

# Land of Screen Dreams: Barbie [C1]

La musa del cinema indie Greta Gerwig ci sorprende con questa megaproduzione sulla famosa bambola di lattice. Con un cast pieno di grandi attori, il film riflette sia la polemica generazionale sia il successivo impulso progressista che ha garantito la popolarità della Barbie negli ultimi sei decenni.



The fantasy comedy film Barbie is out this month! And while the exact [plot](#) of the movie is top secret, it promises to [shatter](#) any preconceptions about the iconic fashion [doll](#) in a shower of pink [glitter](#). Rumours of a Barbie movie have been circulating for over a decade, with different directors, writers and actors connected with the project. Greta Gerwig was eventually approached to write the screenplay with her partner Noah Baumbach. Given that Gerwig is the director behind the Oscar-winning Little Women, and Baumbach successfully adapted Don DeLillo's famously "unfilmable book" White Noise last year, their agreement [to tackle](#) the controversial all-American [doll](#) immediately caused excitement.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Veteran US toy manufacturer Mattel launched the Barbie [doll](#) in 1959. She was inspired by Bild Lilli, a [sultry](#) German [doll](#) marketed to adult men, who were encouraged to buy her as 'a gift' for their girlfriends. Barbie was [envisaged](#) as a [wholesome](#) fashion toy for teens, but was also clearly designed to be an inspirational manifestation of the modern American woman. She initially arrived in a [zebra-striped swimsuit](#), but [soon enough](#) her [wardrobe](#) had expanded quite considerably. Sophisticated accessories such as cars, caravans, dream houses and all their furniture, cost into the hundreds of [dollars](#). Barbie was marketed to increasingly younger children, from three years and up ([despite](#) concerns about them [swallowing](#) the shoes), initiating some lifetime collections.

## PUSH FOR INCLUSIVITY

By the 1980s, the tall white blonde [doll](#) with her unrealistic body proportions had been [called out](#) as a bad role model for girls. Since then, Mattel has [gone out of its way](#) to introduce inclusivity into the brand. Now Barbies come in a range of natural skin tones and subtle racial features, varying body types and some disabilities: this year a Barbie was introduced with the characteristics of someone with Down's syndrome. Barbie also comes qualified in around 250 professions: from Barbie vaccinologists to violinists, from yoga teachers to renewable energy engineers.

## VARIOUS BARBIES

With Barbie, Gerwig says her challenge was to make a movie, not quite for kids (it is rated PG-13), that represented the making and evolution of Barbie as an icon, and the expansion of Barbie Land as her ideal yet fragile world. Barbie's diversity will be represented in the film, which features an amazing [ensemble cast](#), some playing different versions of Barbie and Ken, Barbie's boyfriend.

## ALL-STAR CAST

Australian actress Margot Robbie plays the signature blonde Barbie and Canadian actor Ryan Gosling plays classic Ken. Other actors involved include Emma Mackey, Dua Lipa, Issa Rae, America Ferrera, Simu Liu and Michael Cera. In a presentation for the film, Gerwig says that she and Baumbach had such fun writing the script that she agreed to direct too. It was fantastic how well things came together, as she explains. **Greta Gerwig (American accent):** We were hired to write it and Noah and I had the best time writing it. I just adore everybody who is in the film. I just love Margot Robbie so much, she's a brilliant actress. We'd shot most of the movie in London and then we went to LA to shoot. And the cast was so committed, everybody gave everything they had, they went for it...

## HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE

Margot Robbie was first involved as a producer on the film, but then it seemed natural for her to play the leading role. The costumes are based on real Barbie clothes and made lifesize by Oscar-winning designer Jacqueline Durran. So eye-catching were the outfits that filming outdoors in LA was quite an experience, says Robbie. **Margot Robbie (Australian accent):** We look like we're laughing [and] having fun but we were mortified. I mean, I knew that we had some exteriors to shoot in LA, I knew once you're doing exteriors there's probably going to be a little crowd of people: we stand out in those outfits. So I knew there'd be a little bit of attention and probably some photos would get out there, but not like it did: it was mad! Hundreds of people.

## THE KEN LIFE

Actor Will Ferrell, who plays a Mattel CEO in the movie, has called the film "an amazing comment on male patriarchy and women in society." Barbie was pioneering as a female role model; as her material wealth boomed and her careers took off, Ken remained homeless and jobless. Ryan Gosling leapt at the chance to play Barbie's trophy boyfriend, who was first introduced in

1961 and quickly established himself as a gay icon. Gosling says that above all the role required humility. **Ryan Gosling (Canadian accent):**I was surprised how some people were clutching their pearls about my Ken as though they ever thought about Ken for a second. They never played with Ken! He's an accessory: that's the Ken life.

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# Glossary

- **gone out of its way** = fare di tutto
- **homeless and jobless** = senza casa e disoccupato
- **plot** = trama
- **shatter** = frantumare
- **soon enough** = molto presto
- **to tackle** = affrontare
- **wholesome** = sana, genuina
- **envisaged** = concepire
- **committed** = impegnato
- **boomed** = crescere a dismisura
- **hired** = ingaggiare
- **doll** = bambola
- **wardrobe** = guardaroba
- **eye-catching** = appariscenti
- **zebra-striped swimsuit** = costume zebrato
- **costumes** = costumi
- **despite** = malgrado
- **swallowing** = ingoiare
- **glitter** = brillantini
- **took off** = decollare
- **leapt** = fare un balzo
- **called out** = attirare l'attenzione
- **ensemble cast** = insieme di attori
- **I had the best time** = divertirsi molto
- **went for it** = mettercela tutta
- **sultry** = sensuale
- **leading role** = ruolo da protagonista