

## The Role of Architecture Exhibitions in Introducing Architecture to the Community

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### ABSTRACT

An architecture exhibition serves as an important platform for professionals in architecture, designers, academics, and the community. This event is utilized as a space to gather, discuss, and share views on the development of the architectural world. The exhibition functions as a medium to showcase ideas, both those that have been built and those still in conceptual form. In addition to providing an opportunity for architecture students and professional architects to demonstrate their skills and creativity, the exhibition also aims to educate the community about the importance of architectural design in enhancing the quality of life. Exhibitions serve as a form of outreach, promoting the archive to current and potential users, visitors, stakeholders, and administrators. This community service activity occurred at the Department of Architecture in Bangka Belitung. The method employed includes several stages: preparation, curation of works, collaboration with partners, execution, and evaluation. The exhibition successfully attracted public interest and served as a means to introduce and educate the public about architecture. A total of 324 people were recorded as having visited the exhibition in two days.

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## INTRODUCTION

An architecture exhibition is an important platform for professionals of architecture, designers, academics, and the community (Irpan et al., 2023). This event serves as a platform to meet, discuss, and share perspectives on the development of the architectural world (Budyanto et al., 2020). Amid the rapid advancement of technology and the ever-changing social dynamics, architecture is no longer regarded merely as a discipline focused on aesthetics and building construction; it has become a response to various contemporary challenges faced by the global community which are communicated and discussed through drawing and built environment representation (Hill, 2007). A knowledge transfer enabled by an exhibition, it creates an opportunity for architects to strengthen collegiality among their profession, provide services to the communities, and self-improvement according to the professional code of ethics (Ikatan Arsitek Indonesia, 2007).

The need for functional, aesthetic, and sustainable spaces drives the emergence of various innovations in design and construction (Liana & Albertus, 2023). The architecture exhibition serves as a platform to showcase these ideas, both in the form of realized works and those still in the conceptual stage. (Wirastri, 2024). In addition to being a means to showcase the skills and creativity of architecture students and professional architects, the exhibition also aims to educate the public about the importance of architectural design in shaping the quality of life. (Fauziah & Laksmitasari, 2020). Certainly, the architecture exhibition makes the community more aware of the existence of the architectural world itself.

In the context of increasing globalization and urbanization, architecture exhibitions are becoming increasingly relevant. In large cities, the demand for public spaces, adequate housing, and efficient infrastructure is on the rise. Similarly, in coastal areas, exhibitions serve as a platform to demonstrate how proper designs can develop existing potentials both on land and in water. This exhibition becomes a forum for exploring innovative and sustainable design solutions to address these challenges (Kim & Kwon, 2018). Furthermore, architecture exhibitions also serve as a venue to introduce the latest trends in the architectural world, such as the application of digital technology, green building concepts, and approaches that are more inclusive and responsive to social needs (Patrick & McKinnon, 2022). By presenting various works and ideas, this exhibition acts as a mirror of the architectural industry's development and a reflection on various social, economic, and environmental issues that influence urban design and planning.

Therefore, architecture exhibitions are not only important for professionals but also for the wider community. Public participation in this architecture exhibition is expected to enhance appreciation for architecture and encourage critical discussions about how design can contribute to the creation of better, more livable, and sustainable environments (Roka, 2019).

### **Community Service Location: Department of Architecture, Universitas Bangka Belitung**

Bangka Belitung has several colleges, institutes, and universities, both public and private. However, currently, the province only has one campus offering an Architecture program, which is the Universitas Bangka Belitung. This Architecture department has been operating for only two years since 2022. The focus of this program is to develop local potential in the fields of education, research, and community service to support sustainable development.

One of the implemented steps has been organizing architecture exhibitions in 2022 and 2023 as a contribution to introducing and enhancing the existence of architecture in the province of Bangka Belitung. Faculty and students from various cohorts in this department have collaborated to create an architecture exhibition that can be understood and appreciated by academics, professional architects, and the community.

From the perspective of architecture students, organizing architecture exhibitions can serve as a platform for them to showcase their work to the community, peers, and professionals in the field. The exhibition also provides an opportunity for students to receive feedback and appreciation for their creations. This is important for boosting students' confidence and motivation in developing their skills.

Moreover, the exhibition offers students a chance to gain recognition and job opportunities, whether through internships or collaborative projects. By involving students in architectural exhibitions, higher education institutions can help prepare them for the professional world with real experience and valuable connections.

## METHODS

The implementation of the Architecture Exhibition to introduce the world of architecture to the public is divided into several methodological stages. The stages are as follows:

- Initial Stage or Preparation Stage: The team, consisting of lecturers and students, coordinates regarding the theme, concept, location of the event, and types of works to be displayed. During this stage, students also detail the tools and materials needed for the exhibition by the planned concept.
- Second Stage: In this activity, the entire team conducts a curation of the works produced by architecture students across various semester levels. The types of works curated include two-dimensional and three-dimensional designs created by first-semester students, a preliminary design for the Temberan Coastal Area produced by third-semester students, and photography with various themes produced by third-semester students. The team curates the work based on quality and by grouping similar types of work (Figure 1).



**FIGURE 1.** Curating Works of Architecture Students

- Third Stage: The next step in this activity is to find partners to organize the exhibition of works. In this case, the Architecture Department collaborates with the professional association, the Indonesian Institute of Architects (IAI) of Bangka Belitung Province, as a supporter of the event. Sponsors from various brands related to construction also participated in this architecture exhibition.
- Fourth Stage: This stage involves executing the technical aspects of the event, including the rundown, banners, flyers, stage setup, exhibition layout, and contacting invited guests from various sectors, such as government officials related to architecture, professional architects, academics, and the community in Bangka Belitung Province (Figure 2).



FIGURE 2. Flyer for the Architecture Design Exhibition (A.D.E)

- Fifth Stage: The implementation of the exhibition begins with a traditional welcome dance from Bangka Belitung, followed by the official opening of the exhibition.
- Sixth Stage: The final stage involves evaluating the event to improve the quality of exhibitions in the coming years.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The exhibition aimed to bring Economou's private archive into the public domain by making historical information, which is generally inaccessible, hidden, and unknown, physically available to a diverse audience (Iacovou & Artopoulos, 2024). Exhibitions serve as a form of outreach, promoting the archive to current and potential users, visitors, stakeholders, and administrators. Likewise, they act as educational spaces, informing visitors about the nature of the archive, what it provides, and the potential discoveries that can be made from its collections (Du Laney, 2023). For many years, exhibitions have commonly been used as an event to introduce unbuilt projects, competition products, milestone projects of architects, and even student's works to the community. Recently, as architectural practice has become more research-oriented, exhibitions (alongside publications) have emerged as a more common mode of practice. Architectural exhibitions usually emphasize the final product, featuring meticulously crafted representations such as pristine models and drawings. This approach is also mirrored in educational settings (Toloudi, 2016). The Architecture Design Exhibition (A.D.E) is the name of the exhibition held by the Architecture Department at the University of Bangka Belitung, as an educational agent. ADE has a local philosophy, where the word "ADE" comes from the Bangka language, meaning "to exist" or "to be present." The hope is that this exhibition will be held annually and continue to grow. Additionally, the presence of this exhibition is intended to be a consistent part of the community.

This exhibition is an annual event that lasts for two days and is open to the public. Its purpose is to raise awareness among the community about the developments in architecture and local potential, given that the case studies of the students' designs are situated in the environments of Bangka City and Pangkalpinang City in Bangka Belitung Province. The works displayed in this event include two-dimensional and three-dimensional designs produced by first-semester students, preliminary designs for the Temberan Coastal Area created by third-semester students, and photography with various themes by third-semester students. The series of exhibition activities is opened with a traditional dance from Bangka Belitung performed by students from the Architecture Department of UBB (Figure 3).



**FIGURE 3.** Performance by Architecture students to open the exhibition activities

Based on Figure 4, this event also includes an Architecture Seminar presented by professional architects. The goal is for architecture students to learn and develop their knowledge regarding architectural innovations, technology, trends, and the design process. The community also gains insights through the perspective of professionals in the field of architecture. This activity serves as a platform for discussing current architectural issues from various perspectives.



**FIGURE 4.** Seminar activities at the Architecture Exhibition

Based on Figure 5, the main activity of this exhibition is symbolically opened by pouring paint onto a canvas as the official opening of the Architecture Design Exhibition (A.D.E). The variety of colors poured onto the canvas represents the hope that the architecture students of Universitas Bangka Belitung can benefit their environment by bringing their unique colors and characteristics. This way, they can introduce and share architectural knowledge with the community.



**FIGURE 5.** The official opening symbolically pouring paint onto a canvas

The Architecture Design Exhibition (A.D.E) was held in the lobby area of a star-rated hotel in Pangkalpinang. The use of public space for the exhibition had a positive impact on the number of visitors who came to see this exhibition by the Department of Architecture, Universitas Bangka Belitung. According to the collected data, over the course of two days, the exhibition attracted 324 direct visitors, including academics from various fields, professional architects, artists, construction consultants and contractors,

material suppliers, and the community. This exhibition also received positive attention from several local media outlets, which covered and publicized the event (Figure 6).



FIGURE 6. Community visiting the Architecture Design Exhibition (A.D.E)

This exhibition successfully attracted public attention and served as an effective platform to introduce and educate the community about architecture. The concept of exhibitions has evolved from simply showcasing representational objects to creating more immersive environments, where visitors become active participants, engaging in discussions and interacting with the exhibition itself (Brown & Szacka, 2019). It also became one of the best ways to showcase the presence of the Architecture Department to the people of Bangka Belitung (Figure 7).

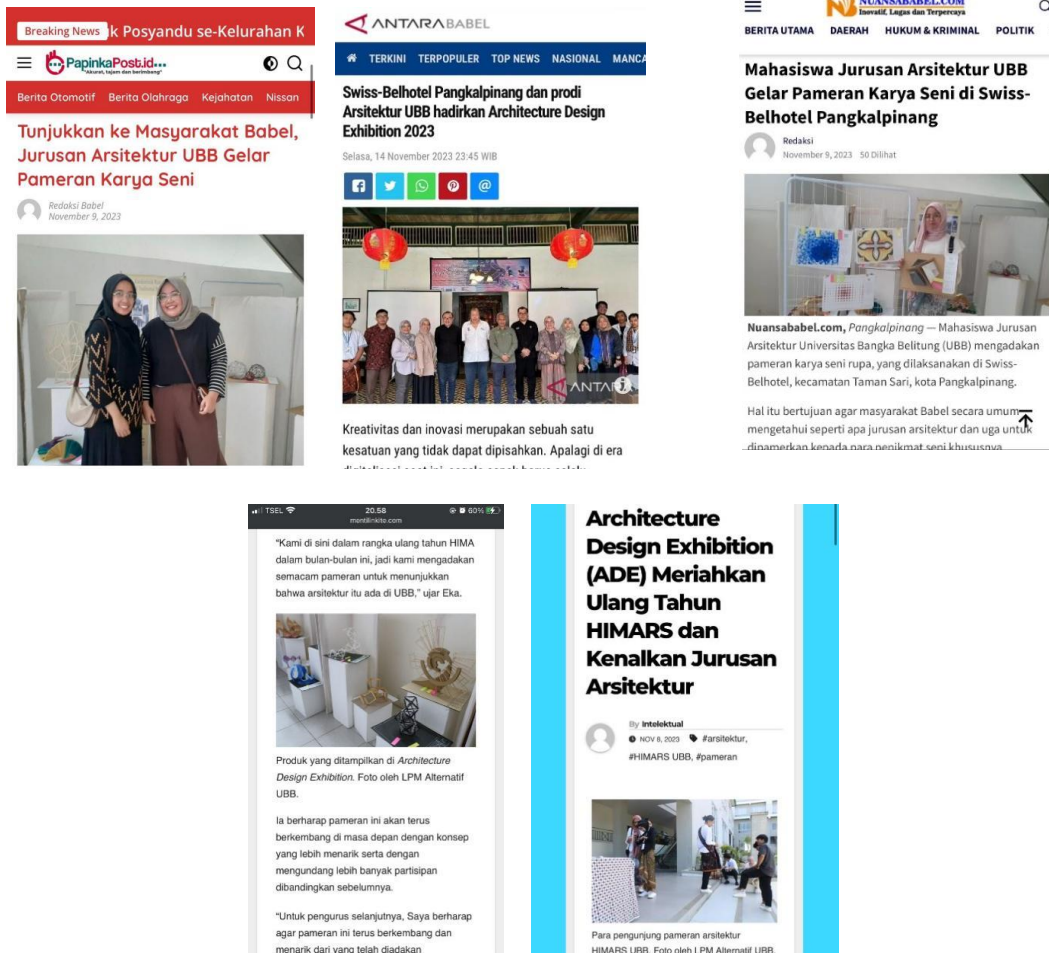


FIGURE 7. The presence of the Architecture Department in the Bangka Belitung community through an art exhibition

## CONCLUSION

The idea of exhibition has moved from a mere display of representational objects into a more immersive environment that recast the visitors into an embedded spectators that participate in the discussion within the exhibition itself (Brown & Szacka, 2019). Likewise, this first public architectural exhibition established by the first architectural department in the archipelagic province of Indonesia provides diverse experiences to various communities who attend it. For those in academics, visiting the architecture exhibition serves as a practical means of generating, developing, assessing, and disseminating ideas and practices (Clear, 2020). Academics can observe and analyze the designs, techniques, and concepts applied in these works, which can serve as references and sources of ideas for their research and teaching. The exhibition also provides a platform for sharing knowledge with fellow academics beyond the architectural fields, addressing the multidisciplinary nature of architectural subjects that embrace knowledge and understanding from several disciplines such as sciences, arts, and humanities (Rendell, 2007).

For students, attending the architecture exhibition can offer practical insights and real-world experience. Students can see architectural works on full scale or through displayed models. This helps them understand design concepts, construction techniques, and materials used in architectural practice. Through the exhibition, students can also expand their understanding of current trends and innovations in the architecture industry. The exhibition can inspire students in their own design projects and help them build connections with professionals in the field.

For the community, visiting the architecture exhibition is an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the value and role of architecture in everyday life. Through the exhibition, the public can also enhance their appreciation for the art and beauty in architecture, as well as understand the important role architecture plays in creating better and more sustainable environments.

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