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BUILDING COLLABORATIVE STRENGTH THROUGH CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN INCLUSIVE EXHIBITION MAKING WITH A MULTI SOURCE CASE STUDY OF VINAUTISM GALLERY

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Abstract

Capacity-building initiatives to improve exhibition management are common in gallery practice, yet evidence-based accounts of how they translate into inclusive exhibition-making remain limited. This article examines how collaborative advantage was mobilized through a training-based capacity-building program at Vinautism Gallery (Surabaya, Indonesia), a privately initiated venue exhibiting the work of an autistic artist and running community-facing arts activities. The study used a qualitative single-case design and assembled a multi-source corpus comprising decision-oriented meetings, partnership intake and selection procedures, curatorial decision artefacts, installation and display-quality records, public program documentation, dissemination and media assets, and co-creation documentation involving autistic artists and artists with disability. Data were analyzed using document analysis and qualitative content analysis, combining a directed coding lens (planning, organizing, motivating, controlling) with inductive refinement. Findings indicate that capacity building was operationalized through an interlocking pathway of routines: structured coordination and role allocation; lightweight procedural tools for partnership access and selection; staged curatorial scoping-framing-selection; display quality assurance via diagnosis and corrective actions; integrated dissemination production that converts exhibitions into communication assets; and mentoring-based co-creation that supports inclusive production and curatorial integration. The study offers a mechanism-based model to guide small galleries seeking practical routes to inclusive, professionally delivered exhibitions.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusion has become a defining expectation for museums and exhibition venues, shaped by a widening understanding of public value and cultural rights. International sector narratives increasingly position museums as institutions that should reduce barriers to participation and respond meaningfully to diverse communities (ICOM, 2020). Yet the operational question remains difficult, especially for small venues with limited staffing and informal governance. Inclusive intentions must be translated into exhibition management practices that can be repeated, evaluated, and sustained, not only into occasional program or one off adjustments.

Recent investigations have broadened the comprehension of how neurodiversity, specifically autism, influences the definitions of access and engagement within museums and galleries. Co-design methodologies, for instance, have demonstrated that the effectiveness of "autism-friendly" initiatives is enhanced when autistic individuals actively contribute to the development of environments, services, and interpretive strategies, rather than being passively served (Watchorn et al., 2026).

Parallel work has emphasized sensory experience as a key determinant of inclusion, proposing practical tools and design responses that help visitors anticipate and regulate sensory conditions (Granland et al., 2025). This scholarship has been vital in moving the conversation beyond generic accessibility commitments toward specific, experience grounded interventions. At the same time, much of the literature concentrates on visitor experience, spatial design, and program adaptation, while paying comparatively less attention to the backstage managerial infrastructure that enables inclusive exhibition delivery across successive cycles.

Another area of research highlights collaboration as a key organizational strategy for museums and cultural institutions. Partnerships can increase capacity, share knowledge, and improve social outcomes by connecting

institutions with outside groups, communities, and resources (Tryapkin et al., 2025).

However, collaboration is often discussed at the level of strategy and intent, while the mechanisms that make collaboration workable are under specified. For exhibition making, collaborative advantage only becomes tangible when it is embedded in day to day decision structures, role allocation, routines of coordination, and shared procedures that shape curatorial planning, production, communication, and evaluation. The gap is particularly evident for small, privately initiated venues where formal governance structures may be minimal and where professionalism must occur through lightweight but robust managerial tools.

This article addresses that gap through a document based single case study of Vinautism Gallery in Surabaya, Indonesia. The gallery's exhibition features the artistic endeavors of Vincent Prijadi Purwono, an artist on the autism spectrum. The case documentation indicates that the gallery is broadening its public engagement through painting workshops, specifically designed for children with special needs, and is transforming into a more inclusive communal art space. Furthermore, the documentation characterizes the gallery's evolution as an organizational shift, transitioning from a family-run initiative to a more publicly accessible and enduring operation, with the aim of enhancing exhibition management practices and the subsequent visibility and significance of creative work involving children with special needs.

This context makes the case relevant to museum management and curatorial readerships interested in how inclusive cultural work is sustained within small organization and hybrid venues that sit adjacent to, rather than fully inside, formal museum structures.

The argument developed in this paper is that collaborative advantage is most visible, and most transferable, when it is translated into concrete exhibition management mechanisms. Rather than treating collaboration as a general aspiration, the study examines how collaboration is represented

and operationalized through managerial practice, specifically through the core functions of planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling that are used within the case documentation to describe exhibition management. Methodologically, the study adopts a document based single case research design, using document analysis as a systematic qualitative approach to interpreting organizational records and associated materials (Bowen, 2009). The analysis applies qualitative content analysis to identify and synthesis management mechanisms and outputs described in the documents, following established approaches to coding and interpretation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The design's suitability for the research objectives stems from its provision of detailed accounts of coordination methodologies, role assignments, procedural stipulations governing exhibition collaborations, and documented exhibition outcomes. This comprehensive documentation facilitates a precise examination of the practical assembly of inclusive exhibition management.

Existing research has productively focused on experience design and participation; however, there is a need for more detailed accounts of how small venues embed inclusive commitments into repeatable exhibition management routines, especially in non-Western settings and in privately initiated organizations. By articulating the practical mechanisms through which collaboration is converted into exhibition management practice, the study offers practice oriented implications for curators, gallery managers, and museum professionals working in small institutions or museum adjacent spaces. It demonstrates how structured collaboration can yield replicable routines and procedural tools that support inclusive programming, strengthen professional delivery, and improve the visibility and sustainability of community facing exhibitions, while recognizing that the evidence base is bounded by what is recorded in documents.

The remainder of the article delineates the document-based research design and coding strategy, presents the exhibition management

mechanisms synthesized from the case materials, and examines implications for inclusive exhibition management and collaborative capacity building in small cultural organizations.

At this point, the novelty will be apparent. The research stance must be included, whether it corrects, debates, or support the previous research. Please use the following table setup if you want to display the data.

METHODS

Research design and case bounding

This study employed a qualitative single case study design to examine how collaborative advantage was created through a training based capacity building program to strengthen inclusive exhibition making at Vinautism Gallery in Surabaya, Indonesia. A single case design was appropriate because it allowed an in depth and context sensitive examination of organizational routines, decisions, and practices within a clearly bounded setting (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995). The case was bounded to the 2022 exhibition cycle and encompassed organizational structuring, governance coordination, partnership intake and selection, curatorial scoping and selection, exhibition delivery, dissemination, and inclusive co creation practices. This approach also aligns with arguments that case study research is especially valuable when the aim is to understand complex processes in real world contexts rather than to isolate variables from their setting (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Actors and participation in the case ecology

Stakeholder groups were defined as the actors whose roles and interactions shaped exhibition making decisions and practices within the case. These included gallery leadership and management, curatorial actors, administrative and support staff, participating artists and community art groups, autistic artists and artists with disability involved in co creation, and facilitators such as mentors and students. Media actors and intended publics were also treated as part of the case ecology because they contributed to

dissemination, visibility, and engagement. In reporting disability related participation, the analysis prioritized ethical and contextual sensitivity by focusing on collaborative structures, mentoring arrangements, and curatorial integration rather than on personal characteristics. This emphasis is consistent with qualitative approaches that value context, participant respect, and interpretive depth (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015).

Data sources and corpus assembly

Data were assembled into a multi source case corpus in order to connect decision traces with implementation traces across exhibition development and delivery. The corpus included naturally occurring decision oriented meetings and group discussions, procedural materials governing partnership intake and selection, curatorial artefacts such as rationale statements and selection lists, practice records documenting installation and corrective action, dissemination and media artefacts, and co creation documentation related to mentoring structures and collaborative workflows. Building a corpus from multiple forms of qualitative material supports a richer and more credible understanding of organization process because it enables the researcher to compare perspectives, documents, and enacted practices across sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Miles & Saldana, 2014; Patton, 2015; Saldana, 2021).

Analytic approach and coding

The study used qualitative content analysis to support the systematic interpretation of written and visual records as evidence of organizational practice. The coding process moved iteratively through familiarization, segmentation, coding, categorization, and synthesis. A directed approach was adopted by using four managerial functions, namely planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling, as an initial analytic frame, while still allowing categories to be refined inductively as patterns emerged from the corpus (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Schreier, 2012). Meaning units were

segmented into decision units, practice units, and artefact units. First cycle coding captured operational mechanisms such as coordination rhythm, selection criteria, installation guidance, quality assurance corrections, dissemination asset production, and co creation mentoring. Second cycle coding then clustered these into higher order categories and pattern based themes, consistent with established guidance on qualitative coding and data condensation (Miles & Saldana, 2014; Saldana, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents a mechanism based account of how capacity building enabled Vinautism Gallery to mobilize collaborative advantage and translate it into inclusive exhibition making routines. The analysis connects decision traces, such as coordination deliberations and intake or selection decisions, with implementation traces, such as display and quality assurance practices, public programs, dissemination assets, and co creation outcomes. Evidence is triangulated across the multi source case corpus.

Capacity building focus and the operational problem space

To establish what capacity building sought to change and why collaboration mattered, the corpus first describes the gallery's operational context and constraints. Prior to the capacity building program, Vinautism Gallery's management system was largely family run and embedded within the broader management structure of a parent business group, which was reported to limit the scope and growth of gallery activities. In response, a university led capacity building team delivered structured inputs through presentation and brainstorming to support a leaner and more autonomous management approach. This process involved gallery leadership, managers, arts stakeholders, and an external arts advisor, and was also broadcast through the gallery's Instagram channel.

As an organizing frame for translating

collaborative effort into workable routines, the program structured exhibition management around four managerial functions, namely planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling. These functions subsequently shaped the standardization of workflows and the articulation of exhibition related routines.

Organizing Mechanisms: Decision Rhythm and Formalized Role Architecture

A key mechanism for mobilizing collaborative advantage was the formalization of coordination, which produced predictable decision rhythms and clearer accountability. Exhibition related matters were discussed through weekly internal meetings held every Friday (Fig. 1), complemented by monthly sessions involving community management and exhibition curators. Decision making was described as combining top down direction with bottom up inputs to support consistent outcomes across exhibitions.

The corpus also documents a more explicit division of labor through a formal organizational structure comprising the director or owner, an operations manager, a development manager, a permanent curator, a secretary or treasurer, a general assistant, and an arts advisor. The articulation of these roles indicates a move from informal administration toward a stabilized governance architecture capable of sustaining repeated exhibition cycles, which is especially important for inclusive delivery under capacity constraints.

Planning mechanisms: a standardized partnership intake and selection pipeline

Planning mechanisms were operationalized through a standardized partnership and selection procedure designed to make collaboration scalable and predictable. Applicants were required to submit a formal request nine months before the scheduled exhibition date, accompanied by an exhibition proposal, artist identity information, and a portfolio package consisting of digital images and at least five original works available for direct review.



Figure 1. Internal meeting topic: gallery management

Selection was documented as a joint curatorial and management decision assessed against three explicit criteria: reputation and artistic quality, alignment with the gallery's vision and work program, and technical feasibility given gallery facilities. Decisions were communicated formally to applicants. Once approved, applicants were required to complete technical arrangements, including administrative matters and agreements, two months prior to the exhibition. The records also indicate a controlled rescheduling mechanism intended to protect the program calendar while still allowing necessary adjustments.

Beyond intake and selection, the corpus outlines a full planning sequence that includes drafting the exhibition plan, selecting exhibitors, theme deliberation between managers and curators, allocating one to two months for artwork production, photographing works and preparing catalogue texts, and final delivery.

Motivating functions: curatorial meaning making, professional continuity, and public programming

The corpus shows that capacity building supported not only logistics but also meaning making and professional continuity. Curatorial work is represented as a practice of constructing narrative coherence and sustaining public interpretation, rather than as the production of

interpretive text alone. The documentation explicitly highlights support for emerging curators (Fig. 2), framed as a strategy for continuity and professional succession within the gallery's exhibition system.



Figure 2. Curation activity with Tepi Barat Community

Motivating mechanisms also operate through structured public programming that extends exhibitions into engagement infrastructure. The corpus details recurring elements of openings and related activities, including remarks by the director and curator explaining exhibition rationale and curatorial process, community or artist presentations, a ceremonial opening activity such as signing a commemorative exhibition poster, guided appreciation sessions across multiple floors, and scheduled public discussions involving artists, cultural actors, academics, and mass media. The records further describe guided tours for schools, universities, and community groups, led by the manager and curator to support learning and interpretation.

Controlling mechanisms: evaluation loops and iterative learning

To sustain improvement across repeated cycles, the corpus evidences a formalized evaluation routine. After each exhibition, staff and curators conducted a review discussion addressing constraints, strengths, and weaknesses, with the aim of informing subsequent improvements. This positions exhibition management as iterative learning rather than a single cycle production process, and it supports quality stability through structured corrective action.

Display quality assurance: from baseline deficits to SOP based standardization

A major delivery outcome concerns the professionalization of display quality assurance. The corpus reports that baseline display conditions did not meet expected standards, citing deficiencies in partitions, hanging height, display harmony, visitor circulation, and lighting.

Subsequent improvement is associated with SOP based standardization. The SOP emphasized mapping visitor movement to reduce confusion, managing spacing between works and visitors, structuring multi floor logic with monumental works on the main floor and supporting works above, and grouping works by style, theme, color, and subject matter. Standardization extended to label design and placement by specifying consistent label material, minimum information fields such as exhibition theme, artist name, title, medium, and year, and consistent positioning. Lighting standards included focused illumination, recommended reflection angles of thirty to forty five degrees, and avoidance of glare that could reduce visitor comfort. The corpus summarizes the result as a significant improvement in display arrangements following SOP adoption.

Dissemination infrastructure: converting exhibitions into visibility assets

To extend collaborative advantage beyond the exhibition space, dissemination was treated as a core delivery infrastructure rather than a peripheral task. The corpus documents dissemination practices that included catalogues and marketing booklets, invitations, authenticity certificates, social media activation on Instagram and TikTok, video documentation of artists and exhibition activities, and media partner networks across print and digital outlets.

Visibility outcomes were supported through extensive media traces. The program documentation reports mass media coverage and also notes attention from online audiences, including content creators and influencers, framed as an effective pathway to younger publics. The corpus also includes recorded links to online

coverage and video documentation distributed through YouTube and Instagram.

Catalogues as shown in Fig. 3 were positioned as critical exhibition artefacts supporting interpretation, education, and sales, with format and print quantity adapted to available resources. Selected catalogue specifications across the 2022 program are reported below.

Table 1. Display SOP components and operational indicators

Domain	Standardized component	Operational indicators (examples)
Visitor experience	Visitor movement mapping	Route logic to reduce confusion
Spatial comfort	Spacing and circulation	Distance management between works and visitors
Zoning	Floor based layout logic	Monumental works on main floor, supporting works above
Curatorial spatial coherence	Grouping principles	Grouping by style, theme, color, and subject matter
Interpretation	Label standardization	Minimum fields and consistent placement
Technical delivery	Lighting standardization	Focused lighting, thirty to forty five degree angles, anti glare

Operational outputs: sustained exhibition throughput in 2022

To show that capacity building translated into operational throughput rather than isolated improvements, the corpus documents a sustained exhibition rhythm across 2022. Five exhibitions were staged with defined date ranges and reported participant totals.

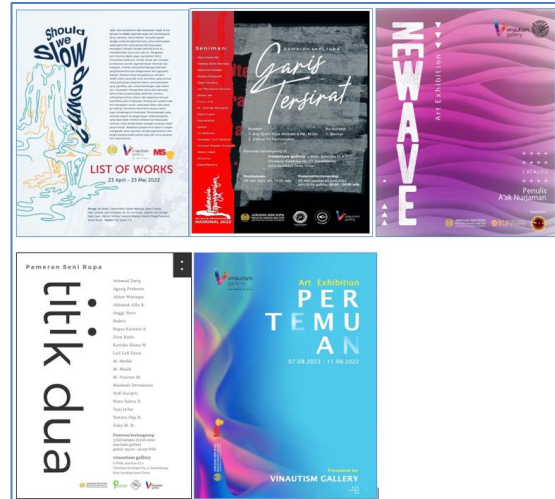


Figure 3. Exhibition Catalogues

Table 2. Documented exhibition catalogues

Exhibition	Format (cm)	Pages
Should we Slow Down? (List of Works)	21.5 × 27.9	10
Garis Tersirat	21 × 29	47
titik dua (List of Works)	21.5 × 27.9	14
Pertemuan	21 × 29.7	46
NEW WAVE	20 × 25	55

Table 3. Exhibition program

Exhibition title	Dates (2022)	Reported participants
Should we Slow Down?	23 Apr to 23 May	15
Garis Tersirat	28 May to 28 Jun	18
titik dua	3 Jul to 23 Jul	19
Pertemuan	7 Aug to 11 Sep	15
NEW WAVE	24 Sep to 24 Oct	15

Inclusion operationalized as production: structured co creation and mentoring

Inclusion is evidenced not only as outreach programming but also as a production mechanism embedded within exhibition making as shown in Fig. 4. The corpus records intensive mentoring and co creation with three children with special needs,

explicitly oriented toward producing artworks intended for exhibition alongside professional artists. The mentoring process involved multiple facilitators and included student participation, framed as a transfer of practical knowledge on strategies for developing artistic skills among children with special needs.



Figure 3. Collaboration and mentoring with autistics artist

Taken together, the findings show that collaborative advantage was made actionable through capacity building that converted coordination, expertise, and resources into repeatable routines and lightweight procedural tools. Governance rhythms and role architecture stabilized coordination and accountability. The partnership pipeline operationalized collaboration through explicit access conditions and feasibility screening. Curatorial and public programming consolidated shared meaning and audience learning. Evaluation routines enabled iterative improvement. SOP based display standards professionalized delivery. Dissemination practices converted exhibitions into visibility assets across print, social media, and audiovisual channels. Finally, co creation embedded inclusion within the production workflow rather than positioning it as peripheral programming.

Table 4. Exhibitions documented in the report (2022)

Exhibition	Dates	Collaboration / community link	(n)
Should We Slow Down?	23 Apr – 23 May 2022	Multi-city (Surabaya, Gresik, Batu, Lamongan, Pasuruan)	15
Garis Tersirat	28 May – 28 Jun 2022	Komunitas Tepi Barat	18
titik dua	3 Jul – 23 Jul 2022	Komunitas Pawitra & Kuas Patis (Pasuruan)	19
Pertemuan	7 Aug – 11 Sep 2022	Multi-city (incl. Yogyakarta)	15
NEW WAVE	24 Sep – 24 Oct 2022	Komunitas Gasrug (Gresik)	15

DISCUSSION

Translating collaborative advantage into lightweight exhibition management governance

Collaborative advantage is not automatic. Partnerships create friction, and benefits usually emerge only when coordination is managed through workable routines, clear decision points, and defined responsibilities (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Vangen & Huxham, 2013). In small venues, governance is therefore less about formal bureaucracy and more about the day-to-day infrastructure that keeps work moving.

Here, collaboration is examined as exhibition management practice. The documentation frames management through four functions—planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling—shifting attention from values to the mechanisms that make collaboration effective (Vangen & Huxham, 2013). This framing clarifies where collaborative advantage is built: in structures that reduce ambiguity and sustain coordinated action.

The record describes a steady coordination

rhythm, with weekly internal meetings and monthly sessions involving community management and curatorial actors, supported by decision-making that blends top-down and bottom-up input. It also specifies an organizational structure with roles such as director or owner, operational and development management, a permanent curator, and administrative support. These arrangements reflect governance guidance for small to medium museums, where role clarity and workable structures often determine whether programs remain stable over time (Willard & Bell, 2021).

Professionalizing planning through procedural standardization and curatorial decision pathways

Planning capacity is most visible in the partnership intake and selection procedure. Proposals are required in advance with defined materials, and selection is handled internally through curatorial and managerial review using stated criteria. Scheduling rules, administrative timelines, and controlled rescheduling indicate that collaboration is managed through process rather than informal networks.

This kind of standardization does more than organize paperwork. It reduces uncertainty, protects the exhibition calendar, and clarifies expectations, helping avoid “collaborative inertia” that arises when responsibilities and decision processes remain unclear (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Huxham, 2004). In this case, planning becomes a repeatable capability because it is formalized as an intake-to-decision pathway that can be refined across cycles.

Standardization also introduces an inclusion tension. Procedures can improve transparency and perceived fairness, but they can become barriers for under-resourced artists or community groups if requirements are difficult to meet or poorly supported. Research on DEAI in museums shows that inclusion often fails when it is not embedded in operations and organizational processes, even when commitments are explicit (Haupt et al., 2022). Inclusive exhibition management therefore

depends not only on having procedures, but on designing and communicating them in ways that widen participation, consistent with sector calls to address bias in museum narratives and practices (ICOM, 2020).

Embedding inclusion in exhibition delivery through curatorial meaning-making, quality assurance, and production practices

The documentation suggests that inclusion is enacted through delivery rather than left at the level of mission statements. Visitor-facing programming includes framing by leadership and curatorial actors, guided appreciation across multiple floors, public discussions, media engagement, and educational visits led by management and curators. These practices support the “motivating” function by building shared meaning and creating repeatable pathways for engagement beyond walk-in attendance.

Control mechanisms further support inclusion through consistency and learning. The record describes post-exhibition evaluations that review strengths, constraints, and weaknesses, treating delivery as iterative improvement. It also details a display SOP that maps visitor movement, manages spacing, structures multi-floor layouts, and groups works to improve legibility and coherence. Although visitor effects are not measured, these practices align with accessibility research emphasizing that sensory and spatial conditions shape participation and that tools such as sensory mapping can support more inclusive environments (Cieslik, 2024).

Most notably, inclusion is documented as a production practice. The case describes intensive co-creation with three children with special needs for exhibition alongside professional artists. This shifts inclusion from access provision to core exhibition work by integrating mentoring and collaborative creation into the exhibition pipeline. This direction is consistent with evidence that co-design with autistic people can improve relevance and usability by grounding museum practice in lived experience and collaborative development (Watchorn et al., 2026).

Implications of the study

The study indicates that collaborative advantage is produced through operational choices, not aspiration. Collaboration becomes actionable when it is translated into routine exhibition-management infrastructure, including coordination rhythms, shared decision points, and role clarity, consistent with scholarship distinguishing realized advantage from collaborative inertia (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Huxham, 2004; Vangen & Huxham, 2013).

The findings also support procedural professionalization as a practical strategy for small, privately initiated venues. Standardized intake and selection pathways act as low-cost governance tools that protect the program calendar, reduce uncertainty, and clarify expectations, making planning durable and less dependent on individuals.

The study further reframes inclusion as an exhibition delivery challenge. Inclusion appears stronger when embedded in core workflows—curatorial meaning-making, structured public engagement, evaluation routines, and display standards that shape legibility, circulation, and participation routes—consistent with accessibility research on sensory and spatial conditions (Cieslik, 2024).

Finally, the case positions inclusion as a matter of production as well as access. Co-creation with children with special needs, intended for exhibition alongside professional artists, locates inclusion in artistic labor and curatorial integration rather than limiting it to outreach. This points to a broader toolkit for museum-adjacent spaces, where mentorship, integration decisions, and visibility work are treated as part of inclusive exhibition management.

Limitations and future research

This study is a qualitative single-case study based on a multi-source documentary corpus of organizational records and program artefacts. The findings therefore describe documented mechanisms and outputs rather than measured impacts on visitors, artists, or organizational performance. Because the evidence reflects what is recorded and curated in institutional documentation, it may privilege intended procedures over variability in everyday practice. Future work should incorporate stakeholder perspectives and outcome measures to test transferability and to connect management mechanisms to lived experiences of inclusion.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that collaborative advantage in inclusive exhibition management is achieved when collaboration is translated into repeatable managerial mechanisms rather than treated as a general value. Using document-based evidence from Vinautism Gallery, the case highlights a practical toolkit for small, privately initiated venues: lightweight governance routines, role clarity, standardized partnership and selection procedures, curatorial meaning-making, and quality assurance practices, alongside inclusion embedded in co-creative production. Making these mechanisms explicit advances museum management and curatorial practice by clarifying how professionalization and inclusion can be strengthened through structured, low-cost organizational design that supports consistency, visibility, and sustainability across exhibition cycles.

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