

Specialised films are a vital part of our film culture and offer audiences an experience of cinema that is very different from mainstream commercial fare. In 2016, they made up over six in 10 films released in the UK and grossed £42 million.

# **FACTS IN FOCUS**

- A total of 526 specialised films were released in the UK in 2016 (64% of all films released) earning £42 million (3.3% of the total box office).
- Films in 43 different languages (including English, Welsh and British Sign Language) were released in the UK in 2016. There were two releases with no spoken dialogue.
- The 368 foreign language films released in the year accounted for 45% of all releases, but shared just 2.4% of the UK box office.
- Hindi was the top earning non-English language at the UK box office; the highest earning foreign language film was *Dangal* (in Hindi) which grossed £2.6 million. The highest earning non-Hindi foreign language film was *Julieta* which earned £1.3 million.
- A total of 108 documentary films were released, accounting for 13% of releases but just 0.5% of the total box office. *The Beatles: Eight Days a Week* was the highest grossing documentary of the year with takings of £1.2 million.
- There were 41 re-releases (5% of all films released), accounting for 0.1% of the overall box office.



#### **ABOUT SPECIALISED FILMS**

The BFI considers most feature documentaries, subtitled foreign language films and re-releases of archive/classic films to be specialised. In recent years some mainstream films, which were originally made and shown in 2D, have been 're-released' in the 3D format. Examples include *Beauty and the Beast, Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace* and *Titanic* (all released in 3D in 2012), *Jurassic Park* (released in 3D in 2013) and *The Wizard of Oz* (released in 3D in 2014). These 're-releases' are not considered as specialised films in the present analyses.

Other films that do not fall into the above categories may also be considered as specialised. Generally described as films with a distinctive genre, hook or style, these releases may be less easy to define as a particular genre or may deal with more complex and challenging subject matter than the majority of mainstream films. Many are from the independent production sector (although they may be handled by a mainstream, studio-based distributor) or are made with a low production budget (compared with a studio production). They may focus more on script and character rather than effects and star names and may be expected to appeal to a narrower audience segment than mainstream films. This year, the BFI RSU has been more conservative when applying the definition of specialised to these other films, giving further consideration to specific storytelling characteristics such as relationship portrayal, world view portrayal and use of language. This has contributed to a lower number of 'other' specialised films. (Non-feature film releases, such as recorded live performances, are not considered to be specialised; they are categorised as event cinema. For more information, see the Exhibition chapter.)

## **SPECIALISED FILMS AT THE UK BOX OFFICE IN 2016**

In total, 526 specialised films were released in 2016, representing 64% of all UK theatrical releases in the year (Table 1). These films grossed £42 million, a 3.3% share of total box office earnings.

Table 1 Specialised films in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2016

Type	Number of releases	Share of releases (%)	Gross box office (£ million)	Share of gross box office (%)	Average widest point of release
Documentary	108	13.2	6.7	0.5	25
Foreign language	368	44.8	30.0	2.4	21
Re-release	41	5.0	1.5	0.1	19
Other specialised	36	4.4	4.9	0.4	35
All specialised films*	526	64.1	42.1	3.3	22
All films	821	100.0	1,262.0	100.0	102

Source: comScore, BFI RSU analysis

Notes:

Figures as at 19 February 2017.

An analysis of specialised film releases and market share from 2007 to 2016 is shown in Figure 1. The proportion of specialised film releases has been between 60% and 70% over the period while the market share for these films has been more volatile, ranging from 3% to 16%. The peak years in terms of market share (2009, 2011 and 2012) are primarily a result of a small number of specialised titles crossing over to mainstream audiences.

<sup>\*</sup> Due to some overlap of categories (eg a film such as *Francofonia* is categorised as a foreign language film and a documentary) this total refers to the number of specialised films, not the sum total of the categories in the table.

 %

 80

 70

 60

 50

 40

 30

 20

Figure 1 Specialised films, 2007-2016 (percentage of releases and market share)

Market share of specialised films

Specialised films as

% of total releases

2007

64.4

8.0

2008

66.6

8.2

2009

68.8

15.2

By sorting specialised films into the four separate categories mentioned above – documentaries, foreign language films, re-releases and others (films with a distinctive genre, hook or style) – we can better understand the patterns of specialised film distribution over time. As Figure 2 shows, there was a steady increase in the number of theatrically released feature documentaries over the majority of the period, from a low of 36 in 2007 to a peak of 117 in 2015; in 2016 108 documentaries were released. The number of foreign language films has also shown an upward trend, from a low of 161 releases in 2009 to a high of 368 in 2016. The number of re-released films tracked by comScore each year was between 25 and 30 up to 2011, but then increased slightly each year up to 2014 (when it reached a high point of 49) before falling back slightly in 2015. In 2016, there were 41 re-releases. However, the numbers do not include all re-releases, particularly limited or one-off screenings which are often shown in independent cinemas. Finally, the more subjective category of films with an innovative or unconventional approach, genre or style saw numbers decline from 117 in 2009 to a low of 36 releases in 2016. It should be noted that the low of 2016 is partly explained by the change in the BFI RSU's application of this definition.

2010

63.6

6.3

2011

61.8

16.4

2012

66.8

12.1

2013

63.9

9.5

2014

64.3

9.2

2015

60.1

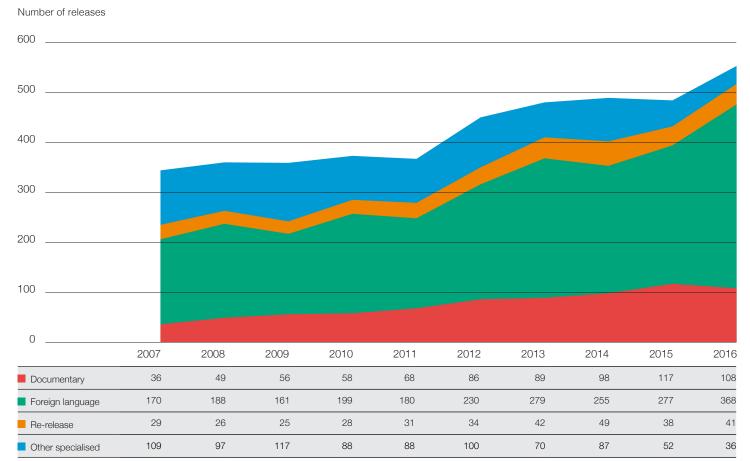
3.7

2016

64.1

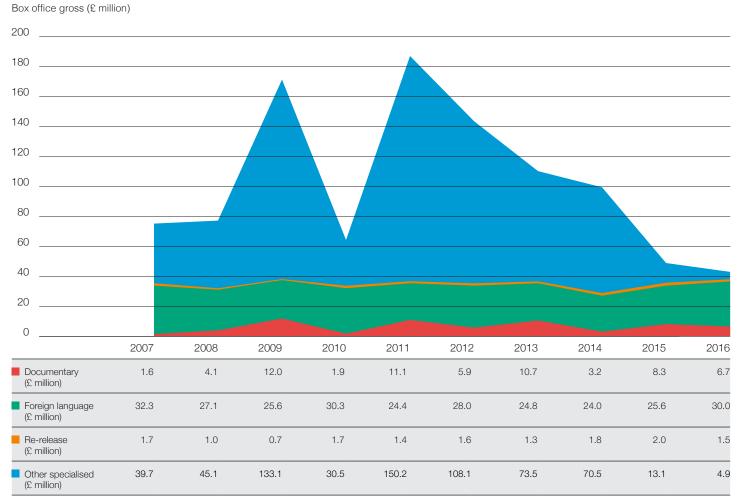
3.3

Figure 2 Number of specialised releases in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2007-2016



The box office performance of specialised films, again split into the four categories of documentaries, foreign language films, re-releases and other films with a distinctive hook, genre or style, is shown in Figure 3. Theatrical revenues for all categories of specialised films are particularly affected by the release of a small number of high earning titles. Over the period 2007-2016, revenues for documentaries have witnessed peaks with the release of a number of break-out titles such as *Michael Jackson's This Is It* in 2009, *Senna* in 2011, *One Direction: This Is Us* in 2013 and *Amy* in 2015. Foreign language film grosses have remained fairly consistent across the last 10 years with few high earning titles like those seen in the early 2000s such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* or in 2001 or *The Passion of the Christ* in 2004. The combined annual revenues for re-releases of archive/classic titles have been consistently small, ranging between £1 million-£2 million. Finally, the more subjective category of films with non-mainstream genres or styles has achieved its highest grosses in years when a few of its titles have translated critical acclaim into box office success such as *Slumdog Millionaire* in 2009, *The King's Speech* in 2011 and *Life of Pi* in 2012. The top release in this category in 2016 was *The Witch*, which earned £1.3 million.

Figure 3 Box office gross of specialised films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2007-2016



## **NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE FILMS**

Films in 43 different languages (including English, Welsh and British Sign Language) were released in the UK and Republic of Ireland in 2016, five more than in 2015 (Table 2). There were also two releases with no spoken dialogue: the re-release of Abel Gance's 1927 silent classic *Napoleon* and the children's animation *Minuscule: Valley of the Lost Ants*, in which characters communicate in whistles, squawks and buzzing noises.

After English, the most common language, in terms of numbers of releases, was Hindi followed by Tamil and French. Hindi was also the top earning non-English language in 2016 with a 1% share of overall box office revenues, followed by Spanish and Tamil (both with 0.2%).

One Welsh language film was released during the year - *The Passing (Yr Ymadawiad)* - while a second film in Welsh - *The Library Suicides (Y Llyfrgell)* - was shown at film festivals and given a limited release but was not tracked by comScore. There was also one film released in British Sign Language, the documentary *Power in Our Hands*.

Table 2 Languages of films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2016 (ranked by gross box office)

Main language	Number of releases	Gross box office (£ million)	Box office share (%)
English	395	1,041.1	82.5
English with others*	54	190.6	15.1
Hindi	48	13.2	1.0
Spanish	12	2.2	0.2
Tamil	42	2.1	0.2
Polish	12	1.8	0.1
French	40	1.7	0.1
Punjabi	28	1.4	0.1
Japanese	13	1.2	0.1
Mandarin	18	0.8	0.1
Malayalam	30	0.8	0.1
Urdu	7	0.7	0.1
German	8	0.6	0.1
Turkish	20	0.6	0.1
Hungarian	1	0.5	<0.1
Kazakh	1	0.3	<0.1
Russian	11	0.3	<0.1
Silent/no language	2	0.3	<0.1
Cantonese	4	0.3	<0.1
Icelandic	1	0.3	<0.1
Danish	5	0.2	<0.1
Korean	7	0.1	<0.1
Italian	7	0.1	<0.1
Filipino	9	0.1	<0.1
Farsi	2	0.1	<0.1
Swedish	5	0.1	<0.1
Arabic	3	0.1	<0.1
Norwegian	3	<0.1	<0.1
Lithuanian	2	<0.1	<0.1
Hebrew	2	<0.1	<0.1
Portuguese	4	<0.1	<0.1
Dari	2	<0.1	<0.1
Telugu	8	<0.1	<0.1
Nepali	2	<0.1	<0.1
Thai	1	<0.1	<0.1
Tagalog	1	<0.1	<0.1
British Sign Language**	1	<0.1	<0.1

Estonian	1	<0.1	<0.1
Marathi	3	<0.1	<0.1
Kannada	1	<0.1	<0.1
Tibetan	1	<0.1	<0.1
Welsh**	1	<0.1	<0.1
Czech	1	<0.1	<0.1
Flemish	1	<0.1	<0.1
Dutch	1	<0.1	<0.1
Total	821	1,262.0	100.0

Source: comScore, BBFC, IMDb, BFI RSU analysis

Figures as at 19 February 2017.

The 40 foreign languages were spread over 368 releases in the UK and Republic of Ireland (45% of all releases, up 8 percentage points on 2015) which earned  $\mathfrak{L}30$  million at the box office (Table 3). This represented 2.4% of the total gross box office for 2016.

Table 3 Foreign language films at the UK and Republic of Ireland box office, 2007-2016

	Number	% of all releases	Box office (£ million)	% of total gross box office
2007	170	32.9	32.3	3.5
2008	188	35.7	27.1	2.9
2009	161	32.0	25.6	2.3
2010	199	35.7	30.3	3.0
2011	180	32.3	24.4	2.2
2012	230	35.5	28.0	2.4
2013	279	40.0	24.8	2.2
2014	255	35.8	24.0	2.2
2015	277	36.8	25.6	2.0
2016	368	44.8	30.0	2.4

Source: comScore, BBFC, IMDb, BFI RSU analysis Note: Figures as at 19 February 2017.

Films in languages from the South Asian subcontinent shared 1.4% of the box office from 21% of releases and films in European languages other than English earned 0.6% of the box office from 14% of releases (Table 4). Taken together, non-English language films were shown, on average, at 21 sites at their widest point of release (the same as in 2015) compared with an average of 170 sites for English language releases.

<sup>\* &#</sup>x27;English with others' includes films whose main language was English but with extensive use of other languages, such as *Eye in the Sky* in English and Somali and *Allied* in English, French and German.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>star\star}$  Welsh and British Sign Language are officially recognised languages of the UK.

Table 4 Language of releases in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2016 (ranked by number of releases)

Main language	Number of releases	% of releases	Gross box office (£ million)	% of gross box office	Average sites at widest point of release
English and English with others*	449	54.7	1,231.7	97.6	170
South Asian subcontinent	169	20.6	18.2	1.4	25
European other than English**	117	14.3	8.0	0.6	20
East Asian	54	6.6	1.2	0.1	9
West Asian/Middle Eastern	30	3.7	2.6	0.2	14
Silent/no dialogue	2	0.2	0.3	<0.1	50
Total	821	100.0	1,262.0	100.0	102

Source: comScore, BBFC, IMDb, BFI RSU analysis, distributor websites

Notes:

Percentages may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Figures as at 19 February 2017.

Table 5 shows the top 10 highest earning non-Hindi foreign language films of 2016. At number one in the list is Pedro Almodovar's *Julieta* (in Spanish), which took £1.3 million at the UK and Republic of Ireland box office. However, this film was only the fourth highest earning foreign language release in 2016 after three Hindi language titles. This was the fifth consecutive year that the top three foreign language films were in Hindi.

Four of the films in the top 10 list were in other South Asian languages (Urdu and Tamil), including the Pakistani film *Janaan*, and there was one film in Japanese, the animation *Your Name*. There were five films in European languages, including the winner of the foreign language film category at the 2016 Oscars®, *Son of Saul* (mainly in Hungarian).

Table 5 Top 10 foreign language films (excluding Hindi\*) released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2016

	Title	Country of origin	Gross box office (£ million)	Distributor	Main language
1	Julieta	Spa	1.3	Pathé	Spanish
2	Pitbull: Tough Women	Pol	0.8	Phoenix	Polish
3	Victoria	Ger	0.5	Curzon Artificial Eye	German
4	Son of Saul	Hun	0.5	Curzon Artificial Eye	Hungarian
5	Your Name	JPN	0.5	National Amusements	Japanese
6	Pitbull: New Orders	Pol	0.5	Phoenix	Polish
7	Janaan	PKN	0.4	B4U Network	Urdu
8	Dheepan	Fra	0.4	StudioCanal	Tamil
9	Theri	Ind	0.4	Q Entertainment	Tamil
10	Kabali	Ind/Mal	0.4	Ayngaran	Tamil

Source: comScore BBFC, IMDb, BFI RSU analysis, distrbutor websites Notes:

Figures as at 19 February 2017.

<sup>\*</sup> See note to Table 2.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Includes Welsh and British Sign Language.

<sup>\*</sup> For Hindi language titles, see Table 6.

Table 6 shows the top 10 film releases of 2016 whose principal language is Hindi. At the top of the list is the drama *Dangal*, with box office takings of £2.6 million. The top three films in the list were also the top three foreign language films of 2016, all of which took over £1 million at the box office.

Table 6 Top 10 Hindi language films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2016

	Title	Country of origin	UK box office total (£ million)	Distributor
1	Dangal	Ind	2.6	UTV Motion Pictures
2	Sultan	Ind	1.8	Yash Raj
3	Ae Dil Hai Mushkil	UK/Ind	1.5	20th Century Fox
4	Fan	Ind	0.8	Yash Raj
5	Kapoor and Sons	Ind	0.5	20th Century Fox
6	Housefull 3	UK/Ind	0.5	Eros International
7	Airlift	Ind	0.4	B4U
8	Dear Zindagi	Ind	0.4	Reliance
9	Baar Baar Dekho	Ind	0.4	Eros International
10	Rustom	Ind	0.3	Grand Showbiz

Source: comScore, BBFC, IMDb, BFI RSU analysis

Note: Figures as at 19 February 2017.

Table 7 shows the 10 highest grossing non-English language films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland between 2001 and 2016. The top film is the 2004 release *The Passion of the Christ* (£11.1 million), followed by *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (£9.4 million) which was released in 2001.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon is one of three Mandarin language films in the list, all of which are wuxia martial arts titles, which reflects the popularity of the genre with UK audiences in the early 2000s. There are also three Spanish language films in the list (two from Spain and one from South America), and one French language title. The most recent addition to the list is the 2013 release *Dhoom:* 3, which is the first film in Hindi to appear in the top 10 since our records began.

Table 7 Top 10 non-English language films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2001-2016

	Title	Language	UK box office total (£ million)	Distributor	Year of release
1	The Passion of the Christ	Aramaic/Latin/Hebrew	11.1	Icon	2004
2	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Mandarin	9.4	Sony Pictures	2001
3	Amélie	French/Russian	5.0	Momentum	2001
4	Apocalypto	Mayan	4.1	Icon	2007
5	Hero	Mandarin	3.8	Walt Disney	2004
6	House of Flying Daggers	Mandarin	3.8	Pathé	2004
7	Volver	Spanish	2.9	Pathé	2006
8	The Motorcycle Diaries	Spanish	2.8	Pathé	2004
9	Pan's Labyrinth	Spanish	2.7	Optimum	2006
10	Dhoom: 3	Hindi	2.7	Yash Raj	2013

Source: comScore, BFI RSU analysis

#### **DOCUMENTARIES**

A total of 108 feature documentaries were released at the UK and Republic of Ireland box office in 2016, representing 13% of theatrical releases. They earned £6.7 million which was 0.5% of the overall box office gross. We have split our analysis of this category into the more traditional expository or observational style of documentary and 'concert' documentaries, which feature coverage of a particular performance and behind-the-scenes footage of popular musical performers. The most successful documentary of 2016 was Ron Howard's US concert documentary *The Beatles: Eight Days a Week*, which grossed £1.2 million, while the highest performing non-concert documentary was the UK independent production by John Dower and Louis Theroux, *My Scientology Movie*, which earned £1.1 million.

Table 8 shows the top 20 non-concert documentaries released in the UK and Republic of Ireland since 2002. The highest grossing non-concert documentary of all time at the UK box office is Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* which earned £6.5 million in 2004. Asif Kapadia's 2015 release *Amy* (£3.8 million) is second, and the 2005 natural history release *March of the Penguins* (£3.3 million) is third.

In addition to *My Scientology Movie*, two other UK documentaries are new entries to the list, *Oasis: Supersonic* and *One More Time with Feeling*. Twelve of the top 20 non-concert documentaries released since 2001 are UK films.

Table 8 Top 20 non-concert feature documentaries released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2002-2016

	Title	Country of origin	Year of release	Box office gross (£ million)	Widest point of release (sites)	Distributor
1	Fahrenheit 9/11	USA	2004	6.5	200	Optimum
2	Amy	UK	2015	3.8	280	Altitude
3	March of the Penguins	Fra	2005	3.3	163	Warner Bros
4	Senna	UK	2011	3.2	358	Universal
5	Touching the Void	UK	2003	2.6	50	Pathé
6	Bowling for Columbine	USA	2002	1.7	37	Momentum
7	TT3D: Closer to the Edge	UK	2011	1.3	125	CinemaNX
8	The Imposter	UK/USA	2012	1.1	77	Picturehouse/Revolver
9	Super Size Me	USA	2004	1.1	83	Tartan
10	My Scientology Movie	UK/USA	2016	1.1	76	Altitude
11	Marley	UK/Jam/USA	2012	1.0	333	Universal
12	An Inconvenient Truth	USA	2006	0.9	68	Paramount
13	Man on Wire	UK/USA	2008	0.9	43	Icon
14	Oasis: Supersonic	UK	2016	0.8	387	eOne Films
15	Être et Avoir	Fra	2003	0.7	15	Tartan
16	Pina	Ger/Fra	2011	0.7	26	Artificial Eye
17	Cave of Forgotten Dreams	UK/Can/Fra/Ger/USA	2011	0.6	39	Picturehouse
18	20,000 Days on Earth	UK	2014	0.6	33	Picturehouse
19	Spellbound	USA	2003	0.5	17	Metrodome
20	One More Time with Feeling	UK/Fra	2016	0.4	156	Picturehouse

Source: comScore, BFI RSU analysis

Notes

The table does not include concert performance documentaries, IMAX-only documentaries and shorts.

Based on box office data for 2002-2016.

Fahrenheit 9/11 is regarded as the highest grossing feature documentary of all time because, even with price inflation, it is unlikely that any documentary films before 2002 will have earned more in nominal terms.

A number of concert performance documentaries, often now in 3D, are released theatrically every year. Table 9 shows the top 10 documentaries in this category from 2008 to 2016. The highest grossing title released since 2008 is *Michael Jackson's This Is It*, which earned £9.8 million in 2009. *The Beatles: Eight Days a Week*, with earnings of £1.2 million, is the only new entry to the list.

Table 9 Top 10 concert documentaries released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2008-2016

	Title	Country of origin	Year of release	Box office gross (£ million)	Widest point of release (sites)	Distributor
1	Michael Jackson's This Is It	USA	2009	9.8	498	Sony Pictures
2	One Direction: This Is Us	UK/USA	2013	8.0	479	Sony Pictures
3	Justin Bieber: Never Say Never	USA	2011	2.3	388	Paramount
4	The Beatles: Eight Days a Week	USA	2016	1.2	102	StudioCanal
5	Katy Perry: Part of Me	USA	2012	1.2	326	Paramount
6	Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert	USA	2008	0.8	65	Walt Disney
7	U2 3D	USA	2008	0.7	67	Revolver
8	Glee: The 3D Concert Movie	USA	2011	0.7	335	20th Century Fox
9	Shine a Light	USA/UK	2008	0.7	159	20th Century Fox
10	JLS: Eyes Wide Open 3D	UK	2011	0.5	210	Omniverse

Source: comScore, BFI RSU analysis

## **RE-RELEASES**

In 2016, 41 archive/classic titles were re-released in the UK and Republic of Ireland. According to comScore, these re-releases accounted for 5% of the year's theatrical releases and generated a combined gross of £1.5 million (0.1% of the total box office). However, not all box office revenues for re-releases are tracked by comScore, which primarily focuses on first-run films. Some additional revenue for films, which tend to be booked for a limited time into specialised cinemas long after their initial release, is missing from this analysis, so the actual box office share is likely to be greater.

Table 10 shows the top 20 specialised re-releases at UK and Republic of Ireland cinemas over the last 17 years. The list is topped by *A Clockwork Orange*, which grossed £2.1 million in 2000 and is the first of four entries for director Stanley Kubrick. His sci-fi epic *2001: A Space Odyssey* appears twice, at number nine from its 2014 re-release (as part of the BFI's Sci-fi season) and at number 12 from its 2001 re-release. His other entry is the 2012 re-release of *The Shining*. Alongside *A Clockwork Orange*, two other re-releases have grossed over £1 million – Steven Spielberg's 20th anniversary re-release of *E.T.* (2002) and the 25th anniversary re-release of sci-fi comedy *Back to the Future* (2010). There is one new entry in the list: the 2016 re-release of *The Nightmare Before Christmas* is at number 16 with box office takings of £0.2 million.

Table 10 Top 20 re-releases at the UK and Republic of Ireland box office, 2000-2016

	Title (year of original release)	Country of origin	Year of re-release	Box office gross (£ million)	Widest point of release (sites)	Distributor
1	A Clockwork Orange (1972)	UK	2000	2.1	328	Warner Bros
2	E.T. (20th anniversary) (1982)	USA	2002	2.1	313	UIP
3	Back to the Future (25th anniversary) (1985)	USA	2010	1.2	273	Universal
4	Blade Runner: The Final Cut (1982)	UK/USA/ Hong Kong	2015	0.8	136	BFI
5	Alien (Director's Cut) (1979)	UK/USA	2003	0.5	134	20th Century Fox
6	Jurassic Park (1993)	USA	2011	0.5	277	Universal
7	Apocalypse Now (Redux) (1979)	USA	2001	0.5	22	Walt Disney
8	Jaws (1975)	USA	2012	0.4	319	Universal
9	2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)	UK/USA	2014	0.4	60	BFI
10	The Leopard (1963)	Ita/Fra	2003	0.3	5	BFI
11	It's a Wonderful Life (1946)	USA	2007	0.3	33	Park Circus
12	2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)	UK/USA	2001	0.3	4	Warner Bros
13	Breakfast at Tiffany's (1961)	USA	2001	0.3	5	BFI
14	The Shining (1980)	UK/USA	2012	0.2	29	BFI
15	Dirty Dancing (20th anniversary) (1987)	USA	2007	0.2	19	Lionsgate
16	The Nightmare Before Christmas (1994)	USA	2016	0.2	91	Park Circus
17	Breakfast at Tiffany's (50th anniversary) (1961)	USA	2011	0.2	13	BFI
18	Casablanca (1943)	USA	2012	0.2	17	Park Circus
19	Chariots of Fire (1981)	UK	2012	0.2	149	20th Century Fox
20	À bout de souffle (1960)	Fra	2000	0.2	5	Optimum



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