## SHARING CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE THROUGH AUGMENTED REALITY GRAFFITI (Case Study of AR Graffiti workshop from WERC Collective Netherlands to DKV FSRD IKJ students)

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***Abstract***

*According to Marshall T. Poe, we are currently entering an era that is "beyond culture". In the future, identity will no longer be closely related to historical (national) culture, but to a mixture of historical cultures and new, diverse cultures. Transcultural communication affects us when confronted with media products such as on television, in cinema and in meetings in exhibition galleries transcending different cultural boundaries. This can be seen when a number of students specializing in multimedia, DKV study program, FSRD IKJ presented the results of an augmented reality (AR) graffiti installation workshop mentored by a collective WERC artist from the Netherlands. From these activities, transcultural communication was established through interactive wall media. Knowledge transfer occurs between individuals or groups who have different cultures or nation states, the concept of transcultural communication involves a communication process that goes beyond individual culture. From the workshop activities, the WERC collective artists provided knowledge transfer related to software technology, from groups of students specializing in multimedia presented interactive illustrations that introduced artwork and design related to the potential and richness of Indonesian culture. So that transcultural collaboration occurs through interactive wall media.*

***Keywords:*** *AR Graffiti, Collaboration, Transcultural*

## Introduction

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IKJ and Erasmus Huis have held a workshop of which the activities involved cultural activities. This workshop brought in three digital artists from the Netherlands, the Werc Collective, namely: (1) **Olav Huizer**, Olav examined the structures and patterns of the nature surrounding him from a young age, driven by a desire to unveil and understand the process behind every natural phenomenon. His fascination for processes later translated to the fields of electro technique and programming languages. Olav's excellent technical knowledge allows him to blend technique, nature and art in WERC's projects. (2) **Jelle Valk**, a graffiti artist, designer and visual artist, who drawn to street art from a young age. Its culture, anonymity, speed and working with specific locations and close communities are a great source of inspiration for his work. Valk is always looking for new ways to visually transform spaces. Only when a work is visually complete and every aspect fits in, no matter how small or big, that he considers it finished. (3) **Joachim Rümke** has been researching different applications of animation in different art forms, especially the performing arts. For Rümke, there's a clear connection between theater and animation, as they are both abstract and narrative art forms. By directing his attention to creating new media arts, Rümke has given his works of animations an interactive dimension that allows WERC to present impressive performances with interesting narratives. They were all exhibiting "Triangulation: at Erasmus Huis, Jalan Rasuna Said, Jakarta, from 14 October 2022 until 15 January 2023.

Graffiti (plural; singular *graffiti* or *graffito*, the latter rarely used except in archeology) is art that is written, painted or drawn on a wall or other surface, usually without permission and within public view (Wikipedia). Graffiti ranges from simple written words to elaborate wall paintings, and has existed since ancient times, with examples dating back to ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, and the Roman Empire. Graffiti is a controversial subject. In most countries, marking or painting property without permission is considered by property owners and civic authorities as defacement and vandalism, which is a punishable crime, citing the use of graffiti by street gangs to mark territory or to serve as an indicator of gang-related activities. Graffiti has been visualized as a growing urban "problem" for many cities in industrialized nations, spreading from the New York City subway system and Philadelphia in the early 1970s to the rest of the United States and Europe and other world regions. In the early 1980s, the first art galleries to show graffitists to the public were Fashion Moda in the Bronx, Now Gallery and Fun Gallery, both in the  East Village, Manhattan. A 2006 exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum displayed graffiti as an art form that began in New York's outer boroughs and reached great heights in the early 1980s with the work of Crash, Lee, Daze, Keith Haring, and Jean-Michel Basquiat. It displayed 22 works by New York graffitists, including Crash, Daze, and Lady Pink. In an article about the exhibition in the magazine *Time Out*, curator Charlotta Kotik said that she hoped the exhibition would cause viewers to rethink their assumptions about graffiti. Being a graphic form of art, it

might also be said that many graffitists still fall in the category of the introverted archetypal artist. Banksy is one of the world's most notorious and popular street artists who continues to remain faceless in today's society. He is known for his political, anti-war stencil art mainly in Bristol, England, but his work may be seen anywhere from Los Angeles to Palestine. In the UK, Banksy is the most recognizable icon for this cultural artistic movement and keeps his identity a secret to avoid arrest. Much of Banksy's artwork may be seen around the streets of London and surrounding suburbs, although he has painted pictures throughout the world, including the Middle East, where he has painted on Israel's controversial West Bank barrier with satirical images of life on the other side.

Referring to the Exhibition Catalogue, Triangulation by WERC, AR Graffiti and its installation connect the digital and the physical world. This characterizes the installation. A digital layer is added to a variety of painted graffiti pieces, making them come alive. With AR Graffiti, WERC collective and the visual communication design students, created and combined graffiti art, illustration with animation using projector video. This combination fosters augmented reality (AR) artwork. On AR Graffiti, different painted graffiti elements are complemented with video projection. By projecting several layers on top of the painted graffiti, these elements come to life. Every feature letter make different graffiti elements: background, form, and fill-in content illustration. A substantial part of the process of the AR Graffiti making is dedicated to research. WERC conducted elaborate aesthetic research into different characteristics of graffiti, studied the history and development of graffiti and its visual traits in depth of which the examples are old school graffiti elements like clouds and bricks, as well as modern graffiti that mixes different styles. All these developments, styles and different characteristics have been indexed and juxtaposed by WERC. In the AR Graffiti workshop relating to the digital world, transforming graffiti art means combining various styles that are usually static into interactive and dynamic images with interactions between digital and physical. AR Graffiti combines graffiti with augmented reality to create a new and progressive art form. Audiences can touch the artwork on the wall to activate the various digital layers.

The difference between the two objects is the existence of a real object and a virtual object. Real objects can be images or objects as AR markers, while virtual objects can be text, animations, 2D models, or videos that are combined with the actual environment so that the user feels the virtual object in the environment (Wang et al, 2005).

Initially culture is always related to the everyday production of meaning. Borrowing from Stuart Hall (1997), here transculturalism is described as a way of life within which "some individuals find ways to transcend their initial culture, in order to explore, examine and infiltrate foreign cultures" (Grunitzky 2004: 25). Transcultural communication affects us

all when we are confronted with media products on television, in the cinema and in the press that "travel" beyond the bounds of different cultures. It affects us when we come into contact with people of different cultures over the Internet.



Photo 1. Four group workshop AR Graffiti from Deskov FSRD IKJ with the mentor
from WERC Collective at Graduate School of Jakarta Institute of the Arts.
Source: Dita Rachma Sari, 2022

From observations in the process of the making of the AR Graffiti at the workshop, there was a very interesting discussion between the speakers from WERC Collective and the DKV FSRD IKJ groups of students who designed graffiti illustrations, starting from selecting ideas and visual themes to be depicted on the walls, then designing complementary illustrations of graffiti which will later be the process of layering motion graphics or animation using a frame by frame technique which will be displayed through the projector's beam. In the process, it is divided into four working groups, which work on illustrations related to the uniqueness of Indonesia, starting from flora and fauna, Indonesian maps which are processed into graffiti typography, wayang as part of Indonesian culture, then united in Unity graffiti, as a single unit. which unites the entire design of AR Graffiti.

In this workshop the students were separated in four groups. The students of the first

group were Khansa Putri Hakim, Hanif Dewana, Talya Cahyaning Dinten, and Dion Yudha, who did typical Indonesian floral designs combined with typographical graffiti, such as the Rafflesia Arnoldi flower. In the second group the students were Mochamad Arya Maulana, Fachri Sani Octavian, Arvin Witana, Mohammad Ikram, who do the Indonesian map design combined with graffiti typography. In the third group the students were Johan Bahari, Akmal Habibi, who do wayang graffiti combined with gunungan designs. In the fourth group the students were Farhan Syahputera, Haura fadhila safira, Antonnia Gabrielle who designed the Unity graffiti by combining various of protected fauna.

**Research Method**

The methods used in this research include various stages and strategies as follows: a. Research Strategy, this research is of descriptive-qualitative in nature of which attention is focused on the form of search by means of library observations with the book Andreas Hepp, Transcultural Communication and, and the process of direct observation from the workshop AR Graffiti, conducting interviews with the mentor from WERC Collective, including the exposure of materials and data concerning several aspects to produce a structured description that clarifies the research problem and question. Collecting data and information by limiting research to covering several is the context for the presence of the research object. (Rohidi , 2011).  b. Data analysis, to analyze AR Graffiti works, an observation process is required. This process is made easier when there is a plan and steps to follow. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006) quoting Rohidi (2011; 233) detailing specific analytical procedures in seven stages, namely: (1) organizing data (2) enter and immerse oneself in data (3) developing categories and themes (4) encode data (5) offers interpretation through analytical memos (6) seek alternative understanding (7) write a report or other format to demonstrate the study. Each stage of data analysis requires data reduction, data piles are collected and arranged into regular data units, and interpretation, when the researcher attaches his meaning and understanding to the visual data in his study.

**Discussion**

In the discussions between AR Graffiti's mentors and student groups, there occurred exciting dialogues regarding understanding ideas and brainstorming. The workshop was not a one direction kind of lecture; it was actually a knowledge sharing related to Augmented Reality software technology, network techniques related to installing sensors tools on walls. This allowed them to interact between images which when touched will display motion or animation from images or graffiti that complement each other in AR designs the graffiti. Language and cultural barriers were an obstacle in the question and answer process to share knowledge related to Indonesian culture and the meaning of the pictures or graffiti that are made. One example was when the mentor asked what was meant by wayang Graffiti

writing? So the students explained that wayang is one of the cultural assets taken from India which is then acculturated to the culture in Indonesia which has been passed down from generation to generation. The ancestors from Java handed on a flat puppets model made of leather which is commonly called *wayang kulit*, but there are also *wayang golek* of Sunda that are made of wood craftsmen. Puppet stories, which are often performed, such as the Ramayana and Mahabarata, with characterizations from the Bharatayuda epic, are then combined with figures from the Indonesian Archipelago like the characterization of Punakawan consisting of Semar, Petruk, Gareng, and Bagong.

Another interesting discussion occurred when one of the mentors asked about the Rafflesia flower. "What was interesting about this flower, and why is it called Rafflesia?" The question was answered by a lecturer who attended the event by explaining the history of the giant corpse flower which can have a diameter of more than 1 meter and a height of more than 2 meters that only grows in Indonesia. The flower was later named Rafflesia Arnoldi, taken from the names of the British Governor General Sir Thomas Stanford Raffles who was in power in the Southeast Asia region at that time and Dr. Thomas Arnoldi, a British florist who discovered it in the interior of the Bengkulu forest, Sumatra.

Furthermore there were other questions regarding the graffiti in Sumatra, Borneo, Java, Sulawesi and Papua. The students answered such a question by describing the map of Indonesia which consists of five large islands, which later received appreciation from the mentors who admired the natural beauty of Indonesia which was told by one of their grandmothers whose grandfather had served in Indonesia. From the discussion, it can be seen that there has been a transcultural communication that occurs between Dutch artists and Indonesian artists to share knowledge on technology and culture that complement each other and as interactive audio-visual works that can be useful study material.
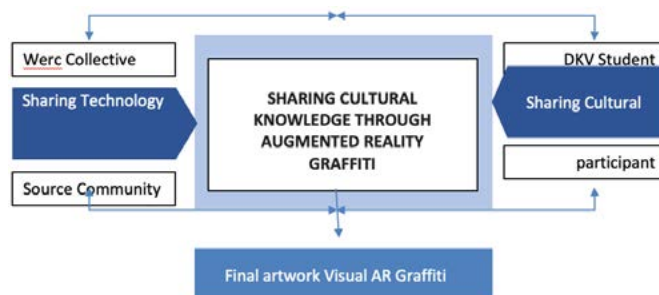


Diagram 1. Sharing Cultural Knowledge through Augmented Reality Graffiti diagram

Source: Rasuardie, 2022

Photo 2. Final artwork Augmented Reality Graffiti interactive wall.
Source: Isworo Ramadhani, 2022

For that reason, on transcultural communication, it should be taken into consideration that it urgently requires that we examine what people do with media as contents and as technologies; how they appropriate them, and what kinds of transculturation processes can be detected here. Media appropriation means that people localize media in their own particular everyday cultural contexts. This does not involve a process of "domestication," if one understands by that the "subordination" of these contents and technologies. The process of transcultural communication has made it clear that the media adaptation is linked with the transformation of existing cultures—even though this is not simply a question of "impact", or "modernization." It is simply too diverse and contradictory (Hepp, 229).

**Conclusion**

From the AR Graffiti workshop, we can see that there is a transcultural communication that occurs between Dutch artists and Indonesian artists in terms of sharing knowledge of technology and culture that complement each other and as interactive audio-visual works Augmented Reality Graffiti is a useful study material. Everybody is very happy and ready to collaborate in that workshop because it produces works that are visually interesting, interactive for viewers who appreciate them, there is a process of transferring knowledge that can be used for educational needs in formal or experimental classes, or final lecture assignments in DKV study programs including for student exhibition needs. It is hoped that this transfer of knowledge can be continued with the transfer of knowledge to younger classmates, so that knowledge development in the field of AR technology continues to occur which can be implemented with other subjects such as motion graphics, animation, and other interactive multimedia. A side from being part of lecture practice, it can also be used as a research study for teachers as a fulfillment of the requirements for carrying out the *Tridarma* of higher education, related to teaching, research, and community service.

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