

Lifestyle



Australian actress Margot Robbie poses on the pink carpet upon arrival for the European premiere of "Barbie" in central London. - AFP



'Barbie' stays atop 'hill of cash' in North America theaters

Warner Bros' blockbuster "Barbie" earned an estimated \$93 million in North American theaters this weekend as it continued "rolling down a hill of cash," industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. Taken together with Universal's dark biopic "Oppenheimer," which took in a mighty \$46.2 million in its own second weekend out, the two films provided a much-needed "Barbenheimer" boost during a middling Hollywood summer.

"July would have been a lukewarm month, but then 'Barbie' and 'Oppenheimer' arrived, moviegoing exploded, and within one week, July caught up to its pre-pandemic average," said analyst David A Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research. Last weekend, "Barbie" scored the biggest opening weekend of the year, at \$80.5 million, showing eyebrow-raising appeal for a movie based on a small plastic doll living in a perfect pink world. With Margot Robbie as "Barbie" and Ryan Gosling as boyfriend "Ken," the Greta Gerwig film has now generated \$351.4 million in North American ticket sales, along with \$423 million abroad,

likely setting it on track to be the next billion-dollar flick. "Oppenheimer" also showed exceptional strength for a historical drama, with its second-weekend result — like that of "Barbie" — among the best in box-office history, said analyst Paul Dergarabedian. The story of the creation of America's atomic bomb has now earned \$174.1 million domestically and \$226 million abroad.

In third for the weekend was a new Disney release, "Haunted Mansion," at \$24.2 million. Disney spent \$150 million to produce the kid-centric film so it has

a way to go to reach profitability, according to Variety. The movie stars LaKeith Stanfield, Tiffany Haddish and Owen Wilson. Fourth spot went to the independent "Sound of Freedom," from Santa Fe Films and Angel Studios, at \$12.4 million. The low-budget action thriller has sparked controversy, with critics saying its story about child sex trafficking plays into Qanon conspiracy theories.

And hanging steady at fifth was Paramount's "Mission: Impossible — Dead Reckoning Part One." This latest in the popular Tom Cruise series took in

\$10.7 million, meaning all of the top five films scored in the double-digit millions. Rounding out the top 10 were: "Talk to Me" (\$10 million) "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" (\$4 million) "Elemental" (\$3.4 million) "Insidious: The Red Door" (\$3.2 million) "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" (\$1.4 million). — AFP



Shoes of a Barbie doll on a shelf.



Barbie dolls at the "Barbie clinic."



A Barbie doll with a hearing aid.



The first Barbie doll with pink colors at the "Barbie clinic".



A Barbie doll with real fur.



It's fantastic: Movie boosts world's top Barbie collection

With her whopping 18,000 Barbies, Bettina Dorfmann was already in the record books, but the release of the blockbuster about the blonde icon has thrown a spotlight on her historic collection. "As a child I always played with Barbies," Dorfmann, 62, told AFP at her shrine to the plastic doll in the western German city of Duesseldorf.

"When I got out my dolls for my daughter, she wasn't interested because they were too old-fashioned. That's when I started collecting them myself." She's been living the pink dream for 28 years, lending her bevy of Barbies — recognized by Guinness World Records as the globe's biggest — to museums and shopping malls which put them on display for a few months.

"They usually draw between 5,000 and 20,000 visitors during the exhibitions but since the movie came out (last week), I heard the interest has really grown." Demand for her catalogues, which list her lovingly preserved Barbies representing various eras, ethnicities and professions — as well as a few Ken dolls — has also soared over the past week, she said.



The first Barbie doll with movable arms and legs.



A photo shows a Barbie doll with a prosthetic leg at the "Barbie clinic" of collector Bettina Dorfmann.

Dorfmann, who has already seen the US movie twice and thinks it's "great," also owns a Barbie "clinic". "Repairing a doll can cost anything from 10 euros (\$11) to 500 or 600 euros if it's a rare model," she explained. At the North American box

office, "Barbie" turned in the best debut of 2023 with \$155 million in takings over the weekend. It also topped the German cinema charts with 732,000 tickets sold, according to industry figures. — AFP



Barbie dolls at the "Barbie clinic" of collector Bettina Dorfmann.

