

Barbie-ism

Beyond the Plastic Dream

1959

Barbie made her debut at the American International Toy Fair in New York City in 1959.

Barbie was borned as the first adult body doll to allow little girls to imagine as itself to anything they want. She presented new ideas about women breaking the traditional gender roles. People was obsessed with Barbie and as a result 300 hundred Barbies were sold in the first year.

(Roxane Schlumberger, 2023)



1959 First Barbie (BarbieMedia.com, n.d.)

1970s

Behind the Scene

- Barbie receiving cultural criticism by the ongoing second wave feminism.
 - women as a “object” , sexist advertising

Reconstruction of Barbie

- Flatter feet and removal of submissive features
- Investment of 2 million dollars to make “athlete of the year” Barbie of the Winter Olympics

Barbie was chosen for the “America’s Time Capsule”

(Rogers, 1995) (Tulinski, 2017)



1992 Barbie Running for President (BarbieMedia.com, n.d.)



1992 Totally Hair Barbie (BarbieMedia.com, n.d.)

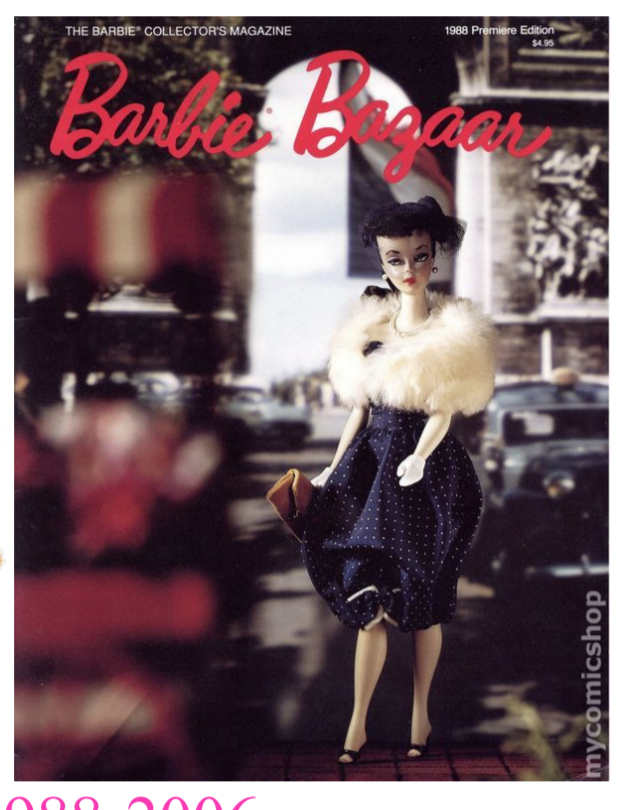
1980s

Behind the Scene

- New Traditionalism
 - Ronald Reagan presidency
 - Conservative critics on feminism
 - Domestication of Barbie
- ex) clearing, nursing little sister, Kelly
- ←”Sweet Rose” furnitures/ cooking counter



1980 1st Black and Hispanic Dolls Named Barbie (BarbieMedia.com, n.d.)



1988-2006 Barbie Bazaar Magazine (MyComicShop, n.d.)



1985 “We Girls Can Do Anything” (BarbieMedia.com, n.d.)



1986 Andy Warhol paintings American icon (BarbieMedia.com, n.d.)

Globalization of Industry

- Last domestic plant closed in 1987
- Market segmentation to avoid critique
- National Barbie convention, General collectors club



1989 Army Officer Barbie (BarbieMedia.com, n.d.)



1989 Pilot Barbie (BarbieMedia.com, n.d.)

Symbolism

- Barbie as American icon in painting
- Not planned by Mattel

(Tulinski, 2017) (Pearson & Mullins, 1999)

1990s - 2000s

Mattel

- Licencing agreement with Disney
- Estimated average doll per house: 8 in mid-1990s
- Globalization of Barbie
 - ex) Musee Grevin in Paris (1993)
- “Be Anything” campaign in 1990
- In 1996, 1.7 billion in sales, 40% of total revenue
- TV campaigns and advertisements in female magazines
- “Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus” film series
- ←Barbie entering princess culture (Tulinski, 2017) (Pearson & Mullins, 1999)
- Teenagers attracted to iphone/gmae



2015 Barbie Vlogger on Youtube (BarbieMedia.com, n.d.)

2023

Plot

Barbie and Ken are living in the wonderful and perfect land of Barbie land. However, when forced to go to the real world, they discover the joy and hardship of living as humans.

Themes

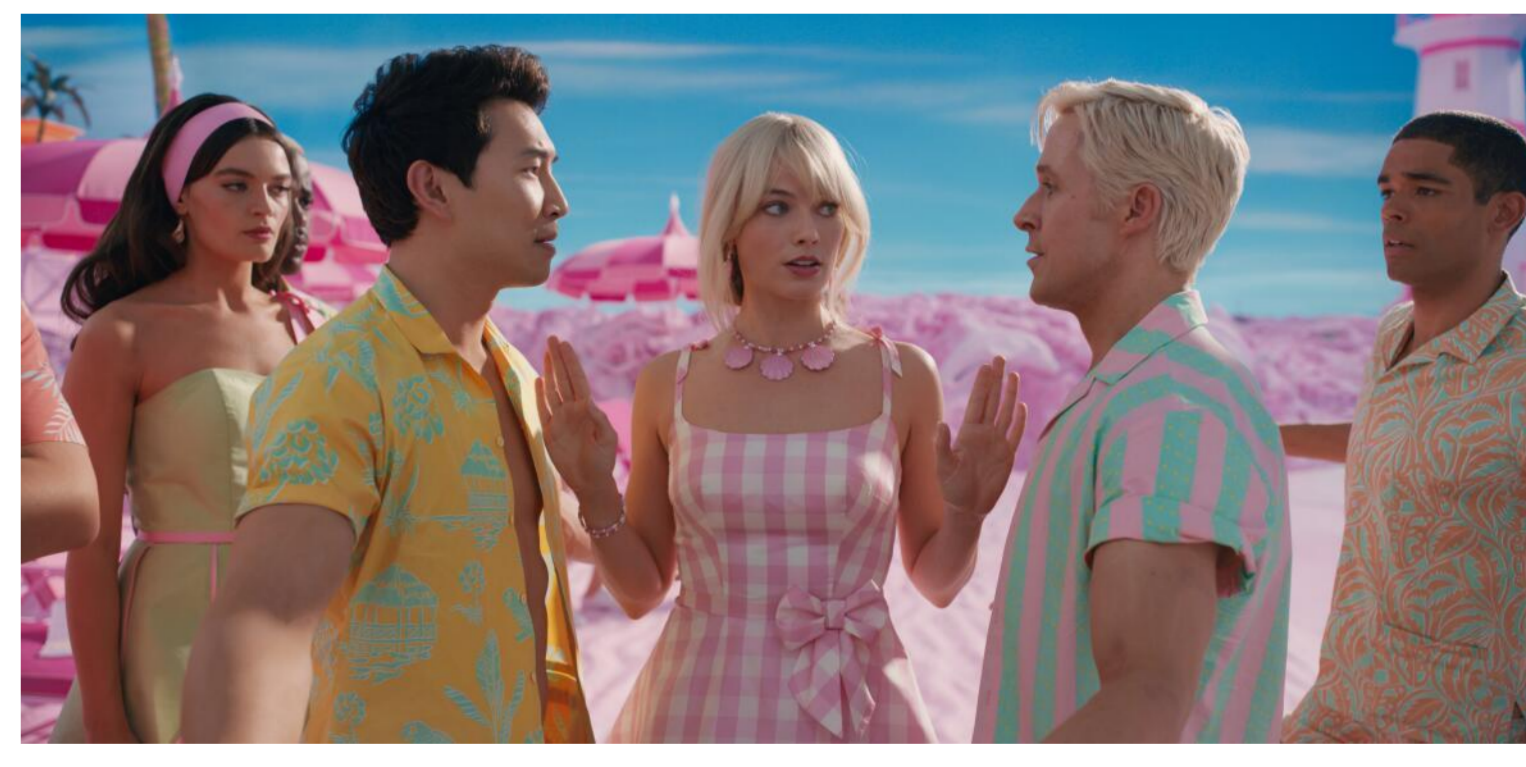
- Feminsim
 - Empowerment
 - Gender Equality
 - Societal Pressure
- Diversity
 - Race
 - Gender
 - Body Type
- Identity
 - Masculinity
 - Gender roles

Sales

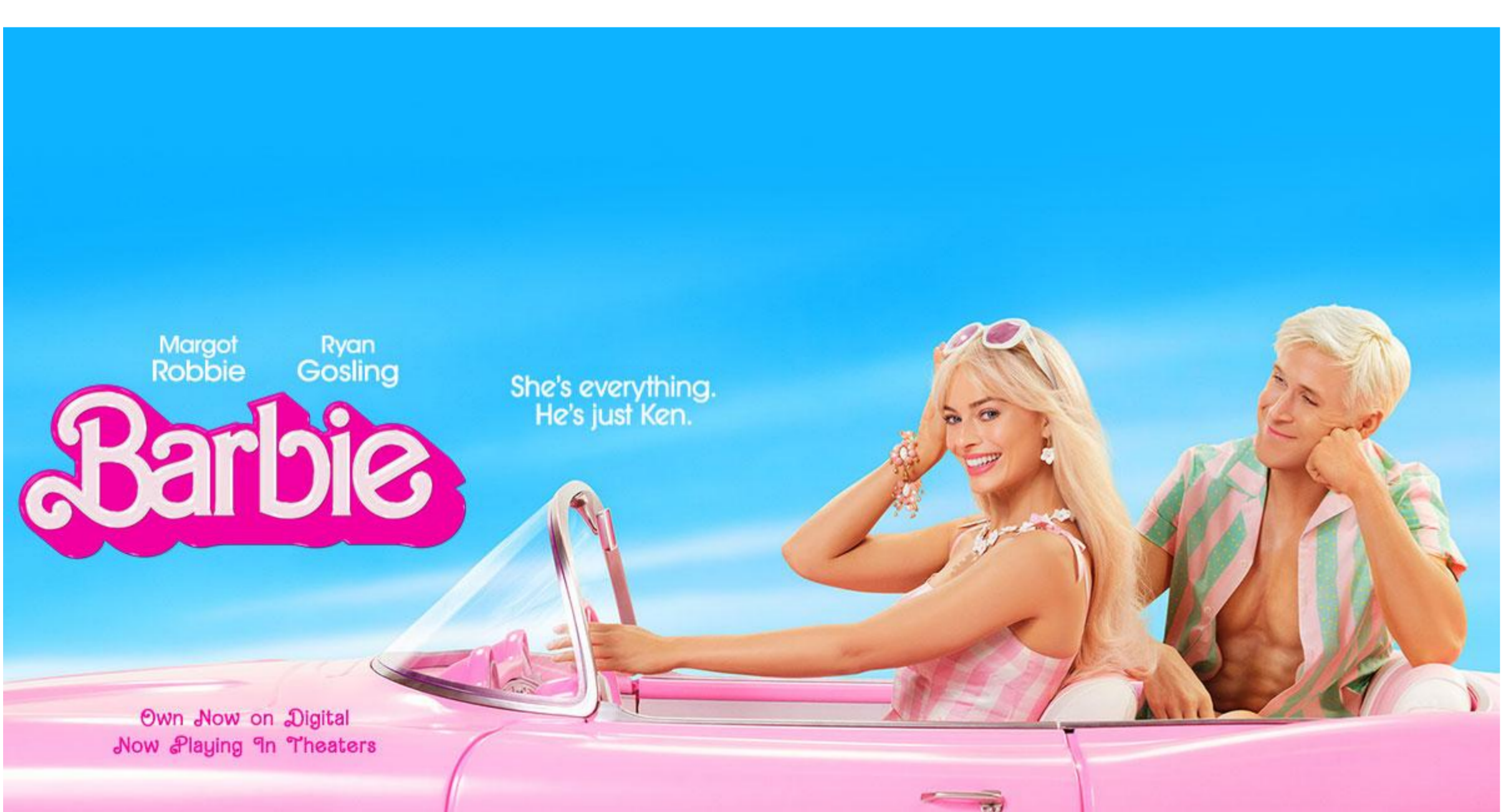
- Grossed \$1.44 billion
 - 14th highest grossing film of all time
- Barbie toy sales increased 25% since the release of the movie
 - During the two months of July-August, 2023 (Kavilanz, 2023)

Public’s Reaction

- Barbie Pandemic
 - Wearing all pink to watch the movie
 - Fluorescent pink themed goods everywhere (Harris, 2023)

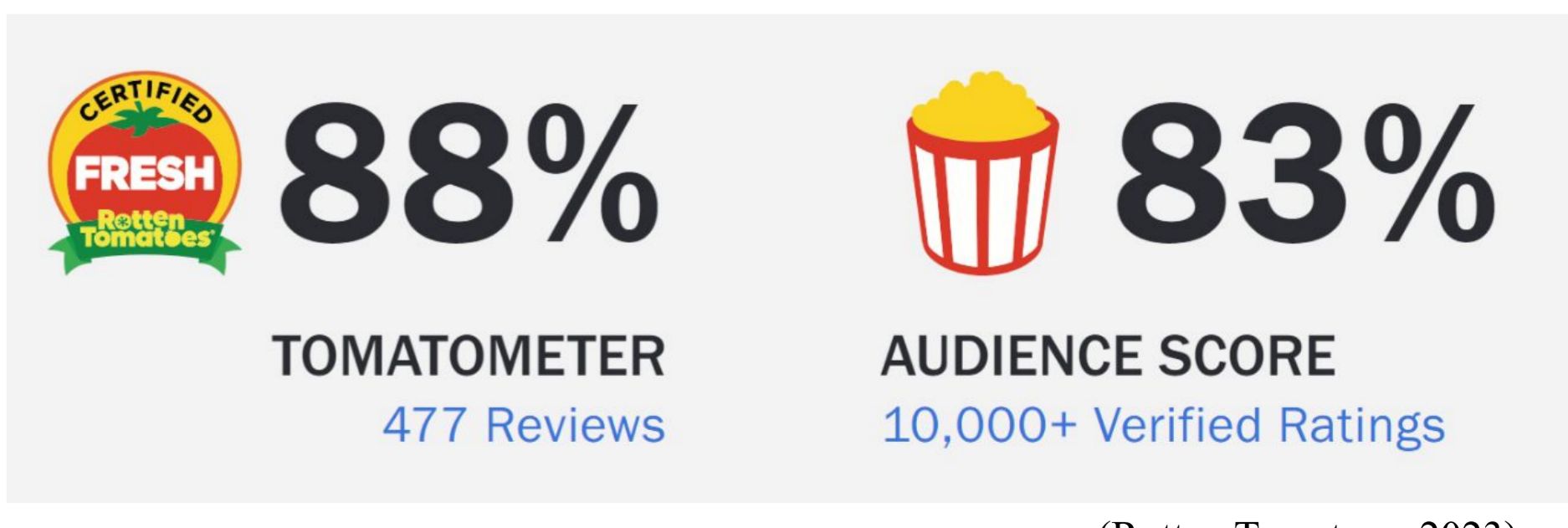


(Warner Bros, 2023)



Released on 21st of July 2023 (US) (Warner Bros, 2023)

Not “Just a Doll” Vehicle for More



(Rotten Tomatoes, 2023)

References

BarbieMedia.com. (n.d.). Barbie. Barbie. <https://www.barbiemedia.com/timeline.html>

Harris, A. (2023). Barbie review: Sometimes corporate propaganda can be fun as hell. <https://www.npr.org/2023/07/19/1188370123/barbie-review>

Kavilanz, P. (2023). Barbie toy sales shoot up 25% after film's release. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/13/business/barbie-toy-sales-circana/index.html>

MyComicShop. (n.d.). Barbie bazaar (1988-2006 Murat Caviale communications) Barbie collector magazine comic books. Comic Books: Buy, Sell, Trade, Consign, Collect | MyComicShop. <https://www.mycomicshop.com/search?TID=51552581>

Pearson, M., & Mullins, P. R. (1999). Domesticating Barbie: An archaeology of Barbie material culture and domestic ideology. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 3(4), 225-258. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:102251600>

Rogers, Mary F. 1999. Barbie Culture. London: SAGE Publications.

Rotten Tomatoes. (2023). Barbie. <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/barbie>

Schlumberger, R. (Director). (2023). The Barbie Story. [Film]. Entertain Me Productions Ltd.

Tulinski, H. R. (2017). Barbie as cultural compass: Embodiment, representation, and resistance surrounding the world's most iconized doll [Master's thesis]. http://crossworks.holycross.edu/soe_student_scholarship/1