Front Matter

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COVER ILLUSTRATION © ALEXANDRA LEON
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AS COVER ART CONTEST WINNER

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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.
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 it's another big part of my work. A good color palette is what I think makes a composition stand out since it's 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.
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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