

Excerpt

Defining Identity

AMERICAN SPACES

Idea Book 2.0



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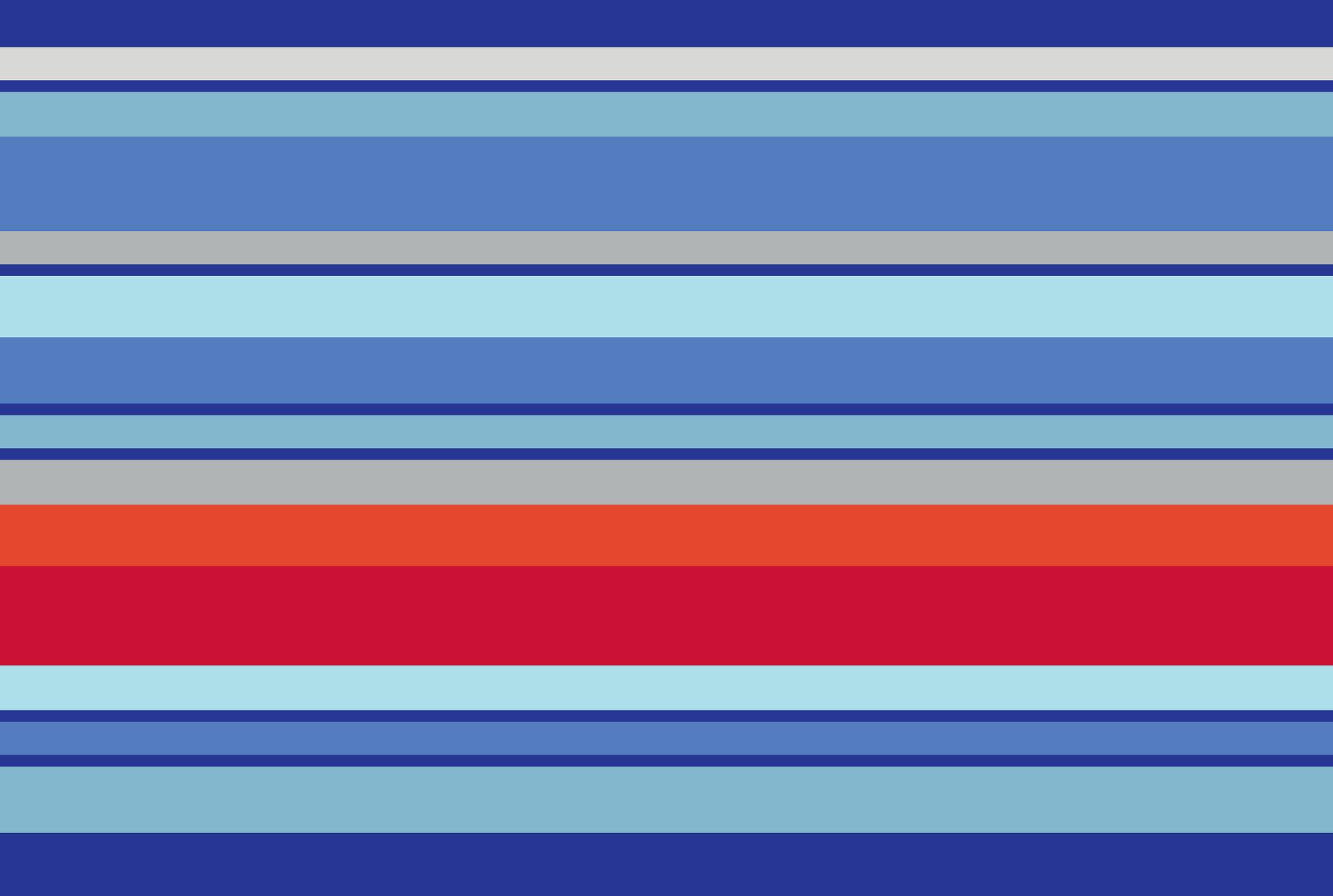
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Defining Identity

Visit seven American Spaces and find seven variations on America, seven strategies for engaging audiences, and seven ways to connect people with foreign policies of the United States. IIP's centers of in-person engagement reflect the diversity of the United States as well as the qualities of their local communities.

So why discuss creating a worldwide “brand” identity for American Spaces?

A brand is the expression of chosen characteristics, values and attributes through products, services, people, places, and experiences. Successful brands evoke positive emotions that audiences associate with an organization or its services. They foster collaboration and pride among their staff. And they distinguish themselves from other brands.

Visual features go a long way toward establishing and maintaining a brand, but a logo is just the start. Idea Book 2.0 exemplifies a style—or look and feel—that signifies and unifies American Spaces. The Office of American Spaces and SI have chosen a new furniture collection that provides a selection of modern, flexible, modular and comfortable options in a color palette that any American Space can customize to the needs and wants of its audience.

A cohesive, distinct identity binds American Spaces as a community—a network—with shared ideals and builds solidarity, goodwill, and cooperation among them. It also allows visitors to be part of something “bigger,” fostering a sense of belonging. A student walking into an American Corner in

Ukraine can feel connected to students all over the world who are learning English or are curious about American universities.

A recognizable identity does not make all American Spaces the same—it conveys a common purpose and shared mission, and it helps provide visitors and other stakeholders with a clear understanding of what American Spaces are and what they do.

IIP and the Office of American Spaces believe American Spaces can make an identifiable and memorable impression by taking full advantage of the aesthetic benefits of the IIP-Smithsonian partnership and using IIP and SI's digital resources in ways that work best for them to advance U.S. foreign policy goals.



Brand Message

All American Spaces are places to connect—with people, with opportunity, and with America, through either collaborative activity or individual inquiry.

They encourage interaction through dialogue on issues that matter most, build bridges of understanding, invite community involvement, and impart an American spirit that feels positive and welcoming.

American Spaces also are safe places for exploration, conversation and self-discovery. They embody freedom of self-expression, counteract negative narratives and develop new generations of global leaders. The design principles in this book were chosen with these specific attributes in mind. For example, one item of furniture can be used passively as seating or actively as a work surface or combined for group discussion. Open, informal seating can encourage collaboration and dialogue. These are the qualities that American Spaces can exemplify with their design choices. They can be more specifically defined as:

- **Places of exploration.** American Spaces represent the United States as a place that fosters individual ingenuity and innovation—pursuing a dream, developing an idea or making things with pride.
- **Places of collaboration.** American Spaces enable visitors to share ideas and experiences and learn from one another. Examples are exchange alumni returning to speak about visiting the United States, students working together to learn English, or entrepreneurs digitally collaborating on a design in real time.
- **Places of acceptance.** Visitors to American Spaces feel welcome, regardless of prejudicial beliefs that may exist in their community or country, and they are encouraged to return. Underrepresented groups, such as women and girls and the LGBT community, know they are welcome.



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Brand Qualities

Another aspect of creating a brand is differentiating American Spaces from the in-person diplomacy platforms of other countries. All American Spaces conduct some of their programming in one or more of five distinctly American core areas throughout the year.

Information about the United States—Policy-relevant programming that promotes mission objectives falls into this area. Posts can help American Spaces find and share information resources on key policy themes, including IIP-produced digital content, eLibraryUSA, MOOCs, speakers, American books, magazines, and movies, and content the Smithsonian has developed specifically for American Spaces.

Community Engagement in Cultural Programs—This area is for growing audience participation while fostering people-to-people connections and building mutual respect. “Campaigns,” or a series of programs on a specific topic, are more effective than single events. American Spaces can support their impact by working together in a country or region to offer collaborative or complementary programs.

American English Language Programs—As one of the most venerable programs of American Spaces, these programs expose audiences to a wider world of information and opportunities for engagement. American Spaces can take advantage of fresh resources, such as ways to use Smithsonian content or creative strategies for classes, or conversation clubs. <http://americanenglish.state.gov>

EducationUSA—American Spaces can take advantage of this established and recognized brand to promote themselves as a network while advancing the global U.S. policy objective of increasing the population of international students in the United States. <https://educationusa.state.gov>

Alumni Programs—Activities featuring alumni of U.S. government-sponsored programs help to promote policy goals from a local perspective and are an enduring source of brand reinforcement. <https://alumni.state.gov>



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Branding with the Five Core Programs