



SPECIALISED FILMS

BFI Research and Statistics

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Image: *Ida* courtesy of Curzon Artificial Eye

SPECIALISED FILMS

SPECIALISED FILMS ARE A VITAL PART OF OUR FILM CULTURE AND OFFER AUDIENCES AN EXPERIENCE OF CINEMA THAT IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM MAINSTREAM COMMERCIAL FARE. IN 2014, THEY MADE UP NEARLY TWO THIRDS OF FILMS RELEASED IN THE UK AND GROSSED OVER £99 MILLION.

FACTS IN FOCUS

- A total of 458 specialised films were released in the UK in 2014 (64% of all films released) earning £99.2 million (9.2% of the total box office).
- Films in 36 different languages (including English) were released in the UK in 2014. Five other releases had no spoken dialogue.
- A total of 255 foreign language films made up 36% of all releases, but shared just 2% of the UK box office.
- Hindi was the top earning non-English language at the UK box office; the highest earning foreign language film was PK (in Hindi) which grossed over £2 million.
- A total of 98 documentary films were released, accounting for 14% of releases but just 0.3% of the total box office.
- There were 49 re-releases (7% of the total), accounting for 0.2% of the overall box office.

ABOUT SPECIALISED FILMS

The BFI considers most feature documentaries, subtitled foreign language films and re-releases of archive/classic films to be specialised. In recent years some mainstream films, which were originally made and shown in 2D, have been 're-released' in the 3D format. Examples include the original *Toy Story* (released in 3D in 2009), *The Lion King* (2011) and *Beauty and the Beast*, *Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace* and *Titanic* (all released in 3D in 2012). These 're-releases' are not considered as specialised films in the present analyses.

Other films that do not fall into the above categories may also be considered as specialised. These films may be less easy to define as a particular genre or may deal with more complex and challenging subject matter than the majority of mainstream films. Many are from the independent production sector (although they may be handled by a mainstream, studio-based distributor) or are made with a low production budget (compared with a studio production). They may focus more on script and character rather than effects and star names and may be expected to appeal to a narrower audience segment than mainstream films. (Non-feature film releases such as recorded live performances are not considered to be specialised; they are categorised as event cinema. For more information, see the Exhibition report.)

SPECIALISED FILMS AT THE UK BOX OFFICE IN 2014

In total, 458 specialised films were released in 2014, representing 64% of all UK theatrical releases in the year (Table 1.1). These films grossed £99.2 million, a 9.2% share of total box office earnings. However, documentaries (0.3%), foreign language films (2.2%) and re-releases (0.2%) took very small shares of total box office revenues.

Table 1.1 Specialised films in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2014

Type	Number of releases	Share of releases (%)	Gross box office (£ million)	Share of gross box office (%)	Average widest point of release
Documentary	98	13.8	3.2	0.3	14
Foreign language	255	35.8	24.0	2.2	19
Re-release	49	6.9	1.8	0.2	32
Other specialised	87	12.2	70.5	6.5	92
All specialised films*	458	64.3	99.2	9.2	34
All films	712	100.0	1,077.8	100.0	110

Source: BFI RSU analysis of Rentrak data

* Due to some overlap of categories (eg a film can be categorised as both foreign language and documentary) this total refers to the number of specialised films, not the sum total of the categories in the table.

An analysis of specialised film releases and market share from 2001 to 2014 is shown in Figure 1.1. The proportion of specialised film releases increased steadily from 2003 to a peak of 69% in 2009, and has stayed between 62% and 67% since then. The box office market share of specialised films has remained close to its average of around 8% apart from three peak years in 2009, 2011 and 2012 when a small number of specialised titles crossed over to mainstream audiences.

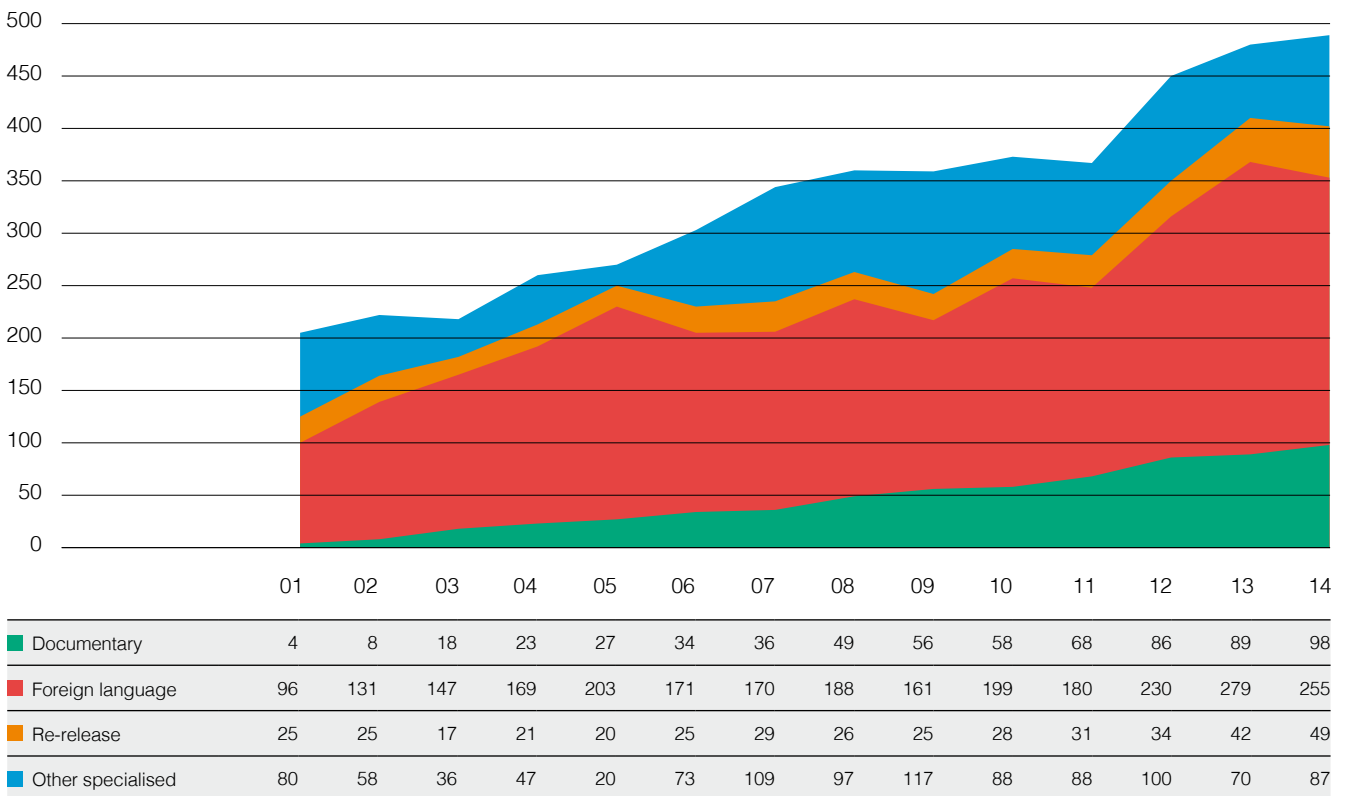
Figure 1.1 Specialised films, 2001-2014 (percentage of releases and market share)



Source: BFI RSU analysis of Rentrak data

By sorting specialised films into the four separate categories mentioned above – documentaries, foreign language films, re-releases and others (films with a distinctive genre, hook or style) – we can better understand the patterns of specialised film distribution over time. As Figure 1.2 shows, there has been a steady increase in the number of theatrically released feature documentaries over the last 14 years – from a low point of four in 2001 to 98 in 2014. The number of foreign language films has also increased over the period, from a low of 96 releases in 2001 to a peak of 279 in 2013. The 255 foreign language films released in 2014 was the second highest number over the period. The number of re-released films tracked by Rentrak each year was usually between 20 and 30 up to 2011, but then increased in 2012, 2013 and 2014. However, the numbers do not include all re-releases, particularly limited or one-off screenings often in independent cinemas. The increase in numbers of re-releases seen since 2011 may partly be explained by the expansion of digital distribution. Finally, the more subjective category of films with an innovative or unconventional approach, genre or style saw numbers decline from 80 in 2001 to a low of 20 in 2005 before rising again to a peak of 117 in 2009. There were 87 releases in this category in 2014.

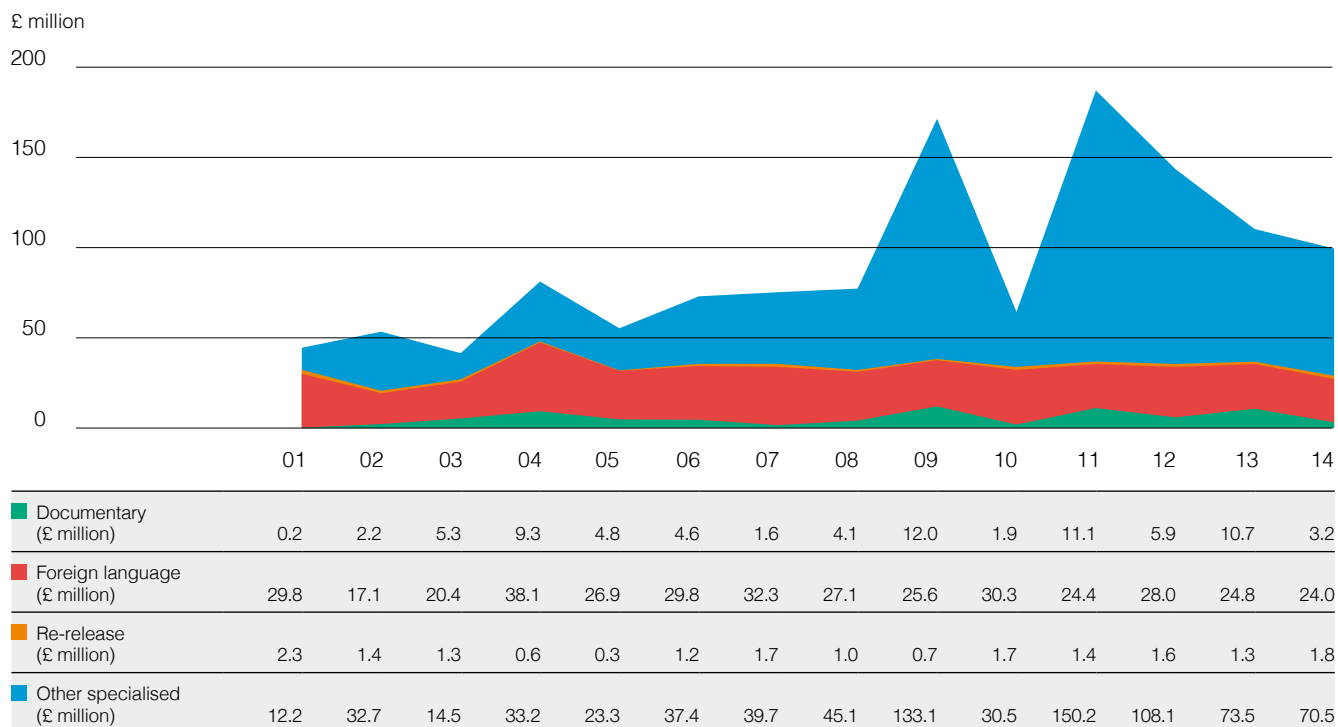
Figure 1.2 Number of specialised releases in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2001-2014



Source: BFI RSU analysis of Rentrak data

The box office performance of specialised films, again split into the four categories of documentaries, foreign language films, re-releases and other films with a distinctive hook, genre or style, is shown in Figure 1.3. Box office revenues for all categories of specialised films are particularly affected by the release of a small number of high earning titles. Over the period 2001-2014, revenues for documentaries have witnessed peaks with the release of a number of break-out titles such as *Fahrenheit 9/11* in 2004, *Michael Jackson's This Is It* in 2009, *Senna* in 2011 and *One Direction: This Is Us* in 2013. Similarly, foreign language film grosses have peaked with the release of titles such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Amélie* in 2001 and *The Passion of the Christ* in 2004. The combined annual revenues for re-releases of archive/classic titles are consistently small, rarely rising above £1.5 million. Finally, the more subjective category of films with distinctive and non-mainstream genres or styles has achieved its highest grosses in years when a few of its titles translated critical acclaim into box office success – *Slumdog Millionaire* in 2009, *The King's Speech* in 2011 and *Life of Pi* in 2012. The top release in this category in 2014 was the winner of the best film award at both the Oscars® and BAFTAs in 2014, *12 Years a Slave*.

Figure 1.3 Box office gross of specialised films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2001-2014



Source: BFI RSU analysis of Rentrak data

NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE FILMS

Films in 36 different languages (including English) were released in the UK and the Republic of Ireland in 2014, four more than in 2013 (Table 1.2). There were also five releases with no spoken dialogue including the American documentary *Visitors* and a re-release of Buster Keaton's 1927 classic, *The General*.

After English, the most common language, in terms of number of releases, was French followed by the South Asian languages Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam. Hindi was again the top non-English language at the box office by value, with a 1.2% share of revenues, followed by French (0.2%) and Tamil (0.2%).

Table 1.2 Languages of films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2014 (ranked by gross box office)

Main language	Number of releases	Gross box office (£ million)	Box office share (%)
English	374	845.3	78.4
English with others*	78	208.5	19.3
Hindi	46	12.9	1.2
French	48	2.5	0.2
Tamil	32	1.7	0.2
Punjabi	18	1.7	0.2
Indonesian	1	1.1	0.1
Polish	6	0.8	0.1
Malayalam	22	0.7	0.1
Swedish	3	0.6	0.1
Russian	4	0.5	0.1
Turkish	12	0.4	<0.1
Norwegian	5	0.3	<0.1
Danish	2	0.2	<0.1
Spanish	5	0.1	<0.1
Italian	5	0.1	<0.1
Arabic	8	0.1	<0.1
German	7	0.1	<0.1
Urdu	2	0.1	<0.1
Japanese	8	0.1	<0.1
Icelandic	1	<0.1	<0.1
Bengali	2	<0.1	<0.1
Lao	1	<0.1	<0.1
Telegu	2	<0.1	<0.1
Nepalese	1	<0.1	<0.1
Farsi	2	<0.1	<0.1
Portuguese	1	<0.1	<0.1
Georgian	1	<0.1	<0.1
Greek	2	<0.1	<0.1
Filipino	1	<0.1	<0.1
Bosnian	1	<0.1	<0.1
Hebrew	1	<0.1	<0.1
Belarussian	1	<0.1	<0.1
Albanian	1	<0.1	<0.1
Creole	1	<0.1	<0.1
Korean	1	<0.1	<0.1
Tibetan	1	<0.1	<0.1
Silent/no dialogue	5	0.1	<0.1
Total	712	1,077.8	100.0

Source: Rentrak, BBFC, IMDb, BFI RSU analysis

* 'English with others' includes films whose main language was English but with extensive use of other languages, such as *Godzilla* in English and Japanese and *Pride* in English and Welsh.

The 35 non-English languages were spread over 255 releases in the UK and Republic of Ireland (36% of all releases, down four percentage points on 2013) which earned £24 million at the box office (Table 1.3). This represented 2.2% of the total gross box office for 2014.

Table 1.3 Foreign language films at the UK and Republic of Ireland box office, 2002-2014

	Number	% of all releases	Box office (£ million)	% of total gross box office
2002	131	35.5	17.1	2.2
2003	147	34.7	20.4	2.5
2004	169	37.5	38.1	4.6
2005	203	43.5	26.9	3.2
2006	171	33.9	29.8	3.5
2007	170	32.9	32.3	3.5
2008	188	35.7	27.1	2.9
2009	161	32.0	25.6	2.3
2010	199	35.7	30.3	3.0
2011	180	32.3	24.4	2.2
2012	230	35.5	28.0	2.4
2013	279	40.0	24.8	2.2
2014	255	35.8	24.0	2.2

Source: Rentrak, BBFC, IMDb, BFI RSU analysis

Note: Figures as at 22 February 2015.

Films in European languages other than English earned 0.5% of the gross box office from 14.6% of releases and South Asian subcontinent languages shared 1.6% of the box office from 17.4% of releases (Table 1.4). Taken together, foreign language films were shown on average at 17 sites at their widest point of release (19 in 2013) compared with an average of 162 sites for English language releases.

Table 1.4 Language of releases in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2014 (ranked by number of releases)

Main language	Number of releases	% of releases	Gross box office (£ million)	% of gross box office	Average sites at widest point of release
English and English with others*	452	63.6	1,053.8	97.8	162
South Asian subcontinent	124	17.4	17.1	1.6	25
European other than English	105	14.6	5.6	0.5	13
Other Asian	14	2.0	0.1	<0.1	8
Other international	12	1.7	1.2	0.1	23
Silent/no dialogue	5	0.7	0.1	<0.1	6
Total	712	100.0	1,077.8	100.0	110

Source: Rentrak, BBFC, IMDb, BFI RSU analysis

Notes:

* See note to Table 1.2.

Figures as at 22 February 2015.

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 1.5 shows the top 10 earning non-Hindi foreign language films of 2014. At number one in this list is Indonesian film *The Raid 2*, which took just under £1.1 million at the UK and Republic of Ireland box office. However, this film was only the fifth highest earning foreign language release in 2014 after four Hindi language titles. Another successful foreign language release in 2014 was *The Wind Rises*, but as it was released in both English and Japanese language versions, it is not included in the list.

Four of the top earning films in the list were in other South Asian languages: there were three films in Tamil (the most popular language in the top 10) and one in Punjabi. The Punjabi language film, *Chaar Sahibzaade* is the first non-Japanese animated feature to appear in this list since our records began. Five of the films were in European languages with French appearing twice in the list.

Table 1.5 Top 10 foreign language films (excluding Hindi*) released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2014

Title	Country of origin	Gross box office (£ million)	Distributor	Main language
1 <i>The Raid 2</i>	Indonesia/USA	1.1	eOne Films	Indonesian
2 <i>Chaar Sahibzaade</i>	Ind	0.8	Dharam Seva Films	Punjabi
3 <i>Two Days, One Night</i>	Bel/Fra/Ita	0.7	Curzon Artificial Eye	French
4 <i>Ida</i>	Pol/Den	0.5	Curzon Artificial Eye	Polish
5 <i>The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared</i>	Swe/Croatia	0.4	StudioCanal	Swedish
6 <i>Yves Saint Laurent</i>	Fra/Bel	0.4	eOne Films	French
7 <i>Kaththi</i>	Ind	0.3	Ayngaran	Tamil
8 <i>Leviathan</i>	Russia	0.3	Curzon Artificial Eye	Russian
9 <i>Lingaa</i>	Ind	0.3	Qube Entertainment	Tamil
10 <i>Jilla</i>	Ind	0.2	Ayngaran	Tamil

Source: Rentrak, BBFC, IMDb, BFI RSU analysis

Notes:

* For Hindi titles, see Table 1.6.

Figures as at 22 February 2015.

Table 1.6 shows the top 10 film releases of 2014 whose principal language is Hindi. At the top of the list is comedy PK, with box office takings of nearly £2.4 million. The top four films in the list were also the top four foreign language films of 2014, and all took more than £1 million at the box office.

Table 1.6 Top 10 Hindi language films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2014

	Title	Country of origin	UK box office total (£ million)	Distributor
1	PK	Ind	2.4	UTV/IG Interactive
2	Happy New Year	Ind	1.3	Yash Raj Films
3	Kick	Ind	1.3	UTV Motion Pictures
4	Bang Bang	Ind	1.2	20th Century Fox
5	2 States	Ind	0.5	UTV Motion Pictures
6	The Lunchbox	Ind/Fra/Ger	0.5	Curzon Artificial Eye
7	Jai Ho	Ind	0.5	Eros International
8	Gunday	Ind	0.4	Yash Raj Films
9	Khoobsurat	Ind	0.4	UTV/IG Interactive
10	Singham Returns	Ind	0.4	Eros International

Source: Rentrak, BBFC, IMDb, BFI RSU analysis

Note: Figures as at 22 February 2015.

Table 1.7 shows the 10 highest grossing non-English language films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland between 2001 and 2014. The top film is the 2004 release *The Passion of the Christ* (£11.1 million), followed by *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (£9.4 million) which was released in 2001. The most recent release in the list is *Dhoom: 3* which earned £2.7 million in 2013.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon is one of three Mandarin language films in the list, all of them wuxia martial arts films, which reflects the popularity of the genre with UK audiences in the early 2000s. There are also three Spanish language films in the list (two from Spain and one from South America), and one French language title. *Dhoom: 3* is the first film in Hindi to appear in the top 10 since our records began.

Table 1.7 Top 10 non-English language films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2001-2014

	Title	Language	UK box office total (£ million)	Distributor	Year of release
1	The Passion of the Christ	Aramaic/Latin/Hebrew	11.1	Icon	2004
2	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Mandarin	9.4	Sony Pictures	2001
3	Amélie	French/Russian	5.0	Momentum	2001
4	Apocalypto	Mayan	4.1	Icon	2007
5	Hero	Mandarin	3.8	Walt Disney	2004
6	House of Flying Daggers	Mandarin	3.8	Pathé	2004
7	Volver	Spanish	2.9	Pathé	2006
8	The Motorcycle Diaries	Spanish	2.8	Pathé	2004
9	Pan's Labyrinth	Spanish	2.7	Optimum	2006
10	Dhoom: 3	Hindi	2.7	Yash Raj Films	2013

Source: Rentrak, BFI RSU analysis

DOCUMENTARIES

A total of 98 feature documentaries were released at the UK box office in 2014, representing 14% of theatrical releases. They earned £3.2 million which was 0.3% of the overall box office gross. We have split our analysis of this category into the more traditional expository or observational style of documentary and 'concert' documentaries, which feature coverage of a particular performance and behind-the-scenes footage of popular musical performers. The most successful non-concert documentary of the year was the Nick Cave film, *20,000 Days on Earth*, which earned £0.6 million.

Table 1.8 shows the top 20 non-concert documentaries at the UK box office since 2001. The highest grossing non-concert documentary of all time at the UK box office, Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*, grossed £6.6 million in 2004, while 2011 release *Senna* is in second place with £3.2 million. Nine of the top 20 non-concert documentaries since 2001 are UK films.

Table 1.8 Top 20 non-concert feature documentaries released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2001-2014

Title	Country of origin	Year of release	Box office gross (£ million)	Widest point of release (sites)	Distributor
1 <i>Fahrenheit 9/11</i>	USA	2004	6.6	200	Optimum
2 <i>Senna</i>	UK	2011	3.2	358	Universal
3 <i>March of the Penguins</i>	Fra	2005	3.1	163	Warner Bros
4 <i>Touching the Void</i>	UK	2003	2.6	50	Pathé
5 <i>Bowling for Columbine</i>	USA	2002	1.7	37	Momentum
6 <i>TT3D: Closer to the Edge</i>	UK	2011	1.3	125	CinemaNX
7 <i>The Imposter</i>	UK/USA	2012	1.1	77	Picturehouse /Revolver
8 <i>Super Size Me</i>	USA	2004	1.1	83	Tartan
9 <i>Marley</i>	UK/Jam/USA	2012	1.0	333	Universal
10 <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i>	USA	2006	0.9	68	Paramount
11 <i>Man on Wire</i>	UK/USA	2008	0.9	43	Icon
12 <i>Être et Avoir</i>	Fra	2003	0.7	15	Tartan
13 <i>Pina</i>	Ger/Fra	2011	0.7	26	Artificial Eye
14 <i>Cave of Forgotten Dreams</i>	UK/Can/Fra/Ger/USA	2011	0.6	39	Picturehouse
15 <i>20,000 Days on Earth</i>	UK	2014	0.6	33	Picturehouse
16 <i>Spellbound</i>	USA	2003	0.5	17	Metrodome
17 <i>The September Issue</i>	USA	2009	0.4	18	Momentum
18 <i>Capturing the Friedmans</i>	USA	2004	0.4	26	Tartan
19 <i>Searching for Sugar Man</i>	UK	2012	0.4	43	StudioCanal
20 <i>Sicko</i>	USA	2007	0.4	166	Optimum

Source: BFI RSU analysis of Rentrak data

Notes:

The table does not include concert performance documentaries, IMAX-only documentaries and shorts.

Based on box office data for 2001-2014.

Fahrenheit 9/11 is regarded as the highest grossing feature documentary of all time because, even with price inflation, it is unlikely that any documentary films before 2001 will have earned more in nominal terms.

A number of concert performance documentaries, mostly now in 3D, are released theatrically every year. Table 1.9 shows the top 10 documentaries in this category from 2008-2014. The highest grossing title released during the period is *Michael Jackson's This Is It*, which earned £9.8 million in 2009. No 2014 releases appear in the chart (the highest earning concert performance film in the UK in 2014 was *One Direction: Where We Are* which is categorised by Rentrak as event cinema).

Table 1.9 Top 10 concert documentaries released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2008-2014

Title	Country of origin	Year of release	Box office gross (£ million)	Widest point of release (sites)	Distributor
1 Michael Jackson's This Is It	USA	2009	9.8	498	Sony Pictures
2 One Direction: This Is Us	UK/USA	2013	8.0	479	Sony Pictures
3 Justin Bieber: Never Say Never	USA	2011	2.3	388	Paramount
4 Katy Perry: Part of Me	USA	2012	1.2	326	Paramount
5 Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert	USA	2008	0.8	65	Walt Disney
6 U2 3D	USA	2008	0.7	67	Revolver
7 Glee: The 3D Concert Movie	USA	2011	0.7	335	20th Century Fox
8 Shine a Light	USA/UK	2008	0.7	159	20th Century Fox
9 JLS: Eyes Wide Open 3D	UK	2011	0.5	210	Omniverse
10 The Stone Roses: Made of Stone	UK	2013	0.5	83	Picturehouse

Source: BFI RSU analysis of Rentrak data

RE-RELEASES

In 2014, 49 archive/classic titles were re-released. According to Rentrak these re-releases accounted for 7% of theatrical releases in 2014 and generated £1.8 million (0.2% of the total gross box office). However, not all box office revenues for re-releases are tracked by Rentrak, which primarily focuses on first-run films. Some additional revenue for films, which tend to be booked for a limited time into specialised cinemas long after their initial release, is missing from this analysis, so the actual box office share is likely to be greater.

Table 1.10 shows the top 20 specialised re-releases at UK cinemas over the last 15 years. Two of the films in the list appear twice, following second re-releases in 2014. *2001: A Space Odyssey* appears at number eight from its 2014 re-release (as part of the BFI's Sci-fi season) and at number 11 from its 2001 re-release. *Ghostbusters* is at number 18 from its 30th anniversary 2014 re-release and at number 20 from its 2011 re-release. The dual appearance of *2001: A Space Odyssey* means that director Stanley Kubrick has four entries in the chart including the all time top classic re-release, *A Clockwork Orange*, which grossed £2.1 million in 2000 (his other top 20 re-release is *The Shining* in 2012). Two other classic re-releases have grossed over £1 million – Steven Spielberg's 20th anniversary re-release of *E.T.* and the 25th anniversary re-release of sci-fi comedy *Back to the Future* in 2010.

Table 1.10 Top 20 re-releases at the UK and Republic of Ireland box office, 2000-2014

	Title (year of original release)	Country of origin	Year of re-release	Box office gross (£ million)	Widest point of release (sites)	Distributor
1	A Clockwork Orange (1972)	UK	2000	2.1	328	Warner Bros
2	E.T. (20th anniversary) (1982)	USA	2002	2.1	313	UIP
3	Back to the Future (25th anniversary) (1985)	USA	2010	1.1	273	Universal
4	Alien (Director's Cut) (1979)	UK/USA	2003	0.5	134	20th Century Fox
5	Jurassic Park (1993)	USA	2011	0.5	277	Universal
6	Apocalypse Now (Redux) (1979)	USA	2001	0.5	22	Walt Disney
7	Jaws (1975)	USA	2012	0.4	319	Universal
8	2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)	UK/USA	2014	0.4	60	BFI
9	The Leopard (1963)	Ita/Fra	2003	0.3	5	BFI
10	It's a Wonderful Life (1946)	USA	2007	0.3	33	Park Circus
11	2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)	UK/USA	2001	0.3	4	Warner Bros
12	Breakfast at Tiffany's (1961)	USA	2001	0.3	5	BFI
13	The Shining (1980)	UK/USA	2012	0.2	29	BFI
14	Chariots of Fire (1981)	UK	2012	0.2	149	20th Century Fox
15	À bout de souffle (1960)	Fra	2000	0.2	5	Optimum
16	This Is Spinal Tap (1984)	USA	2000	0.2	22	Optimum
17	Ghostbusters (30th anniversary) (1984)	USA	2014	0.1	155	Park Circus
18	Amadeus (Director's Cut) (1984)	USA	2002	0.1	8	Warner Bros
19	Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)	USA	2012	0.1	15	Paramount
20	Ghostbusters (1984)	USA	2011	0.1	73	Park Circus

Source: BFI RSU analysis of Rentrak data



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