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Eduvest – Journal of Universal Studies

Volume 5 Number 3, March, 2025

p- ISSN 2775-3735- e-ISSN 2775-3727

Graphic Design Analysis of the Nickelodeon Animated Film Poster Plankton: The Movie (2025)

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ABSTRACT

Science has always evolved, ranging from technical science to creativity. One of the sciences that cultivates creativity is fine art, in this study focuses on fine art (graphic design). This study analyzed the 2025 movie poster "Plankton: The Movie" from Nickelodeon, with the results of the overall analysis, this poster is an example of a successful visual communication design in the context of an animated movie poster. Posters not only attract attention visually but also effectively convey the basic premise of the film, generate curiosity, and build anticipation. Strategic design decisions in typography, color, composition, balance, and focus work in harmony to create a poster that fulfills its marketing goals while staying true to the familiar aesthetic of the SpongeBob SquarePants franchise.

KEYWORDS

graphic design, fine art, movie poster, "Plankton: The Movie" 2025, Nickelodeon



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INTRODUCTION

The realm of science has always developed, ranging from technical science to creativity. Knowledge that is in the nature of processing creativity, for example in the fields of gastronomy, sports, and art. The realm of art is one of the sciences that process creativity that has existed since pre-historic times, as can be seen from cave paintings, as well as tools to connect prehistoric human life such as clothes, cooking utensils, and hunting tools. Fine art is an eternal science, being one of the branches of science that is expressed through visual media and in contact with our daily lives (Parhan et al., 2022). Fine arts can also be a family of sciences that can be researched by humans, for example in terms of history, creative techniques, education using fine art media, to discussing figures in the fine arts themselves. Fine arts also have so many branches, there are branches of pure art and applied arts. Pure art can be found in painting, graphic art, sculpture. Applied art can be found in graphic design, batik, applied wood crafts, applied ceramic crafts.

Discussing graphic design, there are so many works that can be studied and researched, such as researching work techniques, various design styles, and work analysis. Graphic design itself is a field of work that is closely related to graphics (prints), more specifically, graphic design is the skill of designing letters and visuals, both in 2D and 3D media, both printed and non-printed works (Widya & Darmawan, 2016). This research focuses on graphic design analysis, the analysis carried out is an analysis of the design components and design principles of the Nickelodeon animated movie poster "Plankton: The Movie" 2025. The design components that will be discussed in the analysis of this research are typography, illustrations, and colors. The design principles discussed are creative ideas, meaning, balance, and focus.

The 2025 movie "Plankton: The Movie" has been streaming on Netflix in March 2025. The film tells the story of the figure of Plankton who is one of the supervillains in Bikini Bottom. Plankton is the owner of the Chum Bucket, he is still trying hard to rule the world, although he has repeatedly failed to rival the successful Mr. Krab. His computer wife, Karen, has helped Plankton devise evil plans to take over the world, but it still fails. Once when Plankton opens the archives of an evil plan devised by Karen, there is a plan that has not been carried out, and Plankton uses the evil means to take over the world. But after using the plan, his attempt to take control of the world fails, and instead turns his computer wife, Karen, into a monster in Plankton's Chum Bucket. After seeing the poster and the film, there are a lot of interesting things that can be analyzed and written. These interesting things will be described in detail in the results and discussion section, which in essence, the poster and animation work are so futuristic (they have modern value, both from the idea, the animation style, the technology used to make the film, and the concept).

Nickelodeon is one of the longest-established animation studios in the United States, starting in 1977 as a trial run, until in 1979 Nickelodeon officially launched as the first cable channel for children. Nickelodeon has many animated films for children, including SpongeBob SquarePants, Danny Phantom, Blue's Clues, and ChalkZone. Therefore, with his studio's large, diverse, and interesting works, one of his animated film posters entitled "Plankton: The Movie" 2025 can be the main object of research, it is hoped that the results of the graphic design analysis from the Nickelodeon animation studio can be one of the sources of reference that are easy to find and easy to understand for the general public and for the graphic designer environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research requires a method. Research methods help solve problems, and help analyze data. The research method used to analyze the poster of the Nickelodeon animated film "Plankton: The Movie" 2025 in this study is a qualitative research method, where the qualitative method uses a descriptive analysis approach, then the

research results are described comprehensively, it is hoped that by using this qualitative method the research results can be easily understood by the general public and among researchers (Malahati et al., 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of the analysis using the qualitative method are as follows.



Figure 1. A poster of the 2025 movie "Plankton: The Movie," from Nickelodeon.

Source: www.imdb.com.

1) Illustration

Illustration is a visual explanation, there are illustrations to clarify information, illustrations arise from ideas, concept ideas, without supporting illustrations of typography in a movie poster will be very empty and uninteresting, the audience will be confused by what nuances the film depicts (Witabora, 2012). The poster above has a visual composition where the animated characters are arranged in a group formation facing the audience, showing dramatic situations or facing threats. Looking at each object, you can see the technique of making it using 3D computer animation techniques, (CGI - Computer Generated Imagery). Visual characteristics that indicate this include: Detailed 3D rendering of the characters, realistic lighting and shadows, visible textures with dimension and depth, expressions and shapes of characters that indicate 3D modeling.

2) Typography

Typography has an important role in the world of design, apart from being the art of designing letters, typography is a sound symbol to convey a message, and also convey a feeling (Nugroho, 2019). Looking at the poster of the movie "Plankton: The Movie" 2025 above, the type of font used is a thick style sans-

serif, the font has a cartoonish-style and futuristic appearance. The existence of typography creates a balance between visual elements and the bottom.

3) Color

Color is a part of human life, color is also one of the very important elements in a design work, in color design it is able to reflect symbols (Fajar Paksi, 2021). The poster of "Plankton: The Movie" 2025 has a dominant color scheme gradation of blue and turquoise (cyan), which creates an underwater atmosphere. The color that is stroked also has an element of lighting, there is a blue lighting effect that highlights from behind the objects creating a dramatic silhouette and giving a dimension of depth. Color-wise, blue reflects the marine environment, tranquility, and depth. The neon green color reflects the toxic and evil character of Plankton, the yellow represents the playfulness and energetic character of SpongeBob, in addition to the combination of bright colors creating a cheerful cartoon atmosphere and attracting children's attention.

4) Creative ideas

Making design works requires creative ideas, the existence of creative ideas can make the latest design works and not monotonous. An idea is a concept of thought that will be poured into a work (Eskak, 2013). In the 2025 "Plankton: The Movie" poster, the main concept creative idea was to elevate the antagonist character Plankton as the central character, flipping the traditional formula where SpongeBob is usually the main focus. It's an interesting creative approach to spin-offs or villain-focused movies. In terms of story telling, without additional words, the poster manages to convey the premise of the film - Plankton has created a new technology that endangers the entire Bikini Bottom. Although it looks like a children's movie, the robotic elements and more complex designs appeal to more mature fans. The creation of the poster work above is consistent with the brand, although it brings a new approach, the poster stays true to the visual aesthetic of SpongeBob with the bright colors and exaggerated character expressions that have become the hallmark of the series.

5) Meaning

Every creation of works certainly has a meaning, there are several meanings that are analyzed, namely:

- a) Symbolic meaning: The huge Plankton robot symbolizes Plankton's boundless ambition and obsession with mastering Bikini Bottom that eventually reaches the point of culmination. Plankton's position at the top and the other characters below reflect the reversal of the hierarchy of power in the narrative.
- b) Narrative meaning: The poster conveys the message that this is a story about an antagonist who finally gets his moment of greatness. The expression of fear in the protagonist's character indicates that the Plankton threat this time is more serious and dangerous.
- c) Thematic meaning: The theme of technology and abused power, demonstrated through the transformation of Plankton into robots.

- d) Moral meaning: Judging by the color, it may hint that excessive ambition and obsession with power (a hallmark of Plankton) can turn a person into a monster. Posters can also contain messages about the dangers of uncontrolled technology.
- e) Cultural meaning: Reflects a trend in popular media where the antagonist gets his own origin or spin-off story. Show the evolution of characters in an established franchise to attract new and old audiences.
- f) Emotional meaning: After seeing the poster and the film, creating a sense of anticipation and tension about the impending conflict, it builds empathy for the protagonist's threatened characters.
- g) Commercial meaning: The poster implies the development of a franchise that draws fans to see the other side of the world of SpongeBob. The use of popular characters but in a new context to appeal to different demographics.
- h) Metaphorical meaning: The Plankton robot can also be seen as a metaphor for how characters that were once seen as weak or insignificant can transform into serious threats when given power and technology.
- i) Philosophical meaning: Posters may raise questions about identity and transformation, the extent to which technology can alter one's essence, it can also imply themes about the consequences of infinite ambition.

The above interpretation analysis shows that although it is intended for a children's audience, the movie poster has a layer of meaning that can be appreciated by different ages, reflecting the complexity of the characters and stories that have developed in the SpongeBob SquarePants franchise over the years.

6) Balance

The creation of works of art, in this case poster design really needs an element of balance, so that the preparation of typography and visual elements does not overlap with each other, the existence of balance makes the work more comfortable to enjoy and view. The following are the results of the balance analysis that can be described:

- a) Visual balance: The poster uses a dynamic asymmetrical balance, with a large Plankton robot at the top and a smaller group of characters at the bottom. Despite its asymmetrical nature, the distribution of visual mass still creates a stable and attractive composition.
- b) Space balance: The negative space (empty area) in the center of the poster creates an effective separation between the top and bottom elements. The distribution of space provides ample "breathing space" among the other elements of the poster.
- c) Light-dark balance: The dark areas on the Plankton robot are balanced by the light areas on the character and the lower background. The blue lighting behind the robot creates a smooth transition between the top and bottom areas.

The balance created creates a visually appealing composition and supports a hierarchy of information, while still conveying the dynamics of conflict that are at the heart of the film's story. This balance also ensures that all the important elements in the poster can be captured by the audience in no time.

7) Focus

The creation of works is not only about artistic and uniqueness, but also must consider the focus. The results of the analysis focus on the 2025 "Plankton: The Movie" poster as follows:

- a) Primary focus: The Plankton robot becomes the main focus of the poster with its dominant size, position at the top, and dramatic silhouette with lighting behind it. The character is designed to grab the audience's first attention with its menacing posture and futuristic design.
- b) Focus directing technique: The use of blue lighting behind the Plankton robot creates a rim lighting effect that directs the eye to the character's silhouette. The frightened expressions of the characters below all point upwards, leading the viewer's eyes back to the threat of Plankton's robots.
- c) Focus through contrast: Found in the Robot Plankton which is dark in contrast to the bright blue background. The neon green title contrasts with the darker blue background at the bottom. This contrast creates clear focal points.

Based on the results above, starting from illustration analysis to focus, the 2025 "Plankton The Movie" movie poster shows a futuristic visual design in various aspects. In terms of typography, the use of a bold sans-serif font with neon green not only creates a strong visual identity but also directly associates the title with the main antagonist character. The color scheme dominated by blue gradations with contrasting accents manages to create an underwater atmosphere that is familiar to SpongeBob fans while giving it a more dramatic and futuristic feel. Overall, this poster is an example of a successful visual communication design in the context of an animated movie poster. Posters not only attract attention visually but also effectively convey the basic premise of the film, generate curiosity, and build anticipation. Strategic design decisions in typography, color, composition, balance, and focus work in harmony to create a poster that fulfills its marketing goals while staying true to the familiar aesthetic of the SpongeBob SquarePants franchise.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis that has been done, the poster of the animated movie Plankton: The Movie (2025) from Nickelodeon is a successful example of effective visual communication design. The poster is not only aesthetically appealing but also able to convey the basic premise of the movie, arouse curiosity, and build audience anticipation.

An in-depth analysis of the various design elements, such as illustration, typography, color, balance, and focus, showed that the strategic design decisions in this poster aligned with the marketing objectives while still maintaining the signature aesthetic of the SpongeBob SquarePants franchise. The use of neon blue and green colors, bold sans-serif typography, and dramatic lighting techniques reinforce the futuristic feel and support the film's narrative centered on the antagonistic character Plankton.

The poster's success also lies in its ability to convey multiple layers of meaning, from the symbolism of Plankton's ambition to a reflection of popular media trends that increasingly make room for stories from an antagonistic perspective. With its innovative visual approach and thoughtful design planning, the poster is an effective representation of the movie, both in terms of visual appeal and commercial appeal.

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