

# FIU Undergraduate Research Journal

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2024

## Front Matter

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SPRING  
2024

# *FIUURJ*

VOL. 2

FIU'S FIRST  
RESEARCH  
JOURNAL BY  
AND FOR  
UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDENTS



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## Our Mission

The mission of FIUURJ is to create a platform to showcase the diverse array of undergraduate research across STEM, the Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts while being freely available to the higher education community as a whole. As an open-access, blind-reviewed multidisciplinary journal, we ensure that student scholarship receives the proper support in order to impact and enrich a wide range of compelling fields. FIUURJ, run by undergraduate students alongside graduate students, alumni, faculty, and volunteers, offers opportunities for FIU students and alumni to gain experience in copy-editing, digital project creation, peer-reviewing, and peer-advising. We aim to empower undergraduates to contribute meaningfully to academic discourse and cultivate expertise in scholarly communication early in their higher education experience.

COVER ILLUSTRATION © ALEXANDRA LEON

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AS COVER ART CONTEST WINNER

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FIUURJ would like to recognize those who helped make this second volume a reality. Thank you to the members of the Faculty Advisory Board, Xuan Jiang, Vanessa Kraemer Sohan, Michael Sohan, Allen Varela, Glenn Hutchinson, Amy Reid, and David Driesbach. Your dedication to the quality of the journal as well as supporting student success is beyond what can be expressed. Thank you to our talented Student Editors and generous Faculty Reviewers for providing your expertise and effort over a wide array of disciplines. To our Graduate Assistant, Jonathan Borroto, Editorial Interns, Lucas Vieira, Naya Quintana, Kaysea Suzana, and Leonardo Rodrigues, thank you for your commitment of time and effort in constructing, developing, and managing FIUURJ with the highest diligence. Thank you, Center for Excellence in Writing, Liberal Studies Program, Office of Research and Economic Development, The Humanities Edge, Honors College, Writing and Rhetoric, College of Arts, Sciences, and Education, Libraries, Department of Biological Sciences, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), the Undergraduate Research Society, MARC U\*STAR, and the Center for Women's and Gender Studies for your partnership which allows us to provide students with the resources and opportunities to flourish. Thank you to Andres Gil, René Price, David Driesbach from the Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) for endowing a Graduate Assistantship, and Stephanie Mitjans-Sardiñas, Frances Orquera, Daniel Gutierrez from ORED for manifesting our first physical office location MARC 344 on campus, as well as Robert Zurita from ORED for technical training and support. Thank you to Jamie Rogers and the FIU Libraries for your digital resources and educational training. Finally, FIUURJ would like to express our appreciation to Professor Michael Sohan's Fall 2023 ENC 4212: Professional Editing students for their copyediting contributions; thank you for the extra sets of eyes that enhanced the integrity of our student writers' research.

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# Alexandra Leon

Cover Art Winner



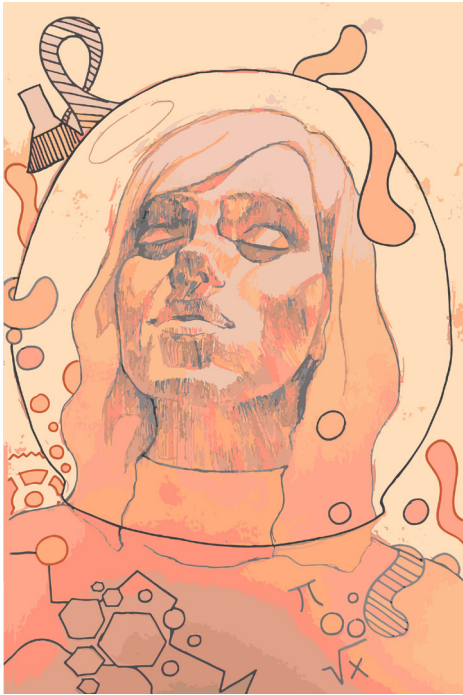
*Naturaleza* is a digital artwork representing the unification of man, nature, sciences, and the arts. Working mainly with warmer tones originally derived from the official FIU gold color (#B6862C), the artwork portrays humanity standing alongside nature, both looking towards a bright future, while sharing similar colors to represent their harmony as two parts of a whole in nature, not separate species.



Inspired by artworks by J.C. Leyendecker and illustrations by art director Jen Zee, *Naturaleza* aims to portray a vision of the unity of different fields of study with a stylized illustrative art style while including wildlife that is native to Florida. The woman, representative of man and the humanities, holds a branch of *Hamelia patens* to represent the sciences, a native plant of Florida and commonly known as the firebush. Both stand alongside the well-known *Puma concolor coryi*, the Florida panther, symbolizing nature and all wildlife. They face the right, simultaneously looking towards the future as a unified force.

## Michael Garcia Arias

*Runner-Up Cover Art Winner*

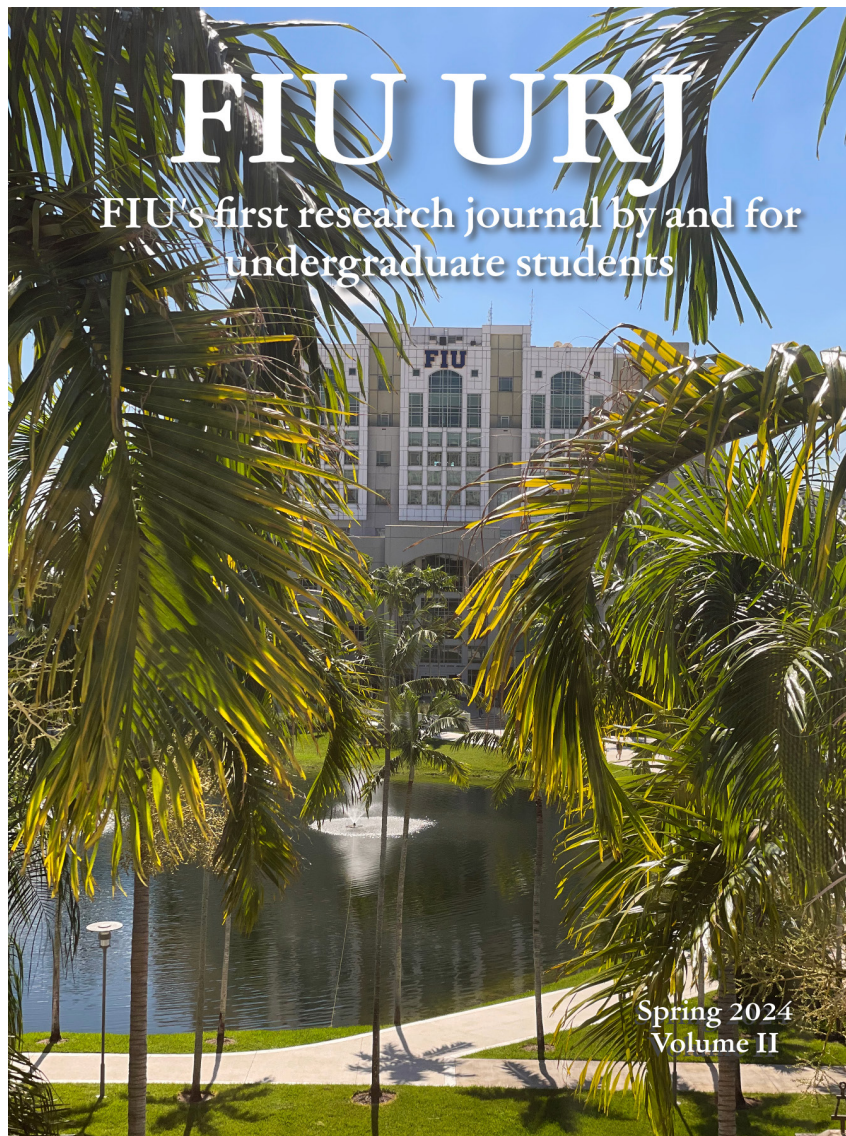


The idea behind this piece was to create this surreal feeling with colors and shapes. My art tends to blend simple shapes and complex figures such as portraits. Therefore, this creates a unique contrast between the two and that's what I wanted to present with this work. Another thing that I wanted to touch on was the color since its another big part of my work. A good color palette is what I think makes a composition stand out since its one of the many components in an art piece that attracts a viewer. My work represents the journal's theme because I feel as though the themes that were required for the contest drove me in a direction to think of other subjects to put in my composition. The color palette was influenced the most since I wanted to connect the other subjects to an artist's process.



## Isabella Polo

*Runner-Up Cover Art Winner*



FIU serves as a beacon of academic diversity, a place where countless students find their passions, whether it lies in STEM, the arts, or social sciences. The picture was taken at the CASE building, a part of campus many have grown familiar with during their time here. This building houses more than humanities-related courses but they also hold many of the science classes, showing how diverse the student body of FIU can be. It's a place where our student body can grow in its incredible range of interests and talents, where boundaries blur and possibilities are endless. FIU for many has been a safe haven for education, offering mentorship throughout their career endeavors. From creators and explorers to aspiring scientists, growing through their education, the next generation is promising in their endeavors. The student body is what represents FIU's multifaceted drive for education as well as a progressive future. CASE also happens to be one of my favorite views of campus, surrounded by greenery with FIU right in the center. This image embodies the essence of FIU. It shows that no matter how different our studies are, at the center of it all FIU is a place where we can all succeed. It is more than just a university, it's a hub for passions, united by the common thread of ambition and pursuit of knowledge. Here at FIU, everyone finds a home for their passions, and together, we can help build toward a brighter and more promising future for all.



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