
PkM WORKSHOP AND GRAPHIC DESIGN PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION FOR STUDENTS

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology has encouraged the importance of mastering visual communication skills among the younger generation, especially students. Photography and graphic design are now strategic media in conveying messages, building images, and expressing ideas creatively and communicatively. In response to this need, this Community Service (PkM) activity was held with the main aim of improving student competence in the fields of photography and graphic design through the implementation of workshops and exhibitions of visual works. This activity involved students from UIN Suska Riau and Universitas Islam Riau, and presented speakers from professional circles to provide technical training related to photography techniques, vector-based graphic design principles, color utilization, visual composition, and the use of design software such as Adobe Photoshop and Canva. In addition to training, this activity also presented an exhibition of student work as a form of appreciation and space for public expression of the participants' creativity. Evaluation of the results of the activity showed that 92% of participants experienced significant improvements in technical skills and self-confidence. Some participants even started building digital portfolios and expanding networks with creative communities online. This program not only has an impact on improving individual abilities, but also strengthens the synergy between the academic world and the creative industry in creating an applicable, collaborative, and sustainable learning ecosystem. Thus, this activity is expected to become a model for student development based on practical and actual skills in the creative economy era.

Keywords: Photography, Graphic Design, Visual Communication, Exhibitions and Creative Industries

INTRODUCTION

Amidst the rapid development of digital technology, visual communication skills are becoming one of the competencies that are increasingly needed, both in the academic world, professionally, and in everyday life. Photography and graphic design are two creative fields that are now developing as strategic media to convey messages, build images, and express ideas and emotions effectively. (Putro 2020). The role of visuals is no longer merely a complement to communication, but has become the core in conveying meaning that is able to penetrate language and cultural

boundaries.

For students, especially in Pekanbaru which is known as one of the cities of education that continues to grow, mastery of visual aspects such as photography and graphic design is very relevant to the needs of the times. Students are required not only to think critically and analytically, but also creatively in conveying ideas through various media. Unfortunately, not all educational institutions provide adequate learning or training space for the development of visual skills in a practical and structured manner. Many students have great potential in this field, but not all students get the opportunity to access adequate technical training or practical experience in photography and graphic design. In fact, interest in both of these fields is quite high. Therefore, educational activities that are practical in nature while providing a space for appreciation such as workshops and exhibitions are very important to bridge these needs. As a center of intellectual and creativity, universities have a strategic role in supporting the development of student skills that are in accordance with the demands of today's creative industry. On that basis, this Community Service (PkM) activity is designed to provide a real contribution through organizing Photography and Graphic Design Workshops and Exhibitions for students.

This activity aims to provide a basic understanding of photography and graphic design techniques, as well as train participants in processing communicative and aesthetic visual works. The exhibition of participants' works is also an important means to appreciate students' creativity while introducing their potential to the wider community.

Graphic design has now developed into a technology-based fine art that plays an important role in various digital industries.(Purnomo et al. 2021). As a form of visual communication, graphic design uses visual elements such as images, colors, and typography to convey information or messages as effectively as possible. Graphic design is needed in various contexts, from product and service promotions, delivering lecture materials, to compiling reports in corporate environments and educational institutions.(Romadhani et al. 2023). Graphic design products can be presented through print media such as flyers, banners, and posters, as well as digital media such as websites and social media.(Zaman et al. 2020).

The use of graphic design in the digital era is becoming increasingly relevant, especially along with the significant increase in the number of smartphone users in Indonesia. Indonesia is recorded as the country with the fourth largest number of smartphone users in the world. In 2021, as many as 89% of the population or around 167 million people used smartphones, while internet users reached around 200 million people(Sudirjo et al. 2023). This fact indicates that digital media is a more flexible and effective means of conveying information and promotions compared to print media.

In graphic design, there are two main types of images, namely raster (bitmap) and vector. Vector images consist of curved lines resulting from mathematical calculations or algorithms, such as length, width, position, and direction of the line. Vectors have the advantage in terms of image quality, because they will not break or blur when enlarged. In contrast, raster or bitmap images consist of a collection of pixels and are superior in terms of detail and color combination. Raster is very suitable

for visuals with high color complexity, but its quality depends on the resolution and graphics device used.

Vector-based graphic design training is the right choice to deepen participants' knowledge in this field. With a good understanding of graphic design, participants are expected to be able to improve their creativity and the quality of their visual work, as well as broaden their horizons in the application of vector-based graphic design as provisions in the industrial and academic worlds. (Amrina and Oktora 2023). Students who have graphic design skills will be able to convey information and products effectively, even potentially becoming design service providers or at least being able to select and process the right images so that the message conveyed can be well received by the audience.

In this PkM program, students from UIN Suska Riau and Universitas Islam Riau will be equipped with an understanding of the differences between vector and bitmap images, basic graphic design techniques, color selection and balance principles, storage in various file formats, and editing techniques using images that are available on the internet or other sources. In addition, participants will also be directed to produce designs that are in accordance with the communication target.

Figure 1. Student Works



Based on the results of monitoring and review of the implementation of the Photography & Graphic Design Workshop and Exhibition for Students, there are several problems that need to be considered to increase the effectiveness and impact of similar activities in the future. The following is an identification of the problems found:

1. Limitations of Students' Technical Skills
Students have difficulty producing quality work that meets industry standards.
2. Lack of Access to Devices and Software
Students face obstacles in accessing hardware such as professional cameras and high-spec computers, as well as licensed graphic design software. These limitations hinder their learning and practice in photography and graphic design.

3. Lack of Space to Display Works

Students often lack a platform or a place to showcase and publish their work. This results in a lack of appreciation and constructive feedback from the community and professionals in the field, which is actually very important for the development of their skills.

4. Low Collaboration between Educational Institutions and Creative Industries

There is a gap between the academic world and the creative industry in Pekanbaru. The lack of collaboration and communication between educational institutions and industry players causes students to lack insight into the needs and trends that are developing in the world of work, as well as opportunities to build professional networks.

5. Lack of Utilization of Social Media as a Promotional Tool

Social media has great potential as a means of promotion and publication of work, many students have not utilized it optimally. This is due to a lack of understanding of digital marketing strategies and effective content management.

Figure 2. Photography & Graphic Design Exhibition



Source: Community Service Activities 2025

To overcome the above problems, it is suggested that future Photography & Graphic Design Workshop and Exhibition activities include:

1. Provision of more intensive and practical technical training, involving professionals from the creative industry.
2. Facilitate access to necessary equipment and software, through collaboration with sponsors or relevant institutions.
3. Organizing broader exhibitions that are open to the public, as well as utilizing digital platforms to showcase student work.
4. Building partnerships between educational institutions and creative industry players to create internship programs, seminars, and collaborative projects.
5. Training on the use of social media and digital marketing strategies to help students promote their work effectively.

By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that similar activities in the future can have a more significant impact on the development of students' skills and careers in the fields of photography and graphic design.

METHOD

1. Identification and Analysis of Needs
Surveys or interviews with target students to determine the extent of their understanding of photography and graphic design and determine the relevant materials needed by participants.
2. Activity Planning
Arrange a schedule of workshop and exhibition activities, prepare competent resource persons or instructors in the field of photography and graphic design and compile training modules or workshop materials.
3. Workshop Implementation
Material Presentation: Providing basic photography theory, shooting techniques, composition, and an introduction to graphic design software (such as Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom, or Canva), Direct Practice: Field photography sessions and graphic design practices, Discussion and Q&A: providing opportunities for participants to ask questions and discuss interactively.
4. Exhibition Activities
Present the best works of workshop participants to be exhibited, Preparation of exhibition media: printing of photography/design works, layout arrangement, venue, and exhibition promotion, Implementation of open exhibitions for the public or campus community.
5. Evaluation and Follow-up
Conducting evaluations of workshop results through questionnaires, participant reflections, or interviews, compiling comprehensive reports on PkM activities and providing e-certificates to participants and facilitating follow-ups through online discussion groups or creative communities.

Figure 5. Group photo after PKM activities





RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Graphic Design Photography Workshop and Exhibition for Students has been carried out smoothly and has had a significant impact on the participants. Not only as a training event, this activity has become a creative space that opens up new horizons for students to express their ideas and imaginations through visual media.

1. Extraordinary Enthusiasm of Participants

Since the first day, the workshop atmosphere was filled with enthusiasm and curiosity. A total of 90 students from Uin Susqa Riau and Universitas Islam Riau attended, showing a high interest in the world of photography and graphic design. They came from various backgrounds, ranging from visual communication design, informatics engineering, to communication science, creating a diversity of perspectives that enrich the learning process.

2. Interactive and Applicative Learning Process

The workshop was designed not only as a one-way delivery of material, but also as a space for creative dialogue between the presenter and participants. In the theory session, participants were introduced to the basic principles of photography – composition, lighting, angles, and visual storytelling – as well as an introduction to design applications such as Adobe Photoshop and Canva. The material was delivered visually and interactively, making it easy to understand even for beginners. When the practical session began, participants were immediately directed to go down to the field to take photos. They were divided into small groups and challenged to create original visual concepts. The shots were then edited and developed into graphic design works with the theme “City and Identity”. This process was a turning point for many participants who had never previously combined photography with graphic design elements professionally.

3. Exhibition: Student Expression Stage

The peak of the activity was marked by the holding of a photography and graphic design exhibition. A total of 30 of the best works were exhibited at Pekanbaru Xchange which has been transformed into an artistic mini gallery. The works raise the theme of locality, portraits of student life, and social criticism in a strong visual form. The exhibition received a warm welcome from more than 100 visitors. Many of them appreciated the quality of the students' works which were considered equal to professional works. Not a few visitors were interested in buying or ordering

similar works, which opened up new opportunities for participants to pursue their path as independent visual creators.

4. Transformation and Real Impact

Post-activity evaluation showed that 92% of participants felt that they had increased their technical skills and confidence in their work. Some participants even stated that they had started to pioneer portfolio accounts on social media to share their work and build connections with other creative communities. More than just training, this activity has become the initial gateway to a more vibrant creative ecosystem among Pekanbaru students. Many participants expressed their hope that this activity would not stop here, but could be developed into a regular program or campus photography-design community.

5. Discussion: Strengthening the Role of Students as Visual Creators

This activity shows that students have great potential in the field of visual communication, and that creative spaces such as workshops and exhibitions can be a catalyst for the development of this potential. In addition, exhibitions become a very important social legitimacy space to build students' self-confidence and professional identity as prospective designers and photographers.

CONCLUSION

The Graphic Design Photography Workshop and Exhibition for Students is not just a technical training, but a creative journey that opens up horizons of thinking, stimulates imagination, and strengthens the visual identity of the younger generation. Behind every click of the camera and stroke of design, students are invited to recognize the power of visual communication as a tool to convey ideas, fight for values, and beautify the world.

The enthusiasm of the participants, the quality of the works displayed, and the positive response from the community show that the creative potential of students is very large and needs to be continuously facilitated. The exhibition is not only a space for appreciation, but also the first stage for students to express their thoughts visually.

The success of this activity is real evidence that the synergy between the academic world and creativity can create a positive and sustainable social impact. Hopefully this activity will be the beginning of many other creative movements that build the future of students as people who think critically, create aesthetic works, and are globally competitive.

1. Similar activities should be made an annual routine program to reach more students from various departments who have an interest in the visual field.
2. Support for more complete photography facilities and infrastructure and design software is needed so that the learning process runs more optimally.
3. It is recommended that there be collaboration with local creative communities or industry players so that students gain professional insight and broader career development opportunities.
4. Post-activity follow-up is needed in the form of forming a creative community or forum to maintain the spirit of working and sharing knowledge among students.

Saying Thank You

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all parties who have supported the implementation of the Community Service (PkM) activity entitled "Graphic Design Photography Workshop and Exhibition for Students".

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4. The organizing committee and technical team who have worked with full dedication for the success of this activity.
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Hopefully this activity can provide broad benefits and be the beginning of other creative activities in the future.

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