CURATING AS BRANDING: CRAFTING INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH EXHIBITION CIPTA! KAPITA SELEKTA CIKINI RAYA 73

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Abstract: With the increasing competition between cultural institutions including art spaces such as museums galleries, branding for these institutions has shifted from visual identity to strategic construction of meaning and symbolic authority. One of the most important touchpoints in art space's branding is in its exhibition, which was produced through curatorial practice. While branding in Indonesian art spaces is typically examined through promotional or visual identity, its relationship to curatorial practice remains underexplored. This study investigates how curatorial strategies can function as institutional branding. Drawing from Aaker's concept of brand identity, this study analyses the exhibition "Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73", organized by the Jakarta Arts Council as part of revitalization of Taman Ismail Marzuki in 2022, as a case study. This study examines thematic grouping, exhibition text, selection of works, and other curatorial outputs of the exhibition to look at how the curatorial process can be utilized as a branding mechanism. The findings indicate that curatorial practice operates as a form of soft branding to articulate institutional identity beyond visual branding, which positions exhibitions not only as artistic display but as an active instrument of brand construction within the Indonesian art ecosystem.

Keywords: brand identity; institutional branding; curatorial practice; exhibition

Introduction

In today's experience-driven creative economy, art spaces such as museums and galleries are no longer evaluated solely by their collections, exhibits, or facilities, but increasingly by their narrative power, symbolic value, and ability to project a distinctive identity. With the proliferation of the creative economy, these institutions now compete not only for visitors and fundings, but also for intangible resources such as public trust, reputation, and visibility. In this sense, institutional branding becomes increasingly important for cultural institutions to assert their identity and to position themselves in the cultural landscape.

Tracing back to Aaker's idea of multidimensional brand, today's branding extends beyond visual identity and incorporates more intangible elements such as emotional and symbolic construct (Aaker, 1996). He distinguishes the concept between brand identity, which is a set of associations the brand aspires to maintain, while brand image is how the brand is perceived by its audience. In this sense, art spaces need to leverage curatorial strategies and narrative strategies in their exhibitions, as one of its most significant

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touchpoints, to project their missions, values, and authority, in which ultimately construct their brand identity.

Studies about branding in art spaces remain primarily focused on visual branding such as in Wallace (2016). Similarly, in Indonesian context, art spaces branding is primarily studied for its visual and promotional aspects such as in Haswati, Kifli, & Ilhamsyah (2023) and Hereyah & Kusumaningrum (2019). On the other hand, studies in Indonesian curatorial practice tend to focus on artistic discourse such as history (Hujatnika, Pradipta, Mukmin, & Respati, 2017), artistic medium (Jeon, 2020), and socio-cultural context (Flores, 2008). Several studies have examined the role of curatorial practice in branding such as in Street (2016) and Nixon, Pitsaki, & Replie (2014), focusing on leveraging curatorial practice in commercial brands. However, studies that link curatorial practice and institutional branding, especially in Indonesia art spaces remain limited.

One of the key studies that correlates between Aaker's concept of brand identity in museum context was done by Pusa & Uusitalo (2014). This study concluded that while, art museums utilize various dimensions of traditional brand identity such as products, persons, symbols, and organization, a museum's curatorial strategies function as the core product dimension of its brand identity by using the scope and focus of their exhibitions to differentiate the museum's personality, employing a proactive strategy to "surprise" visitors with unique art experiences, and leveraging the reputation of exhibited artists (or lending credibility to new ones) to enhance the perceived quality and distinctiveness of the museum brand.

Building upon the conceptual framework that positions curatorial practice as one of the most important branding touchpoints in art spaces, the primary purpose of this study is to contribute to the discussion that links institutional branding and curatorial practice. This study examines how curatorial strategies in an exhibition can be utilized as branding mechanisms in constructing institutional brand identity by using the exhibition "Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73" as a case study. Organized by the Jakarta Arts Council as part of Taman Ismail Marzuki revitalization and its reopening in 2022, the exhibition presented archival materials and historical collections that illustrate the venue's history and the council's contribution to Jakarta's cultural landscape since its founding in 1968.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach grounded in practice-based critical reflection, positioning the curatorial process itself as both the subject and method of inquiry. It draws from the author's dual role as the curator of the examined exhibition "Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73" as well as the researcher. This reflexive approach acknowledges the author's positional influence on interpretation and decision-making during the curatorial process.

The data used in this study are taken from two points: the curatorial process and the exhibition outputs. This study analyses the author's direct observation, curatorial notes, selection criteria, and conversation with the members of the Jakarta Arts Council as the organizer during the curatorial process and the exhibition outputs including displayed artworks, thematic grouping, exhibition text, and spatial layout. While no interviews, surveys, or focus groups were conducted at this stage, the reflective practice lens enables a critical reconstruction of the curatorial process to identify its branding implications.

This study does not seek to measure

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audience perception or brand image as conceptualized by Aaker. Instead, it emphasizes the strategic dimensions of curatorial practice as strategies in constructing institutional brand identity. As such, the methodology prioritizes interpretive reading over empirical measurement.

Literature Review

David Aaker distinguishes the concept of brand identity and brand image as how a brand is portraying their identity as aspire to be and how a brand is being perceived by its audience (Aaker, 1996). Aaker further elaborates that brand identity is a set of unique associations that the brand aspires to create or maintain, which represent the value and the brand implied to promise its audience. It consists of four perspectives: brand as a product, brand as a person, brand as an organization, and brand as a symbol. Aaker's concept of multidimensional brand was further expanded by Chang (2008) through the concept of soft branding. Rather than relying on visual attributes and spectacle, institutions can build their identity through the construction of meaning by evoking memory, pride, and identification. Herézniak and Anders-Morawska (2015) emphasize that brand values lie beyond surface-level visibility but in intangible factors such as emotional connection and symbolic relevance. Though primarily focused on visual branding, Wallace (2016) acknowledged that in the competitive cultural climate, exhibition text serve as crucial branding tools that communicate not only the content and themes of the curated offering, but also the authority and distinctive vision of the institution that organized it, thereby reinforcing the museum's mission and value in a competitive cultural environment. In this sense, branding is not utilized as traditional marketing practice but as an ongoing process of constructing institutional identity.

This understanding of branding as the construction of institutional identity through intangible factors like culture, memory, and symbolic relevance is particularly pertinent to cultural institutions like art spaces. These institutions embody this concept as they are inherently involved in curating and communicating shared narratives and values. Bennett (1995) conceptualizes museums and cultural organizations as "civic technologies," spaces where histories, values, and identities are curated and communicated to the public through exhibition. As Greenberg (1996) stated, exhibitions are not neutral displays but discursive structures that frame memory and confer authority. Through selection, contextualization, and amplification of cultural objects, institutions project not only artistic narratives but also their own institutional identity.

In their study, Pusa & Uusitalo (2014) applied Aaker's brand identity concept for art museum context. As a product, the museum brand is defined by its core outputs such as collections, exhibitions, scope, and focus, as well as its augmented outputs seen in their educational or public programs. As a person, museums rely on how key individuals such as artists, curators, critics, and museum's founder or director can contribute to their brand identity. Museum's organizational culture, values, and leadership, which collectively deliver overall customer experience contribute to how the museum's brand is constructed as an organization. Meanwhile, as a symbol, museums focus on its ability to become an icon that provides intangible benefits such as heritage transfer, intellectual capital, and emotional well-being. This branding framework applied to art museums can also be applied to other art spaces including art galleries, art fairs, biennials, or art exhibitions in general.

The above framework illustrates that

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the function of branding, particularly of cultural organizations, operates beyond traditional marketing strategies towards the continuous multidimensional construction of institutional identity. It provides the foundation for the understanding of cultural institutions and art spaces not merely as venues for art but as active brand constructors.

Result

Curatorial Rationale

The exhibition Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73 marked a key moment in the history of the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ) and Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM) following its revitalization. Bringing together more than sixty rarely seen artworks in the DKJ's collection from the 1960s–1990s and over one hundred archival materials, the show retrieved and reframed cultural memory while highlighting artistic tendencies in Indonesian modern and contemporary art. The exhibition employed three main curatorial devices: thematic grouping, which structured artworks and archives into seven interrelated sections; exhibition texts, which framed institutional narratives; and spatial design, which guided visitor experience through a dialogue between archives and artworks. Together, these devices formed curatorial strategies that are employed to construct the institutional image of the organizing institutions.

The curatorial rationale of Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73 is to commemorate and pay tribute to DKJ's contribution in Indonesian art landscape while at the same time marks the new era of DKJ and TIM to continue its founder's legacies in developing artistic discourses, ecosystem, and artistic dissemination (Nugeraha & Putra, 2022). The curatorial presentation was designed to balance archival activation with contemporary relevance, creating an exhibition that was both historically grounded and forward-looking. By interconnecting thematic grouping, interpretive texts, and spatial design, the exhibition sought to position canonical works with overlooked artistic voices, situate artistic practice within wider socio-political contexts, and invite critical engagement from the public. The approach emphasized storytelling as a framing device, while juxtaposing past and present practices to highlight the continuity and transformation of Jakarta's cultural identity.

Key implementation of these strategies includes foregrounding archival materials along with collection-based display to frame curatorial narratives about the history and roles of DKJ and TIM within the larger Indonesian art context. The exhibition presents renowned Indonesian artists alongside dominant artistic tendencies between 1960s to 1990s while intentionally including works from underrepresented artists, styles, and artistic ideologies. It also deliberately presents the mainstream artistic practice alongside experimental and provocative works. To ensure thematic clarity, the exhibition employs the use of narrative framing through exhibition text and spatial design.

Thematic Grouping

The exhibition "Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73" was organized into seven thematic sections. Each section was structured around specific tendencies in Indonesian modern and contemporary art, presented through a selection of works from the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ) collection and supporting archival materials. Rather than presenting these tendencies as linear art historical survey, the curatorial framework emphasized on the nuance around these themes, highlighting how different styles, ideologies, and mediums

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were produced within a broader social, political, and cultural context.

Figure 1. Exhibition view of Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73
(Source: Jakarta Arts Council)

The first section is the "Archives and Posters", displaying DKJ' archival collection including exhibition posters, audio recording, news clipping, and photo documentation from various art programs held at TIM between 1970s-1990s. "Dari Sudut-sudut Kota" (From the Corners of the City) featured landscape paintings by Indonesian modern artists in the 1970s-1980s. In addition, this section also features a series of paintings commissioned by Pertamina in the 1970s depicting various mining facilities across the country. "Tentang Manusia" (About Human) focuses on figurative works that span across generations of artists, artistic styles, and themes. In the "Gambar tanpa Gambar" (Image without Image), the exhibition highlights the abstract art collection, looking at the emergence of abstract art in Indonesia while expanding its discussion beyond the predominant Bandung School artists. A special section was dedicated to the work of Jakarta-based artist Nashar, whose works radically challenged the dominant artistic discourse in the 1970s through his "three-non" credo (non-thematic, non-concept, non-technique), which can be seen as an "anti-art" artistic ideology. Nashar, who served as a member of DKJ's committee, was also a central figure in developing the council's strategic direction in the 1970s. "Grafis: Seni/Desain" (Printmaking: Art/Design)

focuses on print works that emerged in the 1970s along with the proliferation of print technology, mass media, graphic design, and pop culture. Lastly, "Seni yang Baru" (The New Art) highlights the emergence of the Indonesian New Art Movement in 1975 as reaction to predominating non-political painting and sculpture in artistic practice by experimenting on different mediums, political imageries, and multidisciplinary approach.

Table 1. Thematic Grouping

Section Title	Key Artists	Narrative
Archives and Posters	-	DKJ's Art Committee programs at TIM in the 1970s-1990s, reframe archives as artistic objects and living records; positions DKJ and TIM as cultural hub in Jakarta for the last 50 years
Dari Sudut-sudut Kota (From the Corner of the City)	Trisno Soemardjo, Nunung WS, Trubus, Oesman Effendi, Zaini, Batara Lubis, Srihadi Sudarsono, Sudarso.	Landscape as one the oldest artistic subject; Shift from colonial idealization of nature to portrayal of urban landscape; Illustrates how artists began to shift their landscape subject from colonial gaze to reflection of urban experience; introduction of corporate patronage from Pertamina commissioned works; tied to socio-political context of the

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		1960s-80s in Indonesia
Tentang Manusia (About Human)	Agus Djaja, Baharudin Mara Sutan, Basuki Resobowo, Hendra Gunawan, A.D. Pirous, Jeihan.	Portrayal of human body as one of the most popular artistic subjects; Exploring identity, politics, and expression; Expands figurative art beyond the colonial gaze and open to multi-interpretation across expression, form, and socio-cultural identity
Gambar tanpa Gambar (Image without Image)	Mochtar Apin, Ahmad Sadali, Umi Dachlan, Oesman Effendi, Zaini, Nashar, Rusli, Abas Alibasyah, Fadjar Sidik, Amri Yahya	Abstract art in Indonesia and its emergence; intellectual and ideological discourse around abstract art; Expands the discussion of abstract art in Indonesia beyond Bandung School by including artists that are not associated with it; reframe abstract art in Indonesia as lyrical and emotive beyond the formalistic and analytical Western abstract art
Nashar oleh Nashar (Nashar by Nashar)	Nashar	Focus on Nashar, an outsider artist rejecting mainstream movement and a central figure of early

		establishment of DKJ; Highlights Nashar's artistic freedom and individuality that challenges dominant narratives in Indonesian art discourse during 1960s-1980s
Grafis: Seni/Desain (Printmaking: Art/Design)	Ahmad Sadali, Rita Widagdo, Sunaryo, Kaboel Suadi, Joesoef Effendi, Priyanto Sunarto, Dido Kusnidar, G. Sidharta, T. Sutanto, Tisna Sanjaya.	Printmaking as artistic medium; influence of mass media, pop culture, and graphic design industry in the artistic practice; Illustrates the rise of printmaking as artistic media in the 1970s-80s; blurring the boundaries between high art, design, and pop culture; intersection of art and applied art in the artistic discourse
Seni yang Baru (The New Art)	Jim Supangkat, Bonyong Muni Ardhi, Hardi, Priyanto Sunarto, Dede Eri Supria, others.	The emergence of the New Art Movement in 1975 as an artistic protest against conservative values in Indonesian art discourse; the use of experimental media such as installation, collage, and political imagery; Mark the contemporary turns and break from the mainstream and

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		dominant artistic tendencies in Indonesia; illustrates DKJ openness to critique and experimentation

Taken together, these curatorial choices reveal how Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73 was designed not only as an art-historical exhibition, but also as an institutional narrative. The thematic groupings foregrounded inclusivity, plurality, and memory, while the integration of archives emphasized continuity and stewardship. These findings form the basis to interpret how such strategies operated as mechanisms of institutional soft branding.

Exhibition Text

To provide contextual and visitor experience guidance, the exhibition Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73 was accompanied by a set of curatorial texts. The main curatorial text was placed in the entrance and served as introduction, explaining the rationale of the exhibition and its objective. In each exhibition section, the curatorial text was employed to provide general understanding of the thematic grouping and the significance of the works displayed in the corresponding section. These texts, placed as a large wall introduction, served not just as contextual aids but as discursive framing devices. They articulated how each set of works could be understood in relation to broader narratives of Indonesian art history, the institutional legacy of the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ), and the symbolic significance of Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM) as a cultural hub.

Table 2. Exhibition Text

Section	Key Narratives	Curatorial Framing
Curatorial Introduction (main exhibition text)	Renewal of TIM and its role for future discourse and ecosystem; DKJ's role and legacy in the development of Indonesian art; Artworks and archives presented as selected snapshots of historical development	Frames the exhibition as both homage and projection of institutional continuity; Positions the exhibition as reflexive reading of Indonesian art development
Archives and Posters	Archival materials as living records of DKJ's initiatives, collaboration, and discursive significance	Uses of archives to evoke institutional memory and evidence of institutional role
Dari Sudut-sudut Kota (From the Corner of the City)	Landscape as popular subject in artistic practice and shift from idealized portrayal of nature to depiction of urban experience	Landscape paintings as mirror of socio-cultural change
Tentang Manusia (About Human)	Figurative art as central subject across different period, styles, and artistic ideologies	Portrayal of human figures to illustrate various ideological and stylistic tendencies in Indonesian art
Gambar tanpa Gambar (Image without	Abstract art emergence in Indonesia; influence of Western art and	Frames abstraction as negotiation between international

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Image)	its tension with local artistic ideologies	influence; Jakarta art the third platform for ideological debate outside the mainstream discourse of Bandung vs Jogja
Nashar oleh Nashar (Nashar by Nashar)	Nashar's biography and his artistic statement of "tiga-non" emphasizing on artistic freedom and experimentation against dominant artistic discourse	Frames Nashar's radical figure as representation of DKJ's institutional spirit
Grafis: Seni/Desain (Printmaking: Art/Design)	Emergence of printmaking as artistic medium tied to the emergence of mass media, popular culture, and design industry	Highlight DKJ's openness to artistic media diversity, blurring the boundaries between art and design
Seni yang Baru (The New Art)	Emergence of the Indonesia New Art Movement in 1975 as a protest of predominant artistic tendencies	Frames DKJ and TIM as an open platform and enabler of contemporary breakthrough

The introduction positioned the exhibition as both a commemoration of DKJ's historical contribution and a projection of its future relevance, stressing TIM's role in sustaining critical discourse and artistic ecosystem-building. Each subsequent section text, while contextualizing specific artworks, also carried an implicit institu-

tional message—foregrounding memory, continuity, openness, and reflexivity as part of the Council's cultural identity.

Spatial Design

The spatial design of the "Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73" employed an open layout with two main elements: archives section along its main corridor and thematic chambers on the side. The archival display acts as conceptual anchor to historical context, while each chamber presents distinct artistic themes and tendencies.
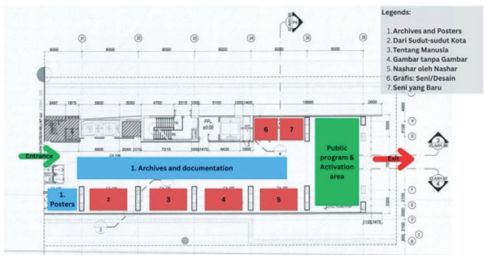

Figure 2. Exhibition floorplan design
(source: personal documentation)

The exhibition layout follows a linear spatial progression that guides visitors through a structured journey. Upon entering the gallery, visitors are immediately introduced to the Archives and Posters section. This display of archival materials and documentation establishes the historical foundation of the exhibition.

Figure 3. Visitor interacting with the displayed archives
(Source: Jakarta Arts Council)

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From this point, the exhibition moves into the main gallery, with the first three thematic chambers displaying landscape, figurative, and abstract works. These three sections showcase the mainstream artistic styles and tendencies within Indonesian art in the 1970 to 1990s. The fourth section, dedicated to the works of Nashar, whose radical approach provides antithesis of the three previous sections. Nashar's works also bridge the curatorial framing to the two concluding sections across that displayed printmaking and works from the Indonesia New Art Movement, highlighting the emergence of artistic experimentations, disruption, and expansion of artistic vocabularies. Adjacent to these end chambers is the public program & activation area that provides an open space for discussions, performances, and interactive programming, reinforcing the discursive and participatory dimensions of Taman Ismail Marzuki as a cultural venue.

Discussion

By using the concept of brand identity (Aaker, 1996; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014) as a theoretical framework, this study positions curatorial practice not merely as a process of exhibition-making and artwork presentation, but as a branding mechanism for institutional identity construction. This strategy aligns with the view that exhibition is not neutral and cultural organizations act as producers of discourse and meaning (Bennett,1995) Within this context, Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73 functions beyond historical documentation or artistic showcase. The exhibition intentionally constructs a narrative about DKJ as the organizing institution and TIM as its venue. By presenting the DKJ collection and archives materials, which incorporates the history of the organization and the exhibition venue, this exhibition projects what the hosts value and preserve as part of their identity.

As a brand-as-product, the selection of works from DKJ's collection established its core institutional product as cultural custodian of Jakarta's artistic development from the 1970s onward. The inclusion of works from artists outside of Jakarta implies that DKJ's institutional scope expands to the national scale. However, this projection of national scope remains suggestive rather than explicitly communicated. The thematic grouping that presents varying, and often contradicting, artistic tendencies along the historical development of Indonesian artistic landscape positions DKJ and TIM as facilitator of diverse discourses rather than authoritarian cultural narrators. While this strategy communicates plurality, it may simultaneously challenge the articulation of clear institutional identity.

In terms of brand-as-person, the curatorial framing in the exhibition text utilizes a neutral and informative tone. It constructs an intellectual and reflective personality that is rooted in discursive dialogue rather than offering entertaining spectacle. The presence of works from well renowned artists in the exhibition asserts DKJ and TIM cultural alignment with the broader established cultural narrative and landscape of Indonesia and reinforces institutional credibility. On the other hand, the inclusion of works from underrepresented artists, exemplified in the dedicated section on Nashar, signal an openness to reinterpret the dominant cultural narratives.

The brand-as-organization dimension is seen not through direct display of objects, but through the contextualization of archival materials that documents DKJ and TIM programming such as past exhibitions, discussions, and publications. These archival materials not only communicate the breadth of DKJ and TIM programming but also institutional ethos centered around discourse production and critical engagement. Presenting

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established artistic tendencies such as the mainstream landscape, portrait, and abstract artworks alongside experimentation in subjects and mediums such as in the works of Nashar and The New Art Movement assert organizational culture that values accommodates across different segments. It illustrates that DKJ and TIM facilitate mainstream artistic tendencies, while at the same time willing to challenge it. Yet, this balanced organizational identity risks creating ambiguous institutional stances if not carefully articulated.

Lastly, brand-as-symbol is communicated through spatial design, contextual timing of the exhibition, and the interpretative reading of the institutional history through archival materials. The opening of this exhibition that was intended to officiate the reopening of the newly renovated TIM complex implies a symbolic value that positions the institutions in the intersection of decades of historical legacy and future possibilities after renewal. The interpretation of archival materials on display anchors DKJ and TIM with Jakarta's cultural memory but its significance relies on the viewer's historical knowledge. This symbolic message may not translate to the broader public or future generation. In this case, symbolic value in this exhibition is potent but remains as subtext.

Table 3. Brand Identity Dimensions

Brand Identity Dimension	Curatorial Outputs	Branding Implication
Brand as Product	Selection of collection on display	Position DKJ/TIM as cultural custodian of artistic productions; inclusion of artists from outside Jakarta signals national scope
	Thematic grouping	Frames DKJ/TIM as facilitator across diverse artistic tendencies
Brand as Person	Exhibition text	Communicates intellectual authority and discourse oriented personality
	Highlight on renowned Indonesian modern artists	Assert institutional alignment with the broader established cultural narrative
	Inclusion of lesser-known artists	Signal openness and willingness to challenge dominant cultural narratives
Brand as Organization	Range of programming shown in the archival materials	Portrays DKJ/TIM as a platform for discourse and dissemination of diverse artistic products; Presents organizational ethos that centered on dialogue and critical engagement
	Presenting mainstream artistic tendencies alongside experimental works	Signals organizational culture that accommodates both continuity and experimentation

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Brand as Symbols	Spatial design	Signals historical context to anchor thematic exploration; symbolic message depends on audience's interpretive capacity and may not translate similarly across different audience
	Exhibition coinciding with the reopening of the renovated TIM complex	Acknowledges legacy while marking institutional revamp; leveraged through context rather than direct curatorial output
	Archival interpretation as narrative tools	Positions DKJ/TIM as discursive hub that builds institutional authority but may rely on nostalgic resonance

Although the curatorial outputs of this exhibition align with Aaker's concept of brand identity, this exhibition may also challenge it in its emphasis on plurality and fluidity. Whereas conventional branding favors singular, memorable identity propositions, the curatorial strategy of this exhibition intentionally favors complexity and contradiction to encourage audience reinterpretation of the curatorial narrative.

Taken together, Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73 demonstrates that curatorial strategy can serve as a branding mechanism for institutional identity. However, this study also acknowledges the constraints of curatorial practice as a branding tool. While brand identity can be projected through curatorial narrative and objects display, the reception remains beyond the scope of this study and contingent on audience knowledge, interpretive ability, and willingness to engage. While this research does not assess audience reception, the findings indicate that narrative-driven curatorial branding enables complex identity expression but introduces ambiguity that institutions must address when aligning exhibitions with broader branding goals.

Conclusion

The findings in this study illustrate that curatorial practice, especially in institutional context, functions not only as an exhibition-making process but also as a form of institutional branding. In the context of cultural institutions, where exhibitions are its main branding touchpoint, curatorial strategy functions as the primary branding mechanism. This study shows how exhibition can have the capacity to construct (and reconstruct) the public image of an art institution by strategically framing the narrative of the institution's origin, legacy, and future intent. Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73 illustrates how narrative and curatorial framing operate as forms of identity articulation that shape how an institution understands itself and wishes to be understood. By activating archives as symbolic capital and positioning plurality as an intentional stance rather than an indecision, the exhibition frames DKJ and TIM as both custodian and critic of Indonesia's cultural landscape. In doing so, the study shifts the positions of collection

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and archival material from passive documentation into active branding assets in communicating institutional continuity, legitimacy, and discursive authority.

The utilization of curatorial strategy as branding mechanism implies that curator also serves as brand intermediaries where the curatorial narrative becomes the branding instrument and exhibitions become sites to project and negotiate brand identity. Branding through curatorial strategy relies on critical alignment between institutional vision and exhibition making process, which provides subtle but deeper brand identity projection to the audience. This model challenges the traditional branding model that relies on visual identity systems or promotional messaging. Therefore, in cultural institutions, branding is embedded in curatorial decisions long before the exhibition's visual identity is designed.

This study acknowledges a number of practical limitations. First, it does not measure audience reception or perception of the projected brand identity. Therefore, it cannot make claims about brand image or how the intended identity is actually perceived by the public. Second, the analysis is based on a single exhibition, which cannot represent the entirety of the institution's branding strategy. Future research should address this gap through audience-based studies, comparative analyses across institutions with diverse curatorial models, and examinations of branding through serial or iterative exhibitions such as biennials, festival, or art fairs to examine how the brand identity constructed from curatorial strategies are being perceived by the audience as brand image.

As Indonesian art institutions navigate evolving cultural, political, and market expectations, branding should be seen not only as a corporate strategy but as an ongoing cultural strategy enacted through curatorial practice. Exhibitions like Cip-

ta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73 reveals that institutional identity is neither fixed nor inherited, but curated, contested, and continuously rewritten.

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