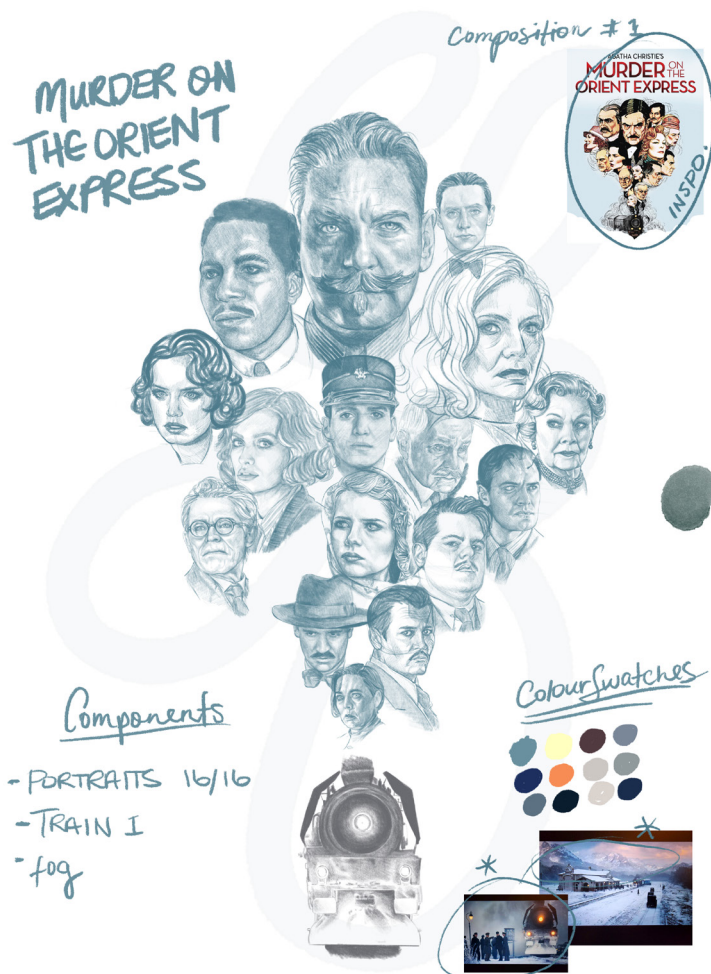


# Letter from the Editor



Dear Reader:

Ever since *MSJ* launched eight years ago, this editor’s dream has been to commission a cover art piece to front one of our issues. Now a reality with Issue 8.1, our first custom-made cover speaks to the depth of visual narration within a frame.

The design process began late last year when I reached out to Lauryn Beck, who previously contributed the visual essay “Hockey and Horror: An Illustrated Analysis of Stephen Campanelli’s *Indian Horse*” (Issue 6.2), to pitch the idea of her designing a cover for an upcoming issue. She agreed to the commission, being familiar with *MSJ*’s layout, style, and approach to showcasing its authors’ research and scholarship. Typically, I use the unifying theme of the issue or choose an article or a featurette in the publication queue as the inspiration for the cover design. Issue 8.1’s lead article, Sahar Hamzah’s “Symmetry and Centrality as Power: The Use of Mise-en-scène to Create Power in Sir Kenneth Branagh’s *Murder on the Orient Express* and *Death on the Nile*,” proved to be the ideal choice for the cover tie-in. I could vividly picture some of this article’s key concepts—Poirot’s centrality, the rule of thirds, and symmetrical frames as foreshadowing—converging somehow on a cover. Lauryn’s first draft reimaged the 1974 promotional artwork for *Murder on the Orient Express* with the cast of the 2017 adaptation

arranged around Hercule Poirot as a sinister cloud of smoke emanating from the train. I knew that Issue 8.1’s cover would be a defining moment in the journal’s history when she shared this initial sketch.

For the second draft, I suggested a design that integrated characters and settings from both of Kenneth Branagh’s adaptations. Lauryn not only included all of the characters from *Murder on the Orient Express* (2017) and *Death on the Nile* (2022), but also spliced together the Orient Express and the Karnak to best represent the two halves of Sahar’s argument. The hot and cold colour values add even more depth to the cover’s artistic expression, which our savvy layout editor Patrick enhanced with the blue masthead and the orange subheadings.

Please enjoy *MSJ*’s crime film edition from cover to cover.

Greg Chan  
Editor-in-Chief