

## Weekend Box Office 1/9-1/11

Courtesy of [Comscore](#)

Rank	Title	Wk	Theatres	Weekend	% Change	Average/ Theatre	Total
1	<a href="#">Avatar: Fire and Ash</a> (20 <sup>th</sup> )	4	3,700	21,300,000	-49	5,757	342,590,528
2	<a href="#">Primate</a> (Paramount)	1	2,964	11,300,000	-	3,812	11,300,000
3	<a href="#">The Housemaid</a> (Lionsgate)	4	3,123	11,200,000	-26	3,586	94,154,000
4	<a href="#">Zootopia 2</a> (Disney)	7	3,200	10,100,000	-48	3,156	378,844,584
5	<a href="#">Greenland 2: Migration</a> (Lionsgate)	1	2,710	8,500,000	-	3,137	8,500,000
6	<a href="#">Marty Supreme</a> (A24)	4	2,512	7,633,062	-39	3,039	70,133,369
7	<a href="#">Anaconda</a> (Sony)	3	3,075	5,100,000	-49	1,659	54,273,000
8	<a href="#">The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants</a> (Paramount)	4	2,567	3,800,000	-54	1,480	63,631,000
9	<a href="#">David</a> (Angel)	4	2,475	3,087,465	-60	1,247	75,174,491
10	<a href="#">Song Sung Blue</a> (Focus)	3	2,262	3,000,000	-49	1,326	31,147,000
		<b>Total</b>		<b>\$85,020,527</b>			

[See Complete Results](#)

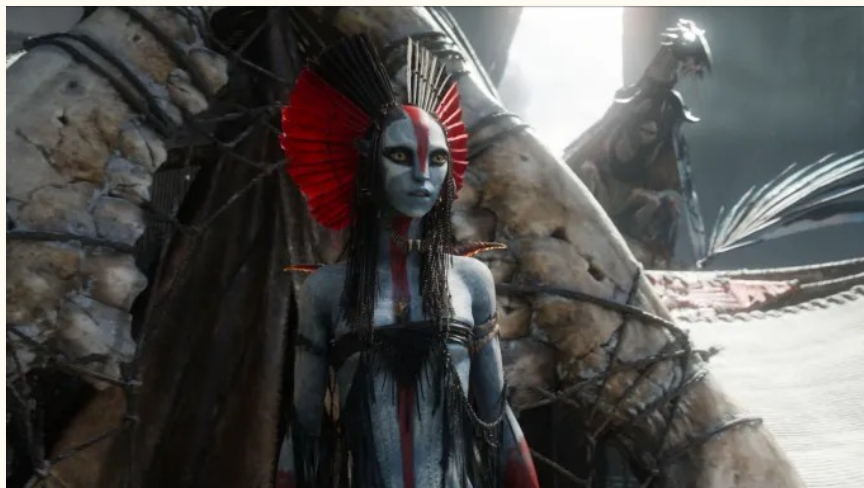
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## AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH Wins Fourth Weekend in a Row

Disney and 20<sup>th</sup> Century's AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH led all films at the box office by bringing in \$21.3M. James Cameron's sci-fi sequel has held the top spot for all four weekends it has played in theatres. Substantial support came from two new movies, Paramount's PRIMATE, which contributed \$11.3M, and Lionsgate's GREENLAND 2: MIGRATION, with \$8.5M. Lionsgate's THE HOUSEMAID with \$11.2M in its fourth weekend and Disney's ZOOTOPIA 2 with \$7.1M in its seventh weekend chipped in admirably. The total weekend box office amounted to \$98.6M.



Both weekends in 2026 have bested those same weekends last year. On weekend #2 in 2025, another Gerard Butler film, DEN OF THIEVES: PANTERA, from Lionsgate, was the top-grossing movie with \$15.0M in its opening. The total box office for that weekend was \$78.6M. Weekend #2 in 2026 has produced 125% of the total box office from the same weekend last year.










If it seems as if we are making a big deal about the winning start to 2026, we are. In fact, production from every week this year will be important if the overall box office is to go up by \$1B or more compared to \$8.6B in 2025. Last year's Q1 was very slow, with the lowest box office of any quarter in the post-pandemic period. Now is the time to take advantage of the easier week-to-week, year-over-year comps. Next weekend, we expect the momentum to continue with the opening of Sony's 28 YEARS LATER: THE BONE TEMPLE, one of the most anticipated films of the first quarter. It won't be a cakewalk to match last year's box office, when Sony's ONE OF THEM DAYS opened at 11.8M and WOLFMAN from Universal took in \$10.9M. Last year's MLK holiday weekend brought in a total box office of \$77.7M for the three days.

### FIRST PLACE

Even though AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH dropped 49% from last weekend, its \$21.4M was still good enough for a first-place finish. This takes its 24-day totals to \$342.6M domestically and \$1.231B worldwide. We expect this to be the last weekend FIRE AND ASH will be able to hold onto first place. Next Friday is the beginning of MLK weekend, and Sony's 28 DAYS LATER: THE BONE TEMPLE should open well and claim the top spot. If that happens, it will be the earliest example among the three AVATAR movies when first place was given up. AVATAR held the top spot for seven consecutive weeks, giving the crown to DEAR JOHN from Screen Gems when it opened with \$30.5M in its debut weekend from February 5-7, 2010. AVATAR: THE WAY OF WATER lasted for seven consecutive weekends as well, knocked off by Universal's KNOCK AT THE CABIN with \$14.1M in its opening weekend from February 3-5, 2023.

This is emblematic of AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH's lower performance compared to the two previous AVATAR movies. To-date, FIRE AND ASH is falling further behind chapters 1 and 2, grossing only 80% and 66% respectively after 24 days. Just last weekend, those comparisons stood at 87% and 72%, so the trend is downward. We are expecting FIRE AND ASH to wind up with approximately \$385M domestic and \$1.4B globally. That would give it a ratio of 3.5 in worldwide box office to 1 for its production budget, still profitable but not in the same league as the first two AVATARS. AVATAR earned \$2.9B globally, THE WAY OF WATER earned \$2.3M, and FIRE AND ASH will finish with around \$1.4B. While all three movies have generated huge sales by any standard, the steady decline is concerning and may influence decisions about making AVATAR 4 and AVATAR 5.

### AVATAR Movies after 24 Days

			
	AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH	AVATAR: THE WAY OF WATER	AVATAR
Release Date	12/19/2025	12/16/2022	12/18/2009
Domestic Locations	3,800	4,202	3,452
Domestic Opening	\$89.2M	\$134.1M	\$77.0M   \$116.6M*
Domestic 2 <sup>nd</sup> Weekend	\$64.0M (-28%)	\$63.3M (-53%)	\$75.6M (-2%)   \$114.2M*
Domestic 3 <sup>rd</sup> Weekend	\$40.0M (-37%)	\$67.4M (+6%)	\$68.5M (-9%)   \$103.5M*
Domestic 4 <sup>th</sup> Weekend	\$21.3M (-49%)	\$45.8M (-32%)	\$50.3M (-27%)   \$76.0M*
Domestic 24-Day total	\$342.6M	\$517.6M	\$430.8M   \$650.9M*
Domestic Total	TBD	\$688.5M	\$785.2M   \$1.2B*
Worldwide Total	TBD	\$2.3B	\$2.9B   \$4.4B*
Production Budget	\$400M	\$350M	\$237M   \$358.8M*
RT Critics	 66%	 76%	 81%
RT Audience	 90%	 92%	 82%

\*Adjusted for inflation

## SECOND PLACE

Paramount's PRIMATE opened with \$11.3M in its first three days and claimed second place for the weekend. This gore-filled chimp-gone-wild horror film was directed by Johannes Roberts, known for creating tense action on a low budget. His best-known works to-date were RESIDENT EVIL: WELCOME TO RACON CITY in 2021, 47 METERS DOWN in 2017 and THE STRANGERS: PREY AT NIGHT in 2018. In addition to directing the movie, Roberts was also the screenwriter for PRIMATE, which is just as well since the ending of the script was completely rewritten one week before filming began. If Roberts had not been the screenwriter, this would have delayed the beginning of filming. Roberts explained that the last-minute change was not driven by studio handlers but instead by how flat the story felt during initial table reads. He rewrote the final scenes to make it more impactful and smarter, and to steer away from tropes of other animal-driven horror movies made before.

PRIMATE's storyline follows a small group of vacationers who go on a retreat to an isolated Hawaiian estate after one of the group inherits the property from a reclusive primatologist. The getaway is meant to be restorative – sun, ocean, and silence – but the house carries a disturbing secret. Years earlier, the scientist who passed down the estate conducted experiments on a chimpanzee who was infected with a mutated strain of rabies in an attempt to study aggression and intelligence under stress. When the chimp escapes its containment and reappears near the estate, the group dismisses the threat initially, assuming the animal is injured and harmless. That illusion collapses as the chimp begins to attack the party deliberately, using its strength, speed, and animal cunning. With electric power and communication cut off, the survivors must confront the reality that they are being hunted by a terrifying and purposeful beast.

The star of the movie is the killer chimp Ben, brought to life by movement specialist Miguel Torres Umba in makeup and suit work rather than using an actual animal or CGI. After a number of recent true stories of aggressive primates, Paramount executives were said to be nervous to greenlight this movie, worrying that audiences could “turn against” them or simply stay away altogether. The swimming pool at the house is a key element in the plot because of a chimp's natural fear of deep water. In the story, the pool becomes a safety zone for the human characters, as long as they can somehow



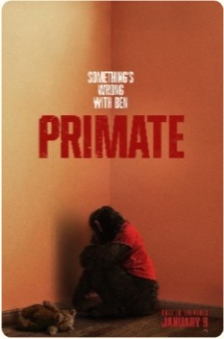
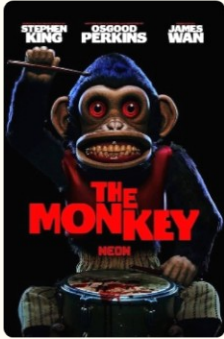




make it there. Troy Kotsur was cast in the role of Adam, a deaf author and owner of the chimp Ben. Born deaf himself, Kotsur won an Oscar for his performance in CODA from 2021, in which he also played a hearing-disabled character. PRIMATE features unique scenes without sound.

The film was shot in less than two months at the end of 2024, with principal photography taking place from September to early November. Because of the onslaught of horror films released in 2025, Paramount opted to allow Roberts plenty of time to complete his movie and picked the second weekend in 2026 to open the film. This strategy appears to have paid off, as its opening weekend has more than met expectations.

Reviews for the film are mostly positive, with critics on Rotten Tomatoes scoring it 78% while audiences have weighed in at 73%. Here are a few of the critics’ reviews. *Variety* said, “Is PRIMATE a slickly executed piece of slaughterhouse shlock? Very much so. Yet Ben, as a slasher, represents a minor triumph of practical effects.” *Roger Ebert.com* takes the view that “It’s a flimsy series of contrivances to get a shockingly realistic ape to rip the faces off of stupid human beings in increasingly creative ways. What more do you want, really?” *The Film Verdict* says, “Doesn’t necessarily hold up to a lot of scrutiny, but for sheer horror pleasure and monster-movie squirms, this silly monkey movie delivers the goods.” The *Los Angeles Times* went low by saying, “One chimpanzee with a typewriter could pound out the script for 'Primate' in an hour.”

When you bring on Johannes Roberts to direct a horror film, you get a movie that scares audiences without having to throw money away. He specializes in making movies that cost somewhere between \$10M and \$20M and bring in a box office multiple of 3, 4, or 5. PRIMATE cost only \$12M to make, and will need only \$30M worldwide to break even. We expect that amount to be in the till by the end of its second weekend. For comparison, we look to the 2025 horror film THE MONKEY. While one movie stars a vicious chimpanzee and the other an ominous stuffed monkey, both key characters are primates, and both movies were made on a very tight budget. Here is how the battle of the primates shapes up.

PRIMATE vs. THE MONKEY

		
	PRIMATE	THE MONKEY
Release Date	1/9/2026	2/21/2025
Domestic Locations	2,964	3,200
Domestic Opening Weekend	\$11.3M	\$14.0M
Domestic Total	TBD	\$39.7M
Worldwide Total	TBD	\$68.9M
Production Budget	\$12M	\$10M
RT Critics	 78%	 77%
RT Audience	 73%	 55%

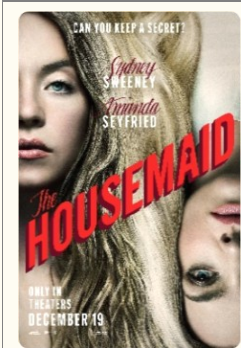





THIRD PLACE

Lionsgate’s psychological thriller THE HOUSEMAID had another great weekend, adding \$11.2 to its total while dropping 25%. This brings its 24-day tally to \$94.2M domestically and \$192.5M worldwide. The film has risen to the highest domestic-grossing movie of Sydney Sweeney’s career, surpassing the 2023 romantic comedy ANYONE BUT YOU, which earned \$88.3M in North America. That also became the highest-grossing rom-com in the post-pandemic period. THE HOUSEMAID should pass \$100M domestic by the end of next weekend.

ANYONE BUT YOU finished with a worldwide box office of \$220.3M, and that will likely keep it in first place globally for movies starring the young actress. THE HOUSEMAID has earned only \$98.3M in foreign territories so far, compared with the \$132.0M earned by ANYONE BUT YOU. We attribute this relative difference in international results to the strength of rom-com movies internationally, compared to psychological thrillers.

Last weekend, we highlighted the newsworthy year that Sweeney had in 2025, and... well... why not hold onto that spotlight in 2026? Sweeney drew renewed attention last week when she appeared in *W Magazine*'s Annual Best Performances issue in a nearly naked state, covered head-to-toe in metallic gold body paint. It was a portrait reminiscent of Marilyn Monroe and the pinups of Hollywood's past. Did this magazine appearance help the weekend box office for her current movie? We're certain that Lionsgate has no problem at all with Sweeney's attention-grabbing appearance.

#### THE HOUSEMAID vs. A SIMPLE FAVOR





		
	THE HOUSEMAID	A SIMPLE FAVOR
Release Date	12/19/2025	9/14/2018
Domestic Locations	3,015	3,102
Domestic Opening Weekend	\$19.0M	\$16.0M
Domestic 2nd Weekend	\$15.4M (-19%)	\$10.3M (-36%)
Domestic 3rd Weekend	\$14.9M	\$6.5 (-36%)
Domestic 4th Weekend	\$11.2M	\$3.4M (-43%)
Domestic 24 Day total	\$94.2M	\$49.0M
Domestic Total	TBD	\$53.5M
Worldwide Total	TBD	\$97.6M
RT Critics	 72%	 84%
RT Audience	 92%	 72%

## FOURTH PLACE

Disney's ZOOTOPIA 2 finished in fourth place in its seventh weekend with \$10.1M, a drop of 48% from last weekend. This brings its 47-day total to \$378.8M domestically and \$1.655 worldwide. The continuing success of ZOOTOPIA 2 has allowed it to climb the all-time ranks of animated movies, now sitting in 14<sup>th</sup> place domestically behind SPIDER-MAN: ACROSS THE SPIDER-VERSE, which earned \$380.3M in 2023. Internationally, it has been a stand-out performer, ranking third all-time for U.S.-produced animated movies. At this time, its ratio of worldwide gross to production cost is an eye-popping 11 to 1.

## ZOOTOPIA 2 vs. ZOOTOPIA after 47 Days



	ZOOTOPIA 2	ZOOTOPIA
Release Date	11/26/2025	3/4/2016
Domestic Locations	4,000	3,887
Domestic Opening Weekend	\$96.8M	\$75.1M
Domestic 2nd Weekend	\$43.0M (-57%)	\$51.3M (-32%)
Domestic 3rd Weekend	\$26.3M (-39%)	\$37.2M (-28%)
Domestic 4th Weekend	\$14.5M (-44%)	\$24.0M (-35%)
Domestic 5th Weekend	\$20M (+28%)	\$19.3M (-20%)
Domestic 6th Weekend	\$19.0M	\$14.3M (-26%)
Domestic 7th Weekend	\$10.1	\$8.1 (-43%)
Domestic Total after 47 Days	\$378.8M	\$308.7M
Domestic Total	TBD	\$341.3M
Worldwide Total	TBD	\$1.0B
Production Budget	\$150M	\$150M
RT Critics	 91%	 98%
RT Audience	 96%	 92%

## FIFTH PLACE

Lionsgate's **GREENLAND 2: MIGRATION** finished in fifth place with \$8.5M in its opening. This is a sequel to the 2020 film **GREENLAND**, which had a peculiar theatrical run but still managed to earn \$52.3M in worldwide gross. The original **GREENLAND** was released in Belgium first on July 29, 2020, and went on from there to play in several additional foreign markets. It never came to North American theatres, with the film coming out in the summer of 2020, just months after the arrival of COVID-19 in March. After bypassing theatres, **GREENLAND** debuted as a PVD rental on December 18, 2020. It ranked near or at the top of the charts for weeks after its online release.

The PVD money plus international box office is estimated to have been around \$80M. After spending \$35M to make the movie, it came in just below the break-even level of \$88M. This was a big picture for STX, and who knows what it would have done if its position in the release calendar had been more favorable. In August 2023, after Lionsgate failed to acquire STX, the two companies came to an agreement through which Lionsgate would act as STX's domestic distributor for theatrical releases and library titles.

Given the encouraging performance of **GREENLAND** under difficult conditions, both STX and Lionsgate agreed to proceed with a sequel, which started principal photography in August 2025. The film was directed by Ric Roman Waugh, known for making action thrillers. He directed the original **GREENLAND** and has worked with the lead actor Gerard Butler on **ANGEL HAS FALLEN** in 2019. The storyline of **GREENLAND 2: MIGRATION** picks up a decade after the comet impact that ended civilization in the first film. Some have survived underground in massive bunkers, including the Greenland facility that saved the Garrity family. With Earth's surface slowly becoming habitable again, governments organize a mass relocation known as Migration to move survivors out of their bunkers and toward areas believed to be capable of sustaining life.



John Garrity (Gerard Butler), his wife Allison (Morena Baccarin in the **DEADPOOL** trilogy), and their now-teenage son Nathan (Roman Griffin Davis in **THE LONG WALK** from 2025) join a perilous expedition across a devastated, lawless

landscape. The world above is scarred by the original crater impact, unstable weather, radiation zones, and survivor factions competing for scarce resources. As the organization and authority break down, the Garrity family is forced to navigate violent encounters, moral dilemmas, and the psychological toll of rebuilding society from scratch. Unlike the first film's race-against-the-clock narrative, *MIGRATION* is more contemplative and survival-focused, emphasizing endurance and trust, and reflective about whether humanity deserves a second chance. The journey becomes less about reaching a destination and more about redefining family, community, and hope in a permanently altered world. While Greenland is part of the setting of the second film, most of the movie deals with travel across the world to explore other areas that have survived.

Most viewers enjoyed the original, with critics more supportive with a 77% score on Rotten Tomatoes and audiences coming in at 63%. This time out, the response has not been as positive, with a 56% rating from critics and 65% from audiences. Here is a sample of what the critics are saying. The *Detroit News* said, "GREENLAND 2 is a strictly second-tier affair, with neither the special effects nor the set-ups raising the pulse of the on-screen action." *Variety* suggests that, "GREENLAND 2: MIGRATION is one of the soggiest excuses for a sequel in memory. The first GREENLAND, released at the end of 2020, was an environmental disaster movie. The new one is a post-disaster slog." IndieWire weighs in with, "To its significant detriment, 'Migration' is a far more generic and action-oriented movie than its predecessor, which had the benefit of watching civilization get pulled apart at the seams." It is not all bad as The *New York Times* stays positive with, "Though this sequel's brisk plot hits familiar postapocalyptic beats, Waugh strikes them with immense force."

The film seems to have fallen into a trap that befalls many sequels. Having made the original for \$35M, director Ric Roman Waugh somehow needed almost triple that amount at \$90M to make the sequel only six years later. While the original found some success under difficult circumstances, that film did not point to a sequel being able to earn the \$225M necessary for this movie to be profitable. The opening weekend performance of only \$8.5M has consigned GREENLAND 2 to a loss-making effort. For a more realistic comparison, we are lining up GREENLAND 2: MIGRATION with ANGEL HAS FALLEN, another film directed by Waugh and starring Gerard Butler.

#### GREENLAND 2 MIGRATION vs. ANGEL HAS FALLEN

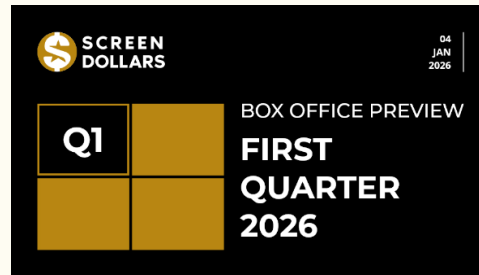
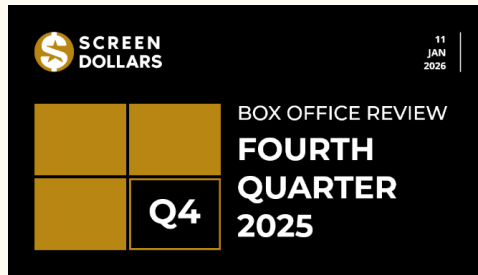
		
	GREENLAND 2 MIGRATION	ANGEL HAS FALLEN
Release Date	1/9/2026	8/23/2019
Domestic Locations	2,710	3,286
Domestic Opening Weekend	\$8.5M	\$21.4M
Domestic Total	TBD	\$69.0M
Worldwide Total	TBD	\$146.7M
Production Budget	\$90M	\$40M
RT Critics	🌸 56%	🌸 38%
RT Audience	🍿 65%	🔥 93%

## Where Are We as of 1/8/2026

After the first week of 2026, the current year's domestic box office stands at 128% compared with 2025, 158% compared with 2024, and 127% compared with 2023.

2026 vs. 2025	2026 vs. 2024	2026 vs. 2023
YEAR TO DATE – 1 Week – 2026: \$179,188,000 2025: \$140,144,000 128%	YEAR TO DATE – 1 Week – 2026: \$179,188,000 2024: \$113,188,000 158%	YEAR TO DATE – 1 Week – 2026: \$179,188,000 2023: \$140,980,000 127%

To read the 2025 FOURTH QUARTER REVIEW or the 2026 FIRST QUARTER PREVIEW, click below:



## NOTABLE INDUSTRY NEWS & COMMENTARY

### Theaters Explain Why Netflix Shouldn't Buy Warner Bros., and Warner Bros. Explains Why Paramount Shouldn't Buy Warner Bros.

*IndieWire*

Cinema United sprang into action this week with a message to lawmakers about the potential negative outcome for a Warner Bros. Discovery sale. Cinema United's President and CEO Michael O'Leary met with representatives from the U. S. House's Subcommittee on the Administrative State, Regulatory Reform, and Antitrust to outline the organization's concerns with both the Netflix and Paramount proposed acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery. O'Leary characterized either consolidation as likely to have an "irreversible negative impact" on theatres, resulting in massive job loss across the economy.

After O'Leary's meeting with the House committee, Cinema United [released a statement](#) listing his arguments for the public to consider. The focus of the statement was primarily on Netflix's proposed deal, highlighting its Co-CEO Ted Sarandos' numerous comments and long-held belief that releasing movies to theatres is "outmoded." More recently, the Netflix chief has stated that the exclusive theatrical release window should "evolve" to something on the order of 1-2 weeks. Cinema United also threw shade on Paramount's proposed acquisition of WBD, with the inherent risk of concentrating up to 40% of the domestic box office under one studio.



*Michael O'Leary from Cinema United, David Zaslav from Warner Bros. Discovery and David Ellison from Paramount Skydance*

Meanwhile, further developments were taking place this week between the negotiating parties. WBD's board of directors [rejected Paramount's most recent offer to acquire its rival at \\$30 per share](#), citing concern about the debt that Paramount would be taking to finance the deal. While this rebuff from the WBD board [was expected](#), [Paramount is persisting](#) with its offer until the January 21<sup>st</sup> deadline, when WBD shareholders will need to voice their opinion on the takeover offer.



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## How IMAX Crushed Other Theater Stocks in 2025

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CNBC



While the 2025 box office overall did not meet the most optimistic goals of theatre owners, one exhibitor is notably outperforming the market. While stock prices for the largest circuits AMC, Cinemark and Marcus were all down, the share price for IMAX grew steadily throughout the year, ending up 44% higher than where it started. This excellent performance was capped off with IMAX reporting [\\$1.28 billion in box office revenue in 2025](#), a 40% increase over last year and its highest level ever.

The divergence in IMAX's performance versus the other exhibitors is mostly due to changes in the moviegoing habits and preferences of consumers. The post-pandemic period has seen a sizeable increase in ticket sales to see movies on the biggest possible screen, either in an IMAX or other premium large format (PLF) auditorium. IMAX

benefits from this trend in two ways, both with theatres making the investment to offer IMAX auditoriums and studios opting to film their new action movies using IMAX cameras and technology. A few examples of the blockbusters scheduled for 2026 release that were filmed in IMAX are STAR WARS: THE MANDALORIAN AND GROGU, NARNIA: THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW, DUNE: PART THREE and [THE ODYSSEY](#).

Many exhibitors have also installed their own branded Premium Large Format screens, such as AMC's BigD, Prime, and XL, Regal's RPX, Cinemark's XD, and Marcus' UltraScreen and SuperScreen auditoriums. On the one hand, exhibitors are not on the hook to pay royalties to IMAX when showing movies on these in-house branded formats, which makes each ticket sale more profitable to the theatre. They also have more control over installing luxury seating in their PLF auditoriums, an increasingly important amenity for their customers. On the other hand, IMAX has been very successful in building brand awareness with the public, as IMAX represents the best possible screen and projection format for experiencing a high-end action film. The tension between IMAX and exhibitors has been building, with some reports emerging that [exhibitors are considering banding together to create a shared brand for Premium Large Format](#) as an alternative to IMAX. But developing and marketing a new PLF brand is a tall order, requiring cooperation between rivals and significant investment across the board.

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## SAG-AFTRA Chief Won't "Rule Out A Strike" Heading into Contract Talks with Studios & Streamers Next Month

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Deadline



2026 is on tap to be an extremely consequential year for the entertainment industry, and not only because of the high-profile potential sale of Warner Bros. The new year

will include another round of negotiations between the major studios and the Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFTRA), Writers Guild of America (WGA), and Directors Guild of America (DGA). The mere possibility of a new labor dispute in the media and entertainment industry is a terrifying prospect, given the extreme damage done by the prolonged strikes in 2023 of the WGA and SAG-AFTRA unions. The issues at hand in the upcoming talks will be different than those from the 2023 negotiations, but they could wind up being equally contested.

One of the major topics will be the status of the health and retirement plans for members of the guilds, and the overall length of a new contract. The health and retirement plans for all three guilds are running at a massive deficit and desperately in need of new funding sources to meet current

and future obligations. [Deadline reported](#) last month that the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), representing studios in these negotiations, has stated that it will add up to \$100 million in funding to bolster these resources. In return, the AMPTP is asking the guilds to commit to a five-year contract instead of the typical three-year agreement.

The AMPTP maintains that the industry needs the stability of a five-year runway to plan accordingly, while the guilds

are opposed to a longer agreement, saying that it would allow the studios to ignore their member's evolving needs. SAG-AFTRA negotiations will come first, beginning in February, and this week [the union's chief and lead negotiator Duncan Crabtree-Ireland said publicly that a strike was "on the table"](#) if necessary to maintain a three-year term. The industry is waiting in anxious anticipation, hoping that these current differences can be ironed out before a possible strike is called.

## GOWER STREET'S Box Office Outlook

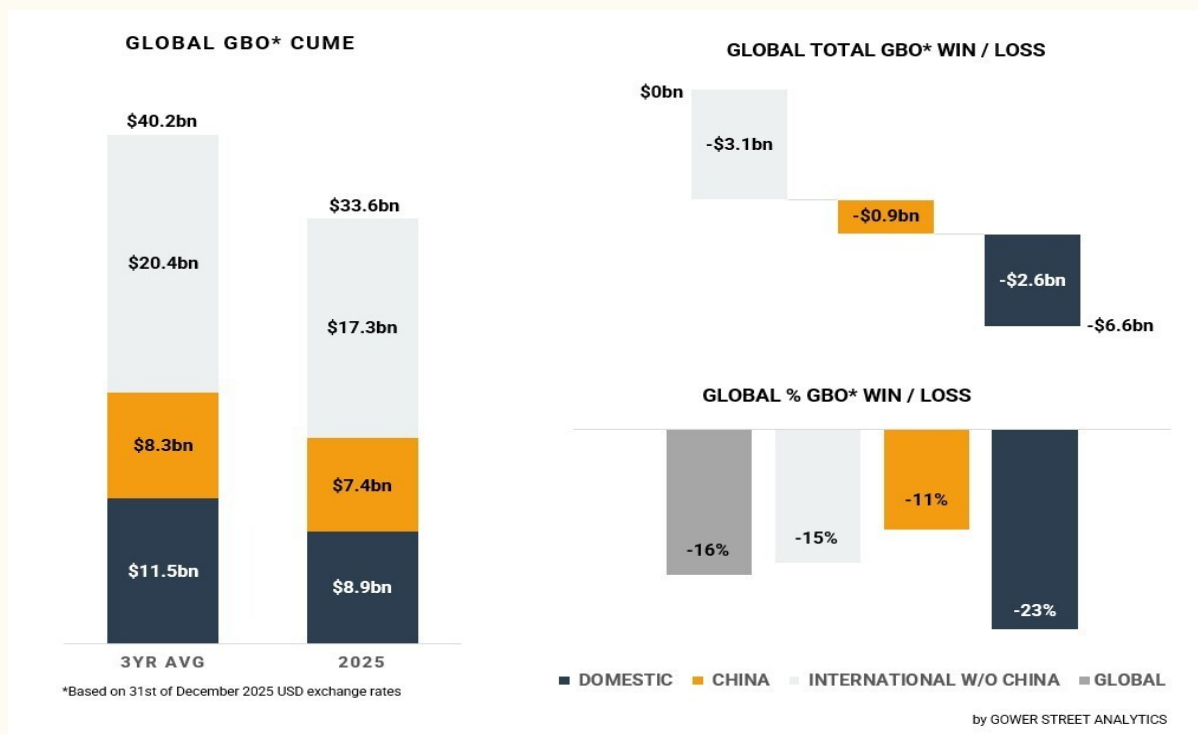


### Highest Grossing December since 2019 adds \$3.5 billion for \$33.6 billion Global Total for 2025

Over the course of 2025 the global box office hasn't always delivered progress. Even less than usual from globally successful US-releases. In December this changed. ZOOTOPIA 2 and AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH were leading the box office around the world, becoming the two highest grossing global US movies of the year generated a combined \$1.8 billion within December, just over half (52%) of the month's total. The pair of Disney titles helped elevate the December global box office to \$3.5 billion. This was the highest grossing December since 2019, up double digits (+10%) against December 2024, the prior best of the decade.

Moreover, this December the International (excluding China) and Domestic markets-combined recorded the second-highest grossing month since December 2019, generating a box office of \$2.95 billion in the month. That is only behind July 2023 (-13%); marginally ahead of 2025's July (+0.3%).

At the end of 2025 the total Global box office is estimated to have reached \$33.55 billion. That is the second-highest grossing year since 2019. Only down -1% on 2023. It is +6% up on 2024 in current US\$-exchange rates. A substantially strengthened dollar had challenged many major international markets severely in 2024. This has eased over 2025 and increases the year-on-year growth at historical exchange rates to +12%. Still, the 2025 global box office is significantly behind (-16%, or \$6.6bn) an average of the last three pre-pandemic years (2017-2019) at current exchange rates.



## INTERNATIONAL BOX OFFICE (EXCLUDING CHINA)

The International box office (excluding China) had a great December. The region provided \$1.96 billion to the global box office. It was the second highest grossing month of the decade, only behind July 2023 (-3%), when the BARBENHEIMER phenomenon reigned. Ahead of last year's December by +7%, which was priorly in that spot. This December the International box office (excluding China) nearly performed on the pre-pandemic level for the month (-2%). This is the second-best value of that metric in 2025 just after September (-1%), and the fourth best since 2019.

Adding the excellent December result the International box office (excluding China) finished 2025 with a \$17.3 billion total. That is +3% above last year and +1% on 2023. While being marginally the best of the running decade, the year was -15% below the three-year average.

## DOMESTIC

The Domestic market had a very good finish of the year. The highest grossing global market in 2025 generated \$985 million in December, the #2 month of the year after July (-13%). It was also the 7th highest-grossing month of the current decade in the market. Further it was the 2nd best December since 2019, only marginally (-1%) behind December last year. Still, this marks the 7th consecutive month which grossed less than the same month last year! Despite this, the Domestic market managed to record the 2nd best half-year of the decade, just behind the second half of 2024 (-8%).

The strong mix of movies in the market was key. Just for the third time this year at least three titles crossed \$100 million within a month. Moreover, it was only the fifth time since June 2019 that six titles grossed more than \$50 million within one month: AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH at #1 with \$250 million, followed by ZOOTOPIA 2 (\$179m), FIVE NIGHTS AT

FREDDY'S 2 (\$122m), WICKED: FOR GOOD (\$66m), DAVID (\$59m) and THE HOUSEMAID (\$56m).

Adding the December result the Domestic market finished 2025 with a \$8.87 billion total. That is -2% down on 2023 and +1% up year-on-year, which positioned the Domestic market in the middle of our top 20 tracked markets at #10. The gap to the three-year average is at -23%. Compared to the pre-pandemic average the Domestic market only rank #14 of the tracked Top 20 major markets

## CHINA

Like the Domestic market, another volatile year at the Chinese box office ends with a very good December result. The \$529 million December box office is the 2nd best December total of the decade, just -5% behind 2023 and on par with 2020. A huge increase of +58% year-on-year. The Chinese market continued its recovery since July after contracting a bit in October, being above the same period in the prior year in four of the past five months by high double digits.

Like last month the Chinese box office was dominated by non-Chinese movies. At #1, ZOOTOPIA 2 added an enormous \$298 million for a \$570 million total. It's already the #2 title in the Chinese market this year. China is by far the highest grossing single territory for the Disney sequel, nearly doubling the 2025 Domestic cume of \$338 million. ZOOTOPIA 2 is the 2nd highest grossing US-movie in China of all time, only behind AVENGERS: ENDGAME (\$627m). At #2 of the December box office AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH contributed \$110 million. At #3 another local World War 2 film GEZHI TOWN generated \$54 million. The first three movies combined had a commanding 87% market share!

The Chinese cume for 2025 reached \$7.4 billion, which is the second best of the decade. Just -5% behind 2023. Significantly up (+21%) on 2024, the 3rd highest growth of the tracked Top

20 major markets. The gap to the pre-pandemic average was at -11%, which ranks #6 of our top 20 tracked markets.

This is harshly down from the peak of +72% at the end of February. The release of local animation phenomenon NE ZHA 2 opened for Chinese New Year and lifted the market's box office to unseen heights. It's by far the highest grossing local title in China of all time with \$2.1 billion. More than double the second-placed THE BATTLE OF LAKE CHANGJIN (\$887m). It's the highest grossing global title this year, despite generating just incremental \$60 million outside of its country of origin. That positions it as well as the highest global grossing animated title of all-time and the #5 global release ever after TITANIC at #4 (\$2.26bn). NE ZHA 2 was the defining release in China for 2025 being responsible for an astonishing 29% of the year's box office!

## OUTLOOK

2025 was the first year since 2019 which was only indirectly influenced by the disruptive events of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Hollywood strikes. With these restrictions disappearing the status quo of the theatrical industry shaped more clearly. A persistent state of transition emerged. Continuing Hollywood Studio consolidation and changed consumer habits challenged the industry. An increasingly unstable economic and political world adds further limiters on a wider scale to the growth of the theatrical industry.

While the Hollywood driven box office is still not back to pre-pandemic strength, local productions around the world expanded their footprint further. The two biggest international markets, China and Japan, saw multiple local productions reaching record heights. Japan was even able to export their local success. DEMON SLAYER: INFINITY CASTLE grossed over \$500 million of its \$779 million global total outside of its country of origin,

making it the #7 release globally of the year. Opening the theatrical world to new audiences and widening the diversity of the slate for the years to come. DEMON SLAYER: INFINITY CASTLE itself is only the start of a trilogy.

That US-productions can still succeed hugely, even in markets that showed a decline of interest for them in recent years was illustrated by the huge success of ZOOTOPIA 2 and to a certain extent also that of AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH in China at the end of 2025.

Animation and Family product defined the global box office for the second year in a row. Four of the top five global grossers this year were family titles after four of the top six in 2024. Attracting families and specifically young audiences is essential for developing the future audience. Additionally, a wider and more diverse slate of movies remains a key factor for a sustainable recovery and growth of the theatrical industry.

2026 unfortunately still doesn't look like a fully 12-month business calendar. But it offers a strong franchise-led release calendar with

new instalments in massively popular franchises like SUPER MARIO BROS, STAR WARS, TOY STORY, MINIONS, SPIDER-MAN, THE HUNGER GAMES, JUMANJI, DUNE and AVENGERS. Further many attractive non-sequels like MICHAEL; the live action version of MOANA; and new titles from Christopher Nolan (THE ODYSSEY) and Steven Spielberg (DISCLOSURE DAY); among many others.

While 2026 is unlikely to get near the record Global box office year 2019 (\$42.3bn), it is likely to become the highest grossing global year since.

## STUDIO RELEASE CALENDAR (1/16-2/12)

Click on any title to view more information.

1/16/26 (Week 3)			
Prior Year Results: \$113,931,067		MLK Day 1/19	
<a href="#">28 Years Later: The Bone Temple</a> 28 YEARS LATER (6/20/25) \$30M open; \$70.4M total.	Sony	R   1h 49m   Horror	Wide (3,000) \$20M-\$25M Open \$50M-\$60M Total
<a href="#">Dead Man's Wire</a> On February 8, 1977, Tony Kiritsis entered the office of Richard Hall, president of the Meridian Mortgage Company, and took him hostage with a sawed-off shotgun wired with a "dead man's wire" from the trigger to Tony's own neck.	Row K	R   1h 45m   Crime Drama	Wide Exp. (1,500) \$5M-\$8M FSS \$12M-\$15M Total
<a href="#">Hamnet</a>	Focus Features	PG-13   2h 5m   Biography, Drama, History	Wide Exp. (1,500)
<a href="#">Charlie the Wonderdog</a>	Viva Pictures	PG   1h 35m   Animation, Family	Wide
<a href="#">Night Patrol</a>	IFC Films	R   1h 44m   Horror, Thriller	Wide
<a href="#">Sheepdog</a>	Allen Media Group	R   2h 9m   Drama	Moderate
<a href="#">The Choral</a>	Sony Pictures Classics	R   1h 53m   Drama, History, Romance	Moderate
<a href="#">Madagascar 20th Anniversary</a>	Universal	PG   1h 26m   Adventure, Animation, Family	Limited
<a href="#">Leave</a>	Footage Films	Drama, Horror	Limited
<a href="#">Signing Tony Raymond</a>	Iconic	NR (Treat as PG)   1h 45m   Comedy	Limited
<a href="#">All You Need is Kill</a>	GKIDS	R   1h 22m   Animation	Limited
<a href="#">Queen Kelly</a>	Milestone Films/Kino Lorber	NR   1h 45m   Drama	Limited
<a href="#">A Private Life</a>	Sony Pictures Classics	R   1h 47m   Crime, Drama, Mystery	NY/LA
<a href="#">The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring</a>	Fathom	PG-13   2h 58m   Adventure, Fantasy	1/17 Event



The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	Fathom	PG-13   2h 59m   Adventure, Fantasy	1/17 Event
The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King	Fathom	PG-13   Adventure, Fantasy   3h 21m	1/18 Event
<b>1/23/26 (Week 4)</b> Prior Year Results: \$87,803,782			
Mercy IMAX 3D	Amazon MGM	R   1h 40m   Sci-Fi, Action	Wide (2,500) \$12M-\$15M Open \$30M-\$40M Total
Return to Silent Hill	Iconic Events	R   1h 46m   Horror	Wide (1,000+) \$5M-\$8M Open \$17M-\$20M Total
H is for Hawk Clika	Roadside Attractions Sony	PG-13   1h 54m   Drama R   Drama, Music	Moderate Moderate (600+)
The Testament of Ann Lee	Searchlight	R   2h 17m   Biography, History	Moderate Exp.
The Dreamer Cinderella	Atlas Distribution	PG   1h 34m   Drama, Romance	Limited
Mr. Nobody Against Putin	Kino Lorber	NR   1h 30m   Documentary	Limited
Arco	NEON	PG   1h 28m   Adventure, Animation, Fantasy	NY/LA
Megadeth: Behind the Mask	Trafalgar	1h 48m   Music Event	1/22 Event
Zombie Land Saga: Yumeginga Paradise	Sony/Crunchyroll	2h   Comedy, Drama, Horror, Fantasy	1/19 Moderate
UFC 324: Gaethje vs. Pimblett	Iconic Events	Live Sports Event	1/24 Event
Hard Boiled	GKIDS	NR   2h 24m   Action, Crime, Thriller	1/25, 1/26, 1/28 Event
<b>1/30/26 (Week 5)</b> Prior Year Results: \$107,370,902			
Send Help	20th Century	1h 53m   Horror, Thriller	Wide (3,000) \$12M-\$16M Open \$25M-\$30M Total
Shelter	Black Bear	R   1h 47m   Action, Thriller	Wide (2,000) \$8M-\$10M Open \$15M-\$20M Total
The Moment	A24	R   1h 43m   Drama, Music, Thriller	Wide (2,500) \$4M-\$6M Open \$15M-\$20M Total
Iron Lung	Independent	R   2h 7m   Horror, Sci-Fi	Wide \$5M-\$7M Open \$12M-\$15M Total
Moses the Black	Fathom	1h 50m   Crime, Drama	Wide
Arco	NEON	PG   1h 28m   Adventure, Animation, Fantasy	Moderate
A Private Life Melania	Sony Pictures Classics Amazon MGM	R   1h 47m   Crime, Thriller PG   1h 44m   Documentary	Moderate Moderate
A Poet	1-2 Special	2h 3m   Comedy	Limited
UFC 325: Volkanovski vs. Lopes 2	Iconic Events	Live Sports Event	1/31 Event
<b>2/6/26 (Week 6)</b> Prior Year Results: \$76,260,084			
Solo Mio	Angel Studios	PG   1h 40m   Comedy, Romance	Wide \$6M-\$10M Open \$15M-\$20M Total
The Strangers: Chapter 3 The Strangers: Chapter 2 (9/26/25) \$5.8M open, \$15M total	Lionsgate	Horror	Wide \$5M-\$7M Open \$12M-\$15M Total
Dracula	Vertical	2h 9m   Fantasy, Horror, Romance	Wide

Still Hope	Fathom	1h 42m   Drama	2/5 Moderate
Buffalo Kids	Viva Kids	PG   1h 21m   Adventure, Animation	Moderate
Scarlet IMAX	Sony	PG-13   1h 51m   Action, Adventure, Animation	Limited
Pillion	A24	1h 47m   Comedy, Drama, Romance	Limited
Whistle	IFC Films	R   1h 37m   Horror	Limited
The President's Cake	Sony Pictures Classics	PG-13 1h 46m   Drama	NY/LA
Jimpa	Kino Lorber	NR   1h 3m   Drama	NY/LA
Calle Malaga	Strand	1h 56m   Drama, Romance, Foreign	NY
Sirat	NEON	1h 55m   Action, Adventure, Drama, Thriller	Limited

[RELEASE CALENDAR](#)
[RELEASE CHANGES](#)

## THE SCREENING ROOM



### NOTABLE TRAILERS



**28 Years Later: The Bone Temple** (Sony)  
1/16 Wide



**Mercy** (Amazon MGM)  
1/23 Wide



**Good Luck, Have Fun, Don't Die** (Briarcliff)  
2/13 Wide



**Ready or Not 2: Here I Come** (Searchlight)  
3/27 Wide

[SEE MORE](#)

## DON'T KILL THE MESSENGER

### Matthew Specktor (Novelist & Screenwriter) and Fred Specktor (Agent) on The Golden Hour, Hollywood Family, and a Changing Industry

Season 2026 | Episode 82 | Jan 7, 2026

In this episode of Don't Kill the Messenger, host Kevin Goetz welcomes acclaimed writer Matthew Specktor and his father, legendary CAA agent Fred Specktor. Matthew's latest book, *The Golden Hour: A Story of Family and Power in Hollywood*, captures the underbelly of Los Angeles through the lens of three generations embedded in the motion picture industry. Together, Matthew and Fred explore the industry that shaped American culture.

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## MOVIE REVIEWS

THE FILM  
**VERDICT**

### PRIMATE



**VERDICT:** This January horror entry is as rock-stupid as its characters, but it delivers plenty of genre jolts.

Alonso Duralde, January 8, 2026

Any movie that features a rabid ape ripping off Rob Delaney's face in the first five minutes has confidently announced that there's more where that came from. And *Primate* does, indeed, deliver plenty of squishy gore along the way, as well as a lot more ripping-off, mainly from John Carpenter's *Halloween*.

The human characters tend to behave like such idiots that the mad-monkey murders feel like a win for evolution, but even viewers who roll their eyes at the teenagers constantly bumping into harm's way may find themselves tossing their popcorn in the air when that harm finally happens.

[FULL REVIEW](#)

### GREENLAND 2: MIGRATION



**VERDICT:** Gerard Butler and family are on the road again in this sequel that's less action thriller and more wistful contemplation of the post-apocalypse.

Alonso Duralde, January 9, 2026

Is there life after sheltering in place? That's a pretty heady topic, intentional or not, for a sequel to a film that got released during the COVID-19 lockdown, but *Greenland 2: Migration* seems more interested in contemplating mankind's destiny than in crafting coherent action sequences. Whether or not that was the intent of director Ric Roman Waugh (*Greenland*, *Kandahar*, *Angel Has Fallen*) is anyone's guess.

[FULL REVIEW](#)