

# Designing A Digital Book As A Documentation Of Graffiti: A Study Of Urban Visual Heritage In Batu Tourism

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## Abstract

This study examines the design of a digital book as a medium for documenting graffiti as part of urban visual culture in Batu Tourism City, Indonesia. Situated within the discourse of Visual Culture and Urban Studies, graffiti is approached not only as an aesthetic expression but also as a spatial narrative that reflects identity, community interaction, and cultural dynamics in public space. The design process adopts the Design Thinking framework, consisting of empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test stages. Data were collected through field observation, photographic documentation, and questionnaires involving 120 respondents, including graffiti practitioners, students, graphic designers, academics, art observers, and the general public aged 17–40 from middle to upper socio-economic backgrounds. Evaluation results indicate that most respondents responded positively to the visual aspects of the digital book, including layout, colour, typography, illustration, and cover design. Several refinements were implemented to improve title clarity, visual consistency, readability, and narrative structure. The findings reveal that graffiti practices in Batu extend beyond stylistic concerns, involving cross-regional collaborations and interactions with local cultural communities, such as traditional Bantengan performance groups. The ephemeral nature of graffiti presents a key challenge for documentation and preservation. The resulting digital book, presented in a 3:4 PDF format, functions as both an archival medium and an educational platform, reinforcing the role of design in cultural archiving and public engagement with urban visual heritage.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of postmodernism in the late 20th century marked the rise of subcultures representing marginalized groups, challenging the dominant cultural system. One of the most visible forms of subcultural expression is graffiti, which utilizes public space as a medium for communication, identity formation, and resistance. Over time, graffiti has evolved from a simple tagging practice to a more complex visual expression associated with urban creativity and cultural production. Within the discourse of Urban Studies, graffiti is increasingly understood as part of urban visual culture that contributes to the identity and character of contemporary cities (McAuliffe, 2016; Iveson, 2019). However, in many contexts, graffiti continues to be associated with vandalism, illegality, and visual disturbance. This dual perception positions graffiti as a

contested practice in public space, where it simultaneously represents artistic expression and social transgression (Young, 2016). Despite this tension, recent studies emphasize the cultural and aesthetic value of graffiti as an integral component of the urban environment, transforming cities into dynamic visual landscapes (Riggle, 2017).

Graffiti in Indonesia has a long history and has undergone a transformation in meaning along with evolving social and cultural contexts. In the early days of independence, graffiti was used as a visual communication medium to inspire the people's struggle. Over time, this practice evolved and began to be influenced by global culture, particularly hip-hop culture, which entered Indonesia in the 1980s through breakdancing and youth communities (Barry, 2008). Unlike graffiti in New York, which emphasized the expression of individual and territorial identity, the development of graffiti in Indonesia exhibited a more diverse dynamic, ranging from artistic expression to a form of social existence in public spaces (Avramidis & Tsilimpounidi, 2017; Riggle, 2017). This shift indicates that graffiti functions not only as a subcultural marker but also as a medium of communication that reflects social narratives and urban identity within specific cultural contexts (Young, 2016). Entering the 2000s, the influence of popular culture further strengthened graffiti's position in the urban visual landscape, including through music and visual media, such as those exhibited by regional hip-hop groups. However, graffiti is still often associated with vandalism and illegal acts, particularly because it is often practiced in public spaces without permits (McAuliffe, 2016). This negative perception has prevented graffiti from being fully accepted as a legitimate form of artistic expression, although in practice, many artists have developed works with well-developed visual concepts and high artistic value (Kelly, 2024; Iveson, 2019).

On the other hand, the development of graffiti in small cities like Batu City, East Java, Indonesia, presents an interesting phenomenon. Located in a mountainous region with a cool climate, Batu City is known as a tourist destination with a variety of thematic recreation parks, such as Jatim Park I, Jatim Park II (Animal Museum and Dino Park), the Transport Museum, Batu Night Spectacular, and Selecta Recreational Park. The diverse visual themes at each of these destinations, complemented by murals and wall paintings in various spaces, from interior areas and parking lots to sidewalks, create a rich and familiar visual environment for the local community. This indirectly creates a visual ecosystem that supports the acceptance of street art practices, including graffiti. In this context, graffiti artists in Batu City have shown a tendency to develop works that are no longer limited to writing, but instead integrate various visual elements such as illustrations, characters, and more complex colour compositions. This transformation reflects a shift from graffiti as a spontaneous expression to a more conceptual and artistic visual form, resembling a carefully planned mural. As a result, the resulting works become more organized, communicative, and adaptable to the increasingly curated context of public spaces. In addition to visual exploration, graffiti practice in Batu City is also characterized by a high level of collaboration across communities and disciplines. Collaboration occurs not only between graffiti artists from various regions, but also involves art institutions such as the Raos Gallery and the traditional Bantengan Diwangkara Andaka art group. Raos Gallery acts as an alternative space that supports the development of graffiti by bridging street art practices and formal art spaces. This gallery is not only an exhibition venue, but also a learning platform through discussion and collaboration, especially for artists without an art education background. Through these activities, Raos Gallery helps broaden the aesthetic and conceptual insights of artists, while simultaneously encouraging improvements in the quality of their work and strengthening the legitimacy of graffiti as part of a culturally valuable visual art practice. Meanwhile, traditional Bantengan art groups, including Bantengan Diwangkara Andaka, are an important part of local cultural practices in Batu City, combining elements of dance, music, pencak silat, and symbolic

values in folk performances. Their connection to graffiti is evident through cross-medium collaborations that integrate graffiti's visual elements, such as characters, expressive colors, and mural compositions, with Bantengan symbols, costumes, and performativity, thus creating a hybrid form of traditional and urban art. This collaboration not only expands graffiti's visual exploration but also enriches its cultural meaning by incorporating local identity into a contemporary context. Moreover, this practice demonstrates the shift in graffiti's function from individual expression to a collective, participatory and performative activity, while strengthening its role as an adaptive medium in representing the ever-evolving dynamics of urban culture.

One example of this collaboration was revealed by Ebrek Racon in an interview, who explained that the idea to combine graffiti with the Bantengan performance emerged as a creative exploration effort to produce a different form of expression. In practice, this collaboration not only presents visual graffiti with a Bantengan theme but also involves the performativity of artists wearing traditional costumes, resulting in an integrated visual and performative experience. Ebrek Racon is a local graffiti figure in the Batu City area, Malang. In graffiti culture, the use of aliases like this is a common practice as a form of artistic identity as well as personal representation within the community. Ebrek Racon is part of an active actor, his role represents a community in the local creative ecosystem involved in various visual explorations and cross-cultural collaborations, including the integration of graffiti with the Bantengan performance.

The activity took place in a public space, specifically on the wall of the apple-picking tourist parking area, and received a positive response when documented and disseminated through digital media. This demonstrates that graffiti in Batu City functions not only as a visual product but also as a communicative and participatory creative process. Thus, graffiti practices in this city demonstrate a shift from mere individual expression to a collaborative form that combines elements of urban and traditional art, while simultaneously strengthening local visual identity within a contemporary cultural context. One of the main challenges in studying graffiti lies in its ephemeral nature. Graffiti is often ephemeral, vulnerable to erasure, environmental factors, or urban redevelopment. As a result, many works remain undocumented or are preserved only through fragmented digital traces, particularly on social media platforms. This is also noted by Kelly (2024), who states that many graffiti works, possessing visual, social, and cultural value, are lost without adequate documentation, primarily due to their ephemeral nature in public spaces (being erased, covered, or replaced by new works). This situation creates a significant gap in systematic and accessible documentation, particularly in smaller cities where graffiti practices are understudied, including the tourist city of Batu, Indonesia. In response to this gap, this study investigates how visual graffiti content in Batu can be systematically collected and curated, and how digital books can be designed as effective documentation media. This research aims to develop digital books that function as visual archives and reference media, supporting the preservation of urban artistic expression while enhancing public understanding of local visual culture. Specifically, this study identifies the characteristics, styles, and themes of graffiti in Batu as a basis for content curation; organizes documentation based on location, form, colour, message, and environmental context; and designs a structured and user-oriented digital interface that is informative, communicative, and visually appealing.

This limited documentation also impacts the scarcity of book publications specifically discussing graffiti as a visual and cultural phenomenon. The few existing publications remain limited, both in terms of distribution and the quality of digital access. This highlights the need for more structured, accessible documentation media capable of presenting visual content and narratives comprehensively. In this context, digital books are a relevant medium because they offer distribution flexibility, high accessibility, and the ability to present visuals with optimal quality. Digital books function not only as archives but also as a visual communication medium capable

of integrating aesthetic elements, narrative, and context. The aesthetic experience in digital media also allows readers to access visual works more dynamically and contextually than conventional print media.

The design of the digital book documenting graffiti in Batu City in this study employed a user-centered Design Thinking approach. This approach allows for an iterative and participatory design process, where graffiti artists and users are involved in every stage of the design, from understanding the context to evaluating the design results (Lewrick et al., 2018; Liedtka, 2018). Thus, the design results are not only aesthetic but also relevant to user needs and the underlying socio-cultural context. Conceptually, this research is also supported by Visual Communication Design (DKV) theory, which emphasizes the integration of communication and visual aesthetics. Elements such as typography, layout, colour, and illustration are used to build a communicative and structured visual system. Furthermore, Gestalt principles are used to optimize the user's visual perception through grouping, hierarchy, and readability, while User Experience (UX) principles ensure that digital books are easily accessible, comfortable to read, and able to provide a meaningful experience for users (Norman, 2013; Garrett, 2011). This study positions design not only as a visual creation process but also as a method of knowledge production. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the field of visual communication design by expanding the discourse on graffiti as an object of urban visual studies, and practically by providing digital documentation media that is accessible to the public, local governments, academics, and creative practitioners. Furthermore, this research supports broader efforts in cultural preservation, creative tourism development, and public space management by increasing the visibility and appreciation of graffiti as part of urban visual heritage. A limitation of this research is its localized scope, which may not represent graffiti practices outside the tourist city of Batu, Indonesia. Based on this background, this study aims to design a digital book as a documentation medium for graffiti in Batu City that not only functions as a visual archive, but also as an educational medium and appreciation of urban art. The educational value of this digital book is intended to be multidimensional and not limited to one aspect only. Specifically, this book is designed to educate readers about four interrelated dimensions: 1) the history and development of local graffiti in Batu as part of urban visual culture, 2) the visual characteristics of graffiti works, including style, composition, and technique, 3) the structure and dynamics of the local graffiti community and its collaborative practices, and 4) the relationship between graffiti and Batu's tourism identity as a creative city. By integrating these dimensions, this digital book aims to function not only as a visual archive, but also as an interpretive medium that contextualizes graffiti within its social, cultural, and spatial environment. By integrating a user-centered design approach and relevant theoretical foundations, this research is expected to contribute to the development of visual documentation media while strengthening the understanding of graffiti as part of urban visual culture.

## **2. METHODS AND THEORY**

### ***2.1 Methods***

This study applies a design-based research approach, focusing on the development of a digital book as a medium for documenting graffiti in the tourist city of Batu, Indonesia. The study employs the Design Thinking framework as its primary methodological approach, emphasizing human-centered, iterative, and participatory processes (Liedtka, 2018; Dell'Era et al., 2020). This approach is highly relevant as the study integrates creative practices with user engagement. Participants comprised 120 respondents, including graffiti practitioners, students, graphic

designers, academics, art observers, and members of the general public aged 17–40. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance to graffiti and visual design. Ethical considerations were ensured through voluntary participation, informed consent, and anonymity. Data collection methods included field observations, photographic documentation, questionnaires, and informal interviews. Observations were conducted to identify graffiti locations and their visual characteristics, while photographic documentation systematically captured artworks. The questionnaire collected user perceptions regarding design aspects such as layout, legibility, and visual appeal. Interviews with graffiti practitioners provided contextual insights and narrative depth.

The selection of graffiti works documented in this digital book is based on considerations of visual characteristics that represent the uniqueness of graffiti practices in Batu Tourism City. In this context, the visual aspect is understood not only as an aesthetic element but also as a communication medium that conveys identity, expression, and the socio-cultural context behind it. The diversity of letter styles, color compositions, visual techniques, and the work's relationship to space are important indicators in the curation process, ensuring that the selected works possess both representative and narrative value. Thus, the digital book functions not only as a visual archive but also as an interpretive medium that helps readers understand the dynamics of urban visual culture more comprehensively. Thematically (figure 1.), graffiti in Batu Tourism City displays a broad spectrum of expression, ranging from explicit themes such as social criticism and freedom of expression to historical representation, to personal themes and visual explorations such as community identity or specific color compositions. This diversity of themes indicates that graffiti is not a singular form of visual expression but rather functions as a reflective medium that captures social and cultural conditions at a specific time. In the context of documentation, grouping works by theme strengthens the book's narrative structure and demonstrates that graffiti possesses a depth of meaning that extends beyond its visual appearance.



**Figure 1.** One of the natural themed graffiti by the Nesk group.  
(Source: Author, 2025)

Furthermore, lettering style is a fundamental element in graffiti's visual identity (figure2). Typographic explorations such as wildstyle, futurism, antistyle, and the use of graffiti characters demonstrate that each artist possesses a distinctive visual approach. The principle of "style is the message" emphasizes that letterforms serve not only as a writing medium but also as a representation of the artist's identity, technical ability, and artistic position within the graffiti ecosystem. This stylistic variation reflects the dynamic development of graffiti's visuals, ranging from complex conventional approaches to experimental explorations that defy legibility as a form

of free expression. In the context of digital books, this stylistic diversity enriches the visual experience while strengthening its documentary function as an archive of the development of local graffiti aesthetics.



**Figure 2.** One of Tibek's Graffiti characters.  
(Source: Author, 2025)

Beyond individual aspects, collaborative (figure 3) work is an important indicator in understanding the social dimension of graffiti as a collective practice. Cross-regional collaborations demonstrate the existence of inter-community networks that enable the exchange of styles, techniques, and visual discourse, thus broadening local perspectives into a broader context. Meanwhile, cross-community collaborations, for example with traditional Bantengan performing arts or art institutions such as galleries, demonstrate that graffiti can transform into a medium for interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue. This confirms that graffiti is no longer confined to a subcultural practice, but has evolved into an inclusive and collaborative creative ecosystem.



**Figure 3.** One of the collaborations between the BFTH graffiti group and Sidomulyo residents was creating a mural with an independence theme.  
(Source: Author, 2025)

Location also plays a significant role in the interpretation of graffiti, as space serves not only as a physical medium but also as a social context that shapes the meaning of the work (figure 4). Mapping graffiti locations in the tourist city of Batu shows that these works are present in strategic locations such as tourist areas, public spaces, and privately owned walls with high visibility. The relatively stable presence of legal spots indicates negotiations between graffiti

artists and space owners, reflecting the dynamics between visual expression and social regulation. Furthermore, the existence of unwritten boundaries, such as avoiding government facilities, places of worship, or hospitals, demonstrates that the graffiti community possesses a collective awareness of social norms and legal consequences.



**Figure 4.** One of the graffiti placements in a public space (legal) is located on Jl. Bukit Berbunga, Apple Picking Tourism Parking. (Source: Author, 2025)

The process followed five stages: empathizing, defining, ideation, prototyping, and testing. Data analysis employed qualitative descriptive methods, focusing on thematic interpretation, user feedback, and visual analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The iterative process allowed for continuous refinement of the digital book design.

## **2.2 Theory**

This study is grounded in an interdisciplinary theoretical framework to support the design and development of digital books as a visual documentation medium. Ambrose & Harris (2015) explain that in Visual Communication Design, design is understood as a problem-solving process that integrates aesthetics, communication, and user experience. The resulting design is expected to effectively convey visual information while maintaining clarity, coherence, and engagement. To understand graffiti as a cultural phenomenon, this study also draws inspiration from urban studies and urban visual culture theory. Avramidis & Tsilimpounidi (2017) also state that graffiti is seen as part of a city's visual identity and a medium of spatial expression. Graffiti reflects social narratives, identity formation, and community interactions within urban environments. The design process incorporates key visual elements, including typography, layout, illustration, and colour. Typography ensures legibility and visual tone, while layout organizes content into a structured and coherent format. Illustrations enhance visual storytelling, and colour serves as both an aesthetic and communicative element. These components are crucial in creating engaging and informative digital books. To enhance user perception and visual organization, this study utilized Gestalt Theory, including principles such as proximity, similarity, continuity, closure, and figure-ground. These principles guide how users perceive and interpret visual compositions and contribute to a more intuitive reading experience (Lidwell, Holden, & Butler, 2010).

Furthermore, this study integrated documentation theory, which conceptualizes documentation as the systematic process of recording, organizing, and presenting information for archival and educational purposes (Drucker, 2014). In the context of graffiti, documentation plays a crucial role due to its ephemeral nature. Digital books serve as structured archives that preserve visual works and their cultural and social contexts. To enhance digital media, this study also considered the principles of User Experience Design (Norman, 2013; Garrett, 2011). User experience focuses on usability, accessibility, and interaction, ensuring that digital books are easy to navigate, readable across devices, and appealing to diverse audiences.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Result

##### 3.1.1 Design Development

The empathize stage is the initial process to understand users through observation, interviews, and direct involvement in graffiti community activities in Batu Tourism City (figure 5-6). This stage aims to dig up information, both direct information from users and indirect information such as observing the background, environment and problems that are similar or related to the users. The designer participated in various graffiti group activities in Batu Tourism City such as attending an exhibition at the Among Tani City Hall, watching the Bantengan Art tradition performance in Sidomulyo, and visiting the creative studio where they work at Jatim Park II/Animal Museum. The designer also visited graffiti actors other than the BFTH group, namely MSJ and Nesk.



**Figure 5.** Various activities with the BFTH group as an empathize stage.  
(Source: Author, 2025)

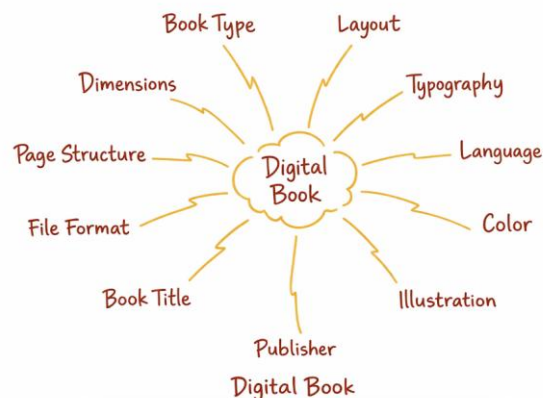


**Figure 6.** Interview with graffiti groups MSJ and Nesk.  
(Source: Author, 2025)

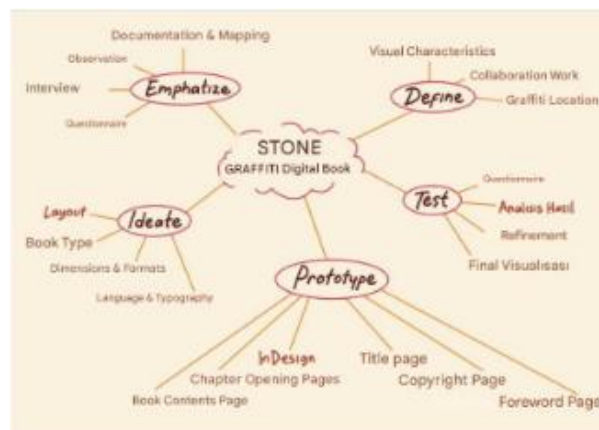
Next, in the define stage, all collected data is analyzed and synthesized to identify the core problems and user needs. At this stage, the designer replays all audio recordings from interviews, reviews all documentation and observations, and then categorizes the existing problems and needs. The designer takes the user's point of view by positioning themselves as if they were part of a graffiti group in Batu Tourism City. This aims to enable the designer to frame the problems

and user needs effectively and accurately. The ideation stage within the Design Thinking process represents an exploratory phase focused on generating potential solutions to address the problems identified during the define stage. After understanding user needs and identifying challenges in documenting graffiti in Batu Tourism City, this phase serves as a creative space to formulate the conceptual direction of the digital book. The results of this stage include the development of the digital book concept, covering structural components and visual approaches aligned with user needs and contextual relevance (figure 7-8).

The design exploration emphasises the integration of visual communication elements to ensure that the book is both informative and engaging. The proposed structure of the digital book comprises several key components, including book type, dimensions, layout, typography, language, colour, illustrations, file format, page structure, title, and publisher. These elements are interconnected and collectively shape the overall design strategy. From a discussion perspective, the ideation stage demonstrates the importance of a user-centred approach in design development. By incorporating user insights, the resulting concept not only addresses documentation needs but also enhances readability, accessibility, and visual appeal. This stage also reflects how design decisions are influenced by both functional requirements and aesthetic considerations, ensuring that the digital book serves as an effective medium for documenting and communicating urban visual culture.



**Figure 7.** Digital Book Structure  
(Source: Author, 2025)



**Figure 8.** Mind mapping in the brainstorming stage.  
(Source: Author, 2025)

The design development stage presents the outcomes of the ideation process, focusing on the formulation of the digital book concept, including its type, format, layout, visual elements, and content structure. The selected book type is a documentation book, aimed at recording and presenting graffiti as a form of urban visual culture in Batu Tourism City. This approach positions the digital book not only as an archival medium but also as an educational and appreciative platform. Visually, the design adopts characteristics of a coffee table book, emphasising strong visual dominance, aesthetic layout, and casual readability while maintaining informative depth.

In terms of format, the digital book is designed with a dimension of 2064 × 2752 pixels at 300 dpi, following a 3:4 portrait ratio optimised for tablet devices. This ratio provides a balance between visual presentation and readability, closely resembling the experience of reading a printed book while remaining adaptable across digital platforms. The PDF format is selected to ensure consistency in layout, typography, and colour across different devices, supporting wider accessibility and stable visual output. The layout strategy incorporates two primary systems: modular layout and full-bleed layout. The modular layout is applied to organise diverse visual content systematically using grid structures, ensuring clarity and visual hierarchy. Meanwhile, the full-bleed layout is used for chapter dividers to highlight graffiti artworks in a more immersive and uninterrupted manner. This combination allows flexibility in presenting both structured information and expressive visual content.

From a communication perspective, the use of language is tailored to be descriptive, accessible, and engaging, particularly for younger audiences and creative communities. The integration of contextual explanations for graffiti-related terms enhances inclusivity and supports broader audience understanding. Typography plays a crucial role in readability and visual identity, with sans-serif typefaces selected for their clarity and suitability in digital formats. The chosen typeface ensures legibility across various screen sizes while maintaining a contemporary visual tone aligned with graffiti aesthetics. The visual development further includes the integration of illustrations, colour schemes, and Gestalt principles to enhance user perception and reading experience. The application of principles such as similarity, proximity, and figure-ground helps organise visual elements into coherent compositions. Decorative elements inspired by graffiti symbols, such as arrows, stars, and expressive marks, are incorporated to reinforce authenticity while maintaining visual consistency. The use of contrasting colours, particularly yellow against darker backgrounds, enhances visibility and creates a dynamic visual impression.

The content structure is divided into five thematic chapters: the early development of graffiti, community groups, collaborative works, critical reviews, and spatial mapping. This structure reflects both historical and contemporary perspectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of graffiti practices in Batu. The integration of visual documentation with narrative content ensures that the digital book functions as both a visual archive and a contextual storytelling medium.

### ***3.1.2 Prototype***

The prototype stage represents the initial visual realisation of the design concept developed during the ideation phase. At this stage, the designer translates conceptual ideas into a series of digital mockups to evaluate the integration of visual elements, readability, and contextual aesthetic quality of the digital book (figure 6-10). The application of Gestalt principles becomes more explicit, allowing the relationship between visual components within each page to be observed and assessed more clearly. The prototype includes several key sections of the book, such as the front cover, inner cover, copyright page, table of contents, chapter divider pages, and

content pages. These elements function as a structural simulation of the final digital book, enabling early-stage evaluation before full production.

In this process, Adobe InDesign is utilised as the primary design tool due to its capability to manage layout composition with high precision. The software supports grid systems, typographic hierarchy, and consistent visual structuring across pages. Features such as master pages and style settings facilitate uniformity, while the export function into PDF format allows the prototype to be tested across multiple devices. From a discussion perspective, the use of InDesign significantly supports the prototyping process by enabling iterative refinement and providing a realistic representation of the final output, ensuring that user feedback can be effectively incorporated.



**Figure 9.** Design in the InDesign application.  
(Source: Author, 2025)

The development of digital book pages demonstrates how conceptual design decisions are implemented into tangible visual compositions. Each page is designed not only as a container of information but also as a communicative medium that reflects the identity of graffiti culture in Batu Tourism City. The cover design utilises a map illustration of Batu City as the central visual element. Areas outside the city are rendered in grayscale, creating a texture reminiscent of stone, while the city area is filled with graffiti elements representing three main groups documented in the book. The proximity of these graffiti elements forms the perception of a geographic shape, illustrating the application of the proximity principle. Additionally, the figure-ground principle allows the visual to be interpreted either as a city map or as a composition of clustered graffiti, demonstrating perceptual flexibility. The use of white space around the illustration enhances clarity and introduces a minimalist aesthetic that balances the complexity of the visual elements.

The book title, “Corak Dinding Jalanan Batu”, reflects a layered meaning, representing visual diversity, spatial context, and geographic identity. The subtitle clarifies the content, reinforcing the communicative function of the cover design. The inner cover adopts a more minimal approach, using clustered graffiti tags that collectively form the word “Batu.” This composition applies both proximity and closure principles, as incomplete letterforms are perceptually completed by the viewer. The grayscale colour scheme reinforces the conceptual association with stone, aligning visual aesthetics with thematic identity.



**Figure 10.** The inside cover design of the book uses proximity and closure.  
(Source: Author, 2025)

The copyright page and introductory pages maintain a clean and structured layout, emphasizing readability and information hierarchy. In contrast, the foreword page introduces a more narrative visual approach through a photographic element depicting a hybrid cultural character. This visual combines global hip-hop influences with local cultural identity, symbolising the intersection between global and local contexts within graffiti culture. From a discussion perspective, this approach highlights how visual storytelling can enhance thematic depth and contextual relevance. The table of contents applies the similarity principle to organise information hierarchically, while background visuals featuring murals from local tourist sites strengthen the contextual identity of the book. This reinforces the positioning of graffiti not only as an urban expression but also as part of the city’s visual and cultural landscape.

Chapter divider pages utilise strong visual compositions, often employing full-bleed layouts to maximise the impact of graffiti imagery. These pages function as visual transitions, allowing readers to engage with the artwork without distraction. The use of expressive textures and spray effects further reinforces the authenticity of graffiti aesthetics.



**Figure 11.** Preface Page  
(Source: Author, 2025)

Typography plays a crucial role in maintaining readability and visual coherence. The selection of a sans-serif typeface, specifically Open Sans, reflects a balance between simplicity and modernity. Compared to serif fonts, which were found to create visual clutter when combined with complex graffiti imagery, the chosen typeface enhances clarity and user comfort. The use of column-based text layout further supports readability, particularly in digital formats where screen size and user interaction vary. Content pages are designed with a minimalist approach, ensuring that textual information remains legible while visual elements are presented effectively. Supporting visual elements are strategically placed in divider sections or non-text areas to avoid interference with reading flow. The application of proximity and similarity principles allows images to be grouped meaningfully, guiding user attention between textual and visual content.



Figure 12. Table of Contents Page  
(Source: Author, 2025)

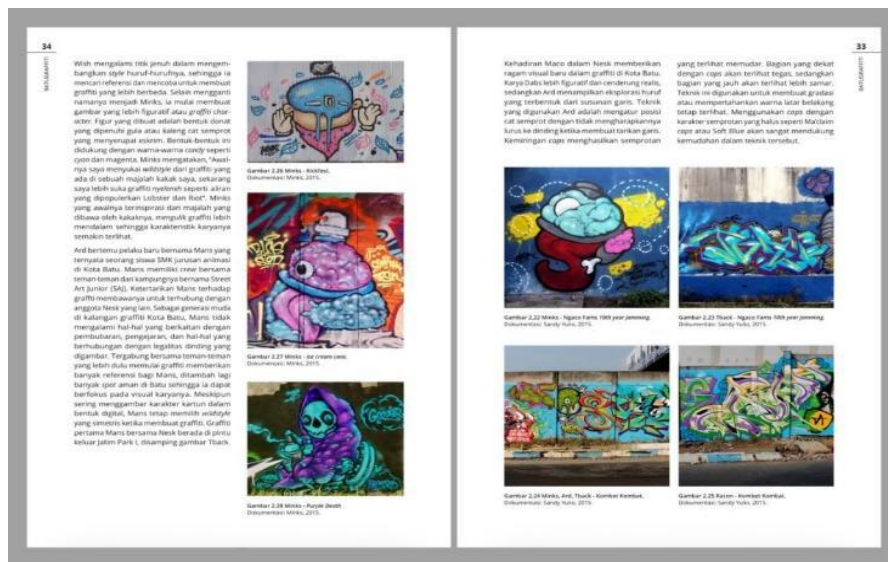


Figure 13. Book contents page  
(Source: Author, 2025)

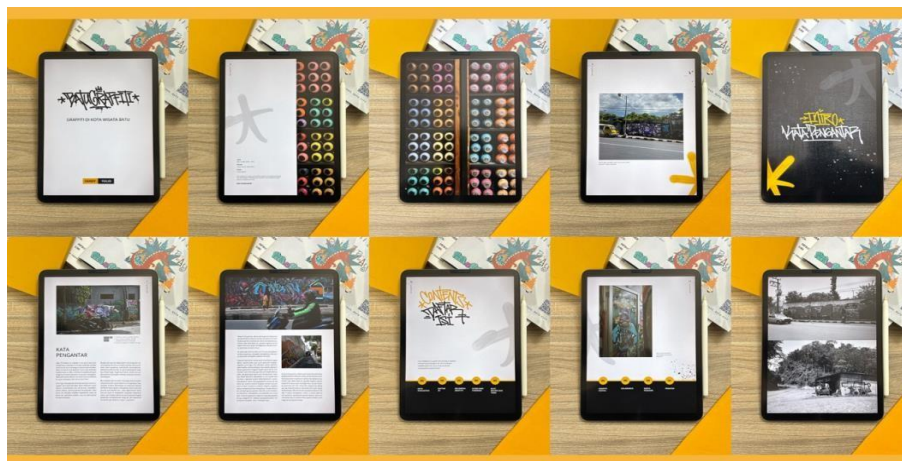
Overall, the layout of each page adheres to Gestalt principles, creating harmony between the composition of images and text. Supporting thematic visual elements are gathered within chapter dividers and completely blank spaces, ensuring no elements interfere with the readability of the text in paragraphs and image captions. The clean, minimalist paragraphs aim to facilitate the reader's focus when searching for information or viewing graffiti photos in detail. Images are

collected as an application of proximity and similarity. This principle allows readers to easily focus on the text first, then shift their focus to the graffiti images on the page.

## 3.2 Discussion

### 3.2.1 Test and Evaluation

The testing phase involved user participation in evaluating and providing feedback on the developed digital book design (figure 14). This phase focused on assessing visual aspects, readability, and overall user perception to ensure that the design aligned with user needs and expectations regarding the digital graffiti documentation book in Batu Tourism City. The initial testing phase was conducted during the Plug and Play exhibition at the Raos Gallery, where the first prototype was presented. User feedback indicated that the layout appeared too busy, with excessive visual elements making the book more like a magazine or zine than a structured documentation medium. This finding reflects a common problem in visual communication design, which aligns with the view of Lidwell, Holden, & Butler (2010), who stated that excessive visual density can reduce clarity and increase cognitive load. Based on this feedback, the design was revised by strengthening the theoretical foundations in visual communication design, book design, and documentation principles. The revised version was then re-evaluated to assess whether it better met user expectations.



**Figure 14.** The design display is handed over to the user for the test phase.  
(Source: Author, 2025)

To obtain broader user insights, a questionnaire was distributed to 120 respondents from diverse backgrounds, including graffiti practitioners, students, designers, academics, art observers, and the general public aged 17–40 years. The evaluation employed a Likert scale (1–5) to measure user responses across key design aspects. The results indicate that the cover and title received an average score of 3.9 (good), suggesting that the visual identity and naming were generally well perceived. Respondents noted that the cover successfully reflects urban and graffiti characteristics, although some suggested making it more visually striking and provocative to enhance first impressions. This aligns with UX principles that emphasise the importance of first impressions and visual appeal in shaping user engagement (Norman, 2013). Similarly, the layout aspect obtained an average score of 3.9 (good), indicating that the organization of visual and textual elements was considered clear and structured. Users appreciated the readability and flow of information; however, several respondents recommended introducing more variation and

dynamism to better reflect the expressive nature of graffiti culture. This suggests a need to balance structure and expressiveness, a key challenge in visual communication design (Ambrose & Harris, 2015). Typography, colour, and visual elements achieved a higher average score of 4.0 (good to excellent), indicating that the selected visual components effectively support readability and aesthetic quality. This aligns with Samara's (2017) explanation, which suggests that effectively selected visual components support readability and aesthetic quality, while also strengthening the communication function in conveying information. The appropriate choice of typography allows text to be clearly read on various screen sizes, while the arrangement of visual hierarchy helps readers navigate the content systematically. The typography is considered easy to read on various digital devices, while the colour palette and graphic elements are considered consistent with the urban graffiti theme.

Minor suggestions include increasing the variety of visual rhythms throughout the chapters, which relates to the importance of visual hierarchy and pacing in design. The visual appeal of the graffiti documentation received a score of 4.3 (excellent), representing the highest-ranking aspect. These findings highlight that the project's core strength lies in its ability to present graffiti works in an engaging, representative, and visually rich manner. Respondents appreciated the comprehensiveness of the documentation, including contextual information such as location, creator identity, and stylistic characteristics. This supports the idea that documentation is not only archival but also interpretive and communicative (Drucker, 2014). Furthermore, the overall appeal of the digital book achieved an average score of 4.2 (very good), indicating a strong positive reception from users. The integration of visual design, structured content, and narrative elements was deemed successful in creating an engaging reading experience. Respondents emphasized that the book not only documents graffiti but also communicates cultural meaning and provides educational value. This reinforces the same perception of Avramidis & Tsilimpounidi (2017), who stated that the role of design is a medium for cultural representation.

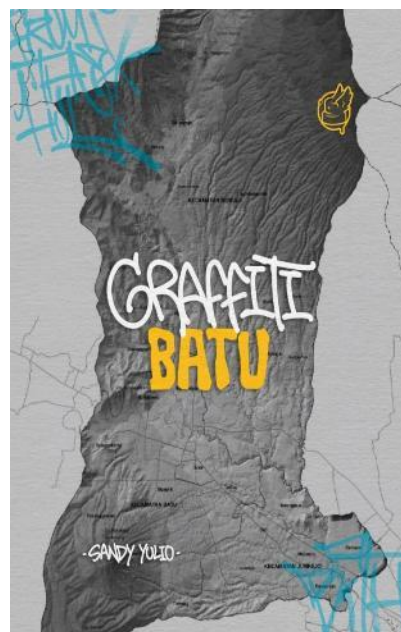
Analysis of open-ended responses reveals several key areas for improvement. The most frequently mentioned variable was colour (10%), followed by aesthetic quality (7.5%) and readability (7.5%), indicating user sensitivity to visual harmony and text clarity. Additional feedback addressed title (5%), cover (3.3%), illustration (2.5%), and layout (0.8%). While most responses were positive, these suggestions highlight the need for further refinement to accommodate diverse visual preferences and enhance overall communication effectiveness. From a discussion perspective, these findings demonstrate that the iterative Design Thinking approach successfully improved design quality through user feedback. This aligns with Liedtka's (2018) opinion, which states that the transition from an initially dense layout to a more structured and readable design reflects the importance of balancing aesthetic expression with functional clarity. Overall, the testing phase validated that the digital book functions effectively as a medium for documenting and communicating graffiti as an urban visual culture.

### ***3.2.2 Refinement and Final Visualization of the Digital Book***

The refinement stage is a crucial phase in translating user feedback into concrete design improvements, while also validating the theoretical framework applied throughout the design process. Based on the questionnaire results, both from Likert scale responses and open-ended feedback, several key aspects were identified for improvement, including colour, visual aesthetics, readability, and clarity of the book title and cover. These refinements align with Garrett (2011), who demonstrated how user-centered evaluation directly influenced design decisions, aligning with User Experience principles that emphasize usability, accessibility, and user satisfaction.

From a Visual Communication Design perspective, adjusting colour contrast is crucial for reinforcing visual hierarchy and enhancing legibility across digital devices. The refinement of the colour palette, which balances the expressive characteristics of graffiti with visual harmony, reflects the application of design principles related to emphasis and unity. This is further reinforced through the use of a limited but strategic colour scheme (white, black, cyan, and yellow), which supports consistency while maintaining the dynamic and expressive nature of graffiti visuals. In relation to Gestalt Theory, this adjustment is particularly aligned with the principles of similarity and continuity, where, according to Lidwell et al. (2010), consistent use of colour helps users cognitively group elements and navigate content more intuitively.

Layout refinements also highlight the practical application of Gestalt principles such as proximity and figure-ground. By reorganising visual elements and optimising white space, the design achieves a clearer separation between text and imagery, thereby enhancing readability without reducing visual richness. This balance reflects a key challenge in documenting graffiti: how to preserve its visual intensity while maintaining informational clarity. The improved layout demonstrates that effective visual communication is not solely about aesthetic appeal but also about guiding user perception and attention in a structured manner. Typography refinement further illustrates the intersection between DKV and UX principles. Adjustments in font size, weight, and style were made to enhance legibility while preserving the expressive identity of graffiti culture. The decision to modify the title typography, shifting from a more formal style to a custom graffiti-inspired typeface, responds directly to user feedback and strengthens the communicative function of the design. This reflects the DKV principle that typography is not merely a functional element but also a carrier of meaning and tone. The revision of the book title into “Graffiti Batu” represents a significant outcome of the refinement process, demonstrating the importance of clarity and memorability in visual communication.



**Figure 15.** Final visualization of the title and outer cover.  
(Source: Author, 2025)



**Figure 16.** Visualization of the book page after the trial phase.  
(Source: Author, 2025)

From a UX perspective, a concise and direct title reduces cognitive load and improves immediate user understanding. At the same time, the integration of graffiti-style visual elements into the title enhances its expressive quality, aligning with the cultural context of the content. The cover design, which incorporates a satellite map interpretation combined with graffiti textures, reflects a synthesis of conceptual thinking and visual storytelling, bridging urban identity with artistic expression. The final visualisation of the digital book can therefore be understood as the result of an iterative design process grounded in both empirical findings and theoretical frameworks. The improved consistency in colour, typography, and layout demonstrates the successful integration of Gestalt principles in creating a cohesive visual system. At the same time, the alignment with DKV principles ensures that the design effectively communicates its intended message, while UX considerations guarantee that the book remains accessible, readable, and engaging for diverse users.

This stage confirms that the strength of the design lies not only in its aesthetic execution but also in its responsiveness to user feedback and its grounding in theory. The final digital book functions as more than a documentation medium; it becomes a communicative artefact that translates urban visual culture into an accessible, structured, and meaningful form. This synthesis of user input, design principles, and theoretical application highlights the role of design as both a problem-solving process and a medium of cultural interpretation. This final visualisation is concrete evidence of the success of the design process, so that the digital book that has been designed becomes a medium that is ready to be used to document, appreciate, and disseminate graffiti art expressions in Batu Tourism City more widely.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the development of a digital book for graffiti documentation in Batu Tourism City not only fulfills its initial design objective but also demonstrates a measurable level of success in communicating the cultural identity of local graffiti as an urban visual practice. The findings indicate that the resulting digital book is able to translate the visual, social, and spatial characteristics of graffiti in Batu into a structured and accessible format. Through the integration of thematic organisation, diverse typographic styles, and contextual narratives, the book succeeds in presenting graffiti not merely as visual artefacts, but as a form of cultural expression shaped by community identity, collaboration, and urban context. From an evaluative perspective, the

effectiveness of the digital book as an educational documentation medium is supported by user responses, which show high levels of acceptance in terms of visual appeal, readability, and overall engagement. The application of Visual Communication Design principles, supported by Gestalt theory and User Experience considerations, contributes significantly to enhancing clarity, visual hierarchy, and interpretability. As a result, the book is not only aesthetically engaging but also functionally effective in guiding users to understand the meaning, diversity, and cultural relevance of graffiti in Batu. This indicates that the design outcome has moved beyond mere documentation toward becoming a communicative medium that facilitates learning and appreciation.

However, the study also reveals certain limitations. The scope of documentation remains geographically specific, which may limit the generalisability of findings to other urban contexts. In addition, while the digital format improves accessibility, the current iteration still operates primarily as a linear reading experience, with limited interactivity that could further enrich user engagement and deeper exploration of content. These limitations suggest that, although the book succeeds in its current form, there remains potential for further development in terms of scalability, interactivity, and cross-platform integration. In conclusion, this research demonstrates that a user-centred, theory-driven design approach can effectively transform ephemeral graffiti practices into a coherent and meaningful body of visual knowledge. More importantly, the study confirms that the resulting digital book not only documents graffiti but also communicates its cultural identity and educational value to a broader audience. This positions the work as both a design outcome and a cultural interface, contributing to the preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of urban visual culture in a contemporary digital context.

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AI Declaration: The author declares that the limited use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools was not used for data generation, data analysis, interpretation of findings, or development of substantive scientific content. All data, results, and conclusions presented in this article are original and derived from the author's independent research.

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