

“Crazy Rich Asians” is the top-grossing romantic comedy in 10 years

[Ashley Rodriguez](#)

Quartz, October 1, 2018



Warner Bros.

“Crazy Rich Asians” sated audiences’ hunger for smart, sweet comedy.

US audiences must have been starved for a smart, sweet romantic comedy on the big screen. Jon Chu’s *Crazy Rich Asians*, based on the novel by Kevin Kwan about super-affluent Asian elites, is now the highest-grossing romantic comedy released in the last decade.

The much-hyped romantic comedy, which struck a cord with Asian-American audiences in particular because of its predominantly Asian cast, pulled in more than \$165 million through Sept. 30 at the box office in US and Canada, the world’s largest movie market.

Crazy Rich Asians surpassed both 2009’s *The Proposal*, starring Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds, and 2008’s *Sex and the City* film at the box office, according to industry tracker [Box Office Mojo](#). That makes it now the sixth highest-grossing rom com ever, behind 1998’s *There’s Something About Mary* in fifth place. Globally, the film, which [cost about \\$30 million](#) to make, has earned more than \$218 million.

High-profile romantic comedies have been fewer and farther between in the last decade because of their limited prospects at the box office. The highest-grossing romantic comedy in history, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, earned \$368 million globally in 2002. The big-budget superhero movies, action flicks, and franchises that studios have gravitated toward instead routinely earn far more, and get sequels. This year’s big event films, like *Black Panther*, *Avengers: Infinity War*, and the second *Jurassic*

World movie, each earned more than \$1 billion worldwide. Last year, [fewer romantic comedies hit US cinemas](#) than in any year since 1989, [Box Office Mojo data](#) shows.

Independent studios, cable-TV networks like Lifetime and Hallmark Channel, and streaming services such as Netflix have picked up the slack. Netflix has invested more in romantic comedies with new releases like *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*, *Kissing Booth*, and *Set It Up* hitting the service this year. It says about [two-thirds of its global audience](#) watches the genre.

The streaming platform [reportedly offered](#) a lot of money up-front for *Crazy Rich Asians*, more than studio Warner Bros., but the creators turned the payday down. They felt the movie, the first in Hollywood since 1993's *Joy Luck Club* to [star a majority Asian cast](#), was too important not to be shown on the big screen.

"Here, we have a chance for this gigantic payday instantaneously," *Crazy Rich Asians* author Kevin Kwan told the Hollywood Reporter. "But Jon and I both felt this sense of purpose. We needed this to be an old-fashioned cinematic experience, not for fans to sit in front of a TV and just press a button."

Kwan and director Chu should both feel good about that decision now.