

= Superman in film =

The fictional character Superman , an American comic book superhero in DC Comics publications , has appeared in movies almost since his inception . He debuted in cinemas in a series of animated shorts beginning in 1941 , and then starred in two movie serials in 1948 and 1950 . An independent studio , Lippert Pictures , released the first Superman feature film , Superman and the Mole Men , starring George Reeves , in 1951 .

Ilya and Alexander Salkind and Pierre Spengler purchased the Superman film rights in 1974 . After numerous scripts , Richard Donner was hired to direct the film , filming Superman (1978) and Superman II (1980) simultaneously . Donner had already shot eighty percent of Superman II with Christopher Reeve before it was decided to finish shooting the first film . The Salkinds fired Donner after Superman 's release , and commissioned Richard Lester as the director to finish Superman II . Lester also returned for Superman III (1983) , and the Salkinds further produced the 1984 spin off Supergirl before selling the rights to Cannon Films , resulting in the critically panned Superman IV : The Quest for Peace (1987) . Ilya Salkind commissioned a fifth Superman script before Warner Bros. acquired the rights entirely in 1993 .

Over the course of eleven years Warner Bros. would develop and then cancel Tim Burton 's Superman Lives , which would have starred Nicolas Cage , Wolfgang Petersen 's Batman vs. Superman , and the J. J. Abrams scripted Superman : Flyby , which went between directors Joseph " McG " Nichols and Brett Ratner . The studio hired Bryan Singer to take over the franchise in 2004 , releasing Superman Returns in 2006 , which starred newcomer Brandon Routh . Donner 's director 's cut for Superman II was also released that year . Despite positive reviews , Warner Bros. was disappointed with the financial performance of Superman Returns , and canceled Singer 's proposed sequel . The studio nearly went in production of a Justice League film with George Miller directing and D. J. Cotrona as Superman , but it was shelved in 2008 and the film series was rebooted in 2013 with Man of Steel , directed by Zack Snyder and produced by Christopher Nolan . Henry Cavill reprised the role of Superman in 2016 with Batman v Superman : Dawn of Justice .

= = Films = =

= = Early films and serials = =

= = = Paramount cartoon shorts = = =

Superman first appeared in cinemas in a series of 17 theatrical animated shorts from between 1941 and 1943 . They were released by Paramount Pictures . Of those seventeen , nine were produced by Fleischer Studios and further eight by its successor , Famous Studios .

= = = Film serials = = =

The first appearances of Superman in live @-@ action film were in two serials for Columbia Pictures : Superman in 1948 and Atom Man vs. Superman in 1950 , both starring Kirk Alyn and Noel Neill .

= = = Superman and the Mole Men (1951) = = =

Superman and the Mole Men is a 1951 superhero film starring George Reeves as Superman and Phyllis Coates as Lois Lane . The film was produced by Barney Sarecky and directed by Lee Sholem with the original screenplay by Richard Fielding (a pseudonym for Robert Maxwell and Whitney Ellsworth) . Shot on a low budget , it served as a trial run for the syndicated TV series Adventures of Superman , for which it became a pilot two @-@ part episode titled " The Unknown

People " .

= = Christopher Reeve series (1978 ? 1987) = =

= = = Superman (1978) = = =

In 1973 , producer Ilya Salkind convinced his father Alexander to buy the rights to Superman . They hired Mario Puzo to pen a two @-@ film script , and negotiated with Steven Spielberg to direct , though Alexander Salkind rejected him as Jaws went over budget . Marlon Brando and Gene Hackman signed on to play Jor @-@ El and Lex Luthor respectively , and Guy Hamilton was hired to direct . However , Brando was faced with an obscenity lawsuit in Italy over Last Tango in Paris , and Hamilton was unable to shoot in England as he had violated his tax payments . The Salkinds hired Richard Donner to direct the film . Donner hired Tom Mankiewicz to polish the script , giving it a serious feel with Christ @-@ like overtones . Christopher Reeve was cast as Superman , having initially failed to impress the Salkinds before bulking up . Brando meanwhile , despite spending less than two weeks on the shoot , and not even reading the script until then , earned \$ 3 @.@ 7 million up front , plus 11 @.@ 75 % of the gross profits from the film . The film was a success both critically and commercially , being released during the Christmas season of 1978 ; it did not have much competition , leading the producers to believe that this was one factor in the film 's success .

= = = Superman II (1980) = = =

Shooting of the two films was marred by Donner 's bad relationship with the Salkinds , with Richard Lester acting as mediator . With the film going over @-@ budget , the filmmakers decided to temporarily cease production of II and move that film 's climax into the first film . Despite Superman 's success , Donner did not return to finish Superman II , and it was completed with Lester , who gave the film a more tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek tone . The Salkinds also cut Brando for financial reasons , while John Williams quit as composer due to turning his attention to other projects . Superman II was another financial and critical success , despite stiff competition with Raiders of the Lost Ark in the same year . In 2006 , after receiving many requests for his own version of Superman II , Richard Donner and producer Michael Thau produced their own cut of the film and released it on November 28 , 2006 . The new version of the film received positive response from critics and the stars of the original film .

= = = Superman III (1983) = = =

For the third installment , Ilya Salkind wrote a treatment that expanded the film 's scope to a cosmic scale , introducing the villains Brainiac and Mr. Mxyzptlk , as well as Supergirl . The original outline featured a father @-@ daughter relationship between Brainiac and Supergirl , and a romance between Superman and Supergirl , even though the two are cousins in the comics . Warner Bros. rejected it and created their own Superman III film that co @-@ starred Richard Pryor as computer wizard Gus Gorman , who under the manipulation of a millionaire magnate , creates a form of Kryptonite that turns the Man of Steel into an evil self . The retooled script pared Brainiac down into the film 's evil " ultimate computer " . Despite the film 's success , fans were disappointed with the film , in particular with Pryor 's performance diluting the serious tone of the previous films , as well as controversy over the depiction of the evil Superman . Salkind 's rejected proposal was later released online in 2007 .

= = = Supergirl (1984) = = =

Upon gaining the rights for the film Superman , Alexander Salkind and his son , Ilya Salkind , also purchased the rights to the character of Superman 's cousin Supergirl . Supergirl was released in

1984 as a spin off of the Reeve films ; Reeve was slated to have a cameo but he ultimately backed out of the production . It stars Helen Slater in her first motion picture in the title role , while Faye Dunaway (who received top billing) played the primary villain , Selena ; the film also featured Marc McClure reprising his role as Jimmy Olsen . Even though the film performed poorly at the box office , Helen Slater was nominated for a Saturn Award .

== Superman IV : The Quest for Peace (1987) ==

Cannon Films picked up an option for a fourth Superman / Reeve film , with Reeve reprising the role due to his interest in the film 's topic regarding nuclear weapons . However , Cannon decided to cut the budget of Superman IV : The Quest for Peace from \$ 35 million to \$ 15 million , with poor special effects and heavy re editing leading to the film 's poor reception . Warner Bros. decided to give the franchise a break following the negative reception of the last two Superman films .

== Abandoned and cancelled projects ==

== Superman V ==

Before the failure of Superman IV : The Quest for Peace , Cannon Films considered producing a fifth film with Albert Pyun as director . Cannon 's bankruptcy resulted in the film rights reverting to Ilya and Alexander Salkind . Ilya Salkind wrote the story for Superman V (also known as Superman : The New Movie) with Superboy writers Cary Bates and Mark Jones in the early 1990s . The story had Superman dying and resurrecting in the shrunken , bottled Krypton city of Kandor . The premise of Superman 's death and rebirth coincidentally predated " The Death of Superman " . Salkind , Bates and Jones developed two drafts of the script , with Christopher Reeve set to reprise the title role .

== Superman Reborn ==

With the success of " The Death of Superman " comic book storyline , Warner Bros. purchased the film rights of Superman from the Salkinds in early 1993 , handing the project to producer Jon Peters . The studio did not want to use Superman : The New Movie , and Peters hired Jonathan Lemkin to write a new script . Warner Bros. instructed Lemkin to write the new Superman film for mainstream audiences , a style for the MTV Generation of the 1990s . The additional family film approach would add to Superman 's toyetic appeal , similar to Batman Forever . Major toy companies insisted on seeing Lemkin 's screenplay before the deadline of the 1993 American International Toy Fair .

Lemkin 's script , titled Superman Reborn , featured Lois Lane and Clark Kent with relationship troubles , and Superman 's battle with Doomsday . When Superman professes his love to Lois , his life force jumps between them , just as he dies , giving Lois a virgin birth . Their child , who grows 21 years old in three weeks , becomes the resurrected Superman and saves the world . Warner Bros. did not like the script because of the similar underlying themes with Bruce Wayne 's obligations of heroism found in Batman Forever .

Peters hired Gregory Poirier to rewrite the script . Poirier 's December 1995 script had Brainiac creating Doomsday , infused with " Kryptonite blood " . Superman has romance problems with Lois Lane and visits a psychiatrist before he is killed by Doomsday . An alien named Cadmus , a victim of Brainiac , steals his corpse . Superman is resurrected and teams with Cadmus to defeat Brainiac . Powerless , Superman wears a robotic suit that mimics his old powers until he can learn to use his powers again on his own , which , according to the script , are a mental discipline called " Phin-yar " , a concept similar to The Force . Other villains included Parasite and Silver Banshee . Poirier 's script impressed Warner Bros. , but Kevin Smith was hired to rewrite . Smith thought Poirier 's script did not respect the Superman mythos properly , and referred to it in An Evening with Kevin

Smith as being " like the Batman TV show version of a Superman movie ; very campy . "

= = = Superman Lives = = =

Kevin Smith pitched Peters his story outline in August 1996 , and was allowed to write the screenplay under certain conditions : Peters wanted Superman to wear an all @-@ black suit , and also did not want Superman to fly , arguing that Superman would " look like an overgrown Boy Scout . " Smith wrote Superman flying as " a red @-@ and @-@ blue blur in flight , creating a sonic boom every time he flew . " Peters also wanted Superman to fight a giant spider for the climactic showdown . Smith accepted the terms , realizing that he was being hired to execute a preordained idea . Smith was also forced to write a scene involving Brainiac fighting a polar bear at the Fortress of Solitude , as Peters felt there were not enough action scenes in the first draft . The Star Wars 20th anniversary re @-@ release in theaters also prompted Peters to commission a " space dog " that Brainiac could present to Luthor purely for merchandising appeal and toy sales . Peters also insisted that Brainiac 's robot assistant L @-@ Ron was to be voiced by Dwight Ewell , calling the character , " a gay R2 @-@ D2 with attitude . "

Smith 's draft , now titled Superman Lives , had Brainiac sending Doomsday to kill Superman , as well as blocking out the sun to make Superman powerless , as Superman is fueled by sunlight . Brainiac teams up with Lex Luthor , but Superman is resurrected by a Kryptonian robot , the Eradicator . Brainiac wishes to possess the Eradicator and its technology . Powerless , the resurrected Superman is sheathed in a robotic suit formed from the Eradicator itself until his powers return , courtesy of sunbeams , and defeats Brainiac . Smith 's casting choices included Ben Affleck as Clark Kent / Superman , Linda Fiorentino as Lois Lane , Jack Nicholson as Lex Luthor , Famke Janssen as Mercy , John Mahoney as Perry White , David Hyde Pierce as the Eradicator , Jason Lee as Brainiac and Jason Mewes as Jimmy Olsen .

Robert Rodriguez was offered the chance to direct , but turned down the offer due to his commitment on The Faculty , despite liking Smith 's script . Smith originally suggested Tim Burton to direct his script , and Burton signed on with a pay @-@ or @-@ play contract of \$ 5 million . Warner Bros. originally planned on a theatrical release date for summer 1998 , the 60th anniversary of the character 's debut in Action Comics . Nicolas Cage , a comic book fan , signed on as Superman with a \$ 20 million pay @-@ or @-@ play contract , believing he could " re @-@ conceive the character . " Peters felt Cage could " convince audiences he [Superman] came from outer space . " Burton explained Cage 's casting would be " the first time you would believe that nobody could recognize Clark Kent as Superman , he [Cage] could physically change his persona . " Kevin Spacey was approached for the role of Lex Luthor , while Christopher Walken was Burton 's choice for Brainiac , a role also considered for Jim Carrey and Gary Oldman . Sandra Bullock , Courteney Cox and Julianne Moore had been approached for Lois Lane , while Chris Rock was cast as Jimmy Olsen . Michael Keaton confirmed his involvement , but when asked if he would be reprising his role as Batman from Burton 's Batman films , he would only reply , " Not exactly . " Industrial Light & Magic was set for work on special effects .

Filming was originally set to begin in early 1998 . In June 1997 , Superman Lives entered pre @-@ production , with an art department employed under production designer Rick Heinrichs . Burton hired Wesley Strick to rewrite Smith 's script . Smith was disappointed , stating , " The studio was happy with what I was doing . Then Tim Burton got involved , and when he signed his pay @-@ or @-@ play deal , he turned around and said he wanted to do his version of Superman . So who is Warner Bros. going back to ? The guy who made Clerks , or the guy who made them half a billion dollars on Batman ? " When Strick read Smith 's script , he was annoyed with the fact that " Superman was accompanied / shadowed by someone / something called the Eradicator . " He also felt that " Brainiac 's evil plot of launching a disk in space to block out the sun and make Superman powerless was reminiscent of an episode of The Simpsons , with Mr. Burns doing the Brainiac role . " However , after reading The Death and Return of Superman , Strick was able to understand some of the elements of Smith 's script . Strick 's rewrite featured Superman as an existentialist , thinking of himself to be an outsider on Earth . Superman is threatened by Brainiac and Lex Luthor , who

later amalgamate into " Lexiac , " described by Strick as " a schizo / scary mega @-@ villain . " Superman is later resurrected by the power of ' K , ' a natural force representing the spirit of Krypton , as he defeats Lexiac .

Art designer Sylvain Despretz claimed the art department was assigned to create something that had little or nothing to do with the Superman comic book , and also explained that Peters " would bring kids in , who would rate the drawings on the wall as if they were evaluating the toy possibilities . It was basically a toy show ! " Peters saw a cover of National Geographic , containing a picture of a skull , going to art department workers , telling them he wanted the design for Brainiac 's space ship to have the same image . Burton gave Despretz a concept drawing for Brainiac , which Despretz claims was " a cone with a round ball on top , and something that looked like an emaciated skull inside . Imagine you take Merlin 's hat , and you stick a fish bowl on top , with a skull in it . " Concept artist Rolf Mohr said in an interview he designed a suit for the Eradicator for a planned scene in which it transforms into a flying vehicle .

Burton chose Pittsburgh , Pennsylvania as his primary filming location for Metropolis , while sound stages were reserved but start dates for filming were pushed back . A minor piece of the Krypton set was constructed but then destroyed , and Cage had even attended a costume fitting . The studio was also considering changing the title Superman Lives back to Superman Reborn . Deeming Wesley Strick 's script too expensive , Warner Bros. enlisted the help of Dan Gilroy to rewrite it into something more economically feasible . Gilroy lowered the \$ 190 million budget set by Strick 's draft to \$ 100 million . However , the studio was still less willing to fast track production , due to financial reasons with other film properties , having Gilroy turn in two drafts . Ultimately , Warner Bros. chose to put the film on hold in April 1998 , and Burton left to direct Sleepy Hollow . At this point in production , \$ 30 million was spent , with nothing to show for it . Burton , citing various differences with Peters and the studio , said , " I basically wasted a year . A year is a long time to be working with somebody that you don 't really want to be working with . "

Disappointed by the lack of progress on the film 's production , aspiring screenwriter / comic book fan Alex Ford was able to have a script of his (titled Superman : The Man of Steel) accepted at the studio 's offices in September 1998 . Ford pitched his idea for a film series consisting of seven installments , and his approach impressed Warner Bros. and Peters , though he was later given a farewell due to creative differences . Ford said , " I can tell you they don 't know much about comics . Their audience isn 't you and me who pay \$ 7 @.@ 00 . It 's for the parents who spend \$ 60 on toys and lunchboxes . It is a business , and what 's more important , the \$ 150 million at the box office or the \$ 600 million in merchandising ? "

With Gilroy 's script , Peters offered the director 's position to Ralph Zondag , Michael Bay , Shekhar Kapur and Martin Campbell though they all turned down the offer . Brett Ratner turned down the option in favor of The Family Man . Simon West and Stephen Norrington were reportedly top contenders as well . In June 1999 , William Wisher , Jr. was hired to write a new script , and Cage assisted on story elements . Cage dropped out of the project in June 2000 , while Wisher turned in a new script in August 2000 , reported to have contained similar elements with The Matrix . In October 2000 , veteran comic book creator Keith Giffen pitched a 17 @-@ page story treatment with Lobo as the antagonist , but the studio did not proceed . Oliver Stone was then approached to direct Wisher 's script , but declined , while in April 2001 , Paul Attanasio was hired to start on a new script , earning a salary of \$ 1 @.@ 7 million . Peters offered Will Smith the role of Superman , but the actor turned it down over ethnicity concerns . The film 's backstory was covered in the 2015 documentary film The Death of " Superman Lives " : What Happened ? .

= = = Batman vs. Superman (2001 ? 2002) = = =

Although it was widely reported that McG had become attached to Attanasio 's script , in February 2002 , J. J. Abrams was hired to write a new screenplay . It would ignore " The Death of Superman " storyline , and instead , it would reboot the film series with an origin story , going under the title of Superman : Flyby . The project had gone as far as being greenlit , but McG dropped out in favor of Charlie 's Angels : Full Throttle . The studio approached Wolfgang Petersen to direct Abrams ' script

; however , in August 2001 , Andrew Kevin Walker pitched Warner Bros. an idea titled Batman vs. Superman , attaching Petersen as director . Abrams ' script was put on hold , while Akiva Goldsman was hired to rewrite Walker 's draft which was codenamed Asylum .

Goldsman 's draft , dated June 21 , 2002 , introduced Bruce Wayne attempting to shake all of the demons in his life after his five @-@ year retirement from crimefighting . Dick Grayson , Alfred Pennyworth , and Commissioner Gordon are all dead . Meanwhile , Clark Kent is down on his luck and in despair after his divorce from Lois Lane . Clark serves as Bruce 's best man at his wedding to the beautiful and lovely Elizabeth Miller . After Elizabeth is killed by the Joker at the honeymoon , Bruce is forced to don the Batsuit once more , tangling a plot which involves Lex Luthor , while Clark begins a romance with Lana Lang in Smallville and tries to pull Bruce back . In return , Bruce blames Clark for her death , and the two go against one another . Part of the script took place in Smallville , where Clark goes into exile with Lana Lang . However , Lex Luthor is held to be responsible for the entire plot of Batman and Superman destroying each other . The two decide to team up and stop Luthor . Christian Bale , who was being considered for the lead in Darren Aronofsky 's Batman : Year one adaptation at the time , was simultaneously approached by Peterson for the Superman role . Peterson confirmed in a 2010 interview the only other actor he approached for Superman was Josh Hartnett . Warner Bros. canceled development to focus on individual Superman and Batman projects after Abrams submitted another draft for Superman : Flyby . Christopher Nolan would later cast Bale as Batman the following year in Batman Begins . In the opening scene of I Am Legend , a large banner displays the Superman symbol within the Batman symbol in Times Square . It is meant as an in @-@ joke by writer Akiva Goldsman , who wrote scripts for Batman vs. Superman and I Am Legend .

= = = Superman : Flyby = = =

Turning in his script in July 2002 , J. J. Abrams ' Superman : Flyby was an origin story that included Krypton besieged by a civil war between Jor @-@ El and his corrupt brother , Kata @-@ Zor . Before Kata @-@ Zor sentences Jor @-@ El to prison , Kal @-@ El is launched to Earth to fulfill a prophecy . Adopted by Jonathan and Martha Kent , he forms a romance with Lois Lane in the Daily Planet . However , Lois is more concerned with exposing Lex Luthor , written as a government agent obsessed with UFO phenomena . Clark reveals himself to the world as Superman , bringing Kata @-@ Zor 's son , Ty @-@ Zor , and three other Kryptonians to Earth . Superman is defeated and killed , and visits Jor @-@ El (who committed suicide on Krypton while in prison) in Kryptonian heaven . Resurrected , he returns to Earth and defeats the four Kryptonians . The script ends with Superman flying off to Krypton in a spaceship .

Brett Ratner was hired to direct in September 2002 , originally expressing an interest in casting an unknown for the lead role , while filming was to start sometime in late 2003 . Christopher Reeve joined as project consultant , citing Tom Welling , who portrayed the teenage Clark Kent in Smallville , as an ideal candidate . Reeve added " the character is more important than the actor who plays him , because it is an enduring mythology . It definitely should be an unknown . " Ratner approached Josh Hartnett , Jude Law , Paul Walker and Brendan Fraser for Superman , but conceded that finding a famous actor for the title role had proven difficult because of contractual obligations to appear in sequels . " No star wants to sign that , but as much as I 've told Jude and Josh my vision for the movie , I 've warned them of the consequences of being Superman . They 'll live this character for 10 years because I 'm telling one story over three movies and plan to direct all three if the first is as successful as everyone suspects . " Hartnett in particular was offered \$ 100 million for a three @-@ picture deal . Walker explained that " I could have made a gazillion dollars on that franchise . I could probably have bought my own fleet of jets or my own island . You know what ? I don 't need it . " Fraser turned it down out of fear of typecasting . David Boreanaz , Victor Webster and Ashton Kutcher auditioned , along with Keri Russell as Lois Lane , but Kutcher decided not to pursue the role , citing scheduling conflicts with That ' 70s Show , the Superman curse and fear of typecasting , while Boreanaz had to back out due to obligations with Angel . James Marsden stated in a 2006 interview that at one point he was approached by Ratner . Although it was never formally

announced , Matt Bomer confirmed he was in the running for the lead role , being Ratner 's preferred choice at the time . Bomer would later voice the character in the 2013 animated film *Superman : Unbound* . Amy Adams had also auditioned for Lois Lane , and would eventually win the role eight years later when she was cast in *Man of Steel* .

Superman : Flyby was being met with a budget exceeding \$ 200 million , not including money spent on *Superman Reborn* , *Superman Lives* , and *Batman vs. Superman* , but Warner Bros. was still adamant for a summer 2004 release date . Christopher Walken was in negotiations for Perry White , while Ratner wanted to cast Anthony Hopkins as Jor @-@ El , and Ralph Fiennes as Lex Luthor , two of his cast members in *Red Dragon* . Joel Edgerton turned down a chance to audition as Superman in favor of the villain Ty @-@ Zor , before Ratner dropped out of the project in March 2003 , blaming casting delays , and aggressive feuds with producer Jon Peters .

McG returned as director in 2003 , while Fraser continued to express interest , but had fears of typecasting . ESC Entertainment was hired for visual effects work , with Kim Libreri as visual effects supervisor and Stan Winston designing a certain " prototype suit " . McG approached Shia LaBeouf for Jimmy Olsen , with an interest to cast an unknown for Superman , Scarlett Johansson as Lois Lane and Johnny Depp for Lex Luthor . The director confirmed in a 2012 interview that Robert Downey , Jr. had been cast as Lex Luthor . Neal H. Moritz and Gilbert Adler were set to produce the film . McG also commissioned Josh Schwartz to rewrite the Abrams script . He wanted to shoot in Canada , which would have cost \$ 25 million more than WB 's preferred Australian locale . McG also shot test footage with several candidates , including Jason Behr , Henry Cavill , Jared Padalecki , and Michael Cassidy before leaving , blaming budgetary concerns and filming locations . He opted to shoot in New York City and Canada , but Warner Bros. wanted Sydney , Australia . McG felt " it was inappropriate to try to capture the heart of America on another continent . " He later admitted it was his fear of flying . Abrams lobbied for the chance to direct his script , but Warner Bros. replaced McG with Bryan Singer in July 2004 , resulting in *Superman Returns* .

= = *Superman Returns* (2006) = =

Following the departure of Ratner and McG , Bryan Singer , who was said to be a childhood fan of Richard Donner 's film , was approached by Warner Bros. He accepted , abandoning two films already in pre @-@ production , *X @-@ Men : The Last Stand* (which , coincidentally , would come to be directed by Ratner) and a remake of *Logan 's Run* . The film uses the events of *Superman* and , to less of a degree , *Superman II* as backstory , while completely ignoring the events of *Superman III* and *Superman IV : The Quest for Peace* . Singer 's story tells of Superman 's return to Earth following a five @-@ year search for survivors of Krypton . He discovers that in his absence Lois Lane has given birth to a son and become engaged . Singer chose to follow Donner 's lead by casting relatively unknown Brandon Routh as Superman , who resembled Christopher Reeve somewhat , and more high profile actors in supporting roles , such as Kevin Spacey as Lex Luthor . Singer brought his entire crew from *X2* to work on the film . Via digitally @-@ enhanced archive footage , the late Marlon Brando appeared in the film as Jor @-@ El . *Superman Returns* received positive reviews and grossed approximately \$ 391 million worldwide .

In February 2006 , four months before the release of *Superman Returns* , Warner Bros. announced a summer 2009 theatrical release date for a sequel , with Bryan Singer returning as director . Brandon Routh , Kate Bosworth , Kevin Spacey , Sam Huntington , Frank Langella , and Tristan Lake Leabu were expected to reprise their roles , however , with the release of *Superman Returns* in July 2006 , Warner Bros. was hesitant on moving forward with development . Warner Bros. President Alan F. Horn explained that *Superman Returns* was a very successful film , but that it " should have done \$ 500 million worldwide . We should have had perhaps a little more action to satisfy the young male crowd . " Singer reacted incredulously to the studio complaints , saying , " That movie made \$ 400 million ! I don 't know what constitutes under @-@ performing these days ... " Filming was supposed to start in March 2008 ; no screenplay was ever written , but Singer would have titled it *Man of Steel* , with an interest in Darkseid as the main villain . Singer stressed that it would have been more action @-@ packed than *Superman Returns*. while writer Michael Dougherty

was interested in using Brainiac . " In my mind , if the Kryptonians really were a space @-@ faring race ... it would only make sense that there would 've been colonies and off @-@ planet missions ... other Kryptonians making their way to Earth seemed like a pretty big one . It wouldn 't necessarily be evil right off the bat . That 's too easy and cliché ... I think it 'd be interesting to see how these other Kryptonians show up , land and have all these powers and [have to learn] how to adapt to them . "

Warner Bros. commissioned husband and wife duo Michele and Kieran Mulroney to write a script for a Justice League film in February 2007 , halting development for the Superman Returns sequel . The Justice League script was submitted to Warner Bros. the following June , which prompted the studio to immediately fast track production . Singer went on to film Valkyrie the following month , and George Miller signed to direct Justice League : Mortal in September 2007 . The script would have featured a different Superman in a separate continuity from Singer 's film ; Routh was not approached to reprise his role for Justice League : Mortal , which ended up going to D. J. Cotrona . The film nearly went into production in March 2008 , but the Australian Film Commission denied Warner Bros. their 40 percent tax rebate and Cotrona 's options eventually expired . With Justice League : Mortal canceled , Singer renewed his interest in the Superman sequel that same month , stating that it was in early development . Paul Levitz , president of DC Comics , still expected Routh to reprise the title role , but Routh 's contract for a sequel expired in 2009 . " Superman Returns didn 't quite work as a film in the way that we wanted it to , " Warner Bros. President of Production Jeff Robinov admitted in August 2008 . " It didn 't position the character the way he needed to be positioned . Had Superman worked in 2006 , we would have had a movie for Christmas of this year or 2009 . Now the plan is just to reintroduce Superman without regard to a Batman and Superman movie at all . "

= = DC Extended Universe = =

= = = Man of Steel (2013) = = =

In June 2008 , Warner Bros. took pitches from comic book writers , screenwriters and directors on how to restart the Superman film series . During story discussions for The Dark Knight Rises in 2008 , David S. Goyer , aware that Warner Bros. was planning a Superman reboot , told Christopher Nolan his idea on how to present Superman in a modern context . Impressed with Goyer 's concept , Nolan pitched the idea to the studio in February 2010 , who hired Nolan to produce and Goyer to write based on the financial and critical success of The Dark Knight . Nolan admired Singer 's work on Superman Returns for its connection to Richard Donner 's version , and previously used the 1978 film as casting inspiration for Batman Begins . Zack Snyder was hired as the film 's director in October 2010 . Principal photography started in August 2011 in West Chicago , Illinois , before moving to Vancouver and Plano , Illinois . The film stars Henry Cavill as Clark Kent / Kal @-@ El / Superman , Amy Adams as Lois Lane , Michael Shannon as General Zod , Diane Lane as Martha Kent , Kevin Costner as Jonathan Kent , Laurence Fishburne as Perry White , and Russell Crowe as Jor @-@ El .

= = = Batman v Superman : Dawn of Justice (2016) = = =

David S. Goyer and Zack Snyder are set to write and direct a sequel to Man of Steel , respectively . Christopher Nolan is also expected to return as producer , albeit in a lesser role than he had in the first film . On June 16 , 2013 , The Wall Street Journal reported that the studio is possibly planning to release the sequel in 2014 . Warner Bros. announced that Superman and Batman will unite in a new film which will be the follow @-@ up to Man of Steel , set for release in 2015 . Goyer stated at the Superman 75th Anniversary Panel at 2013 San Diego Comic @-@ Con International , that Batman and Superman would face off , and titles under consideration are Superman Vs Batman and Batman Vs Superman . On August 22 , 2013 , it was announced that Ben Affleck was cast as

Batman . On December 4 , 2013 , it was reported that Gal Gadot was cast as Wonder Woman .

On January 17 , 2014 , it was announced that the film had been delayed from its original July 17 , 2015 release date to March 25 , 2016 , in order to give the filmmakers " time to realize fully their vision , given the complex visual nature of the story " . On January 31 , 2014 , Jesse Eisenberg and Jeremy Irons were cast as Lex Luthor and Alfred Pennyworth , respectively . In an official press release , Snyder described the casting of Eisenberg as Luthor by stating , " Having Jesse in the role allows us to explore that interesting dynamic , and also take the character in some new and unexpected directions . "

== Justice League (2017) ==

Shortly after filming had finished for Man of Steel , Warner Bros hired Will Beall to script a new Justice League film in June 2012 . With the release of Man of Steel in June 2013 , Goyer was hired to write a new Justice League script , with the Beall draft being scrapped . In April 2014 , it was announced that Zack Snyder would also be directing Goyer 's Justice League script . Warner Bros. was reportedly courting Chris Terrio to rewrite Justice League the following July , after having been impressed with his rewrite of Batman v Superman . In October 2014 , Warner Bros. announced the film would be released in two parts as the fifth and ninth installments of the shared universe , with Part One releasing in 2017 , and Part Two in 2019 . Snyder will direct both films with Henry Cavill set to reprise his role as Superman .

== Untitled Man of Steel sequel (TBA) ==

In October 2014 , a Man of Steel sequel was announced with an intended release between 2016 and 2020 . In August 2015 , Jon Schnepf revealed to DC Movie News on the Popcorn Network that the studio are rumored to have George Miller as the director for the sequel . On June 2016 , Russel Crowe confirmed that a Man of Steel trilogy was originally planned before it was scrapped due the announcement of Batman v Superman : Dawn of Justice

== Characters ==

== Recurring characters ==

This table only includes characters which have appeared / appearing in multiple films .

A dark grey cell indicates the character was not in the film , or that the character 's presence in the film has not yet been announced .

A V indicates a voice @-@ only role .

A C indicates a cameo role .

A P indicates an appearance through photograph (s) .

A Y indicates a role as a younger version of the character .

A O indicates a role as an older version of the character .

A A indicates an appearance through archival footage , stills or audio .

A Marc McClure reprised his role as Jimmy Olsen for Supergirl .

B The corpse of the now @-@ deceased General Zod also appears in the film in a crucial role , however , Michael Shannon did not film any scenes for the film and his corpse was created using the physique of fitness model Greg Plitt and a head @-@ shot of Shannon .

== Non @-@ recurring characters ==

== Reception ==

== Box office performance ==

indicates that the film in the series is currently playing

== Critical and public response ==

== Franchise collections ==

The initial four Superman films were released previously on VHS , and throughout the film series ' history , three box sets of the films have been released by Warner Bros. The first occurred on May 1 , 2001 , when The Complete Superman Collection was released both on DVD and VHS , containing that year 's DVD / home video releases of Superman , Superman II , Superman III , and Superman IV . The set was valued at US \$ 49 @. @ 99 for the DVD release and US \$ 29 @. @ 99 for the VHS release , and received positive reviews .

The four Christopher Reeve films were again released on November 28 , 2006 , in new DVD releases to coincide with Superman Returns , also released in that year . Superman was released in a four @-@ disc ' special edition ' similar to Superman II , which was released in a two @-@ disc special edition . Both Superman III and IV were released in single disc ' deluxe editions ' , and all four releases were available together in The Christopher Reeve Superman Collection , an 8 @-@ disc set that was valued at US \$ 79 @. @ 92 . Like the 2001 set before it , The Christopher Reeve Superman Collection received positive reviews .

Also on November 28 , 2006 , a 14 @-@ disc DVD box set titled Superman Ultimate Collector 's Edition was released , containing Superman , Superman II , Superman II : The Richard Donner Cut , Superman III , Superman IV , Superman Returns , and Look , Up in the Sky : The Amazing Story of Superman , among other releases . All contents of the set were housed within a tin case . The set was valued at US \$ 99 @. @ 92 , and received extremely positive reviews when first released . However , after only a day on the market , Warner Bros. announced that there were two errors discovered within the set . The first was that the 2 @. @ 0 audio track on Superman , was instead the 5 @. @ 1 audio track already on the disc . The second was that the Superman III disc was not the 2006 deluxe edition as advertised , but the 2001 release instead . The set was soon recalled , and Warner Bros. offered a toll @-@ free number to replace the faulty discs for people who had already purchased the set . Due to popular demand , a corrected set was released and Superman Ultimate Collector 's Edition returned to store shelves on May 29 , 2007 .

On October 14 , 2008 , another Christopher Reeve Superman film collection was released , entitled Superman : 4 Film Favorites , containing all four films , but with far less bonus material than previous sets . The collection was a 2 @-@ disc DVD @-@ 18 set that included the first disc of both special editions from the 2006 release and both deluxe editions .

On April 1 , 2011 , it was announced that the entire Superman anthology would be making its way to Blu @-@ ray for the first time . The anthology box set was released on June 7 , 2011 .