

SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE



Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse is a 2018 American computer-animated superhero film featuring the Marvel Comics character Miles Morales, produced by Columbia Pictures and Sony Pictures Animation in association with Marvel. It is the first animated film in the Spider-Man franchise. Directed by Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey, and Rodney Rothman (in Persichetti and Rothman’s feature directorial debuts) from a screenplay by Phil Lord and Rothman, it stars Shameik Moore as Miles Morales / Spider-Man, alongside the voices of Jake Johnson, Hailee Steinfeld, Mahershala Ali, Brian Tyree Henry, Lily Tomlin, Luna Lauren Velez, John Mulaney, Kimiko Glenn, Nicolas Cage, and Liev Schreiber. Set in a shared multiverse called the “Spider-Verse”, the film’s story follows Miles Morales of Earth-1610 as he becomes the new Spider-Man and joins other Spider-People from various dimensions to save New York City from the Kingpin.



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PLOT



New York City teenager Miles Morales struggles to live up to the expectations of his father, police officer Jefferson Davis, who sees Spider-Man as a menace. Miles adjusts to boarding school, and visits his uncle Aaron Davis, who takes him to an abandoned subway station to paint graffiti. Miles is bitten by a radioactive spider and gains spider-like abilities similar to Spider-Man.



Returning to the station, Miles discovers a “Super-Collider” built by Kingpin, who hopes to access parallel universes to bring back his dead wife and son (whose deaths he blames on Spider-Man). Miles watches as Spider-Man attempts to disable the collider while fighting Kingpin’s enforcers, Green Goblin and Prowler. Spider-Man saves Miles, but Green Goblin shoves Spider-Man into the collider, causing an explosion that kills Green Goblin and severely wounds Spider-Man. He gives Miles a USB flash drive to disable the collider, warning that the machine could destroy the city if reactivated. Watching in horror as Kingpin kills Spider-Man, Miles flees from Prowler.

As the city mourns Spider-Man’s death, Miles tries to honor his legacy and become New York’s next superhero. Trying out his newfound abilities, he damages the USB drive. At Spider-Man’s grave, Miles meets Peter B. Parker, an older, worn-down version of Spider-Man from another dimension. Upon meeting him, Miles discovers his ability to emit a bio-electric “venom” blast. Peter reluctantly agrees to train Miles in exchange for help stealing data to create a new drive. They infiltrate Kingpin’s research facility, and Miles discovers he has the power to turn invisible. They are confronted by scientist Olivia Octavius, who determines that Peter will die from cellular decay if he remains in their dimension.



Chased through the laboratory and surrounding forest by Octavius, Miles and Peter are rescued by Gwen Stacy, a Spider-Woman from another dimension. They find Peter’s aunt, May Parker, who is sheltering more heroes from other dimensions – Spider-Man Noir, Peni Parker, and Spider-Ham – who are also deteriorating. Miles offers to disable the collider so the others can return home, but the heroes tell him he lacks experience. Distraught, Miles retreats to Aaron’s home, where he discovers Aaron is Prowler. Miles returns to May’s house, where Peni has completed the new drive; he is followed by Kingpin, Prowler, Octavius, Scorpion, and Tombstone. In the ensuing brawl, Miles is captured by Aaron and unmask himself. Unwilling to kill his own nephew, Aaron is mortally shot by Kingpin. Miles flees with Aaron, who tells him to keep going before dying of his injuries. Jefferson arrives on the scene and Miles escapes, leading his father to believe Spider-Man killed Aaron.

The heroes regroup at Miles’ dorm. Peter restrains Miles to ensure his safety and leaves with the others, choosing to sacrifice himself by staying behind and deactivating the collider. Jefferson arrives outside Miles’ door and, assuming he does not want to speak to him, apologizes for his mistakes. Miles masters his powers and goes to May to acquire web-shooters and repaint one of Peter’s suits. He joins the heroes, defeating Kingpin’s enforcers and using the USB drive to send them home. Kingpin fights Miles, attracting the attention of Jefferson, who realizes Spider-Man is not the enemy and encourages him. Miles paralyzes Kingpin with his venom blast and throws him at the kill switch, destroying the collider.

Kingpin and his enforcers are arrested and Jefferson recognizes Spider-Man as a hero while getting evidence that Kingpin killed Aaron. Miles embraces the responsibilities of his new life. Back in their home dimensions, the heroes return to their lives; Peter prepares to fix his relationship with Mary Jane, and Gwen finds a way to contact Miles across dimensions.

In another dimension, Miguel O’Hara travels to a 1967 New York and argues with that universe’s Spider-Man.

CHARACTERS & CAST



CHARACTERS & CAST



ANIMATION & DESIGN



The film’s animation was handled by Sony Pictures Imageworks, who had handled nearly all of Sony Pictures Animation’s prior films, as well as visual effects for all prior Spider-Man films. According to Lord and Miller, they wanted the film to feel like the viewer had “walked inside a comic book,” and were excited about telling the story in a way they believed the live action films could not. During initial development, the directors worked with a single animator, Alberto Mielgo, to establish the film’s look. This number eventually grew to 60 animators during production. It became clear that they could not complete the film on time, so the crew was expanded further. The number had reached 142 animators by August 2018 and at one point to 177 animators, the largest animation crew that Sony Pictures Imageworks had ever used for a film. Animation work was completed in October 2018.

The CGI animation for the film was combined with “line work and painting and dots and all sorts of comic book techniques,” to make it look like it was created by hand, which was described as “a living painting.” This was achieved by artists taking rendered frames from the CGI animators and working on top of them in 2D, with the goal of making every frame of the film “look like a comic panel.”



To make the film feel more like a comic book, it was animated without motion blur, instead using an older technique called motion smearing, first seen in the 1942 Looney Tunes short The Dover Boys. The frame rate varied between 24 images (animating on ones) and 12 images (animating on twos) per second, the latter case using the same image twice. The producers described the effect as making the animation “crunchy.” Sometimes, the two frame rates would be used in the same scene, such as when Miles and Peter Parker swing through the forest; Miles was animated at 12 frames to show his inexperience while Peter was animated at 24 frame to give him smoother movement. To create depth of field, another technique was used: deliberately misaligned colors, as if the colors had been slightly misprinted as happens with ink printing in real comics. Other methods to make the film look more like a comic were halftones and Ben-Day dots to create colors, tones and gradients, crisscrossed lines to create texture and shadows, Kirby Krackle to create the illusion of energy, motion lines to show movement, and onomatopoeia, words on the image, to represent sounds and motion.

Rather than using animation principles like squash and stretch, the animators came up with substitute versions, “so that in texture and feel it felt different, but it still achieved the same goal — to either feel weight or anticipation or impact or things like that.” Different comic styles were emulated throughout the film for the different characters, with Spider-Gwen’s animation based on the designs in her comics, Spider-Man Noir having a black-and-white color scheme, and Spider-Ham being designed as “cartoony” as possible.

ACCOLADES

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse won Best Animated Feature Film at the 76th Golden Globe Awards, and won the same award at the 24th Critics' Choice Awards and the 91st Academy Awards, among several other awards and nominations. It was the first non-Disney or Pixar film to win the Oscar for Best Animated Feature since *Rango* (2011), becoming the 6th non-Disney/Pixar film to win the award.

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse appeared on many critics' top ten lists. According to Metacritic it appeared in first place on 5 lists. Critics at New York Magazine listed it at 9 on their list of the best films of the decade.

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