

Candidate 4 evidence

The Fallen Titan: What Happened to Marvel?

The Marvel cinematic universe used to be an unstoppable titan when it came to making movies, from *Avengers Infinity War* (coming in at \$2 billion mark) *Avengers End Game* (grossing a colossal \$2.799 billion) . But now it seems that they cannot make any profit on their movies. How did this happen? Excessive releases. Worse quality. Poorer story-lines. The list is endless.

It is undeniable that they are churning out too many films. The last seventeen years have taken viewers through three phases of the *Infinity Saga*. We are now on phase four - the *Multiverse Saga*. Before Phase 4, Marvel would usually release two movies a year - a good thing, because it meant that every movie got the required amount of time to ensure decent quality. But recently they have been releasing 3 or 4 movies every year, which has caused fatigue within the fan base, which in turn has caused fewer people to watch the movies.

Due to excessive releases, the quality of the movies has taken a massive hit. The CGI is significantly worse, despite having a similar budget to the older movies, because the VFX artists simply do not have enough time to make sure the CGI is as polished as it can be. An example of this would be *Antman and Wasp Quantomania*: the CGI and green screening are absolutely abysmal in this movie as they didn't give the VFX artists enough time. In a *Los Angeles Times* review, Justin Chang took issue with the Quantum Realm's "surreally designed yet gloppy-looking orange landscape." And as a result, it is one of only two films ever to score "rotten" in Rotten Tomatoes "Tomatometer" scale.

That's to say nothing of the storylines and character development. In the old Marvel movies, we had characters that we actually cared about and were beautifully written, for example Iron Man and Captain America, who had years of development, making them rich and three dimensional. Now the characters are bland and boring. Thor. She-Hulk. Gorr the God-Butcherer, for goodness' sake. The storylines of the new movies are also significantly worse than those of the old; for example, *Thor Love and Thunder* tries to be a comedy movie, while also having one of the darkest villains from the comics as the main antagonist. In defter hands, it could work, but the jokes feel forced and unnatural and do not blend well with the dark and serious scenes. They also turned the protagonist, Thor, who is meant to be a serious character and a 1500-year-old Norse god, into an absolute joke, completely ruining previous character development. And don't even get me started on the screaming goats. This movie was so bad that Chris Hemsworth himself, the actor for Thor, said that "This is the kind of movie a seven-year-old would make". All this made the movie an absolute mess and not entertaining in the slightest.

Another reason why Marvel seems to be failing in the box office is because of Disney plus. The rise of streaming platforms has drastically changed how people watch movies. Before people would go to the cinema to watch the latest Marvel movie, making it an experience. But now most people will just wait until it comes out on Disney plus - why? Because most of the time in Marvel's current state it is not worth spending the money on an overpriced movie ticket. Forty to fifty percent of Marvel fans would much rather watch a movie in the comfort of their own home, rather than spending more money to watch a movie that is probably going to be pretty bad.

The drop in quality has been a slap in the face to the fan base. People have - rightly - started to criticise Marvel online, which only leads to an even larger decrease in ticket sales, as fans of Marvel will trust what other fans have to say about the movies. With their reputation in free-fall, this will create difficulty in attracting new audiences, along with damaging the reputation of future movies. If one movie in a franchise gets bad reviews, fans will see this as a reason to not watch the next movie in cinemas.

When people are talking about Marvel movies, two words often show up, 'superhero fatigue.' But I would not call it superhero fatigue, I would call it bad writing fatigue, as there *are* still superhero films and TV shows that are successful. *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* was a massive success which made over six hundred and ninety million dollars worldwide on a one hundred to two hundred-million-dollar budget for Sony. *The Batman* was an even bigger success, making over seven hundred and seventy-one million dollars against a one hundred to two hundred-million-dollar budget for DC. In terms of TV shows, *Invincible* Season 2 had a much higher viewership than the first season, while *The Boys* Season 4 had a twenty percent higher viewership than Season 3. *The Penguin* TV show, which is in the same universe as the previously mentioned Batman movie, was a massive success with both critics and fans alike. So far *Invincible* Season 3 has been incredible. Though at this current moment in time it's not finished, I'm very excited to see the season finale for Season 3, and the show has a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes. So what does this tell us? That superhero movies and TV shows are still loved by many; the movies and TV shows just have to be good.

But there *are* several ways in which Marvel could fix themselves, one of them being focusing on the depth and quality of movies. We need to go back to the quality of the movies before Phase 4, which had compelling character arcs that would continue over many phases, and storylines that connected to each other as well as upholding the same standard as the movies that came before them. Another thing they could do is balancing the humour with emotion. Marvel has always had humour in their movies, but the previous Marvel movies had the perfect balance of comedic and emotional scenes; for example *Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol 2* has plenty of funny moments, but it also has a very sad moment when Yondu sacrifices his spacesuit, and by extension his life, to save Star Lord as the planet is destroying itself. These are the main things that Marvel could do to reignite the flame that they have blown out.

So, is it possible to fix what's happened to Marvel? Marvel has clearly realised that they have messed up because in 2024 they only released one movie, and the movie that they released, *Deadpool and Wolverine*, was a massive hit, making over 1.3 billion dollars, and was loved by the fans and critics. The Disney plus TV show *Agatha All Along* was well received, and *X-Men '97* was loved by fans of the original show. From set leaks and rumours, people are excited to see the first ever superhero team, The Fantastic Four, come to cinemas in the movie *The Fantastic Four First Steps*, and some people are even saying it is their most anticipated movie of the year. The trailers for *Thunderbolts** have got fans excited for the future of the Marvel cinematic universe once again. The new Marvel animated TV show, *Your Friendly Neighbourhood Spider-man*, was a pleasant surprise with the fans, who weren't expecting this show to be very good (me being

one of them), with some even saying that it's up there with one of the best spiderman shows. I am glad that Marvel has finally learned from their mistakes, even if it took them a couple of years, because I want to them to improve. I want them to succeed. I want to see good Marvel movies again. Could it be that the unstoppable titan has returned?

1309 words

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