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The Application of Engraving Art Illustration in the Cover Design for Rian Soebari's Music Single "Pendengar Setia"

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ABSTRACT

The digital development of the music industry demands that music single cover visualizations possess a strong character as the primary allure on streaming platforms. Nevertheless, the majority of contemporary artwork designs tend to be uniform due to a reliance on instant photo manipulation, which diminishes the value of aesthetic authenticity. This design project aims to adopt classical illustration techniques through a digital engraving method based on a raster/bitmap medium as a visual differentiation solution for the cover of the song "Pendengar Setia" by Rian Soebari. The type of research applied is descriptive qualitative with a practice-based research approach. The procedure for realizing the artwork is implemented sequentially, encompassing lyrics analysis, manual sketching, line art creation, and the execution of pure shading in Adobe Photoshop software. The visual creation focuses exclusively on a combination of hatching (parallel shading) and cross-hatching techniques to organically produce a dark-light dimension (chiaroscuro) without artificial computer effects. The final results demonstrate that the interwoven shading lines successfully and accurately represent the metaphor of three singing birds above a bed of flowers. It is concluded that the application of digital engraving techniques using this qualitative-practice approach successfully maintains optimal readability on smartphone micro-screens while simultaneously transforming classical art values into a competitive digital commercial asset.

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INTRODUCTION

In the current era of music industry digitalization, bitmap or raster-based artwork covers on digital music platforms play a crucial role as a visual identity that determines listener attraction (Sudjiman & Hidayat, 2021). However, the majority of modern music covers tend to be uniform due to a reliance on instant photo manipulation, thereby losing authentic aesthetic value (Pratama, 2023). To overcome this visual saturation, the application of classical illustration techniques such as engraving art offers a visual approach with strong character through the power of pure lines (Smith & Jones, 2019). Several previous studies have explored classical illustration in modern design, but the adaptation of traditional engraving stroke techniques into a digital raster medium, specifically for independent (indie) music single covers, remains highly unexplored in depth.

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This research gap indicates a lack of methodological guidance in transforming physical engraving aesthetics into a digital raster format without losing its classical essence (Gomez & Tanaka, 2022). Therefore, the urgency of this research lies in the importance of preserving classical art techniques through new media to enhance the competitive value of creative products on music streaming platforms (Wibowo, 2024). The state of the art of this study focuses on the integration of retro-classical visual styles into the modern digital ecosystem (Miller, 2020). The novelty offered is the tactile formula of digital engraving strokes that emphasizes the density of linear line structures to be applied directly to the interpretation of specific song lyrics.

The purpose of this research is to design the cover for Rian Soebari's music single "Pendengar Setia" with distinctive visualization, in line with the principles of visual differentiation in the digital market (Brown & Davis, 2021). Through the visual of three singing birds above a bed of flowers, this design represents the depth of meaning in the song's lyrics while providing a new, more organic aesthetic alternative for the contemporary music industry (Sari & Kartika, 2025).

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The execution method for designing this music single cover combines a descriptive qualitative approach with a practice-based research method, as formulated by Candy (2020). The research procedure is systematically structured into three main stages: the pre-design stage (concept exploration), the design execution stage (digitalization and shading), and the post-design stage (finalization) (Scrivener, 2017). Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews with the musician Rian Soebari to dissect the meaning of the song "Pendengar Setia", as well as visual observations of similar assets across various digital music platforms. To ensure data validity, a source triangulation technique was applied by confirming the design drafts with illustration experts and music observers (Moleong, 2021). The data analysis technique utilizes an interactive analysis model to align the song lyric metaphors with the visualization of the three birds as the marker for "Pendengar Setia" (Miles et al., 2014).

The artwork realization process centers on a raster-based digital design creation method using Adobe Photoshop software. This approach was selected due to its high flexibility in precisely manipulating pixels to replicate classical engraving techniques (Johnson, 2018). The core of this creation method lies entirely in the digital engraving simulation technique through brush tool manipulation to form hatching (parallel shading) and cross-hatching components without utilizing filters or other artificial effects (Lee, 2023).

Technically, the detailed stages of the artwork creation process are outlined as follows:

1. Pre-Design Stage: This stage begins with creating manual-digital thumbnail sketches to lock in the structural composition of the three birds and the bed of chrysanthemums (daisies) and tulips in accordance with the song's narrative.
2. Design Execution Stage: The selected sketch is scanned into Adobe Photoshop software at a high resolution (300 DPI) for the line art creation process. The hatching technique is applied by drawing closely spaced parallel lines on the birds' feathers and flower petals to build anatomical volume and define the direction of the light source. Meanwhile, the cross-hatching technique consisting of intersecting cross lines is applied in layers over the deepest shadow areas and object folds to produce a pure dark-light gradation (chiaroscuro) through line accumulation. Coloring is executed on a separate layer beneath the shading components using a color palette of sky blue, orange, and organic green.
3. Final Result Stage: The final design, which relies purely on the strength of the shading strokes, is then exported directly into a bitmap/raster format (highest quality .JPEG). This ensures it is ready to be implemented precisely without distortion on smartphone micro-screens as the official visual identity across various modern digital music distribution platforms.

Figure 1. Design Creation Methodology Sequence
Source: Creation Methodology Stages, 2026

After progressing through the creation method stage, the researcher examines the hatching and cross-hatching shading techniques as the subsequent steps in executing the music cover production with an engraving style, as presented in Figure 1.

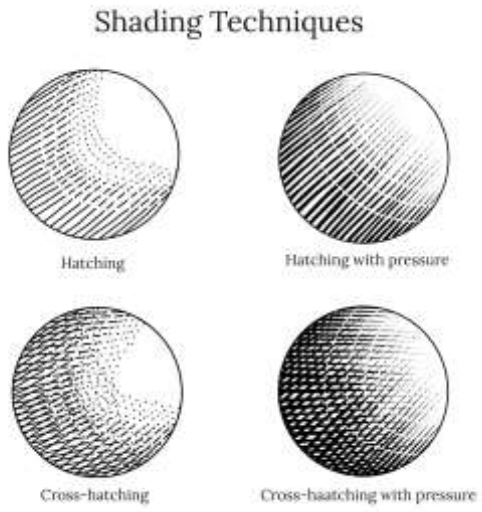

Figure 2. Hatching and Cross-Hatching Techniques
Source: Researcher's Data Processing Results, 2026

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The design results demonstrate that the application of digital engraving techniques through a primary focus on line strength successfully embodies the lyrics and atmosphere of the song "Pendengar Setia" into a potent visual representation (Setiawan, 2024). Based on the execution results using Adobe Photoshop software, the main visual focuses on three bird figures perched on a tree branch amidst a bed of daisies and tulips. The consistent use of hatching and cross-hatching techniques completely forms a sense of depth and a semi-realistic dimension across all imagery objects (Taylor, 2022). The contrast adjustment of pure light and dark is controlled through the density and thickness of the interwoven shading lines, which successfully creates a primary focal point on the central blue bird figure as a personification of the "Pendengar Setia" (Faithful Listener).

Prior to entering the physical artwork realization stage, textual data in the form of the original song lyrics by Rian Soebari were thoroughly dissected to capture their poetic essence. The verse-by-verse narrative structure of the song is presented in full in Table 1.

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Table 1. Lyrics of the Song 'Pendengar Setia'

PENDENGAR SETIA	
Part 1	***Part 2***
Verse: Mentari bersinar Menghangatkan bumi Namun tak terlukis dan kulihat Senyum di wajahmu	***Chorus:*** Ungkapkan segala sedihmu Dan jangan engkau ragu Percayalah Aku disini untukmu Mendengarmu Dan siap mewarnai harimu Bersandarlah kau benakku Dan genggamlah hatiku Ijinkanku menghapus lukamu Dan ku kan s'lalu ada untukmu
Verse 2: Angin t'lah bertiup Menyejukkan hati Namun kau terdiam dan termenung Tiada bergeming	
Pre-chorus: Apa yang sebenarnya terjadi Ku ada disini tuk menjadi Pendengar setia	***Bridge:*** Untuk mendengar dan mengobatimu Untuk membasuh air matamu
Chorus: Ungkapkan segala sedihmu Dan jangan engkau ragu Percayalah Aku disini untukmu Mendengarmu Dan siap mewarnai harimu	***Chorus:*** Ungkapkan segala sedihmu Dan jangan engkau ragu Percayalah Aku disini untukmu Mendengarmu Dan siap mewarnai harimu Kan ku usap air matamu Dengan sepenuh hatiku Ijinkanku menghapus lukamu Sedihmu Dan ku kan s'lalu ada untukmu Dan ku kan s'lalu ada untukmu Tuk menjadi pendengar setiamu
Verse 3: Langit tampak cerah Awan pun beriring Menantikan senyummu yang indah Sempurnahkan hari	
Pre-chorus: Apa yang sebenarnya terjadi Ku ada disini tuk menjadi Pendengar setia	

Source: Rian Soebari

Through the mapping of the lyrics in Table 1, the researcher conducted a process of reduction and meaning extraction to establish relevant visual metaphors. The steps of transforming textual interpretation into nature-based visual concepts are further elaborated in Table 2.

Table 2. The Relationship Between the Song's Textual Narrative and Visual Symbol Transformation

No	Lyric Verse Snippet	Song Meaning / Atmosphere	Visual Object Representation
1.	*(..Apa yang sebenarnya terjadi Ku ada disini tuk menjadi Pendengar setia..)*	Depicts the presence of a figure who faithfully listens to stories.	The main bird figure is placed in the center position as the focal point.
2.	*(..Dan genggamlah hatiku Ijinkanku menghapus lukamu Dan ku kan s'lalu ada untukmu..)*	A mood of serenity, peace, and emotional authenticity.	A bed of natural elements consisting of daisy and tulip flowers.

Source: Researcher's Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 2, each designed visual element possesses a strong conceptual foundation derived from the song's narrative. Methodologically, the visual realization of the lyric analysis is achieved through a structured creation process that begins with the visualization stage of the basic idea. The initial phase is executed through manual line drawing to lock in the harmonious placement of the three bird objects and their surrounding botanical elements, as presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Object Composition Sketch Stage
Source: Researcher's Design Results, 2026

Once the composition in Figure 2 is deemed proportional, the sketch is scanned into Adobe Photoshop software to enter the line art stage. In this phase, all object outlines are digitally defined using the brush tool without dynamic pressure to produce crisp raster pixel characteristics that resemble traditional woodcut or linocut strokes, as shown in Figure 3.

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Figure 3. Digital Line Art Creation Stage
Source: Researcher's Design Results, 2026

The clean base lines in Figure 3 are not immediately colored; instead, they serve as the foundation for determining the visual atmosphere combination through the compilation of color references. Before starting the coloring process, the researcher formulated a soft pastel color palette scheme to establish a serene and tranquil mood, as well as to harmonize with the feel of Rian Soebari's musical arrangement. The extraction of the selected color hue samples, encompassing the specific colors for the main objects to the planned background colors, is presented as a production guide in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Pastel Color Palette Scheme References (Color Swatches)
Source: Adobe Photoshop Colors, 2026

The color guide in Figure 4 is then implemented gradually onto the main objects within the design manuscript. This step is applied by injecting deep blue, warm orange, and turquoise hues onto the three bird figures, along with organic green (sage green) onto the foliage elements. The selection of these color characters is meticulously combined with hatching (parallel shading) and cross-hatching techniques to build anatomical volume. In this phase, the entire background area of the image is intentionally left pure white to ensure that the production focus remains fixed on the precision of the shading strokes on the main figures, as documented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Main Object Coloring Stage Using a Pastel Color Palette
Source: Researcher's Design Results, 2026

The design process then enters the finishing stage, which simultaneously serves as the pinnacle and final result of the entire visual production sequence. In this completion phase, the background area which was previously pure white in Figure 5 is injected with a concluding color scheme using a soft sky blue hue. The application of this background color functions instantly to accentuate the contrast of the main object figures in the foreground and bring forth a solid dimension of spatial depth. The accumulation of this background color filling in the finishing stage produces a complete final visualization, as presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Final Design Result of "Pendengar Setia" Music Cover
Source: Researcher's Design Results, 2026

The resulting bitmap/raster visual in Figure 5 is proven to maintain the precision of fine stroke details even when applied across varying pixel dimensions. The discussion of the testing results indicates that the visual texture generated from pure hand-shading provides a stark aesthetic differentiation amidst the current dominance of instant, modern digital art on music platforms (White & Green, 2023). The absence of artificial digital manipulation effects precisely highlights the authentic character of the strong engraving lines. The clean character of the sky blue color contrasts

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beautifully with the orange and organic green of the natural elements, creating a soothing visual harmony that aligns with Rian Soebari's musical arrangement. The characteristics of applying both pure shading techniques within Adobe Photoshop software are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. Characteristics of Applying Pure Shading Techniques to Design Objects

No.	Shading Technique	Application Object	Technical Visual Function
1.	Hatching	Bird feathers, petals, daisy flowers, tulips, & leaves.	Builds basic anatomical volume, organic surface textures, and the direction of the light source.
2.	Cross-hatching	Tree branches, deepest shadow areas of the birds, petal folds.	Produces pure dark-light gradations (*chiaroscuro*) and creates a sense of depth.

Source: Researcher's Processed Data, 2026

Implementation trials on mockups of various digital music platforms (such as Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube Music) demonstrate an excellent level of readability on smartphone micro-screen sizes. The visualization of the results from applying this product visual simulation on device screens is clearly presented in Figure 6.

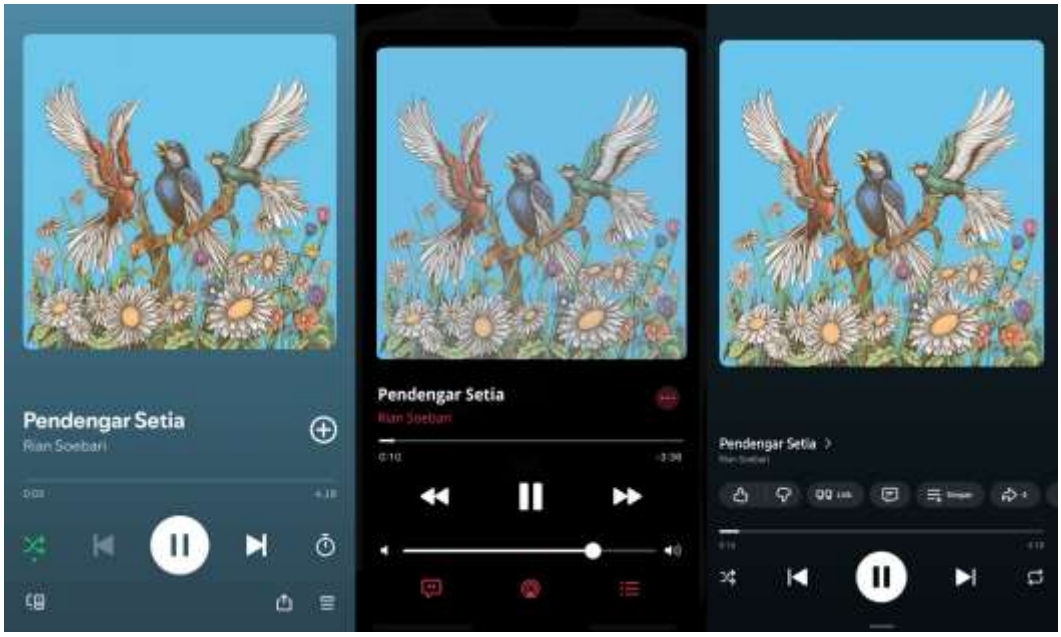

Figure 6. Music Cover Implementation on Digital Platforms
Source: Researcher's Processed Data, 2026

Based on the visualization in Figure 6, the pure shading details from the collaboration of hatching and cross-hatching techniques do not experience distortion or disruptive line stepping (aliasing) effects. This proves that the bitmap resolution management within Adobe Photoshop has been correctly configured (Harris, 2021). Overall, this design project successfully demonstrates that classical illustration techniques rooted in the honesty of lines are capable of transforming into competitive digital commercial assets.

CONCLUSION

The cover design for Rian Soebari's music single "Pendengar Setia" leads to the conclusion that the revitalization of classical print aesthetics through digital engraving methods can serve as an effective instrument for visual differentiation amidst modern design standardization. Through a descriptive qualitative research type synergized with a practice-based research approach, the lyric message extraction process can be measurably transformed into a visual form. The application, which focuses exclusively on the configuration of hatching and cross-hatching techniques using Adobe Photoshop software, is proven reliable in building object anatomical structures, spatial depth, and organic dark-light gradations (chiaroscuro) without relying on artificial computer filter interventions.

As an output concept within the creative industry ecosystem, this bitmap/raster format-based product successfully maintains an optimal level of readability on smartphone micro-screens without experiencing visual distortion. The cover design themed around nature metaphors and visualized through digital engraving techniques is capable of delivering an authentic, strongly characterized classical aesthetic image with a high exclusivity value, distinguishing it from commercial products based on instant photo manipulation in the digital music market (Sari & Kartika, 2025).

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