

FRAME BY FRAME

'JURASSIC WORLD': A Must See Summer Smash

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The obsessive craze that gives a film massive popularity is expected with certain titles, but can also come out of nowhere. Frankly, this is what happened with *Jurassic World*.

In its opening weekend, *Jurassic World* treated sold-out audiences to a thrilling and exciting sci-fi adventure. All day and night, auditorium lines stretched beyond lobby doors, with box office lines reaching parking lots. I can't even remember the last time I witnessed this type of commercial flood.



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Obviously films like *Marvel's The Avengers* (2012), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2* (2011) and *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* (2005) hit cinemas with such turnout, but the actual experience is simply something I cannot recall.

In its current running of two weeks, *Jurassic World* smashed more than 20 box office records. Of these feats, its most notable are worldwide opening weekend and overseas opening weekend (\$524.1 million and \$315.6 million respectively, surpassing *Deathly Hallows – Part 2*), first film to gross more than \$500 million in its opening weekend, summer opening weekend and North American all-time second weekend (\$208.8 million and \$106.7 million respectively, surpassing *Avengers*) and fastest to accrue \$1 billion worldwide (14 days, surpassing *Furious 7*'s recent record of 17 days).

What was it that drove people to such

enthusiastic lengths? What made them unable to get enough? Part of it can be contributed to the fact this is the world's first Jurassic film since *Jurassic Park III* in 2001. This means the world bears an entire generation which had yet to experience dinosaurs on the big screen. Add this to the nostalgia factor associated with the original 1993 film, and you have a recipe for overwhelming success. All that's left is whether the film itself is actually worth the anticipation, and let me say *Jurassic World* does more than satisfy a moviegoer's appetite.

As far as sci-fi adventure thrillers go, this is certainly a great movie that varieties of families and moviegoers can enjoy, all while sitting on the edge of their seats and leaving wanting more.

Set in an open and fully operational dinosaur theme park, two decades after the *Jurassic Park* incident, park scientists engineer a fearsome, hybrid animal—Indominus rex—to attract new visitors and keep interest in *Jurassic World* peaking. But when the antagonistic creature escapes its paddock and begins killing any animal and person it sees, the park must be evacuated while an enthralling hunt for the creature ensues.

Chris Pratt stars as Velociraptor trainer and expert Owen Grady, a character reminiscent of Grant, Malcolm and Muldoon from the first film, who leads the hunt for the hybrid. Bryce Dallas Howard, in part, fills the late Richard Attenborough's shoes as the one running the show in *Jurassic World*, an ambitious park operations manager named Claire Dearing. Irrfan Khan's Simon Masrani is the other side of the John Hammond coin as the owner of *Jurassic World* and CEO of the park's backing Masrani Corporation. B.D. Wong reprises

his role as geneticist Dr. Henry Wu from the original film, this time playing truer to his novel counterpart: a smart, talented man who, despite his concerns, delivers upon his employers' requests.

For someone who's heavily critical of the series' evolution, and a fan of Michael Crichton's novels, I was unsure as to how this film would perform. I thought it would fall flat on itself and the *Jurassic* series would fade into a footnote. Though despite a few nitpicks, *Jurassic World* proved me wrong on all other levels.

My favorite elements are Pratt and the hybrid antagonist.

Pratt was always going to be my sole motivation for seeing the film. He was the only piece of the puzzle that really interested me, particularly after *Guardians of the Galaxy*

(2014). I worried slightly he might come off a bit too goofy in the film. Pratt is certainly known for his humor, and his goofy side plays well in a film like *Guardians*. To my surprise, however, Pratt was pretty damn serious throughout *Jurassic World*. Grady acts as the voice of reason; the only one living in reality who realizes just what danger the park's visitors are in. And Pratt's level of sincerity shows audiences he can in fact be taken seriously, and this could perhaps pave the way for a new variety of work in his future.

Now, with the I-rex, I found myself smiling and thrilled with relief. For one, the film's best CG animation definitely went toward this creature, as its performance had to be the most convincing of all the featured dinosaurs. But mainly, I was pleased to see how similar the animal was to Crichton's depiction of the Carnotaurus in his 1995 novel *The Lost World*. As a monstrous, carnivorous predator which hides among the jungle using chameleon-like abilities, the Carnotaurus was a dinosaur I wanted to see in a *Jurassic* film for the longest. And while the I-rex is an original creature features portions of Carnotaurus DNA, the animal was closer to a Crichton Carnotaurus in look and behavior than any of the other species used in the mixture. All in all, the I-rex is a fresh and thrilling addition to these films, giving the series new life and reason to stick around for the ride.

The references to the original film are also a joy for fans. As characters stumble through the nature-ridden remains of *Jurassic Park*, viewers get that sense of kinship while knowing full well that they're overall immersed in a different setting, experiencing a different crisis.

I still feel the special effects artists haven't stepped up their game regarding the dinosaurs since *Jurassic Park* and *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*. The over-reliance on CGI had the potential to distract viewers from the rest of the story rather than drawing them into it. But the remaining elements of the film were all executed so well, the choice in effects actually didn't distort the illusion, and that impressed me.

Jurassic World is certainly the largest hit of the summer so far. It's taken the entire world by surprise and will be one for the record books for quite some time. *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* definitely has the potential to steal *Jurassic World*'s spotlight, but I have to admit the competition will be pretty stiff. For now though, *Jurassic World* is THE movie to see this summer, and for any fan of the original film, it's not one to miss.

