

Excerpt

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AMERICAN SPACES

Idea Book 2.0



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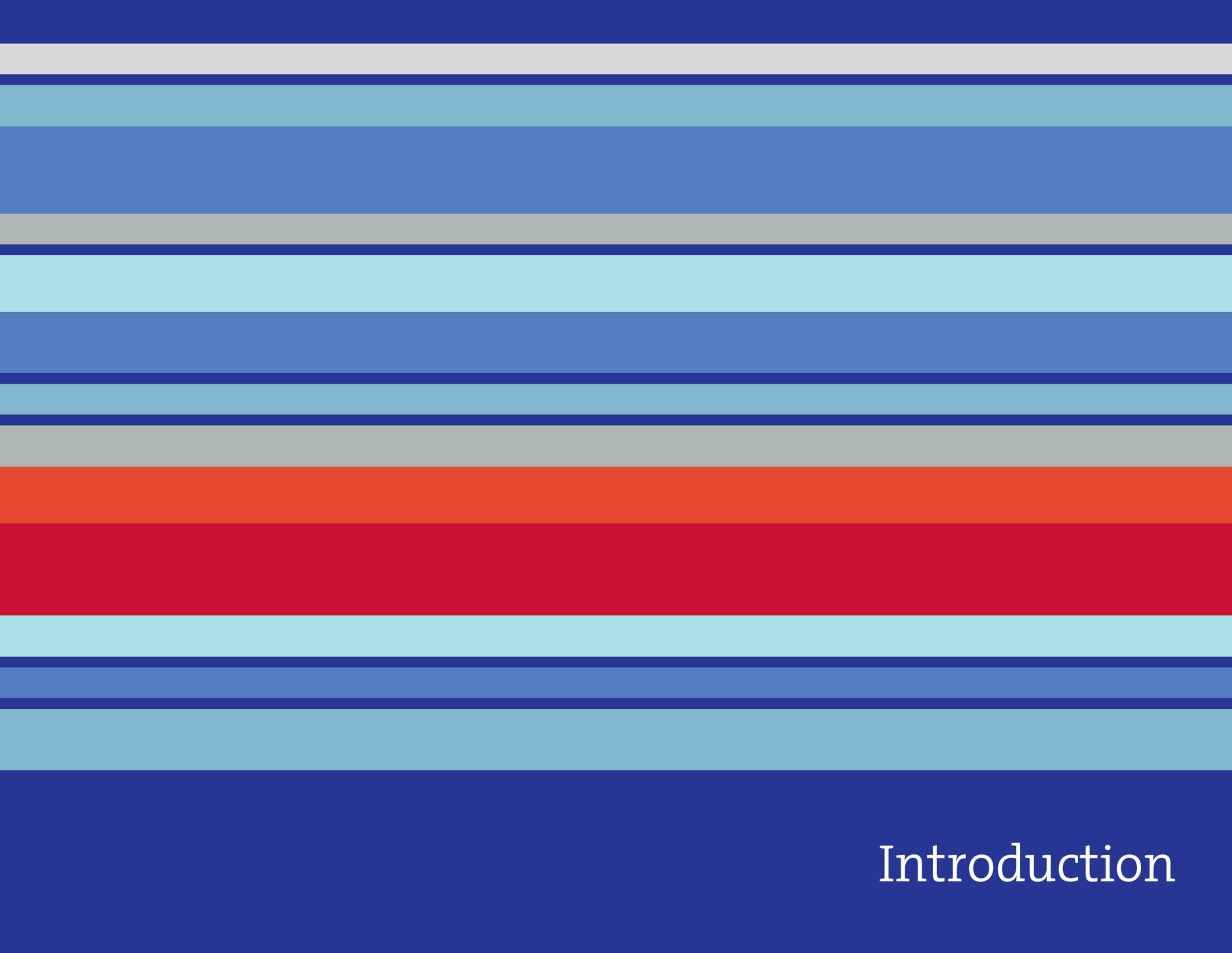
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Introduction

Based in communities around the world, American Spaces have long served as key overseas platforms for conducting public diplomacy.

In the past three years, American Spaces have made dramatic progress toward becoming premier venues for the entire mission to achieve foreign policy goals through in-person engagement. And that evolution continues.

Increasingly, American Spaces are making the Internet and interactive technologies accessible to key audiences. They are reaching those targeted audiences with advanced digital tools and interacting with them through in-person and virtual programming. These digital-first approaches combined with vibrant designs and rich programming resources provided through a rewarding partnership with the Smithsonian Institution (SI) are enabling American Spaces to carve out a niche as hubs of innovation and discovery in their communities and countries, attracting strategic audiences relevant to U.S. foreign policy.

The original Idea Book, released in 2013 as a broad branding and design resource for the worldwide network of American Spaces, provided the context for this shift. It served as a roadmap for charting a course toward open, adaptable environments that were also vivid and inspiring, within the framework of the Model American Spaces project.

Idea Book 2.0 is the result of this continued and fruitful IIP-SI collaboration, which began in 2012. Through site visits, focus groups, digital conferences, design renderings, construction projects, and on-site workshops, IIP and SI have streamlined this design resource to provide the network of American Spaces the means to improve and harmonize their interior designs and physical spaces—all in support of offering dynamic, mission-aligned programming.

Like its predecessor, Idea Book 2.0 provides ideas and inspiration to create a modern, synergistic look and feel, while providing flexibility to support the needs of local audiences. Idea Book 2.0 focuses on visual branding of the American Space through innovative use of design and space with a new furniture selection and a simplified color palette. Use it as a guide and idea starter to take your American Space to the next level.



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Opening Message

The Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) initiated the Model American Spaces project with SI to develop signature design specifications and dynamic programming to ensure American Spaces are attractive, innovative, interactive, and engaging. Using Idea Book 2.0, all spaces, large and small, can implement the expressive look and feel that captures the American essence of American Spaces.

IIP's Office of American Spaces provides oversight, training and funding to support more than 700 American Spaces worldwide. It is the home office for the Foreign Service Specialist corps of Information Resource Officers (IROs), who are based in strategic locations around the world. IROs support Posts to ensure that American Spaces are used as venues to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives.

The Smithsonian's Office of International Relations (OIR) coordinates the Institution's international efforts, including partnerships with governments, cultural institutions, NGOs and professionals worldwide. The mission of OIR is to harness the creativity and assets of the Smithsonian to promote meaningful change in the world.



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Who We Are

We put forward here design ideas to help enliven the full range of Spaces, from wholly managed American Centers to co-managed American Corners and Bi-national Centers.

Through consultation with American Spaces staff and partners, Embassy staff, IIP staff, and numerous designers from SI and beyond, we have developed some design principles and concepts that may serve as sources of inspiration for interior space planning and selection of design, furniture, and graphics. The concepts were developed with these goals in mind:

- To provide users of American Spaces worldwide with innovative and dynamic environments within which they can explore the diversity of American language, culture, education, and foreign policy activities and positions; and
- To advance the role of American Spaces as symbols of shared relationships and commitments between the U.S. and host communities.

The *Designing Your American Space* section (Chapter 4) is full of recommendations to help you (re)design and enliven your spaces. Regardless of the size of your space or the number of rooms, we offer strategies to create an American Space that suits your needs while ensuring that it reflects the vision and needs of your local community.

Functionality and **flexibility** are crucial elements to the success of the physical environments. We hope that the design renderings serve as inspiration and allow you to visualize how spaces of varying sizes can be configured to promote and foster diverse programmatic offerings.

While we recommend that you engage with your local community of artisans, printers, and craftsmen to create your unique space, if you see a particular element in a design that you would like to incorporate, we have provided the specifications and ordering information that you will need for procurement on pages 5.26–5.45. The book contains suggestions on:

- Color Palette
- Furniture, including storage, shelving, seating, tables, and mobile partitions
- Flooring and finishes
- Furniture Schedule
- Finish Schedule



What You'll Find

Additionally, we include sections on:

- *Defining Identity*: ensuring your brand purpose and personality are established and shine through in spaces that can support mission-driven programming across the American Spaces five core programs.
- *Engaging Visitors*: identifying and connecting with your visitors to enhance their experience; recommendations for conducting focus groups that provide valuable insight into the needs and experiences of your American Space visitors and U.S. government program alumni; and information about how to access Smithsonian content to meet your programming needs.
- *Graphics*: a sampling of the suite of high-resolution graphics created by SI specifically for American Spaces, as well as images from SI collections and a how-to guide for applying these graphics to walls, pillars, or even windows in your space.



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What You'll Find (*continued*)