

LoveGBTQ+

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LETTY AND IVANA[Sophie Mayanne]: If you could both introduce yourselves:

[Letty]: I'm 24 and from London, I manage a bar and gallery in London as well as a karaoke hole.

[Ivana]: I'm 25 and also from London. I work in a bar as a sound and lighting technician.

[SM]: How do you feel about the representation of the LGBT community in advertising, and media spaces?

[Letty]: I think it would be good to see more representation that is not tokenistic or just ticking a box. At this time of year, there always seems to be a lot of companies jumping on the Pride rainbow representation bandwagon.

[Ivana]: There isn't enough representation but it's definitely a lot better than how it was when I was growing up. We are slowly moving away from being portrayed through stereotypes.

[SM]: What do you feel represents you?

[Ivana]: I represent me.

think of the answer, but I guess Ivana hit the nail on the head!

[Letty]: I was struggling to

[SM]: What does love mean to you?

[Letty]: For me love is largely about that person that enriches and enhances your life day to day, taking care of each other and knowing that someone unconditionally has your back.

[Ivana]: Love is never being afraid because you will always have the support from that special someone no matter what life throws at you.

RIO AND ZACH[SM]: If you could both introduce yourselves:

[Rio]: Call me Rio, or Ram! I'm 22 in a couple of days, from Gloucester, and I'm currently signed off from work to focus on my mental health and I'm an artist.

[Zach]: Hi I'm Zach, I'm 22, and I live in Cheltenham, I've recently come back from traveling and volunteering abroad and now I'm back working at a wedding venue.

[SM]: How do you feel about the representation of the LGBT community in advertising, and media spaces?

[Rio]: I don't feel that there is enough representation and I think it's a matter of 'Are we being well-represented?', are we being portrayed properly, without the classic tropes, without being tokenised, or messily written in. I can slowly see it happening but it's still not fast enough. I actively have to search for media spaces that represent us properly.

[Zach]: I feel that because I try to surround myself with lots of LGBT creatives, I naturally see a lot more LGBT content. But away from social networking, I don't see much at all. I know there have been more instances recently but as Rio said it hasn't been quick enough.

[SM]: What would you like to see more of?

[Rio]: I would love to see more LGBTQ people simply living their lives on tv or in film without their identity being of any importance or significance to the plot. I would also like to see more trans coming of age things.

[Zach]: Education on LGBT families, lifestyles and sex so that children grow up as open-minded as possible about these things and are never made to feel like they aren't 'normal'.

[SM]: What does love mean to you?

[Zach]: I feel many different types of love i.e. the love I have for Rio, or my dog or my friends are all different and I think each one has a different meaning to me. I would say one of the most important things to me is loving a person for who they are rather than who you may expect them to be, no matter the relationship you have with them.

[Rio]: I feel the same way as Zach, and I also believe that love can be expressed and received in many ways, and everyone is different. I've never been great with affection but I've learned to display it in a way that is comfortable for everyone

IZZY AND LIEPA[SM]: If you could both introduce yourselves:

[Izzy]: I'm 20, From Amsterdam and a student of Eastern European Studies. [Liepa]: I'm 18 and I'm from Lithuania. Currently living in Utrecht, I study Media and Culture in Utrecht University.

[SM]: How do you feel about the representation of the LGBT community in advertising, and media spaces.

[Izzy]: I think there is representation of LGBT people, although I'm not too sure if it is representative enough. It has taken a long time for LGBT characters to be presented in the media, although at times I feel the depiction is still dated. In films and TV gay couples always break up, gay men most of the time remain single and sleep around, and lesbians always 'meet the right guy'. To me, this is a very selective portrayal of the lives we lead. I feel as though the lives of LGBT characters remain exaggerated and glorified to feed into a heterosexual conception and reflection of our own sexuality.

[Liepa]: I don't feel that there is enough representation of the LGBT community. I barely see any ads or anything in the media here that would represent the community, maybe some on Instagram. But never on the streets. Most LGBT events that are happening are also organized by LGBT organizations, for LGBT people.

[SM]: What changes do you hope to see in the future?

[Izzy]: Successful and inspiring gay characters and icons being represented in the media [Liepa]: I hope in the future we will have an equally active representation both in the media and in society of LGBT people. That half of the events happening in town would also at least have LGBT people represented in their advertisements, same with the media and general advertising.

[SM]: What does love mean to you?

[Izzy]: I think love is about understanding and accepting someone. I think it is about understanding where they come from, what their views are, and who they truly are. I think once you can truly understand who someone is, it makes it 1000 times more beautiful when you fall in love with every single bit of them. And support, support is a big factor. Supporting someone through their life, and learning and appreciating things you would have never encountered before. In that way, I think love is a beautiful recognition of someone else- and an immense appreciation of what you have learned.

[Liepa]: Love for me is not getting bored with a person because I tend to get bored very very easily. Of course, besides that comes trust, encouragement, fun. She makes me try to be a better person, do more and work harder for what I want to achieve. Love motivates me, because not only do I want to be the best partner I can be, but I also want to be the best person on my own.

BAILEY AND PAUL[SM]: If you could both introduce yourselves:

[Bailey]: Hi I'm Bailey, 19 from London and studying Fashion Journalism at Central Saint Martins.

[Paul]: Hi I'm Paul 19, from London and studying Fashion Journalism at the London College of Fashion.

[SM]: How do you feel about the representation of the LGBT community in advertising and media spaces.

[Bailey]: To a degree again, and where the representation is, it mostly feels tokenistic or done as a marketing ploy.

[SM]: What would you like to see more of?

[Paul]: Trans representation in the media and more people supporting Munroe Bergdorf. [Bailey]: More queer people in positions of power.

FRANK AND LAIKE[SM]: If you could both introduce yourselves:

[Frank]: My name is Frank, I'm 21 years old. I study Sociology with Human Rights and I volunteer with the Red Cross, where I plan to further my career in crisis aid. I also have a small business selling LGBTQ+ themed chokers on Etsy.

[Laike]: My name is Laike and I am 19 years old and originally I am from Aylesbury, but I have recently moved to Colchester to be with my boyfriend Frank. I am an Entertainments Manager at a children's play center, however, I am an actor by trade. I also volunteer with the Red Cross with Frank.

[SM]: How do you feel about the representation of the LGBT community in advertising, and media spaces.

[Laike]: I believe that there can't be enough representation in the media, for the sole reason that there can't be enough representation for straight people. For us to be fully equal, we need to forget the idea that it's a burden or a breakthrough to have an advertisement of LGBTQ+ people.

[SM]: What do you feel represents you?

[Laike]: Love, Happiness, Equality, Animals, and Frank. The only things I will ever need. [Frank]: Intersectionality. The acceptance and support of all minority groups. As Marsha P Johnson said: No pride for some of us, without liberation for all of us.