DESIGNER'S NOTE

For this year's edition of *Brushing*, the theme best associated with this journal is "Out of Darkness." Thinking about the last and current year we are in, many individuals struggled with the presence of COVID-19. Positivity rates are currently on the rise, some are forced to stay quarantined, and others unfortunately stand at death's door. With all of this in mind, it has undoubtedly been a dark time for every one of us. Yet, what this journal aspires to contribute is to remind those that there is still hope in this world, that even a small amount of light is enough to pierce through the darkness.

In designing the cover, I became inspired by a video game called Disco Elysium, whose artistic style featured abstractions of various characters and I thought the painterly aspect of the game fitted perfectly with Brushing. For the color schemes, I decided to use dark blues, purples, and pale greens to represent "darkness," and an orange/yellow hue to compliment the blue, alluding to light of course. The illustration of the hand, made in Illustrator, was inspired by photos I took of myself holding a lit lantern in a dark room. The strong white outline of the hands and organic lines makes them pop from the dark, emphasizing its importance in "unveiling the curtain." The organic designs derived from a Webtoon I read called The Red King. In one of the chapters the artist drew an intricate ripple in space where the entity revealed themselves in front of Ivan. I decided to mimic that design creating that same ripple to another "space."

As for the page designs, I again mimicked part of the organic designs, and expanded into abstract "orb" which is open to interpretation. It may be seen as a globe or even an imaginative crystal ball. I also created beautifully intricate feathery designs and splotches of paint-like patterns.

Finally, for the back cover, I decided to add more detail to it rather than leave it in a single solid color. By experimenting, I found ways to mimic the front cover's color scheme (while making it distinct) by blurring and merging blots of those same colors in addition to revealing a soft glow in the center of the page.

Sincerely,

Tracy Lam
Assistant Designer