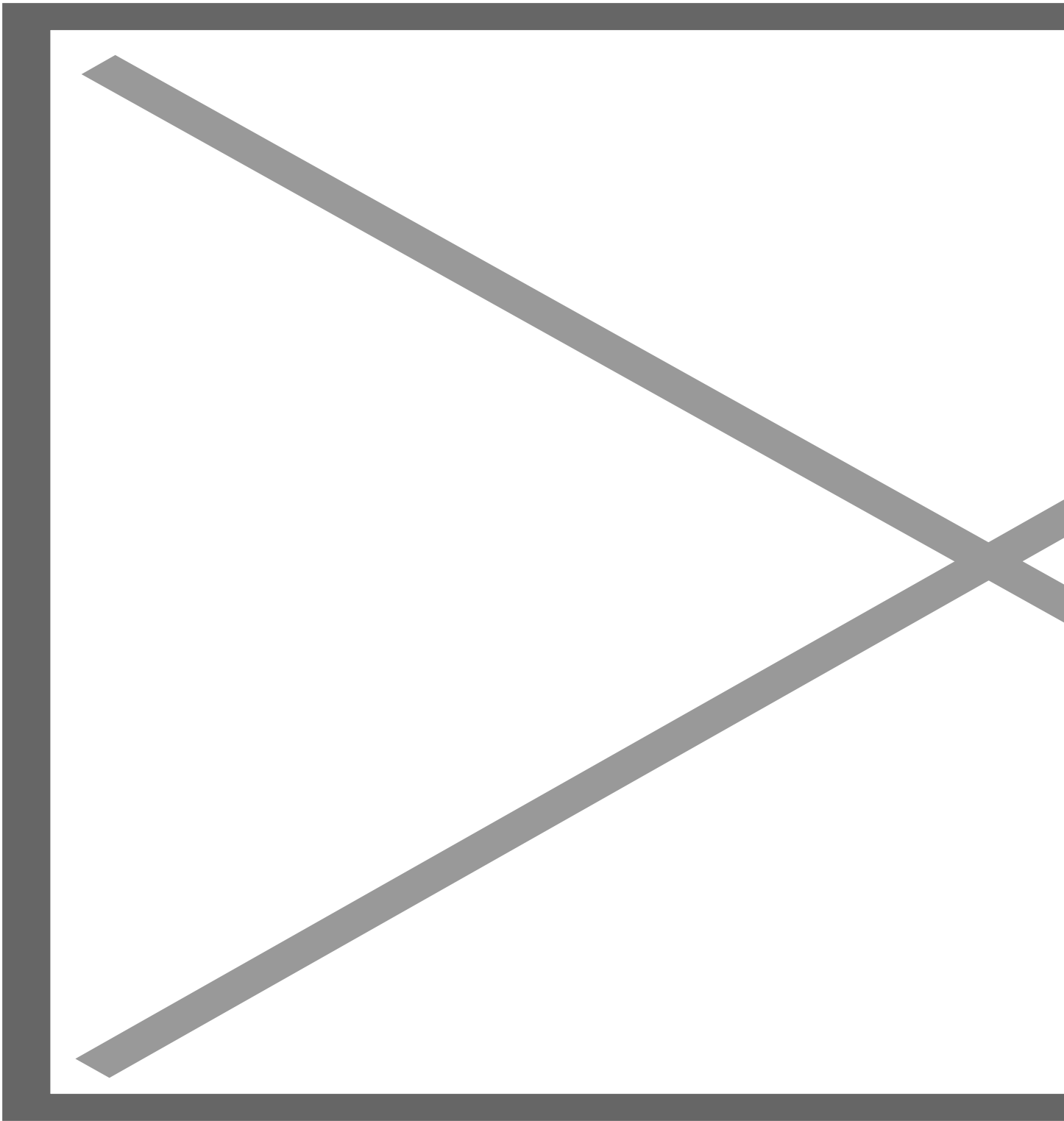


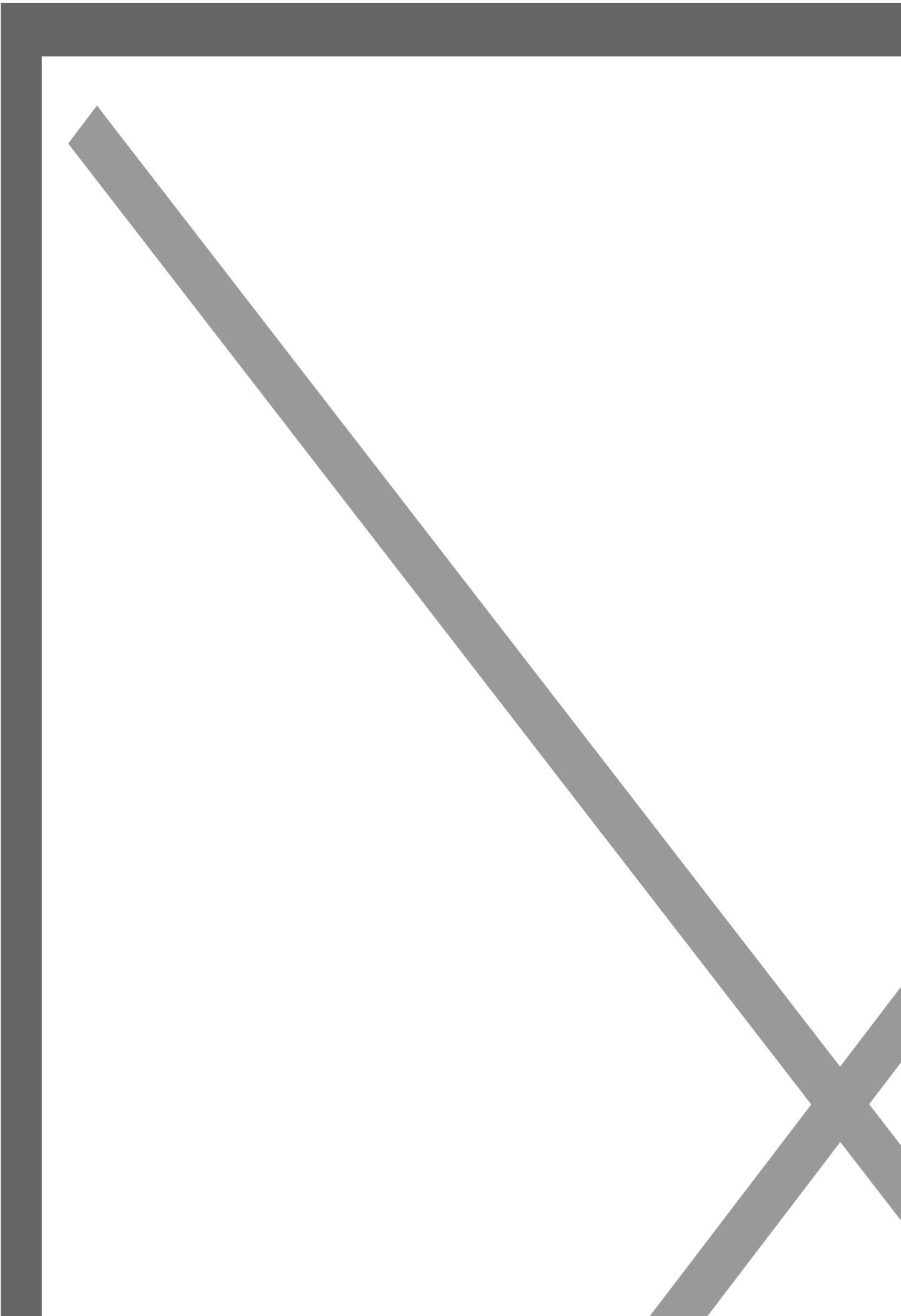
‘Avatar: The Way of Water’ sequel rings up USD 17 million in US debut night

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: Director James Cameron’s long-awaited ‘Avatar: The Way of Water’ pulled in USD 17 million at US and Canadian box offices from its first showings on Thursday night, distributor Walt Disney Co DIS.N said. With international sales, the sequel to the highest-grossing movie of all time has generated USD 50.4 million at theaters around the globe since the movie started rolling out on Wednesday.



Thursday's domestic tally was below recent Disney release 'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever', a Marvel superhero film that racked up USD 28 million on its first evening in November. Hollywood's big question is whether 'The Way of Water' can recoup its massive production and marketing costs. Studios split ticket sales with theaters, and Cameron told GQ magazine that 'The Way of Water' will need to make USD 2 billion just to break even. Sales from first-night screenings do not always correlate with the final tally, particularly around the Christmas holiday season.



Box office experts predict 'The Way of Water' will play in theaters for several weeks, as the original movie did, which will be key to earning back its budget. The sequel should end the opening weekend with at least USD 140 million from domestic theaters, forecasters said. "The Way of Water" was released 13 years after the first film wowed audiences with pioneering 3D technology. It remains the all-time box office champion with USD 2.9 billion in global ticket sales. In the new installment, actors Sam Worthington and Zoe Saldana return as Jake Sully and Neytiri 10 years later, now parents of five children. Their peaceful life is interrupted when the Sky People, the Na'vi name for humans, return to go after Jake. The Sully family seeks refuge with the oceanic Metkayina clan and must quickly learn the ways of the water to survive.