

Student Writers

Dylan Avellanet

Dylan Avellanet was born in Puerto Rico and moved from there at age seven to Miami. Since childhood he had a passion for art and nature. In middle school he played basketball, whereas in high school he focused on his artwork. During his beginnings at FIU, his artistry continued as an art major before changing to English literature due to an interest in storytelling and characterization, especially in films. The connection to animals and nature that he felt since childhood pushed him to pursue a career in animal health. He is currently applying to become a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

Tiara Campbell

Tiara Campbell holds dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Biological Sciences and Natural and Applied Sciences, graduating magna cum laude on the Quantifying Biology in the Classroom and Honors College tracks, and as a Phi Beta Kappa inductee. Her research explores the relationship between red meat consumption and endometriosis progression, aiming to uncover dietary impacts on this condition affecting many women. Tiara is applying to medical school to advance her studies in women's health, global health, and the interplay between medicine and nutrition. In her spare time, she enjoys baking, beach days, and scuba diving.

Leila Camplone

Leila Camplone earned her Bachelor of Science in Crime Science with a Certificate in Cyber Threat Intelligence from FIU in Spring of 2024. She actively volunteers with the Afghan Education Student Outreach Program (AESOP), where she teaches English as a Second Language courses to Afghan girls. As an Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence (ICCAE) Fellow, Leila presented a comprehensive research project to the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), which analyzed the geopolitical impact of Chinese influence in Latin America. With her background in cybersecurity and criminal justice, she is dedicated to pursuing a career in the federal government specializing in national security.

Gisselle Mestre Delgado

Gisselle Mestre Delgado earned her Bachelor of Arts in Art History and a Certificate in Pre-Modern Cultures from FIU. She was also a member of the Honors College. Currently, Gisselle works as a research assistant at the Museum of Art and Design at Miami Dade College (MOAD) and assists with the Women Artists Archive Miami (WAAM). As a first-generation student from Matanzas, Cuba, her research interests focus on Latin American and women's arts. She aspires to become a museum curator to share her passion for often untold stories and narratives. In her free time, Gisselle enjoys reading and painting.

Antonio Garcia

Antonio Garcia recently earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Philosophy from FIU and is currently teaching World History at iMater Academy Middle/High School. His research is centered in critical theory, political philosophy, and Ancient Greek philosophy. He is currently researching the intersection between ethics and intelligent technology. He is also interested in The Frankfurt School, nationalism, and how the neoliberal tradition has diminished the “political imagination”. He is originally from Cuba but has lived majority of his life in Miami, Florida. Outside the academy, Antonio enjoys cooking and listening to music. He hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in Political Theory.

Michael Keyack

Michael Keyack is an Honors College student pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering. At NASA Center For Research and Education in 2D Optoelectronics’ High Volume Lab, he conducts research in additive manufacturing for electronics, exploring material properties for applications of printed electronics. Beyond engineering, he has a passion for music technology and designs musical equipment as a creative outlet.

Sofia Gabrielle Nava Marron

Sofia Gabrielle Nava Marron is an international business student at Florida International University, where she studies International Business Administration and Digital Analytics. Passionate about connecting cultures through marketing, she serves as Co-President of the American Marketing Association and is an active member of the Model United Nations travel team. Sofia has gained practical experience as a digital marketing consultant for El Central Hispanic News and as an intern at Puente Cultural Integration. Her current research focuses on emerging gender roles and their impact on alcohol advertising.

Erika Noel

Erika Noel is pursuing a degree in Biomedical Engineering at Florida International University. With a deep passion for tissue engineering and biomedical imaging, she has participated in advanced research projects at prestigious institutions like Stanford and the University of Michigan. Erika has earned accolades for her leadership and dedication, including a Presentation Award at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists (ABRCMS). Beyond academia, she is actively involved in student organizations, having served as President of the Engineering in Medicine & Biology Society, and has also held the title of Miss Fort Lauderdale, showcasing her versatility and drive.

Daveena Ramnaraine

Daveena Ramnaraine is an undergraduate student pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences and Natural & Applied Sciences, and a minor in Chemistry through the Honors College and Quantifying Biology in the Classroom (QBIC) program. She has a passion for plant sciences and how it can solve numerous global health challenges, and conducts research focused on this area. Daveena aspires to earn a Ph.D. and continue her journey in research. When not in the lab, she enjoys growing and eating her own fruits.

Ariel Robledo

Ariel Robledo is a fourth-year student pursuing a double major in Political Science and History. Ariel dreams of one day working for the federal government with specialties in policymaking, governance, and especially research. He is a member of the FIU Student Government Association as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, and former research assistant to FIU's Theory-based Research on Interviewing, Interrogation, Intelligence-gathering, and Assessing Deception Lab. Outside of FIU, he was a history intern for the Graduate Center for the City University of New York (CUNY). He is currently an intern for a security-based think tank specializing in international relations and global security.

Emily Rosario

Emily Rosario is a Global Medallion scholar graduating with a major in History, a minor in Art History, and a Certificate in Christian Studies. She has presented her research at the Humanities Edge Research Conference and has earned first place in FIU's Writing in History Essay Competition. Emily's research interests focus on the intersection between religion, culture, and ideas across Western Europe and the Middle East. Passionate about education, she aspires to become a history professor, sharing her love for academia with future generations. Emily enjoys listening to podcasts, reading fantasy books, and hanging out with friends in her spare time.

Ana Laura Rumbaut Gil

Ana Laura Rumbaut Gil is a native from Chile, raised by a Cuban family. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Forensic Biology and a minor in Philosophy and hopes to become a physician in the future. Her scientific research interests are in the inflammatory mechanisms of Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative diseases, while her philosophical research interests lie in the study of aesthetics and the philosophy of color. Outside of school, she loves to sing, read, and spend time in nature.

- Cathrina Saint-Hubert *Cathrina Saint-Hubert (she/her) is a recent graduate at FIU who earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. She is currently working as a research assistant in the Mechanisms Underlying Treatment Technologies (MUTT) Lab and is working towards becoming a registered behavior technician (RBT). Cathrina is largely interested in pursuing a graduate program in clinical psychology focused on adolescents, and she is directing her efforts toward cultivating the clinical and research skills needed to become a stellar clinician.*
- Daly Santana-Rodda *Daly Santana-Rodda is a Research Assistant at FIU's Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy and a proud FIU magna cum laude graduate of Political Science. She is an honor society member of Phi Beta Kappa and Pi Sigma Alpha and earned certificates in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and National Security. Daly was part of a team which proudly represented FIU in the Atlantic Council's Cyber 9/12 Strategy Challenge. She also interned with Marco Rubio's office which helped her gain insights into public policy. Daly is committed to contributing positively to her field of study and local community.*
- Sebastian Scavuzzo *Sebastian Scavuzzo is a fourth-year biochemistry major. Although he studies biochemistry as an undergraduate student, his research is focused primarily on computational and experimental biophysics to understand the complexity and unique nature of vital neuronal proteins. Through this research discipline, he found his passion to further his studies in protein design and small molecule docking and synthesis once he graduates in the effort of advancing pharmaceutical research.*
- Kelly Turro *Kelly Turro is a fourth-year student majoring in Biological Sciences with a second major in Natural and Applied Sciences. Her research was conducted under the Honors College Advanced Research and Creativity in Honors (ARCH) program, with mentoring from the Department of Physical Therapy and the Department of Nurse Anesthesiology in the FIU Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Kelly aspires to go into the field of Dentistry, applying to attend dental school. She currently volunteers as a General Biology I Peer Leader, guiding general biology students through weekly workshops.*
- Nayla Ugardes *Nayla Ugardes (she/her) is a Bridge medical student at Florida State University with a background in Behavioral Neuroscience and Psychology from FIU. Her passion for psychiatry is rooted in a commitment to improving mental health care for underserved communities. Through research with the Public Health Research Institute of India and her honors thesis, she explored the impact of social determinants on health. With a community-driven focus, Nayla is dedicated to advocating for patient-centered, equitable care and hopes to address systemic barriers to healthcare as a future psychiatrist.*

Artistic Contributors

Winners

Nellie Abrahamyan *Through her art, Nellie Abrahamyan aims to provoke thought, evoke emotion, and encourage dialogue—enriching both individuals and the communities they inhabit. As a Silver Key Scholastics winner, her artistic journey has led her to exhibit at prestigious venues, including Miami International Airport. Nellie is passionate about exploring the intersections of life—using art as a lens to connect diverse experiences. Her work reflects a deep commitment to community as she believes in art’s transformative power. As a mentor to young artists, Nellie strives to inspire creativity and foster collaboration, emphasizing the value of artistic expression in enhancing our surroundings.*

You can find more of her work at @_ax_xl_ on Instagram.

Michael Crenshaw *Since the sixth grade, art has guided Michael Crenshaw on a richer academic path and a more exciting livelihood. One of his many passions lies in Art History. He deeply enjoys the process of research and writing about the most influential artists of our time. Seeking a career path in the arts and art history wasn’t something Michael originally sought to get a degree in, but after working with the students at Glades Middle School, he was inspired to share and gain insight into his peers’ styles and techniques in fine arts. In the future, Michael would like to use his future degree in Art History to both conduct research and teach at a secondary institution as a professor - a goal that will require much schooling. His love for history in art and his love for being an educator made this career path an obvious choice; For Michael, to teach means to be a student forever, and to make a career out of consistently learning.*

*You can find more of his work on **Medium** at <https://medium.com/@crenshawmichael178>.*

Alonso Bravo *Alonso Bravo is a digital artist at FIU—soon to be an animator—who was born in Lima, Peru. He is 21 and he moved to Miami in 2023 to obtain a Bachelor of Fine Arts with the goal of working in the animation, art and gaming industry. He is self-taught in traditional and digital art and has always channelized emotions through fantasy and surrealist pieces that intertwine divinity and chaos with vibrant colors and almost microscopic details. Alonso is a part of the FIU Fine Arts Student Association. He has been publishing his creative process on Instagram (@**aportfolioacido**). He continues to improve his skills as a writer, poet, musician and artist.*

*You can find more of his work at @**alonso_bravogb** on Instagram and his digital portfolio, <https://alonsobgb.wixsite.com/my-portfolio>.*

Honorable Mentions

Ana Laura Rumbaut Gil

Ana Laura Rumbaut Gil's grandfather is a self-trained Naif artist, painting the most rustic and endemic corners of his Cuban roots. From him, Ana absorbed the love for art. She began drawing the people that she loves as a naive attempt to imitate him when she was little. Throughout her life, Ana has come to deeply appreciate aesthetics and the way people perceive visual elements. Like her grandfather, she likes to manipulate color and shape to transcend the plane of the obvious when we look. Art has an essential power to translate human emotion throughout dimensions and times.

Katherine Attaway

Katherine Attaway is an animation major with a passion for illustration. She loves bright colors and bold textures and how they can work together to bring a simpler piece to life. Over time, Katherine developed a fascination with how vibrant visuals can evoke emotion and tell stories. Inspired by mixed media art, she strives to infuse energy and joy into her work. Katherine's work often includes exciting characters and intriguing scenarios, utilizing traditional painting techniques within digital programs to create a unique outcome. Her goal is to captivate audiences and ignite their creativity, inviting them to see the world through a colorful lens.

Saina Amir-Zadeh-Shams

Saina Amir-Zadeh-Shams is an 18-year-old artist who has been making art all her life. She enjoys creating art of all styles and with different kinds of mediums, especially art from a variety of cultures. Her family is from Iran, and her inspiration to make Persian miniature art comes from her own culture. She grew up surrounded by miniature paintings on every wall of her house, and she had always thought of this ancient art style as beautiful and unique, focusing most of her artworks around them.

Dylan Avellanet

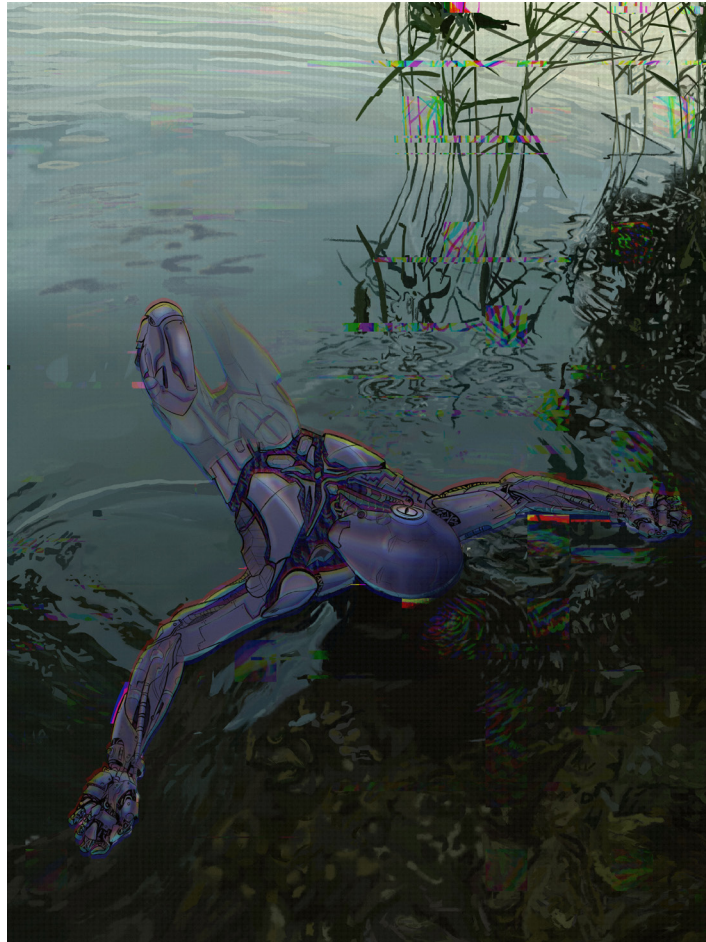
Dylan Avellanet's artistic background has its origins in his toddler years. Over time Dylan has illustrated all manners of animals, landscapes, fictional media, human figures, and fictional characters. In his sophomore year of high school, Dylan took a drawing level 3 class under the guidance and mentorship of the late Mr. Dave Isenberg. Mr. Isenberg remained his instructor in junior year for Advanced Placement 2-Dimensional Art and also in senior year for Advanced Placement Drawing. During Dylan's first year at FIU, he was as an art major before switching to English literature. Art remains a consistent hobby of Dylan's, with interest in the same subject matter.

Nicole Rodriquez

As an undergraduate student with a deep passion for art, Nicole Rachez loves creating visually appealing pieces that people can enjoy and remember. Her artistic journey is all about crafting memorable experiences, whether through painting, digital design, or mixed media. Nicole is dedicated to making art that resonates and brings joy to those who see it. Her work is driven by a love for beauty and creativity, and she is excited to share her vision with the world. For Nicole, art is not just a form of expression but a way to connect with others and make lasting impressions through her eyes onto other peoples'.

Nellie Abrahamyan

1st Place Cover Art Winner



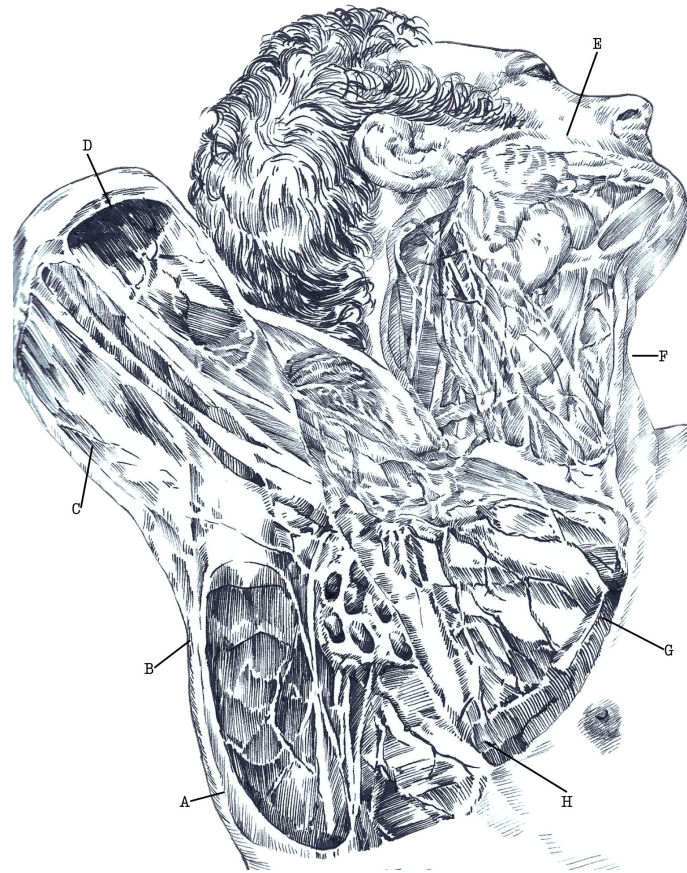
In recent years, a divide has emerged in how people perceive STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and art, often viewing them as opposing forces. However, I believe these fields are deeply interconnected, each enriching the other and contributing to our understanding of the world. Historically, art and science have influenced one another, leading to innovations and profound cultural advancements. To illustrate this relationship, I envision a robot reclining in a tranquil swamp. This imagery symbolizes the harmony between technology and nature, showcasing how they can coexist rather than compete. The



design and functionality of the robot stem from scientific principles, yet its aesthetic and emotional impact draw from artistic expression. Art and STEM are not merely complementary; they are partners in progress. The creative process in art can inspire scientific exploration, while scientific advancements can inform and enhance artistic techniques. Together, they shape our lives, influencing everything from the design of everyday objects to the structures of our cities. The world is a tapestry of interconnected elements, with commonalities abound. From the intricate patterns found in nature to the algorithms driving technology, everything reflects underlying principles of design and functionality. These shared characteristics remind us that, whether through art or STEM, we are all part of a unified creative process.

Michael Crenshaw

2nd Place Cover Art Winner



Science and mathematics have been used for ages to help shape, develop, and define the visual and fine arts. Most importantly, which can be traced back to the early Egyptians, are anatomical studies and illustrations. Visual memory and diagrams, dissections of the body, are still crucial to medical students, aspiring surgeons, anatomy education, and in the same category, artists. While one may find that the arts and sciences have little relation, their understanding of the human body is what binds them together - artists seek to understand what they imitate, and without artists, the members of today's medical field would



have no visual diagram to aid their texts and studies. FIU's URJ seeks to platform knowledge, promote future scholars, and provide resources to the public as to aid their impactful projects and contributions; artists seek to do the exact same, especially those that commit to the study of anatomy and science and illustrate such for the scientific community. One artist that may come to mind for most would be the famous Leonardo Da Vinci, both a painter and inventor. His early silverpoint anatomical and skeletal studies laid the foundation for some of his greatest and most famous compositions. The URJ promotes those same future Da Vinci's, combining the humanities and STEM, the arts and sciences, in one publication, bringing together the greatest minds at FIU.

Alonso Bravo

3rd Place Cover Art Winner



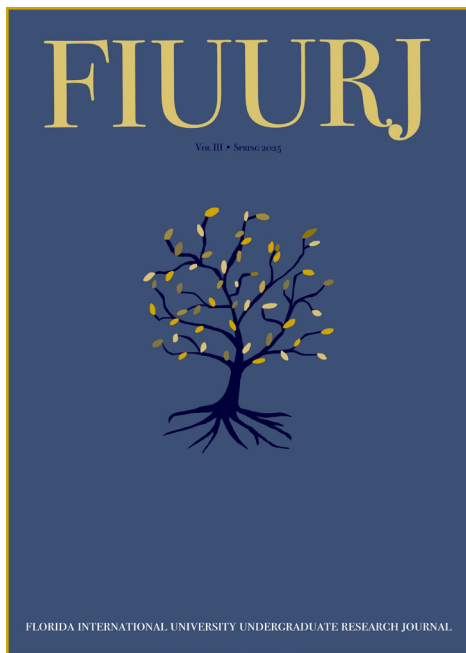
In “Transferred Wisdom,” the astronaut reaches to grab a paper from a philosopher, which represents the concept of transferring knowledge and evolving it through time. It’s an idea that speaks about where our modern ideologies, technology, and advanced access to resources come from, and shows two opposite environments (space and nature, philosophy and science) connecting thanks to the characters portrayed in the piece, which are the astronaut at the top and the two philosophers on the bottom-right. The two philosophers are Plato and Aristotle. My artwork references “The School of Athens,” a painting from the 16th century by Raphael Sanzio, where we see philosophers who shaped Western philosophy, science, and political theory, holding a book each. Plato’s book (Timaeus), holds beliefs related to justice, beauty and wisdom, while Aristotle’s emphasizes ethics and an objective truth ruled by the human perspective. In “Transferred Wisdom,” they hand a page of



their books to the astronaut, which symbolizes the transmission of their theory and knowledge soon to be transformed and adapted by our modern society, which keeps evolving thanks to new discoveries, new inventions, new ideologies (social sciences), and new ways to perceive the world through art. “Transferred Wisdom” is a piece with a lot of details: it has real constellations mixed with formulas and chemical composition of neurotransmitters, like adrenaline and serotonin: which happen in situations of risk, anxiety and happiness. These are the feelings we get from new discoveries and interactions with new people, which also englobes the themes of STEM and the drive of FIUURJ respectively. On the other hand, the background contrasts thanks to the color palette: FIU’s gold and blue, and the solar system that forms part of it creates splashes of paint that also work as stars in the sky of the foreground.

Ana Laura Rumbaut Gil

Honorable Mention



“The Tree of Knowledge” is a biblical tale that recurrently appears in Genesis. Upon Adam and Eve’s welcoming of sin into the world, evil escapes unleashed into God’s universe and begins to camouflage under the disguise of good. While the meaning of this story has been relativized and debated by many intellectuals throughout hundreds of years, a common agreement is that

it represents the intertwining of good and evil in the human experience through its branches, and that the way we absorb and perceive knowledge is marked by a convoluted mixture of many distinct concepts and phenomena. Only by eating from the tree of knowledge can a person gain the moral judgement to discern between good and evil. And because that is the case, all disciplines of knowledge, being born from the same purpose of illuminating the human intellect, subsist in branches of an interconnected ecosystem as well, as radically different as they

may appear to be. Branches of Gold is a visual ode to the authentic Tree of Knowledge. The branches of the tree all harbor one of four different types of leaves, each representing an area of knowledge that is contained in the journal: sand (STEM), mustard (Social Sciences), ivory (Arts), and dark gold (Humanities). It is a simplistic but candid representation of what the student will find inside. It unites all spheres of life into an alive body that never ceases to grow and progress.

Katherine Attaway

Honorable Mention

This piece is inspired by the core of FIUURJ’s mission, which is accessible growth for student researchers and writers. In the piece, an FIU student reads a journal. The abstract background showcases the possibilities that come from the research that went into making it. The lab coat showcases scientific research, however the abstraction contrasts it and implies the various areas of research that can be done. The visual language of this piece is namely bold and confident, in colors and textures. This exemplifies the work of undergraduate researchers as striking and unique. In addition, the swirling motion created in the back pushes forward the endless possibilities of research once again. To represent FIU as a whole, a brighter version of the school colors is used. The brightness helps each element pop while showing the bright minds of undergraduate researchers and the exciting moves they are making. Utilizing only two colors helps any student researcher see themselves in the one depicted. The researcher is not any one student, but an amalgam of school spirit, prowess, and innovation. They could take any other appearance, body shape, or dress and still hold the same unifying message. FIU students hold endless potential. Research is for everyone.



Saina Amir-Zadeh-Shams

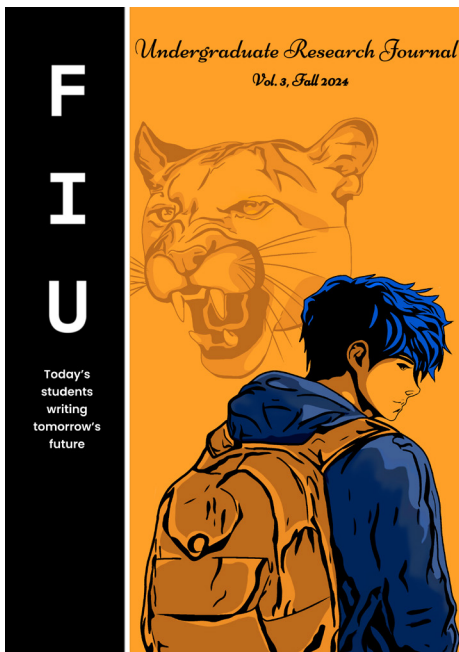
Honorable Mention

My artwork is my own twist on the ancient Persian miniature art style. Persian miniatures have existed since the 13th century, and reflect the themes of FIUURJ, as it is important to study art from all cultures and understand the meaning behind them. Ancient Persia was a time of science, where many advancements to astronomy and mathematics had been made, and Persian miniatures reflect on this era of discovery. This art style also depicts mythology and everyday life in ancient Persia, giving us a hint about how people interacted with each other during this time. I also added many details that represent FIU and FIUURJ. The lady in my drawing is wearing a crown that depicts FIU's "Kissing Bridge", with her hair representing the water under the bridge, including the turtles and fish that live there. She is also petting a panther, FIU's beloved mascot. The tree in the artwork, which bears grapes, flowers, and leaves, displays the resources that the lady and the panther need to become nourished and grow, aligning with the theme of FIUURJ to provide resources to undergraduate students. Although there is fog above the tree, the tree protects the two characters to give them clear air, which represents how FIUURJ helps students create a smooth path for their futures through research and experience.



Dylan Avellanet

Honorable Mention



This piece represents the themes of the journal through showcasing the shared condition of FIU students. A condition that encompasses the pursuit of greatness through fierce ambition and how students all exist under an umbrella of shared drive as one community. The student, showcased in the striking blue and bright gold of the university colors, represents how all students share extensive knowledge, thorough production, powerful drive, and eagerness to learn as members of FIU. Still, to each individual there is mystery and there is a story. The backpack, simplistic and unassuming, contains the mystery of each individual. The backpack may contain books and materials pertaining to STEM, social sciences, arts, or humanities. Essentially, what makes a student who they are and what they want to be. It represents all the research and knowledge contained in the Undergraduate Research Journal, of both peer and stranger alike, united through FIU's mission of elevating the future. The panther roars above the student, representing their strength and intensity in academia and the community as FIU students. The panther overlooks in a monochromatic scheme to match the background, like a spiritual presence of sorts to represent the shared power and vigor of FIU students as learners, professionals, and mentors. It looms above almost like a protective force, analogous to how FIU students protect and encourage knowledge and truth through their research.

Nicole Rodriguez

Honorable Mention



“My artwork is focused on being visually appealing by using bright and specific colors that resonate with students as soon as the look at it for the first time. I decided to use blue and gold as a representation of our FIU colors. This makes it seem as if FIU student opportunities and pride is the main focus of the journal. As we explore and look through the image, we find a certain level of symmetry with beautiful

parts of it being a little more disruptive to show that art is subjective, as well as whatever research students will find in the journal. The sunrays portray the students as the spotlight of the project that is under this cover and shows that there is a lot more to the story than the beautiful cover they are looking at. We then see three paws representing the third edition of the journal as this is the third year it has been published. We also see a panther which specifically

portrays our panther and FIU spirit through actual images. Then, on the right, we see Socrates, who is known to be the father of knowledge. The entire journal focuses on all sorts of knowledge all the way from STEM, to humanities and this is something that Socrates perfectly represents. He was a person who analyzed every bit of human information as much as he could with the resource he had at the time. Thousands of years later, we are on the same spot, researching topics we are interested in as young adults that are getting to understand and see the world from our own experiences and perspectives. Lastly, we see branches coming out as a symbol of strength but also growth in all subjects related to research and knowledge which is why they are growing towards the book in the middle. They represent all sorts of knowledge and information which is what the journal is about. I really enjoyed working on this project, I put a lot of effort into trying to keep it as simple as possible but making it give a statement at the same time. I hope whoever sees this, enjoys and appreciates this.

Interested in Having Your Artwork Featured in FIUURJ?

The FIU Undergraduate Research Journal, with its goals of interdisciplinary unity and progress, hosts a cover art contest every publication cycle. We hope to platform and support up-and-coming artists of the FIU undergraduate community, regardless of your academic or professional background, in the same way we aim to champion research and innovation in each volume.

If you are interested in having your artwork featured in our Spring 2026 volume, visit fiuurj.fiu.edu. For any application questions or clarification, please contact us by email at fiuurj@fiu.edu. **Submissions will open later this summer.**

Winners of the contest will be announced at a humanities undergraduate research event in the Fall. Our 1st place winner will be featured on our front cover, while our 2nd place winner will be featured on our back cover. Our 3rd place winner and honorable mentions will have a spot within the volume spread.

Your artwork has the potential to become an integral part of our journal and contribute to the visual representation of academic exploration and creativity, so we look forward to seeing your creative interpretations!

Interested in Publishing with FIUURJ?

We are currently looking for new research proposals to publish in our Spring 2026 volume. If you are a current (or recent) FIU undergraduate student interested in submitting an article, literature review, IRB approved humanities-based research, or creative artifact, please visit the FIUURJ website for submission information: www.fuurj.fiu.edu/submissions.

For any application questions or clarification, please contact us by email at fiuurj@fiu.edu. We strive to provide an encouraging, inclusive, and collaborative platform for prospective student researchers to gain recognition for their work.

Interested in Joining FIUURJ?

FIUURJ relies on the diligent work of student editors to review, edit, and collaborate on proposals and manuscripts for the highest quality possible. If you are interested in supporting student writers during the writing process and have completed any upper-level writing course, please visit the “Get Involved” page on our website for application information:



<https://fiuurj.fiu.edu/apply-to-be-a-student-editor/>

Faculty reviewers are also essential to the publication process by contributing valuable expertise and sufficiently assessing the quality of submitted student research. The FIUURJ committee encourages interested faculty to apply for this voluntary opportunity and enrich the publication experience of learning students by mentoring new groups of successful writers. For more information, please visit the “Get Involved” page on our website at:



<https://fiuurj.fiu.edu/apply-to-be-a-faculty-reviewer/>



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Research Journal

SPRING 2025 | VOLUME 3