The infographic (left page)

Summer

Most films — especially summer blockbusters — peak on their opening weekend. The top five films last year, measured by box office receipts, opened in May or July.

"Spider-Man 3"

beat box-office records for its opening weekend and, when it closed, nearly half of its domestic ticket sales had come from those three days.

Color Key

Total domestic gross, through Feb. 20, 2008.

$0   70   133   200   275   337 mil.

Fall

The revenue big summer hits brought in as they dwindled made up a substantial portion of ticket sales last fall. From Sept. 7 to 13, half of all box office receipts came from movies that had been open three weeks or longer.

Given the staying power of the blockbusters, some analysts argue that midrange movies like October's

"Elizabeth: The Golden Age"

might have done better in past years, when there were fewer films competing for mainstream viewers.

Winter

In the fourth quarter, more Oscar contenders enter the mix. These films often spread more slowly than other movies.
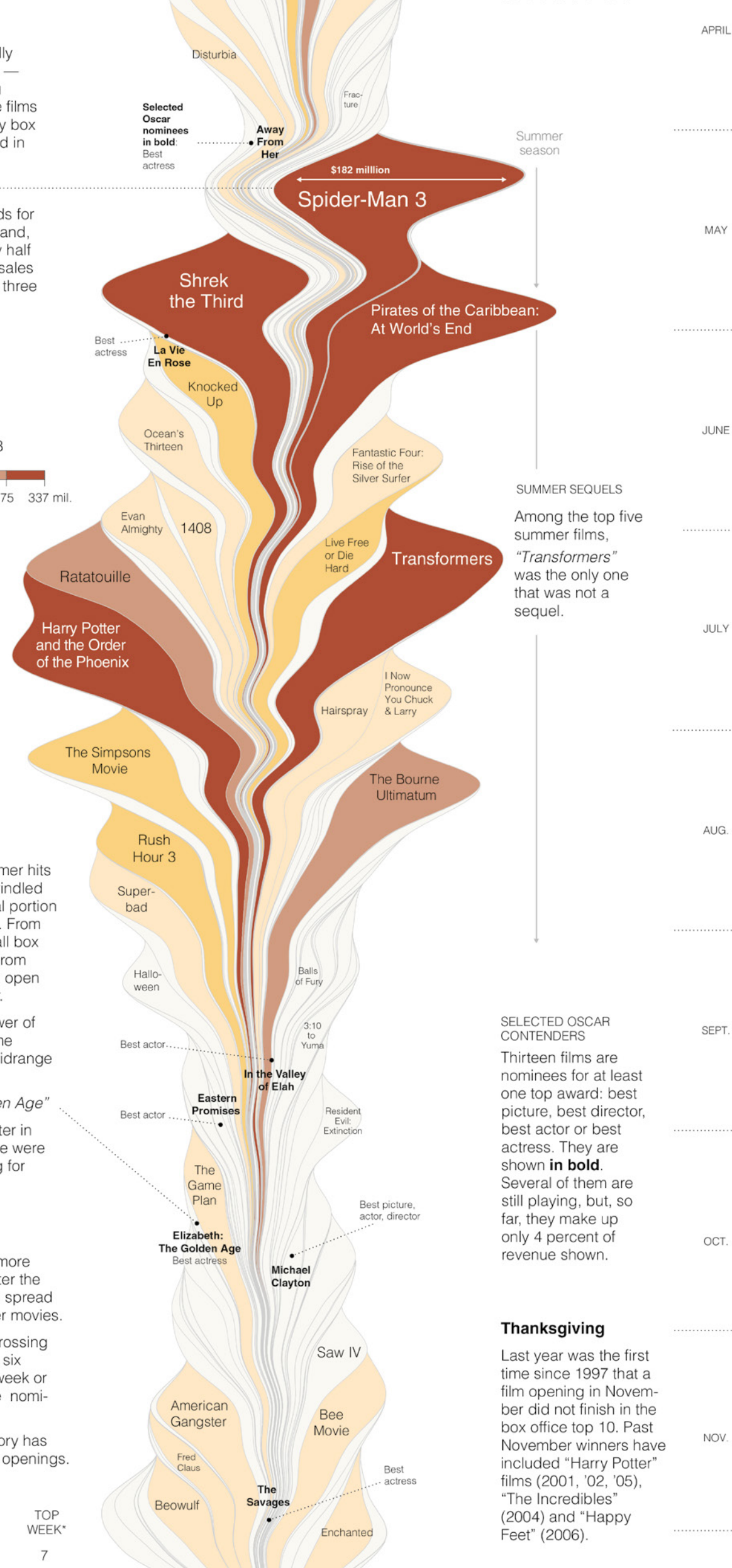
Among the 100 top-grossing movies last year, only six peaked in their third week or later. Four of them are nominees for best picture.

But recent Oscar history has favored films with big openings.

NOMINEES FOR BEST PICTURE   TOP WEEK*

Atonement   7

Selected Oscar nominees in bold: Best actress

Disturbia
Fracture
Away From Her — Best actress
$182 million
Spider-Man 3
Summer season
Shrek the Third
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End
Best actress — La Vie En Rose
Knocked Up
Ocean's Thirteen
Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer
Evan Almighty   1408
Ratatouille
Live Free or Die Hard
Transformers

SUMMER SEQUELS

Among the top five summer films, *"Transformers"* was the only one that was not a sequel.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix
I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry
Hairspray
The Simpsons Movie
The Bourne Ultimatum
Rush Hour 3
Superbad
Halloween
Balls of Fury
3:10 to Yuma
Best actor — In the Valley of Elah
Eastern Promises — Best actor
Resident Evil: Extinction

SELECTED OSCAR CONTENDERS

Thirteen films are nominees for at least one top award: best picture, best director, best actor or best actress. They are shown **in bold**. Several of them are still playing, but, so far, they make up only 4 percent of revenue shown.

The Game Plan
Elizabeth: The Golden Age — Best actress
Michael Clayton — Best picture, actor, director
Saw IV
American Gangster
Bee Movie
Fred Claus
Beowulf
The Savages — Best actress
Enchanted

Thanksgiving

Last year was the first time since 1997 that a film opening in November did not finish in the box office top 10. Past November winners have included "Harry Potter" films (2001, '02, '05), "The Incredibles" (2004) and "Happy Feet" (2006).

APRIL
MAY
JUNE
JULY
AUG.
SEPT.
OCT.
NOV.

Article (right page)

Amanda Cox is a driving force behind the *New York Times'* presentation of visual information. To make her infographics, she focuses always on the unique characteristics of the data, which often yields profound insights. Her interactive visualizations display everything from election results to long-term socioeconomic developments in a comprehensible and accessible way.

Amanda Cox

Amanda Cox was a mere intern at the *New York Times* when she stood up to an external contributor who had wrongly changed a definition on a graphic: she stopped him in his tracks. The members of the paper's graphics team, headed by Steve Duenes, were impressed by this display of courage in someone so young. They were not the only ones. Dean Baquet, the newspaper's executive editor, remembered the episode when announcing Cox's appointment in 2016 as editor of *The Upshot*, a microsite launched in 2014 that provides analysis on politics, policy, and daily life. Baquet began his announcement by saying: "She's creative and collegial and has a rare force of intellect. She is responsible for some of the most innovative work the *Times* has done over the last decade, and her input has lifted the work of dozens of *Times* journalists."

Cox interned at the *New York Times* in the summer of 2004 and was hired as graphics editor the following year. Her work on *The Upshot* began concurrently with the start of the project, as she helped shape its vision and do the reporting. At first, Cox was torn about making the change from reporter to editor. "There's a little bit of self-loathing amid the excitement, like somehow being a reporter is more important. But keeping a beginner's mind is probably healthy," she said.

When she was a child, Cox's parents, both auditors, subscribed to the *Wall Street Journal* and *Newsweek,* which she remembers reading a fair amount. An aptitude test indicated that she would make an excellent air traffic controller, but she was leaning toward actuarial science.

In the end, she studied mathematics and economics at St. Olaf College, a small liberal arts school in Minnesota. After graduating, she worked for two years as an assistant researcher at the Federal Reserve. "My favorite thing at the Fed was making charts," she admits. Later, she earned a master's in statistics from the University of Washington. Unsure of which career path to follow, she applied to several different jobs and companies in order to see which of the rejection letters upset her the most. "I thought it might reveal some hidden preferences," she explained. Like an insightful graphic, the initial "no" from the *New York Times* pointed the way.

In 2009, the *New York Times* won the prize for Best of Show at the 19th Malofiej Awards for the same infographic in both the print and digital media categories: "Ebb and Flow at the Box Office," which tracked the earnings of several films, was produced by none other than Amanda Cox. The graphic, which she does not consider so significant today, triggered a definite trend. It was a minor revolution that others have repeatedly imitated. She went on to produce a visually similar piece in 2015: "How Different Groups Spend Their Day" earned a Silver Medal at the 24th Malofiej Awards.

If asked which of her graphics is her favorite, she prefers the ones she made back when she and her team had the nerve to put something unorthodox on the paper's homepage, such as "Flying Boxes," in 2008. The piece analyzed the race between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton for the Democratic Party nomination. For Cox, it's one of a kind. "I can remember feeling like we had

The New York Times
Ebb and Flow at the Box Office
Amanda Cox, Lee Byron

This graphic won top prize at the Malofiej Awards in 2009 in both print and digital, and its unique look gave rise to its own school of style. It gives box office data for the top films of 2007 in the U.S. The length of time a film was in theaters is shown vertically and its income horizontally.