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The Show that demystifies Economics Cinema Industry – part 1

The Beginning©

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The cinema industry, how it all began, which are the most successful films at the box office, who are the most popular actors. We will see all of that starting with a brief history of the motion picture industry!

Moving pictures date back to 1888 with the experimental film “Roundhay Garden Scene”, the earliest motion picture in existence, filmed in Leeds by Louis Le Prince who is considered the “Father of Cinematography”. Although his movies were the first ones made through a single lens camera on paper film, we do have some earlier examples of moving images that were produced in the 1830’s on revolving drums and disks: such as the Zoetrope and the Stroboscope. However, the real beginning of modern film and cinema was in 1885 with Louis and Auguste Lumière, as the two brothers were the first to present moving pictures projected onto a screen to a paying audience.

Of course, over time the technology developed and improved, and films increased in both length and quality. In 1915, they were already able to make close-up shots without moving the camera, and sound appeared at the end of the 1920’s. There already existed certain techniques to colorize film, such as tinting and hand coloring, and additive color and subtractive color methods, but these were expensive and required much further development until color films became commercially viable. The process called “Technicolor” was invented in 1916, and greatly improved over the following decades, and was the most widely used color process in Hollywood between 1922 and 1952. Technicolor’s most advanced form split the three primary colors using specialized prisms onto three separate negatives which would then be printed onto a single gelatin film strip.

Technicolor eventually came up with a single-strip color film, known as Monopack, which was later further developed by Eastman Kodak, and which took off in 1950, with the introduction of Eastmancolor, the first economical 35-mm color negative single-strip film. In the next few years, CinemaScope, an anamorphic lens series enabling the shooting of widescreen films, was introduced, further advancing the industry and cinemas themselves, but was incompatible with the pioneering Technicolor, and the three-strip process became obsolete.

Until relatively recently, film cinematography using single-strip gelatin negative and positive print dominated the motion picture industry, but the current trend towards digital production may eventually make traditional film processes severely outdated.

The development of cinema wouldn’t have been possible without what we today call the Majors, now the Big Six film production companies: Warner Brothers, Walt Disney,

Universal, Columbia Pictures, Paramount Pictures and 20th Century Fox. The oldest companies being Paramount, which was founded in 1912, and 20th Century Fox, established in 1935. Of course, there are many other smaller production studios, known as Indies, or independents. The leading independent distributors are Lions Gate Films and MGM, which used to be among the major group.

When you think of the Cinema industry, the first thing that comes to mind is...well...Hollywood, of course! Famous for its name emblazoned on the Hollywood Hills; it's also known for its place in the entertainment industry, as the home to many theatres, but only one of the major production studios, Paramount, is actually based there. But "Hollywood" is also the name we've adapted to represent the film industry in the United States, which is actually no longer the world's leading producer of films, nor is it in second place. Actually, the US film industry is now third behind Bollywood, the Indian film industry based in Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay, which is officially the largest film industry in the world. The second largest is quite unknown to us westerners, and may come as a surprise: it's known as Nollywood, with the "N" referring to Nigeria. The country's film industry took off in the 1990's and has been growing ever since. In 2013 it was rated as the third most valuable film industry in the world, with total revenue that year of \$10 billion, and it is the second largest employer in Nigeria.