

IS THIS THE END OF A MARVEL-IOUS ERA?

BY KYLE DOUGLAS
PHOTO EDITOR

Pivotal. That is how fans would describe the beginning of Marvel's MCU with Robert Downey Jr.'s *Iron Man*. While it did not beat Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* as the best comic book movie of the year, for the first time, Marvel had truly attracted audiences, comic fans and casual moviegoers alike becoming a box office success. As fans would see, *Iron Man* was only the beginning of a larger arc spanning over a decade.

Yet, with the release of *Avengers Endgame*, the culmination of everything the Marvel Cinematic Universe had built up to until that point, fans were left with the question: What next?

Should the MCU continue? *Spiderman Far From Home* would be the next movie to release, allowing for some characters to feel the repercussions of the previous movie, but with the COVID-19 pandemic, Marvel would change their format.

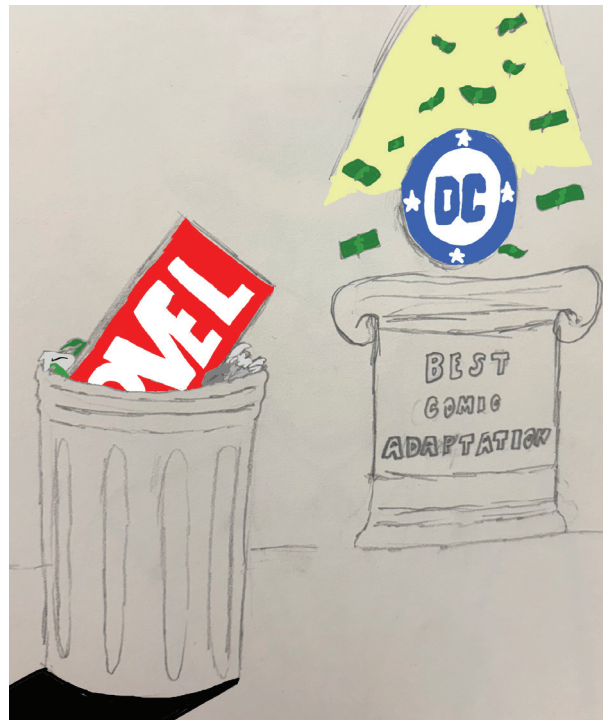
Multiple shows would be released on streaming services receiving a mix of reviews before Marvel began to release movies once again, yet the feeling was never quite the same. A few notable movies would be released, such as *Spiderman : No Way Home* or *Guardians of the Galaxy Volume 3*, but sales would continue to decline along with reviews. Up until this year, 2025, in which Marvel's movies have been met with genuinely positive reviews.

Captain America: Brave New World was met with mostly positive reviews, but financially,

it flopped, becoming one of the fourth worst Marvel movies in the box office. Yet, to many's surprise, the next movie *Thunderbolts** was a critically acclaimed movie, receiving 88% from critics and 93% from audiences on Rotten Tomatoes. Still, it was a critical flop. Finally, *Fantastic Four First Steps* released in July, and it was even more beloved than *Thunderbolts**. Yet, currently, its box office reports continue to decline, as in its second week it was down 80%, along with, DC's *Superman* far surpassing *Fantastic Four's* current sales.

This marked the first time since 2008 in which DC passed Marvel in the box office. Now, Marvel's last chance of redemption is a large turn in the box office, or *Avengers Doomsday* and *Spiderman: Brand New Day* in 2026. Is it time to put away the

cinematic mask for Marvel and start anew?



Graphic by Kyle Douglas