NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE**

BRAND GUIDE

CONTENTS

BRAND
STRATEGY

ABOUT THE MUSEUM

There are four pillars upon which the museum stands:

1. It provides an opportunity for those who are interested in African American culture to **explore and revel** in this history through interactive exhibitions, public programs and symposia, and publications.

2. It helps all Americans see how **their stories, their histories, and their cultures** are shaped and informed by global influences.

3. It explores what it means to be an American and share how American values like **resilience, optimism,** and **spirituality** are reflected in African American history and culture.

4. It serves as a place of **collaboration** that reaches beyond Washington, D.C., to engage new audiences and to work with the myriad of museums and educational institutions that have explored and preserved this important history well before this museum was created.

BRAND VALUES

Authenticity

The museum tells the story of the African American experience with accuracy, honesty, respect and the unvarnished truth. Rigorous scholarship is at the core of its publications, exhibitions and academic endeavors. We continuously work to maintain its originality, integrity, transparency and credibility.

Innovation

The museum is innovative in presenting sensitive subject matter that is essential in understanding contemporary African American history and culture. We incorporate cutting-edge technology to share the African American story with the world. We create an environment for experimentation and for employees to transform the museum experience.

Discovery

Discovery is central to the work of this museum. We are steadfast in our commitment to help people look deeply into the past and the present, to ask the tough questions, and to see how America's past has shaped the America we know today. The museum encourages continuous learning by staff and the broadening of education and perspectives.

Excellence

The museum focuses on ways to work better, smarter and in alignment with the highest standards. We do not rest on accomplishments; we build on them. We work to deliver the best possible experience for our visitors and stakeholders. The museum endeavors to set new standards in the field, to shatter limitations and exceed expectations. We inspire excellence in our employees. Employees care about their work and the credibility of the museum.

Resilience

The museum honors the resilience of African Americans who overcame tremendous adversity to build America and influence the world over. Just as they displayed great strength, courage and optimism in their struggle for equality and justice, the museum draws on wells of resilience. We use resilience to overcome obstacles in building exhibitions and public programs to the highest quality.

Spirituality

Spirituality is deeply embedded in African American culture and is an essential part of the ethos of the museum. We create exhibitions and programs designed to instill a sense of reverence for and a deep connection to the human spirit.

BRAND APPROACH

A recognizable brand identity is important.

When the museum's voice and character are consistently reflected in its communications, that facilitates understanding. It encourages the development of meaningful relationships between the museum and its audiences. The museum's brand is a reflection of its core values. Used well, it helps to support the museum's mission.

Please use this guide as a resource. A brand identity is at its most effective when it is applied thoughtfully and with purpose. The guidelines detailed here are designed to exist in harmony with the museum's exhibitions and its institutional character. They are also intended to be flexible and functional enough to meet the needs of a living, vibrant cultural institution.

USING THE BRAND
The NMAAHC Office of Public Affairs can offer guidance and support in using the museum brand. Make sure that the all public-facing materials including the logo or other brand elements are reviewed and approved by the Office of Public Affairs.

BRAND
VOICE

WRITING IN THE MUSEUM'S VOICE

When writing or speaking on the museum's behalf, your words should feel consistent with existing language and true to the museum's character. Be straightforward, clear, and concise. All museum communications should share a common and familiar voice.

The museum's voice is—above all—authentic, inclusive, and accessible. It is welcoming and always respectful. Its tone strikes a balance between casual and overly formal. Audiences should feel invited to discover what the museum has to offer.

Depending on context, the mood may be celebratory, reserved, passionate, spiritual, or informative. Consider what is most appropriate for the situation at hand.

RESPECT AND INCLUSION
Make sure to use terminology that is empowering, respectful, inclusive, and accurate. The museum recognizes that identities and the language used to describe them are varied and always evolving. Pay special attention to how people self-identify when it comes to race, nationality, religion, gender, sexuality, ability, and other social and cultural groups.

STYLE GUIDELINES

Depending on the context, the museum's tone spans a range from serious to celebratory, and from casual to formal. Avoid any language that is so formal or so casual that it feels inaccessible or unwelcoming to a wide audience. Formality should feel respectful, never exclusionary.

Please contact the Office of Public Affairs for more specific guidance on writing style.
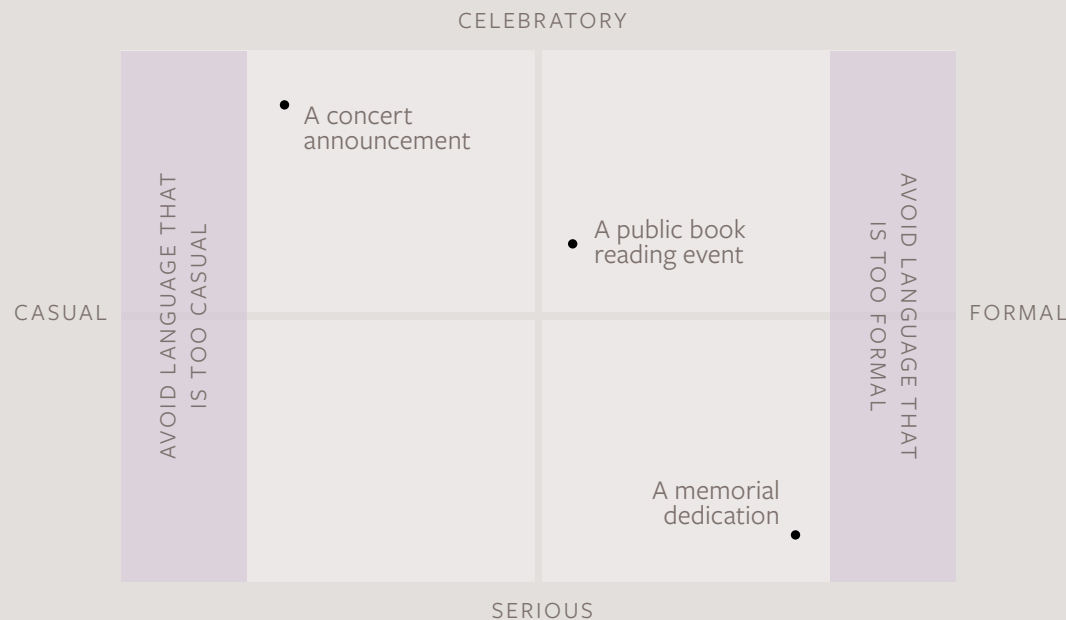
In general, writing on social media may be more casual than other written content, especially when engaging in conversations with followers.

REFERRING TO THE MUSEUM

When referring to the museum in writing, use the full name of the museum whenever possible: National Museum of African American History and Culture. (Do not use an ampersand.) The name may be abbreviated as "NMAAHC" where necessary, but the full name is preferred.

CELEBRATORY

CASUAL — AVOID LANGUAGE THAT IS TOO CASUAL

- A concert announcement
- A public book reading event

AVOID LANGUAGE THAT IS TOO FORMAL — FORMAL

- A memorial dedication

SERIOUS

WRITING SAMPLES

Here are some examples of writing that reflects the museum's voice:

SHARING THE KNOWLEDGE

The Museum established a reputation early on for telling the unvarnished truth about the African American experience. As soon as it opened, the Museum became the go-to repository for and authority on African American life past and present.

This is a museum with a mission.

It is a museum living out a commitment to educate, celebrate, engage and create. It is a museum providing a space to honor the past and reflect on it.

"I felt proud to be African American and walk through here and see so many years of perseverance, struggle, and overcoming a lot of different things, but also success. That's what the Museum represents."

—CANDACE PARKER, MUSEUM VISITOR

AMPLIFY VOICES
Use quotations from museum audiences, experts, and historical primary sources whenever possible. Showcasing authentic voices sharing real experiences helps people understand and connect to the museum's offerings.

VISUAL
IDENTITY

OUR LOGO

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY** *&* **CULTURE**
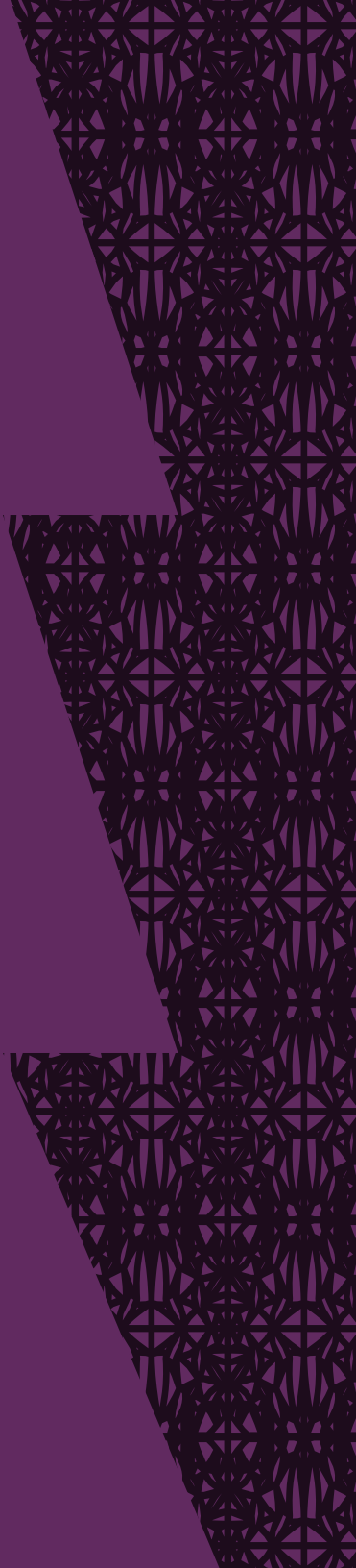
Vertical Logo

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY** *&* **CULTURE**

Horizontal Logo

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY** *&* **CULTURE**

Color Logos

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY** *&* **CULTURE**

LOGO ANATOMY

ICON

Both the symbol in the logo and the structure for the museum's architecture were inspired by depictions of three-tiered crowns in Yoruban art from West Africa.

TEXT

The text in the logo is set in Freight, the family of typefaces used throughout the museum exhibitions. The all-caps sans serif communicates the museum's bold, forward-facing character, with touches of italicized serif text that are a nod to its historic grounding.


NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY** *&* **CULTURE**

OLD & NEW

The new logo brings unity to the museum's branding by using Freight, the same typeface used throughout the museum exhibitions. Materials may need to be updated with the new branding. A quick way to tell whether a logo needs to be replaced with the new version is to look at the letter "M" in "MUSEUM." If the top of the "M" is pointy, it needs to be replaced. If the top of the "M" is squared off, the logo is current.

NEW LOGO:
Squared-off "M" in Freight
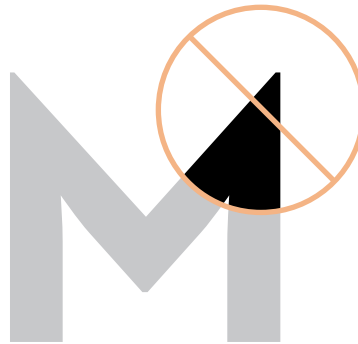
OLD LOGO:
Pointy "M" in Neutraface

LOGO LOCKUPS

Use these lockups when you need to include Smithsonian branding or the tagline along with the main logo.

Lockups with the Smithsonian logo
(only needed if the Smithsonian brand is not prominently visible elsewhere)

NATIONAL MUSEUM
of **AFRICAN AMERICAN**
HISTORY & CULTURE

Smithsonian

NATIONAL
MUSEUM *of*
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
HISTORY &
CULTURE

Smithsonian

Lockups with the museum tagline

NATIONAL MUSEUM
of **AFRICAN AMERICAN**
HISTORY & CULTURE

A people's journey. A nation's story.

NATIONAL
MUSEUM *of*
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
HISTORY &
CULTURE

A people's journey.
A nation's story.

If you need to include both the Smithsonian brand and the tagline, use the tagline lockup and include the Smithsonian logo elsewhere in the design. Do not try to create a lockup that includes all three elements.

Note that the Smithsonian lockup is not required in printed material as long as the Smithsonian logo is within the initial view.

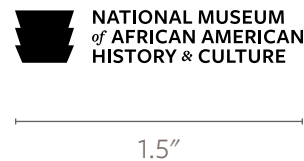See pages 45–53 of the Smithsonian brand guide for more information: **logo.si.edu**

Here is an example of a layout where the NMAAHC logo with tagline and the Smithsonian branding are all present, but not together in a lockup.

SIZE & PLACEMENT

When placing the logo in a layout, make sure that it appears large enough for the text to be clearly legible, and that there is ample space between the logo and other elements.

MINIMUM SIZE

The logo should not appear smaller than 1.5″ wide for the horizontal logo and .75″ wide for the vertical logo.

NATIONAL MUSEUM
of AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY & CULTURE

1.5″

NATIONAL
MUSEUM *of*
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
HISTORY &
CULTURE

.75″

CLEAR SPACE

The required clear space for the logo is relative to the size of the logo. For the horizontal logo, use two tiers of the three-tiered icon as a measure for minimum clear space. For the vertical, use one tier of the icon.
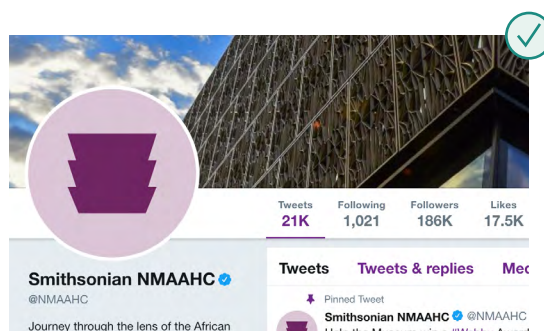
NATIONAL MUSEUM
of AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY & CULTURE

NATIONAL
MUSEUM *of*
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
HISTORY &
CULTURE

REVERSING THE LOGO
The black and color versions of the logo are preferred, but the logo may be reversed to appear over a dark background.

Note that the text in the vertical logo is solid, not cut out to reveal the background. Also note that the sun icon in the Smithsonian lockups should always be white. (The enclosing circle may be removed for the reversed lockups.)

ICON ONLY
The three-tiered icon may be used alone on the museum's official social media accounts and in some special cases (for example, promotional materials like buttons and lanyards). Do not use the icon by itself without first consulting with the Office of Public Affairs.

DO NOT STRETCH OR DISTORT
If you resize the logo, be sure to maintain the logo's proportions.


DO NOT CHANGE COLOR
The logo may appear in black, the brand purple, or white (reversed). The entire design should always be one color. Do not alter the color or combine the color options.

DO NOT CHANGE CONFIGURATION
Do not rearrange or resize any of the parts of the logo. Instead, consider switching to the vertical version of the logo for instances where the horizontal logo is an awkward fit.
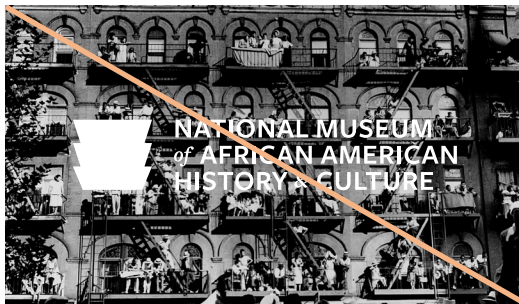
DO NOT PLACE OVER BUSY OR LOW-CONTRAST BACKGROUNDS

Make sure that the logo appears over a background that provides ample contrast. The logo should appear over a solid color, or over a photo or pattern that does not compete or interfere with legibility.

Note that the text in the vertical logo is solid, not cut out to reveal the background.

DO NOT ADD SHADOWS OR OTHER EFFECTS

Do not change the appearance of the logo. If the logo does not stand out enough, consider using it in a different color (black, purple, or white), or a background that provides more contrast.

SUB-BRANDING & CO-BRANDING

Sub-branding and co-branding applications for the museum fall into three categories:

1

DEPARTMENT LOCKUPS
(See examples on following page)

Standard museum department lockups may be used for limited, primarily internal applications (stationery and business cards, email signatures, internal announcements and presentations). Do not use on merchandise, in public-facing museum communications, or on the website.

Please contact the Office of Public Affairs if you need a sub-brand logo, and do not try to create your own.

2

PARTNER CO-BRANDING
(See examples on following page)

When the museum receives support from or works with other institutions, it may be necessary to use partner logos alongside NMAAHC branding. Make clear with sizing and placement whether the museum is primary and the partner is supporting, or vice versa. Where possible, black and white or one-color partner logos are preferred.

3

PUBLIC-FACING SUB-BRANDS

In some special cases, museum events and units need their own public-facing branding that is more distinctive. In these cases, specialized sub-brands may be developed with the approval and supervision of the Office of Public Affairs.

Any sub-brands must be designed to work harmoniously with the larger museum brand (by using color and typography from this brand guide, for example), and it should be clear that the sub-brands are part of NMAAHC. The NMAAHC parent brand should appear prominently on marketing materials, web pages, and microsites to avoid confusion.

DEPARTMENT LOCKUPS

Sample department lockups. Contact the Office of Public Affairs if you need a logo with a department lockup.

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY** *&* **CULTURE**

Office of the Director

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY** *&* **CULTURE**

Office of Public Affairs

PARTNER CO-BRANDING

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY** *&* **CULTURE**

TOYOTA

NMAAHC-dominant co-branding
(more common)

AARP®
Real Possibilities

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY** *&* **CULTURE**

Partner-dominant co-branding
(less common)

FORMATS & PLATFORMS

Different versions of the logo are appropriate in different contexts. Make sure to use the version that best suits your purpose.

	IN PRINT	ON THE WEB	IN A POWERPOINT
FILE TYPE:	EPS (vector)	PNG	PNG
COLOR SPACE:	CMYK	RGB	RGB
RESOLUTION:	N/A	72 ppi	96 ppi

IN PRINT

Use vector files (EPS or SVG) when you use the logo in print. Vector files use mathematical data instead of pixels to create an image, which means that the logo can be resized without appearing blurry or pixelated. If you must use a raster file (PNG, JPG, etc.) in print, be sure that the effective resolution is at least 300 pixels per inch.

ON SCREENS

While vector files are the least prone to error, raster images are sometimes necessary to use, especially on the web. PNG is preferred to JPG because PNG files allow transparency. This means that a PNG logo file can appear over different backgrounds without a white rectangle behind it, which can be distracting. Be sure that the logo looks clear, legible, and unpixelated across standard and high-resolution displays.

THE ICON

The full logo is preferred wherever possible, but the icon may be used by itself in some special cases. If you would like to use the icon alone, first consult with the Office of Public Affairs, and be sure that the museum's full name and/or website can be found anywhere the icon is used, so that the icon does not exist in isolation.
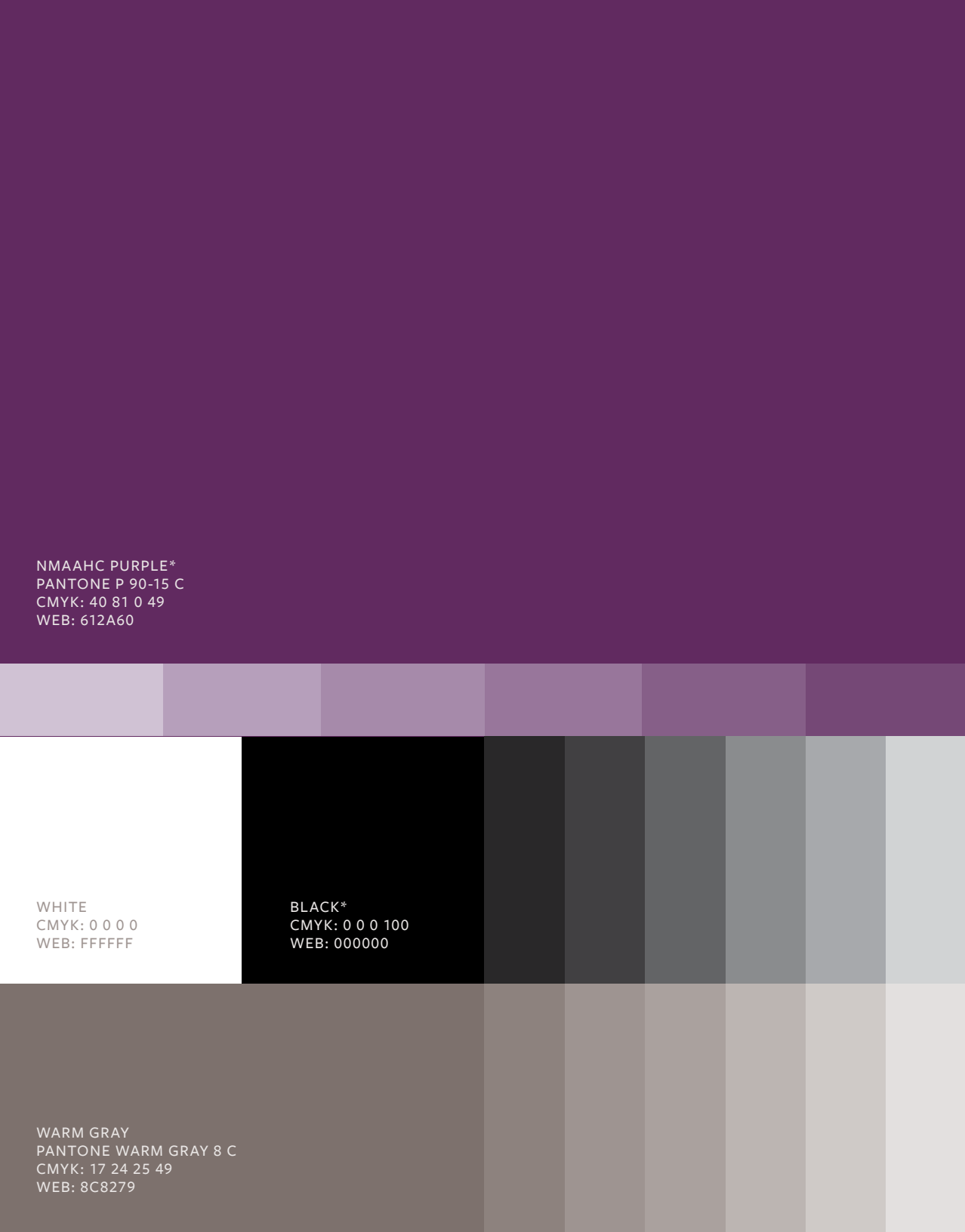
COLOR PALETTE

The brand color palette is comprehensive. It includes a primary palette to be used widely, as well as a versatile range of supporting colors to be used as accents and where a wider range of tones is called for. The colors are neither super-saturated nor dull. They are rich, bold, and warm.

NMAAHC PURPLE

Purple is the brand's primary color. Historically, purple has been used to signify beauty, royalty, faith, prosperity, and healing, and it has a strong connection to African American culture. This particular shade is bold and versatile, and it is as important to the brand identity as the logo itself.

Primary palette

NMAAHC PURPLE*
PANTONE P 90-15 C
CMYK: 40 81 0 49
WEB: 612A60

WHITE
CMYK: 0 0 0 0
WEB: FFFFFF

BLACK*
CMYK: 0 0 0 100
WEB: 000000

WARM GRAY
PANTONE WARM GRAY 8 C
CMYK: 17 24 25 49
WEB: 8C8279

These are the main brand colors and should be used most often. Use tints of the purple and shades of gray as needed to complement and provide contrast to the main colors. High-contrast pairings of purple, black, and white work well for bold and simple messages. Combinations using tints of the purple and shades of warm and cool gray can help provide clearer hierarchy, and support more subtle messages.

Pantone and CMYK formulas should be used only for print, and web formulas should be used on-screen. Note that the web colors are expressed as HEX codes (an alternative way to express an RGB color value) for ease of use. When necessary, the equivalent RGB values may be used.

DARK MAGENTA CMYK: 12 86 30 44 WEB: 89294C	MAGENTA CMYK: 24 94 60 12 WEB: AD2F4D	LIGHT MAGENTA CMYK: 8 34 16 0 WEB: E5B1B9
DARK RED-ORANGE CMYK: 8 80 90 35 WEB: 9E3D1F	RED-ORANGE CMYK: 0 84 94 10 WEB: DA4926	LIGHT RED-ORANGE CMYK: 0 32 48 2 WEB: F4B485
DARK YELLOW CMYK: 8 36 96 26 WEB: B4841E	YELLOW CMYK: 0 32 98 6 WEB: EDAA1A	LIGHT YELLOW CMYK: 2 13 60 0 WEB: FAD97F
DARK GREEN CMYK: 54 30 84 32 WEB: 61713C	GREEN CMYK: 42 20 98 10 WEB: 8E9933	LIGHT GREEN CMYK: 16 8 56 0 WEB: DAD78A
DARK TEAL CMYK: 76 34 50 35 WEB: 2F6460	TEAL CMYK: 80 20 50 12 WEB: 1C8B81	LIGHT TEAL CMYK: 36 2 24 2 WEB: 9FCEC3
DARK BLUE CMYK: 72 60 32 26 WEB: 4B556F	BLUE CMYK: 70 56 16 4 WEB: 5D6D9C	LIGHT BLUE CMYK: 24 16 2 4 WEB: B6C0D8

Supporting palette

These additional colors are designed to support the primary palette. Use these colors as accents and in situations where additional color is needed (graphics and illustrations, color-coding systems, etc.) The main colors should be used most widely, and the lighter and darker shades more sparingly. The lighter and darker shades can provide legibility for tone-on-tone designs. The lighter and darker shades may also be used to communicate a more serious mood, while the main colors are more celebratory.

Use tints of the light shade as needed to provide contrast. Do not tint the main color or the dark shade, as this can produce dull-looking colors.

PRIMARY TEXT COLOR
SECONDARY TEXT COLOR
Body text color

This is an example of a good default color palette with purple as a dominant color. It feels bold and authentic and is easily identifiable as NMAAHC.

PRIMARY TEXT COLOR
SECONDARY TEXT COLOR
Body text color

A simple color palette like this that uses black and white with purple and tones of another color is very flexible. It feels clear, intentional, and inviting.

PRIMARY TEXT COLOR
SECONDARY TEXT COLOR
Body text color

A palette that uses several supporting colors is ideal when the content needs color categorization or lots of visual interest with icons and bite-sized content.

PRIMARY TEXT COLOR
SECONDARY TEXT COLOR
Body text color

This is a color palette that works well on-screen, with dark tones dominating and one key supporting color introduced. It feels powerful and sophisticated.

SAMPLE COLOR COMBINATIONS
Here are some examples of how brand colors may be combined. Consider what mood is appropriate for the content and what colors appear in photos and other images in the layout. Colors from the supporting palette may be especially useful when differentiating between categories or helping to create hierarchy of information. Colors from the primary palette (purple, black, white, and grays), should be used most widely.
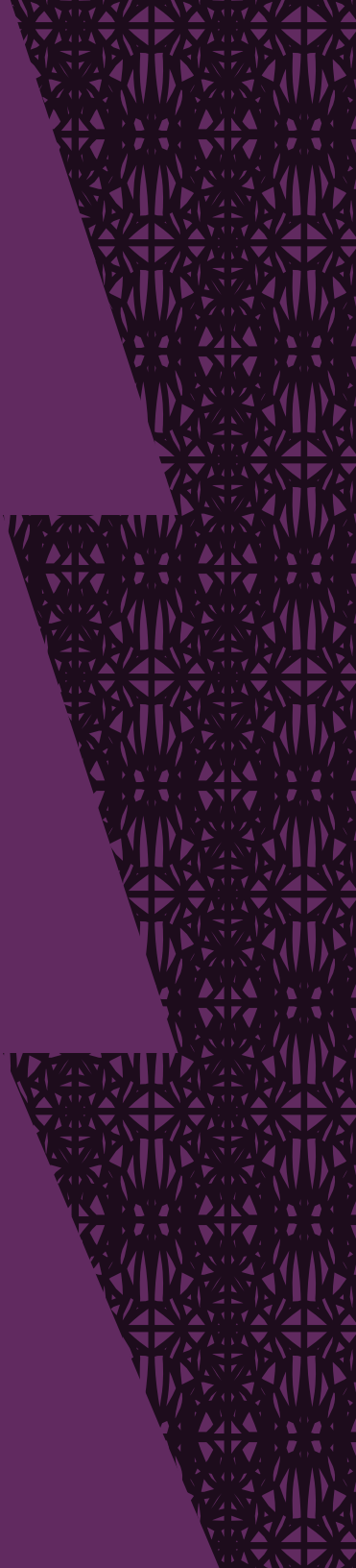
CORONA PATTERN
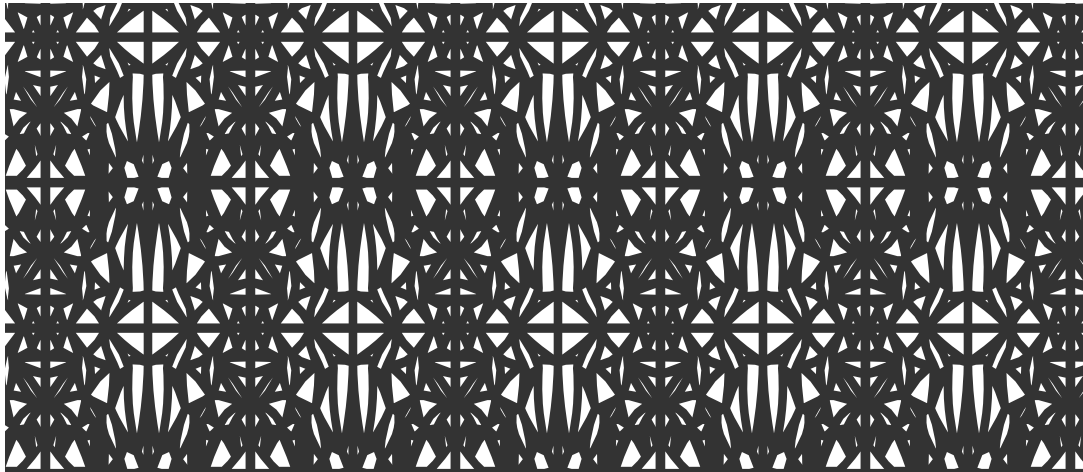
The corona pattern is derived from the lattice ironwork on the museum building. This brand asset can be used as a textural element and as a background in layouts.

Text may appear over the latticework pattern, but the pattern should be very low contrast and the text should be large and clear to ensure legibility.

HEADLINE TEXT
Subheadline text example
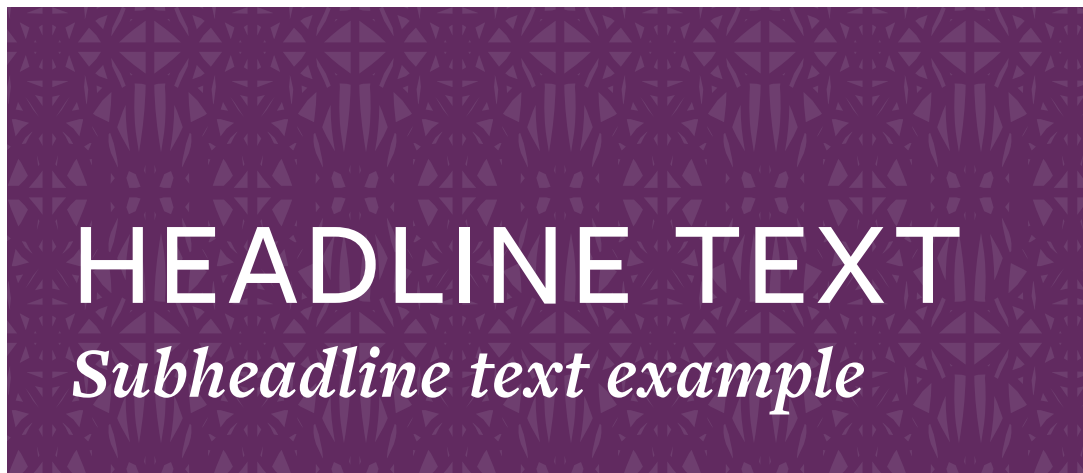
TYPOGRAPHY

TYPEFACES

Freight Text and **Freight Sans** are the brand typefaces. Created by African American designer Joshua Darden, this set of fonts is inspired by historic typefaces, and has a warm and balanced character. These fonts are the visual manifestation of the museum's voice, and when set at large sizes in heavier weights, they can be very commanding. At small sizes, they remain clear and legible.

Freight Text and Freight Sans are flexible and expressive, and can communicate a range of tones. Be mindful of what mood is called for in different applications, and use typography consistently within designed pieces and across series.

FREIGHT TEXT

FreightText is the serif typeface in the Freight family.

Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

0123456789

STYLES

Light	*Light Italic*
Book	*Book Italic*
Medium	*Medium Italic*
Semibold	*Semibold Italic*
Bold	***Bold Italic***
Black	***Black Italic***

FREIGHT SANS

FreightSans is the sans serif typeface in the Freight family.

Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

0123456789

STYLES

Light	*Light Italic*
Book	*Book Italic*
Medium	*Medium Italic*
Semibold	***Semibold Italic***
Bold	***Bold Italic***
Black	***Black Italic***

NOTES ON TYPOGRAPHY

The Freight font family is expressive. Used along with color and photography, it can help visually communicate mood to support the text. Take cues from the museum's exhibitions as inspiration for conveying a variety of moods.

I, too, sing America.

WE ARE THE ONES WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR.

JUSTICE IS WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE IN PUBLIC.

The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.

Love is an action, never simply a feeling.

WE NEED, IN EVERY COMMUNITY, A GROUP OF ANGELIC TROUBLEMAKERS.

Birds flying high, you know how I feel.

NUMERALS

The Freight family includes both oldstyle figures (numerals with ascenders and descenders that expand above and below the height of the zero) and lining figures (numerals that are all the same height and sit on the baseline). Both may be used, but err on the side of using lining figures. Oldstyle figures can communicate a more formal or historical mood.

2016   1930

Lining figures

2016   1930

Oldstyle figures

PUNCTUATION

The Freight family includes a comprehensive set of glyphs. Make full use of them.

- Use accents and diacritical marks when called for (especially in people's names).

- Use em-dashes, en-dashes, and hyphens in their appropriate places.

- Use typographer's quotes (curly quotes) and apostrophes instead of straight quotes and apostrophes.

- Use ampersands sparingly in body text. When in doubt, err on the side of using "and."

jalapeño flambé

Words with diacritical marks

&

Ampersand (use sparingly)

" "

Typographer's quotes

// //

Straight quotes

The event—the first of its kind—was a success.

Em dash (—): The longest dash. Use for an emphatic pause or to set off a clause. Do not use spaces on either side.
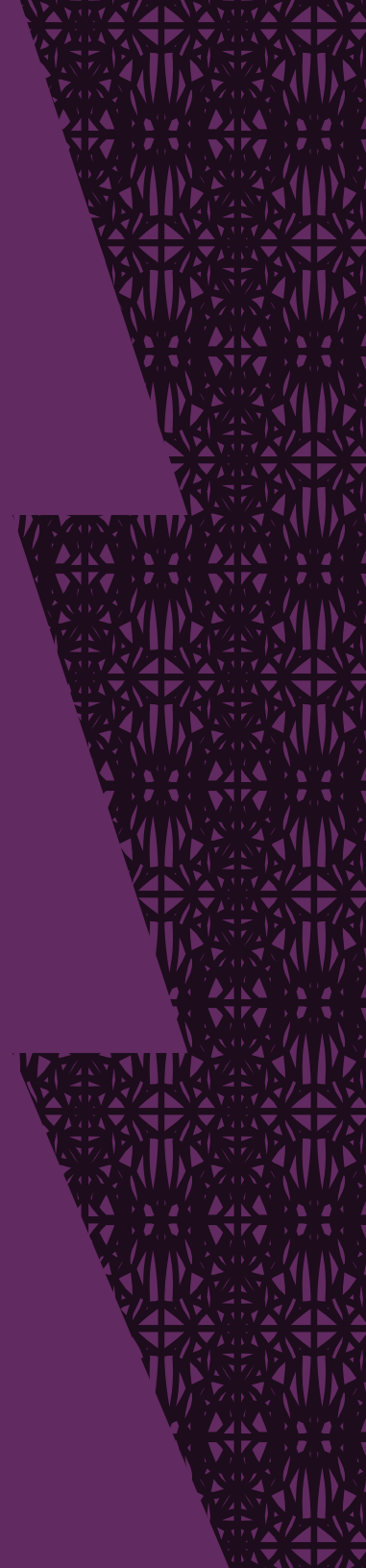
It lasted from 1992–2004.

En dash (–): Medium-length dash, and the least commonly used. Use to indicate a range.

state-of-the-art

Hyphen (-): The shortest dash. Use for hyphenated names and compound words.

IMAGES

PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

Photography is an important aspect of the museum's brand, and should be used widely. Use imagery that embodies the brand values: authenticity, innovation, discovery, excellence, resilience, and spirituality. Take care to ensure that people are depicted in ways that are respectful and empowering, never objectifying.
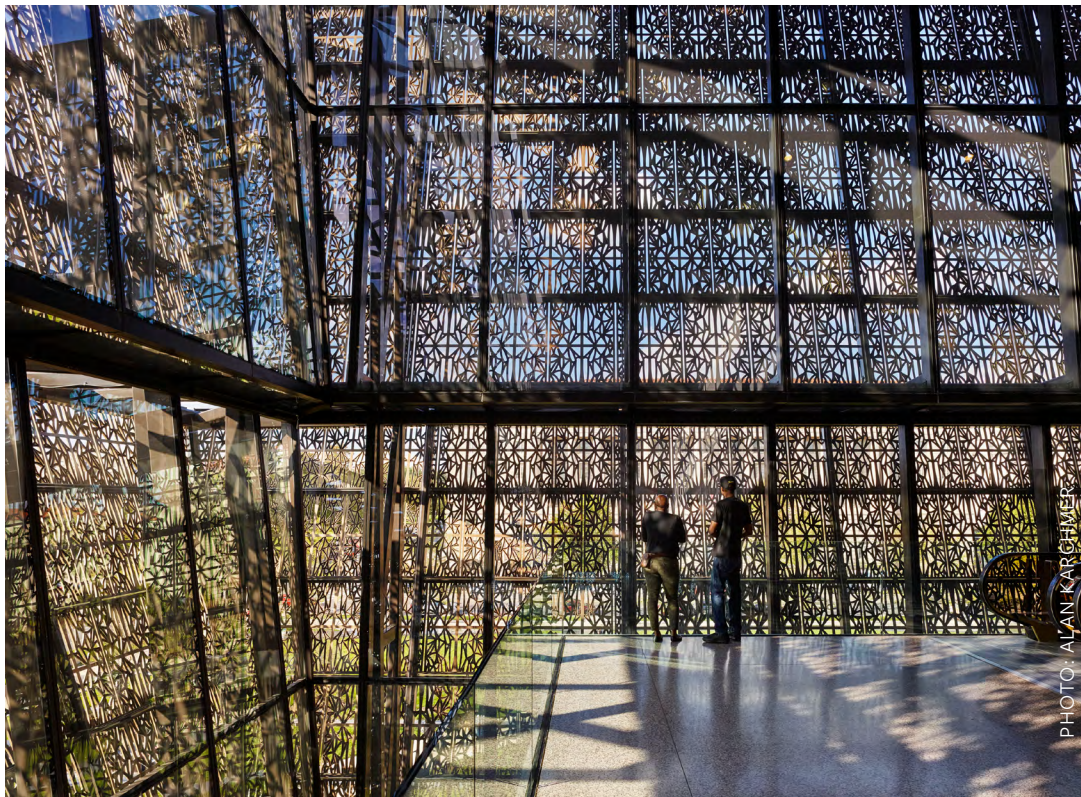
Always be sure to include photo credit information and abide copyright restrictions.

INTERACTION
Wherever possible, include images of people being engaged when using photography of museum exhibitions and events.

PHOTO: DOUGLAS REMLEY/SMITHSONIAN

PHOTO: ALAN KARCHMER

PHOTO: ALAN KARCHMER

LIGHTING AND COMPOSITION

Use images with strong compositions that draw viewers into the scene. Indirect natural light is best; avoid fluorescent light and photos taken with a flash. High-quality professional photography should be used wherever possible.

Howard University Marching Band performing at the Dedication Ceremony for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, September 24, 2016. *Photo: Leah L. Jones/NMAAHC*

HUMAN SUBJECTS

Showing human faces helps to draw people in and feel connected to the museum. Include names of the people pictured and stories and context information wherever possible to humanize subjects.

Alvin Ailey and Carmen DeLavallade in *Roots of the Blues*, 1961. *Photo: Jack Mitchell*

HISTORICAL IMAGES

The museum's collection offers many beautiful and powerful historical photographs. Make use of these images when they are relevant (such as when talking about a specific exhibition, object, person, or historical era), but make sure to also feature contemporary photographs. The museum is multifaceted. Take the opportunity to use contemporary as well as historic images to show that the museum is forward-looking, exciting, and alive.

Photograph of women and children at voter registration motorcade, September 8, 1956. *NMAAHC Collection, Frances Albrier Collection*
© Cox Studio

FROM THE COLLECTION

Showcase objects from the museum's collection to add context and visual interest. Make sure to include the artist name and other identifying information. Isolate objects from their background where possible.

CAPTIONS AND CREDITS

Always include information about photography and items from the NMAAHC collection. Photographs should ideally include a caption (including the names of people shown) and photographer credit. Art and other collection items should identify the object (artist, title, and medium for art, or a short description for non-art objects) and include the date and acquisition information.

Pinback button for the
Poor People's Campaign
c. 1968
*NMAAHC Collection, gift
of Linda and Artis Cason*

Untitled (*Church Ladies*)
Clementine Hunter
c. 1965
Oil paint on paperboard
*NMAAHC Collection, gift from
the collection of Sabra Brown
Martin* © Cane River Art Corporation

Visitors view a video on the domestic slave trade in the *Slavery and Freedom* Exhibition. *Photo: NMAAHC*

MOOD

Photography is a useful tool to help evoke a mood. Make sure that the feeling captured by a photo is appropriate to the context. Bright colors and sunny scenes can feel positive and uplifting. Stark compositions, focused lighting, and subdued color can feel powerful and captivating.

Photo: Alan Karchmer
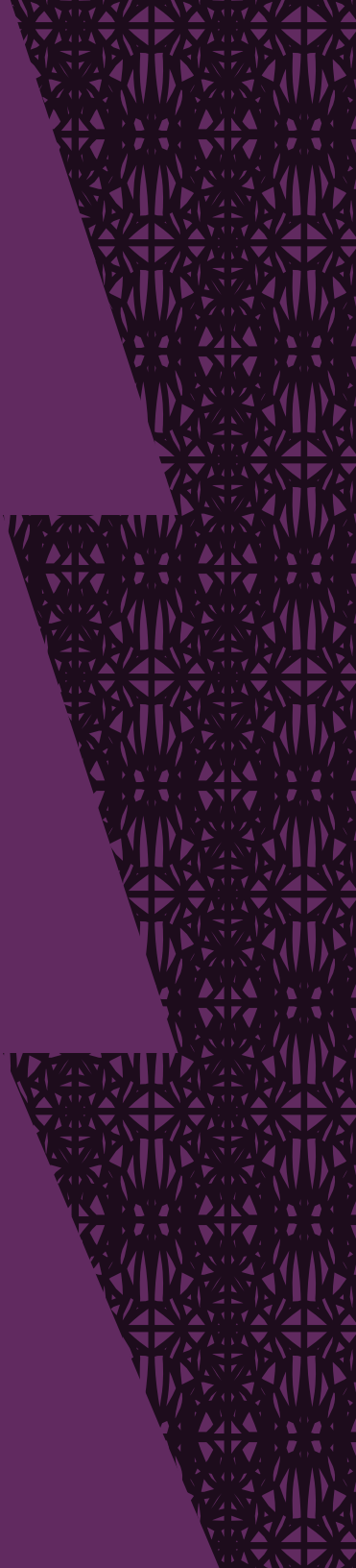

Photo: Leah L. Jones/NMAAHC

Photo: NMAAHC

COLOR & PHOTOGRAPHY

Use color with photography thoughtfully. In general, use the main brand colors from the primary palette alongside photo imagery.

Supporting palette colors may also be used in special cases where the brand purple and neutrals are unsuitable, but make sure that these applications are still clearly recognizable as NMAAHC. When using colors from the supporting palette, take note of the colors in the photograph, and use brand colors alongside it that complement the photography. This may mean echoing the colors found in the photograph, contrasting them with complimentary colors, or using more neutral colors to allow the colors in the photo to shine.

IMPLEMENTATION

LAYOUT

Layout design should always follow brand guidelines and feel appropriate to the content. Make use of the full expressive range of brand assets. Take the opportunity to showcase quality photography and evocative text. Take cues from and repurpose existing designs to help maintain consistency across communications.

A successful layout is eye-catching, clear, and functional, and should be recognizable at a glance as the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Make sure that all public-facing branded communication is reviewed and approved by the Office of Public Affairs.

WHAT TO INCLUDE
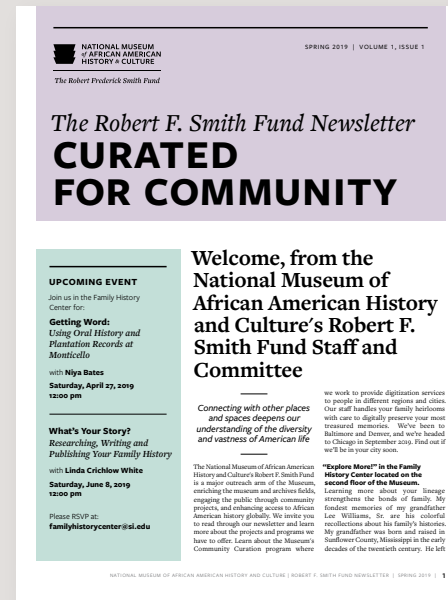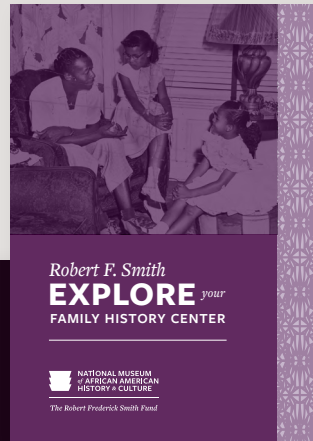Make sure that all branded communication includes the following whenever relevant:

- The museum logo with the appropriate lockup

- A call to action (CTA) telling the audience what is being asked of them (to attend an event, sign up for something, enter an email, etc.)

- The date, time, and location for all events, and admission price and RSVP information when relevant

- Contact and social media information

SAMPLE LAYOUTS

Here are a few examples of how the NMAAHC branding may be used in context.

Postcard

Newsletter

Poster

Event program

Web ads

MUSEUM NEWS

Dear friend,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet. Nemporia cum voluptas et ipicidi verias mi, cor apelit pori quibus, ullacestem dolecto inum nonsenis mint is dolestiis mosa quid magnamus et volorec aboribe rerit, sum autet et labo.

For more information, please visit **nmaahc.si.edu**

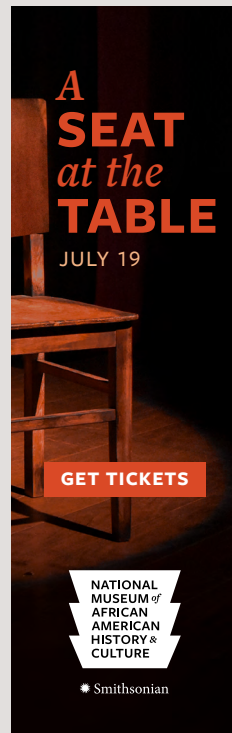**JOIN TODAY**

Digital newsletter

Hierarchy

Hierarchy is the order in which the mind perceives information on a page. Elements with higher contrast from their surroundings will stand out first. A clear visual hierarchy helps the viewer skim through the page and glean the message at a glance. Allow the content to be the guide when assigning levels of importance to different pieces of information.

- **USE** variables like size, weight, and color to create distinct levels of hierarchy.

- **AVOID** layouts with no variation as they will look flat and be harder to comprehend.

Scale

Scale is the relative size of elements in a composition. Large variation in scale can create emphasis and hierarchy, and convey a sense of awe by drawing the eye to one element.

- **USE** layouts with dramatic variations in the scale of elements.

- **AVOID** layouts with uniform scaling as these lack a visual focal point.

Focus

Layouts and compositions should have a single dominant focal point. This enhances clarity by giving the viewer an anchor and helps guide their eye.

- **USE** layouts with a clear focal point. Let the content breathe by using generous white space.

- **AVOID** layouts packed with content.

ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION

Communications from the museum should be inclusive and accessible to everyone. Keep the needs of all people in mind, and wherever possible:

- Follow website accessibility best practices online (**usability.gov** is a useful resource)

- Use simple, clear language

- Use large, high-contrast text for easy readability

- Use color schemes that do not compromise legibility for people with colorblindness

- Include alt text and/or descriptive captions with photographs and other images

- Provide captions/transcripts for video and audio content

- Include icons and visual cues to support text

- Use inclusive language everywhere, and include comprehensive and/or open-ended response options on forms

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For marketing, branding, and general communications questions, contact the Office of Public Affairs at: **NMAAHC-MarCom@si.edu**

Smithsonian identity guidelines and resources can be found at: **logo.si.edu**

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of* **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE**

✹ Smithsonian