

QUEER AMERICAN CINEMA

Journey from the underground into the mainstream

Pre-Code

- Homosexuality was openly depicted in Hollywood films.
- Queer characters were slowly gaining acceptance although they still experienced criticism from conservatives.
- Marlene Dietrich gained both popularity and backlash through her cross dressing and open bisexuality.



Code-Era

- Homosexuality was no longer directly discussed or depicted in Hollywood films. Instead homosexuality could only be alluded to.
- Gay characters often were shown as caricatures.
- Homosexual characters began to be associated with violence and insanity.

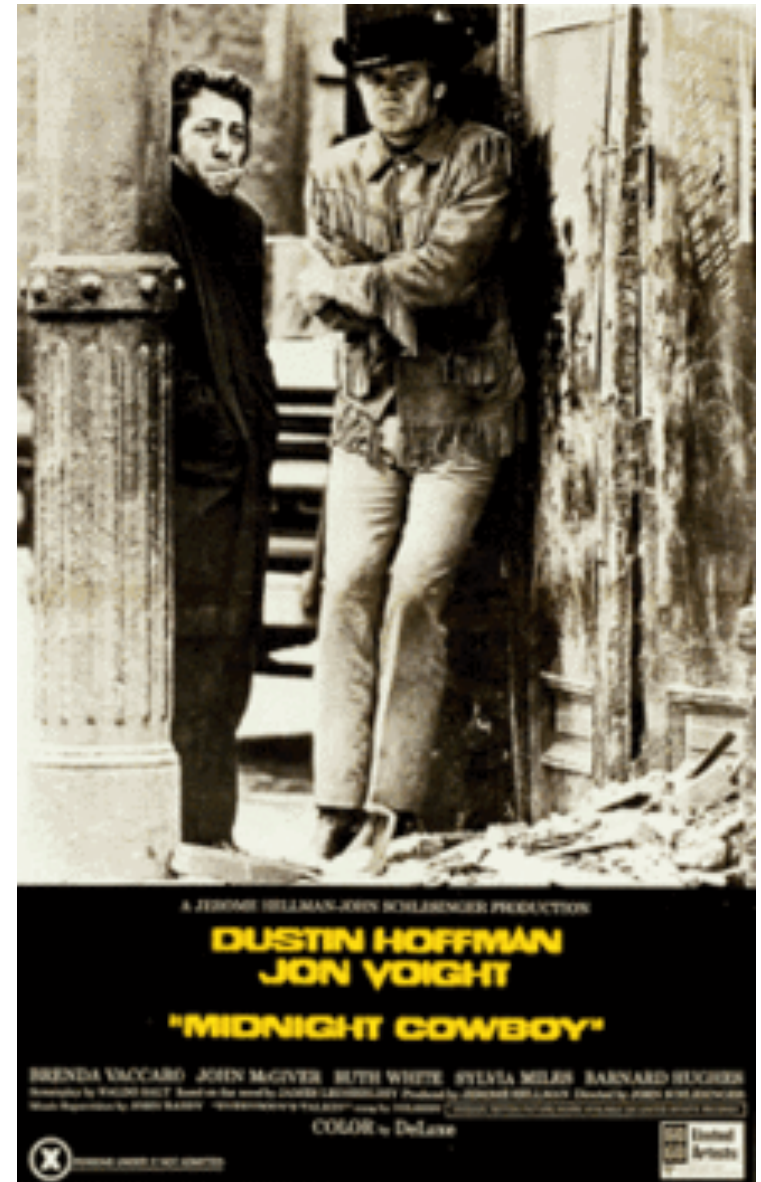


Underground Cinema

- As the cost of filmmaking diminished, queer filmmakers began to find a voice in the world of underground cinema.
- Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey made many controversial and sometimes popular films which depicted a variety of queer characters.
- George Kuchar, Kenneth Anger, John Waters and other queer directors were able to make their start with extremely low budget films and gradually built an audience.

Post-Stonewall

- Stonewall represented a huge step forward for queer characters in films.
- Hollywood films began to portray homosexuals with dignity instead of disgust.
- Midnight Cowboy features a struggling but sympathetic gay male protagonist and yet it received three Oscars including Best Picture.



AIDS Crisis

- Queer cinema began to focus on the victims of AIDS
- A subgenre of AIDS cinema is established with the films *An Early Frost* and *Parting Glances*.
- The AIDS crisis also garners attention from mainstream Hollywood with films like *Philadelphia*.



New Queer Cinema

- The 1990s saw an explosion of highly political independent films from queer directors
- Queer characters were often depicted as heroic and rebellious.
- Notable directors include Gregg Araki, Todd Haynes, Gus Van Sant.
- The movement paved the way for queer cinema to enter the mainstream in the 21st century.

