

Avatar: The Way of Water

Avatar: The Way of Water is a 2022 American epic science fiction film directed and co-produced by James Cameron, who co-wrote the screenplay with Rick Jaffa and Amanda Silver from a story the trio wrote with Josh Friedman and Shane Salerno. Distributed by 20th Century Studios, it is the sequel to *Avatar* (2009) and the second installment in the *Avatar* film series. It features Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldaña, and Stephen Lang reprising their roles from the first film, with Sigourney Weaver returning in an additional role^[6] and Kate Winslet joining the cast. It follows a blue-skinned humanoid Na'vi named Jake Sully (Worthington) as he and his family, under renewed human threat, seek refuge with the aquatic Metkayina clan of Pandora, a habitable exomoon on which they live.

Cameron said in 2006 that he would like to make sequels to *Avatar* if it were successful, and he announced the first two sequels in 2010, following the widespread success of the first film, with the first sequel aiming for a 2014 release.^{[7][8]} However, the addition of two more sequels, for a total of five *Avatar* films, and the necessity to develop new technology to film performance capture scenes underwater, a feat never accomplished before, led to significant delays to allow the crew more time to work on the writing, preproduction, and visual effects.^[9] The filming process, which occurred simultaneously with a currently untitled third film, began in Manhattan Beach, California, on August 15, 2017. The filming location moved to Wellington on September 25, 2017, which ended in late September 2020 after three years of shooting. With an estimated budget of \$350–460 million, the film is one of the most expensive films ever made.

After repeated delays in release, *Avatar: The Way of Water* premiered at the Odeon Luxe Leicester Square in London on December 6, 2022, and was released in the United States on December 16. The film received generally positive reviews from critics, who praised the visual effects and technical achievements but criticized the plot and lengthy runtime.^[10] It was a major box office success, breaking multiple records, and grossing \$2.320 billion worldwide, making it the highest-grossing film of 2022, the highest-grossing film since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the third-highest-grossing film of all time. The National Board of Review and the American Film

Avatar: The Way of Water



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<u>James Cameron</u>
Screenplay by	<u>James Cameron</u> <u>Rick Jaffa</u> <u>Amanda Silver</u>
Story by	<u>James Cameron</u> <u>Rick Jaffa</u> <u>Amanda Silver</u> <u>Josh Friedman</u> <u>Shane Salerno</u>
Produced by	<u>James Cameron</u> <u>Jon Landau</u>
Starring	<u>Sam Worthington</u> <u>Zoe Saldaña</u> <u>Sigourney Weaver</u> <u>Stephen Lang</u> <u>Kate Winslet</u>
Cinematography	<u>Russell Carpenter</u>
Edited by	<u>Stephen Rivkin</u>

Institute named *The Way of Water* one of the top-ten films of 2022. Among its many accolades, the film was nominated for four awards at the 95th Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and won for Best Visual Effects. Three further sequels are in production, with the next film set to be released in December 2025.

Plot

Sixteen years after the Na'vi repelled the Resources Development Administration (RDA) from Pandora,^[a] Jake Sully lives as chief of the Omatikaya clan and raises his family with Neytiri, consisting of two sons Neteyam and Lo'ak, his daughter Tuktirey, and adopted daughter Kiri (born from Dr. Grace Augustine's inert avatar). Miles "Spider" Socorro, son of the late Colonel Miles Quaritch, frequently visits their children while being raised by human scientists who stayed on Pandora.

The RDA returns to colonize Pandora. Among their ranks are Recombinants, Na'vi avatars implanted with the memories of deceased human soldiers, with a recombinant Quaritch as their leader. Jake leads a guerilla campaign against the RDA occupation. During a counterinsurgency mission, Quaritch and his subordinates capture Jake's children. Jake and Neytiri arrive and free them, but Quaritch manages to capture Spider, subsequently recognizing him as his son. After the RDA unsuccessfully interrogates Spider for additional information, Quaritch decides to spend time with Spider to gain his favor. In return, Spider teaches Quaritch about Na'vi culture and language.

Aware of the danger posed by Spider's knowledge, Jake and his family relocate themselves from the Omatikaya to Pandora's eastern sea, inhabited by the Metkayina clan. There, the family assimilates with the Metkayina: Kiri develops a spiritual bond with the sea, Jake and Neytiri assist Chief Tonowari and his wife Ronal, while Lo'ak befriends Tsireya, their daughter. Following an altercation between Tonowari's and Jake's sons after the former mocked Kiri, Lo'ak apologizes at Jake's insistence due to initiating the fight. Aonung, Tonowari's eldest son, and his friends then entice Lo'ak to a hunting trip, stranding him in a sea predator's territory. Lo'ak is saved from the predator by Payakan, a Tulkun—an intelligent and pacifist whale-like species whom the Metkayina consider their spiritual brethren—and befriends Payakan. Upon his return, Lo'ak wins Aonung's friendship by accepting blame for the trip but is told that Payakan is an outcast. Later, Kiri links to the Metkayina's underwater Spirit Tree and meets Grace in a vision but suffers a seizure during the link-induced trance and nearly drowns. Jake summons Norm Spellman and Max Patel for help, diagnosing Kiri with epilepsy and warn that she cannot connect to the Spirit Tree again.

Eventually, Ronal heals Kiri, while Quaritch tracks Norm and Max's aircraft to the Metkayni's archipelago. Bringing Spider with him, Quaritch joins forces with the RDA's marine operations and commandeers a whaling vessel hunting Tulkuns. Quaritch's squads begins raiding the archipelago but fail to find Jake after

	<u>David Brenner</u> <u>John Refoua</u> James Cameron
Music by	<u>Simon Franglen</u>
Production companies	<u>TSG Entertainment</u> <u>II</u> <u>Lightstorm</u> <u>Entertainment</u>
Distributed by	<u>20th Century</u> <u>Studios</u>
Release dates	December 6, 2022 (<u>Odeon Luxe</u> <u>Leicester Square</u>) December 16, 2022 (United States)
Running time	192 minutes ^[1]
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$350– 460 million ^{[2][3]}
Box office	\$2.320 billion ^{[4][5]}

interrogating various tribes. He decides to massacre villages and kill Tulkuns in order to draw Jake out. Lo'ak mentally links with Payakan and learns he was cast out because he attacked human whalers who killed his mother, resulting in many Tulkun casualties.

When the Metkayina learns of the Tulkun killings, Lo'ak goes to warn Payakan, followed by his siblings and friends. Finding Payakan being hunted, Quaritch captures Lo'ak, Tsireya, and Tuktirey. Jake, Neytiri, and the Metkayina then confront the humans and rescue the kids. Quaritch forces Jake to surrender, but Payakan attacks the vessel, initiating a battle between the Metkayina and the humans. Spider cripples the vessel, while Neteyam rescues Lo'ak, Tsireya, and Spider, but is fatally shot by one of Quaritch's men. Traumatized by Neteyam's death, Jake and Neytiri resolve to save their daughters, who were recaptured. Jake faces Quaritch, who holds Kiri hostage, but desists when Neytiri does the same with Spider. Jake, Quaritch, Neytiri, and Tuktirey are trapped inside the sinking vessel. After a tense skirmish, Jake strangles Quaritch unconscious and is rescued by Lo'ak and Payakan, while Kiri recovers Neytiri and Tuktirey. Spider saves Quaritch from death but rejects him and rejoins Jake's family.

After Neteyam's funeral, Jake informs Tonowari of his decision to leave the Metkayina. However, Tonowari identifies his family as being part of the clan out of reverence and welcomes them to stay. Jake's family accept their new lives at sea but vow to continue their struggle against the RDA.

Cast



left to right: Sam Worthington (pictured in 2010), Zoe Saldana (2023), and Sigourney Weaver (2017), who play the lead roles in the film

- Sam Worthington as Jake Sully: a former human who fell in love with Neytiri and befriended the Na'vi after becoming a member of the Avatar Program, eventually taking their side in their conflict with humans and leading them to victory. He left his human body to permanently become Na'vi and is now chief of the Omatikaya.^{[11][12]}
- Zoe Saldana as Neytiri te Tskaha Mo'at'ite: the daughter of the previous leaders of the Omatikaya, the clan's future spiritual leader, and Jake's mate.^{[11][12]}
- Sigourney Weaver as Kiri te Suli Kireysi'ite: the 14-year-old daughter of Dr. Grace Augustine's Na'vi avatar who was adopted by Jake and Neytiri.^[13] Weaver originally appeared in the first film as Dr. Grace Augustine, a human scientist who took the side of the Na'vi and died during the conflict. Her Na'vi avatar is revealed to have birthed Kiri despite her death. Like most of the cast, she learned free-diving for the film and filmed scenes underwater.^[14]
 - Weaver also reprises her role as Dr. Grace Augustine, despite Weaver's saying in 2014 that she would not do so, though she and Cameron confirmed prior to then that she

would return in the sequels:^{[6][15][16]} she appears in this film in a video recording and in a spiritual vision in which she meets with Kiri.

- Stephen Lang as Colonel Miles Quaritch: a human military officer who led the paramilitary division of the RDA in their conflict with the Na'vi.^[17] After being killed by Neytiri, he is resurrected as a Recombinant^[17] and seeks revenge against Jake and his family. Cameron said that Quaritch would act as the main antagonist in all five planned films.^{[18][19][20][21]}
 - Lang also reprises his role as the late human Quaritch in a video recording made for his Recombinant self.
- Kate Winslet as Ronal: a free diver of the Metkayina, the clan's spiritual leader, and pregnant wife of Tonowari.^{[22][23]} Winslet called Ronal "a pivotal character in the ongoing story" but also "relatively small comparative to the lengthy shoot" since shooting all her scenes only took a month.^[24] It marks her first time working with performance capture, and motion capture altogether. She, like most of the cast, also had to learn free diving for the film; while filming an underwater scene, she held her breath for over seven minutes, a new record for any film scene shot underwater.^{[14][24][25][26]}
- Cliff Curtis as Tonowari: the chief of the Metkayina clan and Ronal's husband.^{[27][28][29]}
- Joel David Moore as Dr. Norm Spellman: a former Avatar Program scientist who allies with the Na'vi.^[30]
- CCH Pounder as Mo'at: the Omatikaya's spiritual leader, and Neytiri's mother.^{[31][32]}
- Edie Falco as General Frances Ardmore: the commander in charge of the RDA's interests.^[33]
- Brendan Cowell as Captain Mick Scoresby: the head of an RDA private sector marine hunting vessel on the moon of Pandora.^[34]
- Jemaine Clement as Dr. Ian Garvin: a marine biologist working for the RDA.^[35]
- Jamie Flatters as Neteyam te Suli Tsyeyk'itan: Jake and Neytiri's 16-year-old son and oldest child.^{[36][37]}
 - Jeremy Irwin as young Neteyam.^[38]
 - Joel David Moore's son Oliver cameos as the infant Neteyam.^[39]
- Britain Dalton as Lo'ak te Suli Tsyeyk'itan: Jake and Neytiri's 14-year-old son.^{[36][37]}
 - Chloe Coleman as young Lo'ak.
- Trinity Bliss as Tuktirey "Tuk" te Suli Neytiri'ite: Jake and Neytiri's 8-year-old daughter and their youngest child.^{[36][37][40]}
- Jack Champion as Miles "Spider" Socorro: the 16-year-old son of Quaritch born in Hell's Gate (the human base on Pandora in the first film) who was raised by scientists who stayed back on Pandora and wears Na'vi attire and an oxygen mask when outside a building. He is inseparable from Jake and Neytiri's children.^{[36][37][41]}
- Bailey Bass as Tsireya "Reya": a graceful and strong free diver of the Metkayina and Tonowari and Ronal's daughter.^{[36][37]}
- Filip Geljo as Aonung: a young male hunter, a free diver of the Metkayina, and Tonowari and Ronal's son.^{[36][37]}
- Duane Evans Jr. as Rotxo: a young male hunter and free diver of the Metkayina.^{[36][37]}
- Giovanni Ribisi as Parker Selfridge: the former corporate administrator for the RDA mining operation, who appears in a recording made for Quaritch's Recombinant.^{[42][43][44]}
- Dileep Rao as Dr. Max Patel: a former Avatar program scientist who allies with the Na'vi.^[45]

- Matt Gerald as Corporal Lyle Wainfleet: a Recombinant under Quaritch's command. Gerald was announced to reprise his role in August 2017.^[29]
 - Gerald also reprises his role as the original human Wainfleet from the first film shown in Quaritch's video recording.

Additionally, Alicia Vela-Bailey appears uncredited as Zdinarsk, a Recombinant and member of the 1st Recom Squadron. Vela-Bailey previously portrayed Ikeyni, Saeyla, and a blonde woman in a bar in the original *Avatar*. She is also featured as a stunt performer in both films.^{[46][47]} CJ Jones appears, also uncredited, as a Metkayina interpreter of the Na'vi sign language he created.^[48] Keston John plays Tarsem, a member of the Omatikaya clan who succeeds Jake when he and his family flee to the Metkayina territories.

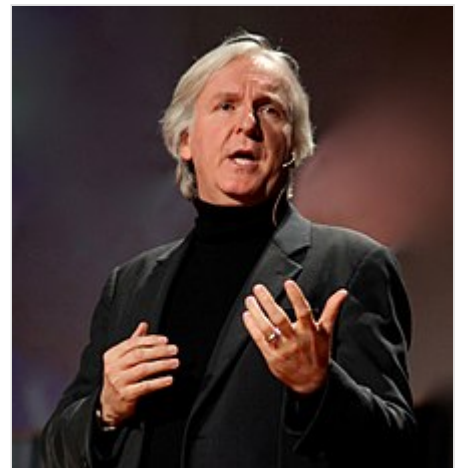
Themes and analysis

Family is the central concept featured in *Avatar: The Way of Water*.^{[49][50][51]} RogerEbert.com critic Brian Tallerico notes that some of the themes in the film echo themes from earlier films directed by Cameron, including *Titanic* (1997), *Aliens* (1986), *The Abyss* (1989), *The Terminator* (1984) and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991). For example, the film asks whether you should run and hide from a powerful enemy or fight their evil, similar to the *Terminator* films. The film also invokes themes of environmentalism and settler colonialism.^[52] Comparing the themes of the sequels to the original, Cameron said "It will be a natural extension of all the themes, and the characters, and the spiritual undercurrents. Basically, if you loved the first movie, you're gonna love these movies, and if you hated it, you're probably gonna hate these. If you loved it at the time, and you said later you hated it, you're probably gonna love these".^[53]

Production

Development

In 2006, Cameron said if *Avatar* (2009) were successful, he would consider making two sequels.^[7] In 2010, he said the sequels would proceed as planned as a result of the film's widespread success.^[8] The sequels were originally scheduled for release in December 2014 and 2015.^[9] He included certain scenes in the first film for future story follow-ups.^{[7][11]} Cameron planned to shoot the sequels back-to-back and to begin work "once the novel is nailed down".^[54] He said the sequels would widen the universe while exploring other moons of Polyphemus.^[55] The first sequel would focus on the ocean of Pandora and also feature more of the rainforest.^[56] He intended to capture footage for the sequel at the bottom of the Mariana Trench using a deepwater submersible.^[57] In 2011, Cameron said he was just starting to design the ocean ecosystem of Pandora and the other worlds to be included in the story. The storyline, although continuing the environmental theme of the first film, would not be "strident" since the film will concentrate on entertainment.^[58] The sequels were confirmed as continuing to follow the characters of Jake and Neytiri in December 2009.^[12] Cameron implied that the humans would return as the antagonists of the story.^[59] In 2011, Cameron said he would film the sequels at a higher frame rate than the industry standard 24 frames per second, to add a heightened sense of reality.^[60]



Director James Cameron in 2010

In 2013, Cameron announced that the sequels would be filmed in New Zealand, with performance capture to take place in 2014. An agreement with the New Zealand government required at least one world premiere to be held in Wellington and at least NZ\$500 million (approximately US\$410 million at December 2013 exchange rates) to be spent on production activity in New Zealand, including live-action filming and visual effects. The New Zealand government announced it would raise its baseline tax rebate for filmmaking from 15% to 20%, with 25% available to international productions in some cases and 40% for New Zealand productions (as defined by section 18 of the New Zealand Film Commission Act 1978).^{[61][62]}

Cameron mentioned a possible third sequel for the first time in 2012; and was officially confirmed the following year.^{[63][64]} Cameron was then looking to release *Avatar 2* in 2015, but later that year, production was rescheduled for 2014, with the film to be released in December 2016, and to be followed by the two other sequels in 2017 and 2018.^[65] By 2015, the scheduled release dates for the sequels were each delayed by another year, with the first sequel expected to be released in December 2017; this was due to the writing process, which Cameron called "a complex job".^{[66][67]} The following month, Fox announced a further release delay.^[68] In February 2016, production of the sequels was scheduled to begin in April 2016 in New Zealand.^[69] In April 2016, Cameron announced at CinemaCon that there will be four *Avatar* sequels, all of which will be filmed simultaneously.^[70]

New crew members include cinematographer Russell Carpenter, who worked with Cameron on *True Lies* (1994) and *Titanic* (1997), and Aashrita Kamath, who will act as art director on all four sequels.^{[71][72][73]} Kirk Krack, founder of Performance Freediving International, worked as a free-diving trainer for the cast and crew for the underwater scenes.^[74] Several creatures that were first introduced in the Walt Disney World theme park attraction *Avatar Flight of Passage* were featured in the film.^[75]

In 2019, after several media outlets shared rumors of potential titles for the *Avatar* sequels, including the name *Avatar: The Way of Water*, Cameron confirmed that the titles mentioned were "among titles that are in consideration" but had not been finalized at the time.^[76]

In 2022, Cameron said that about ten minutes of "gunplay action" were cut from the film as he was no longer inclined to "fetishize the gun", although he is known as an "action filmmaker".^[77]

Writing

In 2012, Cameron said the sequels were being written as "separate stories that have an overall arc inclusive of the first film", with the second having a clear conclusion instead of a cliffhanger to the next film. Screenwriters were also announced: Josh Friedman for the first, Rick Jaffa and Amanda Silver for the second, and Shane Salerno for the third.^[65] However, Friedman later clarified and said Jaffa and Silver were writing the first of the four sequels and he was writing the second.^[78] In April 2014, Cameron expected to finish the (then) three scripts within six weeks, stating that all three sequels would be in production simultaneously and were still slated for December 2016 to 2018 releases.^{[79][80]} He said although Friedman, Jaffa and Silver, and Salerno are each co-writing one sequel with him, they at first worked together on all three scripts: "I didn't assign each writer which film they were going to work on until the last day. I knew if I assigned them their scripts ahead of time, they'd tune out every time we were talking about the other movie."^{[65][81][82][18][78][83]} Cameron added that they had "worked out every beat

of the story across all three films so it all connects as one, sort of, three-film saga", a creative process that was inspired by his experiences in the writing room of his television series *Dark Angel*.^[84] The writing took longer than expected, forcing Cameron to delay the release of the films further in 2015.^[66]

He spent a year writing the script for the first sequel titled *Avatar: The High Ground*, a 130-page treatment and then threw it out and started over because "it didn't go enough into the unexpected," which is one of the critical elements about sequels, according to Cameron. At one point, he threatened to fire his writers because they would only focus on the new stories, rather than first figuring out what made the original movie a success.^{[85][86]} In December 2015, in an interview with *Entertainment Weekly* Cameron said: "I'm in the process of doing another pass through all three scripts [...] Just refining. That's in parallel with the design process. The design process is very mature at this point. We've been designing for about a year and a half. All the characters, settings and creatures are all pretty much [set]."^[87] On February 11, 2017, Cameron announced that the writing of all four sequels was complete.^[88] In a November 26 interview the same year, he estimated that the scripts had taken four years to write overall.^[53] One element in *The High Ground*, showing an outer space battle between Na'vi, humans and spaceships was cut; this was later used in the prequel novel of the same name. Cameron cited the omission of the sequel's core aspects, which were insufficient, as reasons for the removal.^{[89][90]}

Discussing the character of Tuk in a February 2019 interview, Cameron mentioned that she was eight years old, and that the film would feature a scene between Jake and Neytiri taking place from Tuk's perspective: "There's a three-page argument scene between Jake and Neytiri, a marital dispute, very, very critical to the storyline. I wound up shooting it all from the point of view of the 8-year-old hiding under the structure and peeking in. Having gone through the experience with [Sam Worthington] on *Avatar*, I now knew how to write the Jake character going forward across the emotional rollercoaster of the next four movies."^{[40][91]} Cameron said the film addresses the implications of Jake and Neytiri becoming parents in the time that elapsed since the first film.^[92] He said:

Becoming a parent changes so much of your behavior and your value system...What we saw in the first film were people who were fearless. Jake would throw himself off his ikran onto a leonopteryx (creatures featured in *Avatar*) but is a father of four going to do that?...He's trying to keep his kids alive and trying to adjust his own life. Is he still a warrior? Are these young boys who are 14, 15, 16, coming up, getting all excited about wanting to go to war and fight for their people and for their land? How's [Jake] going to be a hypocrite and hold them back when he has to go do it?^[92]

In a December 2019 interview, Lang said his character was always meant to return in the sequels, as Cameron had shared with him "that Quaritch had a future" while shooting the original film.^[93]

Casting

Sam Worthington and Zoe Saldña were confirmed in January 2010 to have signed on to reprise their roles in the sequels.^[11] Later that year, Cameron confirmed that both Weaver and Stephen Lang would return despite the demise of their characters.^{[18][15]} Cameron also said Weaver would be featured in all three sequels (the fourth one was not planned at the time), and that her character, Grace Augustine, would be alive.^[16] In March 2015, however, Weaver said that she will play a new character in the next film.^[6] Cameron confirmed in 2010 that Lang would return as Quaritch in the first three sequels, stating, "I'm not

going to say exactly how we're bringing him back, but it's a science fiction story, after all. His character will evolve into really unexpected places across the arc of our new three-film saga."^{[18][19]} In September 2015, Michelle Rodriguez said unlike Weaver and Lang, whose characters had also died in the first film, she would not return in *Avatar 2*.^[94]



Producer Landau, Worthington, Saldaña, Cameron, Weaver and Lang promoting the film in Tokyo

Several new cast announcements were made in 2017, with Joel David Moore, CCH Pounder and Matt Gerald all confirmed to return from the first film.^{[31][32][29][30]} Additionally, Cliff Curtis joined the cast as Tonowari, the leader of the Na'vi reef people clan of Metkayina.^{[27][29]} On September 23, 2017, child actor Filip Geljo was revealed to have been signed in an undisclosed role.^[95] On September 27, seven child actors were confirmed as a part of the main cast including Geljo: Jamie Flatters, Britain Dalton and Trinity Bliss as Jake and Neytiri's children; Geljo, Bailey Bass and Duane Evans Jr. as members of the Metkayina (together with Curtis); and Jack Champion, the only one to perform in live action, as a human born on Pandora.^{[36][37]} Cameron later said the child cast had been trained for six months to prepare for the underwater scenes filmed in performance capture, and that they now could all hold their breath "in the two-to four-minute range", even then-seven-year-old Trinity Bliss, and were now "all perfectly capable of acting underwater, very calmly while holding their breath".^{[96][97]}

On October 3, 2017, it was reported that Winslet, who starred in Cameron's *Titanic*, had joined the cast of *Avatar 2*, and possibly its sequels. Cameron commented: "Kate and I had been looking for something to do together for 20 years, since our collaboration on *Titanic*, which was one of the most rewarding of my career", and added that her character was named Ronal.^{[22][98][23]} When asked by ComicBook.com on her reasons to return to work with Cameron, Winslet said he just asked her to play Ronal and she accepted out of a combination of her love for the first *Avatar* film, an attraction to the well-written and strong female role she was offered, a love for being on the water and to work with Cameron and the film's cast.^[99] Although the nature of her character was originally unknown, the following month Cameron said Ronal was "part of the Sea People, the reef people", in reference to the Na'vi clan of Metkayina, making *Avatar 2* Winslet's first role via performance capture, or motion capture altogether, which she was looking forward to; since she insisted on performing all of her character's movements herself, she, like the child cast, had to learn free diving for the film.^{[53][24]} Winslet, who had been notoriously reluctant about working with Cameron again because of the complicated situations he puts his actors in for their scenes, said Cameron proposed the role to her in July 2017 when he came to help her and their fellow *Titanic* collaborator Leonardo DiCaprio at a fundraiser in France, sending her the scripts shortly after.^[24] She commented that her role was "relatively small comparative to the lengthy shoot", as she would only have one month of shootings, but also "a pivotal character in the ongoing story".^[24]

On October 13, 2017, it was announced that Giovanni Ribisi would reprise his role of Parker Selfridge from the first film, in all four upcoming *Avatar* films.^[43] On January 25, 2018, Dileep Rao was confirmed to return as Dr. Max Patel. A year later, Edie Falco, Brendan Cowell and Jemaine Clement joined the cast in live-action roles.^{[33][34][35]} Marc Maron also auditioned for Clement's part.^[100] Edward Norton turned

down an undisclosed role in *Avatar 2*, due to only being interested in playing a Na'vi, which his proposed character was not.^[101] Joel David Moore's then infant son, Oliver, filmed a brief cameo as an infant Neteyam.^[39]

Filming

Performance capture

Avatar: The Way of Water entered production and started preliminary shooting on August 15, 2017, with Manhattan Beach, California, as the main shooting location.^[102] Principal photography began on September 25, 2017, on a \$350–\$460 million budget; the film is one of the most expensive films ever made.^{[2][3][103]} It was simultaneously filmed with *Avatar 3* (2025).^[104] As Weaver later revealed in November, filming had to be moved around to allow her to film a cameo appearance in the series eight finale of *Doc Martin* (2004–22).^[105]

On November 23, Cameron said the crew had been undergoing tests with the cast for the last month to film underwater scenes in performance capture, and that they succeeded in filming the first of those on November 14, featuring six of their seven main child actors, including Trinity Bliss.^[53] He said "we're getting really good data, beautiful character motion and great facial performance capture. We've basically cracked the code".^{[96][97]} The cast and crew did not use scuba sets as "air bubbles might interfere with the accuracy of the sensors". Another problem with underwater scenes was how the infrared light used in performance capture was not registered by the camera sensors as it was absorbed by the water, and so UV-light had to be used instead. Two separate performance capture systems were made; one used underwater, and another above the water, which had to work in sync with one another.^[106] Cameron said that tests would last until January 2018, as "we're still working in our small test tank. We graduate to our big tank in January".^[96] It was "a dialogue scene", as according to Cameron, the characters communicate via "a kind of a sign language".^[53] The underwater fight scene between Worthington and Lang was difficult, based on their interviews. Worthington considered this a risky option because doing choke-outs can cause drowning. Overseen by a safety team during the shoot, the actors ensured their survival.^{[49][107]}

On April 30, 2018, Winslet had "just a couple days" of shooting left to do.^[108] While filming an underwater scene, Winslet held her breath for over seven minutes, breaking the record for longest breath held while shooting a film scene underwater, a record previously held by Tom Cruise for *Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation* (2015).^[14] In May 2018, Saldaña said filming was "kind of only halfway done" and that the crew is "about [to finish] motion capture production on the [second and third] movies, and then after that, they go straight into pre-production for the live-action part that would shoot for six months in New Zealand."^[109] Saldaña finished shooting her scenes on June 8, for both *Avatar 2* and its sequel, while Cameron said around the same time that 130 days of performance capture had been shot.^{[25][26]} On November 14, 2018, Cameron announced filming with the principal performance capture cast had been completed.^[21]

Part of the movie was shot at 24 frames per second, but many fast scenes were filmed at 48 frames per second. This allows fast objects still to be clearly visible when moving, but it was also said that too detailed a view sometimes causes the viewer to see playing actors rather than story characters. The projector in the

movie hall runs at 48 frames per second, for the 24 fps sections frames are duplicated.^[110] To avoid the soap opera effect, Lightstorm Entertainment hired Pixelworks in 2020, which used their TrueCut Motion software to create "motion grading", a tool that ensure a movie keep its theatrical appearance.^[111]

Live-action

In February 2019, Landau said live-action filming for *Avatar 2* and *3* would commence in New Zealand in the spring of 2019.^[112] Cameron confirmed later the same month that they had "only wrapped for [the motion capture parts]. Now, that is the vast majority of the characters and it is the vast majority of the running time of the film[s]. But that pesky little live action component is going to cost me five months of my life across the two movies."^[113] Filming for 2019 concluded on November 29, to resume the following year in New Zealand.^{[114][115][116]}

On March 17, 2020, Landau announced that the filming of the *Avatar* sequel films in New Zealand had been postponed indefinitely in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He also confirmed that production would remain in Los Angeles.^[117] However, virtual production continued in Manhattan Beach, California while visual effects continued at Weta Digital in Wellington.^[118] In early May, health and safety production protocols had been endorsed by the New Zealand government, allowing filming to resume in the country.^[119]

On June 1, 2020, Landau posted a picture of himself and Cameron on Instagram, showing that they had returned to New Zealand to resume filming. After their arrival, Cameron and 55 other crew members who had traveled to New Zealand started a 2-week government-supervised isolation period at a hotel in Wellington before they would resume filming. This would make *Avatar 2* and *3* the first major Hollywood blockbusters to resume production after postponing filming due to the pandemic.^{[120][121][122][123]} On June 16, 2020, Cameron resumed filming and Landau posted a photo of his crew on Instagram filming the production.^{[124][125]} The New Zealand production hired 46 New Zealand cast members including Cliff Curtis (Tonowari) and Duane Evans Jr. (Roxto), 114 local stunt artists, almost 800 extras, and 36 apprentices and interns.^{[126][127]} In September 2020, Cameron confirmed that live action filming in New Zealand had been completed, therefore completing the shooting of the film altogether after over three years; he estimated *Avatar 3* to be "95%" completed, due to having live-action parts yet to be filmed outside of New Zealand.^{[128][129][130]}

In July 2022, the New Zealand Film Commission disclosed that the *Avatar* sequels had received over NZ\$140 million worth of public funding through the country's Screen Production Grant. By comparison, *The Hobbit* trilogy (2012–2014) had received NZ\$161 million in film subsidies. While ACT party deputy leader Brooke van Velden criticised the Government's film subsidy programme for allegedly taking public funding from other areas, the Economic Development and Regional Development Minister Stuart Nash argued that New Zealand's film subsidies for major Hollywood products brought much needed overseas investment and jobs to the New Zealand film industry.^[131]

Visual effects

On July 31, 2017, it was announced that Wētā FX had commenced work on the *Avatar* sequels.^[134] The film heavily features underwater scenes, actually filmed underwater with the cast in performance capture.^{[96][97]} Blending underwater filming and performance capture being a feature never accomplished before, it took the team a year and a

It's never been done before and it's very tricky because our motion capture system, like most motion capture

half to develop a new motion capture system.^{[133][132]} In December 2022, Wētā FX's VFX producer David Conley describe *Avatar 2* as the biggest visual effects project that the company had ever undertaken, totalling nearly 3.3 billion thread powers. To cope with the huge amount of data, Wētā used the services of cloud storage company Amazon Web Services.^[135]

In November 2015, Landau said *Avatar 2* would have a number of major technological improvements since the first movie. A lot more of the lighting work on the virtual production stage could be done during production instead of post-production, and like *Alita: Battle Angel* (2019), which is produced and co-written by Cameron, the crew can use two lightweight HD head cams to record the actors' facial performance. In addition they also used two digital puppets instead of just one; one that is an accurate copy of the real actor, and another that is the actor's character, allowing the team to re-target one onto the other to make it as accurate as possible.^{[136][137]}

Cameron said there was a possibility that the film could be shown in "glasses-free 3D", along with the sequels.^{[138][139]} But he later disagreed with these rumors and did not think the technology would be there yet.^[140]

Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) also returned to assist the VFX for the film after doing so with Weta for the final battle of the first film. ILM assisted in delivering 48 one-off VFX shots for the film's opening scenes.^{[141][142]}

The film was completed on November 23, 2022.^[143]

Runtime

In July 2022, *Empire* revealed the runtime was "around three hours" at that stage in production.^[144] In November 2022, the film's runtime was revealed to be 192 minutes (three hours and twelve minutes).^[1] In the *Empire* interview, Cameron said: "I don't want anybody whining about length when they sit and binge-watch [television] for eight hours... I've watched my kids sit and do five one-hour episodes in a row. Here's the big social paradigm shift that has to happen: it's okay to get up and go pee."^{[145][146]}

Avatar: The Way of Water is the second Disney-distributed film and the second 20th Century Studios film, after *Avengers: Endgame* and *Titanic* respectively, to exceed three hours in length.^[147]

Music

Avatar composer James Horner was originally reported to score music for the franchise, before his death in a plane crash in June 2015.^[148] In December 2019, Simon Franglen, who had previously worked with both Cameron and Horner as record producer and arranger since 1997's *Titanic*, including on *Avatar* (notably completing Horner's score for 2016's *The Magnificent Seven* after his passing), was reported to write music for the film.^[149] Landau confirmed his involvement in the project in August 2021, while also

systems, is what they call optical base, meaning that it uses markers that are photographed with hundreds of cameras. The problem with water is not the underwater part, but the interface between the air and the water, which forms a moving mirror. That moving mirror reflects all the dots and markers, and ... it creates thousands of false targets, so we've had to figure out how to get around that problem, which we did. ... It's taken us about a year and a half now to work out how we're going to do it.

— Cameron, on blending underwater filming and motion capture system^{[132][133]}

associating with the forthcoming *Avatar* sequels.^{[150][151]} Horner's score was reused in the film, in addition to the original themes produced by Franglen.^[151] The scoring for *Avatar: The Way of Water* officially began on July 29, 2022.^[152] The soundtrack album was released on December 16, 2022, by Hollywood Records.^{[153][154]} An expanded score album, featuring ten more tracks from the original score, followed four days later.^[155]

In November 2022, it was reported that the film would feature an original song titled "Song Chord" which will be performed by Franglen and Zoe Saldña.^[156] The following month, it was announced that Canadian singer the Weeknd would contribute an original song "Nothing Is Lost (You Give Me Strength)" to the film, produced by Franglen and Swedish supergroup Swedish House Mafia.^{[153][157]}

Marketing

Disney extensively promoted *Avatar: The Way of Water* across multiple media platforms, including merchandising, consumer products, theme parks and advertising.^[158] At the 2022 CinemaCon,^[159] the new title for the sequel was officially announced and the first teaser trailer was debuted at the event,^[160] along with four new first look images, showing off the adventures of the Na'vi on and off the coasts of Pandora.^[6] It was theatrically showcased at the premiere of *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*,^{[161][162]} and was later released online on May 9.^[163] The teaser finished its first 24-hour online window with 148.6 million views,^[164] including 23 million from China alone, according to Disney and 20th Century.^{[165][166]} Grant Ridner of GQ commented: "The trailer features minimal dialogue and primarily focuses on shots of the cerulean Pandora and its residents, as well as indigenous flora and fauna."^[167] However, Stuart Heritage of The Guardian criticized the teaser, saying: "There isn't a trace of premise here, or character, or any real action to speak of. Instead, we're given a minute and a half of nice-looking scenery. It's like being held hostage to look at someone's holiday photos."^[168] Louis Chilton of The Independent also felt that the trailer "feels rather too much like a tech demo, or the trailer for a long-gestating video-game sequel".^[169]

In June 2022, the teaser was edited by Disney ahead of the theatrical screenings of Pixar's *Lightyear*, where sequences featuring Sully holding a rifle and few guns were edited. According to Russ Burlingame of Comic Book Resources, the trailer was edited due to "public sentiments to avoid glorifying gun violence" as *Lightyear* released after the Robb Elementary School shooting incident,^[170] while TheWrap's Drew Taylor opined that the change was made on the request of the Motion Picture Association for attaching the trailer with PG-rated films.^[171] New set photos were released by Empire on June 30, showing Kate Winslet and Cliff Curtis in their Na'vi forms,^[172] and subsequent photos were released on the following day, showing Sigourney Weaver as Jake and Neytiri's adopted teenage Na'vi daughter, Kiri.^[13] Though the film was not promoted at the San Diego Comic-Con event, Lego released four new sets from the franchise as a part of the promotions.^[173]

Eight minutes of the film's footage were showcased in 3D at the D23 Expo on September 10, 2022.^{[174][175]} McFarlane Toys had launched several action figures based on the characters and creatures, which were unveiled at the event.^[176] The collections were officially released on October 1.^[177] A second excerpt from the film was shown during the credits of the *Avatar* re-release on September 23, which evidently varies in different versions and screenings.^{[178][179]} The official trailer was released on November 2 at Good Morning America.^{[180][181]} New poster characters were released on November 21, and the second and final trailer was also released then.^{[182][183]} An 18-minute clip of "never-seen-before" footage

from the film was exclusively released at the CCXP convention on December 2.^[184] The footage features independent storylines surrounding Jake's character and events occurring several years since the first film.^[185]

Disney initiated the environmental global campaign, "Keep Our Oceans Amazing", to support the Nature Conservancy in the conservation of marine habitats and animal species.^{[158][186]} A concept art book titled *The Art of Avatar: The Way of Water*, written by Tara Bennett with a foreword by Robert Rodriguez, was made available for pre-order in October 2022, and was set to be released simultaneously with the film.^[187] Another book titled *Avatar The Way of Water: The Visual Dictionary* by Joshua Izzo is also set to be released with the film.^[187]

Deadline Hollywood estimated that advertisers paid more than \$170 million for promos. Lightstorm Entertainment and Mercedes-Benz revealed the Vision AVTR concept car inspired by the film at the Consumer Electronics Show in 2020. Amazon Echo enabled interactions for its Alexa virtual assistant based on the film, the first time it did so for any film. In China, Disney partnered with JD.com and Alipay for advertising, while Razer Inc. launched the Yaqui Orochi V2 Avatar computer mouse in the country themed after the film. NYX Professional Makeup owned by L'Oréal promoted a lineup of makeup products inspired by the film. Kellogg's launched an estimated 53 million *Avatar*-themed packages across its three labels. Motorola Mobility and Deutsche Telekom partnered with Disney to promote the film in Latin America and EMEA respectively.^[188]

Release

Avatar: The Way of Water's world premiere was held on December 6, 2022, at the Odeon Luxe Leicester Square in London.^[189] The film was released to theaters in some countries on December 14, 2022,^[190] and was theatrically released in the United States on December 16 by Disney subsidiary 20th Century Studios.^{[191][192][193]} The film is the first in the series to be released under Disney, since its acquisition of both 20th Century Studios and the rights to *Avatar* in 2019.^{[194][195]} The film was released in RealD 3D, Dolby Cinema, IMAX and IMAX 3D formats. Select showings also had support for a dynamic high frame rate of up to 48 frames per second.^[196] *The Way of Water*, alongside the forthcoming sequels, was released in Dolby Vision.^[53] *The Way of Water* is one of the widest releases ever given for a Disney film, debuting on over 12,000 screens in the United States and Canada and 40,000 internationally.^[197]

The 2023 Hollywood Professional Association Tech Retreat revealed that 1,065 individual Digital Cinema Packages (DCPs) were created for the film's theatrical release. This includes specific variations of the film presented in formats such as 2D, 3D, HDR, 4K, varying light levels, aspect ratios and various audio formats, as well as 51 subtitled languages and 28 dubbed language variations. According to Disney's Motion Pictures Operations VP Kim Beresford, the film was divided into 15 reels (resulting in 6,338 portions) to be completed in time; allowing the DCP mastering team to begin creating delivery elements before the complete film was locked. Roughly 800 DCPs were reviewed for quality control five days prior to the film's release date. Walt Disney Studios' VP of Distribution Technology Mark Arana said: "We had to turn our operation into a 24/7 support model." Additionally, Disney's distribution team invented a new system to create and keep track of the numerous versions as well as a cloud-based DCP mastering tool.^[198]

The film was subjected to eight delays, as the crew took more time on the writing, pre-production and visual effects process. Initially in late-2010, the film was scheduled for release in December 2014.^[9] By mid-2013, Cameron originally intended *Avatar 2* to be released in December 2015,^[65] which was

subsequently delayed to 2016 and then to 2017.^{[67][66]} In April 2016, Cameron announced four *Avatar* sequels which would be released in December 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2023;^[70] but, in March 2017, he said this film would not be released in 2018, due to extensive production and the visual effects process.^[199]

In April 2017, a new release date of December 18, 2020, was announced, with all the other sequels: *Avatar* 3, 4 and 5 releasing on December 17, 2021, December 20, 2024, and December 19, 2025, respectively.^[200] However, following the announcement of the three upcoming *Star Wars* films,^[201] in May 2019, the sequels were delayed another two years, with this film being scheduled to be released on December 17, 2021.^[202] The release date was again deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in August 2020, a new release date of December 16, 2022, was announced.^{[196][203][191]} Mentioning the delays, Cameron felt optimistic that they would not harm the films' success, likening *Avatar 2* to his films *Aliens* (1986) and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), which were both commercially successful sequels released seven years after the original films.^{[53][204]} The film was also approved for release in China, making it one of the few Hollywood blockbusters to be greenlit for distribution in the country in 2022.^[205]

Home media

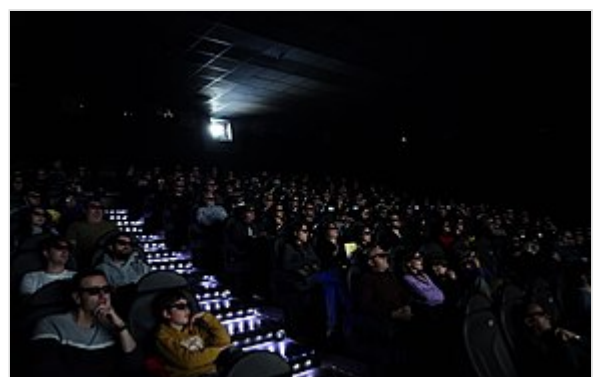
Avatar: The Way of Water was released for digital download on March 28, 2023. It contains behind-the-scenes featurettes.^[206] The film was released on June 7, 2023, on *Disney+* and *Max*.^{[207][208]} *Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment* (under the *20th Century Home Entertainment* label) distributed *Avatar: The Way of Water* on Ultra HD Blu-ray, Blu-ray 3D, Blu-ray and DVD on June 20, 2023.^[209] Disney will release an expanded "collector's edition" of the film on December 19, 2023.^[210]

On February 2nd, 2024, the film became available to stream in variable high frame rate in 3D 4K Dolby Vision on the Disney+ app for *visionOS*.^[211]

Reception

Box office

Avatar: The Way of Water grossed \$684.1 million in the United States and Canada, and \$1.636 billion in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$2.320 billion.^{[4][5]} It had a worldwide opening of \$441.7 million, the eleventh-biggest of all time, and the third largest in the COVID-19 pandemic era, behind *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (\$601 million) and *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* (\$452.4 million). IMAX accounted for \$48.8 million, the second-highest global weekend ever for a film released in IMAX cinemas.^{[212][213]} It is the highest-grossing film of 2022, the third-highest-grossing film of all time,^{[214][215]} and the highest-grossing film of the pandemic era.^[216]



Theater attendees watching the film in 3D in Barcelona

It is the fourth film to reach the \$1 billion milestone in the pandemic era after *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, *Top Gun: Maverick* and *Jurassic World Dominion*, as well as the sixth-fastest overall to reach the milestone at 14 days.^{[217][218]} It crossed the \$2 billion milestone on January 22, becoming the first film in the

pandemic era and the sixth in history to reach the milestone. It is also the second-fastest to gross over \$2 billion, reaching the milestone in 40 days.^{[219][220]} *Deadline Hollywood* calculated the film's net profit as \$531.7 million, accounting for production budgets, marketing, talent participations and other costs; box office grosses and home media revenues placed it first on their list of 2022's "Most Valuable Blockbusters".^[221]

United States and Canada

By December 14, 2022, prior to the film's release in the United States and Canada, *Boxoffice Pro* projected an opening weekend of \$145–179 million, and a total final gross of \$574–803 million.^[222] The film made \$53.2 million on its first day, including \$17 million from Thursday night previews. It went on to debut to a \$134.1 million weekend, nearly double the original's opening of \$77 million, but coming in below expectations while finishing first at the box office.^{[223][224]} *Deadline Hollywood* and *Variety* wrote that strong audience exit scores, the small day-to-day drop, limited competition from other films and the upcoming Christmas holiday all indicated likely strong legs at the box office.^{[3][225]}

The film made \$63.3 million in its second weekend, a drop of 53%,^[226] and \$95.6 million over the four-day Christmas weekend, remaining atop the box office.^[227] Box office analysts partially attributed the December 2022 North American winter storm for the drop.^{[228][229]} In the third weekend, it grossed \$67.4 million for an increase of 6%, and also grossed \$88.8 million through the four-day New Year weekend,^{[230][231]} while becoming the second highest-grossing film of 2022 in the region.^[232] It remained the highest-grossing film at the box office throughout its first seven weekends of release, the highest number of consecutive weekends for any film since the original *Avatar*.^{[233][234]} It is also the seventh-highest-grossing film of all time in the US and Canada.^[235]

China

On the release day of *Avatar: The Way of Water*, *Tianjin Maoyan Weiyong Culture Media* estimated that the film would make \$357 million (¥2.5 billion) and \$100 million in its opening weekend, later revising it down to \$222 million (¥1.5 billion).^{[236][237]} It grossed \$57 million in the first week in China, according to Artisan Gateway. This included a gross of \$51.3 million during the weekend. The box-office gross of the film was impacted by the recent surge in COVID-19 infections in the country. IMAX meanwhile reported that the film marked its best weekend ever in China, with a \$15.8 million opening.^[238] In the second weekend, the film grossed \$25.9 million, for a drop of 55%,^[239] and an increase of 42% during the New Year weekend with \$36.9 million.^[240] *Avatar: The Way of Water* ultimately grossed \$245 million in China, slightly more than the \$202 million that *Avatar* earned in its initial run.^{[241][237]}

Other territories

Outside the US and Canada, the film grossed \$307.6 million in 52 countries in its first week of release. The largest openings for the film by the end of the week were in China (\$56.8 million), South Korea (\$24.9 million), France (\$21.7 million), Germany (\$19.4 million) and India (\$19.2 million).^{[212][213]} In the second weekend, it grossed \$168.6 million for a drop of 42%.^[242] In the third weekend, it grossed \$186.7 million, an increase of 6% from the previous weekend.^[243] In the fourth weekend, it grossed \$132.6 million for a drop of 30%, while becoming the highest-grossing film of the pandemic era outside the US and Canada.^[244] The five largest-running total countries by February 26, 2023, are China

(\$249.8 million), France (\$148.3 million), Germany (\$138.3 million), South Korea (\$105 million) and the United Kingdom (\$91 million). It became the highest-grossing film of all time in twenty box office territories, including Germany, France, Austria, Turkey and New Zealand.^{[245][246][247][248]}

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 76% of 450 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 7.1/10. The website's consensus reads: "Narratively, it might be fairly standard stuff—but visually speaking, *Avatar: The Way of Water* is a stunningly immersive experience."^[249] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 67 out of 100, based on 68 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.^[250] Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "A" on an A+ to F scale, the same as the first *Avatar*, while PostTrak reported 91% of audience members gave the film a positive score, with 82% saying they would definitely recommend it.^[3]

Positive reviews focused on the visual spectacle of the film, and advocated seeing it in as large a format as possible.^{[10][251]} Chicago-Sun Times critic Richard Roeper gave the film a rating of three and a half out of four stars, highlighting the film's visuals as "some of the most dazzling, vibrant, and gorgeous images ever seen on screen."^[252] Variety critic Owen Gleiberman praised the film as a "dizzily spectacular sequel" with "miraculously sustained" combat sequences, "scenes that will make your eyes pop, your head spin and your soul race" and "state-of-the-art 3D (never in-your-face, just images that look and feel sculpted) [that] makes the film's every underwater glide feel as experiential as one that you're literally on." On the other hand, Gleiberman felt that the story is "basic" with a "string of serviceable clichés," "bare-bones dialogue" and little dimensionality to the characters.^[253] The Atlantic critic David Sims said that the film will wow audiences and exhibit "new delights...in the alien world of Pandora" while noting that the film gets off to a slow start that is "busy with plot details as the film updates the audience on the past decade-plus of Pandoran life."^[254] Science writer Darren Naish praised the creature design and detailed alien world, saying the series would remain a "mainstay of discussions in creature design and speculative biology for some time yet".^[255]

Los Angeles Times critic Justin Chang hailed Cameron as "one of the few Hollywood visionaries who actually merits that much-abused term" and said the film will "stun most of his naysayers into silence", while also praising the film's tenderness and sentimentality.^[256] Entertainment Weekly critic Leah Greenblatt summarized her review of *The Way of Water* saying that it "created its own whole-cloth reality, a meticulous world-building as astonishing and enveloping as anything we've ever seen on screen — until that crown is passed, inevitably, in December 2024, the projected release date for *Avatar 3*."^[257]

However, some critics felt that the film was excessively long, and that the story was not substantial enough to justify the length.^[10] The New Yorker critic Anthony Lane opined: "The film is more than three hours long, some of it dangerously close to dawdling; not until the final third does Cameron apply the whip and remind us that, in the choreographing of action sequences, he remains unsurpassed."^[258] The Guardian critic Peter Bradshaw was critical of the "scathingly bland plot" and noted that, despite the shift in setting, "there isn't a single interesting visual image".^[259]

San Francisco Chronicle reviewer Mick LaSalle called it "a one-hour story rattling around in a 192-minute bag," while acknowledging that "it looks pretty good," incorporating "one of the best uses of 3-D to date, with visuals that seem to have been conceived in three dimensions."^[260] The Telegraph critic Robbie

Collin said that the film "has no plot, no stakes and atrocious dialogue" and that "for all its world-building sprawl, *The Way of Water* is a horizon-narrowing experience – the sad sight of a great filmmaker reversing up a creative cul-de-sac."^[261]

The *Toronto Star* commented that the film was poorly received by some indigenous peoples in Canada, being viewed as trying to portray the colonial struggles of an indigenous population, with reviewer Drew Hayden Taylor noting: "It's also rather conventional in its own way and somewhat boring. Predictable. I've been involved in crooked card games with a less foreseeable storyline."^[262]

Accolades

At the 95th Academy Awards, *Avatar: The Way of Water* received nominations for Best Picture, Best Sound, and Best Production Design; and won Best Visual Effects.^[263] Its other nominations include two Annie Awards (winning both),^[264] two British Academy Film Awards (winning one),^[265] five Critics' Choice Movie Awards (winning one),^[266] and two Golden Globe Awards.^[267] The National Board of Review and the American Film Institute named *The Way of Water* one of the ten-best films of 2022.^{[268][269]}

Sequels

The Way of Water is the first of four planned sequels to *Avatar*. *Avatar 3* started filming simultaneously with this film in New Zealand on September 25, 2017. Cast members from previous films, including Worthington, Saldana, Lang, Weaver, Pounder, Winslet, Curtis, Ribisi, Moore, Rao, Gerald, Dalton, Bliss, Champion, Bass, and Geljo, have all been announced to return while Oona Chaplin, Michelle Yeoh, and David Thewlis will be playing new characters.^{[270][271][272][273]}

According to Kirk Krack, Cameron said that *Avatar 3* will be 30% water, half of *The Way of Water*'s 60%, and 4 and 5 15%.^[106] The ocean scenes for the sequels were filmed simultaneously during the production of *The Way of Water*.^[274]

Although the last two sequels have been reportedly greenlit, in a November 2017 interview Cameron said: "Let's face it, if *Avatar 2* and *3* don't make enough money, there's not going to be a *4* and *5*."^[53] Thewlis later confirmed this in February 2018, stating "they're making *2* and *3*, they're gonna see if people go and see them, and then they'll make *4* and *5*."^[275] Conversely in November 2018, Weaver said, after the first two sequels had completed main photography, that she was currently "busy doing *Avatar 4* and *5*", which several media outlets interpreted as confirmation that the last two sequels had started filming.^{[276][277][278]}

In January 2019, in face of the proposed acquisition of 21st Century Fox by The Walt Disney Company, Disney CEO Bob Iger confirmed that both *Avatar 4* and *Avatar 5* are being developed but have not been officially greenlit.^[279] According to producer Landau in February 2019, Iger may have been misinterpreted. He said that *Avatar 4* and *5* "are not only [greenlit]" but also a third of *Avatar 4* has already been filmed.^[280]

Following the box-office success of *The Way of Water*, Cameron confirmed that the sequels are effectively greenlit. "It looks like with the momentum that the film has now that we'll easily pass our break even in the next few days, so it looks like I can't wiggle out of this and I'm gonna have to do these other sequels," Cameron said in January 2023, adding: "I know what I'm going to be doing the next six or seven years".^[281] It was also confirmed that Brendan Cowell will reprise his role as Captain Mick Scoresby and

will also feature the return of Payakan, the Tulkun who befriends Lo'ak.^[282] Giovanni Ribisi will reprise his role as Parker Selfridge, with his character having a bigger role in the film after his brief cameo in *The Way of Water*.^[283]

See also



Film portal



Science Fiction portal

- Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cinema
- List of films featuring extraterrestrials
- List of films with longest production time
- List of highest-grossing films
- List of most expensive films
- List of underwater science fiction works

Notes

- a. As depicted in *Avatar* (2009)

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External links

- Official website (<https://www.avatar.com/movies/avatar-the-way-of-water>) 
 - *Avatar: The Way of Water* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1630029/>) at IMDb
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