ARTS

"I've got a pocketful of miracles"
POCKETFUL OF MIRACLES FRANK SINATRA

After cuts to online platform, The Yale Review leans into print, events

BY JOANNE HWANG
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XIMENA SOLORZANO / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR
The Yale Review has focused its commitments to its print quarterly and public events for the Yale community, after it scaled back online publishing in the spring.

Last spring, The Yale Review paused its annual festival and scaled back online publishing as University-wide budget reductions took hold ahead of the federal endowment tax hike. Now, the Review is focusing on its print quarterly and on bringing writers to campus.

The News reported in March that the literary journal would reduce online content to prioritize print, as Yale prepared for the endowment tax hike. Executive editor Meghan O'Rourke '97 told the News then that she expected a "substantial reduction" in readership.

However, the magazine has found readership relatively consistent even under the cuts.

"Online readership has held steady this year, which is better than we expected," deputy editor Will Frazier wrote in an email to the News.

According to Frazier, the print quarterly and the "Poem of the Week" series have continued, and the cuts have not changed what the magazine publishes in print.

Clare Sestanovich, the Review's editorial director and acting editor this semester, echoed that sentiment.

"We're devoting more time and attention to our quarterly print issues," Sestanovich wrote in an email to the News. "We've always been deeply committed to print publishing; it's a process we believe can elevate rigorous thought and beautiful prose."

The Review is funded primarily through a University-held endowment, with donations and subscriptions making up a small share. As a result, the Review has had to make sacrifices following reductions such as pausing online-only publishing and shrinking its undergraduate reader program.

Despite those cuts, the Review has kept publishing commissioned work and submissions and focused on bringing writers and editors to campus in person to offer new formats for students to engage with the magazine.

"In a year of contraction, we've put our energy into collaboration, and the result is a full year of public programming," Frazier wrote.

This fall, the Review is focusing on "Writing in Public," a series of free monthly lunchtime talks with the Yale English Department and the Poynter Fellowship in Journalism.

"We've been hosting talks like these for our own staff and student volunteers since our editor Meghan O'Rourke arrived in 2019," Frazier wrote. "Caleb Smith, chair of English, had a parallel vision for a public series on writing — so this year we joined forces, and opened the series to the whole campus."

According to Sestanovich, the series extends the Review's role on campus as a way to illuminate how the "incredibly opaque" publishing industry works.

"We hope the visitors we bring to campus will demystify writing and editing for Yale students," Sestanovich wrote, "and energize the vibrant literary community here on campus by starting new conversations about what it means (and takes) to be a writer today."

So far, the series has hosted Henry Finder of The New Yorker and Parul Sehgal of The New York Times. Melissa Febos is scheduled for Nov. 11, followed by Andrea Long Chu on Feb. 4 and a panel of literary agents and book editors on Feb. 23.

"Turnout has been wonderful, and recorded versions of the talks will go online in the coming months," Frazier wrote.

Public programming and fostering a literary community is at the forefront of the Review's goals. In the face of a fast-paced, online landscape, according to Sestavoich, teaching students the print process is a "core part of our mission as a magazine."

"It's a hard time for magazines, and writers often struggle to find a home for their most ambitious, idiosyncratic work," senior editor Sam Huber wrote. "As the publishing landscape contracts, TYR remains committed to cultivating writers' voices, and to giving them the editorial support they need to think big and take risks."

The Yale Review Festival will return April 5 to 9 next year.

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'Adults' creators say comedy series was shaped by their Yale experiences

BY JULIA YAKIREVICH
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Like some undergraduates, FX's comedy series "Adults" is in its sophomore year, according to the Yale alumni who created the show.

Ben Kronengold '18 and Rebecca Shaw '18 compared the series' second season, which premiered Aug. 27, to a second year in college. The show follows five friends in their mid-20s who live together in one of their childhood homes in Queens, New York. Dubbed a "low concept," "hangout" show by its creators, "Adults" documents the mundanity and thrilling makings of a chosen family.

"You know what something feels like when it's working.

You know what it feels like when it doesn't," Shaw said in an interview. "And importantly, you have the confidence to be able to course-correct."

The show first premiered in May 2025, and its first season garnered a 77 percent Rotten Tomatoes score. The second season has found a bigger audience — according to Variety, internal streaming data from Disney shows a 40 percent increase in viewership between the two seasons.

Kronengold and Shaw both boast comedy backgrounds that developed during their time at Yale. Shaw directed the sketch comedy group Red Hot Poker, while Kronengold directed the sketch comedy group The Fifth Humour and the improv group The Viola Question. After graduating, the pair went on to be the youngest writers for The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon in 2019. A few years later, they left the show to work in scripted television.

While not immediately obvious to viewers, the pair's time at Yale influenced the setting and characters of "Adults."

In the show, the house in which the five main characters reside has a living room couch that only seats four people. Kronengold and Shaw compared the set-up to their days squeezing everyone they knew onto a common room couch in their respective colleges, Trumbull and Morse.

Shaw recalled wanting the show's couch to "be big enough for four, and the fifth person will be on someone's lap or laying across the rest of the group."

"Our friends are always on top of each other," Shaw said. "There's always three to a lap."

The show's executive producer, Sarah Naftalis '09, also attended Yale, where she wrote for The Yale Record. Naftalis said closeness between friends results from life in close quarters.

"We were all living together in, you know, as beautiful as the Yale dorms are, small spaces that invite a kind of intimacy," she said.

Kronengold and Shaw said the show was influenced by other landmark comedy series such as "F.R.I.E.N.D.S.," HBO's "Girls" and "Seinfeld." Shaw said that "every generation has to figure out what their specific comedic voice is, and what are the things that make them laugh."

Shaw said the voice of "Adults" is really the voices of their characters.

"The goal at the end of the day is to create these characters and create these stories that people can see themselves in and people can feel like they are also a part of," she said.

"We can never imagine that we could represent a generation. We can't speak to everyone's experience," Shaw added. "But what we can do is know Anton, and know Issa, and know Paul Baker, and know Billie, and know Samir," referring to the show's characters.

According to Kronengold and Shaw, the characters of "Adults" combine the personalities of many of their real friends, including some they made at Yale. Shaw said that some of their friends' real stories — "some of which they signed off on, some of which they didn't" — have been incorporated into the show's plotlines.

Kronengold added that they were inspired by their friends' love stories, including queer romance. In a departure from hit sitcoms such as "F.R.I.E.N.D.S," the show features queer characters in the main cast.

"We looked around at our own friend group and looked at the love stories that we were seeing in the people that we love so much," he said. "With that in mind, it felt very second nature to tell stories that looked different than a lot of what we've seen on TV before, but also without making that always the point."

Naftalis said every friend group has an "Issa-like friend," whom she described as the one who gets away with her own set of rules.

"That's Issa, and no one questions it," she said. "I do think about my Yale friends a lot when we're trying to come up with pitches in the room. They're the best people I know."

Naftalis said she has an active text chain with Yale friends. She has also visited New Haven with Kronengold and Shaw. Working with fellow alumni, she joked, has an obvious practical benefit: "It saves you so much time to not have to explain what Yorkside is."

When Naftalis met the pair and started working with them, she said they instantly found a "shared language." They are "a great example of people who found their comedy people at Yale and kept them close," Naftalis said.

In the writers' room, Naftalis said, it is "honestly like being in a good seminar." Eight to 10 writers sit around one table trading and building off each other's ideas. During filming for the second season of "Adults," the set had a "summer camp" feeling — and the occasional "finals week" crunch, Naftalis said.

The creators hope to continue the series. It has not yet been renewed for a third season, but Shaw and Kronengold have begun planning, and said they are looking forward to featuring more exciting guest stars.

"There are lots of stories to tell within this friend group," Kronengold said.

Actress Julia Fox, comedian Jake Shane and actor Gaten Matarazzo are among the show's previous guest stars.



ANGELINA KOVALCHUK / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
The makers of FX's "Adults," Ben Kronengold '18 and Rebecca Shaw '18, said their time at Yale is reflected in the hit comedy series.

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