

# Visual Communication as Event Infrastructure: A Practice-Oriented Case Study of the Tainan SING Era Song Competition

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## Abstract

City-based cultural events are not only performances, competitions, or festivals; they have increasingly become platforms for urban cultural communication, public participation, and place-brand formation. In many cultural events, however, visual communication is still treated as back-end promotional packaging, with its function reduced to producing posters, social media graphics, stage backdrops, or promotional materials. This paper argues that visual communication in city-based cultural events is not merely a tool for beautification or publicity, but an event infrastructure that supports how an event is identified, understood, shared, and participated in. Using the Tainan SING Era Song Competition as a case study, this paper examines how visual communication supports the brand recognition, social media visibility, and audience engagement of a city-based music event. The study adopts a practice-oriented case study approach. The research materials include event documents, visual design outputs, social media records, event photographs and videos, and practitioner reflections. It focuses on three questions: how visual identity transformed the event from a call for original song submissions into a recognizable city-based music event; how social media-oriented communication design supported event visibility and information dissemination; and how visual communication and event media created multiple layers of audience engagement. The findings indicate that visual communication was not merely promotional packaging. Through brand identification, information organization, social media content, and event documentation, it supported the communication process from the call for entries, finalist announcement, voting, and the final concert to outcome extension. The paper proposes visual communication as event infrastructure, explaining how visual communication connects cultural policy, original music, social media communication, and public participation in city-based music events.

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## Keywords

Visual Communication, Visual Identity, Event Communication, Audience Engagement, City Branding, Music Competition, Practice-Oriented Case Study

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. City-Based Music Events as Platforms for Cultural Communication

City-based cultural events have become an important means through which contemporary cities conduct cultural communication, construct local images, and facilitate public participation. City branding does not emerge only from landmarks, tourist attractions, or official slogans; it can also be felt, participated in, and remembered through festivals, performances, competitions, music events, and public cultural events. [Kavaratzis \(2004\)](#) argues that city branding involves the overall construction of city image, place identity, communication strategy, and stakeholder perceptions. [Getz \(2008\)](#) also situates planned events within the contexts of tourism, place marketing, and sociocultural benefits, explaining how events may function as media for local attractiveness and city image construction. Recent research continues to show that arts and cultural events can serve as important components of urban cultural branding strategies and can enhance city visibility through public experience and cultural assets ([Ciuculescu & Luca, 2024](#)).

Music events have particular significance in urban cultural communication because songs can carry local memories, everyday experiences, emotional narratives, and the atmosphere of an era. They can also be re-circulated through performance, recording, social media sharing, and live presentation. [Richards and Palmer \(2010\)](#) use the concept of the eventful city to explain how cities can create public experiences through cultural events and how urban meanings can be continuously produced and reinterpreted through events. From this perspective, an original music competition centered on a city is not merely a mechanism for selecting musical works; it also invites creators to translate urban experience into works that can be heard, performed, and shared.

The Tainan SING Era Song Competition has precisely these characteristics. According to publicly available event materials, the competition was first held by the Tainan City Government in 2017. It invited music creators to write impressions of Tainan, continued from 2018 to 2023, and in 2024 adopted the central appeal of writing another song for Tainan. It encouraged creators to draw inspiration from Tainan's humanities, landscapes, emotions, stories, everyday life, history, and memories, and to express the voice of the times through original music ([Department of Popular Music Industry, Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology, 2023](#); [College of Digital Design, Southern Taiwan University of Sci-](#)

ence and Technology, 2024). SING is therefore not a conventional singing contest. It is a city-based original music event that takes urban culture, local stories, everyday memories, and generational emotions as the core of its creative framework.

However, a city-based music event does not automatically generate public impact simply because musical works exist. The event must first be seen, understood, and shared, and it must guide different groups into the participation process. For a competition-based event such as SING, participants include creators who submit works, social media followers, online voters, media audiences, public-sector actors, and audiences at the final concert. These groups encounter the event at different times, through different media, and with different informational needs. A clear and sustained visual and communication design system is therefore required to move the event from the call-for-entries stage to finalist announcements, voting, the final concert, and outcome extension.

## 1.2. Visual Communication beyond Promotional Packaging

In the execution of cultural events, visual design is often positioned at the back end. After the event plan, rules, process, and program content have been determined, designers are asked to produce the main visual, posters, social media graphics, or stage backdrops. In this workflow, visual communication is easily understood as surface decoration and may even be reduced to graphic production or packaging. Visual identity, however, is not a single image or aesthetic style. It is a communication system that enables an organization, event, or brand to be recognized, differentiated, and remembered. Melewar and Saunders (1998) define corporate visual identity systems as comprising names, logos, colors, typefaces, and other visual elements, and they argue that consistency and management affect the effectiveness of identification. Wheeler (2018) similarly emphasizes that brand identity must operate through extendable visual and verbal systems across different touchpoints. As social media has become a primary field for event communication, the function of visual identity has expanded from traditional posters, brochures, and on-site objects to Facebook, Instagram, short videos, stories, and cross-platform content. Recent research suggests that visual design on social media platforms is not merely aesthetic; it also participates in the organization and communication of brand messages (Carpio-Jiménez et al., 2024). Hwang and Lee (2025) further argue that the visualization of brand identity in social media video communication must consider message strategy, platform format, and user attention. These studies indicate that contemporary visual identity has shifted from static standards to a cross-platform, dynamic, and social media-oriented communication system.

## 1.3. Research Gap

Existing research has provided important foundations from the perspectives of city branding, cultural events, visual identity, and social engagement. Research on city branding and events explains how cultural events can function as media for

place marketing, city image, and public experience (Kavaratzis, 2004; Getz, 2008; Richards & Palmer, 2010; Ciuculescu & Luca, 2024). Research on visual identity emphasizes the importance of visual systems for brand recognition, consistency, and cross-touchpoint communication (Melewar & Saunders, 1998; Wheeler, 2018; Landa, 2018). Research on social media and audience engagement further shows that contemporary participation in events has expanded from on-site attendance to online interaction, short-video circulation, and user-generated content (Hudson et al., 2015; Qiu et al., 2021; Avlonitou & Papadaki, 2024; Marić Stanković et al., 2026).

However, these studies are usually situated in separate contexts. City branding research often focuses on policy, place image, and event impacts. Visual identity research tends to use corporate brands or general brand systems as its primary objects. Social media research often concentrates on platform interaction, advertising effects, or audience attitudes. By contrast, fewer studies have analyzed, from a practice-oriented design perspective, how visual communication operates across the full process of a city-based music competition and connects administrative calls for entries, social media communication, finalist promotion, online voting, the final concert, and outcome extension into a public cultural event that can be recognized, shared, and participated in.

The Tainan SING Era Song Competition provides a suitable case for analyzing this issue. From 2021 to 2024, the event was implemented by Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology and gradually developed an event system that included call-for-entry promotion, social media communication, finalist promotion, online popularity voting, the final concert, and outcome extension. This paper does not discuss every aspect of SING's execution, such as budget control, tendering and project governance, jury invitation, artist coordination, crisis handling, or student training. Instead, it focuses on visual identity, social media communication, and audience engagement, and analyzes how visual communication supported the publicization of a city-based original music competition.

#### **1.4. Research Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this paper is to explore how visual communication supported event recognition, social media visibility, and audience engagement in the Tainan SING Era Song Competition. This paper does not treat SING as a simple event report, nor does it focus on the overall governance of the project. Rather, it treats SING as a visual communication practice case within the context of city-based cultural events.

This paper proposes the following three research questions: RQ1: How did visual identity transform the Tainan SING Era Song Competition from a call for original song submissions into a recognizable city-based music event?

RQ2: How did social media-oriented communication design support the public visibility and dissemination of the event? RQ3: How did visual communication and event media create multiple layers of audience engagement during the com-

petition process? These three questions correspond respectively to event recognition, social media communication, and audience engagement. The first question concerns how visual identity established event positioning and brand recognition. The second examines how event information was communicated in stages through social media-oriented visual content. The third discusses how creators, online audiences, and on-site audiences entered the participation process through different media and event nodes.

### 1.5. Research Contributions

This paper makes three contributions. First, it proposes the perspective of visual communication as event infrastructure, arguing that visual communication in city-based cultural events is not merely promotional decoration but an important mechanism that supports event recognition, information organization, social media visibility, and audience engagement. This perspective helps reposition visual communication from back-end graphic production to a strategic foundation for event design and cultural communication. Second, this paper provides a practice-oriented case analysis of a city-based music competition. Whereas much city branding research discusses cultural events from the perspective of policy, tourism, or festivals, this paper focuses on how visual communication operates within the event process. It explains how the main visual, social media graphics, event information, media content, and on-site visuals jointly supported the publicization and participatory transformation of the event.

Third, this paper offers practical reference for local government cultural events and design management. For competition-based cultural events, visual communication should be integrated from the early stages of event planning rather than passively producing promotional materials after the event content has already been determined. Visual communication can help establish annual recognition, organize multi-stage information, design social media interaction nodes, and extend event outcomes beyond the final concert.

## 2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews three groups of literature relevant to this paper: city branding and cultural events, event visual identity and communication design, and social media and audience engagement. The first group explains how city-based music events can function as platforms for urban cultural communication and public participation. The second explains how visual communication extends from static identity to a cross-media and cross-stage event communication system. The third explains how contemporary participation in cultural events is no longer limited to the site of the event but continues through social platforms, short videos, online interaction, and user-generated content. The chapter concludes by proposing the analytical perspective of this paper: visual communication in city-based music events can be understood as a form of event infrastructure that supports event recognition, public visibility, and audience engagement.

## 2.1. City Branding and Cultural Events

City branding research suggests that a city is not only a geographical space or administrative unit but also a cultural symbolic system that can be perceived, interpreted, and communicated. In his theoretical framework moving from city marketing to city branding, [Kavaratzis \(2004\)](#) argues that city branding should not be reduced to external publicity or slogan design. Rather, it involves the overall construction of city image, place identity, communication strategy, and stakeholder perceptions. In other words, city branding is not a single identity object or government slogan; it is continuously formed through the relationships among urban governance, cultural production, public communication, and residents' and visitors' experiences.

Event studies further explain how planned events can function as important contact interfaces between cities and publics. [Getz \(2008\)](#) argues that event tourism is not merely a subcategory of tourism activities but is also related to place marketing, destination image, sociocultural benefits, and local development strategies. [Richards and Palmer \(2010\)](#), through the concept of the eventful city, argue that cultural events can create eventfulness and public experience for cities, making the city not simply a place to be passively viewed but a cultural space that is continuously produced and reinterpreted through events.

Recent studies continue to emphasize the importance of arts and cultural events for city brand building. [Ciuculescu and Luca \(2024\)](#), in their analysis of European Capital of Culture bid books, argue that cities can build brand characteristics through art, cultural events, flagship architecture, historical memory, and local cultural themes. Such studies show that city branding does not rely only on large-scale construction, tourist attractions, or official publicity. It can also be accumulated through sustained cultural events and public participation. This is especially important for cities with rich historical and cultural resources, where cultural events can enable local stories, residents' experiences, and creators' interpretations to enter the process of city brand construction.

Music events occupy a particular position in urban cultural communication. Compared with tourism publicity or static display, music can carry local memories, everyday experiences, emotional narratives, and a sense of the times, and it can be re-circulated through performance, recording, social media sharing, and live presentation. City-based music events are therefore not merely entertainment programs. They may also become cultural translation platforms among creators, audiences, and the city. When a music competition takes the city as its creative theme, participants are not simply submitting songs; they are translating personal experience, place imagination, and urban memory into works that can be heard, performed, and shared.

Thus, to analyze a city-based music event, it is insufficient to focus only on the event content or the musical works themselves. It is also necessary to examine how the event becomes public: how it is recognized, how it is communicated, and how it enables different audiences to understand and enter participation pathways.

This is why this paper incorporates visual communication into the analysis.

## 2.2. Event Visual Identity and Communication Design

Visual identity is an important foundation for the recognition of brands and events. Traditional research on visual identity has often taken corporate or organizational brands as its objects and emphasized consistency in logos, colors, typefaces, image styles, and application standards. Melewar and Saunders (1998) regard corporate visual identity as a system composed of names, logos, colors, typefaces, and other visual elements, and they argue that the standardization and management of visual identity help establish recognition effects. Wheeler (2018) also argues that the core of brand identity lies not only in designing a single logo but also in building a system that can be extended and recognized across different touchpoints.

From the perspective of visual communication design, visual identity is not merely a matter of looking consistent; it also involves message organization and communication efficiency. Landa (2018) notes that the task of graphic design and visual communication is to solve communication problems through visual form, information hierarchy, media selection, and message strategy. For events, this is especially important because events often contain multiple time nodes, multiple audiences, and multiple layers of informational needs.

The visual communication of competition-based cultural events is highly complex. While a general brand may mainly communicate products, values, or images, a competition-based event must simultaneously address its call-for-entry theme, eligibility, registration process, awards, jury members, finalist list, voting rules, final event information, award results, and outcome review. These pieces of information cannot simply be stacked together. They must be designed according to the event cycle, differentiated by stage, audience, and medium. Therefore, event visual identity should not be understood as a single main visual. It should be understood as a communication system that works across time, media, and platforms.

The development of social media and video platforms has also changed the application environment of visual identity. In the past, event visuals were concentrated in posters, printed materials, outdoor banners, stage backdrops, and physical printed objects. Contemporary events, however, rely heavily on Facebook, Instagram, short videos, stories, and mobile screen formats. Carpio-Jiménez et al. (2024) point out that image language, color, typography, and brand symbols in social media content have communicative functions and affect visual consistency on Instagram. Hwang and Lee (2025) further argue that, in social media video communication, the visualization of brand identity must consider message strategy, platform format, and user attention in order to enhance brand awareness effectively. For city-based music events, visual identity must also integrate eventness and urbanity. On the one hand, event visuals must convey musicality, stage presence, and contemporaneity. On the other hand, they must respond to the posi-



tioning of urban culture, local memory, and public events, so as not to be misunderstood as a commercial concert or campus singing contest. Event visual design, therefore, becomes a form of positioning work. Through the event name, main visual, colors, images, and layout tone, it must transform a one-time call for entries into a music event with urban cultural meaning.

This paper therefore regards event visual identity as a foundational mechanism for event recognition. The main visual, social media graphics, jury introductions, finalist announcements, final concert visuals, and outcome reviews are not individual design objects. Together, they form a visual system that allows the event to be recognized, understood, and continuously encountered. This corresponds to the first research question: How did visual identity transform SING from a call for original song submissions into a recognizable city-based music event?

### **2.3. Social Media, Audience Engagement, and Online-Offline Event Experience**

Contemporary audience engagement in cultural events is no longer limited to on-site attendance, because social media allows events to be continuously encountered before, during, and after they formally take place. Before an event, audiences may see call-for-entry information, jury introductions, finalist lists, and promotional videos. During the event, they may participate through comments, sharing, voting, and stories. After the event, they may extend event memory through photographs, videos, award announcements, and outcome reviews. In other words, event participation has expanded from a single on-site experience into a cross-platform and cross-temporal process of communication and interaction.

[Brodie et al. \(2011\)](#) define engagement as an interactive state formed between consumers and brands or organizations within a specific context. Although their work comes primarily from service and brand research, it helps explain how audiences at cultural events are not passive recipients but may participate through interaction, sharing, and co-dissemination. [Hudson et al. \(2015\)](#), in their study of music festival attendees, further show that social media affects audience emotions, brand relationship quality, and word of mouth, suggesting that social media has become an important medium through which music events build relationships with audiences.

Recent research further suggests that social platforms are not only channels for event publicity but also reshape the event experience itself. [Qiu et al. \(2021\)](#), in their study of social media advertising for music festivals, argue that social media advertising formats and persuasion strategies influence audiences' perceptions of and intentions to participate in music festivals. [Avlonitou and Papadaki \(2024\)](#) using an Instagram Reel as a case, discuss the role of social media messages in cultural communication and note that short-video content has become an important format for public communication by cultural institutions and events. These studies show that social media content does not simply transfer existing information onto the internet. It reorganizes cultural messages through platform



formats, visual rhythm, condensed narratives, and interactive mechanisms.

Studies of music festivals and youth audiences also show that platforms such as TikTok and Instagram deeply influence the online-offline experience of music events. [Marić Stanković et al. \(2026\)](#) examine how Generation Z's digital practices on TikTok and Instagram influence the music festival experience, arguing that social media shapes event perception, forms of participation, and collective identity. This research indicates that the experience of music events is no longer limited to watching performances on site. It also includes pre-event anticipation on social media, photography and sharing during the event, post-event content re-circulation, and secondary dissemination through user-generated content.

For competition-based music events, the role of social media is even more complex. The event does not simply involve buying tickets and attending; it involves multiple forms of participation, including submitting, following, watching, voting, sharing, attending on site, and reviewing outcomes. Different stages require different social media content designs. The call-for-entry period must emphasize the theme, awards, and deadline. Jury introductions must build professional trust. Finalist introductions must generate attention toward people and works. Online popularity voting must guide audiences to take clear action. Final concert promotion must convert online attention into on-site participation.

Therefore, social media-oriented communication design is not simply posting content or increasing exposure. It transforms the event process into a series of public communication nodes that can be understood, shared, and participated in. This also corresponds to the second and third research questions: how did social media-oriented communication design support public visibility and information dissemination, and how did visual communication and event media create multiple layers of audience engagement during the competition process?

## 2.4. Literature Summary and Analytical Perspective

Based on the above literature, this paper understands city-based music events as intersections of cultural communication, city branding, and public participation. City branding literature explains that city image and place identity are not formed only through official publicity but are also constructed through cultural events, public experience, and stakeholder participation ([Kavaratzis, 2004](#); [Getz, 2008](#); [Richards & Palmer, 2010](#); [Ciuculescu & Luca, 2024](#)). Literature on visual identity and communication design shows that visual systems are not merely logos or aesthetic styles but communication mechanisms through which events or brands become recognized, understood, and extended across different media ([Melewar & Saunders, 1998](#); [Wheeler, 2018](#); [Landa, 2018](#); [Carpio-Jiménez et al., 2024](#); [Hwang & Lee, 2025](#)). Research on social media and audience engagement further indicates that participation in contemporary events has expanded from on-site attendance to hybrid experiences composed of online interaction, content sharing, short-video circulation, and user-generated content ([Hudson et al., 2015](#); [Qiu et al., 2021](#); [Avlonitou & Papadaki, 2024](#); [Marić Stanković et al., 2026](#)).

However, existing research has rarely integrated these three groups of literature to analyze how visual communication operates within the actual process of a city-based music competition. This paper is not concerned with the promotional performance of a single event. Instead, it addresses a practical question: in a city-based music competition organized by local government, how does visual communication transform an administrative call for entries into a public cultural event that can be recognized, shared, and participated in?

Based on this question, this paper proposes visual communication as event infrastructure as its analytical perspective. Here, event infrastructure does not refer to physical venues, equipment, or administrative processes. It refers to the visual and communication systems that support the publicization of an event. Specifically, visual communication has at least three functions.

In this paper, visual communication as event infrastructure refers to a connected system of visual identity, staged communication content, platform-specific media, on-site visual materials, and outcome documentation that enables an event to be recognized, communicated, participated in, and remembered. This definition distinguishes the concept from event branding alone: branding emphasizes identity and recognition, whereas event infrastructure emphasizes the operational system through which recognition, information circulation, audience action, and event memory are organized across the event process.

First, visual communication supports event recognition. Through the event name, main visual, colors, image vocabulary, and cross-media applications, the event is distinguished from ordinary call-for-entry information and gradually forms the image of a recognizable city-based music event. Second, visual communication supports public visibility. Through social media-oriented communication design, event information is broken down into visual content for different stages, such as call-for-entry announcements, jury introductions, finalist announcements, voting information, final concert promotion, and outcome reviews, allowing the event to remain visible, understandable, and shareable on social platforms. Third, visual communication supports audience engagement. Through visual content, event media, and social media interaction, creators, online audiences, voters, and on-site audiences are incorporated into different participation pathways, so that the event is not limited to competition results but becomes a multi-stage and multi-audience process of urban cultural participation.

The following analysis is therefore organized according to the three research questions. Chapter 4 discusses how the visual identity of SING supported the transformation of the event from a call for original song submissions into a city-based music event; how social media-oriented communication design supported event visibility and information dissemination; and how visual communication and event media created multiple layers of participation for creators, online audiences, and on-site audiences. Chapter 5 returns to the concept of visual communication as event infrastructure and discusses the implications of this case for city-based cultural events, event communication design, and practice-oriented design

research.

### 3. Case Background and Methodology

This chapter explains the case background, research design, data sources, analytical framework, and research limitations of this paper. Because the purpose of this paper is not to write a complete event report on the Tainan SING Era Song Competition but to analyze how visual communication supported event recognition, social media visibility, and audience engagement in a city-based music event, the chapter combines case description and methodological design to establish the empirical basis and research scope for the analysis in Chapter 4.

#### 3.1. Case Background: The Tainan SING Era Song Competition

The Tainan SING Era Song Competition is an original music competition centered on Tainan's urban culture. Public event materials indicate that the event was first held in 2017 and invited creators to write impressions of Tainan through literary expression and to present Tainan's diverse cultural characteristics through original music. The spirit of the event lies in encouraging lyricists and composers to continue the spirit of folk-song creation, carry the voice of the times, and write another song for Tainan. SING is therefore neither a conventional singing contest nor a competition centered only on vocal technique or stage performance. It is a city-based music event that connects urban memory, local stories, literary spirit, and popular music creation.

From 2021 to 2024, the Tainan SING Era Song Competition was implemented by Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology. During this period, the event gradually developed a more complete competition and communication process, including the call for entries, registration promotion, jury introductions, work evaluation, finalist announcements, finalist promotion, online popularity voting, the final concert, award announcements, and outcome extension. In 2024 in particular, the event further strengthened arrangements such as post-production for finalist works, the online popularity award, and the final concert. The competition thus did not remain only at the levels of submission and evaluation but expanded public participation through social media communication and live presentation.

In terms of event positioning, the core of SING is not simply to hold a competition. It is to encourage the reinterpretation of urban culture through original music creation. Participants are invited to draw inspiration from Tainan's humanities, landscapes, emotions, stories, everyday life, history, and memories, and to translate urban experience into songs. This gives SING multiple characteristics as a competition, cultural communication project, urban narrative, and public participation event. For this reason, the visual communication task of the event is not merely to promote registration information. It must organize the elements of city, music, originality, competition, and public event into a communication system that can be recognized, understood, and shared.

### 3.2. Research Scope: Visual and Communication Practices from 2021 to 2024

This paper focuses on the visual identity, social media communication, and audience engagement design of the Tainan SING Era Song Competition from 2021 to 2024. This period was selected for three reasons. First, 2021 to 2024 was a period during which the event was continuously implemented by the same institution. The event therefore showed a relatively high degree of continuity in visual design, social media management, call-for-entry promotion, and the final concert. This allows the paper to observe how visual communication accumulated event recognition across years rather than analyzing the promotional design of a single year only.

Second, the event during this period had a clear multi-stage communication process. SING was not a one-time call-for-entry announcement but involved consecutive nodes, including the call for entries, jury introduction, finalist announcement, voting, final concert, and outcome review. These nodes corresponded to different audiences and communication tasks, making the case suitable for analyzing how social media-oriented communication design supported event visibility and information dissemination.

**Table 1** summarizes the event development focus and visual communication tasks from 2021 to 2024.

**Table 1.** Event development and visual communication tasks of the Tainan SING Era Song Competition, 2021-2024.

| Year | Event Development Focus                                                  | Visual and Communication Tasks                                                                                                                      |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2021 | Establishing the foundation of execution and the event promotion process | Establishing the annual main visual, call-for-entry announcements, basic social media postings, and final concert communication                     |
| 2022 | Continuing event recognition and the competition process                 | Strengthening call-for-entry information, jury introductions, finalist announcements, and final concert promotion                                   |
| 2023 | Stabilizing social media management and event rhythm                     | Maintaining cross-platform visual consistency and arranging finalist, final concert, and outcome review content                                     |
| 2024 | Expanding audience interaction and outcome extension                     | Strengthening post-production of finalist works, online popularity voting, social media interaction, and communication of the final concert outcome |

Third, the 2024 event added or strengthened participation mechanisms such as post-production for finalist works, the online popularity award, and the final concert. Audience engagement was therefore no longer limited to watching the event on site; it also included online voting, social media interaction, support for finalist works, and outcome review. This allows the paper to analyze how audience engagement was gradually constructed by visual communication and event media at the levels of creators, online audiences, and on-site audiences. This paper does not discuss all aspects of SING's project execution, such as tendering and project governance, budget control, jury invitation, artist coordination, crisis handling, cross-departmental integration, or student training. Although these elements were important conditions for the successful execution of the event, they are not the focus of this study. The paper focuses on how visual communication supported the publicization of the event; that is, how the event became visible, understandable, shareable, and participatory through visual identity, social media content, and event media. **Table 1** summarizes the event development focus and visual communication tasks from 2021 to 2024.

### 3.3. Research Design: Practice-Oriented Case Study and Reflective Practice Analysis

This paper adopts a practice-oriented case study approach. Case study research is appropriate for analyzing complex phenomena in specific contexts, especially when the research questions involve design decisions, media use, organizational processes, and participation relationships in real situations. Case study research can preserve contextual integrity and analyze a case through multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2018). The questions addressed in this paper do not concern causal relationships between single variables. Instead, they concern how visual communication was planned, extended, and used in a city-based music event, and how it supported event recognition, social media visibility, and audience engagement. A single-case study is therefore not a limiting choice but a methodological design that corresponds to the nature of the research questions.

The term practice-oriented in this paper does not mean replacing the research method with personal experience, nor is it equivalent to presenting event outcomes. Practice-oriented research in art and design emphasizes that practical processes, design outputs, and reflective records can become part of knowledge production. The premise is that the researcher must examine practical materials through clear research questions, data structures, and analytical procedures. Frayling (1993) distinguishes research into art and design, research for art and design, and research through art and design. Candy and Edmonds (2018) also argue that practice-based research aims to generate shareable and examinable knowledge through practice and its outcomes, rather than merely presenting creative results.

On this basis, this paper treats the visual materials, social media content, event documents, and on-site records of the Tainan SING Era Song Competition from 2021 to 2024 as research materials rather than simple outputs. The paper is not

concerned with whether a particular poster, post, or final concert was successful. Instead, it examines how these materials formed visual and communication systems within the event process: how they established event recognition, organized information, guided social media interaction, supported on-site experience, and extended event memory. In other words, the focus of the analysis is the design mechanism rather than the evaluation of individual works.

Because the researcher was also a practitioner involved in the event, this paper also adopts reflective practice analysis. Schön (1983) notes that professionals continuously make judgments, adjustments, and reflections in action; reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action can thus be important ways of understanding professional practical knowledge. However, reflective practice can easily become a subjective description if it lacks data comparison. This paper therefore does not use the researcher's memory or personal judgment as the only basis. Instead, practitioner reflection is examined in relation to event documents, visual outputs, social media records, event images, and appendix materials.

The researcher served as the project leader of the Tainan SING Era Song Competition from 2021 to 2024 and participated in event planning, visual communication coordination, social media communication, and outcome documentation. The researcher's practical participation is therefore treated as one source of data. At the same time, event documents, public social media records, visual materials, event images, and appendix materials are cross-checked to reduce interpretive bias arising from a single practitioner perspective.

Specifically, this paper first constructs a material matrix according to year, media type, event stage, and audience action, and then categorizes the materials according to the three research questions. The first category of materials is used to analyze event recognition and includes the annual main visual, promotional materials, stage backdrops, on-site signage, and website/FB/IG applications. The second category is used to analyze public visibility and includes call-for-entry announcements, jury introductions, finalist announcements, finalist introductions, online popularity voting posts, and final concert promotion. The third category is used to analyze audience engagement and includes call-for-entry information, voting content, final concert documentation, award announcements, and outcome reviews. Through this classification, practical materials are transformed into examinable units of analysis.

To reduce the potential bias created by the researcher's simultaneous role as practitioner, this paper adopts three measures. First, it clearly defines the research scope and analyzes only visual identity, social media communication, and audience engagement, without discussing complete project management issues such as tendering, budget control, jury invitation, artist coordination, or crisis handling. Second, it does not use personal experience as the sole evidence but cross-checks event documents, public social media records, visual materials, event images, **Appendix A**, and **Appendix B**. Third, it avoids equating visual communication directly with event effectiveness. It does not claim to prove that SING has

become a mature city brand, nor does it infer overall popularity from online voting cases. Instead, it focuses on how visual communication supported the publicization of the event.

This paper's practice-oriented case study is therefore neither an event review nor a design portfolio. It uses practical materials as its basis and, through case study research, reflective practice, and visual material analysis, explains how visual communication in a city-based music event was transformed from back-end promotional output into event infrastructure that supported event recognition, public visibility, and audience engagement.

### 3.4. Data Sources

The data used in this paper include five categories: event documents, visual design outputs, social media records, event records, and practitioner reflection. Together, these materials form the basis for analyzing SING's visual communication and event communication design.

The first category consists of event documents, including event proposals, guidelines, call-for-entry rules, press releases, event schedules, evaluation rules, and final concert programs. These materials are used mainly to understand event positioning, competition systems, communication nodes, and annual arrangements. The second category consists of visual design outputs, including the annual main visual, posters, social media graphics, jury introduction graphics, finalist announcement graphics, online popularity voting graphics, final concert visuals, stage backdrops, and outcome review visuals. These materials are used mainly to analyze how event visual identity was extended across media and how visual content at different stages responded to event information and audience needs.

The third category consists of social media records, including Facebook, Instagram, and related platform posts, short videos, finalist introductions, voting information, final concert promotion, award announcements, and outcome reviews. These materials are used mainly to observe how the event formed a continuous public communication process through social media-oriented communication design. The fourth category consists of event records, including final concert photographs, videos, on-site visuals, media reports, award information, and event outcome records. These materials are used mainly to analyze how online communication extended into the on-site event and how the final concert transformed the competition into a public cultural event. The fifth category consists of practitioner reflection, including design decisions, communication strategies, social media operation experiences, and cross-year adjustments during event execution. These materials are used to supplement design judgments that are difficult to identify through documents and visual materials alone, such as why certain information needed to be divided into different posts, why certain visual elements needed to continue across years, and how the event balanced policy objectives, participant needs, and audience reception. **Table 2** lists the research data sources and explains how each type of material was used in the analysis. **Table 3** reports



the visual/application materials and FB/IG posts that define the corpus of visual and social media analysis.

**Table 2.** Research data sources and analytical uses.

| Data Type                      | Main Materials                                                                                                                  | Analytical Use                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Event documents</b>         | Event proposals, guidelines, call-for-entry rules, press releases, event schedules, and evaluation rules                        | Understanding event positioning, institutional design, communication nodes, and annual development |
| <b>Visual design outputs</b>   | Main visual, posters, social media graphics, jury introductions, finalist announcements, final concert visuals, outcome reviews | Analyzing visual identity, information design, and cross-media extensions                          |
| <b>Social media records</b>    | Facebook and Instagram posts, short videos, voting information, finalist introductions, final concert promotion                 | Analyzing social media-oriented communication design and event visibility                          |
| <b>Event records</b>           | Final concert photographs, videos, on-site visuals, media reports, and award records                                            | Analyzing the connection between online and on-site participation                                  |
| <b>Practitioner reflection</b> | Design decisions, communication strategies, social media operational experiences, cross-year adjustments                        | Supplementing design judgments and practical contexts                                              |

**Table 3.** Corpus of analyzed visual and social media materials, 2021-2024.

| Year | Visual/application items | FB posts | IG posts |
|------|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| 2021 | 11                       | 35       | 48       |
| 2022 | 13                       | 71       | 50       |
| 2023 | 12                       | 52       | 50       |
| 2024 | 12                       | 63       | 79       |

Note. Visual/application items were counted from the annual final reports. FB and IG posts were counted from the official public Facebook and Instagram pages. Event documents include annual event proposals, guidelines, call-for-entry rules, press releases, event schedules, evaluation rules, final concert programs, and final reports used to establish the case context. Visual/application items, FB posts, and IG posts were counted as the primary corpus for visual and social media analysis.

### 3.5. Analytical Framework and Procedure

This paper establishes its analytical framework according to the three research questions. The three questions correspond to three analytical dimensions: visual

identity, social media-oriented communication design, and audience engagement. This framework ensures that the analysis in Chapter 4 directly addresses the research questions and prevents the case materials from becoming an event record or outcome display.

The first dimension is visual identity and event transformation. This dimension analyzes how SING used event name, annual main visual, color, image style, typography, layout tone, and cross-media applications to transform ordinary call-for-entry information into a recognizable city-based music event. The analysis focuses on how the visual system communicated urbanity, musicality, originality, and a sense of the times; how annual visuals balanced variation and continuity; and how visual identity supported consistency across different platforms and media.

The second dimension is social media-oriented communication design and public visibility. This dimension analyzes how SING transformed the event process into staged social media content. The analysis focuses on how call-for-entry announcements, jury introductions, finalist announcements, finalist introductions, online popularity voting, final concert promotion, award announcements, and outcome reviews were arranged according to the event cycle; how information required by different audiences was organized through visual hierarchy; and how social media graphics, short videos, and posts made event information shareable and continuously visible.

The third dimension is visual communication, event media, and audience engagement. This dimension analyzes how SING created multiple layers of engagement through visual and media content. The analysis focuses on how creators participated through call-for-entry information and an urban creative theme; how online audiences participated through following, liking, commenting, sharing, viewing finalist content, and online voting; how on-site audiences entered a public cultural event through the final concert; and how outcome reviews extended the visibility and memory of the event.

The material matrix was applied through a worked classification procedure. For example, a 2024 finalist online voting post was coded as public visibility because it introduced a finalist work and made the creator and work publicly visible on FB and IG. It was also coded as audience engagement when the post included action prompts or platform functions such as viewing, liking, commenting, sharing, or voting. By contrast, an annual main visual or stage backdrop was coded primarily under event recognition unless it was used in a post or event record that further guided audience action. This procedure allowed one material to be examined for its dominant communication function while acknowledging its possible cross-category roles. **Table 4** maps these research questions to the corresponding analytical dimensions and main analytical materials.

The analytical procedure consists of three steps. First, this paper organizes the event documents and visual materials from 2021 to 2024 and establishes data tables of annual event development, communication stages, and major visual out-

puts. Second, the materials are classified according to the three analytical dimensions, placing the main visual, social media graphics, short videos, voting content, and final concert visuals into corresponding analytical contexts. Finally, the paper combines these classifications with practitioner reflection to explain how the visual and communication designs responded to event positioning, audience needs, and public participation goals, and then in Chapter 5 further synthesizes these findings into the perspective of visual communication as event infrastructure.

**Table 4.** Correspondence between analytical dimensions and research questions.

| Research Question                                                                                                                        | Analytical Dimension                                             | Main Analytical Materials                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>RQ1: How did visual identity transform SING from a call for original song submissions into a recognizable city-based music event?</b> | Visual identity and event transformation                         | Annual main visuals, posters, social media graphics, final concert visuals, on-site visuals, <b>Appendix A</b>                                                             |
| <b>RQ2: How did social media-oriented communication design support the public visibility and dissemination of the event?</b>             | Social media-oriented communication design and public visibility | Facebook/Instagram posts, short videos, jury introductions, finalist announcements, voting information, final concert promotion, <b>Appendix B</b>                         |
| <b>RQ3: How did visual communication and event media create multiple layers of audience engagement during the competition process?</b>   | Visual communication, event media, and audience engagement       | Call-for-entry information, finalist introductions, online popularity voting, final concert documentation, award announcements, outcome reviews, <b>Appendices A and B</b> |

To make the analytical process more examinable, this paper further constructs a material matrix according to year, media type, event stage, and audience action. The units of analysis include annual main visuals, posters and promotional materials, website/FB/IG applications, jury and finalist introduction graphics, online popularity voting posts, final concert on-site visuals, event photographs, and outcome review content. These materials are then classified into the three analytical dimensions: event recognition, public visibility, and audience engagement. The analysis observes the message function, media position, visual extension, and audience action orientation of each material, and cross-checks event documents, public social media records, visual outputs, event images, and practitioner reflection to reduce interpretive bias from a single practitioner perspective.

## 4. Findings and Analysis

This chapter analyzes, according to the three research questions, how visual communication operated as a design mechanism within the event process of the Tai-

nan SING Era Song Competition. Rather than treating visual outputs as individual promotional items, graphic outputs, or event records, the chapter examines them within the event cycle. It analyzes how visual identity was translated across media, how social media content reorganized event information and guided action, and how on-site visuals were extended from spatial identification into materials for subsequent communication.

This chapter mainly uses two sets of appendix materials. **Appendix A** compiles the major visual identity applications of the Tainan SING Era Song Competition from 2021 to 2024, including main visual posters, promotional materials, stage backdrops, on-site promotional signage, website/FB/IG applications, on-site extended items, promotional videos, and final concert documentation. This appendix serves as the material basis for analyzing the cross-year, cross-media, and cross-site extension of visual identity. **Appendix B** compiles FB and IG social media interaction cases for finalist works in the 2024 online popularity voting, and is used to analyze how finalist works were designed as social media content units that could be viewed, interacted with, supported, and shared.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section 4.1 responds to RQ1 by analyzing how visual identity supported the transformation of the event from a call for original song submissions into a recognizable city-based music event. Section 4.2 responds to RQ2 by analyzing how social media-oriented communication design reorganized event information and generated public visibility. Section 4.3 responds to RQ3 by analyzing how visual communication and event media created multiple layers of engagement among creators, online audiences, and on-site audiences.

#### 4.1. Visual Identity and Event Transformation

The visual communication task of the SING Era Song Competition was not merely to produce an annual poster or social media graphics. It was to transform an event with multiple attributes into a cultural event that the public could recognize. SING simultaneously involved urban culture, original music, a competition system, social media communication, and live performance. Without clear visual identity and information organization, the event could easily be understood as an ordinary call for entries, a singing contest, or a single performance. The role of visual identity was therefore to integrate these dispersed attributes into an event system that could be recognized, extended, and repeatedly encountered.

First, the event name SING Era Song provided the most basic frame of identification. SING directly connected the event with singing, music, and popular culture, giving it an easily understandable musical attribute. Era Song linked original songs to urban memory, generational emotion, and public narrative. This name was not merely an event title. It became the core semantic basis for visual identity and communication content. Subsequent main visuals, call-for-entry graphics, finalist announcements, voting content, and final concert visuals all extended from this naming framework, enabling audiences to recognize messages at different

stages as belonging to the same event.

Second, the annual main visual was not a single output within the event. It served as the starting point for cross-media translation. The materials organized in **Appendix A** show that the main visual was extended to promotional materials, website/FB/IG applications, promotional videos, stage backdrops, on-site promotional signage, and event objects. These media differed in size, viewing distance, use context, and information capacity. The focus of visual communication was therefore not the mechanical reproduction of the same image, but the translation of the event name, annual visual tone, information hierarchy, and event identity into different media.

This cross-media translation had two implications. First, it enabled the event to maintain recognizability across different platforms. An audience member might first encounter a call-for-entry graphic on social media, later see a finalist announcement or voting post, and finally encounter the stage backdrop and signage at the final concert. Although the time and place of these encounters differed, the continuity of the event name, visual tone, and information format organized these materials into a series of touchpoints for the same event. Second, it transformed the event from a one-time promotion into a multi-stage identity system. The main visual was no longer simply a call-for-entry poster; it became the identity foundation supporting the event from call for entries, finalist announcement, voting, and final concert to outcome review.

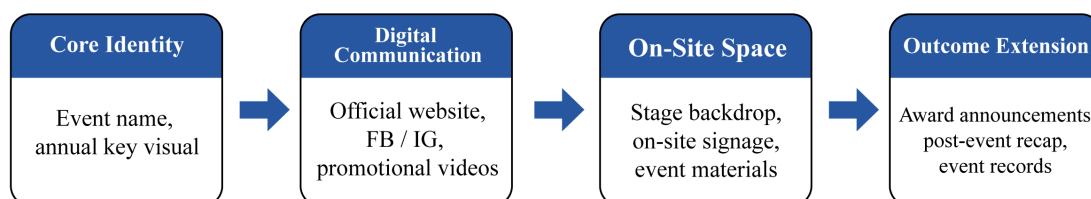
Third, the visual identity of SING had to manage the tension between annual variation and event continuity. If the annual visual remained completely unchanged, the event could lose freshness; if the annual visual was completely disconnected each year, the event would have difficulty accumulating recognition. The visual materials from 2021 to 2024 can be read as a form of consistency within variation. Each year could adjust its visual expression according to the annual theme and event atmosphere, while maintaining continuity through the event name, information hierarchy, social media posting formats, and final concert identity. In other words, what continued was not a single image but a way for the event to be recognized and understood.

Fourth, visual identity also helped integrate urbanity and musicality. If the visuals relied too heavily on monuments, history, or tourism symbols, the event might be understood as general urban cultural promotion. If they overemphasized stage, entertainment, or popular culture, the urban cultural positioning of the event might be weakened. The visual communication of SING therefore needed to balance urban imagery and the feel of a music event, so that the event was neither simply a cultural bureau call for entries nor a commercial concert, but a city-based music event centered on Tainan.

SING's visual identity can therefore be understood as a mechanism of event transformation. It transformed dispersed call-for-entry information, social media content, finalist works, live presentations, and outcome records into an event system with annual recognition, cross-platform communication, and a sense of live

performance. This analysis responds to RQ1: visual identity transformed SING from a call for original song submissions into a city-based music event that could be continuously recognized and participated in.

**Figure 1** is a conceptual framework derived from **Appendix A** and the analysis in Chapter 4. It explains how SING's visual communication extended from the annual main visual to digital platforms, on-site spaces, and outcome reviews, forming a cross-media event visual system. It is not a flowchart of a single annual event.



**Figure 1.** Cross-Media Operational Framework of Visual Communication in the Tainan SING Era Song Competition.

## 4.2. Social Media-Oriented Communication Design and Public Visibility

SING's social media communication did not simply publish existing event information on platforms. Rather, it redesigned the event process as a sequence of content nodes that could be read, shared, and transformed into action. As a competition-based cultural event, SING included call-for-entry announcements, registration reminders, jury introductions, finalist announcements, finalist introductions, online popularity voting, final concert promotion, award announcements, and outcome reviews. Each stage had different informational priorities and audience actions. The key to social media-oriented communication design was therefore not simply to increase exposure but to reorganize the information hierarchy and guide different audiences toward corresponding actions.

In this section, the post-level indicators are used to situate the scale of social media-oriented communication rather than to measure campaign performance. As shown in **Table 3**, the official FB and IG pages provided a recurring corpus of event posts across the four editions. In 2024, this communication sequence further included 12 finalist voting cases on FB and IG, where likes, comments, and shares were explicitly built into the voting mechanism. These materials are therefore analyzed as evidence of how public visibility and audience action were designed into the event process.

During the call-for-entry stage, the main task of visual content was to reduce the cost of understanding. Potential participants needed to quickly grasp the event theme, eligibility, submission deadline, award information, and submission method. Call-for-entry graphics and promotional materials, therefore, had to translate complex event information into a clear visual hierarchy: the event name and theme established recognition, the deadline and awards became attention

points, and the submission method provided an entry point for action. At this stage, visual communication was not merely the beautification of information. It translated administrative text into participation instructions that could be quickly read.

During the jury introduction and finalist announcement stages, the focus of information design shifted from inviting submissions to building trust and generating attention. Jury introduction graphics visualized the professionalism of the competition through portraits, professional credentials, and layout organization. Finalist announcements brought works and creators from the evaluation process into public view. The design function of these contents was not merely to announce lists, but to transform the competition process into event nodes that could be followed on social media.

The online popularity voting stage further transformed social media posts into actionable interfaces. **Appendix B** compiles 12 finalist works and their interaction cases on FB and IG in 2024. The design focus of these voting contents was not merely to present work titles or creator information. It was to package the works as social media units that audiences could immediately operate. Audiences were not facing a static finalist list, but a set of content interfaces with platform interaction functions: they could view, like, comment, share, and express support through these actions.

From a design perspective, online popularity voting integrated works, creators, platform functions, and voting rules within the same social media context. The work was transformed into an identifiable content unit; the voting rules were translated into understandable action prompts; and platform interaction was transformed into a participation mechanism. This design gave audience behavior on social media a specific meaning within the event system. Liking, commenting, and sharing were no longer simply responses to a post; they became forms of action that supported finalist works.

However, the evidentiary level of **Appendix B** must be carefully defined. This paper does not use online voting screenshots to infer overall voting performance, nor does it use one or multiple interaction cases to judge the popularity of works. The main function of **Appendix B** is to show how social media interaction design transforms finalist works into actionable visual and platform interfaces. In other words, the paper analyzes the form of interaction design rather than the results of social media performance.

Final concert promotion was responsible for guiding online attention toward on-site participation. At this stage, visual communication needed to integrate time, place, performers, event highlights, and on-site information so that audiences could understand the final concert not as an internal evaluation procedure, but as a public cultural event that they could enter, watch, and join. After the event, award announcements, event photographs, videos, and outcome reviews converted the on-site event back into social media content, preventing event visibility from ending immediately after the final concert.



SING's social media-oriented communication design can therefore be understood as a process of information reorganization, action guidance, and outcome recirculation. Call-for-entry graphics translated participation information into a submission entry point. Jury and finalist contents transformed the competition process into public attention. Voting posts transformed works into actionable interfaces. Final concert promotion guided online attention toward on-site participation. Outcome reviews transformed the on-site event into content that could be viewed and shared again. This analysis responds to RQ2: through information hierarchy, platform formats, and interactive mechanisms, social media-oriented communication design supported public visibility and information dissemination.

### **4.3. Visual Communication, Event Media, and Multiple Layers of Audience Engagement**

Audience engagement in SING did not occur only at the final concert, nor can it be fully described by on-site attendance or social media metrics alone. Throughout the event process, participation was distributed across different times, media, and roles, including creators' creative participation, online audiences' interactive participation, on-site audiences' performance participation, and post-event viewing and review. The role of visual communication and event media was to connect these dispersed actions into a participation pathway that could be understood.

The first layer was creators' participation. SING participants did not merely submit musical works. They were invited to take Tainan as the creative theme and translate the city's humanities, landscapes, emotions, stories, everyday life, history, and memories into original songs. The call-for-entry visual was therefore not a general registration entrance for a competition but an invitation to urban narrative. The event name, main visual, guidelines, and social media call-for-entry content jointly organized the creative frame of writing a song for Tainan, enabling creators to translate personal experiences and place imagination into a mode of event participation.

The second layer was online audience engagement. Social media allowed audiences to encounter the event before the final concert. Audiences could become aware of the event during the call-for-entry period, learn about creators during the finalist period, support works during the voting period, build expectations before the final concert, and continue encountering the event through outcome reviews after it ended. This participation was not a single behavior but was composed of multiple micro-interactions, including viewing, liking, commenting, sharing, voting, following works, and reposting event information.

In this process, visual communication transformed the abstract notion of support into operable action. Finalist introductions made creators and works concrete and visible. Voting posts provided operable entry points for interaction. Short videos and outcome content extended the time during which works could be viewed. Audiences were not simply informed about the event; they were placed within a media environment with action prompts. This is why this paper regards

online popularity voting as an interactive interface rather than merely a promotional post.

The third layer was on-site audience engagement. The final concert was the key node through which SING transformed from a submission process and social media communication into a public cultural event. Through live performance, songs that had been dispersed across submission materials, finalist lists, and social media posts were transformed into a shared experience of listening and viewing. On-site audiences were not simply facing competition results; they were encountering a city music performance centered on Tainan.

The visual design of the final concert had a dual function. On the one hand, stage backdrops, on-site promotional signage, event objects, programs, table cards, and staff badges established event identity in the physical space, giving the final concert a consistent visual order and ceremonial quality. On the other hand, these on-site objects entered photographs, videos, and outcome reviews, and became materials for subsequent communication. In other words, on-site visuals did not serve only the immediate spatial arrangement. They were also medialized as part of subsequent event documentation.

The final concert documentation, stage backdrops, and on-site extended objects in **Appendix A** can be viewed as the material basis for this transformation. On-site visuals first established recognition within the event space and were then brought back to digital platforms through photography, video, and social media reviews. This allowed on-site participation to extend beyond the night of the event and become event media that could be preserved, viewed, and shared again. The physical event site was therefore not only the place where the event occurred; it also became a production site for subsequent communication content.

SING's audience engagement can thus be understood as a pathway gradually organized by visual communication and media. Creators entered the urban creative framework through call-for-entry visuals. Online audiences participated in the dissemination of works through social media posts and voting interfaces. On-site audiences entered a public performance through the final concert. Post-event audiences continued to encounter the event through photographs, videos, and outcome reviews. Visual communication in these stages was not an attachment; it designed the conditions for participation.

The participation structure of SING can therefore be understood as a continuous process of creative participation, social media interaction, live performance, and outcome recirculation. This analysis responds to RQ3: through the call-for-entry invitation, finalist presentation, social media voting, on-site identity, and outcome review, visual communication and event media created multiple layers of engagement among creators, online audiences, and on-site audiences.

#### **4.4. Summary of Findings**

This chapter has analyzed three roles of visual communication in the SING Era Song Competition. First, through the event name, annual main visual, and cross-

media translation, visual identity transformed SING from a call for original song submissions into a recognizable city-based music event. The materials organized in **Appendix A** support this analysis: the main visual was not a single poster but an identity system extended to digital platforms, on-site spaces, event objects, and outcome documentation.

Second, through the reorganization of the information hierarchy and platform interaction design, social media-oriented communication design transformed the event from a one-time announcement into a series of public communication nodes. The call for entries, jury introductions, finalist announcements, voting, final concert promotion, and outcome reviews corresponded to different audience needs and action goals. **Appendix B** further shows how online popularity voting transformed finalist works into social media content units that could be viewed, interacted with, and shared.

Third, visual communication and event media created multiple layers of audience engagement. Creators participated in the urban narrative through the creative theme. Online audiences participated in the dissemination of works through social media interaction and voting interfaces. On-site audiences entered a public cultural event through the final concert. Post-event audiences continued to encounter the event through photographs, videos, and outcome reviews. On-site visuals were also transformed from spatial identity into subsequent image and social media communication materials, giving the event an extended public life.

The SING case therefore shows that visual communication in city-based music events is not merely promotional packaging. It is a design mechanism that supports event recognition, public visibility, and audience engagement. The next chapter discusses, based on this analysis, the conceptual and practical implications of visual communication as event infrastructure.

## 5. Discussion

The analysis in Chapter 4 shows that visual communication in the Tainan SING Era Song Competition was not simply promotional packaging. It continuously performed the functions of organization, translation, and connection within the event process. Visual identity transformed the event from call-for-entry information into a recognizable city-based music event. Social media-oriented communication design turned event messages into a series of public communication nodes. Event media and on-site visuals enabled creators, online audiences, and on-site audiences to enter different layers of participation.

This chapter further discusses the theoretical and practical implications of these findings. First, it proposes visual communication as event infrastructure and explains how visual communication supports event recognition, public visibility, and audience engagement. Second, it discusses how the SING case presents a process from event publicity to participatory city branding. Finally, it proposes implications for local government cultural events and practice-oriented design research.

### **5.1. Visual Communication Is Not the Skin of an Event, but the Interface through Which an Event Is Experienced**

In the SING case, the most significant point about visual communication is not how many posters, graphics, backdrops, or videos were produced, but how these visual objects made a relatively abstract cultural event approachable. An original music competition is not immediately easy for general audiences to understand. It is neither simply a concert nor a conventional singing contest. It asks creators to take Tainan as their theme and translate local memory, everyday experience, and a sense of the times into songs. If such an event remained only at the level of guidelines, registration rules, or press releases, it could easily be perceived as an administrative call for entries. Only through continuous visual and communication design did it gradually become a public event that could be seen, followed, and participated in.

Thus, when this paper describes visual communication as event infrastructure, it does not argue that visual design is more important than the event itself. Rather, it points out that in contemporary cultural events, the event does not first exist as a complete entity and then become packaged by design. Instead, an event gradually becomes understandable to the public through repeated acts of naming, imaging, posting, sharing, on-site presentation, and review. The visual system of SING was the interface of this process.

This also explains why the main visual cannot be understood merely as an annual poster. If the main visual remains only on a poster, it is a promotional item. When it is extended to the website, FB, IG, promotional videos, stage backdrops, on-site signage, staff badges, programs, outcome reviews, and event documentation, it is no longer a single image. It becomes a continuous cue through which the event is recognized across different media. Audiences may first encounter a call-for-entry graphic on social media, later see a finalist announcement, then a voting post, and finally the stage backdrop and event objects on site. These touchpoints are dispersed across time and space, but the continuity of visual identity enables audiences to understand them as belonging to the same event.

In other words, the visual communication of SING was not a style attached to the surface of the event. It was a way of organizing the event. It divided the event into different stages and reconnected those stages. Call-for-entry graphics helped creators understand how to enter the event. Finalist introductions made works and people visible. Online voting allowed audiences to understand how they could intervene. Final concert visuals transformed the site into an identifiable public space. Outcome reviews prevented the event from disappearing immediately after the concert ended. These functions could not be completed by a single design object; they were gradually supported by a cross-media visual communication system.

The SING case therefore reminds us that visual communication in cultural events should not be placed only in the position of beautification after the event has been completed. It is closer to a mediating practice that establishes under-

standable pathways among policy goals, creators, social media audiences, on-site audiences, and event outcomes. Without these pathways, an event can still be completed, but it is less likely to become public. If visual communication enters event design early, it does not merely make the event look good; it enables the event to be experienced.

This finding extends the visual identity literature reviewed in Chapter 2 by showing that visual identity in a city-based cultural event is not only a recognition device. In this case, it also operated as a processual interface that organized information, connected event stages, and helped audiences move from awareness to participation.

## **5.2. City Branding Is Not Announced; It Is Sung through Participation**

The SING case also makes the concept of city branding more concrete. Many discussions of city branding easily remain at the level of slogans, images, landmarks, or policy publicity. The particularity of SING lies in the fact that it did not have the government directly tell the public what Tainan is. Instead, it invited creators to answer this question through songs. City branding thus was not only an image issued by the government; it was reproduced among creators, audiences, and event media.

In SING, Tainan was not merely the background of the event; it was the condition of creation. Participants had to engage with Tainan's humanities, landscapes, emotions, stories, everyday life, history, and memories, and translate them into lyrics and music. This translation process turned the city from an object of tourism or viewing into experiential material that could be written, sung, and shared. Different creators did not understand Tainan in the same way. Some wrote about nostalgia, some about food, some about streets, and some about local emotions. Precisely because of this multiplicity, the city brand was no longer a single official version but appeared through multiple songs as multiple senses of the city.

In other words, city branding in this paper is not a one-way output of image. It is a process of cultural translation jointly participated in by creators, social media audiences, and live performances. This responds to city branding research's emphasis on place identity, public experience, and stakeholder perceptions, while concretizing those concerns within the context of visual communication and social media participation in a city-based music event.

Social media communication further prevented these senses of the city from remaining only in the materials submitted to judges. When finalist works were made into social media posts, short videos, or voting content, songs were no longer simply works submitted for evaluation. They became public content that audiences could view, understand, support, and share. The design of online popularity voting was especially important because it invited audiences to enter the dissemination process of the works rather than remain bystanders. Liking, commenting, and sharing may appear to be lightweight social media interactions, but

within the event context they were transformed into supportive actions toward works, creators, and urban narratives.

The final concert provided another form of transformation. Online finalist lists, work introductions, and voting content were transformed on site into sound, stage, and public gathering. What audiences heard on site was not an abstract city brand but the interpretations of Tainan by different creators. This point is important because city branding that relies only on official publicity can easily become one-way output. Through music competition and live performance, however, city branding is placed within relationships of creation, performance, support, and viewing.

This paper therefore does not claim that SING has already become a mature city music brand. Such a claim would be too strong and beyond what the data can prove. A more accurate statement is that SING shows how a city-based music event can support the process of city branding through visual identity and social media communication. This process is not completed at once, nor is it achieved through a single main visual or a single concert. It is gradually formed through years of calls for entries, creation, finalist presentation, voting, performance, and outcome review.

The value of SING therefore lies not only in selecting award-winning songs, but also in establishing a mechanism through which the city can be rewritten and reheard. From this perspective, what visual communication and social media design support is not only event exposure, but also the circulation of urban cultural experience. City branding is not simply announced; it is sung again and again through creators' songwriting, audience support, live performance, and outcome recirculation.

This argument extends the city branding and cultural event literature reviewed in Chapter 2. [Kavaratzis \(2004\)](#) understands city branding as the overall construction of city image, place identity, communication strategy, and stakeholder perceptions. [Richards and Palmer \(2010\)](#) argue that cultural events enable city meanings to be continuously produced through public experience. The significance of the SING case is that it concretizes this city-branding process as a music and visual communication process jointly participated in by creators, social media audiences, and on-site audiences.

### **5.3. The Design Problem of Cultural Events Is Not the Last Mile, but How the Event Is Organized from the Beginning**

The practical implication of the SING case for local government cultural events is not simply that posters should be made attractive. The more important issue is that the event must be treated from the beginning as a communication system that requires design, rather than first completing administrative procedures, competition rules, and program arrangements and only afterward asking designers to produce promotional materials.

In many public-sector commissioned events, visual design is placed at a later

stage. Only after the event name, guidelines, process, venue, jury, and performers have been determined is design asked to organize the information into posters, graphics, and backdrops. This workflow easily reduces visual communication to decorative output and confines designers to surface form, making it difficult for them to intervene in how the event is understood, participated in, and extended. The experience of SING shows that when visual communication participates early in information architecture and media planning, it can help the event form a more complete public communication pathway.

A public communication pathway refers to how different audiences encounter the event at different times. Creators need call-for-entry information and creative motivation. Finalists need opportunities to be seen and introduced. Online audiences need content that is easy to understand and interact with. On-site audiences need clear event information and a coherent on-site experience. After the event, the organizer and creators need outcomes to be preserved, reviewed, and re-circulated. If these needs are not organized at the beginning, subsequent social media posts can easily become scattered announcements, and on-site visuals can become mere decorations.

The SING case also reminds us that social media should not be understood only as an exposure tool. If social media operation simply posts event information on a platform, it is little more than a bulletin board. If, however, social media content is designed according to the event process, forming a rhythm from call for entries, jury introductions, finalist announcements, finalist introductions, online voting, and final concert promotion to outcome review, then the social media platform becomes part of the event itself. Audiences are not invited to enter the event only at the end; they are gradually brought into the event process.

This also concerns how event effectiveness is understood. Local cultural events often use the number of submissions, on-site attendance, media exposure, or social media data as performance indicators. These indicators are certainly important, but they cannot fully explain whether the event has established cultural participation. In SING, participation was dispersed across different stages: some people submitted works, some viewed finalist works, some participated in online voting, some attended the event on site, and some later watched videos or listened to released works. These forms of participation may not be completely captured by a single metric, but together they constituted the public life of the event.

This point qualifies audience engagement literature by showing that engagement in competition-based cultural events cannot be reduced to a single action or metric. In the SING case, engagement was distributed across submission, viewing, voting, sharing, attending, and revisiting event outcomes, and visual communication helped connect these actions into an event pathway.

For local government cultural events, the design problem is therefore not only a matter of visual style. It is a matter of how an event is organized to be understandable, participatory, and extendable. If visual communication is placed at the end, it can only deal with the appearance of a finished product. If it is placed at



the beginning, it can help the event form clear audience pathways, media rhythms, and outcome extensions. This is the most important practical implication of the SING case for event design.

This also corresponds to the discussion of social media and audience engagement in Chapter 2. Brodie et al.'s (2011) definition of engagement, Hudson et al.'s (2015) analysis of social media relationships in music festivals, and Qiu et al.'s (2021) study of social media advertising and event participation intention all suggest that audiences are not merely recipients. The SING case further shows that in competition-based cultural events, social media content, voting interfaces, and outcome reviews can design audience engagement as a cross-temporal and cross-media event pathway.

#### 5.4. Implications for Practice-Oriented Design Research

This paper also offers a methodological implication for practice-oriented design research. If design practice research only presents outcomes, it can easily be seen as a portfolio or event report. If it only conducts theoretical discussion, it may become detached from design practice. This paper adopts a practice-oriented case study approach and attempts to connect these two positions: it is based on actual event materials but does not merely display them; it begins from design practice experience but transforms it into discussable design knowledge through research questions, data classification, and an analytical framework.

This also corresponds to the practice-oriented case study and reflective practice analysis adopted in Chapter 3. The paper does not treat the researcher's practical participation as a simple source of experience. Instead, it transforms the practical process into examinable research materials through a material matrix, analytical dimensions, and the cross-checking of multiple data sources.

In this study, the function of **Appendix A** and **Appendix B** is not to display all outcomes, but to serve as the material basis for analyzing how visual communication operated. The paper is not concerned with whether a single poster, graphic, or video was successful. It is concerned with how these visual and media materials formed a system within the event process: how they established event recognition, organized information, guided interaction, supported on-site experience, and extended event memory.

This research approach helps move design practice from outcome description toward mechanism analysis. For practice-oriented design research, the important task is not only to explain what designs were produced, but also to explain how those designs functioned in a specific context and to propose analytical perspectives that can be referenced by other cases.

The perspective of visual communication as event infrastructure proposed in this paper is therefore not a closed model but an analytical lens. It can be used to understand how visual communication in other city-based cultural events, music competitions, local festivals, or public events can be transformed from graphic output into part of an event system.

This point also responds to the literature gap identified in Chapter 2. Existing research often discusses city branding, visual identity, and social media engagement separately, and rarely places the three within the same event process. Through a practice-oriented case study, this paper treats visual materials, social media content, and event media as analytical units within the same communication system, and thus attempts to move design practice from work display toward mechanism analysis.

## 5.5. Summary of Discussion

Based on the analysis in Chapter 4, this chapter has proposed three points for discussion. First, visual communication can be understood as event infrastructure for city-based music events, supporting event recognition, public visibility, and audience engagement. Second, the SING case shows that city branding is not only official publicity, but a participatory process formed through creators, social media audiences, live performance, and outcome review. Third, for local government cultural events, visual communication should be integrated from the early stages of event planning and should be designed together with social media communication, audience engagement, and outcome extension.

Through the SING case, this paper shows that visual communication is not merely event promotional packaging. It is a strategic mechanism that connects cultural policy, original music, social media communication, and public participation. The next chapter summarizes the research findings, contributions, limitations, and directions for future research.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper used the Tainan SING Era Song Competition from 2021 to 2024 as a case to examine how visual communication supported event recognition, social media visibility, and audience engagement in a city-based music event. The paper did not treat SING as a simple event outcome case, nor did it focus on overall project governance, budget management, or performance evaluation. Instead, it focused on how visual identity, social media communication, and event media jointly constituted a cross-media event communication system.

The paper proposed visual communication as event infrastructure as its core perspective. Here, infrastructure does not refer to venues, equipment, or administrative processes. It refers to the visual and communication system that supports how an event is identified, understood, shared, and participated in. In the SING case, visual communication was not external packaging added after the event was completed. It was a key interface that continuously helped the event become public through the process of call for entries, finalist presentation, social media interaction, final concert, and outcome review.

Regarding the first research question, the study found that visual identity transformed SING from a call for original song submissions into a recognizable city-based music event. The event name, annual main visual, promotional materials,

digital platforms, stage backdrops, on-site signage, and event objects jointly formed a cross-year and cross-media identity system. This system enabled the event to become more than a one-time call for entries and to gradually accumulate urban cultural meaning and music-event recognition.

Regarding the second research question, the study found that social media-oriented communication design transformed event information from a one-time publication into a sequence of public communication nodes according to the event process. Through social media content at different stages, the event remained visible, understandable, and shareable during the processes of the call for entries, finalist presentation, voting, final concert, and outcome review. Social media platforms therefore functioned not only as announcement tools but also as part of the event process.

Regarding the third research question, the study found that audience engagement in SING had a multi-layered structure. Creators participated in urban narrative through songwriting. Online audiences participated in the dissemination of works through social media interaction and online voting. On-site audiences entered a public cultural event through the final concert. Post-event photographs, videos, award announcements, and outcome reviews further prevented the event from disappearing immediately after the on-site event ended, extending it into cultural content that could be preserved, viewed, and recirculated.

This paper makes three main contributions. First, it repositions visual communication from the role of event promotional packaging into the context of event systems and cultural communication, showing that visual communication can support event recognition, information organization, social media visibility, and audience engagement. Second, it provides a practice-oriented case of a city-based music competition, explaining how local government cultural events can use visual identity and social media design to transform an administrative call for entries into a city-based cultural event with public participation. Third, it offers practical reference for local government cultural events and design management, suggesting that visual communication should be integrated from the early stages of event planning and can support a more participatory process of urban cultural communication through annual identity, social media interaction, live performance, and outcome extension.

This paper also has limitations. First, it is a single-case study. Its purpose is to analyze the visual communication and event communication mechanisms of SING in depth, rather than to establish a model that can be directly generalized to all city-based music events. Second, the paper mainly uses event documents, visual materials, social media records, event images, and practitioner reflection. It does not conduct audience interviews, satisfaction surveys, or quantitative measurement of city-brand perception. Therefore, it does not claim to prove that SING has fully become a mature city music brand. Instead, it explains how visual communication supported its processes of branding and publicization. Third, the researcher was also a practitioner involved in the event. Although the paper cross-

checks documents, visual materials, and social media records, it must still acknowledge that the practitioner's perspective may introduce interpretive bias.

Future research can develop in three directions. First, audience interviews or surveys can be used to further analyze how different audiences understand SING's visual identity, city imagery, and event participation experience. Second, different city-based music events, cultural competitions, or local festivals can be compared to examine whether visual communication as event infrastructure has cross-case applicability. Third, social media data analysis can be incorporated to investigate how different types of posts, short videos, voting mechanisms, and outcome review content influence event visibility and interactional engagement.

In conclusion, the Tainan SING Era Song Competition shows that visual communication in city-based music events is not merely the visual decoration of an event. It is a strategic mechanism that connects cultural policy, original music, social media platforms, live performance, and public participation. When visual communication is understood as event infrastructure, it does not merely make an event visible; it enables the event to be understood, participated in, and remembered across different media and times.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The researcher served as the project leader of the Tainan SING Era Song Competition from 2021 to 2024 and participated in event planning, visual communication coordination, social media communication, and outcome documentation. The researcher's position has been explained in the methodology and limitations sections, and the study cross-checks multiple sources of evidence. Apart from this practitioner role, the author declares no other conflicts of interest.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. Summary of Visual Identity Applications of the Tainan SING Era Song Competition, 2021-2024

2021

2022

Main visual poster



Promotional materials



Stage backdrop





Continued

On-site promotional  
signage



Website/FB/IG  
applications



On-site extended  
items



Promotional videos





## Continued

Final concert records



2023

2024

Main visual poster



Promotional materials



Continued

Stage backdrop



On-site promotional signage



Website/FB/IG applications



On-site extended items





## Continued

Promotional videos



Final concert records



## Appendix B. Compilation of Social Media Interaction Cases for Finalist Works in the 2024 Online Popularity Voting

Note: This appendix serves as social media interaction design material for the online popularity voting. It shows how the FB and IG platforms transformed finalist works into content units that could be viewed, liked, commented on, and shared. This paper does not use these cases to infer overall voting performance or the popularity of individual works.

## FB

## IG

1



Continued

2



3



4



Continued

5



6



7



Continued

8



9



10





Continued

11



12

