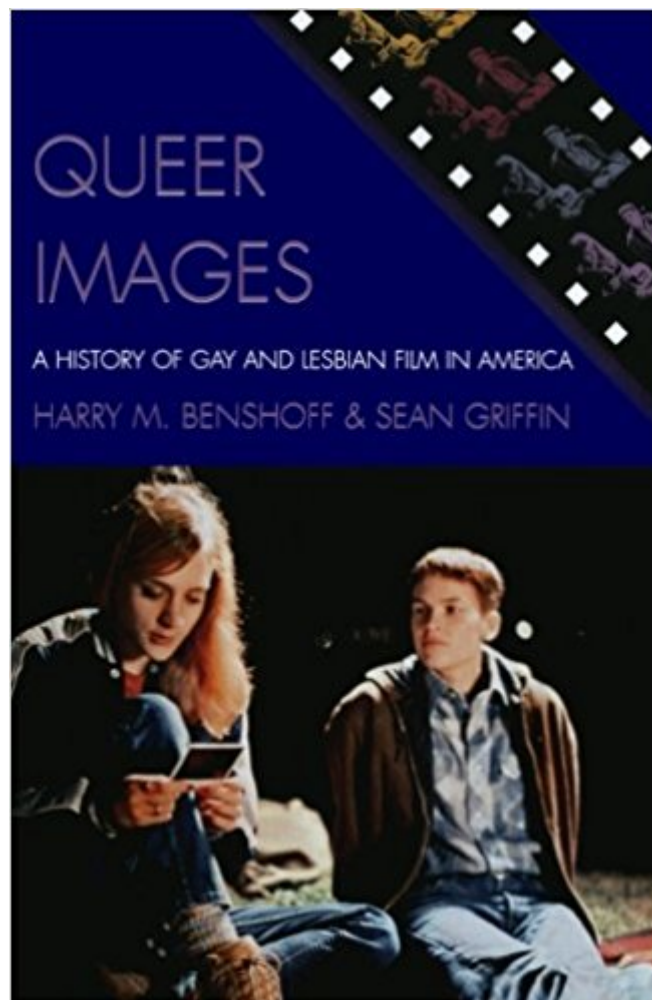




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# **Queer Images: A History Of Gay And Lesbian Film In America (Genre And Beyond: A Film Studies Series)**



## Synopsis

From Thomas Edison's first cinematic experiments to contemporary Hollywood blockbusters, *Queer Images* chronicles the representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer sexualities over one hundred years of American film. The most up-to-date and comprehensive book of its kind, it explores not only the ever-changing images of queer characters onscreen, but also the work of queer filmmakers and the cultural histories of queer audiences. *Queer Images* surveys a wide variety of films, individuals, and subcultures, including the work of discreetly homosexual filmmakers during Hollywood's Golden Age; classical Hollywood's (failed) attempt to purge "sex perversion" from films; the development of gay male camp in Hollywood cinema; queer exploitation films and gay physique films; the queerness of 1960s Underground Film practice; independent lesbian documentaries and experimental films; cinematic responses to the AIDS crisis; the rise and impact of New Queer Cinema; the growth of LGBT film festivals; and how contemporary Hollywood deals with queer issues. This entertaining and insightful book reveals how the meaning of sexual identity—has reflected on the silver screen—has changed a great deal over the decades, and it celebrates both the pioneers and contemporary practitioners of queer film in America. *Queer Images* is an essential volume for film buffs and anyone interested in sexuality and culture.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In their excellent general history of queer sexualities in American film over the past 100 years, co-authors Benshoff and Griffin gracefully realize their goal of creating "a volume that would update

and theoretically complicate Vito Russo's *The Celluloid Closet*." In their up-to-date consideration, they contextualize films in relation to cultural, political and social issues surrounding homosexuality and its perception. From the subtle suggestions in silent movies through classic Hollywood pre- and post-Hays Code, experimental and underground film and the New Queer Cinema of the late 1980s to the present, the college professor authors maintain an accessible style and vocabulary even while tackling prickly points and turns of queer theory. Beyond queer films or characters in films, the study also puts forth a lineage of queer filmmakers from Dorothy Arzner and George Cukor to Todd Haynes and Gregg Araki, and explores how queer movie audiences read, learn from and deconstruct the images presented both of them and by them. While hardcore gay pornographic film is under-considered, early physique films, gay documentaries and AIDS films are well covered, though some mainstream films are conspicuous in their absence (*Dog Day Afternoon*, for instance). Like Russo's groundbreaking study, this new contribution to the field is essential. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

[An] excellent general history of queer sexualities in American film over the past 100 years. . . . The college professor authors maintain an accessible style and vocabulary even while tackling prickly points and turns of queer theory. Like [Vito] Russo's groundbreaking study, this new contribution to the field is essential. (Publishers Weekly)Media professors Benshoff and Griffin set out to create the definitive guide to queer issues in American cinema, and they have succeeded admirably. Using an erudite yet easily readable approach, they explore homosexuality in the movies. . . . What's refreshing about this work is that it's not a one-sided criticism but a guide through the more progressive development of the presentation of gays in movies; readers are left with hope for the future. Highly recommended for general, gay and lesbian, and especially film collections. (Library Journal)Replaces Vito Russo's *The Celluloid Closet* as the authoritative text on this subject. Writing in an engaging, literate style, Benshoff and Griffin brilliantly interweave film theory and queer theory with a history of the U.S. film industry, a complicated task. The authors display remarkable, almost archival knowledge of gay representation in classic Hollywood film and the contributions of queer artists to these films. Including an invaluable bibliography, this volume is now the standard for those interested in gay and lesbian film in the U.S. Essential. (CHOICE)The productive duo Harry Benshoff and Sean Griffin have provided in *Queer Images* a much-needed survey of a field of ongoing historical discovery and socio-cultural turbulence. An ideal textbook for the burgeoning network of queer cinema undergraduate courses, *Queer Images* is an elegantly clear and comprehensive, jargon-free update of Vito Russo and Richard Dyer for the queer twenty-first

century. The book bursts with vivid questions and case studies drawn from the tapestry of film history— a tonic for an amnesiac generation of readers, queer and otherwise. (Thomas Waugh, Concordia University)

Mssrs. Benshoff and Griffin ably guide the avid reader through this by-now vast yet still under exposed field of entertainment and concern. For better or usually worse, motion pictures and the visual media are overly influential in defining who and what non-heterosexual people are. Understandably, a minority that mostly fails to identify and define itself will be 'explained' and misrepresented by others, especially its cross ill-wishers. Benshoff and Griffin point out, entertainingly and urgently, the false either-or 'thinking' that informs American attitudes toward sexuality and gender in real life and reel life— crucially so, for the huge chunk of citizens who believe they have never met 'a homosexual.' Gay-, lesbian-, and bi-themed films and characters are undeniably engaging— and often upsetting— but as this fun and riveting book makes clear, it's one thing to preach 'liberty and justice for all,' and another to practice it— on screen or in life. (Boze Hadleigh, author, *The Lavender Screen*)

Queer Images is an indispensable book for anyone studying the history of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people in film— and for anyone who just simply loves the movies. Comprehensive and entertaining, Queer Images takes us on a fascinating journey through old Hollywood and up through the world of independent film, looking at queer films, filmmakers, and audiences, and how they treated, reflected— and sometimes shaped— sexuality and sexual identity. An important, timely must-read for film buffs of every stripe. (Michelangelo Signorile, talk show host; author, *Life Outside*)

Do you want to know anything and everything about gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and queer films, filmmakers, and film characters? Then Queer Images is the book for you. It is a one-stop treasure trove of information and sharply written observations. Each chapter is filled with insights and surprises. No other history of queer film has covered so much so skillfully. (Alexander Doty, professor of gender studies and communication and culture, Indiana University; author of *Making Things Perfectly Queer*)

Queer Images is a fascinating, sweeping overview of the ways gay men and lesbians have been portrayed on screen and what those portrayals tell us about who we were— and are— as a society. An impressive achievement. (William J. Mann, author, *Edge of Midnight* and *Behind the Screen*)

Kudos for Queer Images! Here's a book for anyone who loves films and for everyone who's interested in broader discussions of sexuality and culture. Chock full of background information on shifting political, cultural, and industry contexts, a gold mine of titles and names, Queer Images is a rewarding read. One of the most comprehensive and up-to-date histories on the topic, Benshoff and Griffin's volume surveys over one hundred years of movies, presents key criticism, and introduces a range of directors, actors, and film execs, too. A

well-researched and timely addition to the field. (Chris Holmlund, author, Impossible Bodies; coeditor, Contemporary American Independent Film)

Provides an interesting array of material on gays and lesbians in the film industry....it is a good starting point and you will probably need other books to substantiate this book..

EXCELLENT! NEEDED FOR A SUMMER CLASS AND RECEIVED IT FAST AND AS STATED

An informative, beautifully written book. It gives great background and other information about movies that have included homosexual relationships as part of the plot. It discusses how these sorts of movies affect society and how, in turn, society affects these types of movies. It's a great book for anyone interested in the interactions of cinema and society.

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