

PRIDE ACROSS THE MULTI VERSE

SECRET
LAIR
P R I D E

Pride Across the Multiverse

is a celebration and reflection of how far we've come, what it took to get here, and what still lies ahead. From the start, we wanted this Secret Lair to celebrate the LGBTQIA2S+ community's relentless creativity. There was no way this collection of eight cards would represent EVERY aspect of the community, but we wanted to honor the hope and joy found in our multifaceted identities. It is our hope that people find some part of their own unique selves reflected in these cards.

The team worked incredibly hard to depict characters from across the Multiverse on cards that represent everything from quiet mundane moments to big celebrations, while recognizing the ongoing fight for our future. As Art Director, I wanted to celebrate the wide spectrum of identities and experiences by working with artists to express themselves with their style and unique experiences in these cards. This project was a terrific opportunity to bring in new styles and artists while also giving visibility to the folks that have been painting Magic: The Gathering for years! I looked for artists across the spectrum of LGBTQIA2S+ and BIPOC identities; having a breadth of artists is an important part of celebrating the diversity of our community and experiences.

As a queer Asian American woman, working on this drop was deeply meaningful and a tremendous challenge. This was my first ever

art direction experience, and I am incredibly thankful for the mentorship of Jess Lanzillo and the support from Jontelle Leyson-Smith. I had the immense pleasure of working with an incredibly talented and playful group of people on this project.

Each card in *Pride Across the Multiverse* tells its own story of love, struggle, resilience, joy, and community. Stories are how we practice hope, and I think it's so important to hope, to really be in the practice of holding fast and remaining true. It is our triumph, and we will shape the future with our ferocious resilience. I am so proud of what we were all able to accomplish in this set and thrilled to accompany you on this journey.

Stephanie Cheung, *Art Director*

Pride Creative Team



Jess Lanzillo
Creative Director



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Art Director



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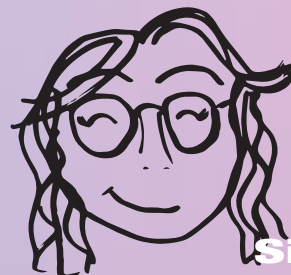
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The Trevor Project is the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning) young people.

The organization works to save young lives by providing support through free and confidential suicide prevention and crisis intervention programs on platforms where young people spend their time: their 24/7 phone lifeline, chat, and text. They also run TrevorSpace, the world's largest safe space social networking site for LGBTQ young people, and operate innovative education, research, and advocacy programs.



Wizards Pride is an Employee Resource Group made up of over 150 Wizards employees who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community. We seek to expand representation in our products and foster inclusivity at WOTC in company culture and hiring. Wizards Pride is not a single moment, day, or month. It is a daily lived experience.

We believe our games should be accessible to everyone, and inclusive of the variety of lived experiences among you, our fans. The Wizards Multiverse should be a place any of us can step into, connect with, or lose ourselves in, no matter who we are.

PREVIOUS EFFORTS

For the last four years, Wizards Pride has been running the Dungeons & Dragons and Magic: The Gathering charity pride shirt campaign benefiting Lambert House and The Trevor Project. Wizards Pride has a close relationship with Lambert House, a local charity in Seattle. In addition to the charity campaigns, volunteers run D&D games with the youth at Lambert House monthly.

LOOKING FORWARD

Wizards Pride is super excited for 2022 Pride Across the Multiverse! This Secret Lair drop represents the cumulative effort of so many queer employees who poured their hearts into this project. We hope that you'll love this as much as we do!

Beyond this Secret Lair drop we are also excited to finally gather again with our local Seattle community to celebrate Seattle Pride 2022. Hope to see some of you there!

ALESHA

WHO SMILES AT DEATH

*“Our history is one hand
reaching out to another.”*

We all love Alesha, and we knew she had to be included here. When we spoke with folks internally, people were passionate about seeing trans elders represented in this set. Our goal with this card was to show an older Alesha thriving, passing on her skills and wisdom. Whether she's on the battlefield or training the next generation, she'll always be a hero.

Seeing Alesha's face was such an emotional moment. I definitely cried when I saw the sketch. Winona Nelson is such a thoughtful artist. It was such an honor to work with her and see another side of her style.

Interview with the Artist

Winona Nelson

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND!

I am an Indigenous artist from the Ojibwe tribe of Minnesota, and grew up in Duluth. I've traveled a lot and lived in a few different US cities, and now reside in Pennsylvania.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS PROJECT OR EXCITED YOU ABOUT WORKING ON THIS PROJECT?

I was excited to work on this project because I am Two Spirit, which is an umbrella term used by Native American people to describe someone with masculine and feminine spirits—in my case, I identify as pansexual and both female and male. As an artist, depicting people of diverse backgrounds, gender identities, and sexual orientations has always been a big motivator in my work. I'm very happy that the amount of representation of minority people and characters has been increasing so much in recent years!

WHAT WAS YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS LIKE?

The art director, Stephanie Cheung, invited me to use an experimental style on this piece. She mentioned the art style of a personal project of mine, a graphic novel called Cut Flowers, which uses graphite linework and digital watercolor instead of the more rendered painting style I am better known for in my fantasy illustration work. It was exciting to get to bring the line-based art style to a Magic card, and since the graphic novel also centers on queer and Two Spirit characters it seemed like a fun thematic match.

WHAT THEMES OR EMOTIONS WERE YOU INVOKING WITH YOUR PIECE?

This piece was intended to show an older member of the queer community helping a younger member. As a middle-aged person, I am overjoyed seeing the ever-increasing visibility of young LGBTQIA2S+ people both creating and being portrayed in media, and the amazing diversity within those identities! I am so hopeful and happy for the younger generation growing up with so much to help them figure out who they are and what path they want to take in the world. That said, I know that things are still difficult for queer kids especially in smaller towns, rural areas, communities of color, and different parts of the world, so I wanted to capture the feeling of the message “it gets better.”

ANY SPECIFIC DETAILS YOU WANT TO HIGHLIGHT ABOUT YOUR PIECE?

I spent a lot of time figuring out a chest binder for the young trans man. I wanted to make sure it didn't look makeshift or dangerous like bandages, and that it fit with the universe. I really like the result, which uses adjustable lacing to provide compression over quilted silk padding for comfort. It looks like it could be a standard-issue piece of equipment for the warriors who need it!







SAVOR THE MOMENT

"I do,"

The moment came first for this card. When we talked about characters we loved and things we wanted to see, Ral and Tomik's wedding was one of the first ideas we had. Most of the time when we see these characters on Ravnica there's some kind of conflict or distraction, but this card wasn't going to have to fight some universe ending war for the spotlight. We wanted a card that expressed the idea that sometimes you can just let everything else fall away and savor a moment of joy.

From the start, we knew EXACTLY who had to paint this piece. Kieran Yanner has such a history with these characters, and I am not one to say no to such a serendipitous moment.



Interview with the Artist

Kieran Yanner

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND!

I'm originally from Australia but have lived in the United States for the last 20 years and in the Pacific Northwest since 2008. I've been working for Wizards of the Coast since about 2005.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS PROJECT OR EXCITED YOU ABOUT WORKING ON THIS PROJECT?

I had a hand in the development of Ral and Tomik's look and story several years ago, so getting the chance to illustrate their wedding was an awesome culmination of that journey.

WHAT WAS YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS LIKE?

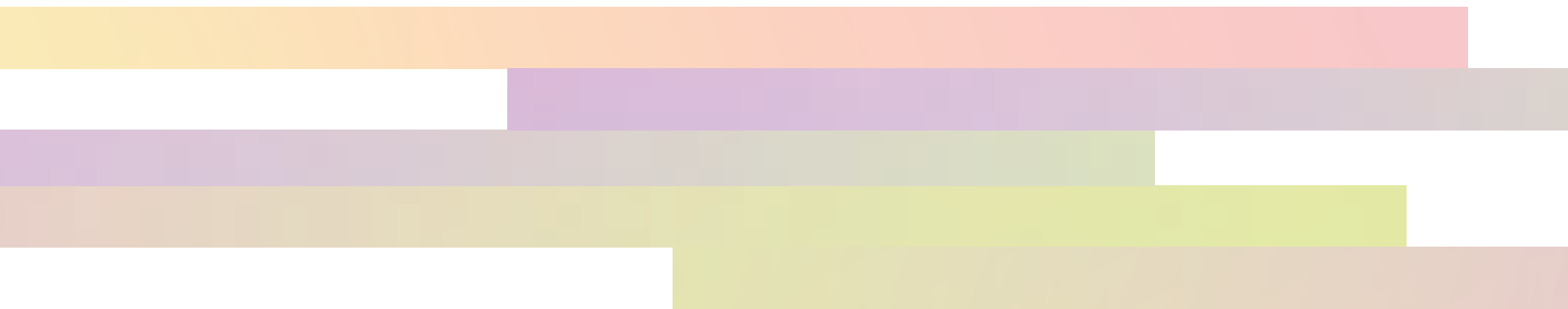
Working with Stephanie on this project was a lot of fun! We worked through a few sketches before settling on this composition and moving to final. Being a married gay man myself I know that ceremonies vary widely (mine was shotgun style in a converted shipping container) but I wanted to take a more "traditional" approach to elements—the flowers, the doves, the couple standing elevated and above the crowd. My last visit to Ravnica was shown in autumn so I wanted to portray a renewed springtime feel with the lighting and set.

WHAT THEMES OR EMOTIONS WERE YOU INVOKING WITH YOUR PIECE?

Capturing the moment just before "the kiss" builds the feeling of anticipation as we know instinctively what comes next. It allows the viewer to fill in the next moments in their own mind, making it a unique personal experience to everyone.

ANY SPECIFIC DETAILS YOU WANT TO HIGHLIGHT ABOUT YOUR PIECE?

I hope the art is well received—there are countless ways we could have presented the union, but I felt relying on my gut and emotional investment was the right way to go.







HEARTBEAT OF SPRING

*“You were right,
Ixalan is a paradise,”
said Saheeli.*

“Mostly because you’re here.”

We felt it was important showcase an intimate, romantic moment alongside the other cards that tackle big, social ideas. After all, quiet spaces with our loved ones often lay the foundation for community strength. After Saheeli and Huatli met and exchanged stories on Ghirapur, it felt natural that their budding relationship be followed with a trip to Ixalan where Saheeli could experience being among the real dinosaurs.

Peo Michie has such a way with “slice of life” couple pieces. She did such an incredible job depicting the complex details of Huatli and Saheeli’s armor in her style.



Interview with the Artist

Peo Michie




TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND!

I'm a Melbourne-based multidisciplinary artist, of African Australian heritage, using my talents of illustration to focus on Queer BIPOC relationships.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS PROJECT OR EXCITED YOU ABOUT WORKING ON THIS PROJECT?

When Wizards first approached me with this project, I was excited to create art for characters that were beautifully designed and visibly BIPOC. I also appreciated that Wizards chose to reach out to a queer PoC artist to create art for these characters, as it showed they understood the worth of not only representation, but the voices of queer and BIPOC people.







NOTE FOR A STRANGER

a short story

Written by Alison Lührs

On the exterior wall of an inn in Precinct Five on the city-plane of Ravnica hangs the Traveler's Noticeboard, warded from rain, time, and those lacking a Planeswalker's spark. The bulletin board hangs in a private space in the public square, sheltered by a nest of ivy and the charitable shade of the inn's clay tile roof. It's difficult to catch someone in the act of posting on the board, since so few can see it, and fewer still bother to walk all the way to Precinct Five, but if someone were to approach they'd find a broad stretch of cork and the earthy musk of a distant and damp rainforest. Scattered as seeds across the board are dozens of requests, warnings, love letters, search warrants, bounties, lovingly sketched pictures, poorly drawn portraits, and all manner of notes and notices, each placed by the rarest of travelers.

The notes range in usefulness. On parchment, hanging dead center:

TWO EXTRA TICKETS: Championship Singles Match, Valor's Reach, next planar quarter-moon. Leave planar contact address below if interested!!

Just to the right, on the back of a menu:

**LOST: Tie clip—silver beetle. Last seen Whisperers encampment, Qal Sisma mtns, Tarkir. Return at once, will trade 20 units of Halo.
Leave under violin case, 187 S 14th St, New Capenna**

On an old sheet of paper torn by years of weather, in a haphazard and bold scrawl:

FOR A GOOD TIME, 44 TOFANA PLAZA, PALIANO, FIORA

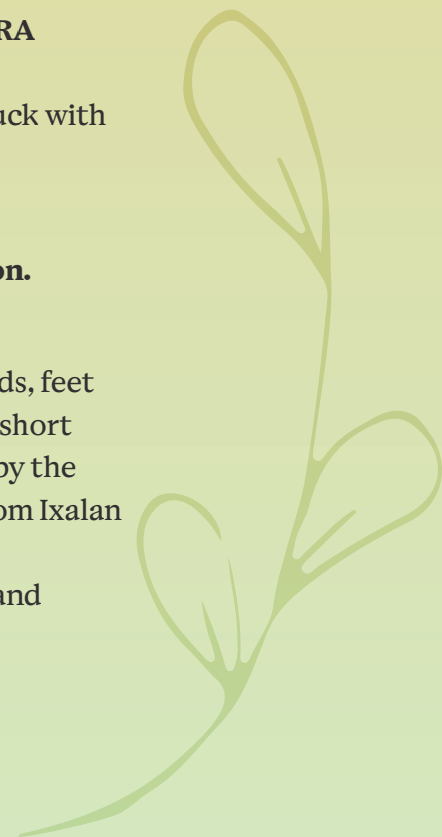
But on a warm amber morning in early summer, a fresh note is stuck with a slim silver pin near the top:

**Seeking raw copper.
Will trade currency of choice in exchange for discretion.**

R

Here, at the Traveler's Noticeboard, the planeswalker Huatli stands, feet firmly planted, chin tipped up out of equal parts confidence and short stature, and skims the board because why not. Her eye is caught by the fresh note up top, and she remembers the raw copper brought from Ixalan to trade when she first arrived on this plane.

In the square behind her, linden trees brighten in verdant praise and





dandelions and clover punch through the cobblestones, the rubble of the city's recent sorrows cleared away at last.

Not one to leave a stranger in want, Huatli rises on her tiptoes to snag an old piece of paper from another corner of the board, and responds in a loopy and flourished hand. Thus begins their correspondence.

Is there an appropriate location to trade if interested?

H

...

Write your initial on the box below the bulletin board. Your signature has been encoded into the warding.

R

"Seems like overkill," Huatli murmurs to no one in particular. She looks down. Sure enough, at her feet is a silver box tied to the post with a delicate metal chain. Huatli taps it with the steel of her toe. Yes. Must be that box.

She kneels, a little uncertain she's doing this right, and uses her index finger to draw a quick H on the lid of the box. It silently slides open, revealing an empty space inside.

"Uh..."

Feeling slightly reassured by this development, Huatli places a medium-sized lump of Sun Empire copper inside, along with a quick inquiring note.

Are you a spy?

H

She seals the box, only realizing after it's shut that she forgot to mention what currency she wanted in return. Huatli says a word she once heard Angrath use and draws the H on top of the box again.

It remains closed.

It isn't until she returns the next day and tries again that the box reopens, a fresh note inside.

**I am a very authentic spy.
Also you forgot to mention how I should pay you.**

R

Huatli smiles. Whoever the spy is, they're cheeky.



Attention: Secret Agent R,

As a very authentic secret agent, what inspired you to become a tool of the state? What honor do you find in the shadows? What enriches the soul of a warrior who hides who they are? Most importantly, what kind of garotte do you intend to craft out of my copper?

I await your encoded transmission, Agent R.

Also not a secret agent,

H

P.S. I am a woman of honor, and do not need compensation in exchange for the goods I gift in the spirit of altruism.

The next morning brings a new note from the mystery writer that draws her smile wider, eliciting a laugh and a thrill in her heart.

Hopeless Optimist,

I had to ask my colleague what a garotte was and regret doing so.

Down to business. I will not press the issue of payment again. I appreciate your generosity—you are inadvertently helping me right a tremendous extraplanar wrong.

That said... you caught me. I don't think I would make a very good spy anyway. Being a "tool of the state" sounds like it isn't very fun. I think I would need to get better at lying first. What gave me away—was it saying I was a very real spy? I thought that would be good cover, alas.

Your copper will not be used to make a garotte, I promise, but it is a critical conductor I'm integrating into a project I'm crafting for a friend! That part is actually real. Truly. Seriously. I'm a lady, not a liar.

You write beautifully, by the way. What brings you to this plane, or are you a local?

Not A Secret Agent

R

Huatli spends the next day with a light heart, pleased her assumption was correct. "I'm a lady." She spends the day reading and re-reading the letter, privately beaming in victory. Bullseye.

She skips from consultation to consultation, from the Azorius legislative records to a long meeting with the sub-lieutenant of the Boros. All the while she can't stop thinking of R, her spy-that-isn't-a-spy.

After an afternoon of trying to contain herself, she returns to the box and leaves her response.

Woman of Honor,

I've spent the last two months on this plane studying the executive structure of the guilds. My home's governmental system is quite different, but I've found in my years there is always something to learn from others. (I now realize, am I a tool of the state?! How embarrassing.) I hope to bring back learnings to help my own home improve.

Perhaps that is naive. Ravnica's government was founded magically, shaped by a foreign planeswalker's hand; it seems designed to spur conflict but functions all the same. I'm not convinced the guild's executive structure is superior to our own, but one can glean inspiration in many surprising sources.

I think of the war and conflict back home and wonder if there is something better. Maybe as a former fake spy you have some insight into how to end conflict. Is it naive to seek utopia?

Lady, Not A Liar

H

...

Seeker of Utopia,

Utopia, hm? I've heard my own home described that way! The point of utopia is that it is impossible, but then again, the point of the impossible is to always strive for it anyway, yes? Nothing is ever finished—that's what I was taught. My mentor's inability to be impressed has led me to be the kind of creator who can't ever put down my tools and call it a day. Is that why you seek to learn from other planes? Do you wish to perfect your own home, even if you know the work will never be completed? I don't think you're naive. I think it's beautiful you want to make your home a better place.

Former Fake Spy,

R

...

R,

The least we can do in this life is try. The more I learn how everyone else strives for perfection, the more I can help my home. You speak of your mentor with warmth but describe what strikes me as cruel treatment. If this box we're using is proof of your genius I am angry on your behalf that your mentor was unimpressed with your work.

It is truly remarkable.

You should be proud to make such beautiful things.

H

H,

I'm flattered that you rush to defend my honor! Please don't assume bad faith—my mentor always encourages me to grow and improve. She means the world to me, as do your kind words.

What do you know of Dominaria? I've been staying there and returning to Ravnica for supply runs. I don't know you, but I think you'd like it.

Perhaps you could meet me there sometime?

Yours,

R

...

Huatli's heart catches in her throat as she reads that morning's missive. By reflex, she defaults to formality.

Dear R,

All I know of Dominaria is gossip of ancient and careless men. I trust your judgment, though. If you say it is beautiful it must be a place to be cherished! I would like to see it and meet you in person, if you are amenable.

H

A response doesn't come for two days. Huatli worries she did something wrong. Until one morning in her box by the notice board...

H,

Let's cut to the chase. I'm interested, you're interested.

Want to meet up for a drink?

Yours if you like,

R

Huatli doesn't have a heart attack, but comes close. She responds instinctually, shamelessly, with a reflex of over-the-top poetry—

R,

You lunge when I dip, and your forward strike has struck me plain and kindled the blush of my cheeks.

All I want in the world is to pursue perfection, even if it is impossible.

Maybe perfection is something we can pursue together.

I'll be at Iveta's Tavern tomorrow at moonrise. Please accept my charity and let me buy you a drink.

H

H,
You make me feel like a teenager. I wish I could write as artfully as you.
Yes, I will be there.

We can start in Ravnica, but let's travel somewhere fun for dinner. I know a fascinating place for a second round in Park Heights! Have you been to New Capenna? It's my favorite to visit on holiday—there's this beautiful dance hall we can check out. You've never seen so much gold in your life! Sometimes there are fights, but it is very safe, I promise. Amazing drinks, amazing fashion, great people-watching, and very fast dancing! I hope that isn't intimidating. We can meet at Iveta's for round one and planeswalk from there?
Come dance with me, H,

R

...

This time, Huatli can't contain her flattered gasp. She spends the rest of the day trying not to burst in anticipation. R said yes. And suggested a second location? With dancing? Huatli's mind spins. How fast is fast dancing? What is it fast in comparison to? Are there variable permitted speeds to the dancing? Is it partner dancing?! Huatli cancels her appointments and spends the stretch of afternoon pacing her apartment trying to choose what to wear, anxiously checking the sky to see if the sun has set any faster. As the afternoon stretches to evening, Huatli anxiously dives into her traveling trunk. A second location requires potential layers. Does she bring a bag? Does she put her overnight items in that bag?! Huatli does not hyperventilate, but she does panic-write several lines of lover's poetry in a moment of fervent ardor... just in case.

When evening finally arrives, warm and thick and perfumed with creeping summer jasmine, Huatli pins her braids in place, clasps her summer jacket, and heads onto the street with a broad smile. Somehow, her fluttering heart manages to remain behind her ribs.

The last thing she expects is the familiar face she spots across the pavement in the 10th District.

"Saheeli?" she calls in disbelief.

The woman across the street pauses, then squeals, a happy noise that carries across the cobblestones. The other pedestrians take no notice; the strangeness of strangers is a mundane fact of life in a city-plane.

Saheeli wears a rainproof wrap over a bright azure sari, and she nearly slips on the rain-soaked pavement as she bounds over to Huatli. "I didn't recognize you without the armor!"

Memories flock Huatli's mind. She remembers her first planeswalk, those few happy days when she first met Saheeli. She hadn't stayed long, but it was long enough that she fantasized often of going back....

Huatli holds her arms out and poses. "Do I look like a real Ravnican now?"

"You're smiling, that's how I know you're not from here," Saheeli teases.

Huatli's eyes are pulled to sky and the impatient path of the moon. It's getting late. R will be waiting for her.

"What are you doing here?" Huatli asks. She angles a foot away as she leans forward, her body torn between which woman to seek.

Saheeli notices. Crosses her arms. "I'm just passing through. I loved meeting you in Kaladesh, hanging out for a few days. I hope I helped make your first planeswalk a good one, Huatli."

Something in Huatli's heart sinks. She enjoyed that too, but the time was brief. Life and its commitments got in the way, and Huatli never had the chance to tell Saheeli she was interested.

For a moment Huatli realizes she can tell Saheeli now, here.

Huatli pauses.

Nearly does.

But the glimpse of the moon behind the other woman reminds her now is not the time. R is waiting for her. Huatli shivers. Come dance with me, H. She finds her words.


"I had fun too. Glad you liked learning about dinosaurs." She grins, but can't help but notice Saheeli's closed-off stance. The moon creeps over the rooftops.

"I have to go," Huatli adds, interrupting whatever Saheeli was about to say.

"Oh! Got it!" Saheeli says instead. "Let's catch up sometime?"

Huatli's already turned away when she yells "Sure yes!" over her shoulder, as if that were a sentence.

She races the ascent of the moon.



Her footsteps splash through the puddles, the street reaching out ahead of her as a racetrack, the creep of the stars egging her on. She turns a sharp left, a broad right, weaving through the Tenth towards Iveta's Tavern like steel towards a lodestone. The evening crowd begins to fill the streets with leisure and laughter. Restaurants spill customers into the walkway, and a flock of birds fly under the bridge she races over.

There.

Huatli slows and calms herself before walking through the door to Iveta's. The tinkle of a bell heralds her arrival.

Iveta's Tavern is cool relief from the summer heat, its walls adorned with hung fabrics and elaborate paintings, a great mirror hanging above the counter at the back. Huatli sees herself in the reflection, tentatively pleased with how her outfit turned out. She notices fresh-cut flowers in vases on the tables, smells how they perfume the room and mingle with the scent of yeast and memories of sugar. The roof is low, its wooden floors lovingly bookmarked with history. There are two other couples in the tavern, no single customers at the tables. Huatli sighs in relief. She didn't keep R waiting.

Huatli quickly orders two coffees (and, in a panic, two additional glasses of wine, uncertain what R will constitute as a first round) and takes a seat, cautiously carrying all four beverages at once, settling into her chair.

She proceeds to die, silently, over and over and over, as she waits for a woman she has never met to walk through the door.

Her anticipation is punctured when a face her heart knows well enters to the sound of the bell.

Saheeli.

Huatli gasps. Did Saheeli follow her here?

Their eyes lock in mutual surprise and the realization hits them in tandem. And as Saheeli approaches, the truth spills from the two women at once.

“H is for Huatli.”

“R is for Rai.”

They stare at one another, entranced.

Mesmerized.

A moment charged with the kind of magic neither could wield.

Huatli's concentration tunnels. The rest of the tavern doesn't exist. The Multiverse compresses, impossible and close, charged and precious. All of

the worlds have collapsed in this one moment into the woman standing in front of her table.

Saheeli, shining in perfect cobalt, eyes sparkling with a wild fascination, sinks into the seat across from Huatli and glances at the four drinks between them.

Huatli explains, softly, stunned, “I panicked.”


A warm, playful smile illuminates Saheeli’s face. She reaches forward through the thicket of stems and cups and gently skims her fingers over the back of Huatli’s hand. Their eyes meet as Saheeli whispers, “It’s perfect.”

Huatli bursts with confession. Saheeli laughs, reciprocates, laments, and laughs again. A shared joke of secret identities, their tiny table a private utopia. Part of Huatli registers the other patrons still in the tavern, and she thrills in the act of feeling observed. Are they jealous, she wonders, at the miracle in front of her?

Their conversation is effortless. Everything is easy with her.

They share one of the coffees on the table, Saheeli saying they’ll need it for the dancing. She rises, and Huatli follows, drawn with the weight of serendipity and the promise of the night.

One pulls the other towards the door, leaving coins on the table behind them, entwining their hands as they do. The warrior-poet’s fingertips explore an artisan’s calluses as their lips gently and tentatively meet under the indigo reach of Ravnica’s sky, and the two women depart the moonlight of one world to emerge under the brilliant stars of another.



COLLECTIVE VOYAGE & BEARSCAPE

*“They built a refuge
with their bear hands.”*

Collective Voyage takes us to Kaladesh’s very own airborne pride parade, paying homage to our real-world celebrations. Pride marches played a key role in activist history, increasing community visibility when advocating for civil and legal rights. Given it would be a spectacular airshow right on Chandra’s home plane, we knew she would jump at the chance to participate and contribute to pansexual visibility. Sometimes there’s an idea you just have to make happen. Bearscape was our playful nod at the intersection of LGBTQIA2S+ identities and Magic’s game mechanics.

One of the things that drew me to working with Ricardo Bessa is his skill with breathtaking scenes. His art feels so light and soft while filled with magic and mystery. It was a treat to see him dive into Kaladesh.

It was important to entrust the care of Bearscape to someone who loves the Bear community. Ricardo co-curated and drew for the Bear zine, Burl and Fur. I adored all the sketches for this card. It was a hard pick!

Interview with the Artist

Ricardo Bessa

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND!

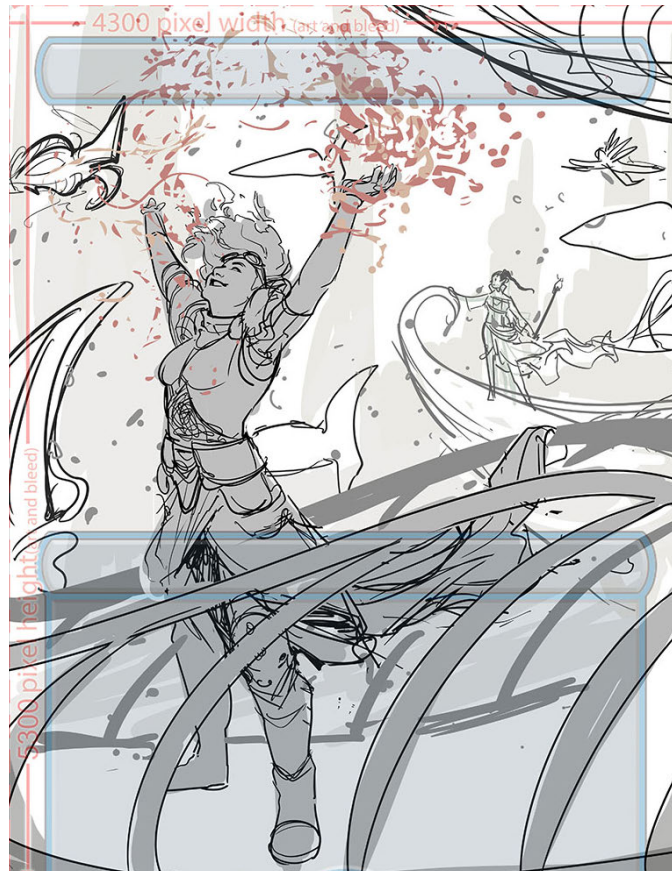
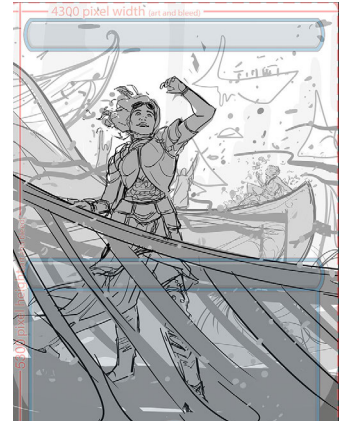
I grew up in Penafiel, a small city in Portugal. I've always really liked fantasy books and video games and the internet, probably because it felt like an escape for my little gay self. Now I live in London, where I do freelance illustration for a living.

WHAT THEMES OR EMOTIONS WERE YOU INVOKING WITH YOUR PIECE?

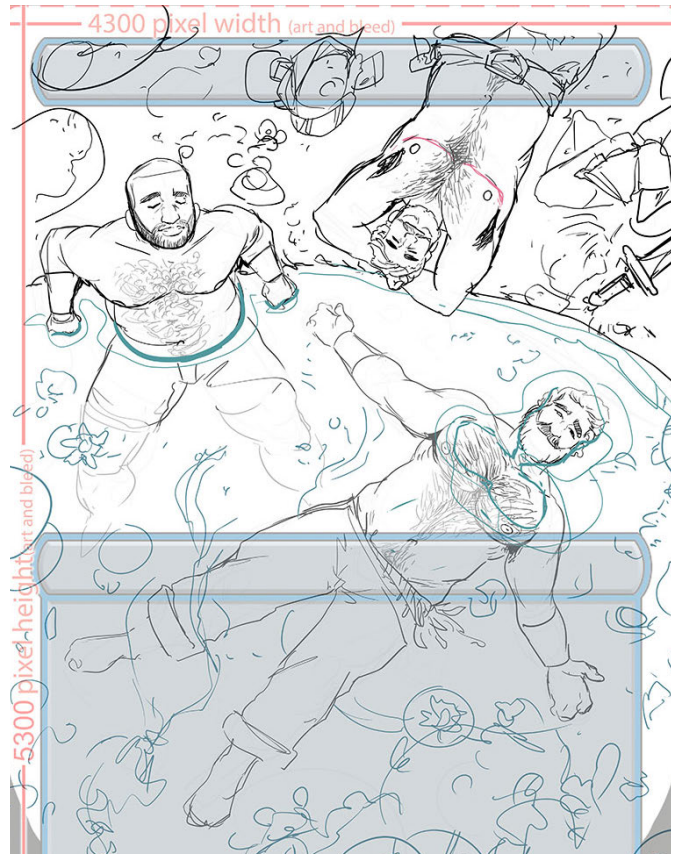
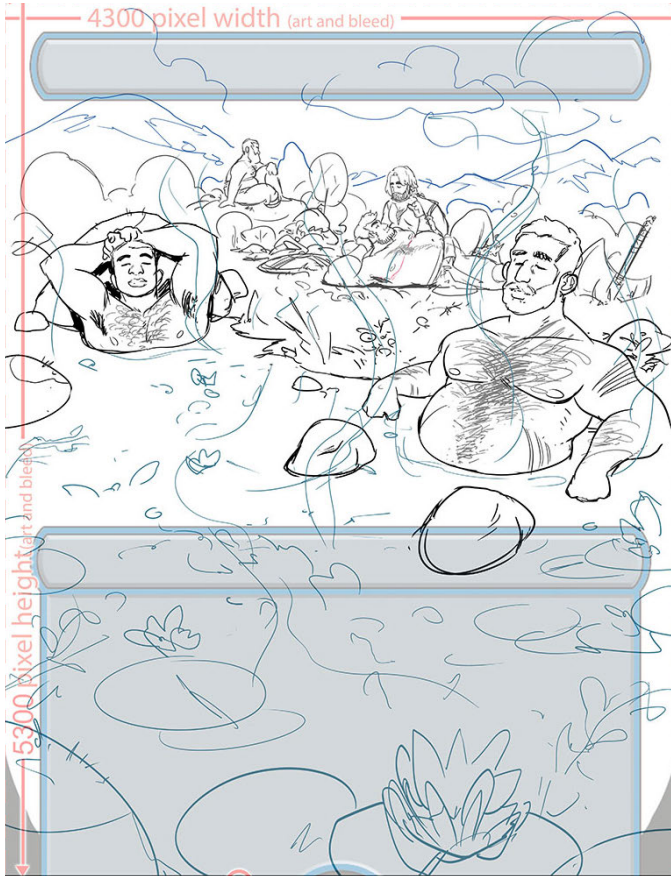
Collective Voyage needed to feel exciting, explosive, full of light and colors, whereas I wanted Bearscape to feel more intimate and peaceful. But I wanted both to evoke a feeling of light and joy, because that's a side of the queer experience that I would like to see more of out in the world. Happy Pride!

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS PROJECT OR EXCITED YOU ABOUT WORKING ON THIS PROJECT?

It's Magic! It's such a staple in the life of anyone who grew up with nerdy interests, like I did. I only played it briefly myself as a teenager, but many of my friends did for ages and still do. Plus, I know that my style isn't usually what people think of when they think "art for Magic: The Gathering," so I relished the opportunity to be included in a project I wouldn't usually be considered for.









TRIUMPHANT RECKONING

*“We have defied fate.
Our destinies are our own.”*

In the past few decades, we have broken down many barriers, but there are still obstacles to overcome before we achieve equality. This card pays homage to our previous victories against the odds, while acknowledging that we still fight for a better future — and that we won’t give up. As one of our newest planeswalkers, nonbinary Niko Aris represents our ever-changing understanding of gender, and their willingness to challenge fate inspires us not to be beholden to history.

Merlin G.G has such a way with colors and fantastic, sweeping scenes. It is quite the feat to fit this epic composition in a Magic card.

Interview with the Artist

Merlin G.G

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND!

I have an illustration and visual development background and love painting fantasy art.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS PROJECT OR EXCITED YOU ABOUT WORKING ON THIS PROJECT?

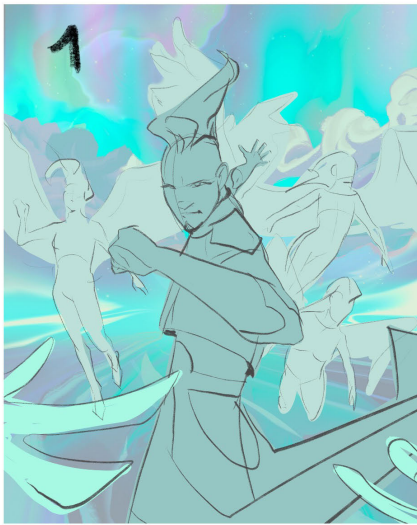
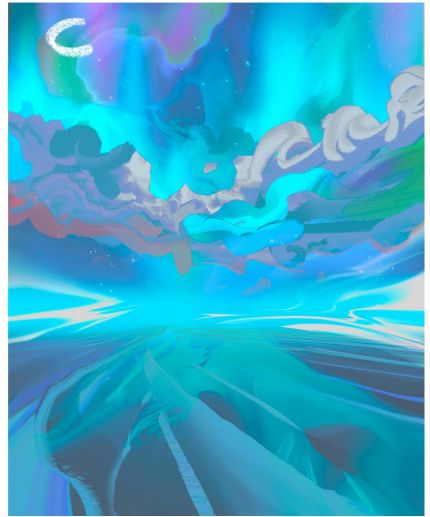
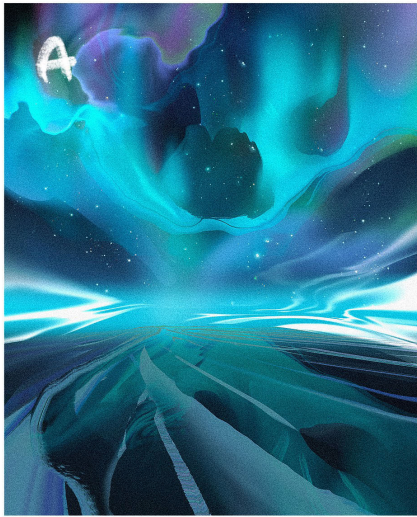
The character description and nature of the project really spoke to me. I'm always excited to work on IPs that have queer representation.

WHAT THEMES OR EMOTIONS WERE YOU INVOKING WITH YOUR PIECE?

I wanted to make this a heroic piece. Hopefully it comes through!

WHAT WAS YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS LIKE?

Chaos and a lot of hair pulling, a lot of searching/making references, and then some more crying :)





SOL RING

“The relic had been kept for years in a place of power, of community, and of friendship—distilling magic from the light of love.”

Sol Ring is a card that doesn't require a specific special deck construction to be useful, one that you see all the time on tables everywhere. We were looking to create an illustration filled with images linked to many different communities, symbolizing people of diverse and overlapping identities coming together.

I was SO excited to work with Lauren YS. Their knowledge and intersectional work were invaluable to getting all the symbols and trinkets into this piece.

Interview with the Artist

Lauren YS

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND!

Hey, I'm Lauren. I'm an artist and muralist based in Los Angeles, and I primarily work in large-scale outdoor urban work. Lately I've been doing a lot of art focused on heritage, ancestry, and queer identities within an intersectional framework.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS PROJECT OR EXCITED YOU ABOUT WORKING ON THIS PROJECT?

The idea of doing work that combines both fantasy/lore (such as Wizards) and queerness is a dream come true for me. As a gay nerd, what more could I want?

WHAT WAS YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS LIKE?

This project was special because it allowed me to dig really deep into queer iconography and pull out symbols, relics, and visual ephemera from our collective queer imagination and assemble them together in this sort of magical cabinet space. It was really fun to find ways to pay homage to powerful events like Stonewall and important queer elders and mix them in with objects that act as visual metonymies for different unique sectors of the LGBTQ+ community.

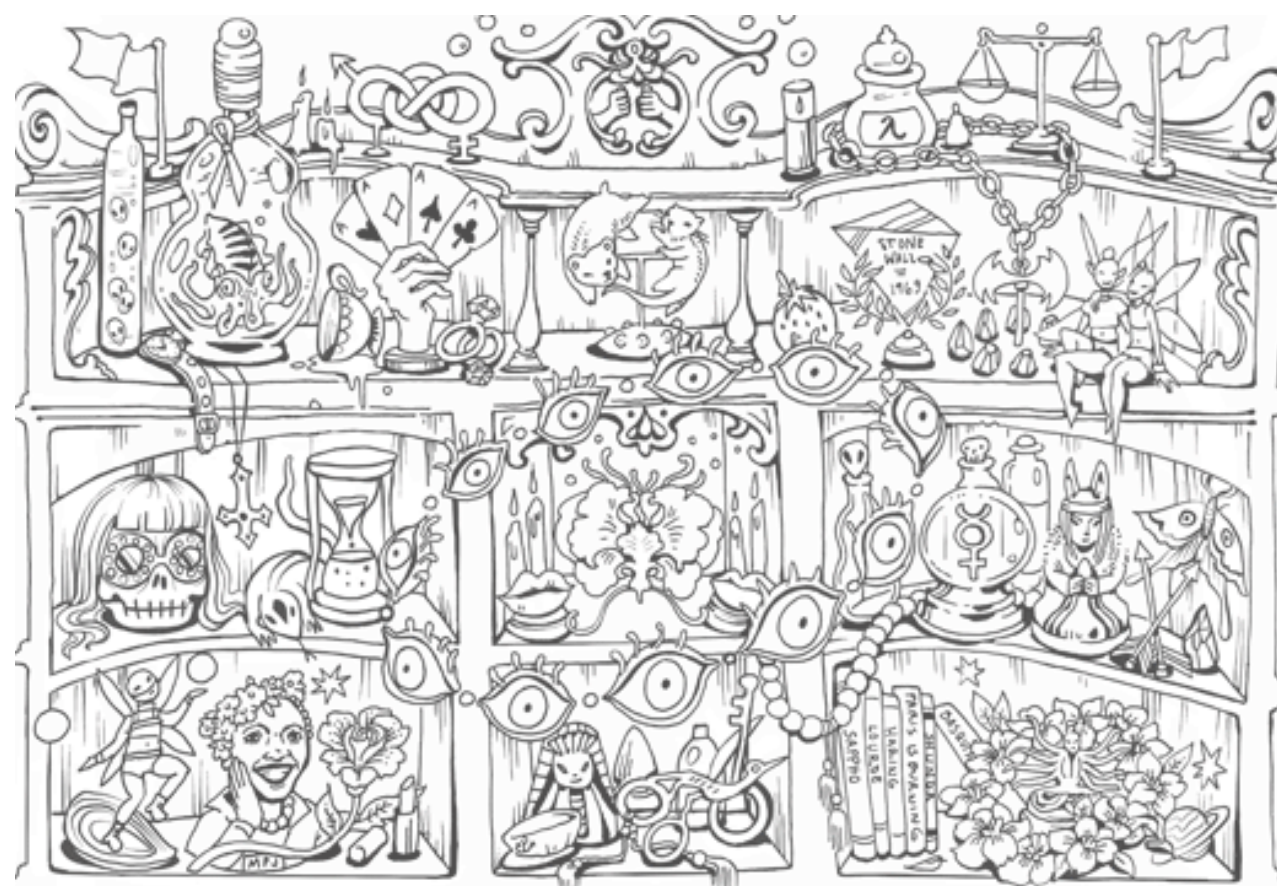
WHAT THEMES OR EMOTIONS WERE YOU INVOKING WITH YOUR PIECE?

I tried to go for quantity with this piece—to crowd in as much information as possible to give the feel of some fantastical apothecary full of queer ephemera, something you could really look at for a long time, and find something different with every engagement. So on the whole, I hope this piece speaks to queer history, pride, and selfhood as much as is possible on one playing card!

ANY SPECIFIC DETAILS YOU WANT TO HIGHLIGHT ABOUT YOUR PIECE?

I'm particularly fond of the otter and bear sculpture, and the ring of eyes in which each iris reflects the flag of a different sector of the LGBTQ+ spectrum.







MANA CONFLUENCE

*“Better places poured
prismatic dreams into the
world, rendering it anew.”*

This card symbolizes our broad, inter-sectional community pooling stories and resources together to help one another in the name of hope. It is through our combined diversity and experience that we create a new and brighter future. This is a land card so the figures are purposely obscured, and that way, viewers from all backgrounds can imagine themselves as part of the magic.

Jabari Weathers was the inspiration for what we wanted for Mana Confluence. It was such a pleasure to bring them on to this project. I could see each sketch as their own complete and gorgeous illustration, but the semicircle of robed figures really caught my eye as a card. Jabari did an amazing job incorporating parts of the other sketches into the final piece.

Interview with the Artist

Jabari Weathers

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND!

I'm a tabletop games illustrator and writer (catch some of my words in Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft from last year) working in Baltimore, Maryland!

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS PROJECT OR EXCITED YOU ABOUT WORKING ON THIS PROJECT?

Working on a Magic: The Gathering card is a definite bucket list moment for many sci-fi/fantasy artists (I hope it's not my last!). It was an honor and kind of a surprise to be approached by Stephanie (*Cheung, art director*) to reinterpret Mana Confluence through a queer lens. I've been loving the stylistic chances Wizards has been taking with Magic lately, and hoped that my own strange hand would fit into this world, and it was really affirming to see that belief echoed from my collaborators at Wizards.

WHAT WAS YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS LIKE?

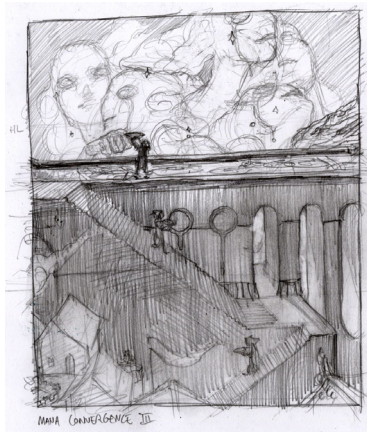
I made three black-and-white sketches to narrow down from, and eventually the third with elements of the first were folded into my final image. The original piece is actually a sizeable gouache painting (essentially an opaque watercolor, reproduces well) with very minor digital touch-up.

WHAT THEMES OR EMOTIONS WERE YOU INVOKING WITH YOUR PIECE?

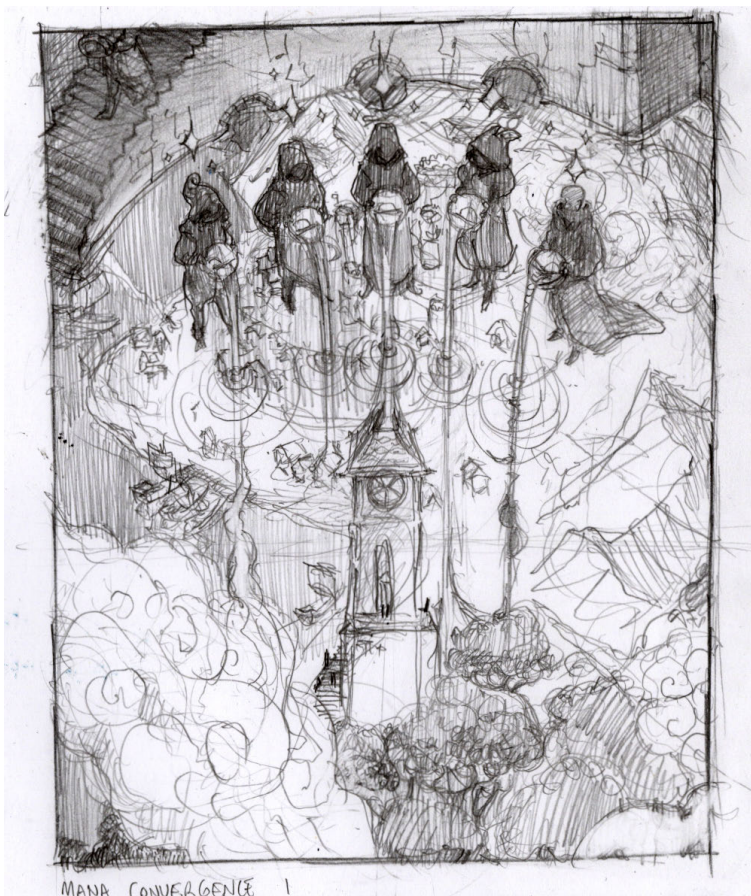
There's a large theme of community and communal manifestation. I'm Black, nonbinary, polyamorous, and very queer and atypical in my social life and navigation. It often feels like I'm having to form the world I want to exist in—which is a relatable challenge we all face in some dimension. This piece overtly speaks to queerness and especially transness in its palette (the LGBTQIA+ colors are repped here in the mages pouring their reality into the world, and the larger palettes of this piece are very much informed by colors of the trans flag). I wanted to depict the work of “outsiders” coming together in a world they may be seemingly separate from but are actually as much a part of as anyone else and pouring aspects of themselves into it to make the world more tenable for everyone. That practice of collaboration and manifestation is arcane; it's mana. This kind of gathering magic is something people have to do on a day-to-day basis, especially when blocked by a world built of marginalizations. The best counter to this we have is our compassionate intersections, and the figures in this piece are aware of that and working their collaborative, communal magic.



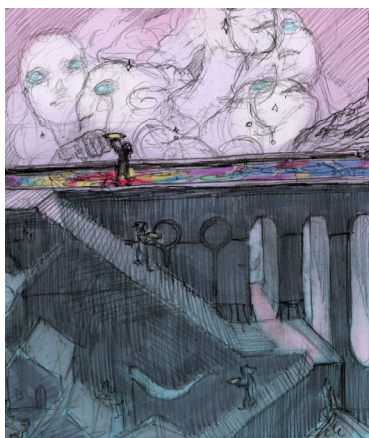
MANA CONVERGENCE II



MANA CONVERGENCE III



MANA CONVERGENCE I







THANK &
SUPPORTED
ACROSS THE

The background features a soft rainbow gradient transitioning from blue on the left to yellow on the right. Several horizontal bars of varying colors (pink, blue, yellow, green) are layered across the top and bottom of the image, creating a modern, abstract design.

YOU FOR
ING PRIDE
MULTIVERSE

SECRET
LAIR
P R I D E