

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Magic Arcana



Sketches: Clash of Realities

Magic Arcana
 Monday, March 7, 2005

Welcome to another edition of [Sketches](#)! Few cards express the Kamigawa block's spirit-vs.-mortal theme as well, in both mechanic and art, as *Betrayers of Kamigawa's Clash of Realities*. Today we take a look behind the scenes of the illustration of this evocative card. But first, some background on the artist, Jim Nelson.

Artist Portfolio

Replenish art by Jim Nelson

Artist [Jim Nelson](#) has contributed over seventy pieces of **Magic** card art since *Tempest*. You can see his work on such cards as *Benthic Behemoth*, *Cataclysm*, *Replenish*, *Fungal Shambler*, *Grim Lavamancer*, *Cunning Wish*, *Hunting Pack*, the *Mirrodin spellbombs*, and the *Champions of Kamigawa Swamps*, 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 Jim for *Clash of Realities*:

Color: Red spirit-world magic
Location: red-aligned location of artist's choosing
Action: Show a yamabushi and a red-aligned kami of your design locked in combat. A fissure has just begun to open beneath them, spitting droplets of magma on the surrounding ground.
Focus: The impending death of both creatures
Mood: "If I'm going down, so are you!"

The next step is for the artist to submit sketches of his or her vision of the art description.

Sketches

Here's Jim's initial sketch submitted for *Clash of Realities*:

Clash of Realities sketch
Clash of Realities sketch by Jim Nelson

This is already an excellent piece -- good composition, and full of action. This is the type of **Magic** art the creative team loves to see, and it was okayed to go final with no further requests. But wait till you see it in the full, chaotic, red color palette.

Final Art

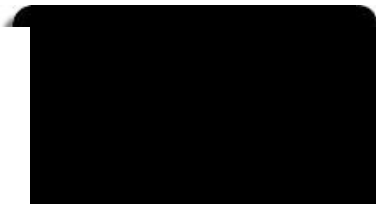
Nelson submitted this final art. Ohh yes.

Clash of Realities final art by Jim Nelson
Clash of Realities final art by Jim Nelson

The barefoot yamabushi (mountain hermit who practices the ancient shamanic arts) straddles the widening rift as the kami tears even more wounds in the terrain. These are sworn enemies from different worlds, throwing their fiercest attacks at one another across a mountain battleground. You can see how Nelson's piece truly captures both the mechanic of the card *and* the theme of the entire Kamigawa block!

Finished Card

And here's how you can see the card in its final state, in booster packs of *Betrayers of Kamigawa*. Get ready to bash the kakuriyo into the utsushiyo* (with a little help from Jim Nelson) with *Clash of Realities*!





* **kakuriyo** (kah-koo-REE-oh) The spirit world.
utsushiyo (oot-soo-SHEE-oh) The material world.
-- The [Kamigawa glossary](#)



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