

"The Muppet Show" is back and better than ever | Arts & Culture

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Dot Smith | t455s884@ku.edu

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In September 1976, a variety sketch show called "[The Muppet Show](#)" aired for the first time; a little under five years later, on March 15, 1981, the show ended. As of Feb. 4, 2026, the show is back, with both guest star Sabrina Carpenter and executive producer Seth Rogen having established themselves as a strong start to the return of the Muppets.

KU has a brief but interesting history with the Muppets, as two creations of original Muppet creator [Jim Henson](#) were displayed three years ago on campus.

The 2023 exhibition at the Spencer Museum of Art featured various puppets from the personal collection of Kansas City-based puppeteer and KU alumna [Hazelle Hedges Rollins](#).

The exhibition contained many different forms of puppets, including articulated rods, marionettes and most pertinently, two Muppets. According to curator Kate Meyer, the display was a hit.

"As long as folks didn't have a puppet phobia, the reaction to seeing the puppets was extremely positive," Meyer said. "Especially familiar Muppets like Ernie and Oscar."

With the positive response, it's clear that the student body cares for the Muppets. But what do they think of the revival?

"The Muppets is such an enduring idea," Cade Nelson, a sophomore majoring in psychology and theater, said. "And it's so encouraging that it can come back in such great form."

Based on both [critical](#) and [popular](#) reception, Nelson isn't the only one who feels this way. Many talk about how nostalgic the show feels, with [NPR calling the show "as delightful as ever."](#)

"I think a lot of people would argue that the world has gotten quite a bit [worse] since 2016," Nelson said. "Watching Kermit, watching Gonzo, is the greatest escapism...it's incredibly important to happen right now."

As of right now, "The Muppet Show" only has plans for the one episode that is currently released, but there is a possibility of continuation.

"The show acknowledges that depending on how this episode goes, there may or may not be more episodes," Nelson said when asked about the possibility of the revival continuing. "I would sacrifice my life to have the Muppets return more consistently."

If the show is to continue, it would be smart to keep the formula and stick to what's been proven to work.

"If [The Muppet Show] were to continue and keep this level of quality," Nelson said. "That would be something historic for a reboot, in my eyes."

Dot Smith is a junior from Milwaukee studying journalism and design. Outside of writing for the arts and culture section, they can be found at the farmer's market, reading a new book or listening to their collection of CDs.

This article was edited by Arts & Culture Associate Editor Elyea Soileau. If the information in this article needs to be corrected, please contact elyeasoileau@ku.edu. We want to hear from you!