

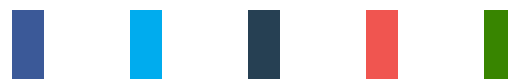
New Indie Players Score at the Box Office with 'Colossal,' 'Their Finest,' and 'Your Name.'

Jessica Chastain shows star power as holocaust drama "The Zookeeper's Wife" leads the post-Oscar 2017 specialty box office.



Tom Brueggemann

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Anne Hathaway in "Colossal"

Courtesy of TIFF

Two new indie distributors injected some life into the specialty [box office](#) this weekend with two unconventional releases.

Both "[Colossal](#)" (Neon Films) and Japanese anime smash "[Your Name.](#)" (FUNimation) rode

positive reviews to strong box office. With more conventional World War II drama "Their Finest" (STX), three films from non-establishment distributors show impressive arthouse strength.

[READ MORE: 'Colossal' Is the Monster Movie No Studio Would Ever Make, And It's Teaching Hollywood a Lesson](#)

Jessica Chastain vehicle "The Zookeeper's Wife," shaping up to be the biggest specialty release so far this year, justified its initial wider run with a solid second weekend.

"The Zookeeper's Wife"

Anne Marie Fox

At least nine of the new limited releases this week also are available on Video on Demand. The only one to see much traction was "Alive and Kicking" (Magnolia), directed by specialty industry veteran Susan Glatzer, marking an unusual documentary presentation from Blumhouse Productions. The dance movie grossed \$9000 in five theaters.

Other VOD flicks getting pro forma play include Walter Hill's [controversial](#) "The Assignment" (Saban) and "Aftermath" (Lionsgate) starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. Netflix debuted their recent South by Southwest premiere "Win It All" from director Joe Swanberg ("Digging for Fire"), his nineteenth feature film since 2006. It received no theatrical play. "The Void" (Screen Media) from Canadian horror specialist Astron-6 landed 31 dates, including many midnight shows, for around \$55,000 to supplement its home viewing.

Opening

Colossal (Neon) – Metacritic: 69; Festivals include: Toronto 2016, Sundance, South by

Southwest 2017

\$125,809 in 4 theaters; PTA (per theater average): \$31,452

Neon, the new distribution company formed by veterans of Radius and Alamo Drafthouse, accomplished with its first release a platform opening with a per theater average over \$30,000. (That's something successful recent start ups A24 and Bleecker Street didn't accomplish until their third and fifth releases, respectively.)

Neon managed it with a movie boasting edgy, offbeat younger audience appeal and positive if not outstanding reviews. It didn't hurt to have four strong New York/Los Angeles theaters, with west coast appearances by Anne Hathaway (earning her best critical response in years) and director Nacho Vigalongo.

This quirky romantic horror genre-bender — about a conflicted American woman's ability to control long-distance a monster that is rampaging through Seoul — is so original that with the right handling it could gain traction in a specialized market hungry for something fresh.

That a film with younger appeal managed to increase its second full-day total is a further encouraging sign that this could be on its way to sustained interest as it expands.

What comes next: These results should encourage a wide array of theaters, both specialized and broader, to book the movie, which needs continued interest from younger viewers. But at a time when older audiences are becoming more selective, it marks a much-needed alternative. Significantly, this opening establishes as an important player in the market.

"Your Name."

Your Name. (FUNimation) – Metacritic: 79; Festivals include: Anime Expo LA, San Sebastian, Pusan 2016

\$1,600,000 in 303 theaters; PTA: \$5,281

This Japanese anime feature had grossed \$329 million worldwide before its American run, with significant results not only at home but in many other territories. This unusually wide initial release follows an off-the-radar Los Angeles qualifying run last December, which led to an upset win from the LA Film Critics but no Oscar nomination. This strong response is particularly impressive as two studio animated behemoths dominate the family market. The Saturday gross, down slightly from Friday, suggests more core fans of Japanese animation than kids appeal.

Though not from renowned Studio Ghibli, "Your Name." bears the hallmarks of those popular films, from its sophisticated plot to strong, naturalistic 2D animation. The time-travel gender-switch plot that hit a nerve worldwide looks to have similar appeal stateside.

This isn't record breaking territory. "Spirited Away," backed by Disney's major marketing, grossed the adjusted total of \$670,000 in only 29 theaters in 2002 to a total gross of what today would be nearly \$15 million. This strong showing — during the same week that the [Academy changed the nominating process for Animated Features](#) — comes with no boost from that venue.

FUNimation enjoyed earlier success with cult film "Dragon Ball Z: Resurrection F" (\$8 million domestic) and "Shin Godzilla" (\$2 million domestic). This is their best result from a more conventional release.

What comes next: The response should justify wider interest, but at a minimum is enough to sustain these initial runs next week and beyond.

"Their Finest"

Their Finest (STX) – Metacritic: 75; Festivals include: Toronto 2016, Sundance 2017

\$77,000 in 4 theaters; PTA: \$19,250

A solid start for the first platform film from young distributor STX (“Bad Moms”), “Their Finest” comes from their deal to release films from Luc Besson’s Europacorp. Set in World War II London, the movie was directed by UK-based Danish filmmaker Lone Scherfig (“An Education,” “One Fine Day”).

Gemma Arterton plays a budding screenwriter assigned to add a female touch to wartime stories at the height of the war. The well-reviewed film got a terrific 86 per cent Saturday increase, showing strong initial appeal among older audiences at its four prime New York/Los Angeles theaters.

This looks poised to raise wider interest just as “The Zookeeper’s Wife” plays out its run.

What comes next: An immediate expansion in New York and Los Angeles along with a dozen new cities will start what is expected to be an aggressive national release.

“Gifted”

Gifted (Fox Searchlight) – Metacritic: 60

\$476,000 in 56 theaters; PTA: \$8,500

“Gifted” came with a successful director (Marc Webb of “500 Days of Summer” and the two most recent “Spider-Man” films), a cast including Chris Evans and Octavia Spencer, and a plot involving an uncle tasked with raising his math-prodigy niece. Fox Searchlight opted for a multi-city platform for their fourth release of the year so far. They had only five all last year and only one by this point in 2015.

The results are an improvement on their other films since Natalie Portman-starrer "Jackie" late last year. "Wilson" recently opened in over 300 theaters to only \$336,000, much less than "Gifted" in only a fifth as many locations. With strong support and an expansion to a wider array of theaters, it could pass the \$4 million mark they haven't hit since Pablo Larrain's award contender.

What comes next: Expect a rapid increase to a range of theaters in upscale and adult audience markets over the next few weeks.

"Graduation"

Graduation (IFC) – Metacritic: 85; Festivals include: Cannes, Telluride, Toronto, New York 2016

\$11,040 in 2 theaters; PTA: \$5,520

The best-reviewed of the week's releases and a winner for Best Director at last year's Cannes for Romanian Palme d'Or winner Cristian Mungiu, this story of a father trying to help his daughter complete the steps necessary for a life-changing foreign scholarship landed two prime Manhattan theater but less response than it deserved.

Mungiu's "4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days" opened nine years ago in a different specialized world to over \$50,000 in two theaters.

This was a competitive weekend with several well-reviewed films. Still, the results reveal the baseline for limited audience interest in even the best-reviewed subtitled films.

What comes next: IFC will maximize the limited interest starting with ten more major cities in the next two weeks.

Truman (Film Rise) – Metacritic: 78; Festivals include: Toronto 2015, Palm Springs 2017

\$(est.) 20,000 in 3 theaters; PTA: \$(est.) 6,666

Spanish director Cesc Gay had a modest success for his youthful gay coming of age film “Nico and Dani” in 2003. This 2015 film involves two old friends much later in life dealing with mortality and a dying man’s quest to find a home for his beloved dog (the title character). Film Rise scored the Lincoln Plaza and Angelika in Manhattan for its initial runs (along with a Miami date), and ended up with better results than the even better reviewed “Graduation,” though neither is stellar.

What comes next: Los Angeles, the San Francisco area and Washington begin its broader national run this Friday.

All These Sleepless Nights (The Orchard) – Metacritic: 73; Festivals include: Sundance, Hot Docs 2016

\$(est.) 4,500 in 3 theaters; PTA: \$(est.) 1,500

A Polish hybrid with millennial characters that blends fiction and documentary (it premiered as the latter in the World section of Sundance 2016) opened in Los Angeles and two San Francisco Bay area theaters. Though it has received strong reviews and significant indie film media attention, its initial dates aroused little interest from niche audiences.

What comes next: New York adds on this Friday.

The Transfiguration (Strand) – Metacritic: 61; Festivals include: Cannes 2016

\$(est.) 5,500 in 1 theater; PTA: \$(est.) 5,500

A young New York public housing inhabitant develops a taste for human blood in this American indie that premiered in Cannes’ Un Certain Regard section last year. Strand booked this at Manhattan’s Angelika Theater to modest results

What comes next: Los Angeles (Landmark’s NuArt) opens on April 18 along with a slow rollout of other big city dates.

"Queen of the Desert"

Queen of the Desert (IFC) – Metacritic: 39; Festivals include: Toronto, AFI 2015

\$(est.) 20,000 in 95 theaters; PTA: \$(est.) 211

Werner Herzog's most successful releases have mainly been documentaries, but he returned to narrative productions with two films that garnered shaky reactions in their film festival premieres. This 2015 biofilm boasts a starry cast led by Nicole Kidman plays a famous English archaeologist known as the female Lawrence of Arabia., Robert Pattinson, James Franco, and Damian Lewis costar. A week in advance of its VOD dates the movie opened nationwide in upscale locations to little reaction.

Herzog's recent "Salt and Fire" (XLRator), set in Bolivia with Gael Garcia Bernal and Michael Shannon, opened with equally weak reviews in a Los Angeles theater, with no grosses reported.

What comes next: VOD for "Queen" will be its main outlet, with plans for "Salt and Fire" unclear.

International release:

Kaatru Veliyidai (AIM/India) – \$(est.) 300,000 in 106 theaters

Week Two

The Zookeeper's Wife (Focus)

\$2,888,000 in 806 theaters (+265); PTA: \$3,593; Cumulative: \$7,603,000

The second weekend for this Polish-set Holocaust film continues to thrive despite mixed reviews. Focus' smart calibrated wider release is showing strong results. With about a 50 per cent increase in theaters, the gross dropped about 12 per cent, a reasonable performance. It dropped just out of the Top Ten, but showed strength with a 50 per cent Saturday night jump.

This looks like it will shortly become Focus' best specialized release since their Oscar-winning "The Theory of Everything." That would put it ahead of awards contenders like "Loving," "Nocturnal Animals" and "The Danish Girl."

Cezanne and I (Magnolia) 23,000

\$(est.) 27,000 in 15 theaters (+13); PTA: \$(est.) 18,000; Cumulative: \$(est.) 50,000

Veteran French director Danielle Thompson's imagining of Cezanne and Victor Hugo's friendship added multiple larger cities its second week to modest results.

David Lynch: The Art Life (Janus)

\$(est.) 11,000 in 4 theaters (+3); PTA: \$(est.) 2,750; Cumulative: \$(est.) 27,000

This documentary about how David Lynch developed into a film director expanded beyond its initial New York date to some minor reaction.

"Karl Marx City"

BOND/360

Karl Marx City (Bond 360) 17,000

\$(est.) 10,000 in 3 theaters (+2); PTA: \$(est.) 3,333; Cumulative: \$(est.) 27,000

A German director's exploration of her father's life as an East German informer added two dates to its initial New York Film Forum opening with modest but steady results.

Ongoing/expanding (Grosses over \$50,000 in under 1,000 theaters)

T2 Trainspotting (Sony) Week 4

\$275,000 in 157 theaters (+17); Cumulative: \$1,600,000

The results are spotty for Danny Boyle's return to Edinburgh's seedy side. It is holding adequately, but these weren't strong grosses as it expanded in the first place. It doesn't seem to warrant a much broader release and won't come close to the \$35 million-plus it has made foreign, mostly in the U.K.

Lion (Weinstein) Week 20

\$167,215 in 203 theaters (+28); Cumulative: \$51,375,000

The last weekend before its DVD release sees Weinstein's biggest recent success end up with a worldwide total over \$130 million.

La La Land (Lionsgate) Week 18

\$156,300 in 224 theaters (+81); Cumulative: \$150,676,000

Still hanging around in theaters weeks after its multiple Oscar winners, Lionsgate had set its home availability for late April, expecting to win Best Picture. They still have managed to add more than \$10 million to its huge total.

Frantz (Music Box) Week 4

\$151,000 in 81 theaters (+44); Cumulative: \$363,398

Francis Ozon's post-World War I story had a big expansion to lukewarm response that will be at the lower end of results for the French auteur's films.

"Personal Shopper"

IFC

Personal Shopper (IFC) Week 5

\$134,232 in 141 theaters (-12); Cumulative: \$1,007,000

Olivier Assayas' latest French production (though largely in English) with Kristen Stewart isn't far behind the gross at the same point of their previous collaboration "Clouds of Sils Maria," and looks to come in close to its \$1.8 million.

Kedi (Oscilloscope) Week 9

\$116,000 in 93 theaters (-15); Cumulative: \$2,213,000

Cats in Istanbul continue to draw interest and could end up with an incredible \$3 million before they finish bringing in fans for this sleeper documentary hit.

The Last Word (Bleecker Street) Week 6

\$60,158 in 116 theaters (-173); Cumulative: \$1,650,000

This movie about Shirley MacLaine micromanaging her death notice was held over for the last time at most remaining locations and will end up around \$2 million.

Raw (Focus) Week 5

\$50,710 in 43 theaters (+5); Cumulative: \$400,714

This French horror film about a vegetarian veterinary student turning cannibal has nabbed some limited interest but has almost completed its run.

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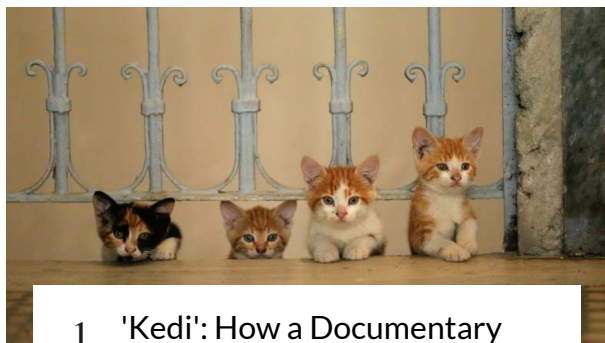
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