

To start, I'd like to thank you for coming here, but also want to note that I'm a fresh college graduate with a Computer Science degree and zero experience in the film industry - I just follow it. With that being said, I follow it like a 9 year old follows their favorite sports team. My X feed is split 60/40 with entertainment and tech. It's my dream to find the intersection between the two, but as I've noticed, you can't replace creativity. Once the creative is ignored, the quality of a film will go down. It's inevitable, and I got really excited this week watching David Ellison and his new Paramount team talk about making films for theatrical over streaming and the importance of betting on unique creatives like Taylor Sheridan or the Duffer Brothers.

This idea of major studios ignoring creatives I think is the main problem the industry is having. The annual release schedule for studios has become incredibly IP saturated. Sure, IP is where the money gets made, but I hope studios are starting to realize that fatigue is building up - just look at the numbers. The second week drop off of Fantastic Four was 66%. It's still making a boat load of money for Disney, but the drop off is in a string of previous releases that have performed poorly. Marvel fans are still showing up to these films in preparation for Avengers Doomsday, but not the casual viewer. People used to rave about going to see (as Tim Robinson puts it) "the new Marvel that's crazy", but people are getting sick of it.

I also always circle back to the stat that in 1984, original screenplays accounted for 73% of box office revenue, but by 2023, this figure dropped to 30.6%. Why can't history repeat itself? It's a question that I think about often because for how much innovation there has been in the industry, history has repeated itself with the theater aspect always remaining. For a century there has always been a technological innovation to spook the theater industry. From radio → TV → VCR → cable → streaming → a global pandemic, the theaters have been under siege forever. Sure COVID dropped ticket sales, but they're slowly recovering through non-IP films, and Barbenheimer proved this.

3 years ago, my friends always complained about going to the theaters. "Why leave our couch" was a phrase I heard at least 50 times. However when Oppenheimer and Barbie came out, a light switched. Sure, it was Greta Gerwig and Chris Nolan releasing films on the same day which is incredibly rare, but behind the scenes it was Warner Brothers trying to get revenge on Nolan for leaving to Universal (this may not be true, but it's a great tin foil theory that is a slightly educated guess). WBD and Universal put their all into marketing and what you got was a culture nuke for the film industry that was needed to kick off a revival for the industry. That was 2 years ago, and my friends love going to the theaters now.

I also think IMAX is going to play a huge role going forward. During college, it was a four year war that I fought to bring my friends to the IMAX theater in Ann Arbor because it didn't have reclining seats. After Oppenheimer came out, a few of my friends and I saw it in IMAX 70mm. They now understand the IMAX difference, especially when directors use IMAX cameras to

help display their visions. Watching Sinners with my friends in the IMAX that they once hated going to was an amazing experience. The success and talk about the film showed to me that people are willing to prioritize filmmakers' visions by going and watching their films on IMAX. This should lead to studios making more deals where directors either get final cut or very limited interference in my opinion.

I think one of the big issues with these IP mega movies is that there is way too much studio involvement. What starts off with an innocent original pitch from a director with a unique take gets butchered along the way through major studio overhaul, test screenings, and rewrites. Recency bias aside, but I saw Weapons at the Lincoln Square IMAX on Sunday, and you can tell that this was Zach Cregger's vision through and through. In fact, he spoke in his press junkets about how he prepped every shot in pre production. This must save money, so why don't studios try to do this with larger IP films?

I have a lot more thoughts, especially with streaming. However, this has gotten pretty long, so if you've gotten here thank you for reading!