

IMAGES

of LGBTQ

People

in Film &
Television

The Lack of LGBT Characters on Television Shows

- At the launch of this television season, there were an estimated 19 regular characters who were openly lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) out of the 647 characters on the five broadcast networks: ABC, CBS, The CW, Fox, and NBC. This represents **less than 3% of regular TV characters**, down from 4% last year.
- **Not one** of the LGBT characters on network TV this season is **African American or a transgender person**.
- The number of scripted LGBT series regulars found on mainstream cable networks has also fallen, from 40 in 2007, 32 in 2008, 25 in 2009, and 35 in 2010, to 29 this season.

Source: Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), "Where We Are On TV Report: 2011 - 2012 Season": <http://www.glaad.org/publications/whereweareontv11>

News Coverage of LGBT People

- With issues such as same-sex marriage, the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, and anti-LGBT hate crimes, LGBT people are covered in the news media today like never before.
- However, more coverage does not mean better coverage. Conservative news outlets openly express disdain for LGBT people and their rights. Other news outlets that try to be more objective sometimes perpetuate outdated or inappropriate language and images for LGBT individuals.

Some examples of outdated/demeaning/non-inclusive language used by the media (and in society):

- ✓ Referring to gay men as "homosexuals" or "the gays"
- ✓ Referring to transgender people as "transgendered" or as "transvestites"
- ✓ Referring to same-sex marriage as "gay marriage"
- ✓ Referring to people of a different gender as "the opposite sex" or "the other sex"

Where Stereotypes Persist: Depictions of Transsexual Women

- Media depictions of trans women, whether they take the form of fictional characters or actual people, usually fall under one of two main archetypes: the “deceptive” transsexual or the “pathetic” transsexual.
- “deceivers” successfully pass as women. They generally act as unexpected plot twists, or play the role of sexual predators who fool innocent straight guys into falling for “men.”
- “pathetic” transsexual will inevitably insist that she is a woman “trapped inside a man’s body.” The intense contradiction between the “pathetic” character’s gender identity and her physical appearance is often played for laughs.

What Images Do You See of Transsexual People?



Hilary Swank as Brandon Teena in *Boys Don't Cry*; a transsexual character on *Family Guy*; Isis King from *America's Next Top Model*

Recommended Trans Films

(all are available from the UMass Stonewall Center)

- *The Aggressives* (documentary about women of color who present as masculine)
- *Becoming Chaz* (documentary about Chaz Bono)
- *Boy I Am* (documentary about FTM youth)
- *Boys Don't Cry* (fictionalized story of Brandon Teena's life and death)
- *Diagnosing Difference* (documentary about the medicalization of transsexuality)
- *Ma Vie en Rose* (feature film about a trans child)
- *Riot Acts* (documentary about gender nonconformity in music)
- *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria* (documentary about a 1966 riot led by MTFs)
- *Soldier's Girl* (fictionalized story of the partner of a murdered soldier)
- *Southern Comfort* (documentary about a trans man who dies of ovarian cancer)
- *TransGeneration* (documentary about transitioning college students)
- *Transparent* (documentary about transgender parents)
- *Two Spirits* (documentary about genders in American Indian cultures)
- *Venus Boyz* (documentary about drag kings)

What Images Do You See of LGB People?



Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi; a character from *Glee*; Wanda Sykes

Recommended LGB Films

(all are available from the UMass Stonewall Center)

- *Better than Chocolate* (comedy about women coming out and finding love)
- *Black Is, Black Ain't* (documentary about LGBT people in the Black community)
- *Brokeback Mountain* (feature film about a male romance in the 1960s U.S. West)
- *Brother to Brother* (feature film about the Harlem Renaissance)
- *But I'm a Cheerleader* (comedy about anti-gay summer camps)
- *The Celluloid Closet* (documentary about the history of LGBT people in film)
- *Fish Out of Water* (documentary about the Biblical passages that supposedly condemn homosexuality)
- *For the Bible Tells Me So* (documentary about Christianity and LGBT people)
- *A Jihad for Love* (documentary about Islam and LGBT people)
- *The Laramie Project* (feature film about the murder of Matthew Shephard)
- *Milk* (feature film about Harvey Milk)
- *Paragraph 175* (documentary about the persecution of LGBT people in the Holocaust)
- *Tongues Untied* (documentary about Black gay men)
- *Training Rules* (documentary about anti-lesbian prejudice in women's basketball)
- *Trembling Before G_d* (documentary about LGB Orthodox Jews)

Reality TV Programs with LGBT Cast Members, 2010-2012*

In two years, one would think there would be more!

High Society: Paul Johnson Calderon &
Tommy Didario

Love Games: Bad Girls Need Love Too:
Lea Lorraine & Steinfeldt

Work of Art: The Next Great Artist: John
Parot & Young Sun

On the Road with Austin & Santino:
Santino Rice

Bachelor Pad: Krisily Kennedy

Top Chef: Just Desserts: Vanarin Kuch,
Craig Poirier, Lina Biancamano, &
Orlando Santos

Next Great Baker: Gregory Soriano &
Chad Fitzgerald

The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills:
Cedric Martinez

Face Off: Marcel Banks & Gage Hubbard

The Voice: Vicci Martinez, Beverly
McClellan, Nakia, & Tyler Robinson

Platinum Hit: Scotty Granger

NY Ink: “Robear” Chinosi

Expedition Impossible: AJ Gibson &
Ryan Carillo

Staten Island Cakes: Vinny Buzzetta &
Spiro Grammatikopoulos

Ton of Cash: Justin Derke

Full Metal Jousting: Jake Nodar

*excludes LGBT-targeted programs