**‘#Rich Kids of Beverly Hills,’ Self-Chronicle of Privileged Youth** By [JON CARAMANICA](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/jon_caramanica/index.html) JAN. 17, 2014 NY Times



Dorothy Wang, left, and Morgan Stewart in “#RichKids of Beverly Hills.” Credit E!

Entertainment

The Statler and Waldorf of 90210 are Dorothy Wang and Morgan Stewart, longtime friends with shared passions — expensive nights out, expensive clothes and shoes — paid for with Mommy and Daddy’s money.

They are the de facto narrators of “#RichKids of Beverly Hills,” a deliciously vacuous and knowingly funny show about the things money can buy — including, implicitly, a featured role in a hot new reality show — which has a two-night premiere Sunday and Monday on E!

The show is inspired by [Rich Kids of Instagram](http://richkidsofinstagram.tumblr.com/), a Tumblr devoted to gently needling, and maybe gently envying, young people who gleefully show off their wealth on that photo- and video-sharing service. The result is a document of young narcissists relentlessly documenting themselves.

In a [commercial](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0LWyk8JR6o) for this show, the narrator suggests that E! understands it has something absurd on its hands: “Every now and then, a TV show comes along that captures the voice of a generation. This is not that show.”

Which is, of course, untrue — this is exactly that show.

When Ms. Wang is shopping for an apartment so that she can finally move out of her parents’ house (into one paid for by them, presumably), she takes a few selfies to make sure the lighting is flattering. Everywhere the stars go, they document. They practice their duck faces, lips in pushed-out pout, to make sure their photos all have the same plasticized allure. The show even incorporates the notification beeps and whooshing noises of sent messages that are native to smartphones — no show on television is more disorienting to watch than this one.

Capturing how young people shape their social selves through technology is essential reality TV work (see “[Catfish: The TV Show](http://www.mtv.com/shows/catfish/),” among others). And documenting the excesses of the obliviously rich is practically a moral imperative. (Think of “The Queen of Versailles,” the documentary about the construction of the nation’s largest private residence that turns to farce as the late-2000s recession hits hard.)

These 20-somethings are more ultrarich than “The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills,” and less self-conscious, too. [Ms. Wang’s father](http://www.forbes.com/profile/roger-wang/), a mall magnate, is worth $3 billion, according to Forbes.

Besides Ms. Wang and Ms. Stewart, there are Brendan Fitzpatrick, a real estate agent and Ms. Stewart’s boyfriend; Jonny Drubel, a songwriter; Roxy Sowlaty, a self-described “Persian princess” who learns that the members of her family are cutting off her spending (although she can still live with them rent-free and keep her car); and the charismatic E. J. Johnson, son of Magic Johnson.

Others — anyone outside the group’s bubble — fare poorly here, though “Rich Kids” might foment a wave of service industry rage. It could start with any number of unhappy-looking waiters and shop clerks shown in the fringes here, or maybe the manicurist who, after Ms. Wang babbles on about disliking Santa Monica, replies, “I live in Santa Monica.” (Maybe the $10,000 tip Ms. Wang leaves on a $30,000 bar bill in one scene helps to assuage some of that tension, or maybe it only exacerbates it.)

During a workout, Ms. Stewart complains, “I look like I’m from Kenya,” because her breasts “are sagging below my waist.” Her trainer, who is black, does not look amused.

And otherness barely flies, even within the cast. Mr. Johnson is the most likable character on the show, but isn’t even a full cast member. And Mr. Drubel, who, like Mr. Johnson, is gay, explodes at Ms. Wang, calling her a “homophobic bitch” after he learns that a blood drive she is supporting doesn’t accept donations from gay men. But he shows up anyway, because that’s where the cameras are.

**#RichKids of Beverly Hills**

*E!, Sunday nights at 10, Eastern and Pacific times; 9, Central time.*

Produced by ITV Studios America in association with Leepson Bounds Entertainment. David Leepson, Doron Ofir and Gennifer Gardiner, executive producers.

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