

# Art-Based Community in Surabaya as an Alternative Art Learning Media for Student

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**Abstract**—A study of art could be done inside and outside the classroom. Formal courses such as Visual Art Major and Visual Communication Design Major in Universities still become foremost preferences for students to deepening their insight and artistic skills. The purpose of this article is to observe the possibilities of art-based communities as an alternative art learning media for students. For it is perplexing and captivating to observe, those that considerably art-based communities were found and grew up lately in Surabaya, such as Jatim Strip, SUB Letter, Koper Jati, and many more. This research using analytic descriptive method and collecting data by interview, literature studies, observation technique, and photo documentation. These data are taken from a sample community, Jatim Strip Surabaya. The approach of this research began with diagnosing the issue, interviewing subject research, following the event, and combining the data with literature references. The finding of this study shed light on the art-based community, with its good and bad point, could be considered as an alternative art learning media.

**Keywords:** *art-based community, alternative art learning media, education, Surabaya*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Art is one important component for the concept of holistic education. Standing equal with religious education, physical education, civics – art education becomes requirement a student said to be whole as human. Art education can be taken through both formal and informal way. Through formal way, [1]. On the other hand, student in a modern era like today able to get art education through various media. We can mention various application and social media which provide many alternatives for student. From Khan Academy, Masterclass, Pinterest to YouTube become cheap alternative (even free) for someone to learn art. Additionally, today, many art-based communities born and developed.

Surabaya is the second biggest city, after Jakarta, in Indonesia. With a total area of 350 km<sup>2</sup> and total population (in 2019) almost exceed 3 million people, Surabaya becomes metropolitan city side by side with its urban issues. Increased awareness of national creative economies, improved economic conditions of middle class, demographic statistics, and massive infrastructure development; these issues are shaping Surabaya become proliferate vessel for its people. Although Surabaya known as second biggest metropolitan city in Indonesia, it's

creative industry not as developed as Jakarta nor Bandung. Surabaya can be seen like a giant that start to walk, but one of its leg still left behind. Most of people in Surabaya think that something intangible, such as creative idea and innovative design, not yet worthy of high appreciation. Tangible and visible things, such as calendar, are more appreciated than the creative process in back stage. The mindset of people in Surabaya is still in transition between “traditional commerce” and “modern business”. The purpose of this study is to find whether art-based community considered as an alternative learning media for student.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescence life is complex and perplexed time in someone life. They study and learn thing differently compared with early child and children, as well as the way they learn art. An assumption is conveyed across research disciplines that an interest in engaging, knowing, and collaborating with others are familiar and natural – comfortable behaviours of youth [2]. Author subject research, art-based community predominantly consist of same (and specific) passion and interest. Next question emerges afterward, “What make learning art become interesting topic or idea?”. As mention above, art is one of important element that makes a human, a human. Some researcher said, the arts are treated not as forms of leisure, play, or amusement, nor as exclusively emotional activities. They are viewed, rather, as fundamental ways of knowing the world” [3].

As an alternative learning space, an art-based community emerged as an answer for educational problem in urban area, i.e., Surabaya. Learning is meaningful when we connect socially with others, a seemingly benign statement supported by a significant body of research that documents how youth actively engage with each other, seeking out individuals and communities based on shared interests [4-6]. In the other hand, other research completing the importance of this topic with their perspective. Community-based art education which increases creativity and self-expression helped teenagers to improve self-esteem. The teaching methods of community-based art education include interactive teaching, behavioural collaboration, media utilization, and service learning [7].

**III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The data in this research were taken from interviewing the subjects research (Sovira Maris – Head of Jatim Strip Surabaya, Bachtyar Yan F. – Treasurer of Jatim Strip Surabaya, and Surya Putra Bahari – Community Active Member). The author did the observation by following some of community activity. This activity was documented and attached to this write. Author complement the research with adding some literature studies relevant to the research. To a certain degree, data also taken from subject Instagram account @jatimstrip accessed at September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*A. Art-Based Community*

Community is a place for a people with similar passion and interest, like photograph community, nature lover community, watercolour painting community, etc. A community can become an alternative learning class, beside their formal education [8]. Beside mentioned reasons, an interesting shift paradigm happened in society, community today often becomes partner for company or corporate in execute their business program, such as CSR programs, marketing promos, or looking for crowd [9]. Imagine, a college student who like to draw an illustration and only get illustration subject for 2 credit, he felt that his passion didn't accommodated in a formal education institution, he can join with local illustration community and get what his formal education. Joining a community offers various advantages, such as: finding new friend with same passion, information about latest development, related issues, intense discussion, and finding job opportunities and career [10].

On the other hand, managing a community is not an easy task. Uniting various person with different background without a formal bond, become a challenge for the community's manager. Different from a formal institution which has a clear structural leadership and rules, several things just inapplicable for community. Take an example in a class, there is clear position between teacher and student. There is a clear rule which dictates when they come to class, how many abstain allowed, how many final tasks need to be done, etc. Student pays the tuition fee as a responsibility and get to learn as his right. Teacher gets salary as his right and teach as his responsibility. This has already proven through interview from management team of Jatim Strip Community, sometimes when they agree to meet together, just few of them is coming. Similarly, the liberalism of members of a community, sometimes become boomerang when the interest of members is not met. These differences in interests sometimes determine the life and death of a community. New members who are beginner often join with expectation to meet their favourite artists, looking new friend, or looking for latest info about their hobbies or interests. In contrast to beginners, members who are already veteran, usually have made this hobby their profession and livelihood, hoping to meet working channel, job vacancies, or latest info for themselves. Both types, if they cannot be managed well, often only become members who come once and never return – there is no engagement with the community concerned.

The expertise of community manager to raise funds creatively also a determining factor in the life and death of a community. Communities that are reluctant to think creatively and innovatively in seeking funding and creating engagement with their members, are often not long-lived and only a momentary trend.

*B. Jatim Strip Surabaya*

Jatim Strip Surabaya community was founded in 2015, originally named Komikgram Jatim and departed from the national community, Komikgram. In some point of time some members get separate. Then from the members who separate, they founded a new community called Komikin Ajah. Conflict arises because this new community, Komikin Ajah, when holding the Komikin Ajah Festival did not invite members from their previous community, Komikgram. In 2018, the Komikgram Jatim rebranding and transformed into a new community that we know today as the Jatim Strip Surabaya. Jatim Strip Surabaya accommodates comic strip artists who are active on Instagram in the Surabaya and surrounding areas, such as Malang and Sidoarjo.

The number of active members reaches 70 people, consisting of several elements of society, active comic artists, hobbyists, and fresh people who only like to draw. Information about this community can be accessed through the Instagram account @jatimstrip.

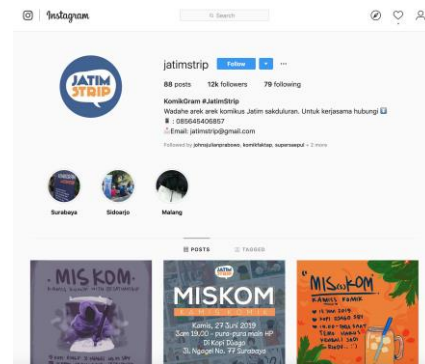


Fig. 1. Jatim strip Instagram account.

Jatim Strip has a vision of accommodating people who have the same interests and passion (drawing comic strips). Through their Instagram account, Jatim Strip also dreams to promote local strip comic artists up to a broader level. Some companies have invited the Jatim Strip community, including: Bank Mandiri, Coffee Toffee, and Faber Castell. The forms of cooperation include: Project drawing together, being a speaker in a workshop, and as an invitation. This community is also often invited to events held by universities and creative events in Surabaya such as: Universitas Kristen Petra, Lokalisasi, Jazz Traffic, Pop Con Asia 2016, 2017 and Urban Gigs. They also often hold projects together with comic strip artists from other regions. Surabaya East Java Strip has a routine agenda namely Miskom (Kamis Ngomik) which is carried out almost every week on Thursday. Communication also occurs within the WhatsApp group, often free conversation, exchanging event

information, and job / project opportunities are done here (outside of physical meetings).



Fig. 2. Jatim strip documentation activities.

### C. Learning Art within Community

Without intending to generalize the stereotypes of art students, it is evident that there are differences in the character of art students compared to other study program students. Most noticeable departed from the desire to be an artist or creative worker, most art students have a free spirit and do not want to be restrained by some formal-academic rules [11]. Wearing ripped jeans, black shirts, or having long hair are their ways to shout their 'freedom' visually. Sometimes, this value they hold must collide with academic rules which they feel are binding or disrupting their freedom. The need to dress neatly on campus, arrive on time, no smoking in the campus area are some social hedge that they must cope when trying to learn art in a formal institution such as school, college, or university. This is understandable because as an institution in which there are various scholar, universities want to create an 'academic' learning environment.

In the midst of that situation, an alternative learning space solution called the community was present. A community is a group of people who share the same hobbies and passion and do activities together [12]. For students, regardless of the course they study, in the middle of the semester usually, they will take or choose a major or specialization. In many cases the additional material in this specialization is less able to satiate their hunger for certain scientific fields or passions.

Taking the example of the subject of the study authors, members in Jatim Strip Surabaya, mostly departing from their love of reading comics or drawing comics (starter members or hobbyist-type member). The types of members who join for this reason hope that by joining them in the Jatim Strip Surabaya they will be able to meet new and same passion peer group, meet their favourite comic strip artists, or just want to find out more about their hobbies. In the other hand, there are the 'veterans' whose purpose is to join more in terms of looking for the latest issues in the world of comic strips, looking for job

vacancies, or additional project illustrations. Members of this type usually make comic strips or illustrations as their way to earning money or profession. The process of learning art takes place in all element that build a comic strip: storytelling, character development, colour selection, layout settings and so on. There are often throw-and-catch advice and opinions among members, there are no academic boundaries and rigid values that often appear when studying in class. All of them are wrapped in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Beginner members can see their peers and senior, then become inspired and motivated. The motivational parameters were seen by their presence at the next meeting by upgrading their equipment and their draw.

On the other hand, learning art in an art-based community offers a lot of freedom that is not obtained in a formal learning institutions [13]. But keep in mind also for students who want to use this as an alternative learning space, along with many of the advantages there are several things that need to be considered as well. In the absence of a syllabus in this alternative classroom, don't expect learning to be structured. Often what happens is the member in it learns independently, according to what he wants to learn that day. Learning is more towards learning together. Because sometimes the more senior artists or comics don't come, so there is no new source of knowledge learned or shared with. A comic artist can be regard as an artist, having a big ego or pride for his drawing and work style. Friction often occurs between members, feeling that his/her work sells the most and does not want to receive input from others. Seen as trivial matter, things like this sometimes can be grow as a potential source of conflict whose make atmosphere of learning unfavourable. Generally, membership in a community is free, but often this also causes a person's interest or motivation to participate in activities reduced. For new members or beginners who are not active in the world of comic strip often feel no need to be active or involved in it. There is no engagement between the members and the community, nothing-to-lose for them.



Fig. 3. Students learning in community.

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussions, it can be concluded that an art-based community can be considered as an alternative to learn art. As a matter of fact, there is some positive point could be concluded from art-based community, such as:

- Alternative study room which liberal and inclusive.
- Student could learn specific and peculiar field of study e.g. comic strip, water-colour painting, food photography, etc.
- Student could join, connect, and increase with same passion peer group, that could be beneficial later on real industry world.
- Liberal learning ambience and ecosystem, which suit with behaviour of adolescence learner.
- Flexible learning time and place.

In contrast, authors also found some point that could be considered about learning in a community. These points are:

- In some occasional time, there is the absence of foreman or leader from the community. This situation could lead collision among the member egos.
- Since there is no precise syllabus or curriculum at some point the process of learning seems walking nowhere.
- Some intrigue problems might happen among the member, especially about shared fee, shared project design and/or money.

To find the real answer of the question from this research, we must acknowledge the concept of art-based community

entirely. It is Author intend that this article leads to further discussion of the role art-based community as an alternative art learning media.

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