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| *The Yellow Book* was a London-based literary quarterly, published from 1894 to 1897 by Elkin Matthews and John Lane, which served to promote the work of Bodley Head authors, artists, and publications. |
| *The Yellow Book* was a London-based literary quarterly, published from 1894 to 1897 by Elkin Matthews and John Lane, which served to promote the work of Bodley Head authors, artists, and publications. The periodical was edited by American Henry Harland and sub-edited by New Woman authors Ella D'Arcy and Ethel Colburn Mayne. Aubrey Beardsley served as art director until he was fired in April 1895 in the wake of public controversy regarding his friendship with Oscar Wilde. Although Lane took over the artistic editorial duties with assistance from Patten Wilson at the time of Beardsley's departure, the periodical maintained its Beardslian aesthetic—most notable in its provocative yellow-and-black covers—throughout its run. John Lane served as sole publisher after Matthews' s departure in September 1894. *The Yellow Book* is central to the study of *fin-de-siècle* literary and visual culture as well as to scholarship on gender and sexuality, Aestheticism, Decadence, and the New Woman.  *The Yellow Book*'s distinctive cover was inspired by the period's decadent volumes of illicit French fiction, bound in a garish yellow colour that had, in the words of Holbrook Jackson, come to be associated with “all that was bizarre and queer in art and life, and all that was outrageously modern” (*The Yellow Nineties*). The cloth-bound quarto, which sold for 5s, published short stories, poetry, and essays, and celebrated the contemporary arts with illustrations, portraits, and reproductions. Unlike most periodicals of the period, *The Yellow Book* did not publish serialized fiction and, hence, allowed for writers to experiment with the form and content of the modern short story. The publication is well known for its patronage of innovative New Woman authors, such as Viola Paget, Olive Custance, Charlotte Mew, Victoria Cross, George Egerton, and Marion Hepworth Dixon, and as an outlet for realist authors to write free from censorship of form or content. Lane and Matthews also published more traditional material from authors, such as Henry James, Edmund Gosse, H.G. Wells, W.G. Yeats, George Gissing, and Walter Crane, among others. Illustrations and reproductions were diverse and varied, but the editors generally strove to feature a wide range of contemporary styles of portraiture, impressionist studies, life drawings, book illustrations, and decorative art nouveau work. The periodical regularly featured work from art editors Beardsley and Wilson.  Simon Houfe has called *The Yellow Book* “both a microcosm of the *fin-de-siècle* and an important trend setter” in periodical, literary, and visual culture (*Yellow Nineties*). The periodical introduced a new aesthetic that intentionally broke away from the Victorian style and paved the way for the distinctively avant-garde little magazines of the modern era. The publisher's first prospectus announced that *Yellow Book* was to be a celebration of the book as object, “beautiful as a piece of bookmaking” (Doran). In addition to its distinguishable cloth binding and peculiar square shape, the periodical was formatted with the irregular Caslon typeface in single-column print with catchwords at the bottom of each page. Its revivalist typographic style was uniquely contrasted with its very modern embrace of white space, use of asymmetrical titles, and embellished margins. To further aesthetically distance the publication from the visual chaos of the Victorian periodical, the publishers segregated text and art into distinct spaces, separating illustrations and reproductions from the text by fly-title pages and tissue-paper inserts so that the art would stand alone rather than act as illustrative second to literary material. *The Yellow Book* ran no advertisements other than a brief publisher's list at back, which primarily marketed Bodley Head editions.  While *The Yellow Book* made intentional use of an elite aesthetic, it was marketed to, and priced for, the common middle-class reader who wished to feel a part of an elite strata of literary and artistic innovators. While based in London, the periodical was published, marketed, and reviewed in the United States and the British Isles, and had a large transatlantic readership. Though the quarterly published only a total of thirteen editions, its innovations in form and content had a lasting impact on transatlantic literary and periodical culture. |
| Further reading:  (The Artists of The Yellow Book and the Circle of Oscar Wilde, 1983)  (Brake, 1995)  (Chan, 2007)  (Doran, 2013)  (Houfe, 1992)  (Hughes, 2004)  (Lasner, 1998)  (Ledger, 2007)  (Nelson, 1996)  (Stetz, 2005)  (Stetz M. D., 1999)  (Symons, 1930)  (Windholz, 1996)  (Kooistra) |