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Sketches: Walking Archive

Magic Arcana
 Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Welcome to another edition of [Sketches](#)! Today we look at the process behind illustrating that Azorius-aligned artifact creature, **Walking Archive**. But first, some background on the artist, Heather Hudson.

Artist Portfolio

Artist [Heather Hudson](#) is a **Magic** illustration veteran, having illustrated over 160 cards from as far back as *Legends*. You can see her work on cards such as *Zephyr Falcon*, *Giant Trap Door Spider*, *Spike Feeder*, *Wall of Blossoms*, *Academy Rector*, *Weatherseed Treefolk*, *Ordered Migration*, *Standstill*, *Prowling Pangolin*, *Molder Slug*, *Kodama's Reach*, *Chord of Calling*, and *Ghost Quarter*, among many, many others.

Art Description

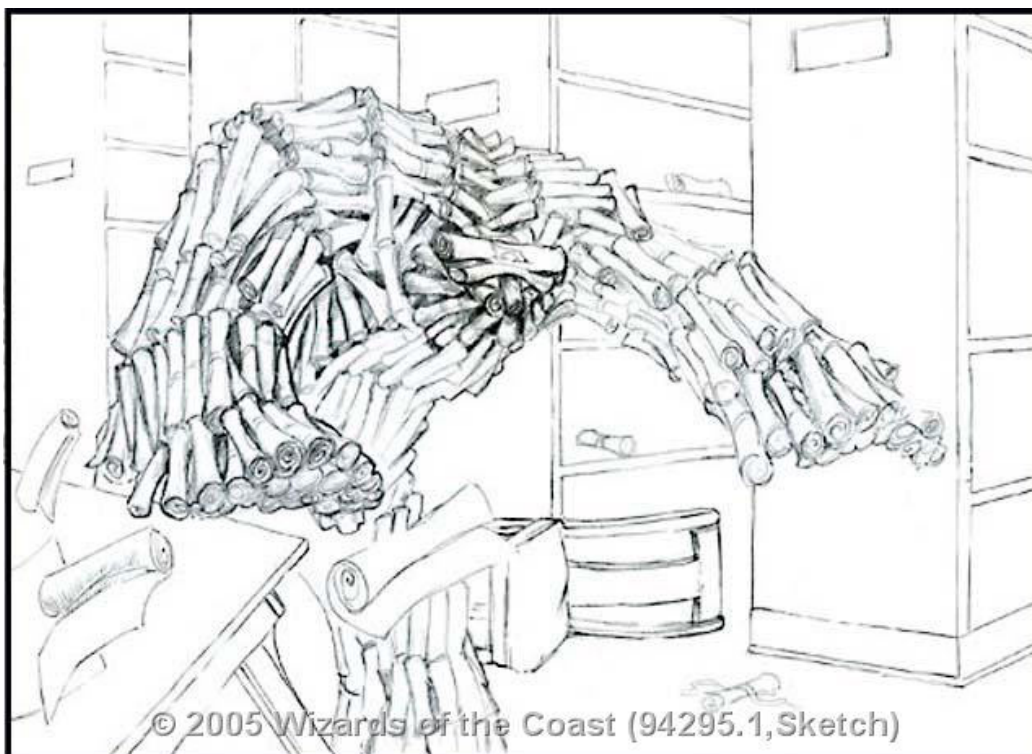
The first step of the creation of a card's art is its art description. The art description tells the artist what the card will do, what its flavor is, and what the mood of the illustration should be. Here were the instructions given to Heather for *Walking Archive*:

- Color: Artifact of the WU guild*
- Location: Your choice*
- Action: This is a creation of the Azorius -- a golem made entirely of rolled-up scrolls. It should look slow-moving and ponderous.*
- Focus: The scroll golem*
- Mood: A walking library*
- Notes: *Rolled up* scrolls -- don't make this look anything like a mummy.*

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

Sketches

Here's Heather's initial sketch submitted for *Walking Archive*:



Heather's golem is already going in exciting directions. It's fully composed of scrolls, with articulated limbs and joints, and even a sense of an expression on its "face" using the angles and shadows formed by the scrolls. This

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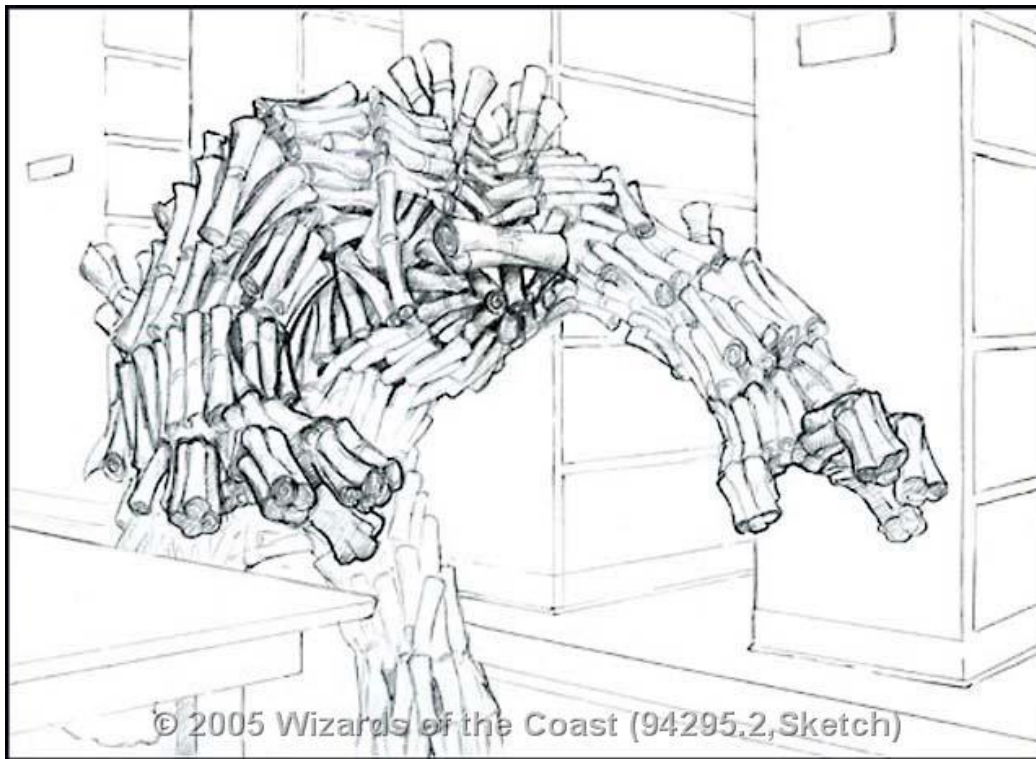
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is an animate pile of Azorius scrolls if there ever was one.

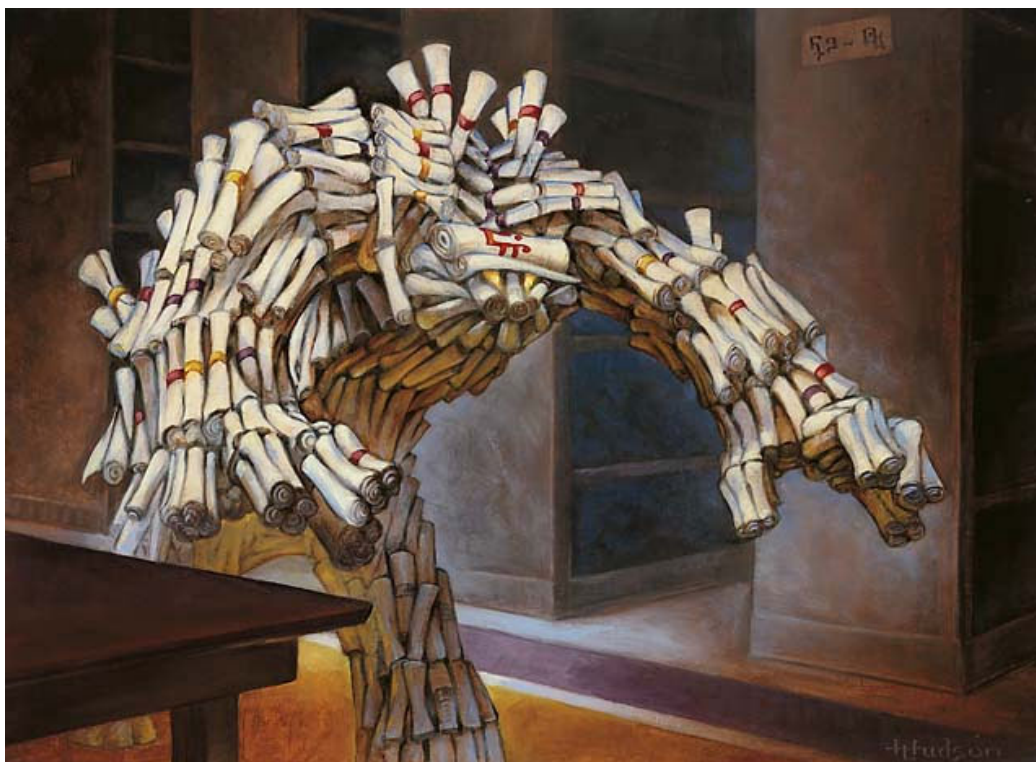
The creative team wanted to see even more articulation in the creature's hands, and perhaps more decoration around its back and head. The other issue they pointed out was that this is a placid Azorius archive of law, and it has defender, yet it's knocking over a desk and spilling scrolls everywhere. This creature should be more passive—and at home in a scroll library! So they asked to see it in a pose with less crashing around.



Precisely! Now it's got fingers composed of tiny individual scrolls (perhaps these are subsections of Azorius law) and isn't careening around the place. It's all ready for the final paint.

Final Art

Heather submitted this final art.



Here you can see the "frills" on the back of its head and shoulders composed of still more scrolls. It provides some nice decoration and a little more sense of it as a living being, as well as an over-packed information storehouse.

Finished Card

Here's the card in its final state, as you can find in booster packs of *Dissension*. Thanks to Heather Hudson, you're all ready to consult the Archive.



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