

Streaming films more diverse than cinematic releases: study

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"Turning Red," which told a coming-of-age story about a young Chinese-Canadian girl, was one of the most streamed films of 2022.

Films released by streaming services are more racially representative and more likely to have female leads than those that debut in theaters, a

study released Thursday showed.

Movies destined for the small screen were almost entirely reflective of the US population, the Hollywood Diversity Report said, with majority-minority casts doing especially well with audiences.

Studios must take notice the changing demographics of those audiences if they want to keep viewers shelling out for their big screen offerings, the report's authors say.

"Our research shows that diversity in the movies is just good business," said Ana-Christina Ramon, director of the Entertainment and Media Research Initiative at University of California, Los Angeles, which produces the report.

"People of color saved the theatrical industry during the pandemic, and they are key to bringing the theatrical business back to its pre-pandemic levels," Ramon said.

The report says research shows an increasingly diverse movie-going [audience](#) favors more diverse [films](#).

Theatrical and streaming films that featured more than 30 percent minority casts outperformed others at the [box office](#) and in Nielsen ratings, respectively, repeating a pattern from previous years, it says.

"The pandemic has normalized diversity on screen, not just in theaters but at home," co-author Michael Tran said.

"Audiences tuned in. If Hollywood reverses course on diversity in the theaters, they'll lose audiences to streaming and to international offerings."

A third of streaming films had a minority actor in the lead role last year, while only 22 percent of theatrical releases did, the report said.

Women and men make up roughly equal shares of the leads of streaming films, with the split closer to 60-40 in favor of men at the cinemas.

The two most-streamed films of 2022—"Turning Red" and "Encanto"—were both animated movies that told coming-of-age stories about young girls of color.

"These films were culturally specific yet universally relatable," said Ramon.

"With more than half of the current population under the age of 18 belonging to communities of color, these [young people](#) will grow up and demand films with protagonists who look like them and who live like them."

The [report](#), which examined English-language theatrical releases among the top 200 films and the top 100 English-language original streaming films, comes weeks after surprise hit "Everything Everywhere All At Once," with a cast of actors mostly of Asian descent, swept the Oscars.

The word-of-mouth smash won seven prizes including best picture, as its Malaysian star Michelle Yeoh became the first Asian woman to win best actress.

The film's theatrical release last spring came ahead of its streaming release.

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