

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Transgender Made Transparent

Elisa Leonelli · Wednesday, November 18th, 2015

During the past couple of years, there's been a noticeable increase in the media visibility of transgender people. Here's a timeline of the most important events.

On June 9, 2014 *TIME* writes on its cover: "The Transgender Tipping Point. America's next civil rights frontier." To illustrate the issue they choose a photograph of actress Laverne Cox, a transgender woman of color, part of the ensemble cast of the TV series *Orange is the New Black* (OITNB), created by Jenji Leslie Kohan, that first aired on Netflix on July 11, 2013. This popular series is immediately renewed for a second season, that airs June 6, 2014, and for a third season, that airs June 11, 2015, following the new binge-watching model of making all episodes available at once.



Jeffrey Tambor as Maura. *Transparent* (c) Amazon Studios

On September 26, 2014, Amazon Studios, seeking to replicate the success of Netflix, airs all at once the 10 episodes of *Transparent*, a series created by Jill Soloway, inspired by the experience of her own West Coast Jewish family, when in 2011 their father came out as a woman at the age of 75, a Transgender Parent.

On January 11, 2015, the *Hollywood Foreign Press* honors *Transparent* with two Golden Globe awards, for Best Comedy Series, and for Best Actor to Jeffrey Tambor, who plays Mort transitioning to Maura. Tambor says in his acceptance speech: "I would like to dedicate my performance and this award to the transgender community. Thank you for your courage. Thank you for your inspiration. Thank you for your patience. And thank you for letting us be a part of the change." The series is renewed for a second season that will air December 11, 2015.

On June 5, 2015, Netflix airs *Sense 8*, a science fiction series created by the Wachowskis, writers and directors of *The Matrix* (1999). One of the storylines features transgender actress Jamie Clayton as a trans woman in San Francisco. Lana Wachowski, who used to be called Larry, talked publicly about her transition, prior to the October 2012 release of *Cloud Atlas*, that she wrote and directed with her brother Andy and Tom Tykwer, because she felt a responsibility to show her support for the LGBTQ Community, and "try to dispel some of the fears that people have around people like me."

On June 11, 2015, Laverne Cox is pictured on the cover of *Entertainment Weekly* dressed up as the Statue of Liberty. The title reads: "America's TransFormation."

On July 2015, *Vanity Fair* features on its cover a glamour photo of former athlete Bruce Jenner, with the words “Call me Caitlyn.” The reality series *I Am Cait* that documents the transition, starts airing on E! on July 26, 2015. *Transparent* creator Jill Soloway says that Caitlyn Jenner called her on the phone “to let me know how the show helped her to feel okay with her journey and to come out to her family.”



Eddie Redmayne as Lili, Alicia Vikander as Gerda. *The Danish Girl* (c) Focus Features

On September 5, 2015, *The Danish Girl* directed by Tom Hooper premieres at the Venice Film Festival. The movie, that will be released in the US on November 27, is based on a 2000 novel by David Ebershoof, inspired by the true life story of Lili Elbe, a Dutch painter formerly called Einar Wegener, who transitioned in the 1920s, and died in 1931 after a fourth experimental gender reassignment surgery. Eddie Redmayne, who plays Lili, says he consulted Lana Wachowski while she was directing him in *Jupiter Ascending*, and she told him that, “when she was living as Larry she was married to her wife and through transition they’re still together.” That is also what happens with Gerda Gerwig, played by Alicia Vikander in the movie, who lovingly supports her husband during the transition and frequently paints her as Lili.

On September 12, 2015 *About Ray* directed by Gaby Della premieres at the Toronto Film Festival. Elle Fanning plays a contemporary teenager who transitions to male with the support of his mother (Naomi Watts) and his lesbian grandmother (Susan Sarandon). The 17-year-old actress says that there’s an LGBT Club and a gay/straight alliance at her private school in Los Angeles and her generation is much more accepting of people who are different.

On September 20, 2015, the Television Academy gives an Emmy award to Jeffrey Tambor as lead actor in a comedy series for *Transparent*, and best director to Jill Soloway, who in her [acceptance speech](#) thanks her Moppa for coming out, and comments, “She could tomorrow go and try and find an apartment and in 32 states it would be legal for the landlord to look her in the eye and say: ‘We don’t rent to trans people.’ Go to TransEquality.org, vote to pass the Trans Equality bill.”

Ironically, ERA, the [Equal Rights Amendment](#) for women, originally written in 1923, was passed by Congress in 1972, but failed to reach ratification by the required number of 38 states before the 1982 deadline and it’s still not part of the United States Constitution. It reads: “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied on account of sex.”

On November 20, 2015, the annual [Transgender Day of Remembrance](#) (TDoR), founded by Gwendolyn Ann Smith to honor Rita Hester, murdered on November 28, 1998, will be observed worldwide to memorialize those whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence.

Top image: Jeffrey Tambor in Transparent, courtesy Amazon Studios.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, November 18th, 2015 at 9:50 am and is filed under [Film](#), [TV](#), [Media](#)

You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.

