

HOLLYWOOD DIVERSITY

REPORT 2024

FEATURING FILM

PART 1: THEATRICAL

UCLA Entertainment & Media
Research Initiative

Acknowledgements

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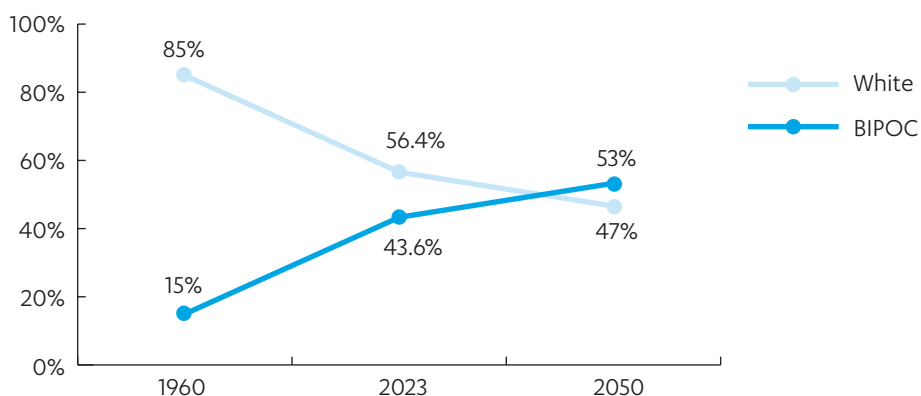
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STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

U.S. Population Shares, White and Minority, 1960-2050



Source: U.S. Census, 2023

The following highlights emerge from this year's analysis:

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). The BIPOC share of the U.S. population is growing by nearly half a percent each year. Constituting 43.6 percent of the U.S. population in 2023,¹ BIPOC will become the majority within a couple of decades. Since 2022, BIPOC posted gains relative to their White counterparts in all key Hollywood employment arenas examined in the theatrical film sector (i.e., theatrical film leads, directors, writers, and total actors²). Despite these gains, BIPOC remained underrepresented on every major industry employment front in 2023:

- Less than 2 to 1 among theatrical film leads (29.2 percent)
- Less than 2 to 1 among theatrical film directors (22.9 percent)
- 2 to 1 among theatrical film writers (22.2 percent)
- Less than proportionate representation among total theatrical film actors (40.4 percent)

Women. Women lost ground, relative to their male counterparts, in three of the four key theatrical film employment arenas in 2023 — among theatrical film leads, writers, and total actors, while treading water among theatrical film directors. Constituting slightly more than half of the population, women remained underrepresented in all major employment arenas for theatrical film.

- Less than 2 to 1 among theatrical film leads (32.1 percent)
- Greater than 3 to 1 among theatrical film directors (14.7 percent)
- 2 to 1 among theatrical film writers (25 percent)
- Less than 2 to 1 among total theatrical film actors (38.7 percent)

Disability Status. This is the second year that this report tracks the disability status of actors. Actors with disabilities gained ground in both relevant employment arenas. Comprising at least 26 percent of the United States population,³ adults with a disability nonetheless remained underrepresented in front of the camera in top films in 2023:

- Greater than 2 to 1 among theatrical film leads (11.3 percent)
- Less than 4 to 1 among total theatrical film actors (7.1 percent)

The Bottom Line. New evidence from 2023 continues to support findings from earlier reports in this series suggesting that America’s increasingly diverse audiences prefer diverse content in theatrical film releases:

“ New evidence from 2023 continues to support findings from earlier reports in this series suggesting that America’s increasingly diverse audiences prefer diverse content in theatrical film releases. ”

- In 2023, theatrical films with casts that were from 31 percent to 40 percent BIPOC enjoyed the highest median global box office receipts, while films with casts that were less than 11 percent BIPOC were the poorest performers (echoing a pattern evident the last four years).
- Median return on investment peaked for theatrical films with casts that were from 41 percent to 50 percent BIPOC in 2023.
- In 2023, films with casts that were from 31 percent to 40 percent BIPOC posted the highest median domestic box office, while films with casts that were from 41 percent to 50 percent BIPOC had the highest mean opening weekend rank and were released in the most theaters, on average.

Overview: Degrees of Underrepresentation, Gains and Losses, Theatrical Films 2023*

| Arena | BIPOC | Women | Disability Status |
|----------------|-----------------|----------|-------------------|
| Film Leads | < 2 to 1 | < 2 to 1 | > 2 to 1 |
| Film Directors | < 2 to 1 | > 3 to 1 | |
| Film Writers | 2 to 1 | 2 to 1 | |
| Total Actors | < Proportionate | < 2 to 1 | < 4 to 1 |

*Gains since the last report highlighted in blue, losses in gold.

- In 2023, theatrical films with multiracial leads, as well as casts that were from 41 percent to 50 percent BIPOC were released in the most international markets, on average.
- BIPOC moviegoers bought the majority of opening weekend, domestic tickets for seven of the top 10 films and 14 of the top 20 films released in theaters in 2023 (ranked by global box office).
- Female moviegoers bought the majority of opening weekend, domestic tickets for three of the top 10 films and five of the top 20 films released in theaters in 2023 (ranked by global box office).
- Moviegoers who were 18 to 34 years old bought the majority of opening weekend, domestic tickets for six of the top 10 films and 10 of the top 20 films released in theaters in 2023 (ranked by global box office).
- In 2023, nine of the top 10 films and 15 of the top 20 films at the global box office featured casts in which more than 30 percent of the actors were BIPOC. Five of the top 10 and eight of the top 20 films had casts in which more than 40 percent of the actors were females. Only one of the top 10 and three of the top 20 films had casts in which more than 20 percent of the actors had known disabilities.
- In 2023, seven of the top 10 and 16 of the top 20 theatrical films for Asian moviegoers (ranked by the group's share of opening weekend, domestic box office) featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC in 2023.
- Eight of the top 10 and 16 of the top 20 theatrical films for Black moviegoers featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC.
- Six of the top 10 and 15 of the top 20 theatrical films for Latinx moviegoers featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC in 2023. There were two films with the same Latinx share and thus tied for the final spot in the top 20.
- Only one of the top 10 and three of the top 20 theatrical films for White moviegoers featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC in 2023.
- All of the top 10 and 16 of the top 20 theatrical films for Native and other moviegoers featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC in 2023. There were two films with the same Native and other share and thus tied for the final spot in the top 20.
- Five of the top 10 and 10 of the top 20 theatrical films for 18- to 34-year-old moviegoers featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC in 2023. A sixth film among their top 10 was a Black-female-led, music documentary.
- For 18- to 34-year-old moviegoers, eight of the top 10 theatrical films featured casts that were more than 40 percent female in 2023. A ninth film among their top 10 was a Black-female-led, music documentary.
- In 2023, eight of the top 10 theatrical films for female moviegoers featured casts that were more than 40 percent female. A ninth film among their top 10 was a White-female-led, music documentary. By contrast, only one of the top 10 theatrical films for male moviegoers featured casts that were over 40 percent female.

- Among each group of BIPOC moviegoers, between five and seven of their group's top 10 theatrical films featured casts that were more than 40 percent female in 2023. By contrast, only two of the top 10 theatrical films for White moviegoers featured casts that were more than 40 percent female in 2023.
- Among each group of BIPOC moviegoers, between five and seven of their group's top 10 theatrical films were ranked number one during their opening weekend at the domestic box office in 2023. In contrast, none of the top 10 theatrical films for White moviegoers won the top spot at the domestic box office during their opening weekend.
- Among the other audience demographic groups, both female and male moviegoers had three theatrical films from their top 10 rank number one during their opening weekend, while 18- to 34-year-old moviegoers had four theatrical films from their top 10 rank number one during their opening weekend at the domestic box office in 2023.

INTRODUCTION

2024 Hollywood Diversity Report: Part 1 Theatrical

This report is the eleventh in a series of annual studies produced by UCLA’s Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE) to explore relationships between diversity and the bottom line in the Hollywood entertainment industry. Housed within the IRLE and Division of Social Sciences, the Entertainment and Media Research Initiative (EMRI) – which explores equity and access issues affecting entertainment industry workers and tracks the viewing habits of increasingly diverse audiences – produced the report.



This report draws attention to the racial, ethnic, gender (including transgender and non-binary) identities, and disability status of those working in key above-the-line jobs in Hollywood's top films and TV shows in any given year. It also tracks how these data relate to what U.S. audiences are watching on television, discussing on social media, and purchasing tickets to see in theaters. These consistent and reliable data, which we collect independent of Hollywood employers,⁴ constitute the foundation upon which the report is built.

The word "diversity" does and should encompass so much more than a few underrepresented racial and ethnic identities. For example, age, sexual orientation, and religion are also important dimensions of identity invoked by the concept of diversity. Although other studies have examined the identity of characters, this report series focuses on the identities of those employed in the industry. Some of the identity information is not necessarily visible nor publicly accessible and verifiable unless the person has stated it publicly. Recently, a few of the data sources used for this report have begun to collect information about disability. With more than one source available for actors that was released as of December 2022, we were able to move forward with collecting the disability status for actors. Although limited in scope, this is a step forward in gaining a better understanding of those represented in top Hollywood films.

Although we already include transgender and non-binary identities in our report, we look forward to expanding the data collected to include other LGBTQ identities, disability status for those in other key job categories, and other underrepresented identities. Some of this work

may require EMRI to release more in-depth reports to complement the current annual reports.

In 2023, this report series returned to examining theatrical releases separately from streaming releases, a practice that was interrupted in 2021 and 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The current report considers English-language, theatrical releases that were ranked in the top 200 at the global box office in 2023 and compares them to the previous year. We examine how the top theatrical releases produced by Hollywood fare in the global and domestic markets and among moviegoers from different demographic backgrounds. We also track who gets to make and star in these films.

In 2023, we examined top streaming films from 2022 separately from top theatrical releases but included both analyses in Part 1. For the current report, Part 1 will focus only on top theatrical films from 2023. Part 2 will focus on top streaming films from 2023 and will be published later this year.

The Data

The *2024 Hollywood Diversity Report: Part 1 Theatrical* examines 109 of the top English-language, theatrical film releases⁵ in 2023. Variables considered in the analyses for this report include the following:

- Racial/ethnic identity of lead talent⁶
- Gender identity of lead talent⁷
- Disability status of lead talent⁸
- Overall cast diversity⁹
- Writer diversity

- Director diversity
- Genres
- Global and domestic box office
- Domestic ticket buyer demographics

Data for this report were compiled from a variety of sources that industry stakeholders rely upon for day-to-day updates on industry developments.

These sources include The Studio System, Variety Insight, the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), Comscore, and Box Office Mojo.

HOLLYWOOD LANDSCAPE

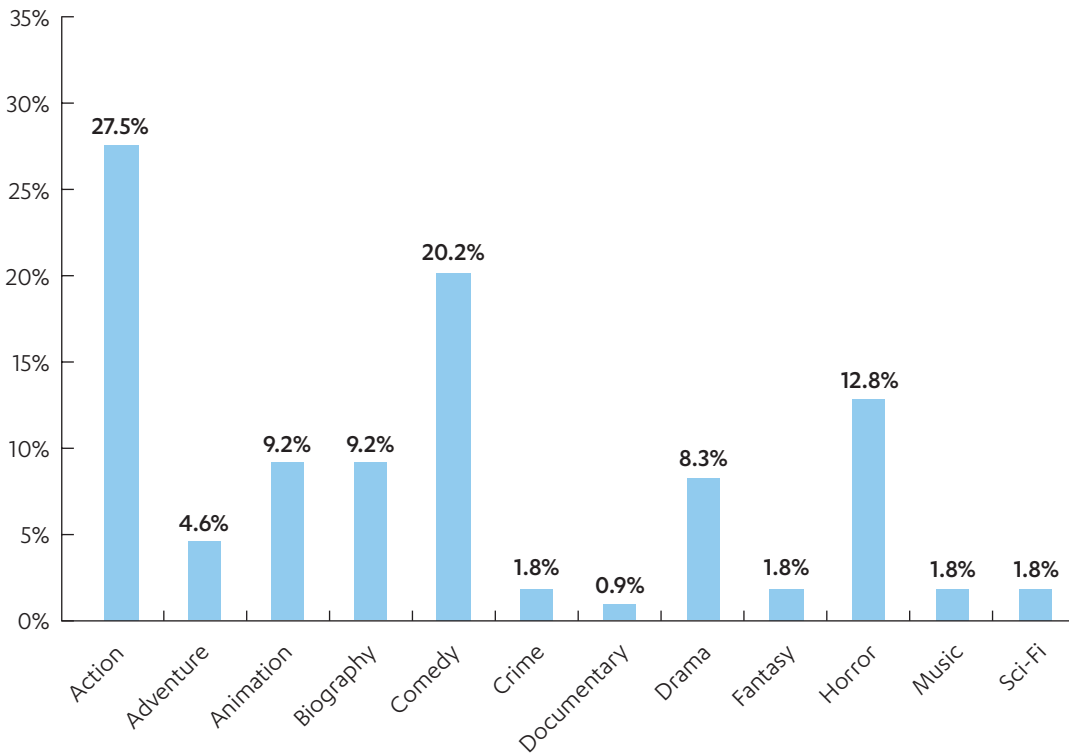
Hollywood Landscape

At the start of 2023, film industry production and theater attendance were still in recovery mode and not completely back to their 2019, pre-pandemic levels. Uncertainty prevailed due to a looming double strike and the continued contraction of the industry. However, before the SAG-AFTRA strike began in mid-July, there were definitely bright spots at the box office and positive signs of what the film industry could become in terms of racial/ethnic and gender diversity. We will expand on this point in the report's conclusion.

Global box office revenue rose 31 percent to \$33.9 billion in 2023, and the North American (domestic) box office rose 21 percent to \$9.07 billion.¹⁰ Although it reached a post-pandemic high, the 2023 domestic box office still lagged behind the 2017-2019 average by 21 percent.¹¹ In this report, the theatrical dataset showed a similar pattern. The 109 English-language films in the 2023 dataset signified a 22 percent increase from the 2022 dataset (as examined in the 2023 report), but the number of theatrical films was still lower than the 146 English-language films in the 2019 dataset (as examined in the 2020 report).

The following chart shows the distribution of 2023 theatrical releases by genre.

FIGURE 1: Percentage Distribution of Theatrical Films by Genre, 2023 (n=109)



In 2023, top theatrical film releases fell into twelve primary genres. Similar to 2022, the action genre (27.5 percent), where most blockbusters are categorized, constituted the plurality of releases. It was followed by comedy (20.2 percent), horror (12.8 percent), animation and biography (9.2 percent) with equal shares, and drama (8.3 percent). Action and horror films held steady since 2022, while comedy and biography films increased, animation films slightly decreased, and drama films decreased. Eight out of the 10 biography films and nine out of the 22 comedy films had drama as their secondary genre. Rather than signaling a decline in drama films since 2022, these data suggest that biopics and dramedies were on the rise.

LEADS

Leads

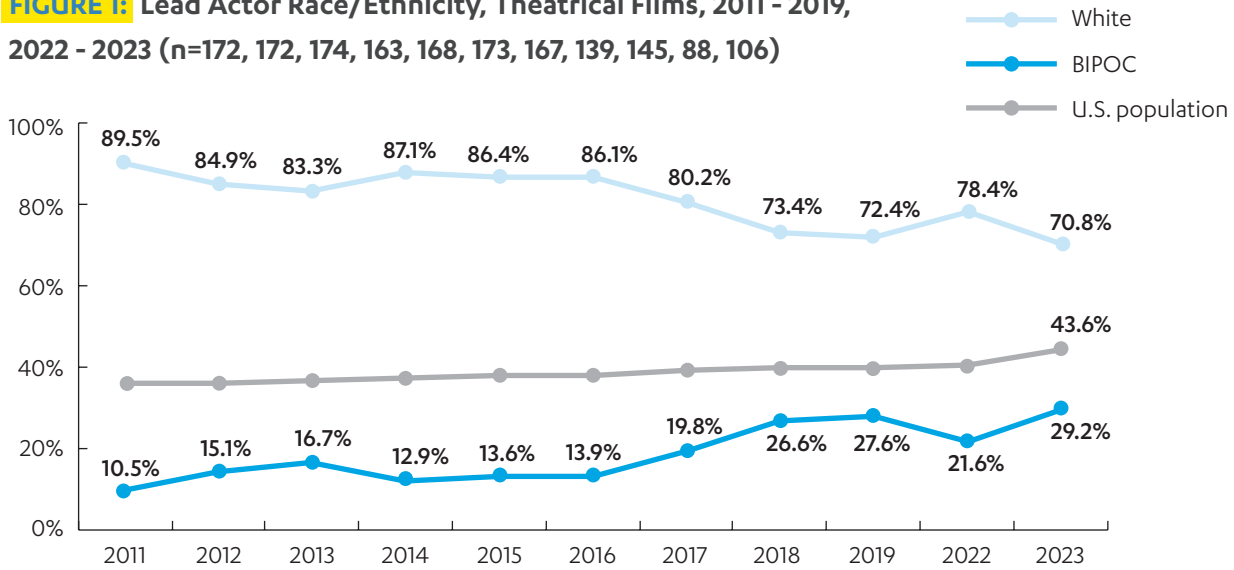
Leads¹² constitute the central characters around whom a film’s narrative primarily revolves. Since the last report in 2022, BIPOC actors posted gains relative to their White counterparts, but women actors lost ground to their male counterparts among leads in Hollywood’s top theatrical releases.¹³ Both BIPOC and women remained underrepresented as leads in 2023. Although their share increased in 2023, adults with a disability also remained underrepresented as theatrical film leads.



Each individual BIPOC group remained underrepresented as theatrical leads, except for Asian and MENA leads who were close to or at proportionate representation in 2023. In addition, within each racial/ethnic group except Latinx and Asian persons, female and other-gender identifying leads were outnumbered by their male counterparts in 2023.

In 2023, top theatrical films with BIPOC leads were most likely to both have the smallest budgets (less than \$10M) and the largest budgets (\$100M+), as compared to films with White leads. For BIPOC actors, the opportunity to lead a wide-release film was a bit of a “feast or famine” experience in terms of its budget in 2023.

FIGURE 1: Lead Actor Race/Ethnicity, Theatrical Films, 2011 - 2019, 2022 - 2023 (n=172, 172, 174, 163, 168, 173, 167, 139, 145, 88, 106)

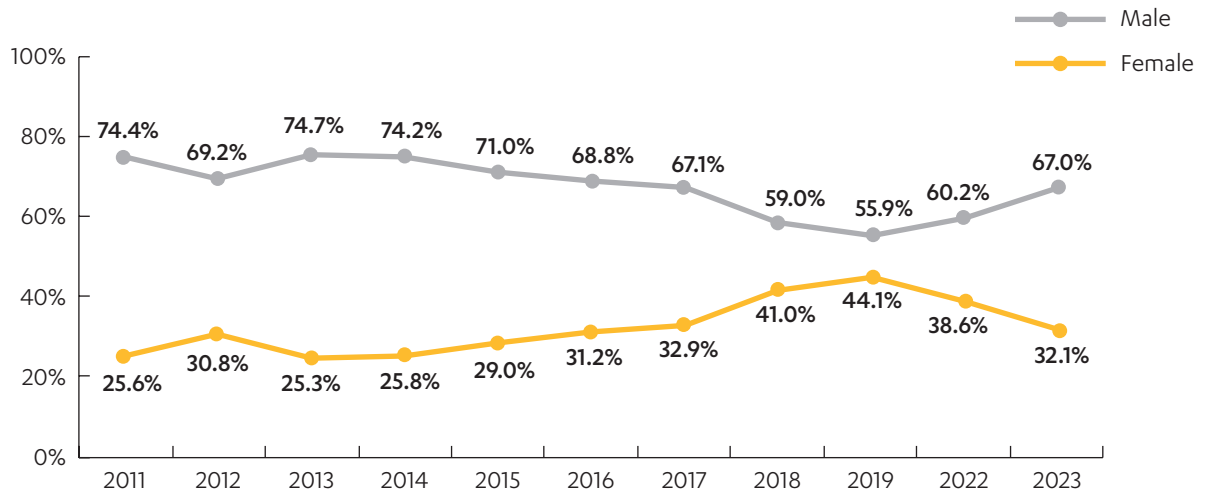


▲ BIPOCs accounted for 29.2 percent of the leads in top theatrical films for 2023, up from the 21.6 percent share posted in 2022. At 43.6 percent of the U.S. population in 2023, BIPOCs would have to increase their 2023 share by more than 14 percentage points to reach proportionate representation among film leads that year (gray line). This represents the largest share of BIPOC leads measured in this report series.



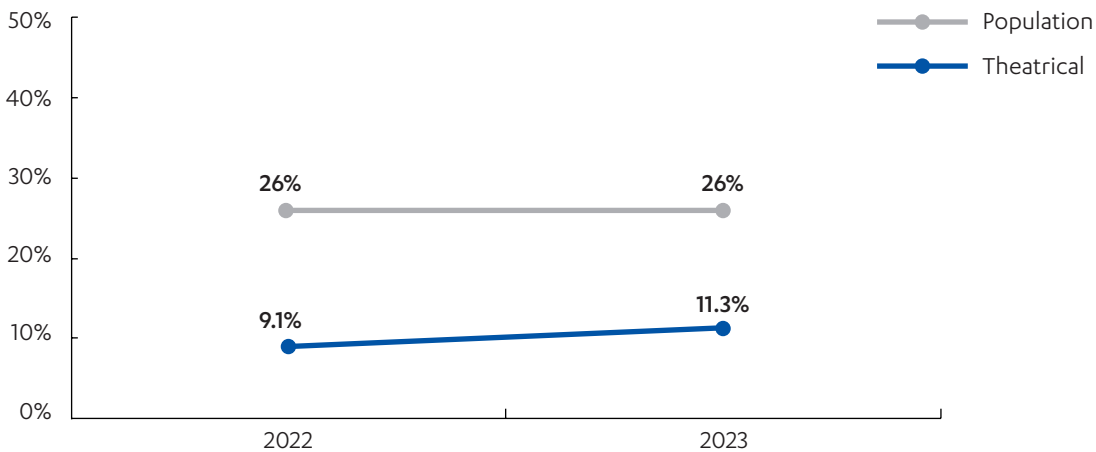
About **2.9 out of 10** lead actors in theatrical films are people of color

FIGURE 2: Lead Actor Gender, Theatrical Films, 2011 - 2019, 2022 - 2023
(n=172, 172, 174, 163, 168, 173, 167, 139, 145, 88, 106)



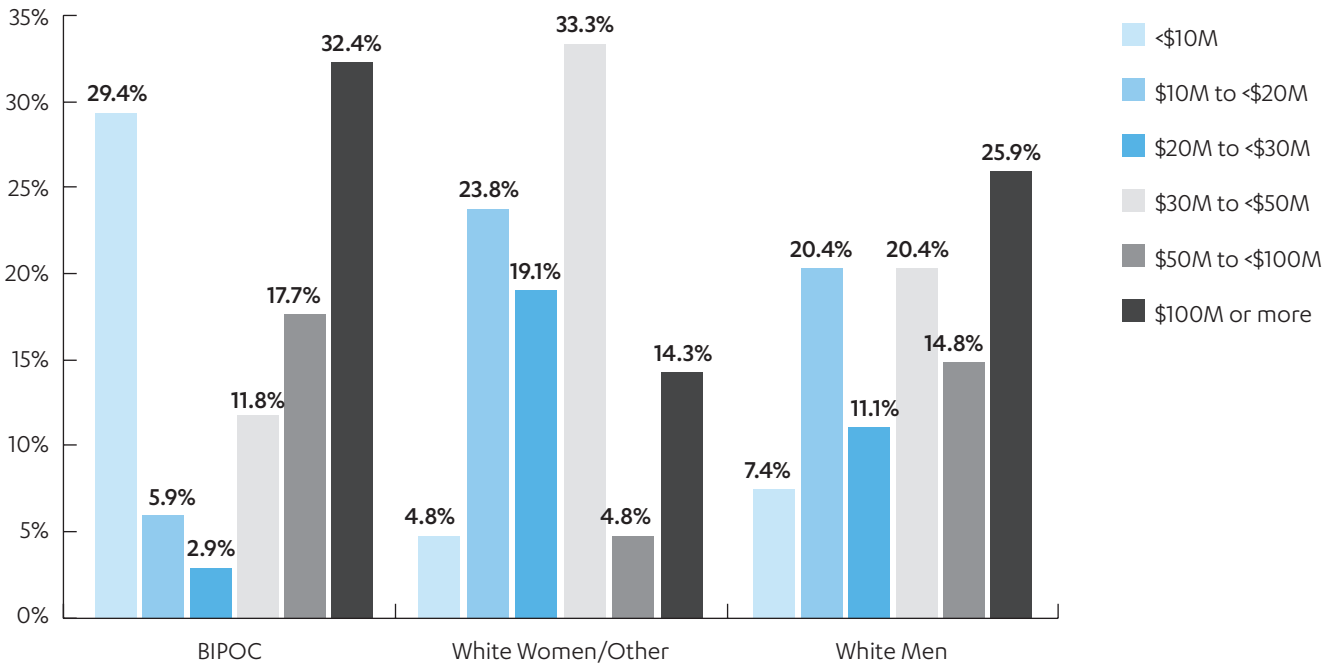
Since the last report, women’s share of top theatrical film leads continued to decline, despite enormous gains over the course of this report series. Women accounted for 32.1 percent of film leads in 2023, a more than six-percentage-point drop from the 38.6 percent figure evident in 2022, and only about seven percentage points above the lowest figure measured in this report series (25.3 percent). Female leads would have to increase their share by almost 18 percentage points to reach parity with male leads in 2023.

FIGURE 3: Share of Theatrical Film Leads, by Disability and Adult Population Share, 2022 - 2023 (N = 88, 106)



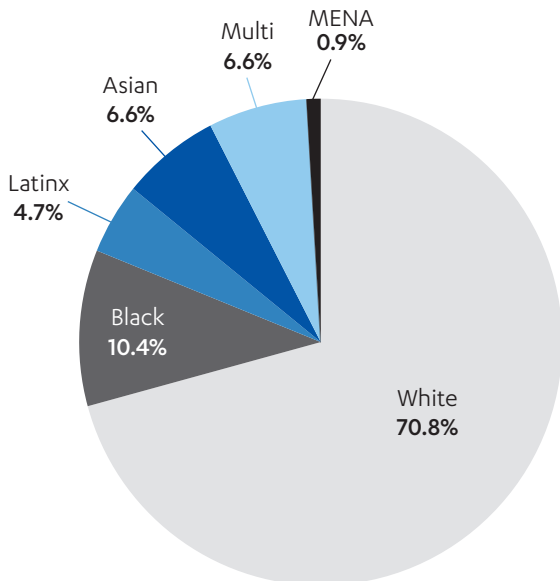
Although their share of film leads increased from 9.1 percent in 2022 to 11.3 percent since the last report, adults with a disability remained underrepresented in this important employment arena in 2023.¹⁴ The twelve lead actors with a known disability in 2023 reported one or more of the following types of disability: mental health (66.7 percent), learning (41.7 percent), and neurological (16.7 percent). Two leads had more than one known disability. There were no lead actors with visible disabilities in top theatrical releases in 2023.

FIGURE 4: Theatrical Film Budget, by Lead Race/Ethnicity and Gender, BIPOC (N = 34), White Women (N = 21), White Men (N = 54), 2023



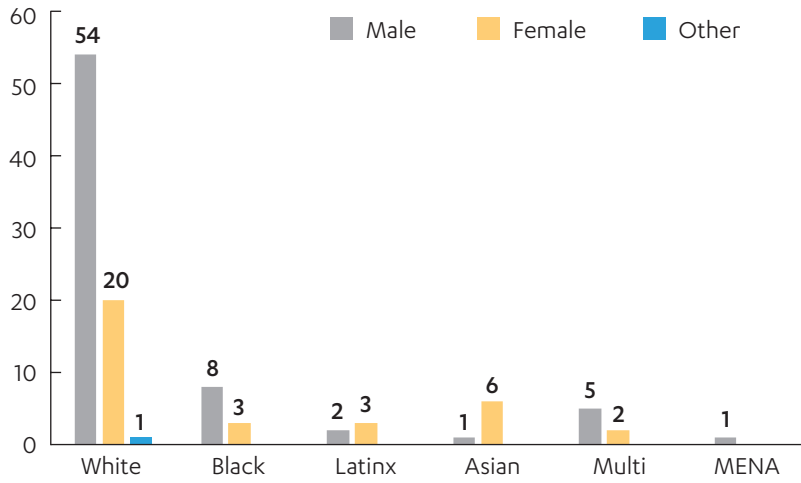
▲ In 2023, top theatrical films with BIPOC leads were most likely to have the smallest budgets, as compared to films with White leads. That is, 29.4 percent of the films with BIPOC leads in 2023 had budgets that were less than \$10 million, compared to just 4.8 percent of the films with White women/other-gender leads and 7.4 percent of the films with White male leads. In the same year, however, theatrical films with BIPOC leads (32.4 percent) were also most likely to have the largest budgets of \$100 million or more, compared to those starring White male leads (25.9 percent) and those starring White women/other-gender leads (14.3 percent).

FIGURE 5: Share of Theatrical Film Leads, by Race/Ethnicity, 2023 (n=106)



▲ A breakdown of theatrical film leads by race/ethnicity shows that White persons, about 56.4 percent of the U.S. population in 2023, were overrepresented in this important employment arena (70.8 percent). Asian¹⁵ (6.6 percent) and MENA (0.9 percent) leads were close to or at proportionate representation in 2023. Meanwhile, Black (10.4 percent), Latinx¹⁶ (4.7 percent), and multiracial (6.6 percent) persons were all underrepresented among theatrical film leads in 2023. There were no Native leads in theatrical films in 2023.

FIGURE 6: Theatrical Film Lead Counts, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2023 (n=106)



Among Latinx and Asian theatrical film leads, women outnumbered men in 2023. By contrast, among White¹⁷, Black, and multiracial film leads, men significantly outnumbered women. There was only one actor who was a MENA lead and no Native leads.

OVERALL CAST DIVERSITY

Overall Cast Diversity

This section documents trends in overall cast diversity for top theatrical films released in 2023. For the analysis, each theatrical film was assigned to one of six distinct cast diversity intervals based on the racial and ethnic identities of its top eight credited actors — casts that were less than 11 percent BIPOC; 11 percent to 20 percent BIPOC; 21 percent to 30 percent BIPOC; 31 percent to 40 percent BIPOC; 41 percent to 50 percent BIPOC; or over 50 percent BIPOC. In addition, the same cast diversity intervals were assigned to each theatrical film based on known disability status of its top eight credited actors. Cast diversity intervals based on gender (i.e., female share) will also be included later in this report. This section also provides total actor counts by race, ethnicity, and gender for the top theatrical films in 2023.

In this report series, which began tracking theatrical films in 2011, films with virtually all-white casts dominated the share of top films for several years. Subsequently, there was a slow, incremental increase in top films with more racially and ethnically diverse casts, such that the least racially and ethnically diverse interval no longer

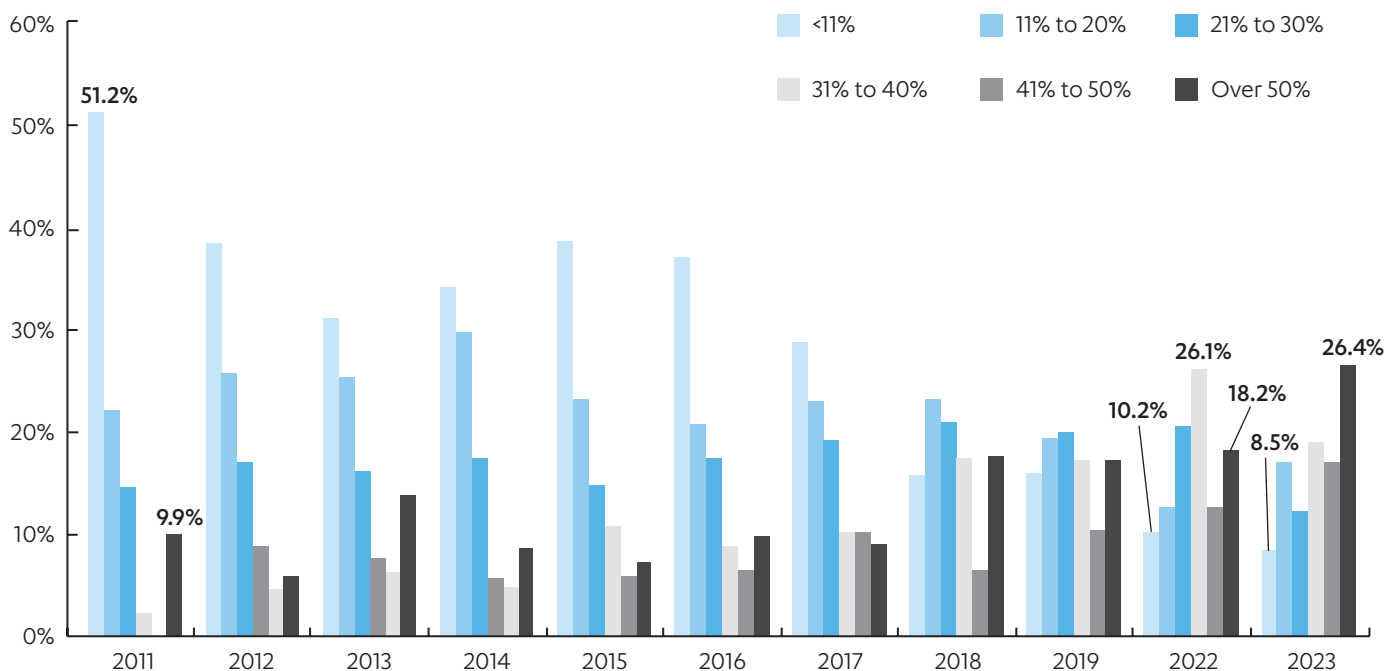


represented the plurality of films by 2018. But in 2023, the most diverse cast interval leapfrogged the others – for the first time, films with casts that were over 50 percent BIPOC represented the plurality of top theatrical films. In terms of disability, the majority of top theatrical films did not include actors with a known disability in the main cast in 2023, and those with a visible disability were excluded altogether.

Since 2019, BIPOC actors have collectively advanced their shares of main cast film roles in top theatrical releases. In 2023, BIPOC actors were close to proportionate representation among these roles in theatrical releases. When examining individual BIPOC groups, this report found that Black, Asian, Native, and MENA actors were close to or at proportionate representation among all theatrical film roles. However, Latinx and multiracial persons remained underrepresented in all film roles in top theatrical releases in 2023.

Similar to the trend in other employment arenas, women lost ground in main cast film roles since the last report. Except for Latinas, women from each racial/ethnic group failed to reach parity with their male counterparts in top theatrical films in 2023.

FIGURE 1: BIPOC Cast Share, by Share of Theatrical Films, 2011 - 2019, 2022 - 2023
 (n=172, 172, 174, 162, 169, 173, 167, 139, 145, 88, 106)



▲ The casts of top theatrical films have slowly become more and more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity over the 13-year period for which this report series has examined the theatrical industry. In 2011, the majority of films (51.2 percent) fell into the least-diverse cast interval (less than 11 percent BIPOC). But by 2023, the fewest films (8.5 percent) were less than 11 percent BIPOC and, for the first time in this report series, the plurality of films were majority-BIPOC (26.4 percent).

FIGURE 2: Disability Cast Share, by Share of Theatrical Films, 2023 - 2024 (n=88, 106)

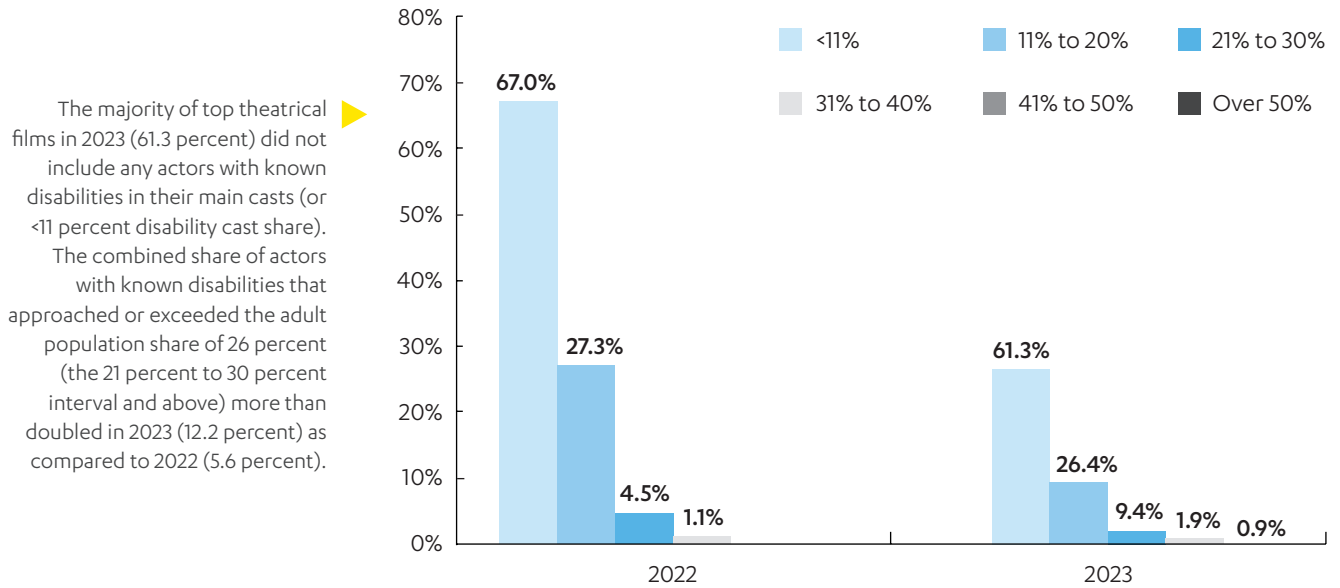
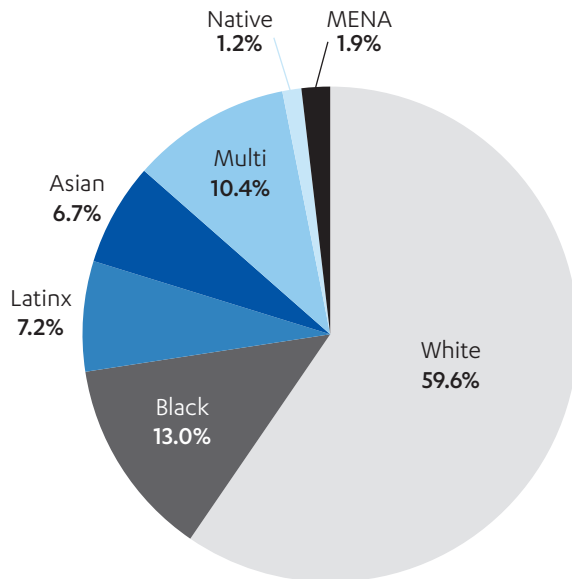


FIGURE 3: Share of All Theatrical Film Roles, by Race/Ethnicity, 2023 (n=806)



The White share of all theatrical film roles dropped to 59.6 percent in 2023, down from 63.9 percent in 2022, continuing a downward trend for the group in top theatrical releases. Black (13.0 percent), Asian¹⁸ (6.7 percent), Native (1.2 percent), and MENA (1.9 percent) actors were close to or at proportionate representation among all theatrical film roles. Meanwhile, Latinx¹⁹ (7.2 percent) and multiracial (10.4 percent) persons were underrepresented among all theatrical film roles in 2023.

FIGURE 4: Theatrical Film Actor Counts, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2023 (n=806)

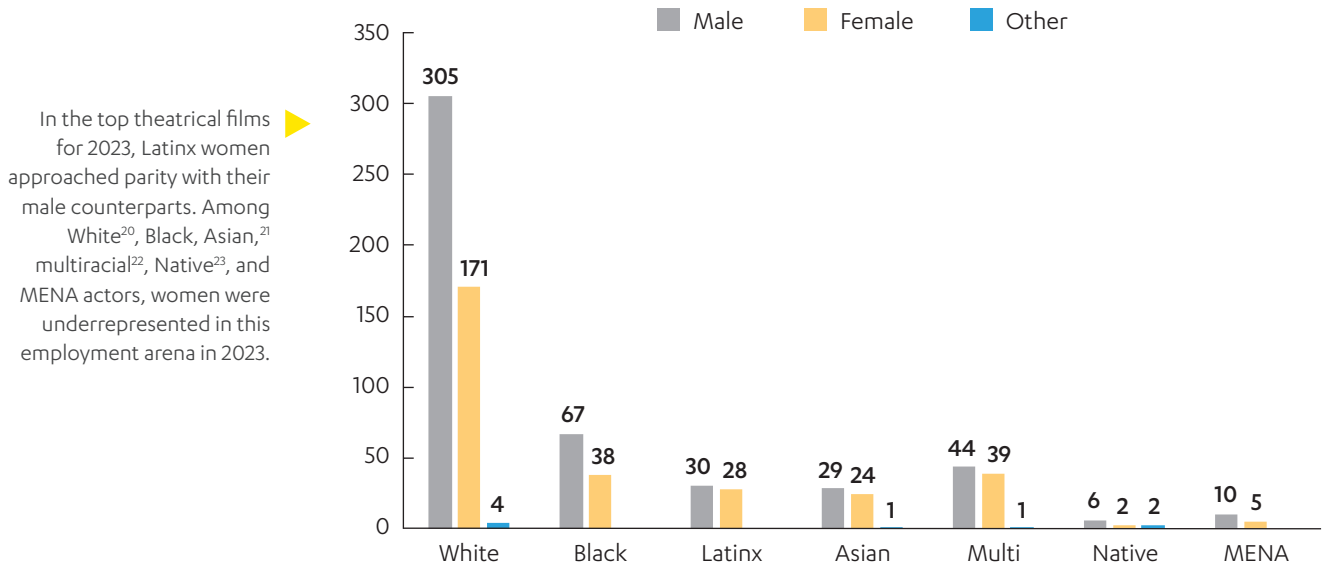
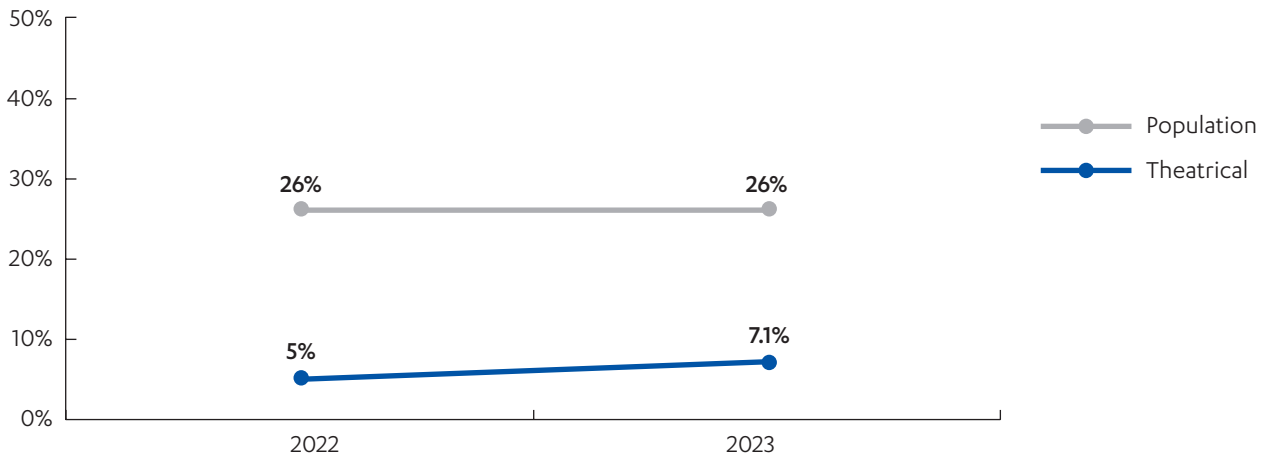


FIGURE 5: Share of All Theatrical Film Roles, by Disability and Adult Population Share, 2022-2023 (N = 676, 806)



▲ Just 7.1 percent of all top theatrical film roles²⁴ in 2023 went to actors with a known disability. Although the group’s share of film roles increased from the previous year, it would have to increase more than three-fold to reach proportionate representation with the estimated 26 percent of adults in the U.S. with a known disability. Among the actors with a known disability, the most reported types of disabilities were mental health (50.9 percent), learning (24.6 percent), and neurological (19.3 percent). Medical and physical disabilities that are not visible made up a smaller share (10.5 percent) of the type of disabilities reported. Eight actors reported more than one disability. In the top films of 2023, only eight actors (1 percent) had a physical, medical, or hearing disability that was visible. Once again, actors with visible disabilities were essentially excluded from the screen in top Hollywood films in 2023.

DIRECTORS

Directors

Directors²⁵ are the artists who shape the look and feel of a film by overseeing key production elements, from script to screen. Since it began tracking films in 2011, this report series found the largest share of theatrical films directed by BIPOC artists in 2023. By comparison, the share of films directed by a woman was virtually the same as the previous year. Even with the gains in recent years, BIPOC and women remained underrepresented among film directors in 2023.²⁶

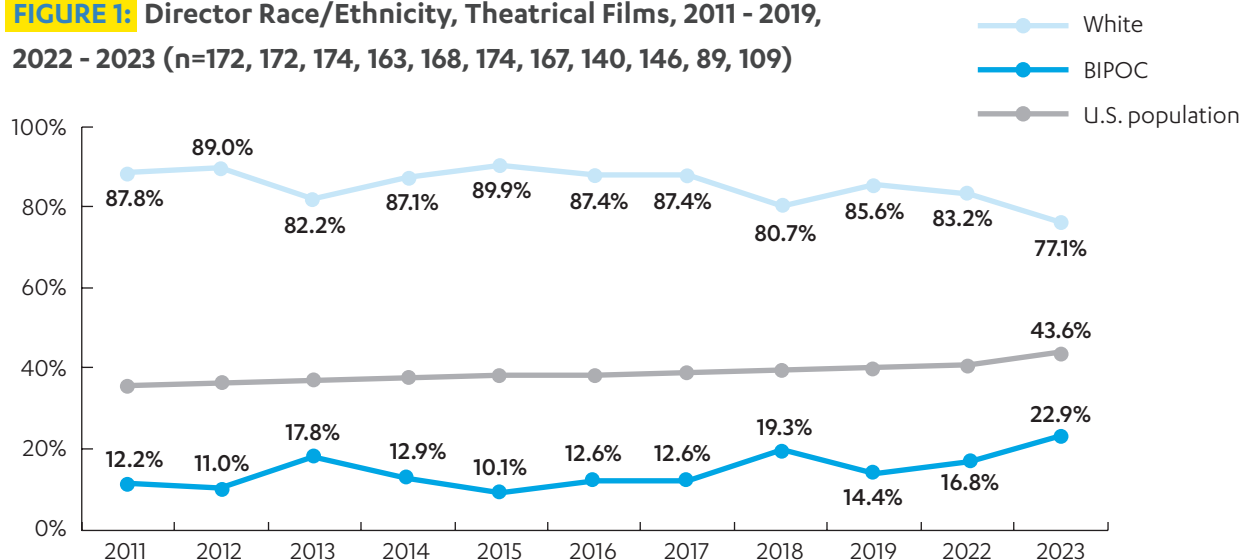


Echoing the increased share of films directed by BIPOC artists in 2023, these BIPOC-directed films were also most likely to have budgets that were \$100 million or more. This said, among the films directed by BIPOC artists in 2023, only five were directed by women of color (20 percent). Men of color continued to have more opportunities to direct big-budget, theatrical films in 2023 and join a very exclusive club of White male filmmakers in Hollywood. Indeed, among White directors, gender inequality is also prominent. That is, eighteen films with a budget of \$100 million or more in 2023 were directed by a White director, but only one of those films (i.e., *Barbie*) was directed by a woman. In fact, this report also found that top theatrical films directed by White women were most likely to have the smallest budgets in 2023. Women who got the opportunity to direct a theatrical film with a wide release in 2023 were typically restricted by a budget ceiling.

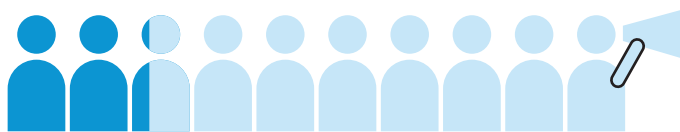
When examining individual BIPOC groups, this report found that each group was underrepresented as theatrical film directors in 2023, except for Asian and MENA persons. Among all racial/ethnic groups, women lagged behind their male counterparts as directors in top theatrical releases.

In 2023, theatrical films directed by BIPOC artists had more diverse casts and more gender-balanced casts than those directed by White men. Theatrical films directed by women had the highest share of gender-balanced casts.

FIGURE 1: Director Race/Ethnicity, Theatrical Films, 2011 - 2019, 2022 - 2023 (n=172, 172, 174, 163, 168, 174, 167, 140, 146, 89, 109)

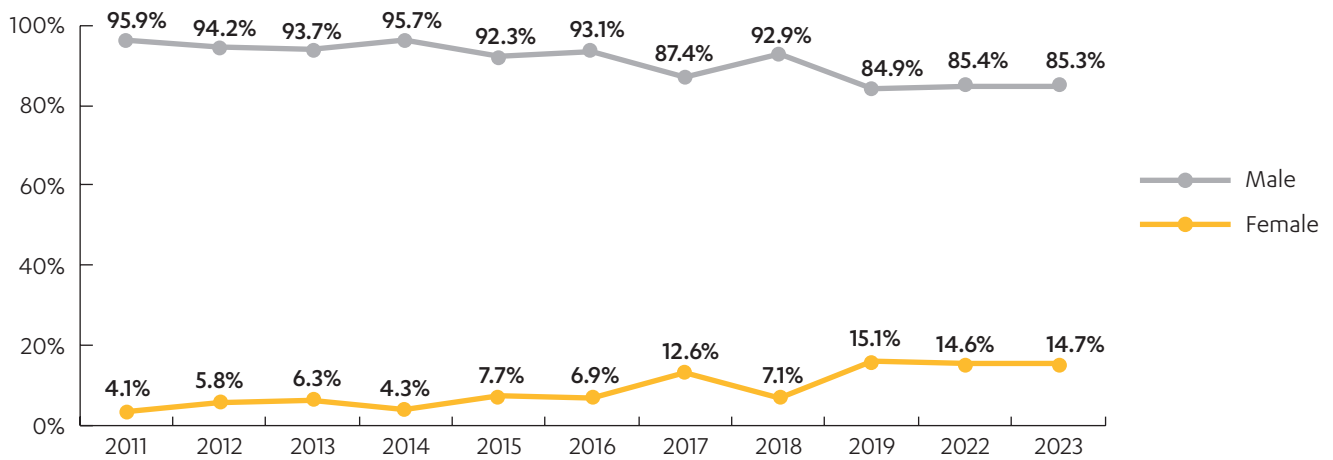


▲ In 2023, 22.9 percent of the year's top theatrical films were directed by BIPOC artists, up from 16.8 percent in 2022. This latest figure was the largest that has been found in this report series and was close to twice the 2011 figure (12.2 percent). Nevertheless, BIPOC directors would have to almost double their 2023 share in order to reach proportionate representation among theatrical film directors (43.6 percent).

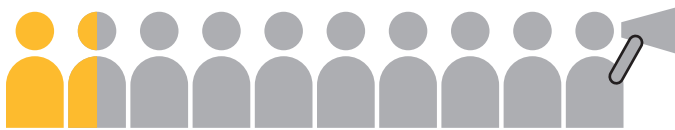


only 2.3 out of 10 theatrical film directors are people of color

FIGURE 2: Director Gender, Theatrical Films, 2011 - 2019, 2022 - 2023
 (n=172, 167, 174, 163, 168, 174, 167, 140, 146, 89, 109)

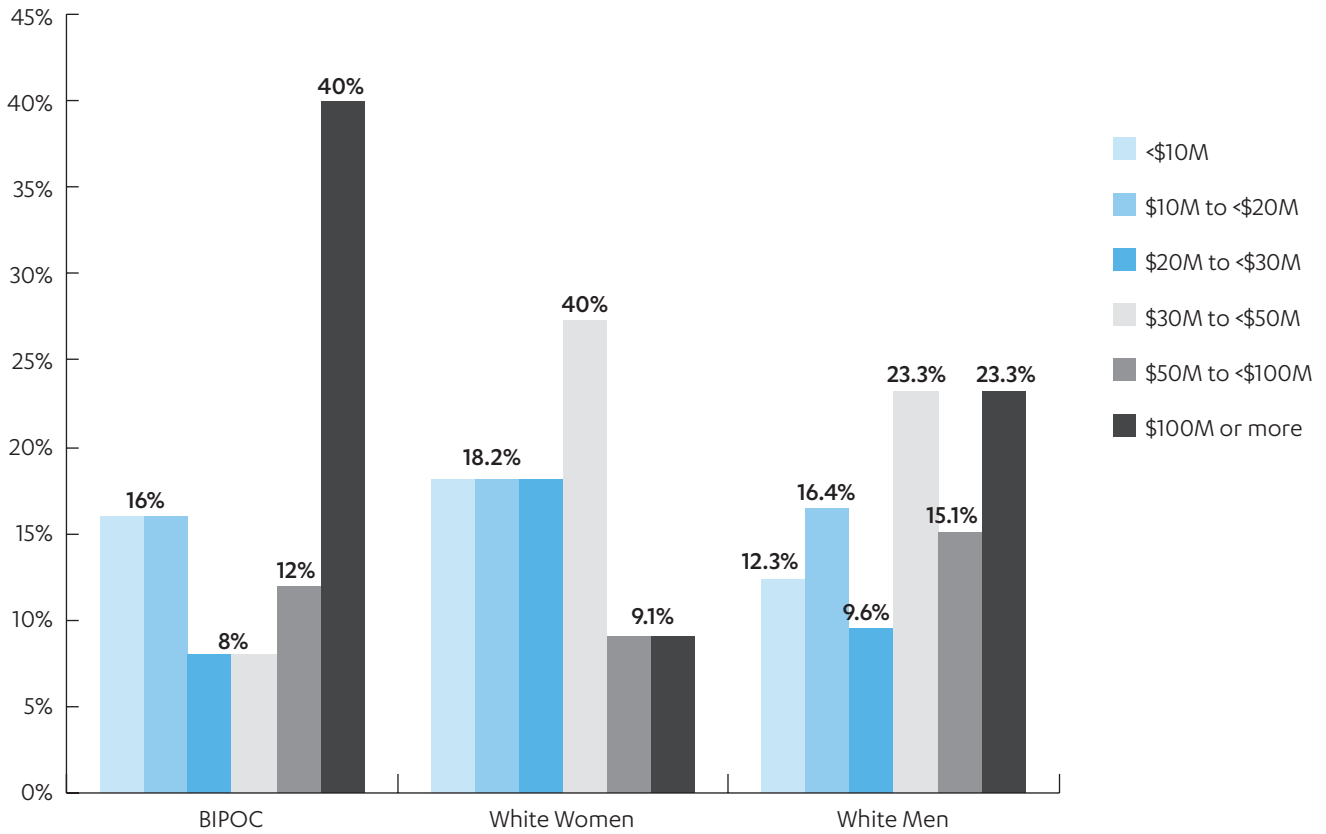


The share of top theatrical films directed by a woman in 2023 was 14.7 percent, which was virtually the same as the previous year (14.6 percent). Although the share of films directed by a woman has increased more than threefold since 2011 — from 4.1 percent to 14.7 percent — women remained underrepresented by a factor of more than 3 to 1 in this employment arena in 2023.



only 1.5 out of 10 theatrical film directors are women

FIGURE 3: Theatrical Film Budget By Director Race/Ethnicity and Gender, BIPOC (N = 25), White Women (N = 11), White Men (N = 73), 2023



In 2023, top theatrical films directed by White women were most likely to have the smallest budgets. That is, 36.4 percent of the films directed by White women had budgets smaller than \$20 million, compared to just 28.7 percent for those by White men and 32 percent for those by BIPOC artists. Meanwhile, top theatrical films directed by BIPOC artists were most likely to have budgets that were \$100 million or more (40 percent). But there were only 10 films directed by BIPOC artists in the largest budget category, compared to 17 films directed by White men in this category.

FIGURE 4: Share of Theatrical Film Directors, by Race/Ethnicity, 2023 (n=109)

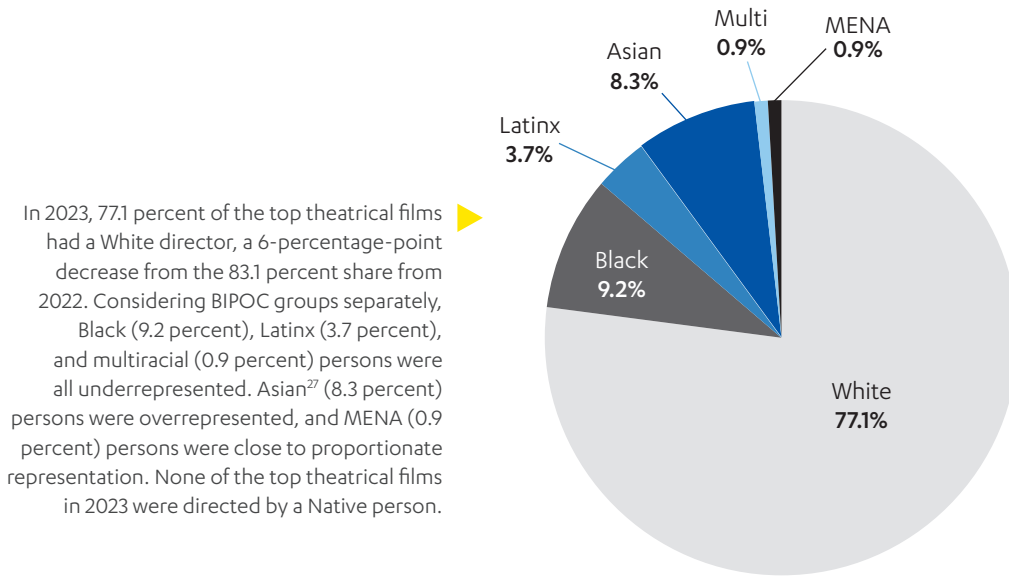
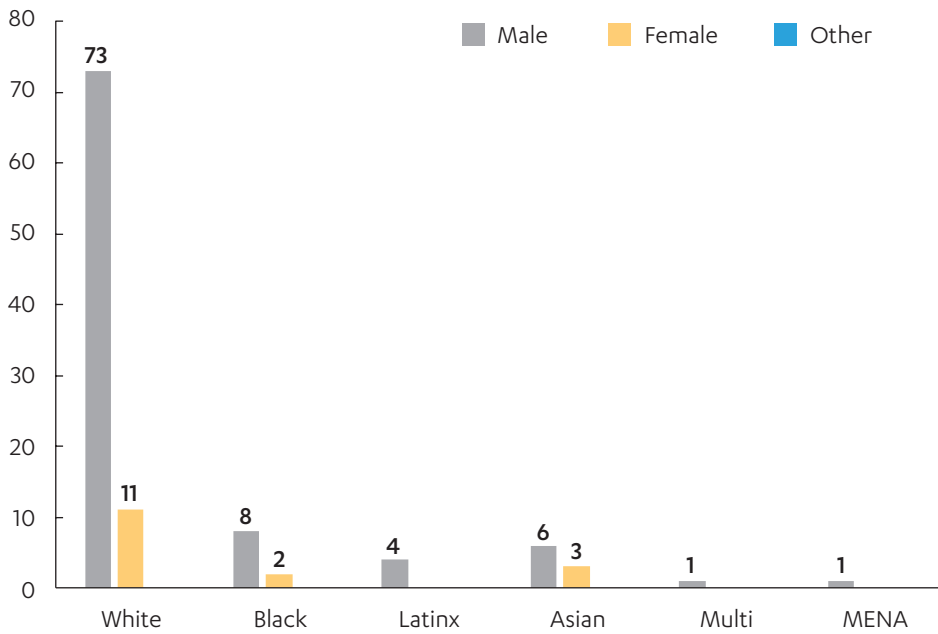


FIGURE 5: Theatrical Film Director Counts, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2023 (n=109)



Among the directors of top theatrical films in each racial/ethnic group, women lagged far behind men in 2023. Women were absent altogether among Latinx, MENA, and multiracial directors in 2023.

TABLE 1: White Male Directors and Cast Diversity, 2023 Theatrical Films (n = 73)

In 2023, 41.1 percent of theatrical films directed by White men had casts that were 30 percent BIPOC or less. Meanwhile, more than two thirds of films directed by White men had casts that were 40 percent female or less (68.5 percent).

| Percent Cast | BIPOC | Female |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| No cast | 2.7% | 2.7% |
| < 11% | 9.6% | 1.4% |
| 11% - 20% | 19.2% | 17.8% |
| 21% - 30% | 12.3% | 17.8% |
| 31% - 40% | 21.9% | 31.5% |
| 41% - 50% | 19.2% | 19.2% |
| Over 50% | 15.1% | 9.6% |

TABLE 2: Women Directors and Cast Diversity, 2023 Theatrical Films (n = 16)

| Percent Cast | BIPOC | Female |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| No cast | 6.3% | 6.3% |
| < 11% | 12.5% | 0% |
| 11% - 20% | 25.0% | 0% |
| 21% - 30% | 12.5% | 12.5% |
| 31% - 40% | 6.3% | 12.5% |
| 41% - 50% | 6.3% | 18.8% |
| Over 50% | 31.3% | 50.0% |

In 2023, 43.9 percent of theatrical films directed by women featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC. Meanwhile, more than two thirds of the films directed by women in 2023 had casts that were more than 40 percent female (68.8 percent).

TABLE 3: Directors of Color and Cast Diversity, 2023 Theatrical Films (n = 25)

Almost 90 percent of the films directed by BIPOC artists featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC in 2023 (88 percent). Indeed, 64 percent of the films had majority-BIPOC casts. Meanwhile, almost half of the films directed by BIPOC artists had casts that were more than 40 percent female (48 percent).

| Percent Cast | BIPOC | Female |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| No cast | 4.0% | 4.0% |
| < 11% | 0% | 0% |
| 11% - 20% | 0% | 4.0% |
| 21% - 30% | 8.0% | 24.0% |
| 31% - 40% | 12.0% | 20.0% |
| 41% - 50% | 12.0% | 32.0% |
| Over 50% | 64.0% | 16.0% |

TABLE 4: Women of Color Directors and Cast Diversity, 2023 Theatrical Films (n = 5)

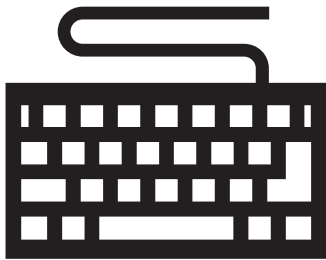
| Percent Cast | BIPOC | Female |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| No cast | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| < 11% | 0% | 0% |
| 11% - 20% | 0% | 0% |
| 21% - 30% | 0% | 0% |
| 31% - 40% | 0% | 20.0% |
| 41% - 50% | 0% | 20.0% |
| Over 50% | 80.0% | 40.0% |

Four out of five theatrical films that were directed by women of color featured casts that were majority BIPOC in 2023 (80 percent). The only film not included had no cast. Meanwhile, over half of the theatrical films featured casts that were more than 40 percent female (60 percent).

WRITERS

Writers

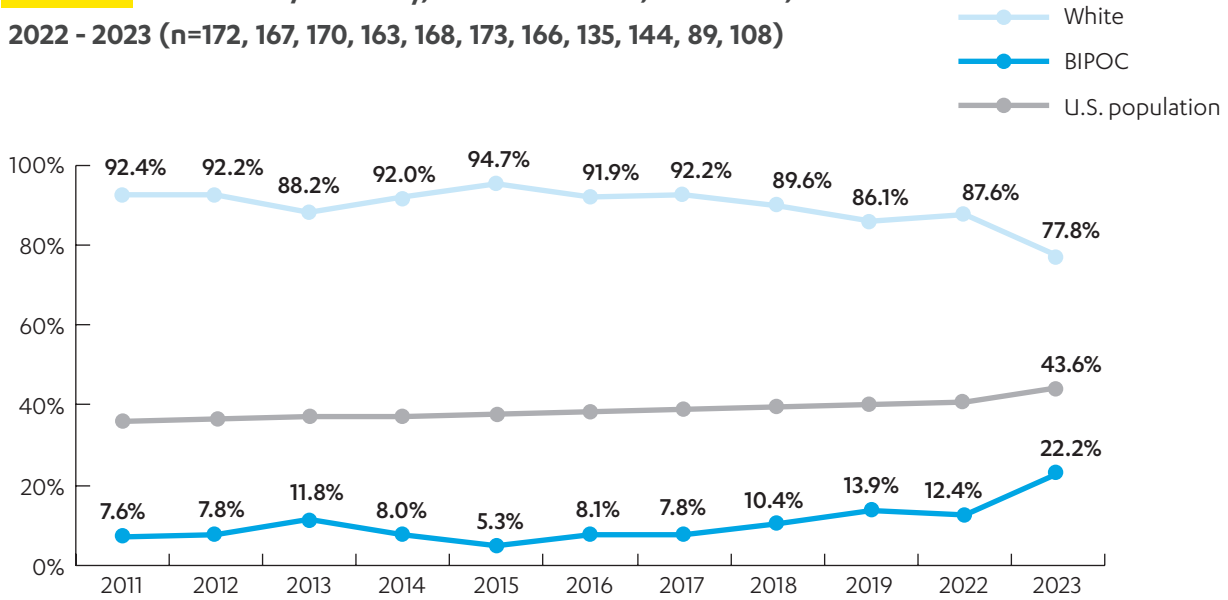
Screenwriters²⁸ are the artists who transform source material and original ideas into the stories that come to life on screen. In 2023, this report series found the largest share of theatrical films written by BIPOC writers since it began tracking films in 2011. In comparison, the share of films written by a woman was slightly down from the previous year. Despite the gains in recent years, BIPOC and women remained underrepresented among film writers in 2023.²⁹



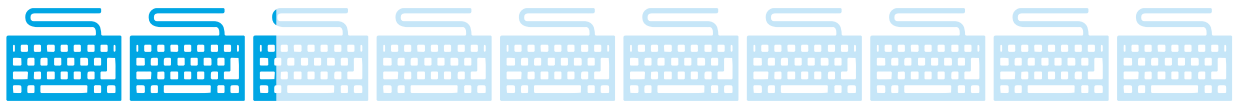
When examining individual BIPOC groups, this report found that each group was underrepresented as theatrical film writers, except for MENA writers who were close to proportionate representation. In addition, White, multiracial, Latinx, and MENA women writers were either underrepresented or excluded within their racial/ethnic groups. By contrast, Black and Asian women writers reached or exceeded parity with their male counterparts.

In 2023, theatrical films written by BIPOC writers had more diverse casts and more gender-balanced casts than those written by White men. Theatrical films written by women had the highest share of gender-balanced casts.

FIGURE 1: Writer Race/Ethnicity, Theatrical Films, 2011 - 2019, 2022 - 2023 (n=172, 167, 170, 163, 168, 173, 166, 135, 144, 89, 108)

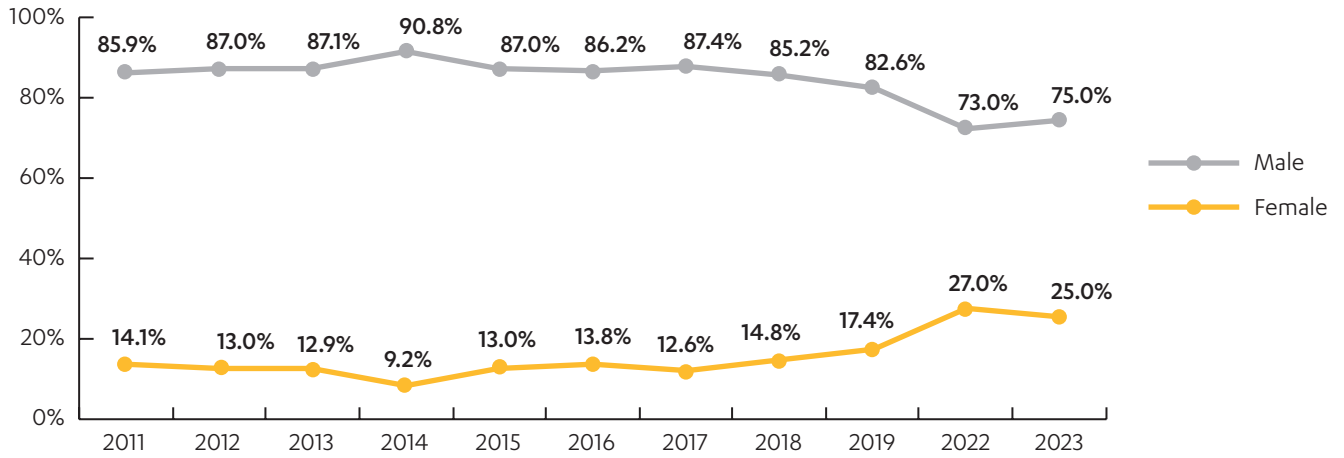


▲ Among the top theatrical releases, the share of films with a BIPOC writer rocketed to 22.2 percent in 2023, up from 12.4 percent in 2022. This latest figure is the highest figure recorded in the report series and about three times the figure recorded in the initial report in 2011 (7.6 percent). BIPOC writers would still have to almost double their 2023 share to reach proportionate representation in this employment arena (43.6 percent). It should be noted that three quarters of theatrical films written by a BIPOC writer in 2023 also had a BIPOC director.



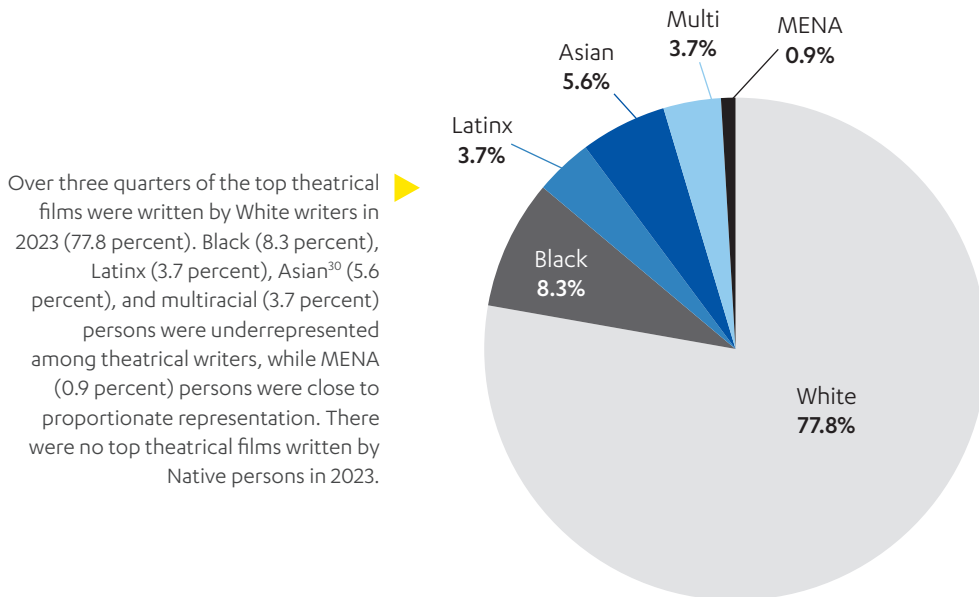
only **2.2 out of 10** theatrical film writers are people of color

FIGURE 2: Writer Gender, Theatrical Films, 2011 - 2019, 2022 - 2023
(n=170, 169, 170, 163, 168, 174, 167, 135, 144, 89, 108)



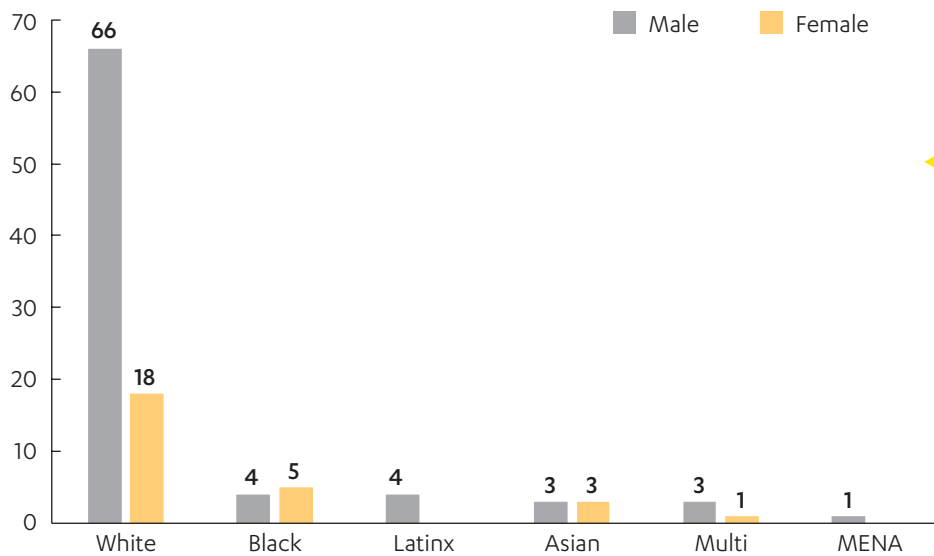
Among top theatrical releases, the share of films with a female writer decreased to 25 percent in 2023, down two percentage points from the 27-percent share evident in 2022. Although almost double the share observed in 2011 (14.1 percent), women would still have to double their 2023 share to reach parity with men in this employment arena. It is worth noting that just over half of the theatrical films with a female writer that year also had a female director (51.9 percent).

FIGURE 3: Share of Theatrical Film Writers, by Race/Ethnicity, 2023 (n=108)



Over three quarters of the top theatrical films were written by White writers in 2023 (77.8 percent). Black (8.3 percent), Latinx (3.7 percent), Asian³⁰ (5.6 percent), and multiracial (3.7 percent) persons were underrepresented among theatrical writers, while MENA (0.9 percent) persons were close to proportionate representation. There were no top theatrical films written by Native persons in 2023.

FIGURE 4: Theatrical Film Writer Counts, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2023 (n=108)



White and multiracial female writers lagged behind their male counterparts, while Latinx and MENA female writers were completely excluded from top theatrical films in 2023. By contrast, Black and Asian female writers reached or exceeded parity with their male counterparts that same year.

TABLE 1: White Male Writers and Cast Diversity, 2023 Theatrical Films (n = 66)

In 2023, 40.9 percent of theatrical films written by White males had casts that were 30 percent BIPOC or less, and nearly three quarters had casts that were 40 percent female or less (74.2 percent).

| Percent Cast | BIPOC | Female |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| No cast | 1.5% | 1.5% |
| < 11% | 10.6% | 1.5% |
| 11% - 20% | 16.7% | 19.7% |
| 21% - 30% | 13.6% | 21.2% |
| 31% - 40% | 22.7% | 31.8% |
| 41% - 50% | 19.7% | 16.7% |
| Over 50% | 15.2% | 7.6% |

TABLE 2: Women Writers and Cast Diversity, 2023 Theatrical Films (n = 27)

| Percent Cast | BIPOC | Female |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| No cast | 3.7% | 3.7% |
| < 11% | 7.4% | 0% |
| 11% - 20% | 22.2% | 0% |
| 21% - 30% | 11.1% | 11.1% |
| 31% - 40% | 11.1% | 14.8% |
| 41% - 50% | 14.8% | 33.3% |
| Over 50% | 29.6% | 37.0% |

Over half of the theatrical films written by women in 2023 featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC (55.5 percent). Meanwhile, 70.3 percent of the films written by women had casts that were more than 40 percent female.

TABLE 3: Writers of Color and Cast Diversity, 2023 Theatrical Films (n = 24)

Over three quarters of top theatrical films written by BIPOC writers in 2023 had casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC (79.1 percent), and half of those films featured casts that were more than 40 percent female (50 percent).

| Percent Cast | BIPOC | Female |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| No cast | 4.2% | 4.2% |
| < 11% | 0% | 0% |
| 11% - 20% | 8.3% | 4.2% |
| 21% - 30% | 8.3% | 16.7% |
| 31% - 40% | 8.3% | 25.0% |
| 41% - 50% | 8.3% | 25.0% |
| Over 50% | 62.5% | 25.0% |

TABLE 4: Women of Color Writers and Cast Diversity, 2023 Theatrical Films (n = 9)

| Percent Cast | BIPOC | Female |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| No cast | 11.1% | 11.1% |
| < 11% | 0% | 0% |
| 11% - 20% | 11.1% | 0% |
| 21% - 30% | 11.1% | 0% |
| 31% - 40% | 0% | 22.2% |
| 41% - 50% | 11.1% | 22.2% |
| Over 50% | 55.6% | 44.4% |

Two thirds of top theatrical films written by women of color in 2023 featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC (66.7 percent), and two thirds of those films featured casts that were more than 40 percent female (66.6 percent).

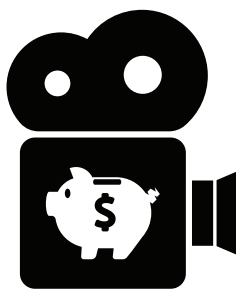
THE BOTTOM LINE

The Bottom Line

In 2023, Hollywood experienced the highs of record-setting blockbusters and the lows of a double strike. The following “Bottom Line” section will offer a deep dive into the domestic, international, and global performance of the top theatrical films from 2023 and how different demographic groups responded to diversity on the screen.



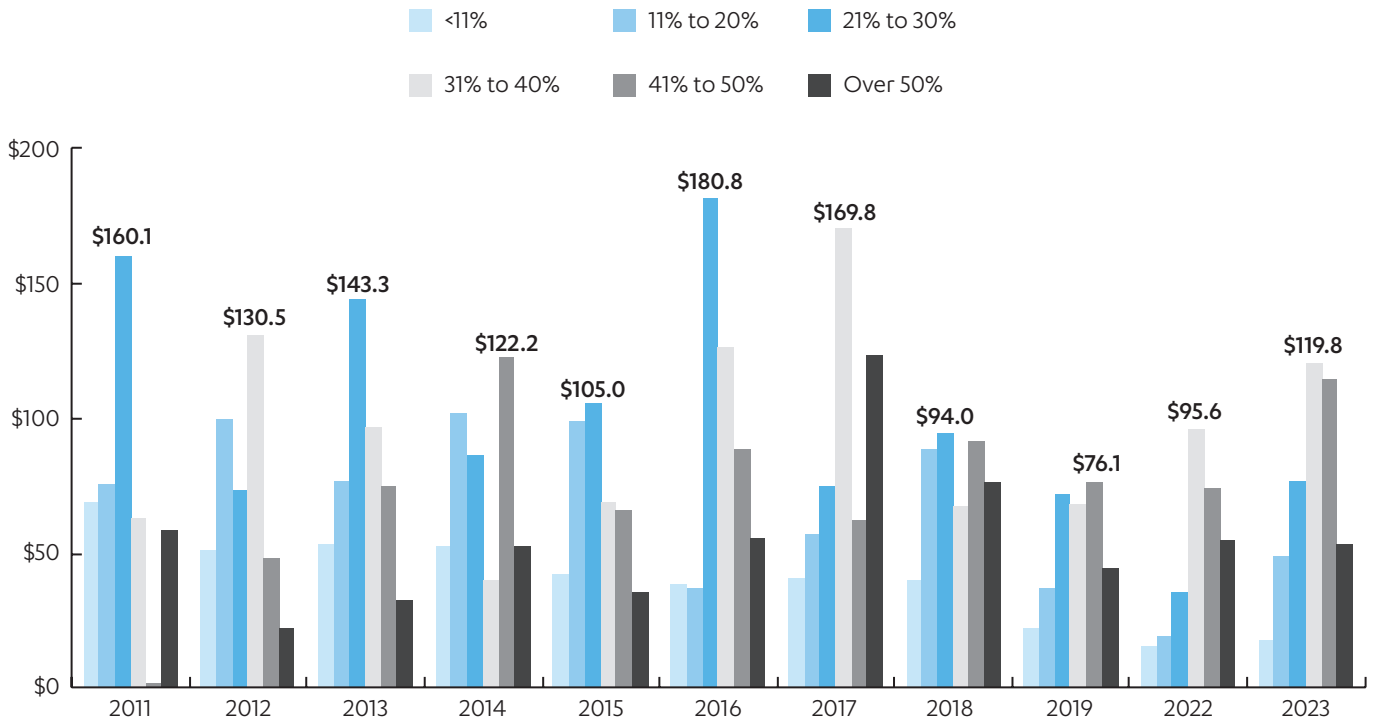
As found in the previous report, theatrical films with casts that were from 31 percent to 40 percent BIPOC enjoyed the highest median global box office receipts, while films with casts that were less than 11 percent BIPOC were the poorest performers (echoing a pattern evident the last four years).



BIPOC audiences have proven essential to an industry struggling for the past four years. BIPOC moviegoers bought the majority of opening weekend, domestic tickets for seven of the top 10 films and 14 of the top 20 films released in theaters in 2023 (ranked by global box office). In addition, nine of the top 10 films and 15 of the top 20 films at the global box office featured casts in which more than 30 percent of the actors were BIPOC. Five of the top 10 and eight of the top 20 films had casts in which more than 40 percent of the actors were females. Only one of the top 10 and three of the top 20 films had casts in which more than 20 percent of the actors had known disabilities.

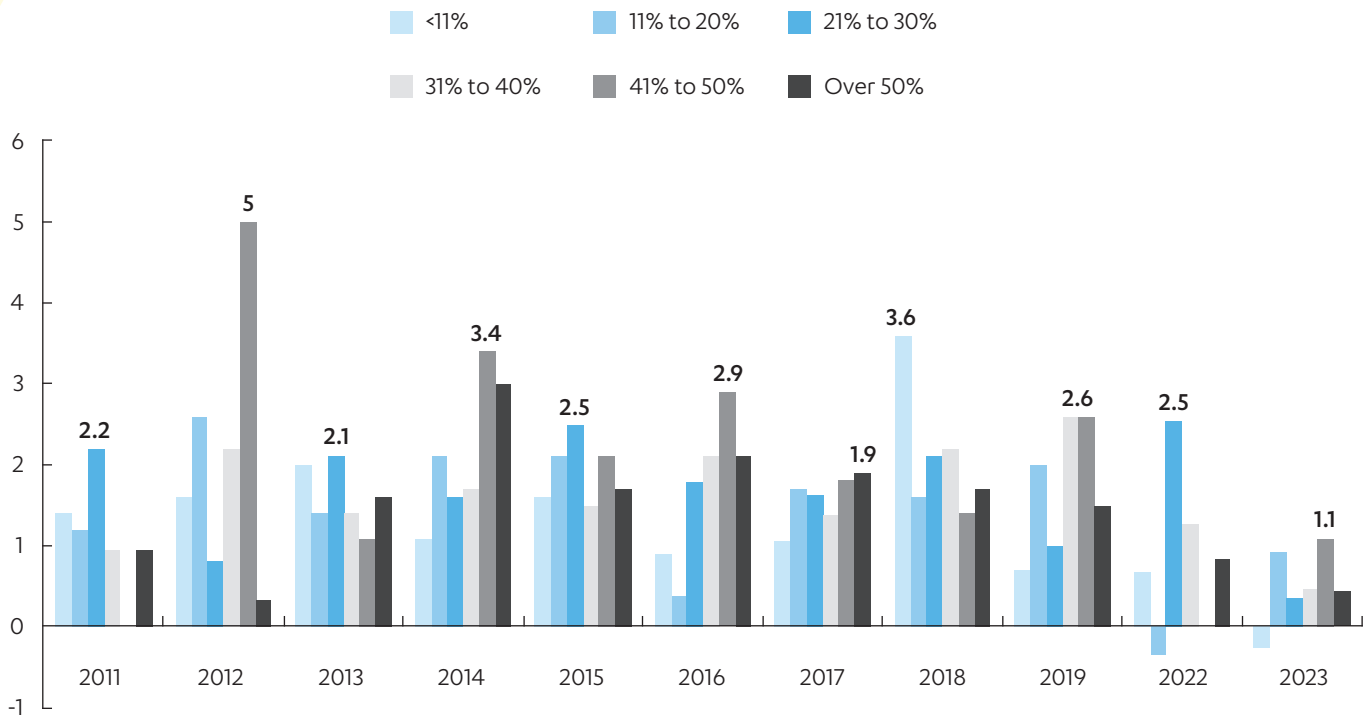
The following charts and tables document the details associated with these findings and introduce, for the first time in this series, audience data for 18- to 34-year-old moviegoers, females, and males. This eleventh report in the series, in the end, reaffirms the vital importance of diversity to the film industry.

FIGURE 1: Global Box Office (000,000s), by BIPOC Cast Share, Theatrical Films, 2011 - 2019, 2022 - 2023 (n=172, 164, 163, 162, 168, 173, 167, 140, 145, 88, 106)



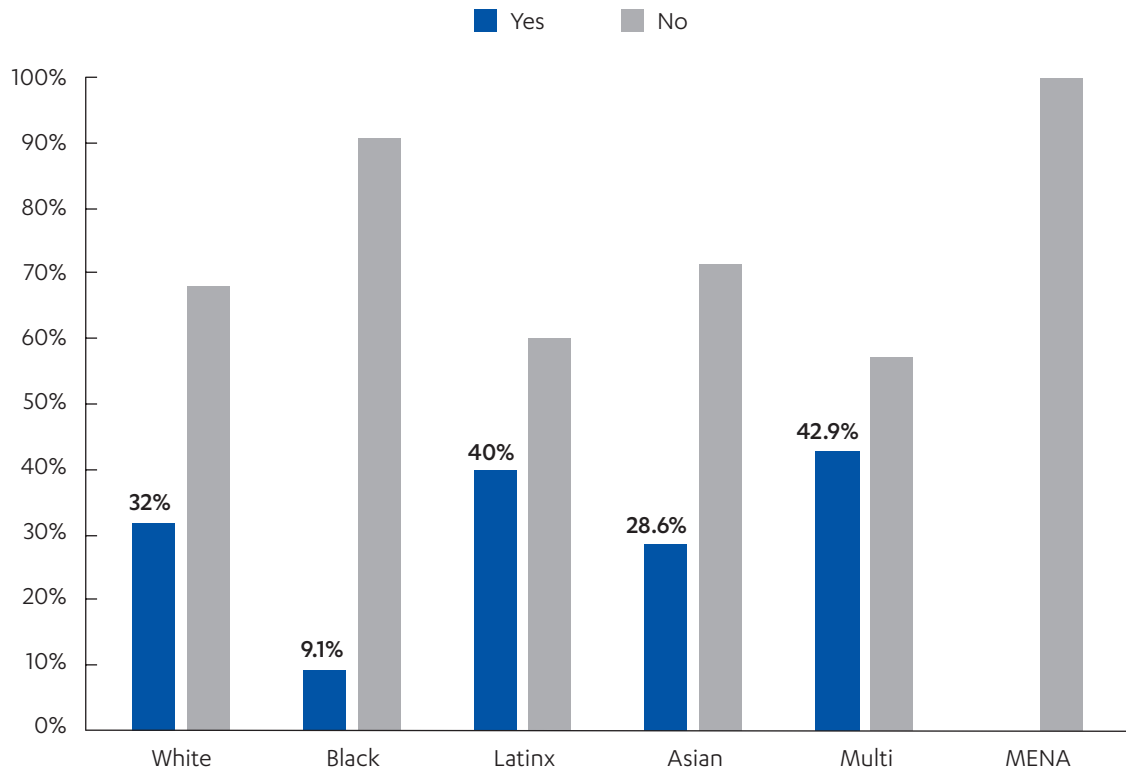
In 2023, the trend continued in which top theatrical films with racially and ethnically diverse casts outperformed their less-diverse counterparts at the global box office. That is, the median global box office peaked for films with casts that were from 31 to 40 percent BIPOC that year (\$119.8 million). Twenty films fell into this cast diversity interval, including *Barbie* (\$1.4 billion), *The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes* (\$322.5 million), and *Shazam! Fury of the Gods* (\$133.8 million). In addition, films with casts that were from 41 to 50 percent BIPOC (\$114.2 million) closely followed with the second highest median global box office. Eighteen films fell into this cast diversity interval, including *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3* (\$845.6 million), *The Little Mermaid* (\$569.6 million), and *Scream VI* (\$169.0 million). Once again, theatrical films that were less than 11 percent BIPOC performed the worst at the global box office (\$18.2 million).

FIGURE 2: Return on Investment, by BIPOC Cast Share, Theatrical Films, 2011 - 2019, 2022 - 2023, (n=160, 147, 153, 162, 168, 173, 167, 139, 145, 83, 102)



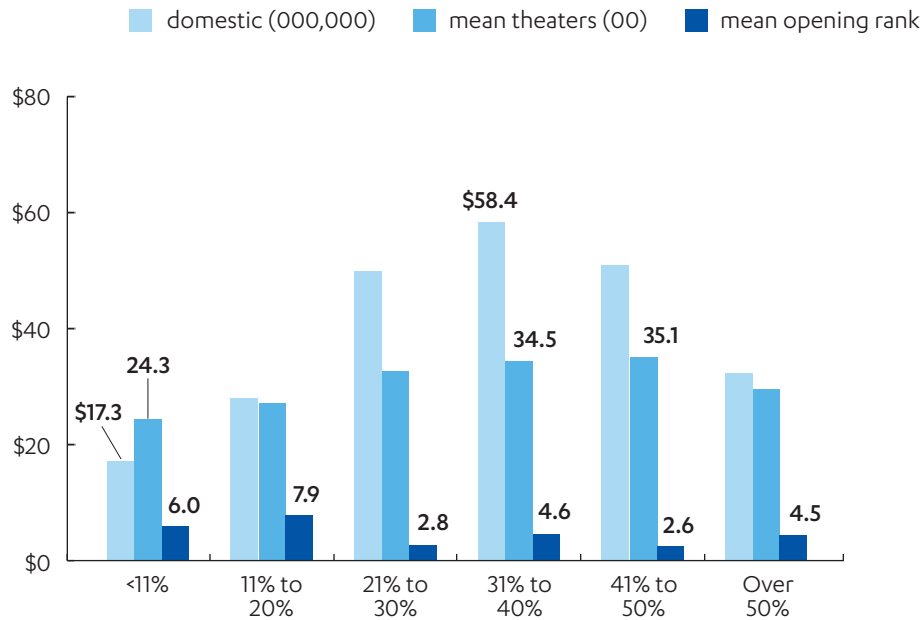
▲ Median return on investment³¹ peaked for films with casts that were between 41 percent and 50 percent BIPOC (1.1) in 2023. Examples of films that fell into the peak interval that year include *Talk to Me* (19.5), *M3GAN* (14.0), and *Saw X* (7.5). Films with the least-diverse casts posted a negative median return on investment (-0.25) in 2023.

FIGURE 3: Film Distribution in China, by Race/Ethnicity of Lead Actor, Top Theatrical Films, 2023 (n=75, 11, 5, 7, 7, 1)



▲ In 2023, top theatrical films with Black (9.1 percent) and Asian leads (28.6 percent) were less likely to be distributed in China compared to other racial/ethnic leads. In contrast, top theatrical films with Latinx (40 percent) and multiracial leads (42.9 percent) (e.g., *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom*, *Fast X*, and *Transformers: Rise of the Beasts*) were the most likely to be distributed in China in 2023. There were no films with MENA leads distributed in China that year.

FIGURE 4: Domestic Film Performance, by BIPOC Cast Share, Top Theatrical Films, 2023 (n=103)



▲ In 2023, films with casts that were from 31 percent to 40 percent BIPOC posted the highest median domestic box office (\$58.4 million). Films with casts that were from 41 percent to 50 percent BIPOC had the highest mean opening weekend rank (2.6) and were released in the most theaters, on average (3,510), followed closely again by films with casts that were from 31 percent to 40 percent BIPOC (3,450). Similar to the last report’s findings, films with casts that were 20 percent BIPOC or less had the lowest median domestic box office (\$17.3 million), appeared in the fewest theaters (2,430), and had the lowest opening weekend rank in 2023 (6.0).

TABLE 1: Median Box Office and Mean International Markets, by Race/Ethnicity of Lead Actor (2023)

| Race/Ethnicity of Lead Actor | N Films | Global Box Office (000,000s) | Mean International Markets |
|------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| White | 75 | \$53.9 | 34.3 |
| Black | 11 | \$117.4 | 34.2 |
| Latinx | 5 | \$169.0 | 35.8 |
| Asian | 7 | \$21.1 | 44.7 |
| Multi | 7 | \$180.5 | 54.4 |
| MENA | 1 | \$13.8 | 22.0 |

◀ Among the top theatrical films in 2023, the seven films featuring multiracial leads were distributed in the most international markets (54.4), on average, and posted the highest median global box office (\$180.5 million). Meanwhile, the five films featuring a Latinx lead posted the second-highest median global box office (\$169 million), despite being released in considerably fewer international markets (35.8), on average.

TABLE 2: Median Global Box Office and Mean International Markets, by BIPOC Cast Share (2023)

In 2023, the 18 theatrical films with casts that were from 41 percent to 50 percent BIPOC were released in the most international markets (46.8), on average, and had the second highest median global box office (\$114.2 million). Meanwhile, the 20 theatrical films with 31 percent to 40 percent BIPOC casts posted the highest median global box office (\$119.8 million) and were released in the second most international markets (43.5), on average. Once again, these findings bust the myth that “diversity does not travel.” This report series has repeatedly found that films with casts that are racially and ethnically diverse perform well in international markets. As diverse as the U.S. audience, global audiences want to see themselves reflected on screen.

| BIPOC Cast Share | N Films | Global Box Office (000,000s) | Mean International Markets |
|------------------|---------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| < 11% | 9 | \$18.2 | 20.3 |
| 11% - 20% | 18 | \$49.0 | 29.3 |
| 21% - 30% | 13 | \$77.0 | 37.5 |
| 31% - 40% | 20 | \$119.8 | 43.5 |
| 41% - 50% | 18 | \$114.2 | 46.8 |
| Over 50% | 28 | \$52.9 | 33.3 |

TABLE 3: Median Box Office and Audience Demographics, by BIPOC Cast Share (2023)

| BIPOC Cast Share | N Films | Global Box Office (000,000s) | White Audience Share | Black Audience Share | Latinx Audience Share | Asian Audience Share | Native/ Other Audience Share |
|------------------|---------|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| < 11% | 9 | \$18.2 | 63.3% | 7.7% | 21.3% | 4.5% | 3.2% |
| 11%-20% | 18 | \$49.0 | 59.6% | 8.7% | 21.6% | 6.4% | 3.7% |
| 21%-30% | 13 | \$77.0 | 48.5% | 13.1% | 28.5% | 6.0% | 4.0% |
| 31%-40% | 20 | \$119.8 | 52.4% | 10.9% | 25.0% | 6.8% | 4.9% |
| 41%-50% | 18 | \$114.2 | 45.9% | 15.1% | 28.0% | 6.4% | 4.5% |
| Over 50% | 28 | \$52.9 | 40.0% | 19.2% | 28.0% | 8.1% | 4.6% |

Just as there was a slight increase in the number of wide-release, theatrical films in 2023 compared to the previous year, the BIPOC audience share of the domestic box office appeared to show signs of rebounding as well. BIPOC moviegoers made up the majority of ticket buyers for theatrical films that fell into each of the following three racial/ethnic cast diversity intervals: 21 percent to 30 percent (51.5 percent), 41 percent to 50 percent (54.1 percent), and over 50 percent (60 percent). For the most part, as racial/ethnic cast diversity increased, the BIPOC audience share also increased and the White share decreased in 2023. This pattern is particularly evident among the two least-diverse cast intervals (i.e., less than 20 percent BIPOC) and among the most-diverse cast intervals (i.e., over 40 percent BIPOC), where white audiences and BIPOC audiences trade places in accounting for the majority of ticket sales.

TABLE 4: Top 20 Theatrical Films at the Global Box Office by Audience and Cast Shares (2023)

| Rank | Title | Box Office (000,000s) | Lead Race/Ethnicity | BIPOC Audience Share | Female Audience Share | Persons 18-34 Audience Share | BIPOC Cast Share | Female Cast Share | Disability Cast Share |
|------|--|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Barbie | \$1,441.8 | White | 44% | 69% | 56% | 31% - 40% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 2 | Super Mario Bros. | \$1,361.4 | White | 60% | 43% | 43% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% | 11% - 20% |
| 3 | Oppenheimer | \$952.0 | White | 39% | 38% | 59% | 11% - 20% | 21% - 30% | 11% - 20% |
| 4 | Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3 | \$845.6 | White | 51% | 40% | 51% | 41% - 50% | 31% - 40% | 31% - 40% |
| 5 | Fast X | \$704.9 | Multi | 67% | 42% | 56% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |
| 6 | Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse | \$690.5 | Black | 63% | 39% | 58% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |
| 7 | The Little Mermaid | \$569.6 | Black | 67% | 68% | 44% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 8 | Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning | \$567.5 | White | 49% | 40% | 38% | 31% - 40% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 9 | Elemental | \$496.3 | Asian | 62% | 54% | 42% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 10 | Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania | \$476.1 | White | 57% | 39% | 54% | 31% - 40% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 11 | John Wick: Chapter 4 | \$440.1 | Multi | 58% | 35% | 54% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% | 11% - 20% |
| 12 | Transformers: Rise of the Beasts | \$439.0 | Latinx | 69% | 38% | 46% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 13 | The Meg 2: The Trench | \$395.0 | White | 62% | 45% | 47% | 41% - 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 14 | Wonka | \$384.2 | White | 46% | 54% | 47% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 15 | Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny | \$384.0 | White | 37% | 42% | 34% | 11% - 20% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 16 | The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes | \$322.5 | White | 38% | 61% | 62% | 31% - 40% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% |
| 17 | Five Nights at Freddy's | \$290.9 | White | 56% | 47% | 49% | 11% - 20% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 18 | Creed III | \$275.2 | Black | 71% | 40% | 55% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 19 | The Flash | \$270.6 | White | 64% | 34% | 50% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% |
| 20 | The Nun II | \$268.1 | White | 71% | 49% | 65% | 11% - 20% | Over 50% | <11% |

▲ In 2023, BIPOC moviegoers bought the majority of opening weekend, domestic tickets for seven of the top 10 films and 14 of the top 20 films (ranked by global box office). Women bought the majority of tickets for three of the top 10 films and five of the top 20 films. Moviegoers who were 18 to 34 years old bought the majority of tickets for six of the top 10 and 10 of the top 20 films. In addition, nine of the top 10 films and 15 of the top 20 films at the global box office in 2023 featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC. Five of the top 10 films and eight of the top 20 films featured casts that were more than 40 percent female. Only one of the top 10 and three of the top 20 films in 2023 featured a cast where more than 20 percent of the actors had a known disability.

TABLE 5: Top 20 Theatrical Films by Asian Audience Share (2023)

| Rank | Title | Box Office (000,000s) | Opening Weekend Rank | Genre | Asian Audience Share | BIPOC Cast Share | Female Cast Share | Disability Cast Share |
|------|--|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Joy Ride | \$15.8 | 6 | Comedy | 27% | Over 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 2 | Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning | \$567.5 | 1 | Action | 16% | 31% - 40% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 3 | It Lives Inside | \$7.2 | 7 | Drama | 12% | Over 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 4 | Transformers: Rise of the Beasts | \$439.0 | 1 | Action | 11% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 5 | The Marvels | \$205.6 | 1 | Action | 11% | Over 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 6 | A Haunting in Venice | \$122.3 | 2 | Crime | 10% | 11% - 20% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 7 | The Creator | \$104.3 | 3 | Action | 10% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 8 | Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania | \$476.1 | 1 | Action | 10% | 31% - 40% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 9 | Oppenheimer | \$952.0 | 2 | Biography | 10% | 11% - 20% | 21% - 30% | 11% - 20% |
| 10 | The Flash | \$270.6 | 1 | Action | 10% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% |
| 11 | John Wick: Chapter 4 | \$440.1 | 1 | Action | 10% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% | 11% - 20% |
| 12 | The Nun II | \$268.1 | 1 | Horror | 10% | 11% - 20% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 13 | Next Goal Wins | \$7.7 | 8 | Comedy | 9% | Over 50% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 14 | Blue Beetle | \$129.3 | 1 | Action | 9% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 15 | Expend4bles | \$37.9 | 2 | Action | 9% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% | 11% - 20% |
| 16 | Plane | \$74.5 | 5 | Action | 9% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% | <11% |
| 17 | The Meg 2: The Trench | \$395.0 | 2 | Action | 9% | 41% - 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 18 | The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes | \$322.5 | 1 | Fantasy | 9% | 31% - 40% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% |
| 19 | Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse | \$690.5 | 1 | Animation | 9% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |
| 20 | Elemental | \$496.3 | 2 | Animation | 8% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |

▲ Seven of the top 10 and 16 of the top 20 theatrical films in 2023 — ranked by the Asian share of opening weekend, domestic box office — featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC. Five of these top 10 theatrical films had casts that were more than 40 percent female, and only one had a cast where more than 20 percent of the top actors had a known disability. In addition, five of these top 10 films were ranked number one during their opening weekend at the domestic box office.

TABLE 6: Top 20 Theatrical Films by Black Audience Share (2023)

| Rank | Title | Box Office (000,000s) | Opening Weekend Rank | Genre | Black Audience Share | BIPOC Cast Share | Female Cast Share | Disability Cast Share |
|------|---|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | The Color Purple | \$46.7 | 3 | Drama | 69% | Over 50% | Over 50% | 21% - 30% |
| 2 | Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé | \$43.4 | 1 | Music | 53% | - | - | - |
| 3 | The Blackening | \$18.2 | 6 | Comedy | 47% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 4 | Creed III | \$275.2 | 1 | Drama | 37% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 5 | The Little Mermaid | \$569.6 | 1 | Adventure | 35% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 6 | The Equalizer 3 | \$191.0 | 1 | Action | 32% | 21% - 30% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 7 | Missing | \$48.8 | 4 | Drama | 21% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 8 | The Boogeyman | \$67.3 | 3 | Horror | 21% | 41% - 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 9 | Transformers: Rise of the Beasts | \$439.0 | 1 | Action | 21% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 10 | Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse | \$690.5 | 1 | Animation | 20% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |
| 11 | Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom | \$255.3 | 1 | Action | 19% | 41% - 50% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 12 | M3GAN | \$180.1 | 2 | Horror | 19% | 41% - 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 13 | Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem | \$180.5 | 4 | Animation | 18% | Over 50% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 14 | Shazam! Fury of the Gods | \$133.8 | 1 | Action | 18% | 31% - 40% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 15 | The Meg 2: The Trench | \$395.0 | 2 | Action | 18% | 41% - 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 16 | The Flash | \$270.6 | 1 | Action | 17% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% |
| 17 | The Nun II | \$268.1 | 1 | Horror | 16% | 11% - 20% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 18 | PAW Patrol: The Mighty Movie | \$200.7 | 1 | Animation | 16% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% |
| 19 | The Creator | \$104.3 | 3 | Action | 16% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 20 | The Marvels | \$205.6 | 1 | Action | 16% | Over 50% | Over 50% | <11% |

▲ Eight of the top 10 and 16 of the top 20 theatrical films in 2023 — ranked by the Black share of opening weekend, domestic box office — featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC. Six of these top 10 theatrical films in 2023 had casts that were more than 40 percent female, and only one had a cast where more than 20 percent of the top actors had a known disability. In addition, six of these top 10 films were ranked number one during their opening weekend at the domestic box office.

TABLE 7: Top 20 Theatrical Films by Latinx Audience Share (2023)

| Rank | Title | Box Office (000,000s) | Opening Weekend Rank | Genre | Latinx Audience Share | BIPOC Cast Share | Female Cast Share | Disability Cast Share |
|------|---|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Insidious: The Red Door | \$189.1 | 1 | Horror | 45% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 2 | The Pope's Exorcist | \$77.0 | 2 | Horror | 42% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 3 | Fast X | \$704.9 | 1 | Action | 40% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |
| 4 | The Nun II | \$268.1 | 1 | Horror | 40% | 11% - 20% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 5 | Super Mario Bros. | \$1,361.4 | 1 | Animation | 39% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% | 11% - 20% |
| 6 | Blue Beetle | \$129.3 | 1 | Action | 38% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 7 | Scream VI | \$169.0 | 1 | Horror | 38% | 41% - 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 8 | The Exorcist: Believer | \$136.2 | 1 | Horror | 38% | 21% - 30% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 9 | Saw X | \$111.0 | 2 | Horror | 37% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 10 | Elemental | \$496.3 | 2 | Animation | 36% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 11 | Trolls Band Together | \$198.6 | 2 | Animation | 35% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% | 21% - 30% |
| 12 | M3GAN | \$180.1 | 2 | Horror | 34% | 41% - 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 13 | Gran Turismo | \$121.9 | 1 | Action | 34% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% | 21% - 30% |
| 14 | Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem | \$180.5 | 4 | Animation | 34% | Over 50% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 15 | Five Nights at Freddy's | \$290.9 | 1 | Horror | 33% | 11% - 20% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 16 | Evil Dead Rise | \$146.7 | 2 | Horror | 33% | <11% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 17 | Missing | \$48.8 | 4 | Drama | 33% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 18 | The Boogeyman | \$67.3 | 3 | Horror | 33% | 41% - 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 19 | Ruby Gillman: Teenage Kraken | \$45.6 | 6 | Animation | 33% | 41% - 50% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 20* | Strays | \$36.0 | 5 | Adventure | 32% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% | <11% |
| 20* | Transformers: Rise of the Beasts | \$439.0 | 1 | Action | 32% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |

*Tied with the same share.



Six of the top 10 and 15 of the top 20 theatrical films in 2023 — ranked by the Latinx share of opening weekend, domestic box office — featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC. There were two films with the same Latinx share and tied for the final spot in the top 20. Six of these top 10 theatrical films in 2023 had casts that were more than 40 percent female, and none had a cast where more than 20 percent of the top actors had a known disability. In addition, seven of these top 10 films were ranked number one during their opening weekend at the domestic box office.

TABLE 8: Top 20 Theatrical Films by White Audience Share (2023)

| Rank | Title | Box Office (000,000s) | Opening Weekend Rank | Genre | White Audience Share | BIPOC Cast Share | Female Cast Share | Disability Cast Share |
|------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | The Boys in the Boat | \$24.3 | 8 | Biography | 81% | <11% | <11% | 11% - 20% |
| 2 | The Holdovers | \$19.1 | 17 | Comedy | 79% | 11% - 20% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 3 | 80 for Brady | \$40.4 | 2 | Biography | 78% | 21% - 30% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 4 | The Hill | \$7.7 | 9 | Biography | 78% | <11% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 5 | Champions | \$19.1 | 6 | Comedy | 75% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% |
| 6 | About My Father | \$18.2 | 6 | Comedy | 74% | <11% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 7 | Jesus Revolution | \$54.3 | 3 | Drama | 74% | 11% - 20% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 8 | Book Club: The Next Chapter | \$29.0 | 3 | Comedy | 73% | 11% - 20% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 9 | The Machine | \$10.7 | 5 | Action | 72% | <11% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 10 | Asteroid City | \$53.9 | 10 | Comedy | 72% | 11% - 20% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 11 | Saltburn | \$19.4 | 14 | Comedy | 71% | 11% - 20% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 12 | Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour | \$250.3 | 1 | Music | 70% | - | - | - |
| 13 | Dumb Money | \$20.5 | 20 | Biography | 68% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% | 21% - 30% |
| 14 | After Death | \$11.5 | 4 | Documentary | 66% | - | - | - |
| 15 | Beau Is Afraid | \$11.5 | 15 | Comedy | 66% | 11% - 20% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 16 | Bottoms | \$12.9 | 19 | Comedy | 66% | Over 50% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 17 | Ferrari | \$14.4 | 14 | Biography | 65% | 11% - 20% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 18 | Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre | \$49.1 | 7 | Action | 64% | 21% - 30% | 11% - 20% | <11% |
| 19 | My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3 | \$38.8 | 3 | Comedy | 64% | <11% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 20 | Napoleon | \$206.9 | 2 | Action | 63% | 21% - 30% | 11% - 20% | <11% |

▲ Only one of the top 10 and three of the top 20 theatrical films in 2023 —ranked by the White share of opening weekend, global box office — featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC. Two of these top 10 theatrical films in 2023 had casts that were more than 40 percent female, and only one had a cast where more than 20 percent of the top actors had a known disability. In addition, none of these top 10 films were ranked number one during their opening weekend at the domestic box office.

TABLE 9: Top 20 Theatrical Films by Native and Other Audience Share (2023)

| Rank | Title | Box Office (000,000s) | Opening Weekend Rank | Genre | Native and Other Audience Share | BIPOC Cast Share | Female Cast Share | Disability Cast Share |
|------|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|--|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania | \$476.1 | 1 | Action | 8% | 31% - 40% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 2 | John Wick: Chapter 4 | \$440.1 | 1 | Action | 7% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% | 11% - 20% |
| 3 | Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning | \$567.5 | 1 | Action | 7% | 31% - 40% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 4 | Killers of the Flower Moon | \$156.3 | 2 | Crime | 7% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 5 | Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse | \$690.5 | 1 | Animation | 6% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |
| 6 | Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves | \$208.2 | 1 | Action | 6% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 7 | Ruby Gillman: Teenage Kraken | \$45.6 | 6 | Animation | 6% | 41% - 50% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 8 | Super Mario Bros. | \$1,361.4 | 1 | Animation | 6% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% | 11% - 20% |
| 9 | Knock at the Cabin | \$54.8 | 1 | Horror | 6% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 10 | Wish | \$176.8 | 3 | Animation | 6% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 11 | Fast X | \$704.9 | 1 | Action | 6% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |
| 12 | The Nun II | \$268.1 | 1 | Horror | 5% | 11% - 20% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 13 | Shazam! Fury of the Gods | \$133.8 | 1 | Action | 5% | 31% - 40% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 14 | The Marvels | \$205.6 | 1 | Action | 5% | Over 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 15 | Transformers: Rise of the Beasts | \$439.0 | 1 | Action | 5% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 16 | Wonka | \$384.2 | 1 | Adventure | 5% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 17 | The Flash | \$270.6 | 1 | Action | 5% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% |
| 18 | Expend4bles | \$37.9 | 2 | Action | 5% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% | 11% - 20% |
| 19 | Freelance | \$9.0 | 8 | Action | 5% | 11% - 20% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |
| 20* | Sisu | \$14.3 | 10 | Action | 5% | <11% | 11% - 20% | <11% |
| 20* | The Equalizer 3 | \$191.0 | 1 | Action | 5% | 21% - 30% | 21% - 30% | <11% |

*Tied with the same share.



All of the top 10 and 16 of the top 20 theatrical films in 2023 — ranked by the Native and other share of opening weekend, global box office — featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC. There were two films with the same Native and other share and tied for the final spot in the top 20. Six of these top 10 theatrical films in 2023 had casts that were more than 40 percent female, and none had a cast where more than 20 percent of the top actors had a known disability. In addition, seven of these top 10 films were ranked number one during their opening weekend at the domestic box office.

TABLE 10: Top 20 Theatrical Films by Female Audience Share (2023)

| Rank | Title | Box Office (000,000s) | Opening Weekend Rank | Genre | Female Audience Share | BIPOC Cast Share | Female Cast Share | Disability Cast Share |
|------|--|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour | \$250.3 | 1 | Music | 79% | - | - | - |
| 2 | Book Club: The Next Chapter | \$29.0 | 3 | Comedy | 76% | 11% - 20% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 3 | Barbie | \$1,441.8 | 1 | Adventure | 69% | 31% - 40% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 4 | My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3 | \$38.8 | 3 | Comedy | 69% | <11% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 5 | The Little Mermaid | \$569.6 | 1 | Adventure | 68% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 6 | 80 for Brady | \$40.4 | 2 | Biography | 68% | 21% - 30% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 7 | Anyone But You | \$33.5 | 4 | Comedy | 67% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 8 | Priscilla | \$20.9 | 20 | Biography | 67% | 11% - 20% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 9 | Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret. | \$21.5 | 3 | Comedy | 66% | 21% - 30% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 10 | Bottoms | \$12.9 | 19 | Comedy | 66% | Over 50% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 11 | The Color Purple | \$46.7 | 3 | Drama | 65% | Over 50% | Over 50% | 21% - 30% |
| 12 | Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé | \$43.4 | 1 | Music | 65% | - | - | - |
| 13 | Love Again | \$12.7 | 5 | Comedy | 64% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 14 | Journey to Bethlehem | \$7.4 | 7 | Adventure | 62% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 15 | The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes | \$322.5 | 1 | Fantasy | 61% | 31% - 40% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% |
| 16 | Wish | \$176.8 | 3 | Animation | 60% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 17 | Trolls Band Together | \$198.6 | 2 | Animation | 59% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% | 21% - 30% |
| 18 | Jesus Revolution | \$54.3 | 3 | Drama | 59% | 11% - 20% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 19 | Ruby Gillman: Teenage Kraken | \$45.6 | 6 | Animation | 58% | 41% - 50% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 20 | His Only Son | \$13.8 | 3 | Drama | 57% | Over 50% | 21% - 30% | <11% |

▲ Four of the top 10 and 12 of the top 20 theatrical films in 2023 — ranked by the female share of opening weekend, domestic box office — featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC. Eight of these top 10 theatrical films in 2023 had casts that were more than 40 percent female. A ninth film among their top 10 was a White-female-led, music documentary. None of these top films had a cast where more than 20 percent of the top actors had a known disability. In addition, three of these top 10 films were ranked number one during their opening weekend at the domestic box office.

TABLE 11: Top 20 Theatrical Films by Male Audience Share (2023)

| Rank | Title | Box Office (000,000s) | Opening Weekend Rank | Genre | Male Audience Share | BIPOC Cast Share | Female Cast Share | Disability Cast Share |
|------|---|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Sisu | \$14.3 | 10 | Action | 71% | <11% | 11% - 20% | <11% |
| 2 | The Flash | \$270.6 | 1 | Action | 66% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% |
| 3 | The Creator | \$104.3 | 3 | Action | 65% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 4 | John Wick: Chapter 4 | \$440.1 | 1 | Action | 65% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% | 11% - 20% |
| 5 | Kandahar | \$9.4 | 7 | Action | 64% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% | <11% |
| 6 | The Machine | \$10.7 | 5 | Action | 64% | <11% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 7 | Beau Is Afraid | \$11.5 | 15 | Comedy | 64% | 11% - 20% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 8 | Gran Turismo | \$121.9 | 1 | Action | 63% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% | 21% - 30% |
| 9 | Silent Night | \$10.8 | 9 | Action | 62% | Over 50% | 21% - 30% | 21% - 30% |
| 10 | Cocaine Bear | \$88.3 | 2 | Comedy | 62% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 11 | Expend4bles | \$37.9 | 2 | Action | 62% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% | 11% - 20% |
| 12 | Killers of the Flower Moon | \$156.3 | 2 | Crime | 62% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 13 | Oppenheimer | \$952.0 | 2 | Biography | 62% | 11% - 20% | 21% - 30% | 11% - 20% |
| 14 | Transformers: Rise of the Beasts | \$439.0 | 1 | Action | 62% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 15 | Napoleon | \$206.9 | 2 | Action | 61% | 21% - 30% | 11% - 20% | <11% |
| 16 | Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse | \$690.5 | 1 | Animation | 61% | Over 50% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |
| 17 | Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania | \$476.1 | 1 | Action | 61% | 31% - 40% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 18 | The Iron Claw | \$18.2 | 6 | Biography | 61% | <11% | 21% - 30% | 11% - 20% |
| 19 | Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves | \$208.2 | 1 | Action | 60% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 20 | Blue Beetle | \$129.3 | 1 | Action | 60% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |

▲ Five of the top 10 and 12 of the top 20 theatrical films in 2023 — ranked by the male share of opening weekend, domestic box office — featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC. Only one of these top 10 theatrical films in 2023 had casts that were more than 40 percent female, and three had casts where more than 20 percent of the top actors had a known disability. In addition, three of these top 10 films were ranked number one during their opening weekend at the domestic box office.

TABLE 12: Top 20 Theatrical Films by Persons 18-34 Audience Share (2023)

| Rank | Title | Box Office (000,000s) | Opening Weekend Rank | Genre | Persons 18-34 Audience Share | BIPOC Cast Share | Female Cast Share | Disability Cast Share |
|------|--|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Bottoms | \$12.9 | 19 | Comedy | 78% | Over 50% | Over 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 2 | Beau Is Afraid | \$11.5 | 15 | Comedy | 75% | 11% - 20% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 3 | Scream VI | \$169.0 | 1 | Horror | 71% | 41% - 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 4 | Anyone But You | \$33.5 | 4 | Comedy | 69% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 5 | Saw X | \$111.0 | 2 | Horror | 69% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 6 | Insidious: The Red Door | \$189.1 | 1 | Horror | 68% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 7 | Evil Dead Rise | \$146.7 | 2 | Horror | 67% | <11% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 8 | Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé | \$43.4 | 1 | Music | 67% | - | - | - |
| 9 | Joy Ride | \$15.8 | 6 | Comedy | 65% | Over 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 10 | The Nun II | \$268.1 | 1 | Horror | 65% | 11% - 20% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 11 | Cocaine Bear | \$88.3 | 2 | Comedy | 65% | 21% - 30% | 31% - 40% | <11% |
| 12 | Asteroid City | \$53.9 | 10 | Comedy | 64% | 11% - 20% | 21% - 30% | <11% |
| 13 | Knock at the Cabin | \$54.8 | 1 | Horror | 64% | 41% - 50% | 41% - 50% | 11% - 20% |
| 14 | Saltburn | \$19.4 | 14 | Comedy | 64% | 11% - 20% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 15 | No Hard Feelings | \$87.3 | 4 | Comedy | 62% | 11% - 20% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |
| 16 | The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes | \$322.5 | 1 | Fantasy | 62% | 31% - 40% | 31% - 40% | 21% - 30% |
| 17 | M3GAN | \$180.1 | 2 | Horror | 62% | 41% - 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 18 | It Lives Inside | \$7.2 | 7 | Drama | 62% | Over 50% | Over 50% | <11% |
| 19 | The Blackening | \$18.2 | 6 | Comedy | 62% | Over 50% | 41% - 50% | <11% |
| 20 | Thanksgiving | \$44.1 | 3 | Horror | 61% | 11% - 20% | 31% - 40% | 11% - 20% |

▲ Five of the top 10 and 10 of the top 20 theatrical films in 2023 — ranked by the 18- to 34-year-old moviegoers' share of opening weekend, domestic box office — featured casts that were more than 30 percent BIPOC. Eight of these top 10 theatrical films in 2023 had casts that were more than 40 percent female, and none had a cast where more than 20 percent of the top actors had a known disability. One film among their top 10 was a Black-female-led, music documentary. In addition, four of these top 10 films were ranked number one during their opening weekend at the domestic box office.

CONCLUSION

“You see. You give the people what they want, and they’ll come.”

– George Jessel

Market Demand

After the first two years of the pandemic hit the theatrical industry hard, there was the possibility that a new “normal” might take the place of business as usual. There was the promise of diversity proclamations by Hollywood, made in the aftermath of the George Floyd murder, to change their ways.³² Then in 2022, Hollywood seemed to return to theaters so cautiously that it not only released theatrical films, which relied on nostalgia and decades-old franchises, but also limited productions based on new ideas, on new talent, and basically on diversity. We would have to wait for 2023 to find out what might be possible on the post-pandemic diversity front.

The first six months of 2023 gave a glimpse of the theatrical industry’s bounce-back potential before major studio film productions shut down after July 14 due to the SAG-AFTRA strike. Only two of the top 10 films at the global box office were released in the U.S. after the SAG-AFTRA strike, *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*. But these two films, which were released together the week after the strike and promoted as “Barbenheimer,” had already established their respective marketing campaigns well in advance. Also, their longevity at the box office may have been partly due to the limited marketing campaigns for other major studio films that were released during the strike due to their casts not being available to promote those films.

The box office juggernaut that was *Barbie* was a testament to the enthusiasm that female-centered films can bring back to the struggling box office. Not surprisingly, those pushing for the movie to be made were mostly women who had to overcome various doubters along the way.³³ For an industry that had turned its back on movies marketed to women years ago,³⁴ this was a wake-up call. With an opening-weekend



audience that was about 70 percent women, the film grossed \$162 million, a record opening for a non-superhero film or sequel and a record for a female director.³⁵ The film surpassed the \$1 billion mark at the global box office in just three weeks.³⁶ Undervalued for far too long by Hollywood, women showed that they can be a driving force at the box office and are vital to the film industry's growth.

Although *Barbie* was based on previous IP, the story was new to audiences. Other examples of how audiences want to see something new infused into something familiar can be found by examining just one particular month in 2023. Three films, *Creed III*,³⁷ *Scream VI*,³⁸ and *John Wick: Chapter 4*,³⁹ with BIPOC leads were released in March 2023. Not only were these films led by BIPOC actors, but each cast was also comprised of 50 percent or more BIPOC actors and broke records for their respective franchises

during their opening weekends. BIPOC audiences catapulted the films to their record-breaking weekends by making up at least 60 percent of each film's opening-weekend domestic audience.

This current report expands upon these particular examples to show the clear market demand for more films starring, directed by, and written by women and BIPOC creatives. In 2023, BIPOC moviegoers bought the majority of opening-weekend domestic tickets for seven of the top 10 films (ranked by global box office). In addition, nine of the top 10 films at the global box office featured casts in which more than 30 percent of the actors were BIPOC. Five of the top 10 had casts in which more than 40 percent of the actors were women. Lastly, even among the studios' most targeted age group, 18- to 34-year-olds, moviegoers were more likely to buy tickets for films with casts that were racially and ethnically diverse and gender balanced.

Last One In...

As mentioned in the previous report, it is an exclusive club to direct a theatrical film that has a wide release. More BIPOC directors were given the opportunity to join this club in 2023. However, the increase mainly benefited men of color, who comprised 80 percent of the BIPOC directors that year. It's also noteworthy to point out that 2023 likely had the largest number of theatrical films (10) with a budget of \$100 million or more that were directed by BIPOC artists. Superhero films are often those with the highest budgets, so it's not surprising that many of the BIPOC directors enjoying the largest budgets in 2023 directed superhero films. In fact, five of the eight superhero films released in theaters in 2023 were directed by BIPOC artists. Unfortunately, the opportunity to direct these films, which were widely popular as recently as a few years ago, came during a tumultuous year for the genre. Some have cited that "superhero fatigue" may have set in as people's interest began to wane due to the oversaturation of this content in film and television.⁴⁰ All these opportunities for BIPOC directors arrived 15 years after the first *Iron Man* (2008) film ushered in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Along with the actors' strike and announced shift in direction by DC Comics, most of these BIPOC directors had more obstacles to overcome than their White male counterparts who had dominated the position for at least a decade.

...First One Out

The fear by many BIPOC and female creatives in Hollywood is that diversity is the first thing

to go during a time of uncertainty. In a recent interview, actor, writer, and producer Issa Rae discussed these concerns:

...One example of what [Issa] Rae sees as a larger withering of promises Hollywood executives made in 2020 toward increasing diversity and representation, both on- and off-screen. "There is a bitterness of just like, who suffers from you guys pulling back? People of color always do," she says.⁴¹

Similarly, actress and producer Dakota Johnson noted how difficult it is to get female-centered projects produced. In an interview, she stated: "That's what it feels like. Everyone who makes decisions is afraid. They want to do the safe thing, and the safe thing is really boring."⁴²

There is no doubt that uncertainty reigns again in Hollywood. The global movie industry is currently forecast to decline by 5 percent in 2024 due to strike-related production delays.⁴³ In addition, a report found that there was a 17 percent drop in the number of workers employed by Hollywood at the end of 2023 as part of a broader restructuring of the industry.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, more layoffs are expected across the entertainment industry in 2024.⁴⁵

If Hollywood sacrifices the progress it made on diversity, how will it sustain itself? Any new version of Hollywood needs to prioritize investing in diversity in front of and behind the camera. If movie studios disregard the findings from this report series that highlight the importance of giving increasingly diverse audiences the films they want to see, they do so at their own peril.

ENDNOTES

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045223>.
- 2 This report considers only the top eight actors in each film, in order of appearance in the credits.
- 3 See <https://www.nielsen.com/news-center/2022/nielsen-gracenote-illuminates-disability-representation-in-entertainment-content-with-inclusion-analytics-enhancement/>.
- 4 Data collection takes place through a labor-intensive, research process that starts by examining reliable third-party databases that use independent methods of documenting the race, ethnicity, gender, and disability status of individuals working on top films and TV shows. These sources are Gracenote’s Studio System, Luminate Film & TV (formerly Variety Insight), and IMDb(Pro). The benefit of using independent sources means that we can standardize the data collection. We do not rely on data from Hollywood employers — individuals, studios, companies, or industry guilds — all of which might involve different kinds of information tracked in different ways. Separately, we study data from Nielsen, Comscore and Talkwalker that show how households and individuals from different races/ethnicities, gender, and age groups experience and consume Hollywood content.
- 5 These films included the top 200 theatrically released films at the global box office in 2023, minus non-English language titles. Theatrical films and their corresponding box office data were examined by selecting films ranked from 1 to 200 on the “2023 Worldwide Box Office” page on Box Office Mojo on January 2, 2024, and then removing non-English language films and films that were being re-released from a previous year. The remaining 109 films were used in the theatrical analysis for this report. The theatrical box office numbers included in this report are reflective of the box office numbers through December 31, 2023, as reported on Box Office Mojo.
- 6 Race/ethnicity was coded into the following major categories: White, Black, Asian, South Asian, Native, Latinx, Black Latinx, Multiracial/Multiethnic (referred to as multiracial throughout this report), and MENA (Middle Eastern or North African). The two subgroups, Black Latinx and South Asian, are reported with their larger race/ethnicity category, Latinx and Asian, respectively, in the featured charts and tables in this report. However, Black Latinx and South Asian counts are separately included in the endnotes. The Latinx category contains persons of Latin American origin or descent and does not include Spaniards. The Native category contains global indigenous peoples, including Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, Polynesians, and Native New Zealanders. The MENA category contains persons descended from the following nationalities: Algerian, Armenia, Bahraini, Egyptian, Emirati, Iranian, Iraqi, Israeli, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Moroccan, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Tunisian, and Yemeni. Transnational ethnic groups from the MENA region are also included, such as Amazigh or Berber, Assyrian, Bedouin, Chaldean, Copt, Druze, Kurdish, and Syriac, as well as pan-ethnic groups such as Arab, Middle Eastern, and North Africa. The South Asian category includes those descended from the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
- 7 Gender was coded according to the following categories: male, female, transgender, and non-binary. Transgender and non-binary cases were combined as “other” in featured charts and tables. However, the specific counts for each category within “other” can be found in the endnotes.
- 8 Disability status was collected using Gracenote’s Studio System and Luminate Film & TV (formerly Variety Insight), which both note disability status that has been stated publicly. Gracenote’s Studio System currently focuses on the disability status of actors and only notes the presence of a disability but does not provide the disability type. Disability status was additionally verified through separate online searches when a disability was noted. Types of disability that were tracked include the following: blindness/low vision; deaf/hard of hearing; learning; medical; mental health; neurological; and physical.
- 9 This report provides data on the top eight actors for each film, in order of on-screen credits. These featured actors are used to compute each film’s overall cast diversity, as well as aggregate race/ethnicity, gender, disability status, and intersectional figures across all films.
- 10 Pamela McClintock, “2023 Box Office: Global Revenue Clears Estimated \$33.9B in 31 Percent Gain Over Prior Year,” *The Hollywood Reporter*, January 4, 2024, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/2023-global-revenue-box-office-1235779026/>.
- 11 Nancy Tartaglione, “Global Box Office Reaches \$33.9B In 2023, Up 31% On 2022 – Analysts,” *Deadline*, January 4, 2024, <https://deadline.com/2024/01/global-box-office-2023-total-barbie-super-mario-bros-oppenheimer-international-china-1235694955/>.
- 12 “Lead role” is defined in this report as the first credited actor and/or top-billed actor in a film.
- 13 To compare the degree of representation for the individual groups, this report employs the latest Census population data from 2023 that shows the following shares: 12.5 percent multiracial/multiethnic, 19.1 percent Hispanic/Latinx, 13.6 percent Black, 6.3 percent Asian, and approximately 1.6 percent Native (U.S. Census Bureau, “American Community Survey, 2022: ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles,” <https://data.census.gov/table?q=DP05>; U.S. Census Bureau, “QuickFacts,” <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045223>). Although MENA is not considered a separate racial category in the Census, the most recent data show that they are approximately 1.1 percent of the population (<https://www.aaiusa.org/demographics>).

- 14 Among theatrical leads with a known disability, there are five White males, three White females, one White non-binary actor, two multiracial males, and one Black female.
- 15 Among Asian leads in theatrical film, there was one South Asian male and two South Asian females.
- 16 Among Latinx leads in theatrical film, there was one Black Latinx female.
- 17 Among White leads in theatrical film, there was one actor who identified as nonbinary.
- 18 Among Asian actors in theatrical film, there were 10 South Asian males and nine South Asian females.
- 19 Among Latinx actors in theatrical film, there were five Black Latinx males and eight Black Latinx females.
- 20 Among White actors in theatrical film, there was one actor who identified as nonbinary and three actors who identified as transgender.
- 21 Among Asian actors in theatrical film, there was one actor who identified as nonbinary.
- 22 Among multiracial actors in theatrical film, there was one actor who identified as nonbinary.
- 23 Among Native actors in theatrical film, there was one actor who identified as nonbinary and one actor who identified as transgender.
- 24 Among theatrical film actors with a known disability, there were four Black males, six Black females, three Latinx males, four Latinx females, four multiracial males, six multiracial females, one multiracial nonbinary person, eighteen White males, ten White females, and one White non-binary person.
- 25 In 2022, we began to count directors from an underrepresented group who were part of a directing team. We considered co-directors and not just the first credited director. Because the number of directing teams was small, the race/ethnicity and gender shares were only minimally impacted. The way to describe the findings moving forward is the share of films that had a director of color, or a female director was as follows.
- 26 There was a total of 14 films with directing teams out of the 109 theatrical films in 2023. There were two men of color, one woman of color, and one White woman who were a part of directing teams with White men. These four individuals were captured in the analysis featured in this report. Ten directing teams were comprised of only White men (71.4 percent). Considering all 126 directors and co-directors for top theatrical releases, the directors of color share drops to 19.8 percent and the women director share drops slightly to 12.7 percent in 2023.
- 27 Among Asian directors in theatrical film, there were three South Asian males.
- 28 In 2022, we began to count writers from an underrepresented group who were part of a writing team. We considered co-writers and not just the first credited screenwriter. Because writing teams are not uncommon, adding in all the co-writers almost doubles the number of writers in total, which highlights the racial and gender disparities among those who are granted screenwriting opportunities, particularly for theatrical releases. The way to describe the findings moving forward is the share of films that had a writer of color, or a female writer was as follows.
- 29 There was a total of 58 films with writing teams out of the 109 theatrical films in 2023. Among these films, there were three films with writing teams that had a person from an underrepresented group who was not captured in the analysis. Of the three films, here is the breakdown of those teams: 1) White female who co-wrote with Asian female; 2) Asian male who co-wrote with Black female; and 3) multiracial male who co-wrote with Black male. Thirty-three of the writing teams (56.9 percent) were all-White male writing teams. Considering all 187 writers and co-writers for top theatrical releases, the writers of color share drops to 16.6 percent and the women writer share drops to 18.7 percent in 2022.
- 30 Among Asian writers in theatrical film, there were two South Asian males.
- 31 For these analyses, a simple return on investment is computed as follows: (Revenue – Budget)/Budget. That is, the higher the ratio, the higher the rate of return.
- 32 Greg Braxton and Ryan Faughnder, “Hollywood says its antiracism push is not a ‘fad.’ Is the industry keeping its promises?” *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 2021, <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2021-09-13/hollywood-george-floyd-amazon-netflix-disney-warner-sony-universal>.
- 33 Brooks Barnes, “‘Barbie’ Reaches \$1 Billion at the Box Office, Studio Says,” *The New York Times*, August 6, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/06/movies/barbie-1-billion-box-office.html>.
- 34 Eliana Dockterman, “We’re Ignoring the Real Reason Barbie Might Dominate the Box Office,” *Time*, July 11, 2023, <https://time.com/6292203/barbie-box-office-women-movies/>.
- 35 Sara Fischer, “‘Barbie’ makes history with \$162 million blockbuster weekend debut,” *Axios*, July 24, 2023, <https://www.axios.com/2023/07/23/barbie-box-office-opening-sales>.
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- 40 Owen Gleiberman, “Superhero Fatigue Is Real. The Cure? Make Better Movies Than ‘The Flash,’” *Variety*, June 19, 2023, <https://variety.com/2023/film/columns/superhero-fatigue-the-flash-1235648428/>.

- 41 Andrew R. Chow, "Issa Rae and Hollywood's Unkept Promises," *Time*, February 1, 2024, <https://time.com/collection/closers/6564918/issa-rae-hollywoods-unkept-promises/>.
- 42 Christy Piña, "Dakota Johnson Says Streaming Execs Not Trusting Creatives to Make Brave Decisions Is 'F—ing Bleak,'" *The Hollywood Reporter*, February 7, 2024, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/dakota-johnson-streaming-execs-safe-projects-madame-web-1235818677/>.
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