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Sketches: Heartbeat of Spring

Magic Arcana
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Welcome to another edition of [Sketches!](#) *Champions of Kamigawa's Heartbeat of Spring*, [previewed yesterday](#) by Mike Flores, was illustrated by **Magic** art veteran and [Kamigawa concept artist](#) Rob Alexander. This green reimagining of red's **Mana Flare** is just one example of the stunning art in *Champions of Kamigawa*; let's look behind the scenes of the creation of that piece. But first, some background on Rob's previous work.

Artist Portfolio

Rob Alexander's **Magic** art career spans the entire history of the game. A landscape specialist, he has contributed over seventy pieces of **Magic** card art from **Taiga** and **Underground Sea** in 1993 to **Beacon of Immortality** and **Honden of Life's Web** in 2004. Rob's work can be seen on such cards as **Demonic Consultation**, **Volrath's Gardens**, **Spawning Pool**, **Lesser Gargadon**, **Llanowar Wastes**, **Shivan Reef**, **Lava Blister**, four out of five of the **Onslaught fetchlands** (all except [Windswept Heath](#)), and three out of five of the **Mirrodin artifact lands**, among many others.



Art Description

The first step of the creation of a card's art is its art description. The art description tells the artist what the card will do, what its flavor is, and what the mood of the illustration should be. Here were the instructions given to Rob for Heartbeat of Spring:

- Color: Green*
- Action: Show a particularly lush part of the forest, except that each object seems to have a ghostly, slightly displaced double image, in unnaturally saturated colors. This spell is an enchantment that represents the land being supersaturated with mana (magical energy).*
- Mood: This is a magical location, and strange things are possible*

Next the artist submits one or more sketches with his vision of the art description.

Sketch

Here's Mr. Alexander's initial sketch submitted for Heartbeat of Spring.



Obviously, it's hard to get across the feeling of "unnaturally saturated colors" in a black-and-white sketch. This sketch only served to show the general composition of the piece: a quiet forest scene with a woodland stream, moss-covered trees and thick underbrush.

It's in the final art that you see the explosion of color Rob created.

Final Art



The sense of an explosion of mana is clear here. The piece is rich with color, and the trees, rocks and stream glint with an iridescent sheen. On the trees in the background especially, you can see a suggestion of that double-exposure effect mentioned in the art description: this is a glade where mana is being magically doubled.

Finished Card

And here's how you'll see the card in its final state, in booster packs of *Champions of Kamigawa*. Have fun doubling your mana at the [prerelease!](#)



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