

## 5 LGBTQI+ Movies That Deserve Your Attention Present & Chill by Şebnem Yaren

### 1. Happy Together (1997)



This is a naked and shadowy gay love story from the beautiful and talented eyes of the Chinese auteur Kar-Wai Wong, *Happy Together*. This aggressive and chunky film observes the relationship of two queer men Lai Yiu-Fai (Tony Leung) and Ho Po-wing (Leslie Chung), who flee from Hong Kong to Argentina, where their relationship faces many troubles. They frequently break up and makeup while other men enter both of their lives and spin the storyline.

It is definitely not a film that is easy to watch; however, its significance of starring queer people of color and a POC director in 1996 makes this movie one of the firsts of its kind and a building block of LGBTQI+-oriented films.

### 2. Signature move (2017)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2019/09/03/the-brief-idyll-of-late-90s-wong-kar-wai/>



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A suppressed romance story that takes place in the streets of Chicago, the film focuses on the writhing love of two women: Zaynab (Fawzia Mirza), a Pakistani lawyer who's in her 30s and a Mexican-American woman named Alma (Sari Sanchez); and how they both deal with the curve balls that family, tradition, and religion throw at them, especially Zaynab.

One of the definite reasons that make this film special is that Fawzia Mirza, who stars as Zaynab, is also a Pakistani Muslim lesbian who co-wrote and produced this movie, making the film more authentic and essential for the success of LGBTQI+ people behind the camera. *Signature Move* is a dramedy that catches eyes as being a prominent film that highlights the impact of family, tradition, and religion in LGBTQI+ people's lives.

### 3. Drunktown's Finest (2014)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.signaturemoviemovie.com>



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My personal favorite out of this list, *Drunktown's Finest*, follows three interconnected Native Americans and their hardships in life. The three characters intersect after the film highlights each of their individual stories: an adopted Christian girl, a soon-to-be macho father, and a person transgender woman of color. Poverty, alcoholism, unacceptance, self-image are all themes laid on the table in the film, in their amplified forms, just like how a transgender person faces them in reality.

The film's significance also comes from the qualities of its director. Apart from making a cinematically beautiful film, the director and screenwriter Sydney Freeland is also a transgender and Native-American woman, telling some of her own stories in the sincerest way. With its casting, subject, and director; *Drunktown's Finest* is a revolutionary film that amplifies the importance of LGBTQI+ lives on all fronts.

#### 4. Carol (2015)

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<sup>3</sup> <https://prod3.agileticketing.net/websales/pages/info.aspx?evtinfo=451498~31a96320-4160-4f8e-a5f9-05c4f03c9c01>



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Probably not the most underrated of the list, *Carol* was a movie I wanted to include because of the uneasy, but at the same time visually pleasing, feeling it gives me. The film tells the story of two women: an aspiring photographer and an older soon-to-be-divorced mother in 1950s New York who develop feelings for each other in the most disallowing circumstances.

Academy Award winner Cate Blanchett and nominee Rooney Mara give an outstanding performance in the film, gorgeously portraying a denied and forbidden love tale while facing social prejudices and bigotry. If you're looking for a beautifully shot and aesthetically pleasing period piece that gives the microphone to two LGBTQI+ people who want to live their lives authentically, this movie is a must watch.

## 5. *Tangerine* (2015)



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<sup>4</sup> <https://missbelivet.tumblr.com/Gallery>

<sup>5</sup> <https://news.kgnu.org/2015/10/outsources-trans-girls-on-film-with-tangerine-director-sean-baker/>



To end on a lighter note, *Tangerine* is a drama-comedy that takes place in sunny Los Angeles, focusing on the vibrant lives of two transgender, sex-worker best friends. Although one of them tears through Los Angeles on Christmas Eve to find the pimp who broke her heart, Sin-Dee (Kitana Rodriguez) and Alexandra (Mya Taylor), played by two transgender women, give us a refreshing glimpse at queer lives.

Amid the artificiality of Los Angeles, the tenderness between the two best friends is portrayed beautifully while looking through a softer lens at the difficulties transgender people face daily. In the hands of the talented director and co-writer Sean Baker, this witty and heartwarming story could brighten up one's day while being an important representation for transgender people and sex workers.