

Culture Pop

Barbieheimer

The merging of two unlikely films proves that genre choice shouldn't define us

the**lab**



Why a plan to pit the two films against **each other backfired**

This week two of the most talked about films Barbie and Oppenheimer released in Australia. But the success of both films wasn't planned this way...

Christopher Nolan, the director of Oppenheimer, had had a previous relationship with Warner Bros. However he recently decided to part ways with the distributor due to their focus on streaming platforms. In an alleged act of revenge, it is rumoured that Warner Bros decided to release its film, Barbie, on the same date as Oppenheimer.

But this backfired on Warner Bros with a growing online movement for cinemagoers to see a double-feature of the films. Then came the merchandise, the memes, the trailer mash ups and the TikToks.



(images: Twitter, YouTube)



trish
@ULTRAGLOSS

people seeing barbie first are wild. the schedule needs to be
black coffee and a cigarette
oppenheimer around 11 (its 3 hours)
mimosas and brunch
barbie around 6/7
dinner, drinks, club



R BBIE
@R0BB1_3

Fuck astrology are you a Barbenheimer (seeing Barbie before Oppenheimer) or an Oppenharbie (seeing Barbie after Oppenheimer), it says a lot about a person!



How this
phenomenon
plays into the
Reactance Theory

You can't put me in a [Barbie] box **I'll enjoy both [bomb]shell films if I want to**

Proposed by Jack Brehm in 1966, **Reactance Theory** explores how people react to threats to their freedom. We have a fundamental need for freedom and autonomy and when we feel those freedoms are threatened we may rebel through subversive acts.

These acts can range from a child eating something they were told not to, to an employee working less after being reprimanded by their boss.

When Warner Bros and the internet initially tried to create a rivalry between the two films, it became clear that people didn't want to be restricted to a preference for just one film.

Despite the films different aesthetics and subjects both are created by excellent storytellers. And audiences wanted to challenge the established norms of being just a Gerwig/Indie film fan or Nolan/Drama film fan. Demonstrating that you can love and appreciate both.



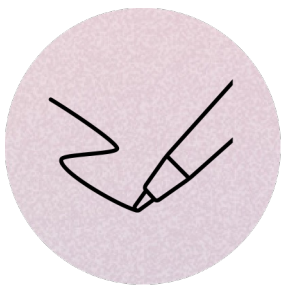
(images: Twitter, Reddit)

“It’s the best
kind of friendly
competition.
Because I think
no matter what,
cinema wins”

Simu Liu (who plays one of the Kens) at the Barbie premiere in London,
12th July 2023

the**lab**

What can this mean for brands?



Subvert the category norms. Sometimes your brand doesn't always have to follow the category tropes or expectations. Play on these stereotypes and look for ways you can create distinction.



Don't restrict your customers to their love for just one thing/product. What are some **interesting and unlikely crossovers** you could uncover and use in comms or marketing?



Have **fun with rivalries**. For example Aldi is known for always having a laugh at their knock off Tesco products. What brand rivalries do you have that could eventuate into successful collaborations?

The background of the entire image is a dark, deep teal color. Scattered across this background are several pieces of white, textured material that resemble ice or crumpled paper. These pieces are layered and torn at the edges, creating a sense of depth and movement. One large, prominent piece is in the lower right, while others are smaller and more fragmented in the upper left and top center. The overall effect is that of an iceberg floating in dark water, with only the tip visible above the surface.

Stay ahead of change

the**lab**

Get in touch to learn more:
hello@thelabstrategy.com