

The Lesbian Visibility Maze explores and critiques the ways in which lesbians are represented in media in four different forms. Firstly, the ways that lesbianism is sexualized by the porn industry, secondly, the ways in which lesbianism is erased in mainstream romance that is marketed towards heteronormative audiences, thirdly, the ways in which lesbianism is often portrayed as white-washed, cisgender, and tragic, and lastly, the way that lesbianism is villainized.

I chose this topic because, as a lesbian myself, I feel like the representation of lesbianism in the media has a huge force on straight society, as well as young, impressionable members of the LGBTQ+ community, and has plenty of room for improvement. I wanted to shed light on some of the issues that these tropes of representation create for lesbian audiences, and how they can be improved.

This game allows the player to navigate through four different “screens”; each one exploring a different mode in which lesbianism appears in the media. The game begins when our protagonist enters a “screen portal”, entering the Lesbian Visibility Maze in our first room. The player must interact with NPCs and complete tasks in order to escape each room and complete the maze. In this process, the player learns about the ways in which lesbian visibility on screens is not always positive, and that the best representation of lesbians must come from the voices of their own community.

I chose to approach this topic using bright colors and dreamy imagery to give each room an otherworldly appearance. I wanted to imagine each room as its own tiny universe, in which I could exaggerate the aspects of each micro-society. I also wanted to incorporate colors to give nods to straight and lesbian society. The room in which lesbianism does not exist is a ballroom wedding in which a bride and groom are decorated in blue and pink respectively, to represent the strict gender binaries of heteronormative romance in the media. The room with the white-washed lesbians incorporates the colors of the lesbian flag: pink and orange. I wanted to make a few other nods to media representation for the audience to connect to, such as the window browsers that live inside the sexualized room, to represent pornography, and the “man” and “woman” symbols that appear on bathroom signs inside the heteronormative room. Overall, I wanted this game to appear friendly, inviting and easy on the eyes to draw the viewer in and engage with the content without too much of a serious tone. At times even, the friendly tone is intentionally misleading: the white-washed lesbians are covered in hearts as they caress each other tenderly, only for the viewer to be prompted to kill one of the lovers. Presenting the content this way with juxtaposition between dreamy, or even comical imagery and a heavy-handed message felt like the appropriate way to drive my point home.