hollywood." GLAAD/5050by2020. August 2018.

2019
RATING



INSUFFICIENT

Lionsgate Entertainment

MOISES ARIAS AS POE, FIVE FEET APART

Summary of 2019 Findings

20 films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints

5 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

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

5 number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

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

Lionsgate was founded in 1997 by Frank Giustra. In its slightly over two decades, Lionsgate has produced and distributed major blockbusters including the *Twilight*, *Hunger Games* and *John Wick* franchises, and acquired studios including Summit Entertainment and Pantelion, focusing on films for a Latinx audience.

The first film Lionsgate released was 1997's *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).

Anna

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2114 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

This thriller follows the titular Anna, a Russian spy recruited by the KGB. There is a period in the film where Anna is undercover in Paris as a model, and she begins dating fellow model Maude, who is unaware of Anna's real identity. Though Anna never tells Maude the whole truth, it does not seem that she is dating her for any reason besides enjoying her company. Anna also has sexual relationships with men in the film and her bisexuality is never discussed - simply presented. It is refreshing to see, in a genre where bisexuality is far too often employed as a transactional plot device, that Anna's relationship with Maude was genuine and separate from her undercover work.



Bombshell

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1721 THEATERS
VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated drama follows the sexual assault allegations against former Fox News CEO Roger Ailes. The film uses several characters from real life and others that are fictional amalgamations of Fox News employees. Two of the fictional characters are Kayla Pospisil and Jess Carr (out actress Kate McKinnon). The two end up sleeping together early on in the film. Jess is clear about the fact that she is a lesbian, and Kayla replies that she is not and does later go on a date with a man. Kayla's character is presented as a conservative, Christian worker at Fox News, who sleeps with a woman, yet the contrast of her sexuality clashing with the ideals of her workplace is not brought up. Jess, however, does discuss how she cannot jeopardize her status at Fox News or with Ailes, and that she fears possible job discrimination, reduced opportunities, or worse as a lesbian. Though the film could have gone further in depicting the complexity of queer women in the workplace subjected to sexism and homophobia, it was good to see that neither Kayla or Jess was ashamed of their queerness.



Cold Pursuit

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2630 THEATERS
VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

This action movie follows a gang war that begins when protagonist Nels Coxman's son dies of a forced overdose, and he seeks revenge against the cartel who killed his son. The villain of the film, Viking, has two key henchmen revealed in the film's third act to be in a relationship, Dexter and Mustang. After Viking murders Dexter, Mustang chooses to seek his own revenge, betraying Viking by working with another faction in a move that ultimately leads to Viking's death. In a film with such a high body count where nearly every member of the gang war is killed, it is noteworthy that Mustang survives the movie's climax. It is interesting to note that the final scene of the film leaves some room for interpretation by the audience as Mustang is left alone in a room with a gun.



Five Feet Apart

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2866 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

Based on the novel of the same name, *Five Feet Apart* is a romantic drama about Stella and Will, two teens with cystic fibrosis who are forbidden to be closer than five feet together to reduce the risk of cross-infection. They are both friends with Poe, another patient with cystic fibrosis, who is gay, and talks about some of his ex-boyfriends, including his most recent ex, Michael, though the audience does not ultimately see him. Unfortunately, Poe dies midway through the movie, right before he had planned to get back together with Michael and to introduce him to his mother. Poe's death propels other parts of the plot, primarily Stella and Will's romance and their realization of how short life is.

It is unfortunate that this film introduced a vibrant character, who was gay, Latino, and living with a disability, only to have him eventually die to further the plot of the central straight white characters. While the film's finale hints at Will's eventual death, Poe is the one central character to die on-screen. When there is only one gay character in a project – whose story culminates as a plot device for a straight romance – it does not send a positive message to audiences for that character to then also die. This is just one more example of Hollywood's decades-long "Bury Your Gays" trope.

John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3850 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

The third film in the *John Wick* franchise introduces The Adjudicator, a representative of The High Table, sent to hunt John Wick. The Adjudicator is played by non-binary actor Asia Kate Dillon, who uses they/them pronouns. In the film, no pronouns are used for The Adjudicator. Though Dillon has referred to the character as non-binary in the press, nothing in the film itself indicates that The Adjudicator is non-binary to the audience.

Given that there are *John Wick* sequels in development, there is an opportunity to bring back

The Adjudicator and establish them as non-binary on screen, potentially, with a moment where they share their pronouns, discuss their being non-binary or similar. As it stands now, however, GLAAD did not count this character in its tally based on the content of the film itself.

Perfect Strangers

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 132 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

Based on an Italian film of the same name, *Perfect Strangers* is set in Mexico City where friends at a dinner party decide to play a game where everyone puts their phones in the middle of a table, and the entire group reads every message and answers every call. Over the course of the game, it is revealed that one of the group, Pepe, is gay and has a boyfriend. However, he had traded phones with his friend, Ernesto, to help Ernesto hide his infidelity from his wife. When the group begins to believe Ernesto is gay after seeing the phone's messages and contents, the friends become incredibly homophobic, saying offensive things, and using anti-gay slurs. This continues to such an extent that when Pepe reveals the phone switch and outs himself, he tells the group that he did not confide in them as he wanted to protect his partner from judgement or rejection. It is also revealed that Pepe was fired from his job at a local school when his bosses learned he was gay.

At the end of the film, the audience sees that the game did not actually happen after the guests had refused, and everyone's secrets are still hidden, meaning that Pepe is still closeted.

There was an opportunity here to tell a refreshing coming out story. Instead this central gay character's sexuality was regarded as a huge, damaging secret and source of conflict in the story. In 2019, Guinness World Records named the original Italian film as the most remade film in movie history with 18 different versions existing of the movie. We wish this version had attempted to separate itself by telling a more nuanced story.

Opportunities Ahead

It was reported in January 2020 that Lionsgate is in final negotiations to adapt the GLAAD Media Award-nominated horror graphic novel *Memetic* as a feature with Seth Rogen attached to produce. The book was written and created by out bi writer James Tynion IV. *Memetic* centers on a weaponized meme image that turns people into killers, but college student Aaron finds out he is immune because he is colorblind. He and his boyfriend Ryan go on a journey to discover what is happening, and find a way to save themselves and their friends and family. A horror film with a queer lead is still incredibly rare to see— even more so a horror film with a queer character with a disability (Aaron also uses hearing aids). Lionsgate has a unique opportunity to be a leader for the rest of the industry.

Other adaptations in the works at Lionsgate include Erin Morgenstern's best-selling novel *The Night Circus*, which includes 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 in a dystopian world where there aren't any women. Author Patrick Ness has confirmed that their relationship is a romantic one. Both these men are listed as cast in the film adaption (played by 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 has been delayed several times, but is currently set for an early 2021 release. Lionsgate announced in 2017 an English adaptation of its 2013 Spanish-language hit *Instructions Not Included*. As GLAAD spotlights in the 2014 SRI, a new version of this film would do well to update the story of the lesbian characters and to eliminate the wildly offensive transphobic gag.

The feature *Ride*, a biopic of famous queer astronaut Sally Ride, is in development at Lionsgate from out director Joey Soloway (*Transparent* creator). Ride was with her partner, Tam, for 27 years before Ride passed away in 2012. Hopefully, the film further explores their relationship as well as highlights Ride's astounding career. Lionsgate is also set to adapt the popular video game *Borderlands*. The *Borderlands* franchise has featured several LGBTQ characters including Athena, Sir Hammerlock, and more. It would be a huge opportunity for Lionsgate to include these LGBTQ characters that fans know in the film's world.





ANDY NYMAN AND DANIEL CERQUEIRA AS DAN AND STAN, JUDY

Roadside Attractions

SUBSIDIARY OF LIONSGATE ENTERTAINMENT

Founded in 2003 by Howard Cohen and Eric d'Arbeloff, Roadside Attractions 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), *Hello, My Name is Doris* (2016), and *Whitney* (2018).

Summary of 2019 Findings

9 films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints

2 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

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

Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 77 THEATERS

This documentary is an in-depth reflection on the hit musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. Cast, fans, and creatives involved in the production speak extensively about the late Jerome Robbins, a gay man who directed and choreographed the original production. The documentary briefly chronicles Robbins' involvement and testimonies during the McCarthy Trials, and his decision to share names for fear he would himself be outed and lose his career.

One talking head interviewed was out actor and writer Harvey Fierstein, who played Tevye in a 2004 revival of *Fiddler*. The film also delves into how the themes in the musical are meaningful and relevant to so many people, including LGBTQ people. Out actor Adam Kantor additionally talked about how the show can be read as an allegory for the LGBTQ rights movement.

Judy

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1627 THEATERS

In this film that chronicles the final years in the life of icon Judy Garland, homage is paid to the gay fans that loved her. The film explores Garland's relationship with her gay fans through a London couple, Stan and Dan, who attended all her shows, and even hosted her for dinner one night. At their apartment, Dan



talks about how Stan had been imprisoned for being gay before the laws were changed, and Garland sympathizes with him, emphatically declaring "to hell with them." Later on, when Judy falters on stage during a show, Dan and Stan begin singing to her, causing the entire audience to sing along in a climactic overture.

Considering Garland was so beloved by gay fans, and is still decades later, it was important that this aspect of her life be portrayed in this film, and that these details be handled with great respect. *Judy* was nominated for a GLAAD Media Award.



Paramount Pictures

Summary of 2019 Findings

- 9** films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints
- 3** total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 33%** percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 2** number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2019	Insufficient
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2018	Insufficient
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2017	Poor
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2016	Poor
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2015	Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2014	Adequate
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2013	Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2012	Adequate

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 Viacom in 1994 and it currently remains under that banner. Viacom re-merged with CBS in 2019, making Paramount sit under the ViacomCBS banner. Known for big budget franchises such as *Indiana Jones*, *Transformers*, and *Mission: Impossible*, Paramount became the first major studio to sign a multi-picture film deal with streaming giant Netflix in November 2018.

Paramount released several LGBTQ-themed or LGBTQ-inclusive films starting in the mid-nineties, including *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 Hikaru Sulu with his 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.

Rocketman

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3610 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

This GLAAD Media Award nominated fantasy-musical biopic follows the life of legendary musician Elton John and his decades-long partnership and friendship with his writing partner Bernie Taupin, including frank and honest handling of John's struggles with addiction and an abusive partner/manager. In addition to John himself, the film includes multiple gay characters. The credits for the film include a credit for "LA Transgender Maid," but GLAAD did not count this character who was given next to no screen time or story. The character was played by a cisgender man. Without visibility into casting decisions, our hope is that the film's creators did not intentionally cast a cisgender man to play a trans woman character, and perhaps named the character such in error.

John and his husband David Furnish, who produced the film, have spoken out about the process of trying to make a film about John's life for decades, and the struggles they faced trying to work with other studios who wanted to tone down his story. Thankfully, the film does not downplay any difficult or unsavory aspects of his story, and presents John's life in its full richness and queerness.

The film was censored by some countries with anti-gay laws, including Russia, which both John and Paramount spoke out against, and was banned in a small number. Despite this, *Rocketman* was very successful at the box office earning almost \$200 million worldwide, and Oscar and Golden Globe wins for John. Bold storytelling with a queer character at its center who is nuanced – and a dedicated team of studio, director, and talent driving the film's success – is just what we should come to expect from Hollywood in future.

What Men Want

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2912 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

A gender-flipped take on the 2000 film *What Women Want*, *What Men Want* follows sports agent Ali who is cursed with the ability to hear men's thoughts. She turns to her assistant Brandon, who happens to be gay, and he agrees to help if Ali will agree to help him become an agent. As part of her curse, Ali hears the thoughts of Danny, another co-worker who is having sexual thoughts about Brandon. Ali lets Brandon in on the secret, and by the end of the film, Brandon and Danny are dating.

Ali hears others' thoughts including a man debating whether to go on Tinder or Grindr, a flamboyant gay man talking about how good he looks, and Ali's friend's husband admitting to sleeping with one of his golf friends. That final revelation turns into a dramatic conflict where Ali spills the secrets of several men. Unfortunately, this closeted hook-up is one of the secrets shared at the couple's wedding, and the reveal is accompanied by dated, anti-gay humor that simply does not align with a movie that features a central gay character.

Wonder Park

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3838 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

In this animated kid's movie, the main character, June, is sent to math camp. There is a scene with several parents dropping off their children to camp, and this grouping of families includes two dads with their arms around each other as they wave goodbye to their child. Though a brief moment, this casual inclusion is a nice addition, showing that queer parents are a part of this film's world.



Opportunities Ahead

Since 2016's *Star Trek: Beyond*, which featured gay crew member Sulu and a glimpse of his husband and child, there has been talk about further *Star Trek* sequels. Noah Hawley is set to direct the next *Star Trek* film, and has stated that the original cast might not all be in the newest film. If this is true, and John Cho does not return as Sulu, there should still be LGBTQ representation demonstrating the franchise's recent progressive strides made in *Beyond* and the new *Star Trek* TV show, *Discovery*.

Set for a summer 2022 release, Paramount has a *Dungeons and Dragons* film based on the immensely popular roleplaying game upcoming. Many in the LGBTQ community play D&D, and it would be an incredibly opportunity to strategically include LGBTQ characters in the film and to leverage the passion for this game.



Sony Pictures

2019
RATING
★★
POOR

Summary of 2019 Findings

- 16** films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints
- 2** total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 13%** percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 2** number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★★★☆☆	2019	Poor
★★★★☆	2018	Insufficient
★★★☆☆	2017	Poor
★☆☆☆☆	2016	Failing
★★★☆☆	2015	Adequate
★★★☆☆	2014	Failing
★★★★☆	2013	Good
★★★☆☆	2012	Adequate

Founded in 1918 as Cohn-Brant-Cohn Film Sales, the film studio was renamed Columbia Pictures in 1924. It gained prominence starting in the '20s due to its association with Frank Capra and 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 its own entity, before Sony purchased it in 1989. Sony releases films from its many imprints including Columbia, TriStar, Sony Pictures Animation, Screen Gems, and Affirm.

Sony Pictures has an inconsistent track record as relates 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 dying by 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), *Rough Night* (2017), and *The Girl in the Spider's Web* (2018).

A Dog's Way Home

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3090 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

This film follows the adventures of Bella, a dog separated from her family, and her attempts to return home to them. On her journey, she meets several people and animals who assist her. At one point, Gavin and Taylor, a gay married couple, take in Bella. Though she does end up running away to return to her owners, the couple is inspired to rescue a dog who needed loving owners. This casual inclusion of a sweet couple, though brief, was a nice way to show that the world of the film included queer people. The film's plot unfolds in an episodic style with each group Bella encounters contributing a lesson or help in some other way on her journey to return home. In this way, the film does pass the Vito Russo Test – without the assistance of Gavin and Taylor, Bella would not have made it out the harsh winter weather and back into civilization which helped her back to her family. Even so, the characters themselves could have been better developed.



Charlie's Angels

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3452 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

The newest in this popular spy franchise, *Charlie's Angels* features out actress Kristen Stewart as Sabina, one of the spies and a lesbian. In a mid-film scene, Sabina is distracted from her case when she stops to check out an attractive woman at the gym. Though the moment is technically enough to confirm Sabina's interest in women, the scene is a very small moment that could have been missed easily by audiences. Ultimately, Sabina spends much more time in the film pretending to be interested in a man for her job, rather than pursuing a woman love interest.

While Sabina's lack of romantic interest is a noticeable omission, particularly when contrasted with one of the straight Angels who did have a brief romance plot, it is still noteworthy for a queer woman character (particularly one played by an out actress) to be one of the leads in an action comedy. Hopefully, this small first step with Sabina will lead to more substantial depictions of LGBTQ characters in this genre in future.

Opportunities Ahead

Jumanji: The Next Level

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4227 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

This sequel includes a group of teens and two older men jumping back into the virtual game where each character inhabits an avatar, with characters visually appearing as new characters who are sometimes of a different gender. Over the course of the movie, two straight characters are experiencing romantic troubles. Though on-screen, the romance at times looks like a gay couple because of the bodies inhabited, it isn't actually. The couple eventually reconciles, but only when they are swapped into new bodies which match their own genders.

Spider-Man: Far From Home

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4634 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

In the lead up to this sequel, press reported a young trans actor named Zach Barack, would play one of Peter Parker's classmates also named Zach. Tyler Luke Cunningham, another actor who is also transgender, was similarly reported to be a featured extra in the film. Since there was no indication of either character being transgender within the film itself, GLAAD did not count Zach or Cunningham's character in its tally.

Sony will be releasing the highly anticipated holiday 2020 film *Happiest Season*, from out filmmaker Clea DuVall. The film is a romantic comedy about a woman who is planning to propose to her girlfriend, but finds out the girlfriend is not out to her family when they travel for a Christmas visit. DuVall co-wrote and directed the film, which stars several out actors including Kristen Stewart, Dan Levy, Victor Garber and Aubrey Plaza. Another upcoming Sony romcom, *The Broken Hearts Gallery*, coming August 2020, includes a central lesbian character, Nadine, who is part of the trio of best friends at the heart of the film. The success of recent romcoms like *Love, Simon* and *Booksmart* on the big screen and *The Half of It* and *The Thing About Harry* on TV should serve as a challenge to Hollywood to create content for an audience clearly searching for queer love stories.

Sony will be distributing Blumhouse's reboot of 1990s cult favorite *The Craft*, with a new group of teen witches. They have already announced that one of the witches will be a transgender girl, played by Zoey Luna, an actress who is also transgender. Another horror film from Sony, *Escape Room 2* scheduled for January 2021, has cast non-binary actor Indya Moore in the ensemble. It is not yet known how their character will identify in the film. This type of casting and inclusion indicates progress, particularly for horror films which have historically portrayed LGBTQ characters as one-dimensional victims or villains, but which remain the most popular genre among LGBTQ moviegoers.

An upcoming adaptation of *Cinderella* has cast out actor Billy Porter as the fairy godmother character "Fab G," and he has said the film is "presenting this character as genderless – at least that's how I'm playing it." The film is set for a 2021 release. While there is not yet any further information known on how the character's story will play out in the film, this would be a great opportunity to introduce LGBTQ characters in a beloved fairy tale for families. In 2018, out bi pop star Halsey signed with Sony to create a semi-autobiographical film in which she would also star. There hasn't been an update to the story since the announcement, but GLAAD is looking forward to this project moving forward.



ANTONIO BANDERAS AND LEONARDO SBARAGLIA AS SALVADOR MALLO AND FEDERICO DELGADO, PAIN AND GLORY

Sony Pictures Classics

SUBSIDIARY OF SONY PICTURES

Summary of 2019 Findings

- 11** films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints
- 5** total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 45%** percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

Sony Pictures Classics (SPC), founded in 1992, is the independent film division of Sony Pictures Entertainment, which acquires, produces, and distributes independent films and documentaries. Several LGBTQ-inclusive films released since its inception include *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 Almodóvar’s *I’m So Excited!* (2013); *Love Is Strange* (2014); *Grandma* (2015); *The Meddler* (2016); GLAAD Media Award winners *Call Me By Your Name* and *A Fantastic Woman* (2017), and more.

All is True

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 328 THEATERS

This biopic of William Shakespeare in his final years shows him back at home with his wife and daughters. During a visit from the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare tells the Earl he wrote a sonnet for him, and makes it clear he harbored romantic feelings for him. The Earl dismisses this as simple flattery, but also hints that the feelings may have once been mutual, though nothing was acted upon between the two. It’s refreshing for a film set in the 17th century to allow Shakespeare to be so forthcoming about his feelings for a man, and a lack of shame, regret, or conflict about that love.

Frankie

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 117 THEATERS

This film follows the titular Frankie, a renowned actor. She gathers her friends and family to Portugal to vacation together in the final months of her life. Those gathered include Michel, Frankie’s ex-husband, who speaks of how her leaving him was a positive because the break-up allowed him to recognize his attraction towards men. There aren’t any harsh words or ill will between Frankie and Michel, and the story is a good example of casual inclusion.



Pain and Glory

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 266 THEATERS

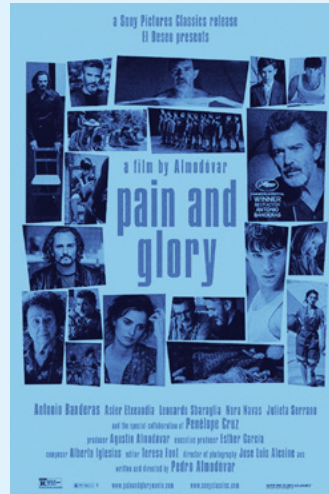
The Oscar and GLAAD Media Award-nominated film *Pain and Glory* is the latest from out filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar. The semi-autobiographical film follows Salvador Mallo, a gay filmmaker who lives with chronic pain and who has started using heroin to manage his pain. Although he is in a creative slump, Salvador has a friend anonymously stage a production of an old one-man show centered on Salvador's former relationship with a man named Federico, who had been addicted to heroin while they were together. Federico attends the show, reconnects with Salvador and they reminisce on their past. The two say goodbye with a kiss, and this moment inspires Salvador to commit to seeking medical treatment for his pain and his addiction.

The nuance in which Salvador is portrayed as a gay man, an artist, and a person living with chronic pain and addiction showing him as fully human, not simply a sum of his parts. Creators need to commit to telling stories with these well-rounded characters, integrating a character's sexual orientation or gender identity as a meaningful part of who they are and how they live their lives.

Where's My Roy Cohn?

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 64 THEATERS

This documentary follows the life of notorious lawyer Roy Cohn, who was instrumental in the worst brutalities of the McCarthy hearings, as well as a mentor to a young Donald Trump. Cohn was gay and closeted, though he spent a portion of his career blackmailing others for being gay, particularly during the McCarthy era. The film delves into Cohn's legacy as a combative lawyer to the mob and expert manipulator, and includes his staged legal hearings to protect G. David Schine, recounts of the younger men he dated in New York City, and his eventual HIV diagnosis which he vehemently denied publicly until his death. The documentary is a fascinating portrait of how the politics of a closeted gay man supported the current anti-LGBTQ movement.



The White Crow

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 365 THEATERS

This biopic is based on the true story of Rudolf Nureyev, a ballet dancer from the Soviet Union, who fled during the Cold War to live in the West. Nureyev was queer, though reports vary on whether he identified as gay or bisexual. In the film, his queerness is explored in scenes with his friend, Teja, who teaches him about Western culture, and the two end up sleeping together. In addition, Rudi has a sexual encounter with the wife of his teacher, one that he does not initiate and about which he feels great discomfort. During the film, audiences see Rudi on dates with Clara, a woman he meets in France, but the relationship never fully blooms. He also checks out other men while the two are out. Because the only romantic connection that he genuinely seemed to enjoy was with another man, GLAAD counted Rudolf as gay in its tally.



LILI REINHART, JENNIFER LOPEZ, KEKE PALMER, AND CONSTANCE WU AS ANNABELLE, RAMONA, MERCEDES, AND DESTINY, HUSTLERS

STX Films

2019
RATING
★
FAILING

Summary of 2019 Findings

- 9** films released theatrically in 2019 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

★☆☆☆☆	2019	Failing
N/A	2018	Not Tracked
N/A	2017	Not Tracked
N/A	2016	Not Tracked
N/A	2015	Not Tracked
N/A	2014	Not Tracked
N/A	2013	Not Tracked
N/A	2012	Not Tracked

Founded in 2014 by Robert Simonds and Bill McGlashan, STX Entertainment produces, finances, markets and distributes mid-budget films of all genres, as well as TV, live events, and VR. Known for wide-release original films with famous stars attached, notable films include *The Gift* (2015), *Edge of Seventeen* (2016), and *Molly's Game* (2018). The studio has not released many LGBTQ-inclusive movies since its founding, with the exception of 2016's *Bad Moms*, which included a bisexual character in the ensemble. Although one of STX's most financially successful films, *Bad Moms* was somewhat questionable, falling into certain tropes and stereotypes about bisexual characters.

Hustlers

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3525 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

Trace Lysette, an actress and advocate who is also transgender, plays Tracey, one of the dancers at the strip club where the film largely takes place. The Tracey character is one of several fringe ensemble members, and the character does not have a developed backstory. Because the film does not establish Tracey as a transgender character, GLAAD did not count her in its tally.

The Upside

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3568 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

This film, co-distributed by STX and based on a true story, follows the friendship formed between Philip, a quadriplegic billionaire and Dell, who takes a job as his life auxiliary caretaker in order to satisfy the terms of his parole. There are several gay panic jokes in the movie including an extended bit about how uncomfortable Dell is with the more invasive aspects of taking care of Philip; Dell balks at having to insert a catheter, he is disgusted when Philip gets an erection, and he is uncomfortable about saying the word “penis” when discussing Philip’s care. The film attempts to depict this character’s homophobia as something funny and relatable to audiences, as opposed to the outdated so-called “comedy” that it is.

Opportunities Ahead

Relatively new as a film studio, STX often produces mid-budget films in all genres. This level of investment has paid off for recent successful major studio LGBTQ-inclusive films like *Love, Simon* and *Blockers* – STX should evaluate its slate with these examples in mind. In spring 2020, STX announced a plan to merge with the Indian studio, Eros International, and to produce up to 40 films a year. For STX, this would be a perfect time to prioritize telling LGBTQ-inclusive stories and featuring leading queer and trans characters in its expanded slate.



United Artists Releasing

Summary of 2019 Findings

7 films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints

2 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

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

1 number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

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

United Artists Releasing (UAR) is a distribution joint venture between Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, Annapurna Pictures, and MGM’s Orion Pictures that aims to release 10-14 films each year. The company was founded as Mirror in December 2017, and rebranded in February 2019 as United Artists Releasing on the 100th anniversary of the founding of United Artists. The distributor plans to compete with the traditional major studios and streamers by combining their slates and following a similar calendar and wide release roll out. UAR as it now stands, is a collective of studios with a back catalog of LGBTQ-inclusive releases including GLAAD Media Award nominee *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women* (2017) from Annapurna, and GLAAD Media Award nominee *God’s Own Country* (2017), *Every Day*, and *Anna and the Apocalypse* (2018) from Orion.



Booksmart

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2518 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

This GLAAD Media Award-nominated comedy follows teen best friends and exceptional high schoolers Molly and Amy who decide to have one wild night of partying before graduation. Amy is a lesbian and hopes to finally connect with her longtime crush at the huge class party, but ends up hooking up with a different girl, Hope, in an embarrassing encounter in the bathroom at a house party. Amy and Hope's awkward sexual experience is treated with the same humor and compassion that are usually reserved for straight couples. The movie even ends with a hint of a romantic future for the girls. The school includes several other queer characters, and handles very casual conversations throughout the film about gender and sexuality in a way that is relevant and accurate to how young people discuss these topics today.

In a refreshing change, *Booksmart* incorporates Amy's sexuality as a key part of the plot, informing who she is, while not telling a coming out story nor presenting any conflict about her orientation. *Booksmart*, similar to *Love, Simon* and *Blockers* in 2018, represents a shift in teen comedies. A few years ago, the LGBTQ community were often the butt of the joke (if present at all), now we lead stories with comedy and heart.



The Hustle

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3077 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

A remake of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (1988), the film follows two con-women, the experienced Josephine and the amateur Penny who team up. Throughout the film, there were several moments where being queer is a punchline. When Josephine and Penny meet, Josephine tells Penny that the town on the French Riviera to which they are headed is a lesbian community to discourage Penny from moving in on Josephine's territory. The gag continues when Penny gets arrested by Josephine's partner-in-crime Brigitte, presented as a police officer, and Penny attempts to hit on her in order to get out of custody ("That's why I came, to do some experimenting, don't you think we can work something out, just between us girls.") Brigitte lives with Josephine, as does another of their paid conspirators. Penny later says it is "hard to tell nowadays" when asked if the two women are dating. In another scene, a man jokes about having a boyfriend while trying to hit on Josephine. Had the film delved deeper, confirming either Brigitte or Josephine as lesbian or bi+ would have been great, but the story as-is was more of a joke at the expense of the community. GLAAD did not count either Brigitte or Josephine in its tally.

Midway through the film, Josephine and Penny's target, Thomas, begins a conversation with a man at a hotel bar who he believes to be a doctor that can help Penny. The man responds in Dutch, subtitled on screen, and expresses romantic interest, as he believes Thomas is trying to pick him up. When Josephine, who can understand and speak Dutch, replies that Thomas is not interested in having sex with the man, he pouts and replies that Thomas is "just my type." It is disappointing that the film decided to include this incredibly minor gay character solely for comic relief, particularly with so many other jokes running throughout using a queer identity as a punchline.

Missing Link

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3437 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

This stop-motion feature follows adventurer Lionel Frost on his quest to find a mysterious Sasquatch, and their journey together. Actor Zach Galifianakis voices the Sasquatch who, midway through the film, chooses the name Susan for himself in a line adlibbed by Galifianakis. Previously, he had been referred to as Mr. Link, and had struggled to choose his first name. He chooses Susan as a tribute to the first human who ever showed him any kindness. There is a moment where Lionel comments that it is a girl's name, but he quickly accepts his friend's chosen name. Though some media outlets have perceived Susan as being non-binary or gender non-conforming, throughout the film, Susan uses he/him pronouns and dresses in a suit. GLAAD did not count the character in its tally.

Earlier in the film, there is a more questionable scene. When Lionel rides into town, a woman blows him a kiss from a saloon window and he replies with a smile. Immediately after, a burly man sharpening a knife on the bars of his prison cell blows a kiss to Lionel from his window and Lionel appears visibly shaken. While his reaction could be read as having more to do with a perceived threat from a criminal and less about the attention coming from a man, it is worth exploring the intention of the film to use a male prisoner. There is a history of negative portrayals surrounding predatory prisoners and, though this was a simple joke in an animated film, it does fit into that harmful trope.

Opportunities Ahead

MGM is producing a biopic of Culture Club frontman Boy George with Sacha Gervasi attached to write and direct, that could be distributed by UAR. The film is set to explore Boy George's roots growing up in an Irish middle class family through the height of Culture Club's success in the '80s. George's queerness is integral to his life and should be fully represented in the film, as should the truths of his life including his issues with addiction and other troubles. George has made headlines in recent years for biphobic and transphobic comments, though he has recently shared he may have not been as clear in his tweets as he intended.



2019 RATING

INSUFFICIENT

Universal Pictures

Summary of 2019 Findings

- 17** films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints
- 3** total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films
- 18%** percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases
- 2** number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

	2019	Insufficient
	2018	Good
	2017	Insufficient
	2016	Insufficient
	2015	Adequate
	2014	Adequate
	2013	Adequate
	2012	Adequate

Universal Pictures was founded in 1912, making it one of the oldest surviving film studios in the country. In 2004, Universal merged with NBC, and shortly after, the new NBCUniversal was purchased by Comcast in 2011. In 2016, Universal acquired DreamWorks Animation and distributed their first film under that label in February 2019. Universal often focuses on mass appeal films with previous releases including *Jaws*, *E.T.*, *the Bourne series*, and the ongoing *Fast and the Furious* franchise.

It was not until the 1990s that Universal began to release LGBTQ-inclusive films. Even then, the 1991 adaptation of *Fried Green Tomatoes* removed the majority of its lesbian content found in the novel. LGBTQ representation in Universal films has often been a mixed bag, 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), and *Blockers* (2018).

Glass

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3844 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

A sequel to 2016's *Split*, *Glass* continues to follow "The Horde," one man with several personalities. In *Split*, one of the personalities is an effeminate character named Barry. Some press outlets referred to the character as gay from comments by actor James McAvoy. Because no evidence of his sexual orientation appeared in the film, GLAAD did not count Barry as gay in *Split*. He returned in an even less prominent role in *Glass*, GLAAD did not count the character in its tally.

During the film, one of The Horde's women personalities flirts with a male nurse, who is taken aback. GLAAD also did not count either of the participants in this scene in its tally.

Good Boys

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3458 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

This R-Rated comedy follows three pre-teen boys on a quest to buy a new drone and to attend a "kissing party." They have several encounters with two teenage girls, Hannah and Lily. When the discussion turns to the party, Lily mentions her first "kissing party," where she kissed another girl. The information is presented casually, and is less of a coming out and more just letting the audience know Lily is interested in women. Near the end of the film, there is a montage in which protagonist Max starts dating his crush Brixlee. After they break up, he begins dating Brixlee's friend, Taylor. When he and Taylor break up, he sees Brixlee and Taylor walking together holding hands, showing that the two girls are dating.

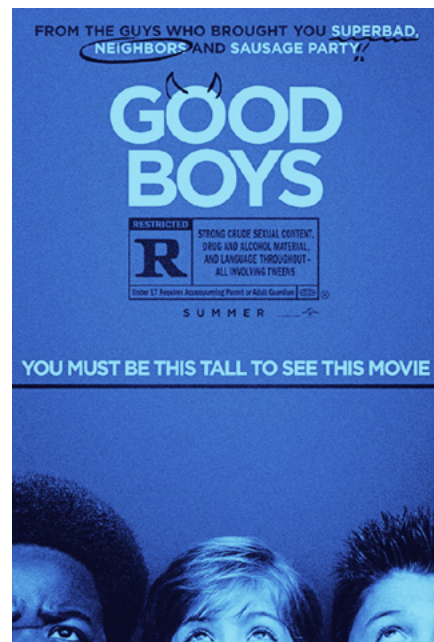
All three characters – Taylor, Brixlee, and Lily – are presented with their queer identities being very matter-of-fact and fitting into the story's world but also making their queer identities explicitly known rather than subtextual. GLAAD would like to see more films follow this example.

Happy Death Day 2U

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3212 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

A sequel to *Happy Death Day* (2017), the film includes gay character Tim from the original, though his role here is reduced. In the first movie, protagonist Tree realizes that Tim is gay and helps him accept himself. In the sequel, we see Tim with a boyfriend. Surely Tim returning with a new love interest is a small sign of progress, but more is expected than one minute of screen time.





How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4286 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

The third and final film in the *How to Train Your Dragon* franchise sees the return of Gobber, a Viking and blacksmith, who serves as a father figure to protagonist Hiccup after his father died. In GLAAD's 2015 SRI, Gobber was counted as a gay character in the second *Dragons* film based on press and a line from the movie meant to confirm that Gobber is gay. When Chief Stoick and his wife argue, Gobber remarked, "This is why I never married. That, and one other reason." GLAAD noted in that report, "without the additional context provided by the filmmakers and press, Gobber's orientation would be no more than an insinuation." In 2018, GLAAD updated its methodology to address this issue. In past reports, those characters were often counted; this report only counts characters based on what is presented on screen and/or through common-held cultural knowledge of a figure. *The Hidden World* similarly had one line that could be read as a vague insinuation when Gobber tells another Viking, "It's not your fault you have the body of a Norse god, I myself have the same problem." Ultimately, the film missed the opportunity to take advantage of this character and storyline. GLAAD did not count Gobber in its tally.

Last Christmas

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3454 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

The holiday romcom *Last Christmas* follows Kate, a woman who is struggling to get her life back on track. She has a contentious relationship with her family, including her sister Marta, who is a lesbian and out to Kate, but not to their parents. About halfway through the film, while at a family dinner, Kate gets into a fight with Marta and outs her to their parents. Kate realizes her mistake later and offers an apology, acknowledging that Marta does not need to forgive her. Marta does eventually forgive and reconnect with Kate, and introduces her girlfriend, Alba, to their parents, who accept Marta and Alba and their relationship.

While the outing by Kate was obviously problematic, it is encouraging to see that she did genuinely regret her rash actions, and to see a happy ending for a lesbian couple.

Little

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2667 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

While *Little* did not include any LGBTQ characters, it did make headlines for a transphobic joke. When Jordan, the harsh tech boss played by Regina Hall, gets chided by a neighbor for kissing her boyfriend in the hallway in front of a child, Jordan mistakes a young girl for a boy in her comeback. When the mom replies ("She's four!"), Jordan doubles down with an out of left field reply, "Oh. He is transitioning? Well good luck, little fella, I like you. Now your mama's a different story. If you need a drink, come over little man." The scene drew criticism from film critics, and co-screenwriter Tracy Oliver denounced the joke saying she did not write it and calling it "insensitive and unnecessary." Transphobic "humor" has no place in film nor in the world.

Ma

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2816 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

This horror film follows Sue Ann, who lures teens to her house under the pretense of partying. One of the teens, Haley, when meeting protagonist Maggie, compliments her, and follows up with "I'm not a lesbian or anything." She later introduces her boyfriend as "this gay dude" before he clarifies that he's "very straight." Later, Haley kisses Maggie while under the influence. This move appears to be demonstrative of how inebriated Haley is rather than out of any sexual or romantic attraction to Maggie. The idea of two girls kissing at a party just to show how drunk someone is problematic and very dated, as are jokes that imply someone is gay as an insult.

The Secret Life of Pets 2

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4564 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

This sequel follows a group of pets in New York, and includes a joke about a rabbit named Snowball. His owner had dressed him in a men's superhero costume for the majority of the movie, until the end when she dresses Snowball in a dress and puts makeup on him. At first, it appears that Snowball will be upset at the change of style, but instead he declares it "awesome." It is a small sign of progress for Snowball to be excited about the new look as compared to how this kind of moment has been played before. GLAAD did not count the character in its tally.

Queen and Slim

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1715 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

This drama follows the titular Queen and Slim, a Black couple who become fugitives after killing a police officer while on the way home from a first date. While traveling, they stay with Queen's Uncle Earl, who lives with several women, including Goddess, played by Indya Moore, an actor who is transgender and non-binary. Because the content of the film on-screen does not make any assertions regarding Goddess' gender identity, GLAAD did not count the character as transgender in its tally.

Opportunities Ahead

Out filmmaker, writer, producer, and director Greg Berlanti is attached to direct and produce a biopic adapted from the book *All That Heaven Allows: A Biography of Rock Hudson*. The book explored Hudson's life as a closeted actor in Hollywood and his heartbreaking death of AIDS-related complications in 1985. Universal is set to begin production on romantic comedy *Bros*, co-written by and starring out actor and comedian Billy Eichner. The film follows two men with a history of commitment problems who attempt a steady relationship. This high profile romantic comedy, from big names like Eichner and Judd Apatow, should usher in more queer films in the genre and from major studios.



ROBERT JAMES-COLLIER AND MAX BROWN AS THOMAS BARROW AND RICHARD ELLIS, DOWNTON ABBEY

Focus Features

SUBSIDIARY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Summary of 2019 Findings

8 films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints

1 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

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

In 2002, USA Films, Universal Focus, and Good Machine teamed to form Focus Features. Focus Features produces and distributes its own films, establishing an impressive record of critically acclaimed and popular LGBTQ-inclusive films including *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), *Milk* (2008), *The Kids Are All Right* (2010), *Pariah* (2011), and *Boy Erased* (2018), in addition to distributing foreign films.

Captive State

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2549 THEATERS

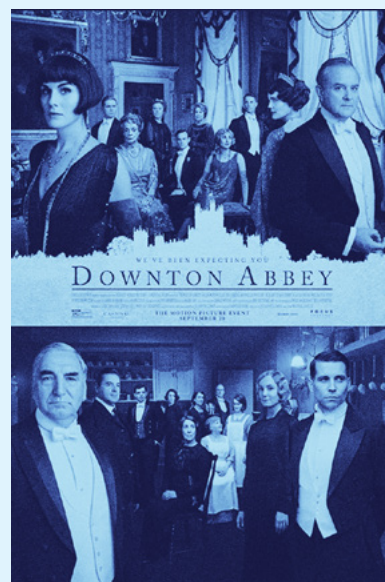
This post-apocalyptic drama follows a group of rebels trying to fight off their new alien overlords. One rebel is Daniel, who works in a gay bar and meets others there. It is unclear if Daniel is gay himself or is working at the bar as a cover to get access to the rebels. Unfortunately, he dies before we can discover more backstory. GLAAD did not count the character in its tally.

Downton Abbey

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3548 THEATERS

The finale film to the British TV series of the same name, *Downton Abbey* continues with the Crawley family and their staff as they prepare for a visit from the royal family. The staff includes the family's gay butler, Thomas. Thomas meets Richard, one of the royal staff who encourages Thomas to meet him at

a bar in town. At the bar, Thomas meets another man who takes him to a warehouse meeting full of gay men, a community gathering Thomas has never experienced. Thomas finally feels a sense of freedom, dancing and enjoying himself. The police raid the warehouse and Thomas is arrested, but Richard is able to get him out of jail by using his status as a member of the royal staff. When Richard departs for London, he leaves Thomas with a gift and a kiss. It was a welcome change for a period drama to see Thomas' more uplifting story and the respect his character was treated with. *Downton Abbey* is nominated for a GLAAD Media Award.





Walt Disney Studios

Summary of 2019 Findings

19 films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints

4 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

21% percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

0 number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2019	Poor
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2018	Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2017	Poor
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2016	Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2015	Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2014	Failing
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2013	Adequate
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	2012	Failing

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 most dominant force in that genre at the box office. The company 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 2019, 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 acquisition was complete, Disney took ownership of several film assets under 21st including 20th Century Fox, 20th Century Fox Animation, Blue Sky Studios, Fox Studios Australia, and Fox Searchlight. In January 2020, Disney renamed the studio from 20th Century Fox to 20th Century Studios, and distributes those films under Walt Disney Studios. Fox Searchlight was renamed to Searchlight Pictures, and operates as an indie distribution unit as a subsidiary of Disney.

Walt Disney Studios has a weak history when it comes to LGBTQ inclusion compared to other 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 Bros. Some of Disney's past inclusive films include *Delivery Man* (2013), *Muppets Most Wanted* (2014), and *Beauty and the Beast* (2017). 20th Century's previous LGBTQ-inclusive releases include *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), *Making Love* (1982), *Silkwood* (1983), *The Object of My Affection* (1998), *The Family Stone* (2005), *Independence Day: Resurgence* (2016), and most recently *Love, Simon* (2018).



Avengers: Endgame

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4662 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

Avengers: Endgame was the 22nd movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), and broke many box office records including becoming the highest-grossing film of all time worldwide. In one small scene, Captain America is leading a group therapy session for survivors left behind after the villain, Thanos, had destroyed half of all life. One member of the group, credited as "Grieving Man," played in a brief cameo by co-director Joe Russo, tells the group about the new man he is dating and trying to move forward in this new world after losing his partner. While the scene itself with no outside context is a nice moment of inclusion, it is ultimately another blink-and-you-might-miss-it moment, inconsequential to the plot, with the character on screen for less than one minute.

The film's directors spoke to press about the moment ahead of the film's release with Russo saying, "It was important to us as we did four of these films, we wanted a gay character somewhere in them. [...] We

wanted it to be casual, with the fact that the character is gay tied into the fabric of the storytelling and representing what everyday life is. We're trying to represent everyone in everyday life." The backlash came from fans frustrated by such little screen time and the lack of meaningful LGBTQ inclusion in the MCU, including the erasure of queer characters' identities in *Thor: Ragnarok* and *Black Panther*.

The MCU films are among the most anticipated and most successful movies that are currently in production, with all three 2019 MCU releases crossing the billion dollar mark at the worldwide box office. That kind of repeated success gives them the power to set new cultural standards, and to inspire other companies to follow its lead. Disney and Marvel should leverage those opportunities to be a global leader by featuring queer heroes in larger roles and exploring the depth and dimension of their lives in the upcoming MCU films *The Eternals*, *Thor: Love and Thunder*, and beyond.

Frozen 2

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4440 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

The sequel to 2013's *Frozen* sees the return of Elsa, a queen with the power to form and manipulate ice and snow. Elsa is one of the only Disney Princesses with no love interest, and she has often been read as gay by fans. Her story hinges on themes often used in queer stories, including feelings of being an outsider, and having to suppress and hide a characteristic she was born with to fit into the wider world. The adoption of Elsa as a queer character has led to worldwide trending calls to #GiveElsaAGirlfriend spurring press coverage and questions to the film's directors. Unfortunately, this story has yet to be made canon, and we hope to see the film develop this story if there is a third *Frozen* movie. While some press outlets have counted the villager Oaken as gay based on a scene from the first film, he does return in a small role in this film. GLAAD did not view the content of the film as substantial enough to confirm Oaken as gay, and he is thus not included in this tally.



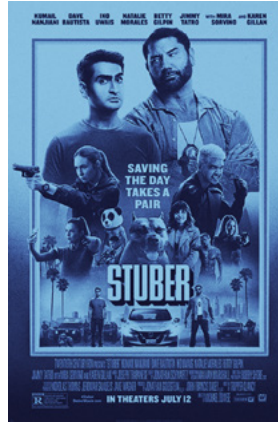
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4406 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

The Rise of Skywalker is the third installment in the *Star Wars* sequel trilogy and the final episode of the nine-part *Skywalker* saga. Director and co-writer J.J. Abrams told press ahead of the release, "In the case of the LGBTQ community, it was important to me that people who go to see this movie feel that they're being represented in the film," teasing that there would be a substantial LGBTQ character in the film. Many fans hoped for a relationship between lead characters Finn and Poe, which was supported in press by actors John Boyega and Oscar Isaac. Unfortunately, the representation turned out to be a split second blink-and-you'll-miss-it kiss between two women Resistance fighters as the camera pans over them during the climactic celebration of the Resistance victory.

This small moment is noteworthy for the world of *Star Wars* where there has not been any LGBTQ inclusion across the decades of films and even for Disney, which has not had a great history when it comes to LGBTQ characters. But in the larger world, this kind of moment feels behind the times when compared to the strides that TV and indie film have made. While the *Skywalker* saga has wrapped, there are already more *Star Wars* films announced including a new trilogy as well as several standalone films. The fervor of fans over just the possibility of LGBTQ representation in this franchise shows how great the appetite for LGBTQ characters and stories is. The new films should engage this audience and introduce original LGBTQ characters, and leverage the multiple LGBTQ characters who already exist in the *Star Wars* comics and books.



Stuber

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3050 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

This action-comedy follows Los Angeles cop Vic and his Uber driver Stu as they team up to hunt down a criminal. One lead that Vic follows takes him to a male strip club, including a seconds-long appearance by a gay man mistaking Vic for a dancer. In another scene, Stu offers a non-violent alternative to torture, taking a suspect's phone and tweeting from his account how much he loves Ryan Gosling. At one point, Stu says he is married to Vic to avoid being targeted, and later, Stu's boss makes jokes implying that Vic is a sex worker Stu hired. It is disappointing that the film attempts to make jokes about LGBTQ people while also essentially excluding them from the story.

Toy Story 4

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4575 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

In an early scene in *Toy Story 4*, audiences see parents of various children dropping their kids off for their first day of school. This includes two women who have their arms around each other before they hug their child goodbye. Though the moment with the two moms was brief, it still caught the attention of anti-LGBTQ group One Million Moms, who called for a boycott of *Toy Story 4*. Their paltry attempts were ineffective, *Toy Story 4* made over a billion dollars worldwide, became the third highest grossing film of 2019, and won the Oscar for Best Animated Feature. The success of a film with even a small inclusive moment like this should be a stepping-stone to animated and family films featuring more significant LGBTQ characters.

Opportunities Ahead

After acquiring 20th Century, there are greater opportunities for Disney to distribute more diverse LGBTQ-inclusive films. The upcoming musical feature *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* is based on the stage musical of the same name inspired by the true story of a gay 16-year-old who overcomes prejudice and bullying to fulfill his dream to become a drag queen. The film was recently delayed to early 2021 per IMDb. Another project in development is the graphic novel *Nimona* at Blue Sky Studios, this story from out writer Noelle Stevenson includes a romance between the two leading men: the villain Ballister Blackheart and hero Goldenloin. It is currently scheduled for release on January 14, 2022. With the acquisition of 20th Century, Disney also inherited a film adaptation of the GLAAD Media Award-nominated comic, *Goldie Vance*, about a teenage girl who solves mysteries at the resort she lives in with the help of her friends and girlfriend, which has Rashida Jones attached to write and direct with Kerry Washington producing. There has been no news announced on the film since 2017, but GLAAD does hope to see Disney move forward with the project.

Also in the works is the *X-Men* spinoff *The New Mutants*, a genre-crossing teen horror super hero film, which features a queer romance between two of the main characters, Rahne/Wolfsbane who can turn into a wolf and Dani who can create illusions based on people's deepest fears and desires. While doing press for the film, which was scheduled for an April 3 release before being pushed to August 28 due to COVID-19, director Josh Boone described the girls'

romantic relationship as "the spine and focus" of the film's character development for the couple.

Disney's MCU will be introducing its first gay hero when *The Eternals* hits theaters next year, pushed back from November 2020 to February 12, 2021 due to COVID-19. Out actor Haaz Sleiman has confirmed in press that he will portray the husband of the hero Phastos, a member of the immortal Eternals team who team up to save humanity, and further confirmed the film will include the couple's son. Another upcoming MCU film, *Thor: Love and Thunder*, is set to finally portray Valkyrie's queerness on screen. Valkyrie first appeared in 2017's *Thor: Ragnarok*, and though out actress Tessa Thompson had said that she played the character as queer, this was not made canon in the film itself. Director Taika Waititi confirmed that a scene, which would have established Valkyrie's queer identity, was cut from the film. Waititi returns to write and direct *Love and Thunder*, set for release February 11, 2022, and Thompson announced at San Diego Comic-Con in 2019 that Valkyrie as the recently crowned King of Asgard "needs to find her queen. That will be the first order of business."

Other upcoming Disney projects include *Jungle Cruise*, an adventure film set in the early 20th century based on the popular theme park ride, starring Emily Blunt, Dwayne Johnson and Jack Whitehall. Whitehall will play McGregor, the gay brother of Emily Blunt's character, as they head into the jungle on a quest to find the Tree of Life. The film was pushed from this summer to July 30, 2021 because of COVID-19.



SAM ROCKWELL, ALFIE ALLEN, AND ROMAN GRIFFIN DAVIS AS CAPTAIN KLENZENDORF, FINKEL, AND JOJO. JOJO RABBIT

Searchlight Pictures

SUBSIDIARY OF WALT DISNEY

Summary of 2019 Findings

6 films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints

0 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

0% percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

Searchlight Pictures, created in 1994, was a subsidiary of 20th Century Fox and known as Fox Searchlight until the Disney acquisition in 2019. The imprint is now known as Searchlight Pictures and still specializes in the release and distribution of independent and foreign films in the United States, as well as horror films and dramedies. Searchlight Pictures has been responsible for the release of several high-profile LGBTQ-inclusive films, including *Boys Don't Cry* (1999), *Kinsey* (2004), *Battle of the Sexes*, *The Shape of Water* (2017), and *Can You Ever Forgive Me* (2018).

Jojo Rabbit

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1173 THEATERS

This satirical film follows a Nazi boy, Jojo, who has a buffoonish version of Hitler as an imaginary friend; he begins to question his beliefs when he develops a friendship and crush on the Jewish girl staying in his home. Throughout the film, Jojo is tasked to work with Captain Klenzendorf, an officer who runs a Nazi Youth camp and then takes over as Jojo's mentor after Klenzendorf is discharged from the camp, alongside the man's second-in-command, Finkel. While Sam Rockwell (who portrayed Klenzendorf) has said in press the character was gay, the actual content referenced in the film – a lingering look between Klenzendorf and Finkel, and the bright, fringed uniforms they show up in for the final battle – was coded subtext at best and not enough to count either man as gay.



Warner Bros.

Summary of 2019 Findings

21 films released theatrically in 2019 under studio & official imprints

3 total number of LGBTQ-inclusive films

14% percent of LGBTQ-inclusive films of studio total releases

3 number of films that pass the Vito Russo Test

Studio Rating Over Time

★★★☆☆	2019	Poor
★★★★☆	2018	Insufficient
★★★☆☆	2017	Failing
★★★☆☆	2016	Poor
★★★☆☆	2015	Failing
★★★★☆	2014	Good
★★★☆☆	2013	Failing
★★★★☆	2012	Adequate

Started by four Polish immigrant brothers as a movie theater business in the early 1900s, Warner Bros. became a film studio in 1923. Warner Bros. 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 Bros. most notable films, *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), included one of the earliest 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). Nearly all of those films were based on external source material that included LGBTQ characters. More recently, Warner Bros. 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 stand outs like *Tammy* (2014), *Storks* (2016), and *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018), as well as notable lows like *Get Hard* (2015), *Central Intelligence* (2016), and *CHiPs* (2017) which all traffic heavily in gay panic jokes and other cheap punchlines.

Doctor Sleep

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3855 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

Based on the Stephen King novel of the same name, *Doctor Sleep* is a sequel to *The Shining*, following the movement of the True Knot cult, who feed on children with special abilities, or “shine.” One member of the True Knot, recruited early in the film, is a teenage girl known as Snakebite Andi. In the book, Andi is written as a lesbian, but this is made out to be a choice she had made because she was sexually abused by men in her life, which is an untrue and harmful way to think of lesbian sexuality. In the film, however, there isn’t any indication of her sexual orientation, except complimenting cult leader Rose as beautiful once. As GLAAD referenced in last year’s report, because of the number of ways in which Andi, Rose, and Sarey’s stories were mishandled in the source material, the decision to cut any queer content seems best so as to reduce harm in this one case.

The Goldfinch

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2542 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

Based on the best-selling novel of the same name, *The Goldfinch* follows a young boy, Theo, and the years-long consequences of his stealing a painting after he survives an explosion at a museum that kills his mother. Also killed in the explosion was a man named Welty, who co-owned an antique shop with another man, Hobie. When Theo visits Hobie to share Welty’s final words, Hobie speaks of Welty as his “business partner.” While it could be interpreted from subtext that the two were romantically involved as Hobie was particularly grief-stricken, the film did not follow through with enough to confirm, which would have been as simple as even one added line. GLAAD did not count Hobie or Welty as gay in its tally.

Another person Theo meets along the way is Boris, a classmate from Russia. When Theo has to leave his house, Boris tells Theo he has something to tell him and then quickly kisses him. Later, the audience learns Boris was planning to tell Theo that he had stolen his painting, nothing about harboring any feelings for him. The kiss is never discussed again, and Boris is only shown romantically with women outside of this one scene. GLAAD did not count Boris as gay or bisexual.

The Good Liar

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2454 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

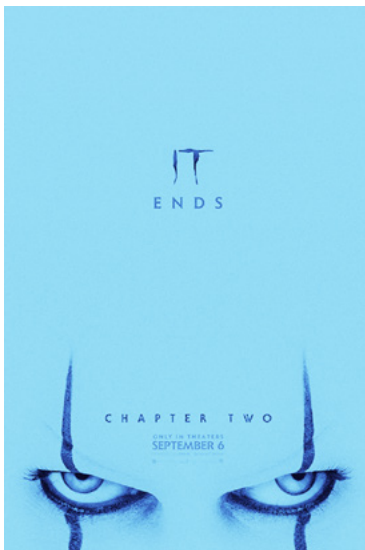
This film follows Roy, a con artist, and his latest victim, Betty, who seems to be a trusting old woman living with her grandson, Stephen. Stephen, a historian, is very suspicious of Roy’s motives. Near the end of the film, it is revealed that Betty was actually running her own con on Roy the entire time, and Stephen was part of the job as her assistant. Stephen is actually Betty’s grandson’s partner, and he was helping Betty with historical research. As the film concludes, the audience sees Stephen with his boyfriend Michael, reuniting and sharing an affectionate moment after the successful fraud has been completed. Stephen’s inclusion was a welcomed surprise, as spy or con films have often included problematic transactional queer relationships as part of the job rather than as a lived identity.

Isn’t it Romantic

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 3444 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

In this film, the protagonist, Natalie, wakes up with her life transformed into a romantic comedy. Everything changes, includes her grumpy neighbor, Donny, who overnight assumes all the stereotypical qualities of the “gay best friend” we’ve seen before. The movie pokes fun at how that character has no life of his own, besides helping Natalie. By the end, Donny is empowered to deliver a speech on the importance of self-love, which motivates and propels Natalie into the climax of the film. When she falls out of the romantic comedy world, she sees Donny kissing another man, and thinks that she may still be trapped. However, Donny, back to being her grumpy neighbor, assures her that he has always been gay. Donny’s plot is a fun twist on the trope of the “gay best friend” characters who are rarely developed beyond the surface.



IT Chapter Two

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 4570 THEATERS
VITO RUSSO TEST: **PASS**

IT Chapter Two opens with an unnervingly graphic and drawn out anti-gay hate crime and murder. The director has said that his aim was to be true to a scene from King's original book - inspired by a real incident where a young man, Charlie Howard, was killed in an anti-gay hate crime in 1984 - and serve as commentary on the hate and violence that LGBTQ people still experience. However, the scene as shown in the film simply reduces the gay couple, Adrian and Don, to nothing more than a plot device that causes another character to realize Pennywise has returned and motivates him to call his estranged friends back to town. The perpetrators of the crime are never punished or even addressed again in the nearly three-hour film, and the gay couple has no further narrative impact. The grisly scene attempts to provide insight on the hatred and violence LGBTQ people may face, but was ultimately not well handled and failed to make a meaningful statement.

The film also includes the reveal that leading character Richie is a closeted gay man and has been in love with his friend and fellow Loser, Eddie, since they were children. As the Losers are all experiencing flashbacks to the childhoods they were forced to forget, Richie sees a moment of his younger self with a boy he seemingly had feelings for before he is bullied and driven away by anti-gay slurs. Pennywise appears and taunts Richie about his "dirty little secret." The audience then sees Richie carving "R +" into a wooden fence post. In the film's climax after Eddie is killed, Richie returns to the post and finishes carving "R + E" into the post, and then he drives out of town as the voiceover from lead character Bill echoes, "Be who you wanna be. Be proud." Unfortunately, this is the end of Richie's story, so the audience is left unsure if Richie plans to actually come out or begins to date men.

While it was a step forward to acknowledge Richie's feelings for Eddie, the impact of the film's climax does not erase the impact of the graphic violence against two out gay men that began the story. It winds up feeling like a tragic bookend, for the gay characters to either be murdered or to lose the love of their life. Had the film given Richie a moment to claim his own narrative, it would have gone some way towards leaving a better impression.

Motherless Brooklyn

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 1342 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

Based on the book by Jonathan Lethem, *Motherless Brooklyn* follows Lionel, a detective with Tourette's syndrome who goes on a journey to find out who killed his mentor. In the book, Lionel encounters a couple of older mobsters who are implied to be gay, yet they do not appear in the film. There is a brief reference a musician makes to oral sex with another man, but it is played off more as a joke than as an actual reference to his sexuality. GLAAD did not count this character in its tally.

Shaft

WIDEST THEATRICAL RELEASE: 2952 THEATERS

VITO RUSSO TEST: **FAIL**

The sequel to 2000's *Shaft*, this action comedy continues to follow detective John Shaft as he reunites with his son JJ. The film attempts to make several jokes about millennial culture, and in doing so, continually insults the LGBTQ community. At one point, JJ's boss complains about his, "seven-year-old daughter who wants me to call her Frank." John also assumes his son is gay because of JJ's non-violent views and how he dresses. John asks him about this by saying, "Are you a metro-sexual heteronormative cis-gender-fluid... stop me when I tick your box?" These dated jokes – humorless and invalidating – could have easily been cut from the film.

Opportunities Ahead

Warner Bros. has a great opportunity to successfully bring to life on screen LGBTQ characters from DC comics in the upcoming DC Extended Universe (DCEU) films. This spring's *Birds of Prey (and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn)*, included lesbian character Renee Montoya and her ex-girlfriend Ellen, as well as briefly confirming that Harley Quinn is bisexual and has dated women. Director Cathy Yan has said that she would like to make a sequel to *Birds of Prey* that introduces the character of Poison Ivy and explores her romantic relationship with Harley Quinn. There are several more DC films planned with the character of Quinn, including the upcoming *Suicide Squad* sequel. Quinn's bisexuality has yet to be fully portrayed in film, and it is long overdue. Another DC character who is bisexual in the comics, but which has yet to be portrayed as such on screen, is Wonder Woman. The second *Wonder Woman* film is due to be released in October, and LGBTQ audiences remain hopeful *Wonder Woman 1984* will delve into her bisexuality, at the very least acknowledging any relationships she has had with women. The character is also likely to appear in other DC films that involve the Justice League, giving even more opportunities to build out her backstory. Other DC projects in the works include *Justice League Dark*, which includes bisexual hero John Constantine who can currently be seen on television in The CW's

Legends of Tomorrow, and *New Gods*, which includes Big Barda, who in some comics is in a relationship with a woman though she is married to Mister Miracle in other runs.

Warner Bros. still has three films left to release in the announced five-film *Fantastic Beasts* series, with the third film in the saga currently set for a November 2021 release. We have previously and at-length addressed the straight washing of Dumbledore and his relationship with Grindelwald in earlier editions of this report. In December 2019 and summer 2020, screenwriter and author JK Rowling tweeted multiple anti-trans statements and published a nearly 4,000-word essay that spread inaccurate misinformation about transgender people. While Warner Bros. did release a general statement, they have failed to address the seriousness of her anti-trans activism.

Warner Bros. is set to release the film adaptation of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *In the Heights* in summer 2021. Though there were no LGBTQ characters in the stage musical, Miranda has confirmed that the characters of Carla and Daniela are a couple in the film. Another upcoming musical from Warner Bros. is a new adaptation of *The Color Purple*. Though the earlier film adaptation minimized lead character Celie's queer identity, that story is present in the source book and the staged musical and must be in the new musical film as well.

Additional Film Distributors



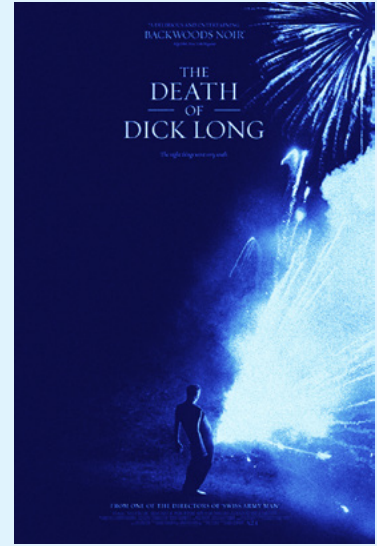
1091 Media

The Orchard in 2019 sold its film and TV division, which is now a privately held firm, distributing new content as 1091 Media. The Orchard, before the sale, released several acclaimed LGBTQ-inclusive and GLAAD Media Award nominated films including 2017's *BPM (Beats Per Minute)*, a French drama following young HIV and AIDS activists; *Thelma*, a Norwegian thriller about a queer woman with unexpected abilities; and *We the Animals* (2018), a coming-of-age story about a queer Latinx boy in upstate New York. In 2019, 1091 Media released documentary *Hurley*, about a well-respected racecar driver, who came out later in life; and *Halston*, the documentary of the legendary but complicated gay fashion designer. Other LGBTQ-inclusive releases in 2019 include family dramedy *Before You Know It* with a lesbian protagonist, and *Sister Aimee*, an alternative story of a televangelist who fakes her death to run away with her lover and finds herself intrigued by the woman who is their guide.



1844 Entertainment

An independent production and distribution company, 1844 Entertainment does theatrical and home distribution for film and television. In 2019, 1844 released Paraguayan drama *The Heiresses* in the United States. Nominated for a GLAAD Media Award, the film follows a wealthy lesbian couple who fall into debt and how that situation unravels the rest of their lives.



A24

Founded in 2012, A24 has become one of the most well-known and successful independent distributors. A major highlight of A24's catalogue was 2016's *Moonlight*, which tells the story of Chiron, a queer Black man, throughout three phases of his life, and won the Academy Award for Best Picture as well as a GLAAD Media Award. While none of A24's biggest releases in 2019 contained leading LGBTQ characters, there were supporting queer characters in multiple films including dark comedy *The Death of Dick Long*, where a married lesbian police officer was instrumental in solving a murder; the horror film *In Fabric*, in which the bosses of the main character were two gay men; and *Climax*, a surreal and graphic horror film with gay, lesbian, and bisexual characters among a troupe of dancers. The Australian drama *Outlaws*, which got US distribution from A24, featured a closeted gay character as the villain who fell into outdated tropes and created a direct tie between the character's evil traits and his orientation.

Additional Film Distributors



Amazon Studios

Amazon Studios began producing films in 2008, but did not start theatrical distribution until several years later. In 2019, Amazon Studios released *Brittany Runs a Marathon*, a GLAAD Media Award nominee that features a gay father of two among a rag-tag group of marathon runners. Amazon also released *Late Night*, which includes out actor John Early as Reynolds, a gay writer on a late-night show.



Breaking Glass Pictures

Breaking Glass Pictures is a distributor of independent film founded in 2009. The studio has released several LGBTQ-inclusive films over the last decade, including 2013's *Geography Club*, about a group of teens starting a GSA at their high school; and *Call Her Ganda* (2018), a documentary about the murder of a trans woman in the Philippines by a United States Marine. In 2019, Breaking Glass Pictures released *Kanarie*, a South African film that follows Johan, a choir member who gets drafted into the military and comes into his own as a queer man; and *Socrates*, a Brazilian drama about a fifteen-year-old boy who has been outcast because of his sexuality and must try to live on his own. These films were nominated for GLAAD Media Awards.



The Cinema Guild

Founded by producers Philip and Mary-Ann Hobel, the Cinema Guild is a distributor of international, independent, and documentary films. In 2019, The Cinema Guild released *End of the Century*, a GLAAD Media Award-nominated romance set in Barcelona between an Argentinian man on vacation and another man from Berlin, which takes a random encounter and turns it into something more.

Additional Film Distributors



Film Movement

Starting as a DVD-of-the-month club in 2002, Film Movement has evolved into a theatrical distributor of independent film, focused on international features, art-house films, and documentaries. In 2019, Film Movement released GLAAD Media Award nominee *Rafiki*, a Kenyan film that follows two daughters of local political rivals who wind up falling in love. *Rafiki* is also notable for affecting change in Kenya, as it was banned for its lesbian content, but director and co-writer Wanuri Kahiu sued the Kenyan government, resulting in the ban being lifted and the film screening in theaters in the country. Other LGBTQ-inclusive films released in 2019 includes *Cassandra, the Exotico!*, a documentary following the titular gay wrestler and his impact; *Genese*, a French-Canadian film following a young man who falls for his best friend; and *Temblores*, a Guatemalan film about a man whose family and community doesn't accept his sexual orientation.



IFC Films

IFC films has been distributing independent cinema since 1999, including releases from its branches IFC Midnight and Sundance Selects. Previous LGBTQ-inclusive films from IFC Films including romantic dramas *Weekend* (2011) and *Jenny's Wedding* (2015), as well as Silas Howard's *A Kid Like Jake* (2018). In 2019, IFC released *Vita and Virginia*, a drama following the romance between writers Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf; comedy *Sword of Trust* that follows a lesbian couple working with pawnshop owners to sell an inherited sword; and *Knives and Skin*, a coming-of-age thriller featuring a romance between two teenage girls.



NEON

An independent distributor founded in 2017, NEON has distributed several award-winning and critically acclaimed films over the past three years. In 2019, the company released *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, a French romance following a painter who falls in love with a woman she has been commissioned to paint. The film received a GLAAD Media Award nomination as well as critical acclaim and honors at Cannes. NEON's boutique division Super LTD also released documentary *This One's For the Ladies*, following a group of Black strippers in New Jersey, including the story of butch lesbian stripper Blaze.

Additional Film Distributors



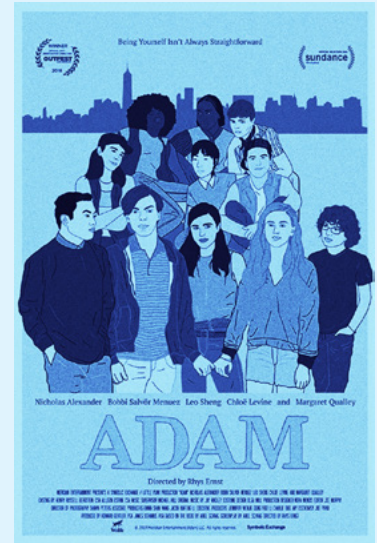
Samuel Goldwyn Films

Samuel Goldwyn Films, founded by Samuel Goldwyn Jr., specializes in art house and foreign releases. Recent films include 2018's GLAAD Media Award-nominated *Saturday Church*, which follows a queer Black 14-year-old finding their queer and trans chosen family. In 2019, Samuel Goldwyn Films released GLAAD Media Award nominee *This is Not Berlin*, which follows Mexican teen Carlos as he discovers the world of Punk and New Wave in Mexico City, as well as his own sexuality. The company also released *Mapplethorpe*, a biopic of gay photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.



Strand Releasing

Founded to distribute exclusively LGBTQ-inclusive films in 1989, Strand releasing has now expanded to other content, but still releases several LGBTQ films each year. Past highlights include road trip drama *The Living End* (1992), Israeli romance *Yossi and Jagger* (2002); and Puerto Rican documentary *Mala Mala* (2014). In 2019, Strand released *Mamma+Mamma*, an Italian comedy following two queer women on their tumultuous journey to have a child. They also released *The Ground Beneath My Feet*, an Austrian thriller with a lesbian protagonist.



Wolfe Releasing

Founded in 1985, Wolfe is the oldest studio to exclusively release LGBTQ films in North America. Some highlights of past Wolfe releases include *Brother to Brother* (2004), a film exploring Black gay culture in the Harlem Renaissance; 2011's *Tomboy*, about a French gender non-conforming child; and *Naz and Malik*, a romance between two Black Muslim teenagers. In 2019, Wolfe released *Adam*, directed by filmmaker Rhys Ernst, a transgender man, which follows Adam, a straight cisgender boy surrounded by a community of queer and trans people in New York in 2006. The film also stars Leo Sheng as Ethan, a trans man who befriends Adam, and includes a cameo by Mj Rodriguez. The film is nominated for a GLAAD Media Award.

ABOUT GLAAD

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

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

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

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