



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Visual Identity Program Records, 1966,
1979-1980, 1985-1995, 1998-2007

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Smithsonian Institution Archives
Washington, D.C.
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Visual Identity Program Records
Identifier:	Accession 07-147
Date:	1966, 1979-1980, 1985-1995, 1998-2007
Extent:	5 cu. ft. (5 record storage boxes)
Creator::	Smithsonian Institution. Office of Public Affairs
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession 07-147, Smithsonian Institution, Office of Public Affairs, Visual Identity Program Records

Use Restriction

Restricted for 15 years, until Jan-01-2023; Transferring office; 05/15/2007 memorandum, Toda to Jonas; Contact reference staff for details.

Descriptive Entry

This accession consists of materials maintained by Kathryn B. Lindeman, Director of Publications, in regards to the implementation and coordination of the Visual Identity Program and its system of logos at the Smithsonian Institution (SI). Early in 1998, Smithsonian Institution Secretary I. Michael Heyman engaged the design firm of Chermayeff & Geismar in New York City to design a system of logos for the museums, research centers, and administrative offices of the Smithsonian.

In conjunction with designer Ivan Chermayeff, the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) issued a book, "Smithsonian Design Guidelines." These guidelines provided guidance for Smithsonian Institution staff and contractors in the proper usage of the Smithsonian Institution logo. For a copy of these guidelines see Accession 01-079.

The logo consists of the wording "Smithsonian Institution" accompanied by the sunburst. The sunburst has been used in Smithsonian Institution references from its beginnings in the mid-1800s for knowledge, enlightenment, and brightness. In the 1960s, a Smithsonian Institution seal was designed with a sunburst at the center. Chermayeff & Geismar used that sun in the new design. Over the years the various Smithsonian Institution museums, research centers, and units had developed their own logo designs, often including a sunburst, forming a patchwork of logos in use around the Smithsonian Institution with no cohesive visual identity. Secretary Heyman, feeling the strong need to unify the uses of the Smithsonian

Institution name and the look of Smithsonian Institution logos, began the Visual Identity Program, which was continued under his successor, Secretary Lawrence M. Small.

Also represented in this accession is David J. Umansky, Director of Communications, who, along with Lindeman, oversaw the Visual Identity Program. Included are memoranda regarding guidance on the use of the Smithsonian Institution logo in stationery and the use of the "Smithsonian Design Guidelines" book; materials related to waivers on the use and implementation of the Smithsonian Institution logo; materials related to violations of the use of the Smithsonian Institution logo; cost and budget information regarding the logo designed by Chermayeff & Geismar, printing costs, and the licensing of the use of the Minion font; materials related to the creation of new podium plaques and badges for Office of Protection Services officers; materials related to the Visual Identity Program website; concept and schematic drawings for signage for various units and museums; information on previously used logos; and other related materials.

Materials include correspondence, memoranda, notes, drawings, reports, guidelines, stationery examples, printing samples, logo presentation materials, meeting minutes, color slides and photographs, and black-and-white transparencies. Some materials are in electronic format.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Corporate image
- Logography
- Logos (Symbols)
- Museums -- Public relations
- Trademarks

Types of Materials:

- Black-and-white transparencies
- Color photographs
- Color transparencies
- Compact discs
- Drawings
- Electronic records
- Floppy disks
- Manuscripts

Names:

- Chermayeff & Geismar
- Chermayeff & Geismar Associates
- Chermayeff, Ivan
- Heyman, Ira Michael, 1930-2011
- Lindeman, Kathryn B.
- Small, Lawrence M.
- Smithsonian Institution
- Umansky, David J.

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- Box 5 of 5 Centered lock-ups, 1998
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