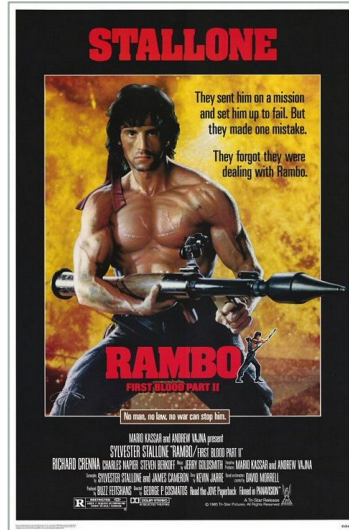
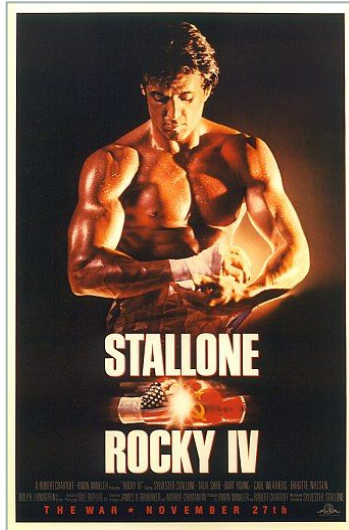
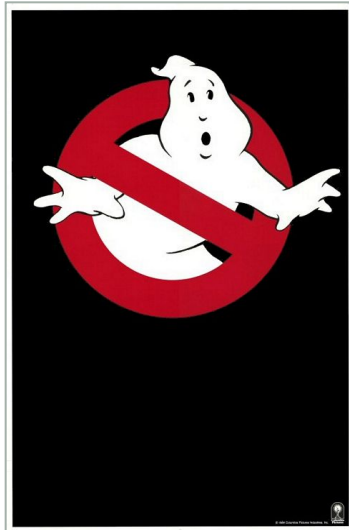
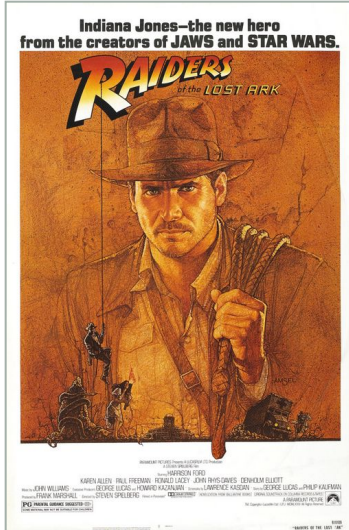
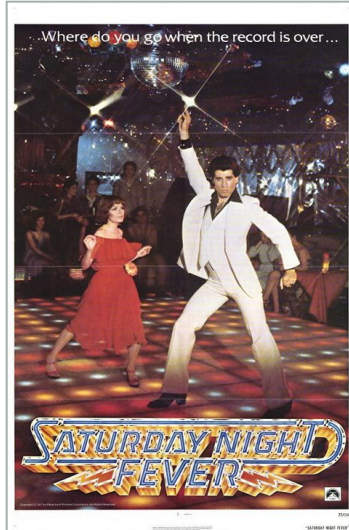
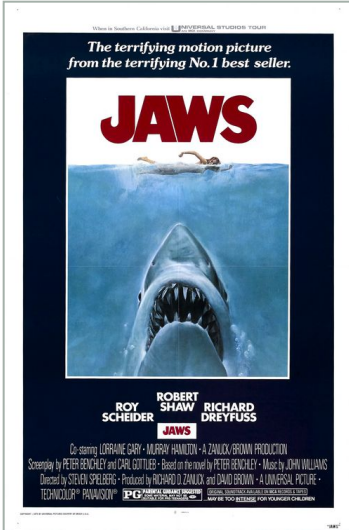


# The Blockbuster Era and High Concept







**Roadshow Picture** A film distributed and exhibited in a manner similar to that of a live stage performance.

- ▶ Limited Release
- ▶ Assigned Seats
- ▶ Intermission
- ▶ Non-Continuous Shows
- ▶ Overtures
- ▶ Higher Ticket Prices
- ▶ Programs

### **Prestige Picture vs. General Release**

- ▶ Budget/Production Values/Stars
- ▶ *ad-pub* - advertising and publicity department of a movie studio
- ▶ *Long Tale Distribution* - a limited slow and controlled access to product.

### **Failure**

- ▶ Decreased Attendance
- ▶ Market Over-saturation: devalued product
- ▶ Large *House Nut* - the negotiated price of theater operation, subtracted from box office revenue before the distributor's percentage is calculated.

**Exploitation Picture** a genre characterized by low budget, short shooting schedule & sensational subject matter.

- ▶ Heavy Marketing Campaign
  - ▶ Radio/TV Advertising
- ▶ Saturation Release
  - ▶ Negative Reviews/Word-of-Mouth
- ▶ **Short Tail Distribution** - extensive, fast access to a product with quickly diminishing returns.

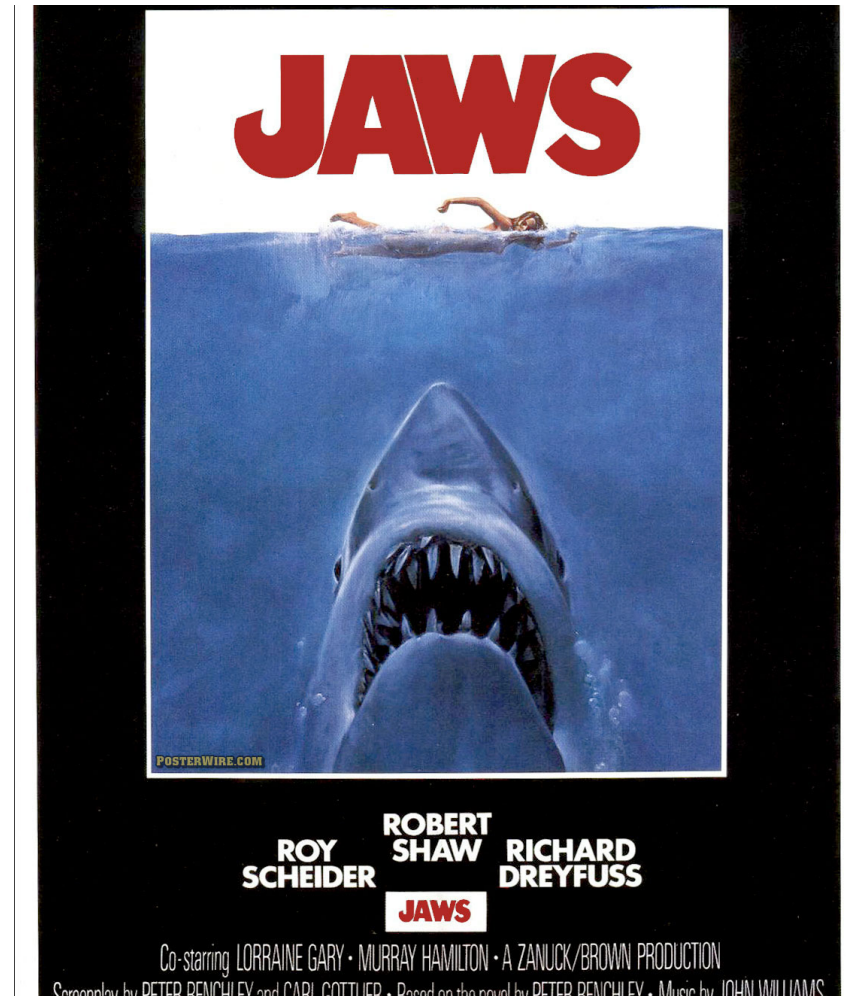
**Disaster Film** a genre structured around a global or regional catastrophe characterized by a large cast, multiple conversing storylines & elaborate “special effects”.

**Monster Film** a genre with a dual focus narrative showcasing violent conflicts between human protagonists and non-human antagonists, often with supernatural powers.



# Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975)

- *Jaws* often credited as one of the 1st to use trad. B-movie elements (horror & mild gore) in big-budget film
- People were genuinely terrified of this film!
- Considered the first **BLOCKBUSTER** and **HIGH CONCEPT** film





# Prequel to the Jaws Model

**Answer Print** First complete version of a film; with rough technical quality lacking in special effects and/or music.

- ▶ Missing John Williams score - ostinato leitmotif
- ▶ Add more shark footage

**Test Screening** private showing of a film prior to official release - not the same as a sneak preview.

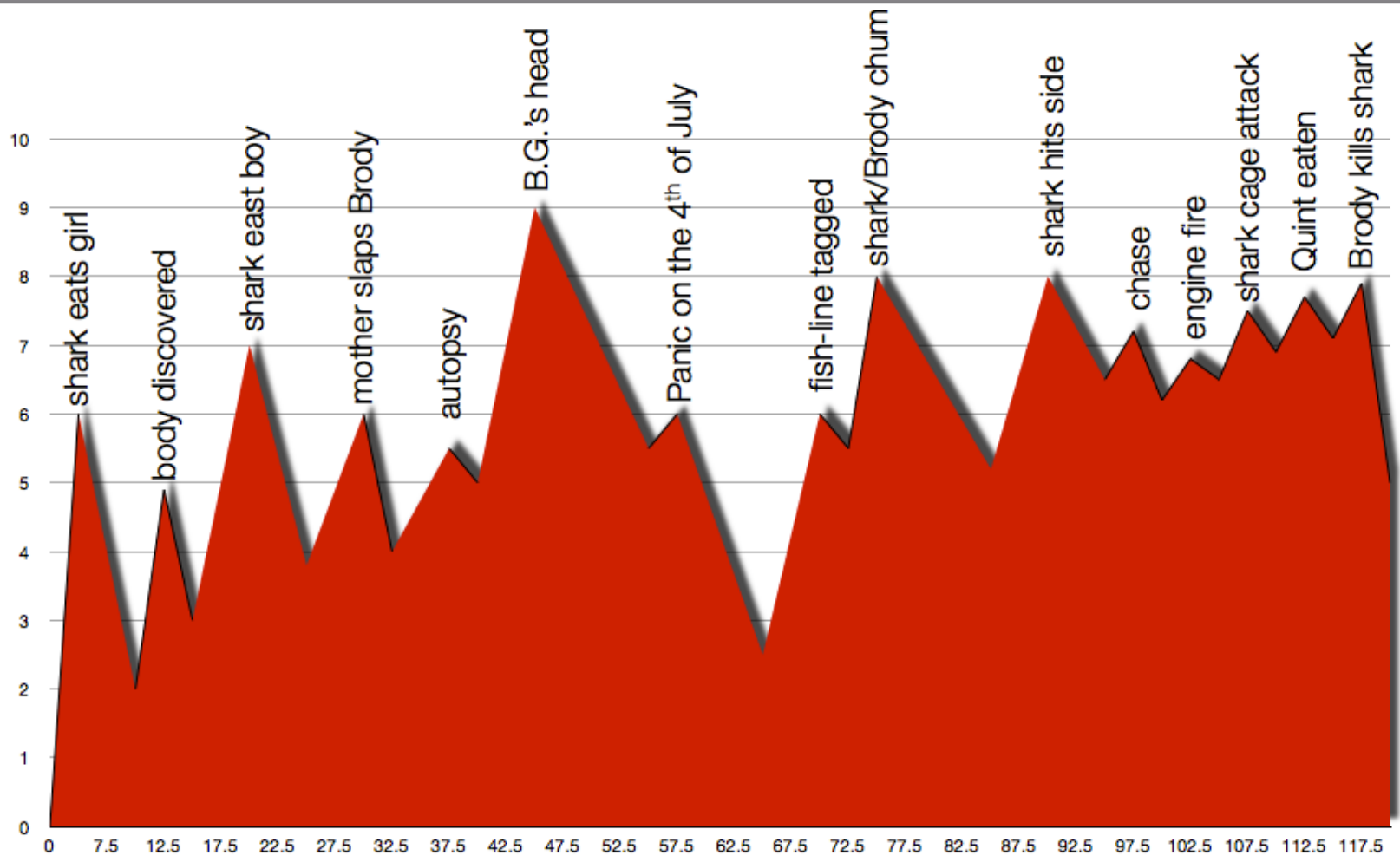
**Dallas** - Swimmer/Fish Ad & Radio Promotion (3000)

- ▶ Demographic - Landlocked Middle America
- ▶ **Rough Assemblages** first version of a film shown to distributors and an early test screenings.
  - ▶ vomiting, popcorn in the isles, one huge scream

**Long Beach** - Lakewood Theater (March 28 1975)

- ▶ Demographic - Coastal
- ▶ Added footage - 2 big screams
- ▶ Taped Audience/**exit survey** - questions administered to audiences at a test screening.





# Jaws Long Beach Test Screening





No. 1 HIT IN WILDWOOD  
and AROUND the NATION!

SEE IT AGAIN ...  
THIS TIME WITH  
YOUR EYES OPEN!

**JAWS**

The terrifying  
motion picture  
from the terrifying  
No. 1 best seller.



ROY SCHEIDER ROBERT SHAW RICHARD DREYFUSS  
**JAWS**

CASTING BY: MARY HARTON • COSTUME DESIGNER: JIMMY HARRIS • PRODUCTION DESIGNER: JIMMY HARRIS • DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: ROBERT SURIN • EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: ROBERT GARDNER & DAVID PERKINS • PRODUCED BY: MERVYN DUKAKIS • WRITTEN BY: CAROL COOPER • BASED UPON THE NOVEL BY PETER ABRAHAMSON

**PG** PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED  
SOME MATERIAL MAY BE OFFENSIVE  
TO YOUNGER CHILDREN

13th Record-Breaking Week In Town!  
Hunt's SHORE TWIN TWO Theatre  
Schellenger & Atlantic Aves. In Wildwood

# Jaws: New Model Blockbuster

*Blockbuster (1)* a financially successful film that approaches, meets or breaks box office records. *(2)* a calculated hit designed to approach, meet or break box office records; a film designed to succeed at the box office based on a formula designed to attract a wide audience through genre prescriptions, exhibition practices, marketing tactics.

## Marketing Tactics

### ▶ Heavy TV Advertising

▶ *roadblock advertising* Running the same tv commercial on all major networks simultaneously

▶ *Co-op advertising* paid advertising with expenses shared between distributor and exhibitor.

▶ *Boost* purchasing additional advertising after the prerelease advertising campaign ends(multi-media).

## Exhibition Practices: Summer of the Shark

▶ *limited wide release* June 20 (409) July 25 (675)

▶ *summer release* Late June - Early September

▶ heat wave

▶ school calendar

# THE MEGAPICTURE ERA

- Megapictures:
  - Gigantic Hollywood production and marketing budgets
  - Special effects-driven (CGI, 3-D) + Dolby/stereo Sound
  - Major event releases
  - ‘Franchise’ picture action/ adventure movies
  - <http://youtu.be/2jH9iAHSKds>
- Target Audience: 12-29 year-olds (75%)





# The Blockbuster Era

Semi- distinct period in American film history: 1975–1989

“Blockbuster Era” often contrasted to “Hollywood Renaissance”:  
Bygone golden age vs. low-point of capitalist cultural production.

Corporate power overwhelms creative filmmaking

Spawned Blockbuster Mentality: A megahit off-sets losses

Innovative creative personnel vs. faceless economic institutions

Middle-class Art Cinema vs. Mass audience blockbusters

# The 1980s Megahit Canon

Lucas/Spielberg Canon

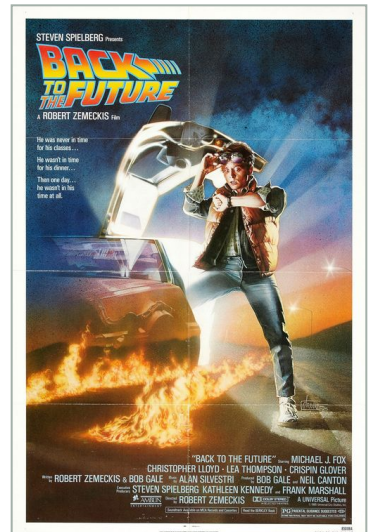
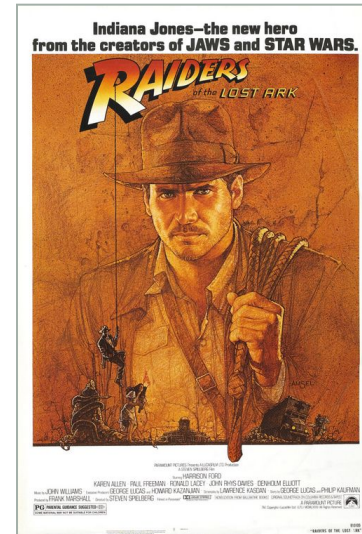
Big Budget Fantasy-adventures:

*E.T. The Extra-terrestrial*  
(1982)

*Back to the Future* (1985,  
1989)

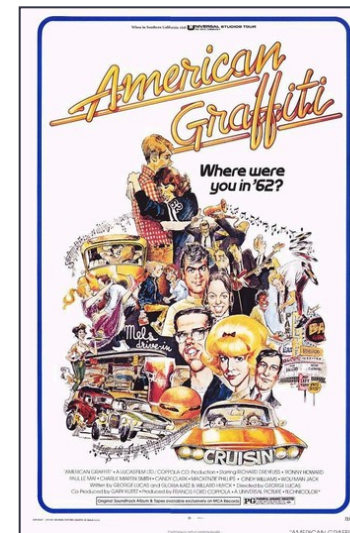
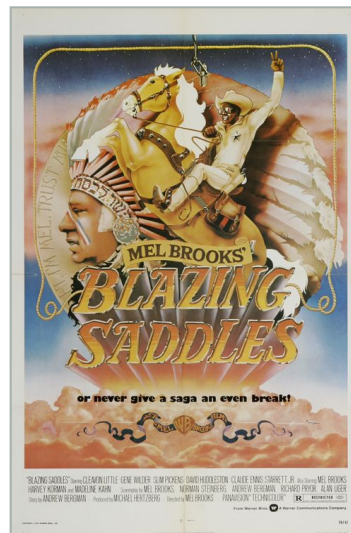
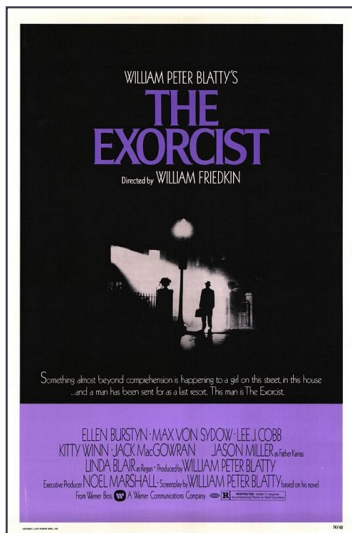
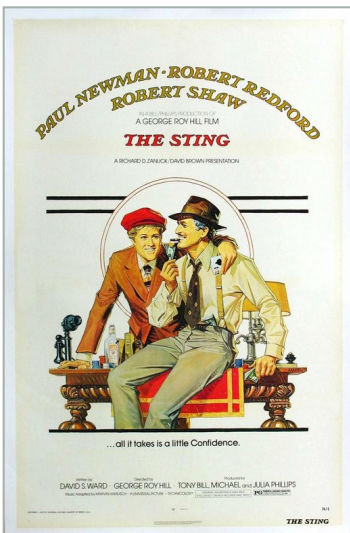
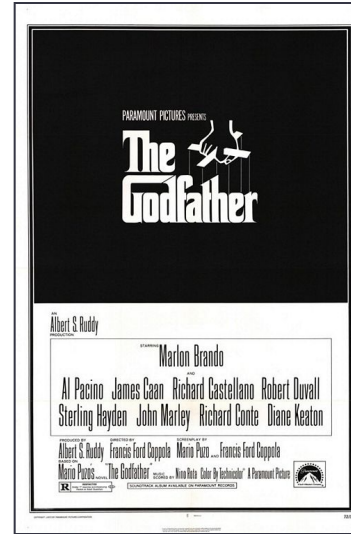
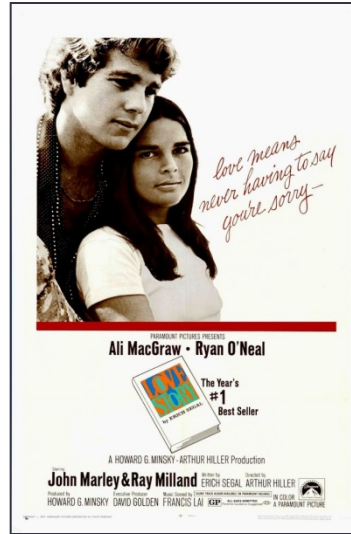
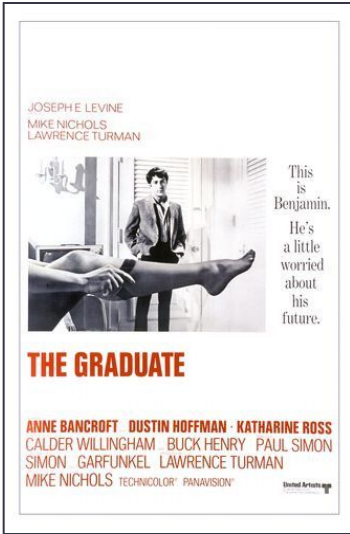
*Indiana Jones* (1981; 1984;  
1989)

*Ghost Busters* (1984; 1989)





# Blockbuster Era generated fewer megahits than previous years



# The Concept of "High Concept"

- To market across a range of media--film, games, books, toys, etc.--it helps to have a basic marketing "hook" or concept.
- The idea of "high concept" refers to films based on a single, simple "concept" that can be easily understood and therefore easily marketed.
- "High concept": often described by quoting Spielberg's line that if a movie can be summed up in 25 words or less, it usually makes a good movie.





Pitch

Logo

Merchandising

Stars

Pre-Sold Property

Style

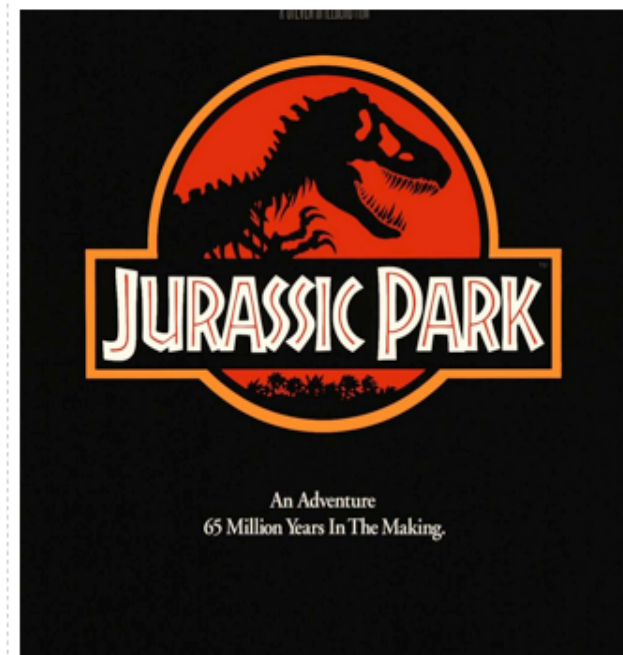
# High Concept

(Wyatt) A film defined by its great marketing possibilities; by numerous and strong marketing hooks.



# High Concept **Pitch**

- ❖ **Pitch** a striking, easily reducible narrative which also offers a high degree of marketability
- ❖ Marketing Approach: One Line Concept
- ❖ Industry Buzzword
- ❖ Easily communicated Narrative, broad Marketability
- ❖ Replication and recombination of prior successful films
- ❖ Critics decry High Concept: No Originality



*Jurassic Park* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1993)





# *Transformers* - “Their war. Our world.”

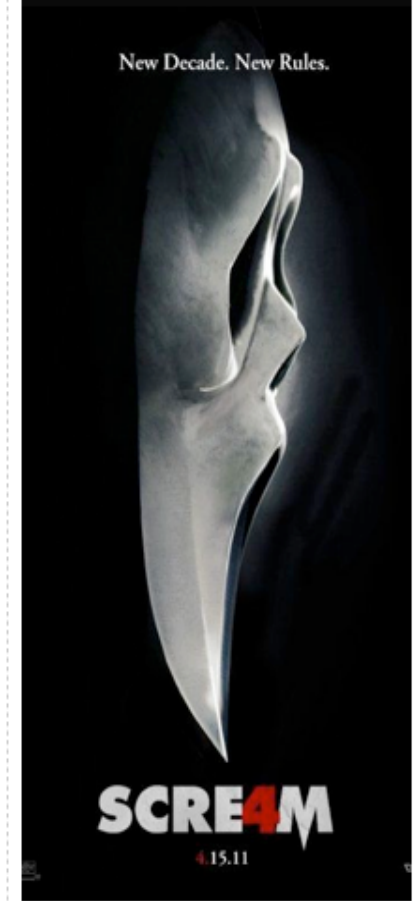


# High Concept Logo



**Logo** Identifiable and simplified visual for marketing the film and merchandise across various media

- Single Strongly Representative image
- Image replicated through TV Campaigns, Soundtrack, Tie-ins, etc.



High concept films are those that can be reduced to a single marketing image, which can be shared across various media.





*Jurassic World* (dir. Colin Trevorrow, 2015)





# Merchandising

🍷 A “must have” for any billion dollar earner

🍷 Fast Food

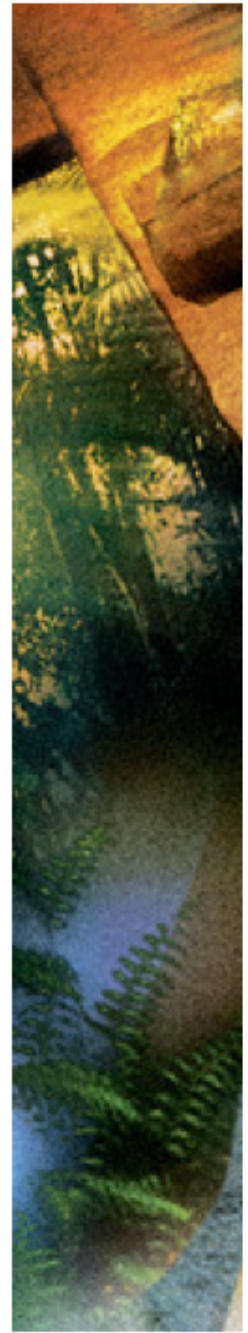
🍷 Toys

🍷 Video Games

🍷 Amusement Rides

🍷 Soundtrack

🍷 Clothing







*After Earth* (dir. M. Night Shyamalan, 2013)



# WHAT IS AFTER EARTH?



After Earth is an ecosystem of content and brand initiatives to begin launching in Spring 2012.

# Themes

**Brands that withstand the test of time**

**How has your product survived over  
the years?**

**Overcome Adversity**

**Futuristic Products**

**High Performance**

**Physical Fitness**

**Products that withstand harsh weather/  
all kinds of conditions**



# Categories

**Beverage**

**Batteries**

**Convenience/Petrol**

**Technology**

**Electronics**

**Insurance**

**Financial Services**

**Survival Gear**

**Interactive**

**Mobile**

**Security**

**Watches**

**Apparel**

**Eco/ Environmentally Friendly**

**Publishing**

**Video Game**

# JURASSIC PARK



**MICHAEL  
CRICHTON**

*High Concept*

*Pre-sold Property*

Best selling  
Novel

Long-Running  
Musical

Fashionable  
Subject Matter

*High Concept*

*Stars*

Link Star Persona to  
Concept

Physical Size

Generic Types

Lack of  
Development

Defined by Style





# Star System



- Most common marketing and promotional component that advertises a film as a vehicle for one or more well-known actors
- Famous Players: fans request for star names in earliest years
- Blockbusters tied to star system and agent packages
- Center of action, bring accumulated history and significance of past performances to each new film
- Acquire status that transforms individual into mythical qualities
- Promotion, publicity, commentary construct star images or personas

*Into the Woods* (dir. Rob Marshall, 2014)



*Into the Woods* (dir. Rob Marshall, 2014)







# High Concept **Style**

Visual representation of marketable concepts via advertising  
Strong match between Image and music sound track throughout  
Sleek, modern settings



MAY THE ODDS BE EVER IN YOUR FAVOR



THE  
**HUNGER GAMES**

2012

THE HUNGER GAMES:  
**CATCHING FIRE**

EVERY REVOLUTION BEGINS WITH A SPARK

NOVEMBER 22  
EXPERIENCE IT IN IMAX



THE HUNGER GAMES:  
**MOCKINGJAY**

PART I

NOVEMBER 21



*The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1* (dir. Francis Lawrence, 2014)







THE CAPITOL  
SALUTES ITS  
CITIZENS  
IN THE GRAIN  
DISTRICT

Your diligent work makes  
us proud. Love your labor.  
Take pride in your task.  
Our future is in your hands.



PANEM TODAY, PANEM TOMORROW, PANEM FOREVER.



THE CAPITOL  
SALUTES ITS  
CITIZENS  
IN THE MINING  
DISTRICT

Your diligent work makes  
us proud. Love your labor.  
Take pride in your task.  
Our future is in your hands.



PANEM TODAY, PANEM TOMORROW, PANEM FOREVER.



*The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1* (dir. Francis Lawrence, 2014)









*The Dark Knight* (dir. Christopher Nolan, 2008)



# Summary: making films financially “safe”

- Early "high concept" films such as *Saturday Night Fever*, *Flashdance*, and *Top Gun* became blockbusters by marketing their concept. I.e., w/out major stars (at the time) and huge budgets.
- But increasingly, Hollywood has come to base marketing on:
  - "Bankable" stars (and directors)
  - "Pre-sold properties"--already well-known from some other medium: tv shows, comic books, computer games--or "sequels" and "franchises" where the stars and/or characters are readily recognizable.
- Marketing special effects, (esp. CGI), fast cutting, and other spectacular visual effects. Recently, 3-D.



# Film within a Media Environment

- There has been a major shift in cinema, in how films work, at least in Hwd.
- Increasingly, films are no longer just films.
- A film no longer considered as a single product (much less as a work of art).
- Rather, part of a larger marketing strategy, which profits not just from theatrical box office, but from a wide range of ancillary media and products.

# The Economics of Filmmaking

- The goal of Hollywood filmmaking is no longer simply to make money at the box office.
- Rather, the goal is to make films that can generate revenues from multiple media (video, television, music, theater, books, computer games) and licensing of ancillary products.

# Media Conglomeration

- Generating profits from multiple revenue streams has become increasingly important as Hollywood studios have become part of larger media corporations.
- Moreover, each media form serves to cross-promote the others: what is called Synergy.
- This cross-marketing also extends to other companies, who advertise the film in exchange for "product placements" within the film or by advertising "tie-in" products based on the film.



# The Hollywood Conglomerate

- All the major film studios owned by global corporations/ conglomerates:
  - Viacom/Paramount, Time Warner, Fox/News Corp, Sony, Disney, Comcast/NBC
- Vertical integration returns: Studios buy megaplexes
  - **Vertical Integration:** control all levels
    - **Production:** making of movies, sold by the foot
    - **Distribution:** deliver films
    - **Exhibition:** display films
- Horizontal integration across media markets: TV, DVD, Web.
- Diversification: Product Placement, Promotional Tie-ins, action figures, etc.



# Time Warner

(NYSE: TWX )



Time Inc.

**TIME**

**FORTUNE**

**Sports Illustrated**

Turner Broadcasting System



Warner Bros. Entertainment

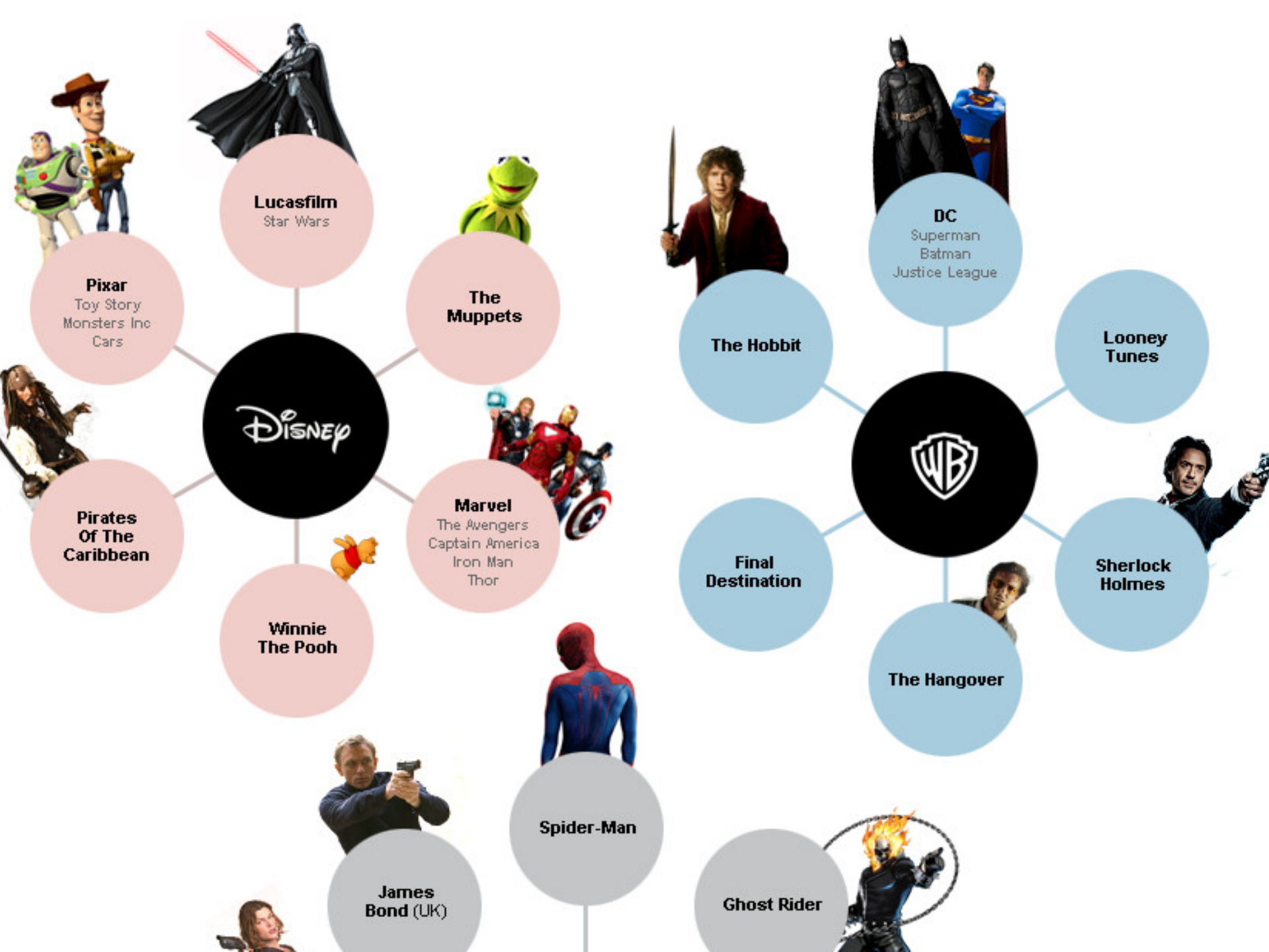


Warner Bros. Animation



**MAD**







Winnie  
The Pooh

The Hangover



Spider-Man



James  
Bond (UK)

Ghost Rider



Resident  
Evil (UK)

Men In Black



The Smurfs



Cloudy  
With A  
Chance Of  
Meatballs



Universal  
Monsters

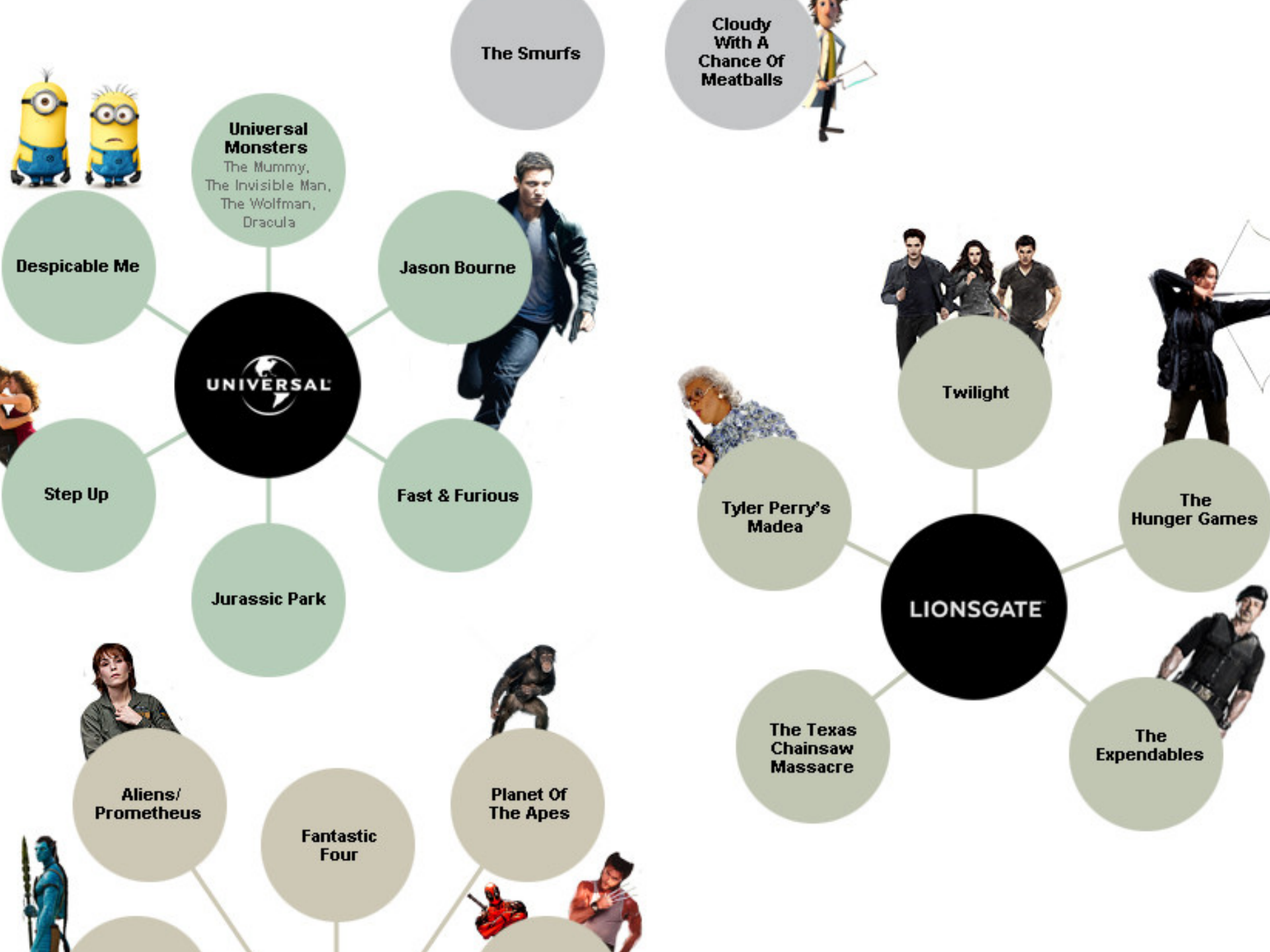
The Mummy,  
The Invisible Man,  
The Wolfman,  
Dracula

Jason Bourne



Spicable Me





**Universal Monsters**  
The Mummy,  
The Invisible Man,  
The Wolfman,  
Dracula



**Despicable Me**



**Fast & Furious**

**Step Up**

**Jurassic Park**



**The Hunger Games**



**The Texas Chainsaw Massacre**

**The Expendables**



**Aliens/ Prometheus**

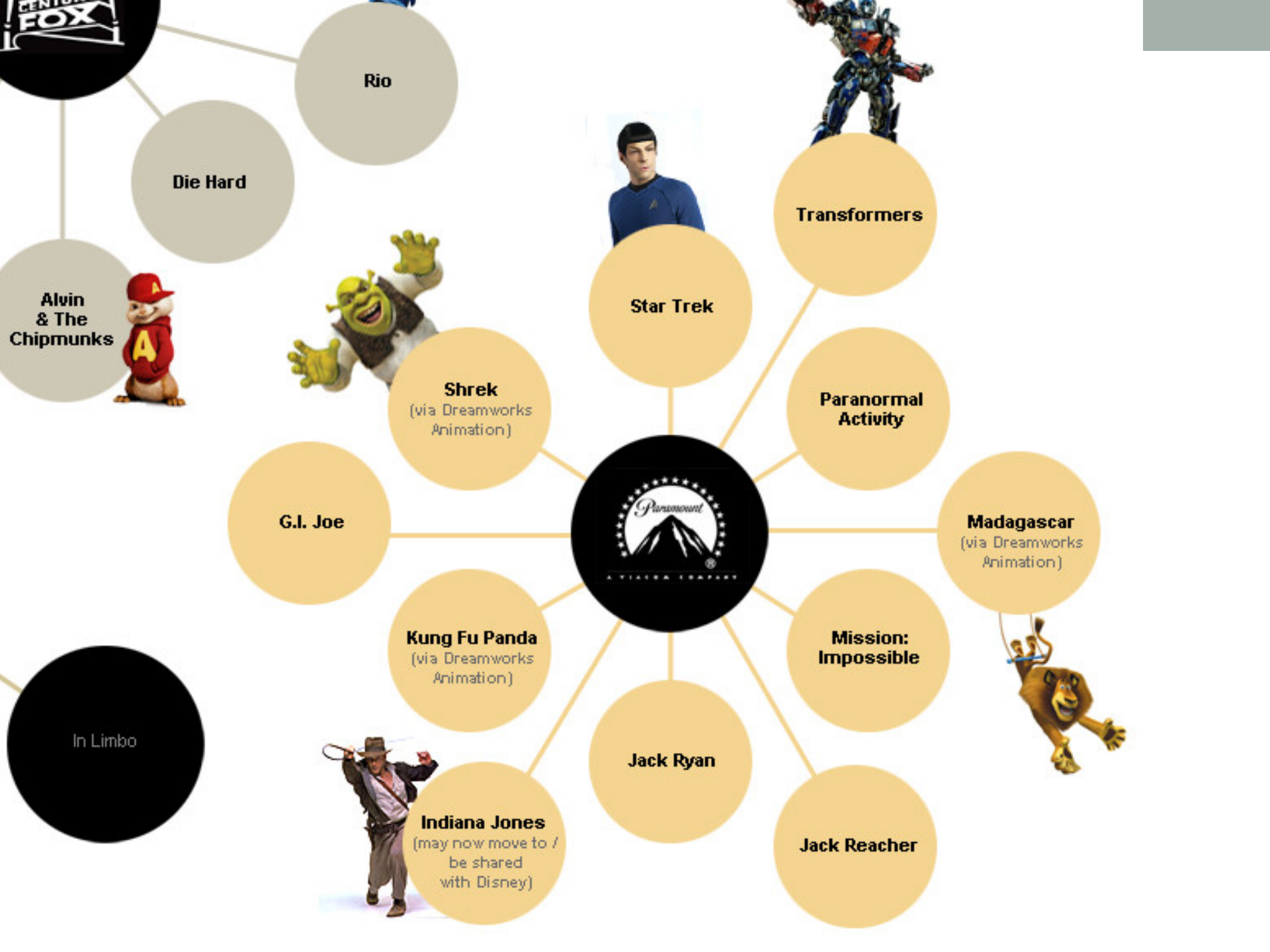


**Fantastic Four**

**Planet Of The Apes**









# Basics of Distribution

- **Distribution** = the practice and means through which certain movies are placed in theaters, in video stores, or on television and cable networks (usually released with “**target audience**” in mind)
- **Distributor**: company that acquires the rights to a movie from the filmmakers or producers and then makes the film available to audiences by renting or selling the film to theaters or networks
- **Premier of “Feature Film”** (primary attraction, 90-120 minutes)
  - **Saturated Release** = as many locations as possible
  - **Wide Release** = couple thousand theaters
  - **Limited Release** = few screens at first (platforms)

# Types of Distribution



- ▶ **Exclusive run** distribution term for booking in one theater per city.
- ▶ **Limited run** distribution term for booking in few theaters per city.
- ▶ **Platform release** distribution term for booking in a small number of theaters per city with the hope that good word-of-mouth advertising and positive critical reviews will create enough demand to open the film wider.
- ▶ **Wide release** distribution term for booking a medium to large percentage of theaters (contemporary figures 600-1999)
- ▶ **Saturation Release** distribution term for booking in a high percentage of theaters (contemporary figures 2000-2999)

# Release Schedule

## 🍷 **Summer Part I** — Memorial Day-July

🍷 tent pole releases, family films, high concept, action films

## 🍷 **Summer Part II** — August-1st Week Sept

🍷 high concept films that would underperform next to tent pole films

## 🍷 **Fall** — 2nd Week Sept- 2nd week November

🍷 award contenders & counter programming

## 🍷 **Winter** — 3rd Week November -1st week January

🍷 family films, branded properties, high concept films

## 🍷 **Winter-Spring** — 2nd Week January-3rd week may (Old System- Early may new system) — Dumping Ground

🍷 romantic comedies, gross out comedies, buddy films, horror, suspense



# World Domination... well, China...

- Domestic theatrical revenues are an ever smaller part of total revenues for films.
- The biggest films of 2013 earned the bulk of their profits abroad with as much as 70 percent of their revenues coming from foreign countries.
- The ten highest grossing films of 2013 each made more money overseas than they did stateside.
- China is currently the largest source of international box office earnings
- By 2018, it's predicted to be the number one source for box-office income.



# Global Rankings for the Major Studios

Save for Fox and Paramount, every major saw revenue decline compared with 2013.

Fox enjoyed a historic 63 percent spike globally and a 69 percent jump in North America, and Paramount's global revenue increased 24 percent (thanks, *Transformers!*).

TOTAL MAJOR-STUDIO BOX OFFICE

**\$24.3 billion**

2014 total

**0.4%**  
less than 2013's

**\$24.4 billion**

(Excluding Lionsgate, the six major studios reached an estimated \$22.5 billion in 2014, up slightly from \$22.1 billion in 2013.)

DOMESTIC REVENUE

**\$10.3 billion**

2014 total

**▼5.2%**

**\$10.9 billion**

2013 total

That's the biggest year-over-year decline in nine years.

ATTENDANCE

**1.26 billion**

2014 total

**▼6%**

**1.34 billion**

2013 total

Moviewalking in the U.S. hit a 20-year low in 2014.

# China's Movie Industry

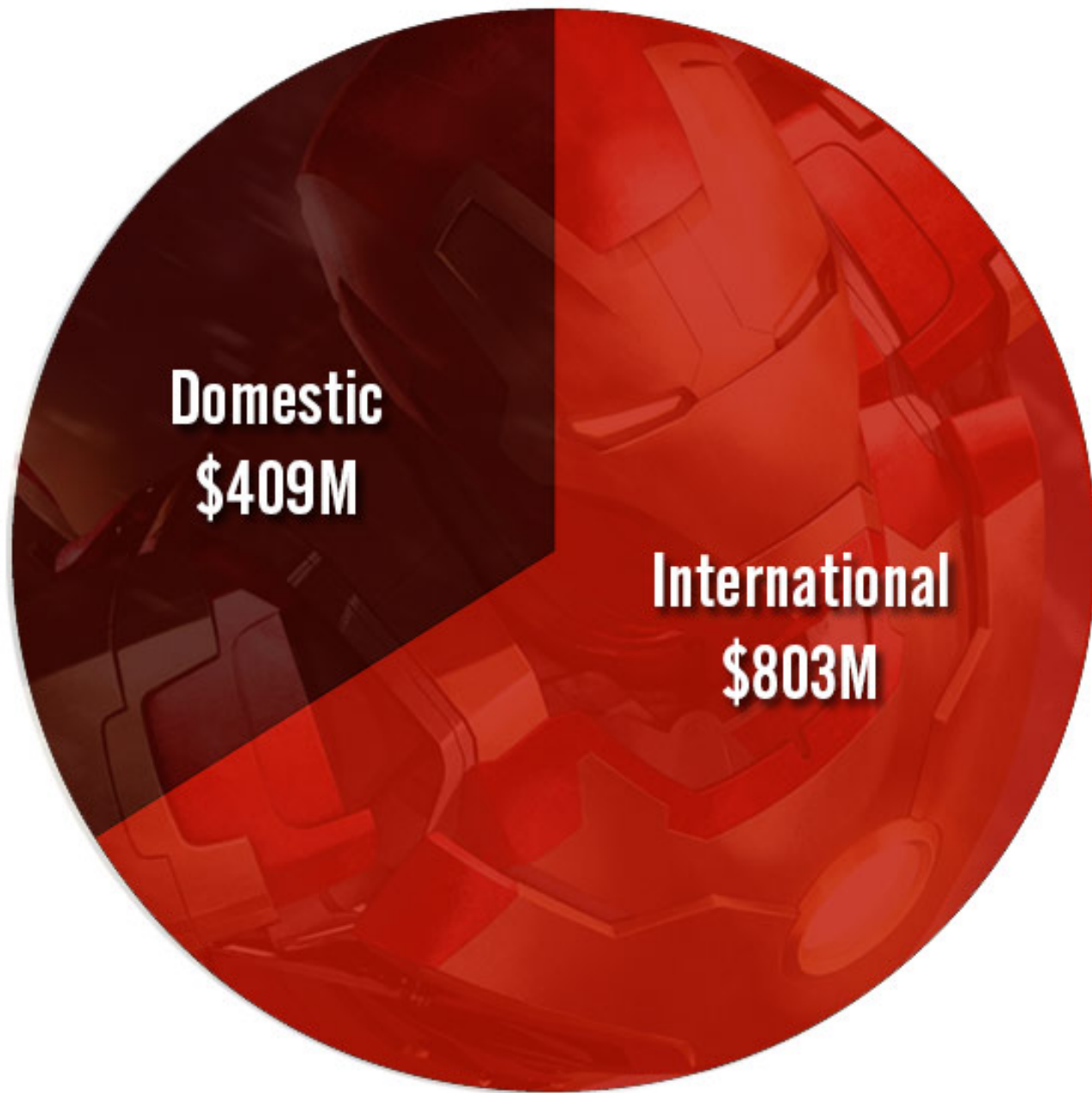
- China's film bureau implements a quota on imports (so, foreign films) to boost local productions, ensuring that homeland films have the space to earn billions without being flushed out by Hollywood blockbusters.
- The quota limits foreign releases in China to 34 a year, generally favoring 3D blockbusters that don't irk the sensitive censors.
- The only way to circumvent the quota is to turn a film into a Chinese co-production, meaning Chinese elements in the story, production and funding.
  - Such ventures give Hollywood 43% of the profits versus the usual 25% – a big added incentive.

# 'The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug'



**Total: \$835.1M**

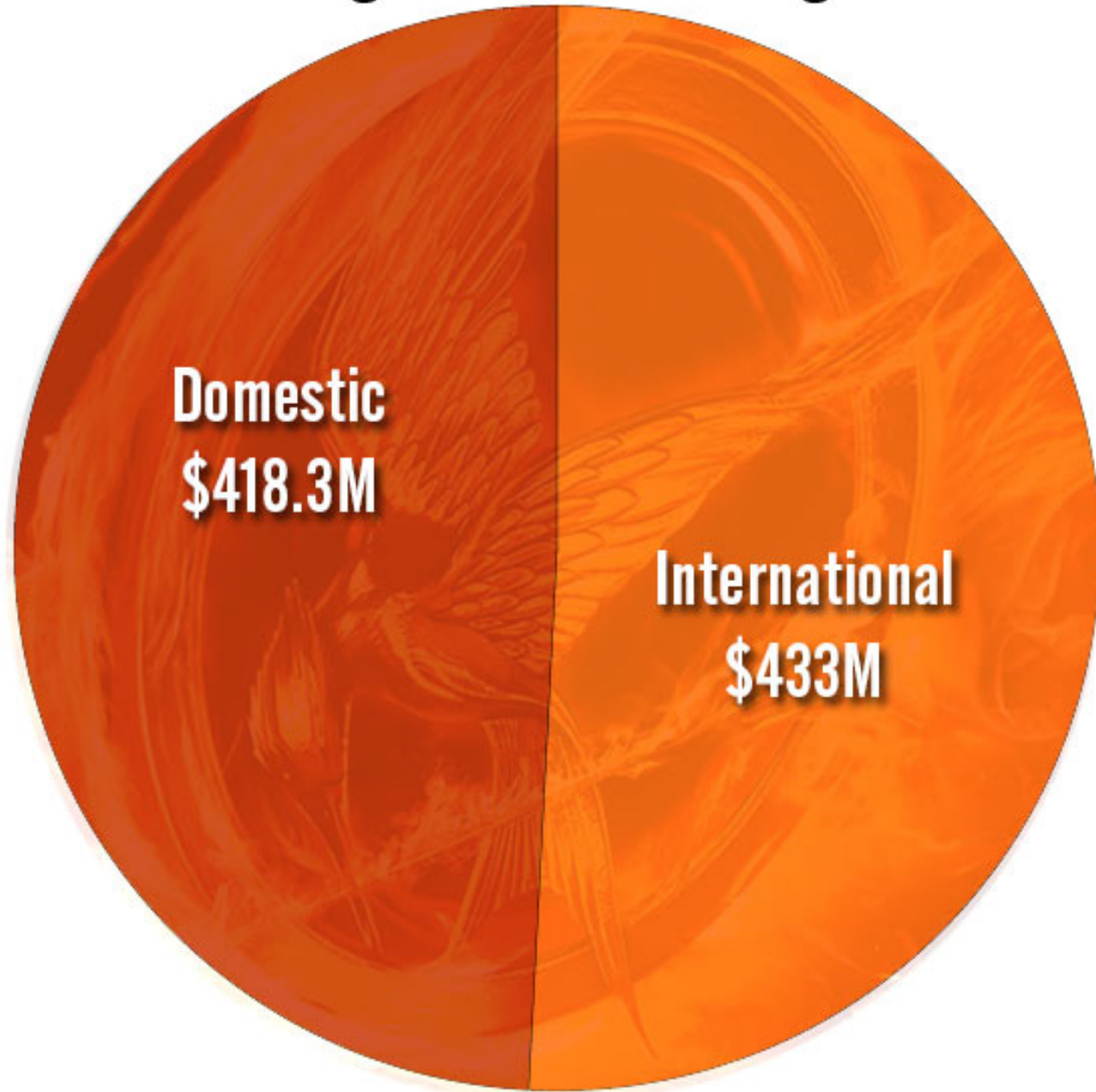
# 'Iron Man 3'



**Total: \$1.2B**



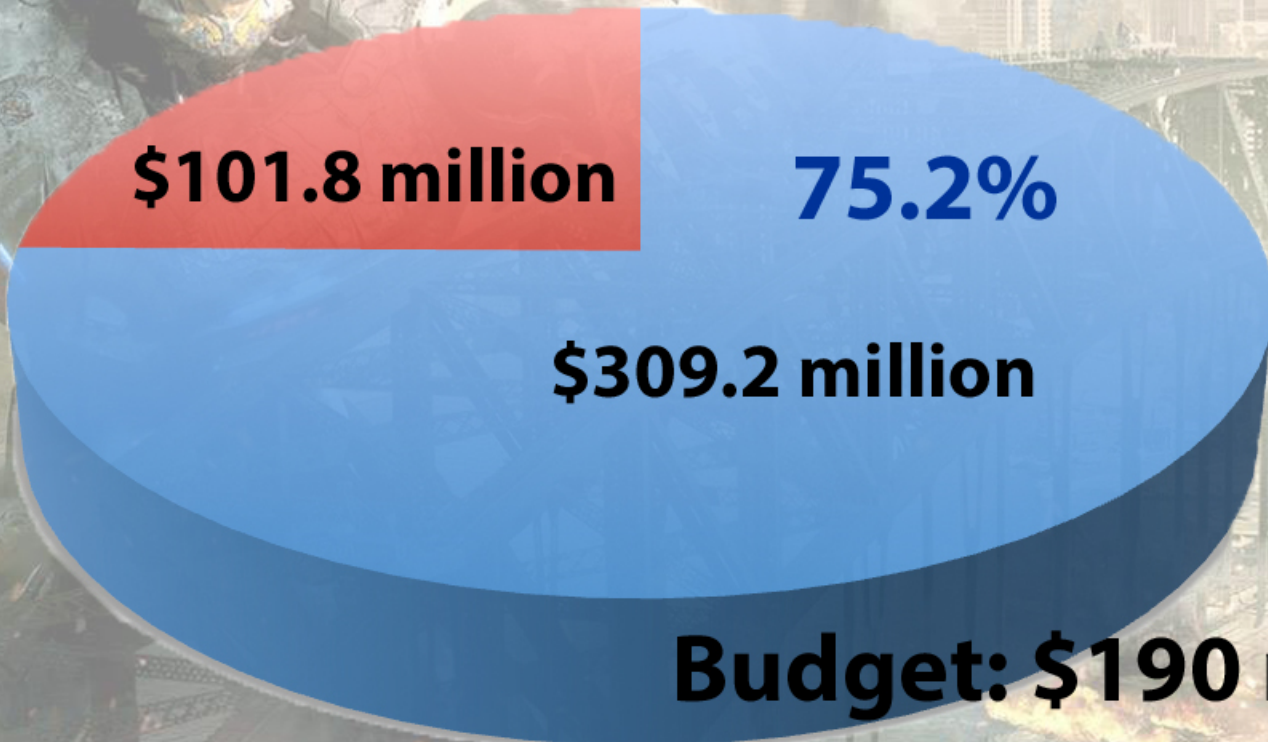
# 'The Hunger Games: Catching Fire'



**Total: \$851.3M**

# "Pacific Rim"

Studio: Warner Bros.



**Budget: \$190 million**  
**Worldwide: \$411 million**



# "The Smurfs 2"

Studio: Sony

**\$71 million**

**79.6%**

**\$276.5 million**

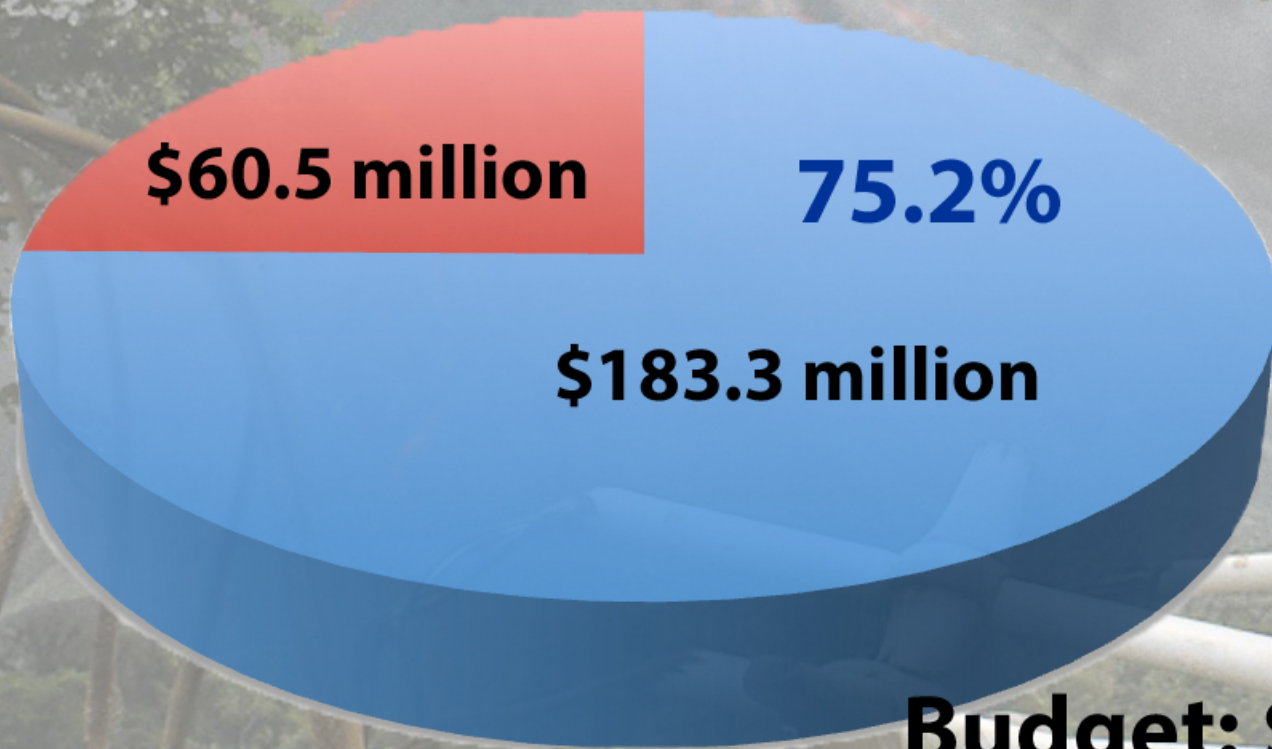
**Budget: \$105 million**

**Worldwide: \$347.5 million**



# "After Earth"

Studio: Sony



**Budget: \$130 million**  
**Worldwide: \$243.8 million**



# “High Concept” as Transnational Film

- Easy to follow storylines allow for access to international audiences who do not speak English as a primary language
- Saturation helps bring attention to US film in foreign markets that encourage domestic film-going and film-production.

# “Artistic Surrender?”

- Recent blockbusters have been modified to please Chinese authorities and audiences, prompting accusations of artistic surrender.
- James Cameron said he was considering inserting Chinese elements into two sequels to *Avatar*, saying it would be "logical" to have Chinese characters on the planet Pandora.
- The upcoming *World War Z* deleted dialogue sourcing a zombie virus outbreak to China.
- *Transformers 4* recruited Chinese actors through a television contest expected to attract thousands of hopefuls.
- *Jurassic Park IV* will reportedly feature dinosaurs found in China.
- *The Dark Knight Rises* and *Skyfall* found reasons for Batman and James Bond to visit China.
- Quentin Tarantino approved multiple changes to *Django Unchained*.
- *Iron Man 3* went further than most, adding scenes for the Chinese version that showed a Chinese surgeon saving Tony Stark and lines for the leading female actor Fan Bingbing. Chinese links were expunged from the Mandarin villain.

# 2015 Golden Globe Nominations

- Best Motion Picture-Drama
- The Nominees:
  - *Boyhood*
  - *Foxcatcher*
  - *The Imitation Game*
  - *Selma*
  - *The Theory of Everything*
- Best Motion Picture-Comedy/Musical
- The Nominees:
  - *Birdman*
  - *The Grand Budapest Hotel*
  - *Into The Woods*
  - *Pride*
  - *St. Vincent*