Cinema is at the heart of public entertainment, however, arguably the art of cinema is disappearing. Cinema cannot be accredited to one individual’s name but the Edison Company’s demonstration of the Kinetoscope prototype in 1891 changed the landscape of film dramatically.

After 132 years and in a new era of digitalisation, a postmodernist audience seek out content that possibly has no theatrical window and suggestively this is a result of the pandemic. Post-pandemic, as we reflect on the effects of the lockdowns, it is evident that Covid-19 had a profound effect on storytelling with the global box office suffering as a result. Dropping by billions of dollars, the Los Angeles box office was projected to fall by 20%. This proved to be detrimental to artistic perspectives, film culture and the future of cinema as this box office acts as a key movie market. With cinema having to adapt to a new epoch of individual choice, the visibility of film has grown to new heights but this visibility is seen on television and primarily on streaming services. Streaming culture has prospered due to the easy access and convenience for modern audiences and it appears this will continue. The increase of consumer choice due to this has meant that cinemas will have to be innovative, and whilst this is not an inherently bad thing, once studios focus on commercial viability, film becomes less of an art form and serves only for monetary purposes.

One of the most recognised filmmakers, Martin Scorsese who has received many accolades for his “culturally, historically or aesthetically significant” work (as noted by the Library of Congress), has spoken about the calibre of cinema today and the lack of cultural significance it possesses. In an interview with Empire Magazine, Scorsese controversially slated the Marvel Universe for its lack of cinematic character. “It isn’t the cinema of human beings trying to convey emotional, psychological experiences to another human being.” Scorsese said. He continued by saying, “We shouldn’t be invaded by it. We need cinemas to step up and show films that are narrative films.” Kevin Feige, the primary producer of the Marvel Cinematic Universe franchise, acknowledged Scorsese’s critique and responded with “I would much rather be in a room full of engaged fans.” This is the perfect exemplification of subjectivity when it comes to art and cinema. Both perspectives are as valid as each other but it does plant a seed for another suggestion that has not been considered, which is the notion of cinematic evolution.

Perhaps cinema is evolving due to the necessity for adaptation and change. Streaming and participatory culture have benefited cinema especially during the pandemic and therefore it may be pessimistic to suggest that cinema is dying. It is possible that the panic about the extinction of cinema relies upon the outdated view of what cinema and film are and fails to recognise what cinema truly is: a chronicle of genuine human emotion and experiences.