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## The AfterEllen.com 2008 Visibility Awards

Posted by Sarah Warn, Founder and Former Editor in Chief on December 24, 2008

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### BEST THEATRICAL RELEASE(S) WITH LESBIAN/BI CHARACTERS

#### *I Can't Think Straight* (Writer/Director Shamim Sharif)



This love story about a Jordanian woman (**Sheetal Sheth**) and an Indian-British woman (**Lisa Ray**) falling in love despite social pressure to conform to their families' expectations easily received the most votes from AfterEllen.com readers. Although the plot is fairly predictable, the acting is excellent, the characters show an enormous amount of emotional growth over the course of the film, and it's a rare lesbian movie featuring women of Indian descent that doesn't end in tragedy.

Runner-up: *Milk*

### BEST FESTIVAL RELEASE WITH LESBIAN/BI CHARACTERS

#### *Water Lilies* (Writer/Director Céline Sciamma)



This first film by openly gay writer/director **Céline Sciamma** is decidedly French, with long, lingering shots that emphasize the awkwardness and poignancy of three 15-year-olds in various stages of development (physically, emotionally and socially). Sciamma and her three stars —

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**Pauline Acquart, Louise Blachère, and Adèle Haenel** — painfully capture the confusion of desiring something you can't quite articulate yet, even to yourself. (But unlike other films that have tackled this topic, no one dies or kills anyone.)

The film is somewhat reminiscent of the classic French love triangle in the play *Huis Clos* (*No Exit*), which proposes that "hell is other people." These three girls are in a purgatory of sorts as they straddle the line between childhood and adulthood, and the film does an excellent job of capturing their angst, and the burgeoning romantic relationship between two of the girls. A thoughtful if slightly unsettling film, *Water Lilies* is well worth watching.

### WORST FESTIVAL RELEASE WITH LESBIAN/BI CHARACTERS

**When Kiran Met Karen** (Writer/Director Manan Katohora)



Writer/director **Manan Katohora** was forced to change his script to a more melodramatic (read: troubled) story when he couldn't get funding for a happy lesbian love story, and he had also had trouble casting his leads, because so many Indian actresses did not want to play gay characters.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the end result — a film about a woman of Indian descent in New York whose romantic feelings for a white woman threaten her engagement (to a man) — was disappointing. Rife with stereotypes, bad writing, and bad music, it is also plagued by a twist ending that doesn't improve upon the story.

### ✓ BEST LESBIAN/BI WEB SERIES

**3Way** (Created by NancyLee Myatt, Maeve Quinlan, and Paige Bernhardt)



Although there were several good entries this year, *3Way* won in this category by a landslide. Funny, campy, and featuring a cast of attractive out lesbians and extremely gay-friendly straight women (**Jill Bennett, Maile Flanagan, Cathy Shim** and **Maeve Quinlan**), *3Way* appeals to lesbian and bi viewers because it doesn't take itself too seriously, and it's really, really gay (while still including straight people).

Add in guest stars like **Elizabeth Keener, Kristy Swanson**, *Reno 911's* **Ben Garant, Liz Vassey** and **Christina Cox**, and the fact that the show boasts one of the only Asian-American lesbian characters around, and you've got a guaranteed hit!





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