ARTS

"The deep roots never doubt spring will come."
MARTY RUBIN

Young filmmakers will take the spotlight at Yale's student-run festival

BYANGEL HU
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale Student Film Festival will soon offer an exclusive glimpse into the worlds of both student and professional filmmaking through screenings and speaker sessions.

Now in its 11th year, the festival received nearly 400 student submissions from over 50 countries, according to its organizers. Around 40 films were selected for screening by a programming team composed of Yale students.

The student films are grouped into four genres: animation, documentary, experimental and narrative, along with an additional category for high school students. The chosen films are entered for a variety of awards, such as "Best Directing," "Best Cinematography" and "Best Editing."

"That is, I would say, the first and foremost reason why we're here — to celebrate the new generation of student filmmakers and give them a platform both to exhibit their work and find audiences and connect the local community with artistic culture at its most daring," Reese Weiden '27, the festival's co-director, said.

Through international outreach and outreach to local high schools, the festival sought to "increase the visibility of other cultures," according to co-director Florence Barillas '27.

Linden Skalak '26, the programming director, was responsible for curating the lineup of films that would be screened. Skalak noted that the mission of the festival was to "amplify student voices and the kinds of things that only young people can make films about."

"We're looking for something that's just very honest and unique to the filmmaker," Skalak said in a voice memo to the News. "What unites all the films that we have for the festival is a sense of voice and vision."

Additional events include an exclusive sneak peek of the unreleased A24 film "The Death of Robin Hood" and a talk with the film's director Michael Sarnoski; a conversation between Carter Bays, the co-creator of "How I Met Your Mother," and Brittani Nichols '10, a writer on "Abbott Elementary"; and a pitch opportunity for student filmmakers to share their ideas to a panel of industry experts, who will offer feedback and prizes.

For the festival directors, this year's programming is especially significant because more than half of the festival's speakers are women, which is "different than years past and different than what you see in the industry," Weiden said.

"We're three women wanting to enter the entertainment industry, and we really wanted to champion women's voices," Barillas added.

The "Business of Entertainment" panel is comprised entirely of women: Christie Marchese, the founder and CEO of Kinema, EVP Entertainment Partnerships and Publicis Media; Liz Massie '86, the senior executive producer of Warner Bros. Discovery; Anna Barnes '01, the president at Little Monster Films; and Shana Waterman '94 LAW '00, the executive producer of "Forever."

In order to represent a variety of interests, the festival will feature a new panel called "Cinema Beyond Entertainment," which will "shed light onto careers that are not really in the mainstream notion of being in the film industry," Barillas said.



COURTESY OF BRONWEN PAILTHORPE
From Thursday to Sunday, the Yale Student Film Festival will feature a variety of film screenings and speaker panels. The festival's organizers hope the events will give young filmmakers a platform for their work.

"We're creating a platform for young filmmakers just at the beginning of their career to really help them see themselves represented," Weiden said.

One highlight of the festival is a talk with Yale lecturer Paul Grimstad, which Barillas will moderate. Grimstad, who is the director of undergraduate studies for the Humanities program, acted in Paul Thomas Anderson's 2025 "One Battle After Another," which won the Academy Award for Best Picture, and Ronald Bronstein's 2025 Oscar-nominated film "Marty Supreme."

The festival will also bring alumni filmmakers Delilah Napier '19 and Lucy Powers '19 back to campus for a screening and discussion of their feature film "Floating Carousel." "Floating Carousel" previously won the "Ultra Indie Award" at the 2025 Woodstock Film Festival, where it premiered.

Weiden emphasized the importance of the festival in creating a space for the Yale and broader New Haven community to experience watching films together, especially because there are currently no movie theaters in New Haven.

"Movie theaters are spaces that are such essential elements to community-building. Not having that feels detrimental to the overall community, so we try to fill in that gap," Weiden said.

All the Yale Student Film Festival events are free and open to the public.

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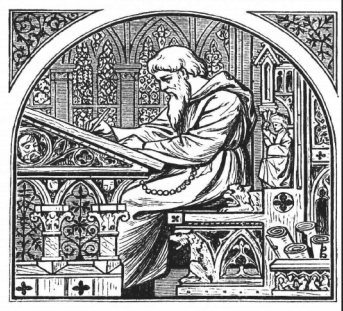
APRIL 8

6–7 PM

New Haven Free Public Library (Elm & Temple; enter from Temple)

An Hour of Creative Nonfiction

17th annual reading by Anne Fadiman and her students



Three undergraduate writers will join Anne Fadiman, the Francis Writer-in-Residence at Yale, to read from pieces about shoes, guns, and matchmaking. Fadiman will read from an essay on Antarctica.

THE STUDENT READERS:

Ethan Kan '28

Evie Kis '27

Megan Wright '27

Co-sponsored by the New Haven Free Public Library and the Yale College Dean's Office

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Mexican folk dance group to bring telenovelas from screen to stage

BY CHUER CINDY ZHONG
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Ballet Folklórico Mexicano's spring showcase, called "Telenovela en Vivo," will debut at the Off-Broadway Theater for two performances on Friday, aiming to immerse the audience in the nostalgia of watching various television shows as children.

Telenovelas, Latin American soap operas, are "highly dramatized stories that really rely on certain themes of marriage, love and heartbreak. There's villains always," Pablo Macias Lopez '27, one of the group's artistic directors, explained. "And we have that in real life, so the fact that we go to the screen to look for that as well is of interest to me."

Macias Lopez described some of the questions he grappled with as he was designing the showcase.

"How can you share that experience of watching something on TV, which a lot of us have had as kids?" Macias Lopez said. "How can you make this be something that people can connect to, and in some ways be comedic and heartbreaking?"

Originally a group of some 25 people, Ballet Folklórico Mexicano previously worked with the former head of Ezra Stiles College, Alicia Schmidt Camacho, to plan performances at the Crescent Underground Theater between Ezra Stiles and Morse Colleges.

"But due to the group getting so large, we couldn't fit in Crescent anymore," Aimee Perales '27, the group's co-president, said. "So we moved to Off-Broadway."

Perales credited the group's growth to what she perceived as an increase in Mexican students and the group's addition of "non-Latinos, who are interested in learning more about the culture through dance, which is so beautiful to see."

Alejandra Coronado '29, one of the new performers in "Telenovela en Vivo," echoed this sentiment.

"It's been not only great for me personally to move and interact with my culture in a new way, but to talk to other people who are on that same journey," Coronado said. "I feel like in a community such as Yale, it can be very easy to get lost in the amount of workload and pressure and different cultures and who you have to be as a student before a person."

Each semester, the theme of the showcase is decided by Ballet Folklórico Mexicano as a whole. In the fall 2025 semester, the group choreographed dances celebrating "Mujeres Divinas," or "Divine Women," and in the spring 2025 semester, their showcase theme was "Rutas de Mexico," or "Routes of Mexico."

"'Rutas de Mexico' was really the turning point for BF in terms of getting more technical and more intentional with our themes," Perales said. With "Telenovela en Vivo," she said they hope to continue that trajectory.

Macias Lopez told the News that "Telenovela en Vivo" would fully use the technology at the Off-Broadway Theater, including a video wall.

"I think that screen has really allowed us to explore a lot of new creative pathways by allowing dynamic backgrounds that can move and shift, and that really allows audiences to connect with the media and visual storytelling in a way that we were more limited to in previous years at the Crescent Theater," Macias Lopez said.

"Telenovela en Vivo" will last approximately two hours, including a 15 minute intermission.

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COURTESY OF BALLET FOLKLORICO