Indigenous Visual Language:

On creating appropriate visual communication for

the Tlicho community, stories, and culture.

by

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Abstract

In 2022, I began a creative collaboration with the Tlicho community, in the region of the Northwest Territories of Canada. As a visual communicator designer and researcher new to the country, I set out to help create an online tool for the Tlicho that would archive as well as visualize traditional Tlicho stories and their history. While I collected the stories for this project, I realized I did not know how to visually represent this community in a culturally appropriate manner. There exists a lot of Pan-Indian imagery and guidance on the web on how to represent indigenous cultures, however, very few projects take into account the different signs, motifs, and visual traditions that give each community its unique visual character. How does any particular First Nation "brand" language look different than a Métis way of visual communication? How can designers identify and use distinct visual systems to create imagery for different Indigenous nations? This question is at the center of my thesis.

To address this question, I worked with the Tlicho Dene to determine how to build a community-specific visual identity guideline. While the identity guideline itself will serve as a tool for future designers working with the Tlicho on visual projects, the process it takes to build this research will be a guide for designers who collaborate with Indigenous nations on visual communication projects.

Acknowledgments

This research is conducted on Treaty 11 territory and was made possible with the constant support from the Tlicho Dene of the Northwest Territories.

I would also like to thank the following people for making this research possible:

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Adolfo Ruiz

Dawn Hunter

Thank you to my family Bindu, Nitin & Kintu Malkan as well as my friend Ryan Kemp for their constant support throughout this dissertation.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Raheel Malkan. The research project of which this thesis is a part, received ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project *No Pro00094766. N*ame *Indigenous Visual Language: On building appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories and culture.* Research conducted for this thesis forms part of a collaboration between Raheel Malkan and members of the Tlicho community in the Northwest Territories, Canada.

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Following Images are Illustrated by Raheel Malkan and archived objects are from the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre

Glossary of Terms

Dene

Dene is an Athabaskan word for "people". The Dene are a First Nation Indigenous group that live in the northern boreal and arctic regions of Canada.

First Nation

The First Nations are an Indigenous people in Canada who are neither Inuit nor Métis. First Nations in Canada are historically peoples who primarily lived south of the Arctic Circle.

Indigenous

The word Indigenous in this document is used to define as originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; i.e Native to a region.

Latin Script

The Latin script (or Roman script) is a writing system based on the letters of the classical Latin alphabet.

Métis

The Métis are an Indigenous people that have historically lived in Canada in British Columbia, Northwest Ontario and the Canadian prairies. Some parts of the population can also be found in the northern United States. The Métis have a mixed European and Indigenous ancestry.

Native American

Native Americans are a group of Indigenous peoples residing in the United States and its territories.

Pan-Indianism

Pan-Indianism is a philosophical and political approach promoting unity, and to some extent cultural homogenization, among different Indigenous groups in the Americas regardless of tribal distinctions and cultural differences.

Syllabics

Canadian aboriginal syllabics, or simply syllabics, is a family of writing systems used by many Indigenous Canadian languages of the Algonquian, Inuit, and Athabaskan origin.

Tlicho

The Tlicho (or Tłįchǫ) people formerly known as the Dogrib are a Dene First Nation people belonging to the Athabaskan-speaking ethno-linguistic group. The Tlicho Dene live on the banks of the Great Slave Lake in the Canadian Northwest Territories.

Chapter One: Introduction

<u>The Problem with "Pan-Indianism" in Visual Communication</u>

Pan-Indianism, a philosophical and political approach promoting unity, is (to some extent) the cultural homogenization, among different Indigenous groups in the Americas regardless of their tribal distinctions and cultural differences. This approach to political organization has been useful to many groups seeking to pool resources and protect Indigenous rights across the world[1]. When it comes to creating distinct visual identities, however and preserving the design traditions of various Indigenous groups, this movement has proven detrimental. Often designs belonging to one Indigenous nation are used to depict another completely different community.

According to Sadie Red Wing, a Lakota and Dakota graphic designer:

> "Too often Indigenous symbols and designs become homogenized into a 'Pan-Indian' motif that only further perpetuates Native American stereotypes. As a Lakota, I do not identify with a Navajo design. A Seminole will not identify with a Lakota design. It seems like common sense, but there are still cases today where designers use any tribe's imagery just to show something is 'Native American'"[2]

I find Red Wing's analysis true in my observations. Let us consider a few examples. Headdresses among various Indigenous groups are a symbol of strength and bravery and are worn by the most powerful and influential members of a tribe. Each community has its own unique history in making them, sometimes influenced by the availability of resources and at other times influenced by tradition. And it is even possible for some communities (like the Tlicho) to not wear them at all.[3] Still too often one finds headdresses being used as visual markers just to portray something broadly as Native American.

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[1] Robbins, Dorothy M, "A Short History of Pan-Indianism", Native American Information Service, July 30, 1997, http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/41/119.html (accessed December 21, 2021)

[2] Margaret, Andersen, "Why Can't the U.S. Decolonize Its Design Education?", January 2, 2017, https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/why-cant-the-u-s-decolonize-its-design-education (accessed December 21, 2021)

[3] Andrews, Thomas, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."
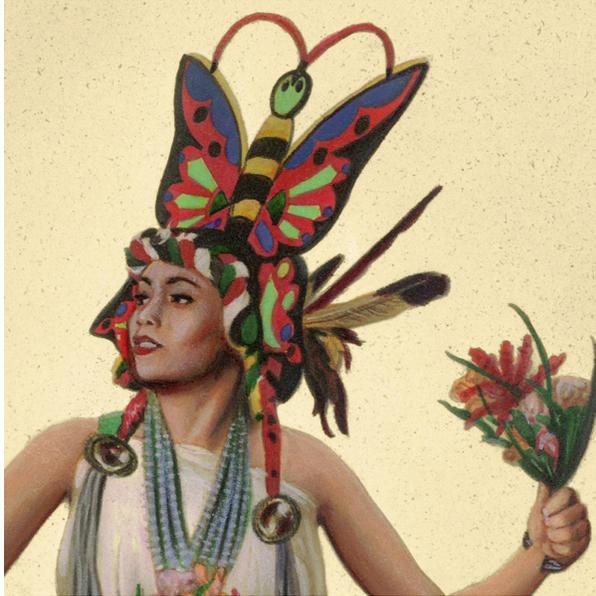
(Image. 1) Pueblo Indians   (Image. 2) Omaha Indians

The same argument holds true for the widespread and commercial use of the Navajo weaving patterns. A highly regarded and sought-after trade item for more than 150 years and a patiently developed product designed by interaction with their Pueblo neighbors, over hundreds of years[4]. The Navajo weaving patterns today are commonly used by designers and large corporations alike to depict something as being Indigenous.

Another example of homogenizing Indigenous cultures lies in the popular reference to Turtle Island as a place where all Indigenous people live. As Thomas Andrews, an archeologist who has worked with the Tlicho for over 40 years points out "Turtles don't exist in the Northwest Territories. There are no turtles in the Tlicho world. There are terms within each language that are appropriate to use, so using Turtle Island is borrowed from a translation of another Indigenous language. To be appropriate you have to be geographically correct and use terms in Tlicho if you're talking about the Tlicho. For them, it's not Turtle Island but it's 'Deh' which is their word for the land."[5]

As Red Wing puts it "When you just give people one idea of a visual that categorizes all Indigenous nations as one race. It further adds to their extinction. And because of the genocide

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[4] Jakobsen, Mads, "The Full History of Navajo Blankets and Rugs" May 9. 2018
[5] Andrews, Thomas, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."

that took place in North America, people sometimes don't know the huge amount of diversity among the different nations on this continent."[6]

More Indigeneity. Less Homogeneity.

Design issues concerning visual representation, as discussed above can be addressed through careful and thorough research as well as by meaningful collaboration. The problem often starts at the level of curriculum in visual arts programs that often fail to acknowledge Indigenous design histories as an appropriate source of pedagogical inspiration. Indigenous visual cultures have existed in North America for thousands of years and yet one rarely sees them at the center of visual design projects, lectures, or assignments. Sensitive as the topic remains, a discussion needs to be had about the priority of Euro-centric design lineages and curricula that dominate Indigenous and non-western design traditions.[7]

Typography and type design courses are good examples to help us talk about this. It is a missed opportunity for design programs to not acquaint design students with the Indigenous syllabic script and other non-Latin scripts. Typography plays a large role in giving any piece of visual communication a distinct visual character. Vernacular typography plays an even bigger role in helping a designer preserve the unique personalities of the written word and by extension the visual identity of a given community. By focusing solely on the Latin script, design programs do not equip their students with the necessary skills required to work with different aboriginal writing systems. A change in design curricula to include Indigenous typography would help to empower students to create a more community-conscious visual communication design.

To help us accommodate Indigenous needs in our design curricula, we may also learn from the late Tlicho Chief Jimmy Bruneau who encouraged the Tlicho youth to "Be strong like two people". His words are interpreted to mean accepting the worldview of the Western world while also strongly developing the Dene skills, teachings, and traditions.[8] Likewise, without losing one

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[6] Red Wing, Sadie, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."
[7] Red Wing, Sadie, "Learning the Traditional Lakota Visual Language through Shape Play", May 13, 2016
[8] Bruneau, Jimmy "Strong like two people"1936 https://truenorthjournal.ca/2017/06/on-the-land/ (accessed December 06, 2022}

or the other in the process, it is possible for contemporary design programs to adapt to the needs of Indigenous communities without losing their fundamental essence.

In the same light, Adolfo Ruiz, a design academic and storyteller points out:

> "We need to think about how the university can come to the community or the student experience can come to the community. To bring in experiential learning in collaboration with communities into the classroom is absolutely a vital thing, where we move beyond the bricks and mortar space of a university. When possible we need to try and bring the classroom into the land, and specifically the communities' land. It is necessary specifically for collaborations and the better understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and to inform design programs. Also, where possible we should actually have community members, visit the classroom to come and share knowledge with students."[9]

> "As Indigenous peoples progress from the residential school era, the urge to distinct tribes from Pan-Indianism forces a greater responsibility on designers to visually communicate Indigenous sovereignty. The role of visual communicators requires the practice of visual sovereignty, or decolonizing the stereotypical representation into a traditional image of cultural education. Visual communicators have the power to give Indigenous nations a respected face in the world by revealing visual languages in visual communication. The rising movement of visual sovereignty in Indigenous visual communication has revolutionized a new fight against stereotypes and continues to revitalize an honourable image away from the subordinate portrayal of Indigenous peoples."[10]

Still, the homogenous and at times even subordinate portrayal of Indigenous peoples in visual communication remains an ongoing struggle. Another example of this homogenization is in the widespread use of inukshuks. The word "inukshuk" which means "in the likeness of a human." These are majestic stone markers that have been built for generations by the Inuit in the vast Canadian Arctic. Inukshuks are used for very specific purposes, which include guiding travelers, warning of danger, and assisting hunters by the Inuit. Yet one sees them being used out of

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[9] Ruiz, Adolfo, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."
[10] Red Wing, Sadie, "Revitalizing Indigenous perspective in design",November 16, 2019

context to indicate something as Indigenous, in places which are nowhere near the Canadian Arctic.[11]

(Image. 3)   (Image. 4)

Issues of cultural homogenization can be addressed by visual communication designers who are motivated, patient, and willing to look in the right place. Given enough attention, there is a large amount of visual vocabulary present in the everyday life and objects of Indigenous nations from which visual communicators can draw inspiration to create an authentic and unique visual language.

Distinct visual cultures also exist in the different ways Indigenous groups create objects (as well as unique patterns and motifs) when working with locally sourced resources. Like the wide availability of porcupine quills in the case of the Tlicho, for example. The surrounding topography and endemic flora can act as inspiration for colour palettes. Even the local animals can serve as mascots and visual metaphors, as most Indigenous peoples have an intrinsic and inseparable relationship with their land and the animals that live upon it. As Marie Batiste a Professor of Indian and Northern Education at the University of Saskatchewan puts it:

> "From the beginning, the forces of the ecologies in which we live have taught Indigenous peoples a proper kinship order and have taught us how to have nourishing relationships

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[11] Andrews, Thomas, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."

with our ecosystems. The ecologies in which we live are more to us than settings or places; they are more than homelands or promised homelands. These ecologies do not surround Indigenous peoples; we are an integral part of them, and we inherently belong to them. The ecologies are alive with the enduring processes of creation itself. As Indigenous peoples, we invest the ecologies with deep respect, and from them we unfold our structures of Indigenous life and thought."[12]

By careful observation, a willing designer should be able to build a large visual archive and vocabulary for an Indigenous nation with the help of true and conscious community engagement. How a designer should go about this process is the focus of what follows.

Author's relationship to research.

While I am not native to Canada, I empathize with Red Wing's objection to being misrepresented by the use of homogenized design. India too can sometimes be represented in design through the use of stereotypical motifs. Though a single nation, India is a subcontinent that is many things but homogenous.

India is split across ethnic lines into roughly three major blocks of the south, north, and northeast (among others). Languages differ from state to state with the country employing at least three major writing systems in the form of Indic, Arabic, and Latin scripts, among many others. While the south is surrounded by the ocean on three sides, the north is covered in snow-clad mountains. The west is a vast and dry desert, and the east is home to subtropical forests. India is a democracy (albeit with flaws) that is home to 1.4 billion differing voices across religion and politics.

The paisley motif, for instance, was popularized using cashmere (anglicized from Kashmir) shawls and is a widely used motif in the north. However, the people in the south have their unique visual traditions, as displayed by the beautiful and diverse *Kolam*. My point is that any visual representation of the country requires at first very thorough research of its dense history and its people. Each region has its unique history and visual culture and to use one design to

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[12] Batiste, Marie, "Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage", 1949

represent another interchangeably would just simply be wrong, insulting, and in the long term, counterproductive.

Just as the turtle motif cannot represent all of North America's Indigenous groups, a stereotypical or homogenized design cannot alone carry the weight of India's diversity. The issue thus, of misrepresentation of a people through "Pan-Indianism" in design, is close to me as a visual designer.

In North America and India, Indigenous visual culture and traditions have existed for thousands of years and yet both struggle today for a respectful visual representation in a post-colonial world.

Chapter Two: How to Create Distinct Visual Identities for Indigenous Nations?

In my secondary research, interacting with design educators, and working with the Tlicho. A few themes and suggestions stand out concerning how to conduct a visual research project when working with an Indigenous nation. They are as follows.

- Studying the Literature
- Using Land as Pedagogy
- Looking at the Past
- Focusing on Typography
- Co-creating with Community

Studying the literature

The first, and obvious, step towards building a distinct visual identity for an Indigenous nation is for a designer to do a thorough job of becoming fully acquainted with the community and related literature. As Thomas Andrews mentions:

> "The way to avoid homogenous portrayal of Indigenous peoples is to dive into the literature of whatever group you're working with and into whatever literature exists on their own specific material culture and study it and learn their motifs. Like the authors of those books eventually you will get to a point where you could walk into a museum and if there were no labels, you would have enough experience to be able to identify the ones that were Tlicho as opposed to others because of your familiarity with the different styles and motifs. It's only through hard work and careful observation that you can make sure you don't fall into that trap of homogenization of Indigenous culture."[13]

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[13] Andrews, Thomas, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."

And while diving into available literature is crucial, it is even more important for a design researcher to visit the community on their land and to start the process of building a relationship rooted in mutual trust and respect. Ruiz describes this as an integral part for any researcher working in an Indigenous context.

> "Any collaboration with an Indigenous community starts with building relationships. That's just essential because it helps to build trust, which is very important. But what is also important is taking the time to build the relationship and having a respectful way of going about things. It is not a corporate or commercial setting where you are in and out in a matter of a few days or hours. Taking the required time to build trust is essential to the ethics of the research. And finally getting to know and following the cultural protocols of the community when possible is vital."[14]

Using land as pedagogy

When it comes to building tangible visual designs and seeking inspiration from the land is the most useful and important. As discussed briefly in the previous section, there is a lot of visual inspiration that designers can seek out by observing the geography and everyday life of different Indigenous peoples. Red Wing points out:

> "The reason why you want to be a little bit more distinct in geographically representing different Indigenous nations is because each nation has a knowledge on how to take care of a particular type of land. So, up north, where it might be a little bit more cold, a little bit more tundra, as you get up towards Alaska. Those nations are experts on how to make a living in those conditions. The same is true for people who live in the prairies or along the coast down in Mexico. It wouldn't make sense to visually replace something Mayan or Aztec with something Alaskan. This feels like common sense but yet again, it does happen.

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[14] Ruiz, Adolfo, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."

If you want to respectfully represent an Indigenous community, land tropes are always going to be the easiest to avoid stereotypes. As a graphic designer, if you are working with an Indigenous nation and you are in a particular type of region, the easiest form of research is to know what living things are Indigenous to that area, because that is what the local demographic sees. So instead of using a headdress or a stereotypical pattern, go look at what flowers grow in that region. See how flowers in Alberta are different from flowers in Hawaii. There are just so many different types of petals, shapes and colours. They're beautiful! Highlight them! We don't need to use triangles and squares all the time.

As another example, if one comes from a place where there might be a greater wood culture, as you get closer to the Pacific, by Vancouver. There are so many beautiful shades of browns and greens within that dense woodland. As well as a lot of wood carving. Highlight that! It sounds repetitive but it really all starts from a particular type of land. Once you start noticing the resources on that land, their function and the colours they bring about. And if you then decide what you want to make out of them. It develops a sense of visual sovereignty for that nation and that's really the way of honoring them."[15]

Looking at the Past: Reviving Lost Visual Vocabulary

The biggest challenge faced by designers when building a visual identity when working with an Indigenous community is the loss of authentic historical designs and artifacts. The loss of generations-old design motifs, patterns, and visual cues is one of the biggest hindrances for a designer trying to rebuild a distinct visual identity. Thomas Andrews talks about this-

"If Tlicho women are sewing floral patterns today because they were forced to do so at residential schools. Should we maybe be taking women to museums to discover patterns, so they can see what their grandparents did or their great-grandparents did in terms of art traditions. In trying to revive that entire dictionary of artistic language that a lot of which has been misplaced or overwritten or maybe completely lost."[16]

[15] Red Wing, Sadie, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."
[16] Andrews, Thomas, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."

Museums of countries with a history of a colonizing project today still hold artifacts stolen from Indigenous communities the world over between the 15th and 20th centuries AD. In a 2019 article Chip Colwell writes-

> "In the wake of European colonial explorations from the 1500s onward, museums were filled with curious, beautiful, mundane and wondrous objects. Many of these things were purchased or traded, obtained with the permission of the individual maker or community. Yet, many were also procured with the threat of violence, without consent and in ways that violated cultural traditions. Many were simply stolen.
>
> When archaeological science took off in the late 1800s, unknown thousands of graves were excavated. When the Western art world fell in love with 'primitive' art, collectors and dealers often resorted to extremes to obtain ancient treasures. Indigenous peoples often tried their best to preserve their sacred objects and to protect the graves of their ancestors. But most communities were unable to stop the plunder."[17]

Visiting these artifacts—as painful as the experience is— is a useful tool for designers trying to revive lost historical art and design traditions. Researching and reviving lost visual vocabulary must remain at the forefront of any brand-building exercise of an Indigenous community.

Focusing on typography

Typography is a powerful aid and a decolonizing tool when it comes to creating contemporary visual communication design. However, a vast gap remains between the diversity and large number of typefaces available in Latin script as compared to other non-latin scripts and Indigenous syllabics.

As Saki Mafundikwa, a Zimbawean visual communicator and design educator, writes:

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[17] Colwel, Chip "'As Native Americans, We Are in a Constant State of Mourning,'" 2019, New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/04/opinion/can-museums-heal-historys-wounds.html (accessed July 18, 2022)

> "Contemporary graphic and typographic design histories are mostly America-centric or Euro-centric. Despite a few books on Cyrillic, the occasional study of Japanese and Chinese writing systems and recently more documentation on Arabic lettering, the Roman letter is supreme and western grids are paramount."[18].

This gap, especially in an Indigenous context, remains to be filled by visual designers working to return an honourable image to Indigenous nations away from a homogenized "Indian" visual language.

While a lot remains to be done. The tide is turning in this direction as seen in the work of the Dutch type foundry Typotheque' in creating a well-designed Canadian Aboriginal Syllabics. Kevin King at Typotheque points us in the right direction with his work "On developing a secondary style for the Canadian Syllabics" where he talks about the severe lack of secondary styles—such as the italics to a Latin script— for aboriginal syllabics in Canada.[19]

Secondary styles such as italics, bold, and condensed are something we take for granted as they are so readily available to users of the Latin script. And yet sometimes we fail to acknowledge the freedom of expression this simple change in type-style allows us. The same freedom of typographic expression and choice of option is required for the several North American Indigenous writing systems that have existed for hundreds of years.

As alluded to in the introductory section, typography has the power to encapsulate not just the meaning of the written word but also the unique characteristics and distinct essence of a vernacular language. In the quest for creating a respectful visual language for Indigenous communities, type design is an essential tool.

Co-creation with a Community

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[18] Mafundikwa, Saki "Face to face with the Afrikan written tradition" 2004, Eye Magazine, https://www.eyemagazine.com/review/article/face-to-face-with-the-afrikan-written-tradition (accessed July 18, 2022)

[19] King, Kevin " Syllabics typographic guidelines and local typographic preferences" Typotheque, 2022, https://www.typotheque.com/articles/syllabics-typographic-guidelines (accessed January 6, 2022)

Co-creating new design work in collaboration with an Indigenous nation is yet another way of creating designs and artwork that is truly authentic to a community. And while this method is effective it is also a responsible way of conducting ethical research when it comes to working with an Indigenous community.

Co-creation puts the researcher and the "subject" of research on the same page. It takes away the hierarchical advantage of the former and provides equity for the latter. Acknowledging the historical trauma associated with having been "researched" during a colonial era is an important part of working with Indigenous peoples today. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith powerfully puts it in *Decolonizing Methodologies,* in an Indigenous context "research" is a dirty word.

> "From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many Indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is so powerful that Indigenous people even write poetry about research. The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized peoples."[20]

One way out of this hierarchical advantage for the contemporary designer is collaboration and co-creation. It enables the community equal opportunity in the process of research-creation and the development of images and visuals that will be used to represent them in designed artworks for a period of time.

Finally, the co-creation of visual identities in an Indigenous context means pushing boundaries beyond the two-dimensional world of pixels, colour palettes, and logos to incorporate intangible cultural values and knowledge such as ceremonies, spiritual connection to the ecosystem, and the kinship between people and other-than-human beings.

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[20] Tuhiwai Smith, Linda "Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples" , 1999

Chapter Three: Researching Tlicho Visual Culture & Building the Visual Identity Guide

(Image. 5) Author on Great Slave Lake

(Image. 6) Introduction with Tlicho Elders

The process of building the Tlicho identity guide began in the spirit of co-creation with a visit to the Tlicho community in Rae-Edzo on the banks of the Great Slave Lake. As one drives from Edmonton, Alberta on a 14-hour drive towards Rae-Edzo, you can see the geography change from the prairies at the foot of the Canadian Rockies to that of the Canadian sub-arctic. Cutting through the boreal forests the flora gets shorter and sparser, the surroundings quieter and more devoid of human noise.

The Tlicho land appears completely different between the summer and the winter months. The community is even more accessible during the colder months surprisingly, as one can drive over the frozen winter lakes. The duality of constantly straddling between the summer and winter driven environments, that the Tlicho experience has become an important part of designing the Tlicho visual identity.

Methods & Design:

Colour Palette (Warm + Cool)

I use solid blocks of colours to consistently split the Tlicho world and visuals into two to represent a binary world that the Tlicho live within.

I separate the identity guide in two halves at every point. Splitting the book into warm and cool color palettes, Dene Syllabics and Latin Typography. Male and Female Clothing, and so on.

Tlicho Colour Palette

Pantone: 186C
CMYK: C=12, M=100, Y=92, K=3
RGB: R=208, G=32, B=46
WEB: D0202E

Pantone: 123C
CMYK: C=0, M=23, Y=91, K=0
RGB: R=255, G=197, B=47
WEB: FFC52F

Pantone: Reflex Blue C
CMYK: C=100, M=94, Y=14, K=12
RGB: R=38, G=51, B=123
WEB: 26337B

Pantone: 000C
CMYK: C=0, M=0, Y=0, K=0
RGB: R=255, G=255, B=255
WEB: FFFFFF
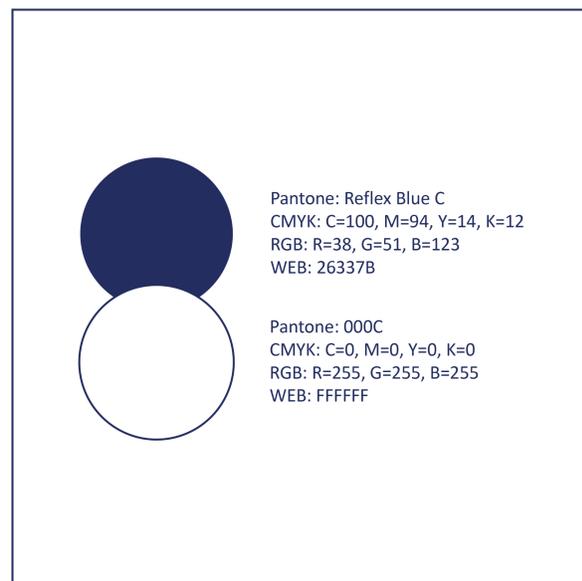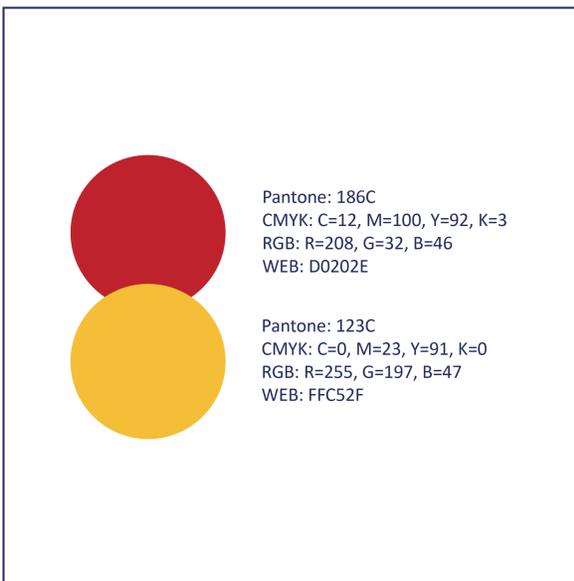
(Image. 7) Warm colour palette   (Image. 8) Cool colour palette

Typography (Latin + Dene)

For typefaces I turn to the Tlicho Government which has pre established typefaces for the Tlicho nation. As guided by the community the identity guideline keeps them consistent to "Calibri" for Latin typography and uses Aboriginal Unicode Keyboard and Fonts from Language Geek for special characters. When speaking of typefaces. Tiro Typeworks typeface Huronia created by Ross Mills is also a significant effort towards creating more indigenous-friendly typefaces.

Tlicho

Tłı̨chǫ

As long as
the sun will rise,
As long as
the rivers will flow,
If the land
is not moved,
We cannot be limited
from our way of life.

Dı̨ı̨ sah nàé t'à.
Dı̨ı̨ deh nı̨ı̨lı̨.
Dı̨ı̨ ndè nàgoèhdǫ-le
nı̨dè Asıı ts'àgoèt'ǫ
hǫı̨lı̨ ha nele.

(Image. 9) Calibri   (Image. 10) Aboriginal Unicode Sans Serif

Everyday material culture and clothing also requires to be split in two, according to male and female genders, as Thomas Andrews points out:

> "An aspect of Tlicho material culture is that there are gendered or sex roles. So, women do certain tasks and men do certain tasks and a lot of material culture that we see is created either by the men or by women. So that separation is an important component to it as well."[21]

Women's and Men's Summer Clothing:

(Image. 11) Women's summer dress   (Image. 12) Women's summer dress close-up.

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[21] Andrews, Thomas, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."

(Image. 13) Men's summer shirt
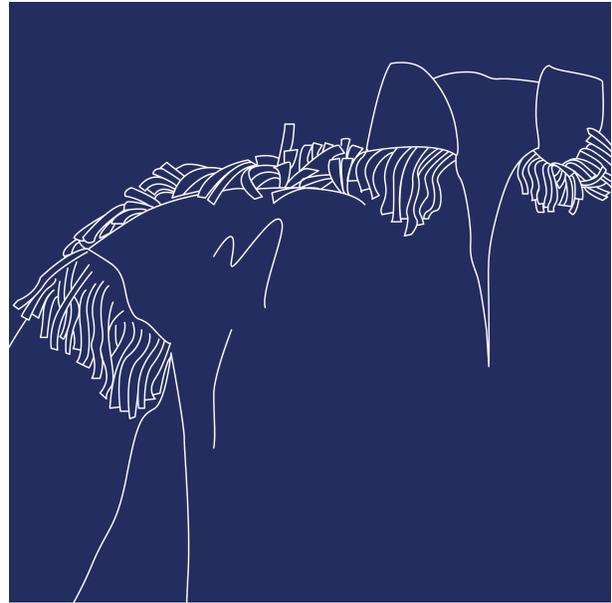
(Image. 14)Men's summer shirt close-up.
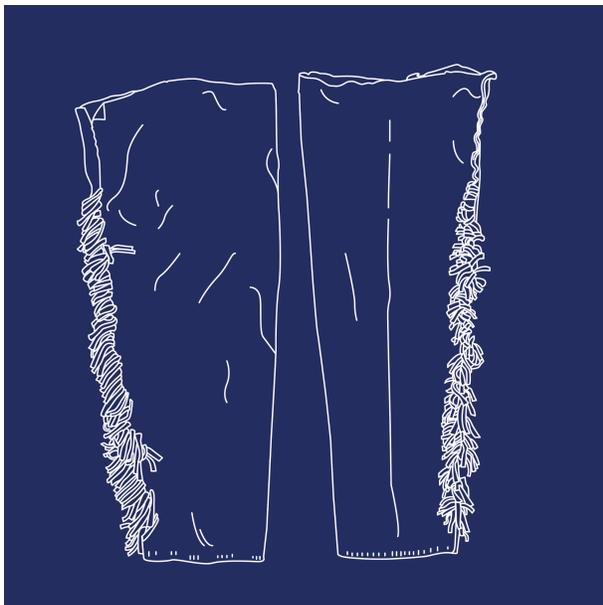
(Image. 15) Men's summer leggings
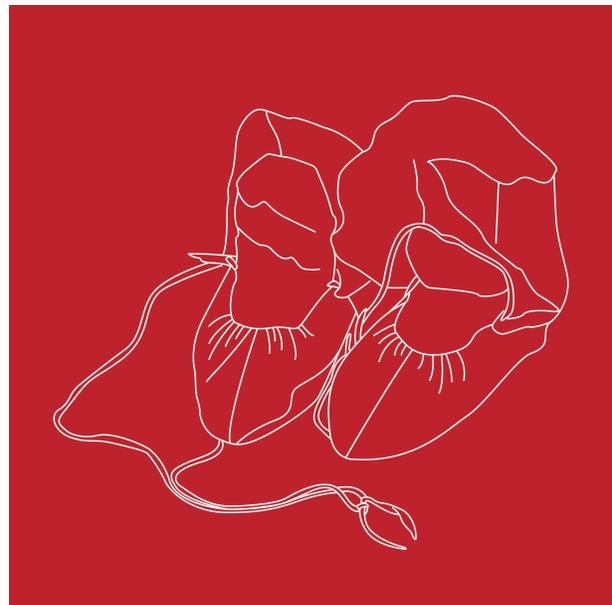

(Image. 16) Moccasins

In order to illustrate and archive traditional Tlicho clothing and objects, I turn to a traveling exhibit organized with the help of Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and put together by Thomas Andrews and Gavin Renwick called " We Live Securely By the Land".

This exhibit provided me with a wealth of archival material and photographic evidence by the help of which I was able to utilize to reference and illustrate traditional Tlicho clothing and material objects with confidence.

Everyday Objects:
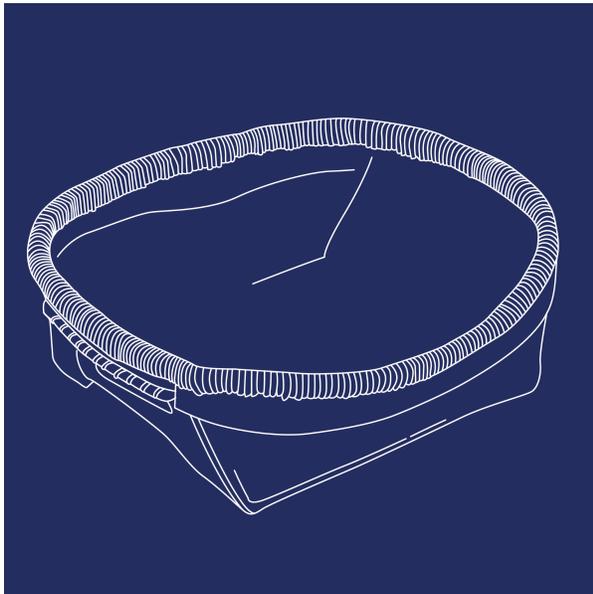
(Image. 17) Water Basket
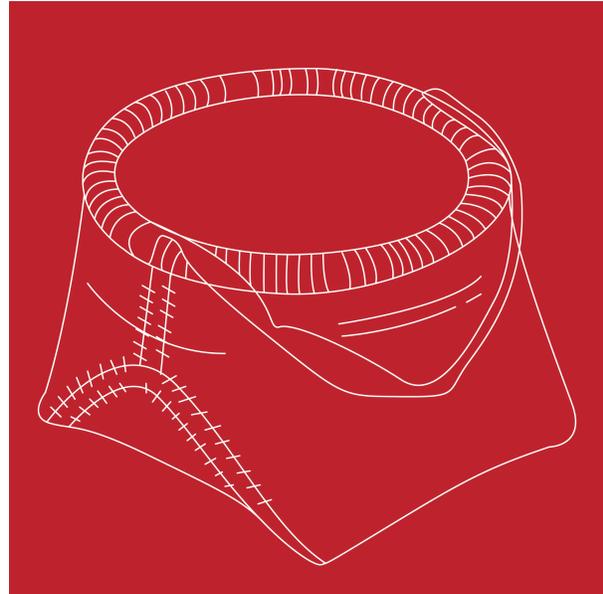
(Image. 18) Baset used for berries.
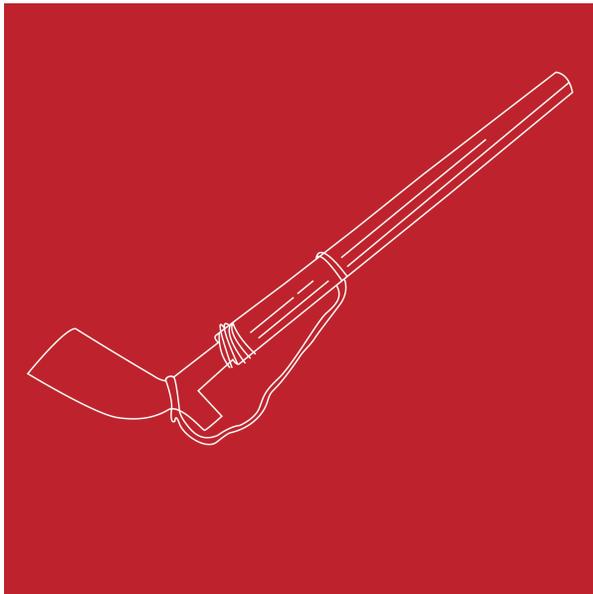
(Image. 19) Smoking pipe
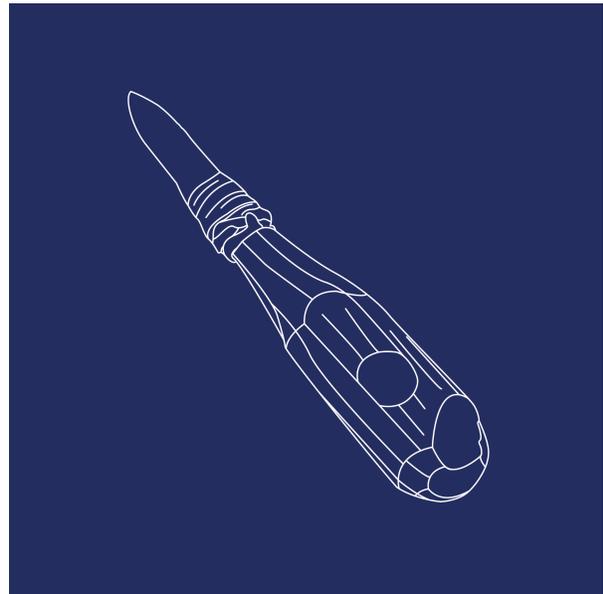
(Image. 20) Tool to make Moccasins

(Image. 21) Bag for hunting mea.   (Image. 22) Bag for hunting meat close-up.

Transport (Summer Canoes + Winter Dogs)

When queried about the role of Tlicho material culture in visual culture, Thomas Andrews describes:

> "In terms of visual aspects historically the role of dogs was really important as well. And all of the material culture that comes with dogs like harnesses and sleighs and carryalls and all of that. Canoes were another thing that were really important traditionally. So birchbark canoes and there are a variety of forms of those too. But then that evolved into a whole number of different kinds of boats which they used to cross the landscape. So dog teams in winter time and canoes in summer time. Snowshoes and moccasins were absolutely important. Because people walked as much as they rode across the landscape. So those would be really important visual cues as well. Both of which with the coming of colonial times were the only thing that survived because people still needed to walk across the landscape. But traditional clothing completely, virtually disappeared. But snowshoes, mukluks and moccasins are still used today."[22]

_____

[22] Andrews, Thomas, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."

Birchbark canoe, Dog harness and Sleigh:
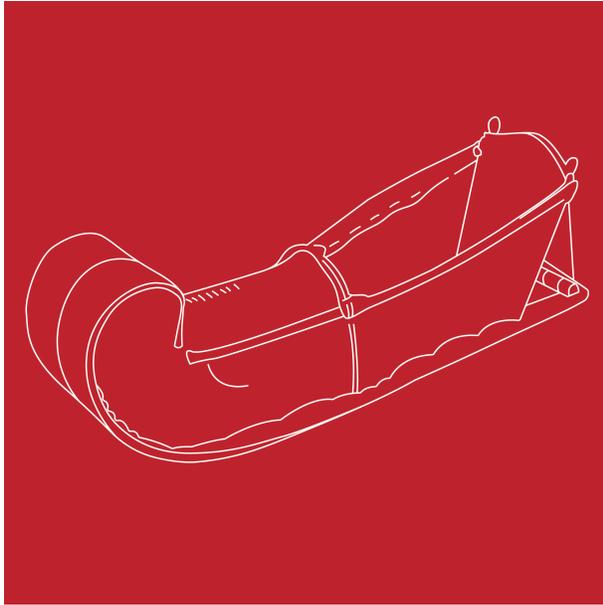
(Image. 23) Sleigh

(Image. 24) Dog harness.
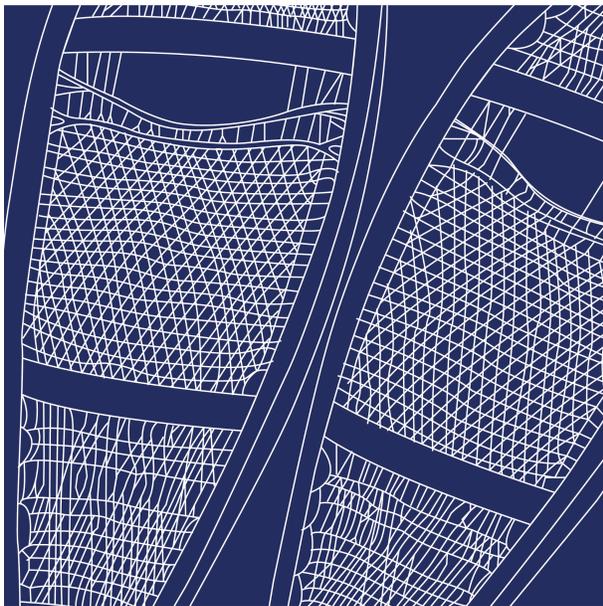
(Image. 25) Winter shoes close-up
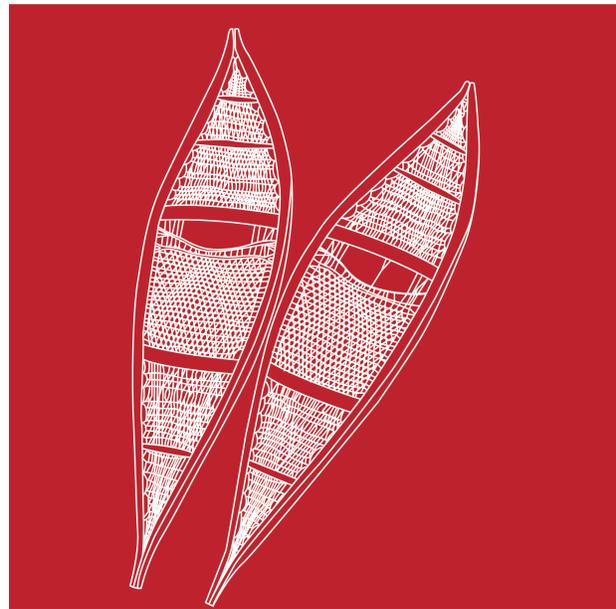
(Image. 26) Winter shoes.

<u>Symbols (Patterns + Motif)</u>

To revive lost patterns I look at a traditional Tlicho porcupine belt (1862). A red, white, blue, and yellow band, loom-woven porcupine quills are coloured with aniline dyes and worked with sinew.

The tanned caribou skin band are not yet attached, so the cut ends of the quills are visible on the reverse side.
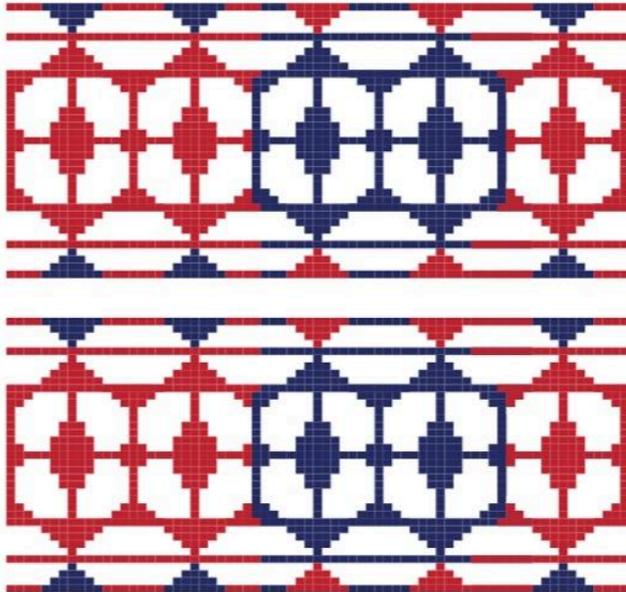
(Image. 27) Weaving pattern
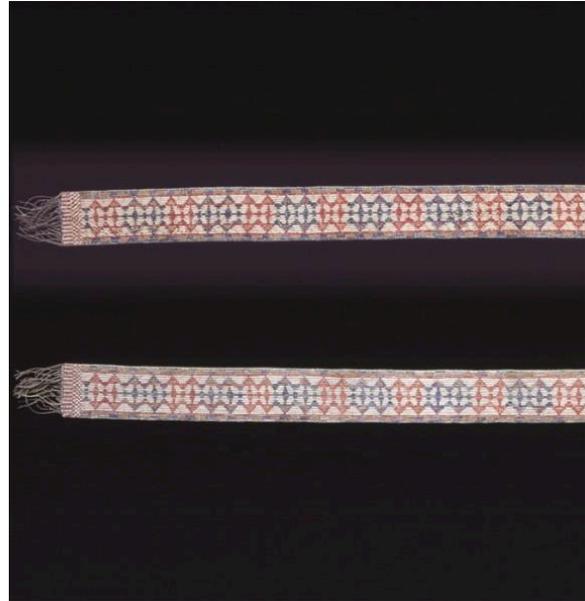
(Image. 28) Porcupine quill belt.
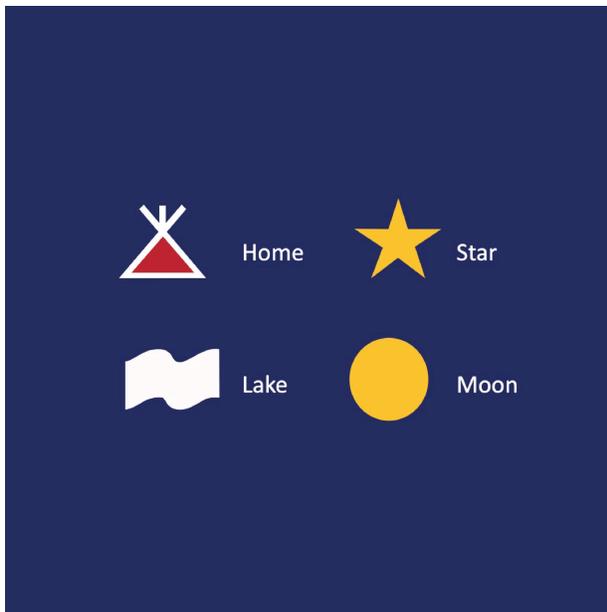
(Image. 29) Tlicho Icons

(Image. 30) Tlicho Repeat pattern

Dwelling (Home + Habitat)

"Caribou skin lodges were the primary form of habitation for the Tlicho Dogrib for centuries. At the beginning of the 20th century, hundreds of these lodges were in everyday use, but when canvas tents became a common trade item in the 1920s, the caribou skin lodges quickly disappeared."[23]

In order to document an authentic Tlicho home for this identity guideline, I reference the Caribou Skin Lodge Project by the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre that, in 1999, collaborated with the Dogrib community to recreate a traditional Dogrib caribou skin lodge with help and reference of a last surviving artifact from 1893.
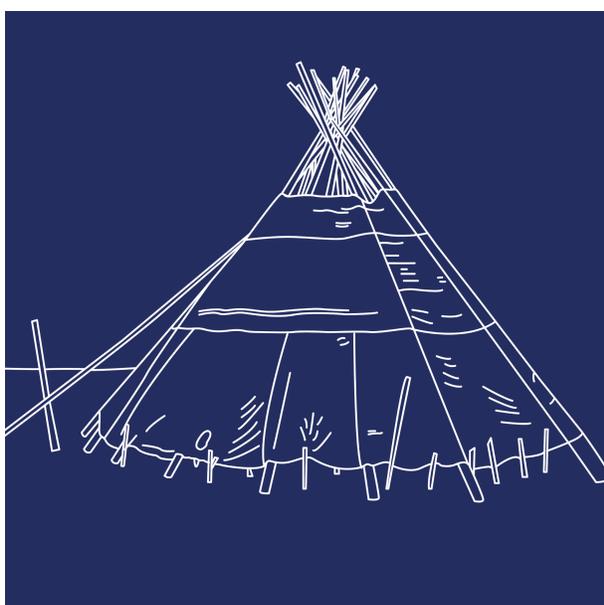
(Image. 31) Tlicho teepee
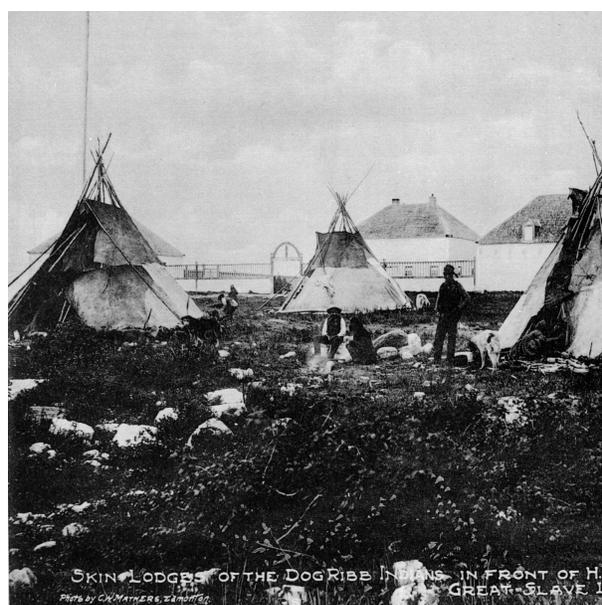
(Image. 32) Tlicho teepee

Flora + Fauna

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23 Mackenzie, Andrews, Zoe, "The Dogrib Caribou Skin Lodge Project", Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, 1999 https://www.pwnhc.ca/item/dogrib-caribou-skin-lodge-project/#tab-id-3 (accessed July 20, 2022)

As I've stated before, the building of an Indigenous identity guide requires pushing of the boundaries beyond the two-dimensional world of pixels and logos to incorporate the spiritual connection of the community to the ecosystem, and the kinship between people and other-than-human beings. Stories involving animal spirits are a common occurrence in the Tlicho tradition. Such as the Tlicho origin story "A woman and three pups".

(Image. 33) Black Bear
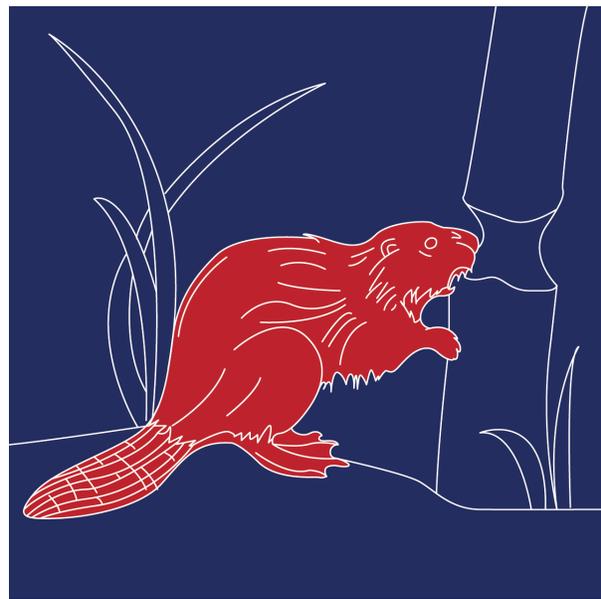
(Image. 34) Beaver
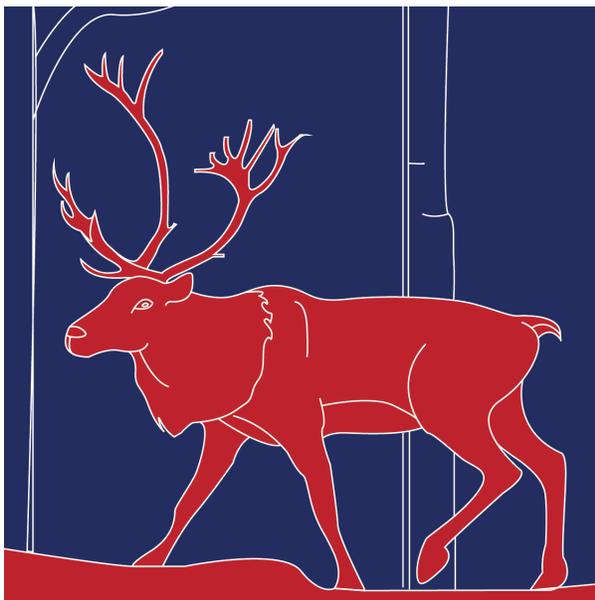
(Image. 35) Caribou

(Image. 36) Raven

Ancestors (History + Tradition)

Tlicho creation mythology by the Tlicho History Project is as follows:

"A young woman who did not have a husband, lived with her two brothers. One day a handsome stranger came to their house. The brothers said to the sister, "This handsome man has come for you so you must marry him." So the couple were wed. On their wedding night the young woman awoke to the sound of a dog gnawing on a bone. The woman's husband was also no longer at her side. She jumped up, lit the fire, and searched the tent but there was no dog in the tent. The woman went back to bed and fell asleep. Once again she was awakened by the sound of a dog gnawing on a bone. The woman called out to one of her brothers who threw a hatchet in the direction of the noise. There was a loud cry and then silence. The woman and her brothers quickly lit the fire and found a large black dog lying dead. The woman's husband did not return. Eventually, the woman gave birth to six puppies. The woman loved these puppies but she was also ashamed of them and concealed them in a sack. One day upon returning to the camp, the woman noticed the footprints of children around the camp. The next day instead of checking her snares as she usually did, she hid behind a bush close to the tent. After she had left, the six puppies crawled out of the sack and turned into three girls and three boys. The woman ran towards them but before she could reach them, two of the girls and one of the boys jumped back into the sack. The remaining three children grew up strong and healthy and produced many children. We are descended from them and that is why we call ourselves the Tlicho or Dogrib people.[24]

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[24] "Woman and the pups", 2018, Tlicho Government https://tlichohistory.ca (accessed December 1, 2022)

Chapter Four: Conclusion

<u>Present Limitations & Future Scope.</u>

Present Limitations:

A limitation of the visual identity guideline, in its present form, is the lack of development of this book in the Tlicho language. The book is yet to be translated into Dene Syllabics with the help of Tlicho youth and elders.

Future Scope:

The future scope for the identity guidelines include receiving and incorporating consistent feedback from the Tlicho community and government to add to the project as and when needed. The future scope also includes expanding and co-creating new designs and motifs which can be used to represent the Tlicho nation in visual projects moving forward.

Sources of traditional Tlicho knowledge and medicine must also be an unalienable part of the Tlicho identity guidelines as a means of archiving and preserving centuries old Indigenous knowledge created by generations of elders.

Thomas Andrews talks about the "visual" of a Tlicho youth sitting next to an Elder listening to traditional Tlicho stories and mythologies as an absolutely vital part of the Tlicho everyday life. In this manner, the identity guidelines must also include and expand beyond the Dogrib creation story and include several other ancient stories as part of the Tlicho identity.[25]

Traditional hunting routes, both during the summer and winter time, can be included as part of the identity guidelines. During the summer these routes include traveling in canoes and then on land as portage routes. As well as the winter routes traveled across a vast landscape historically with the help of dogs and sleighs but more recently with snowmobiles.

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[25] Andrews, Thomas, Interview for "Indigenous Visual Language: On creating appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories, and culture."

Appendices

Interviews

Attendees

Raheel Malkan, Sadie Red Wing

Q1. Raheel Malkan: Now that you have a brief idea of the identity guide as well as the context of the thesis. What in your opinion should an indigenous identity guideline comprise of? Are there any aspects you can think of that I might add to this identity guideline?

Sadie Red Wing: Knowing that it's going to be designed specifically to a demographic. An indigenous demographic will always read land tropes. I know it's sometimes kind of common knowledge to be like you have to know the animals in this area. But definitely the first thing that I start in a class of mine when I'm working with indigenous graphic designers. Is that we have got to know the plants of the region we're working in. And we've got to know the ecosystem and the animals and their relations to the humans.

For example, if we're going to build a color palette for a particular region, we can pull that color palette from a particular type of plant species in the area. So if I come from the prairie and we have a unique flower, that's a particular type of yellow or a purple that you might not see in the northwest or you might not see in the southeast. Coming from a demographic that can recognize that color from that particular plant. Is some of the easiest or basics of developing color palettes. Knowing that there's a lot of symbolism in there based on the flag that you showed within their nation. But what I would like in identity guides the most is showing sovereignty amongst nations in the region. And definitely ecosystems and relations between plants, animals and humans.

The next step of research that I usually have students do—And it's a little bit hard because genocide has affected us a lot—Is the study of trade routes. Particularly in the context of appropriation. When a particular trade route brought in new technologies, it really developed or enhanced the visual sovereignty of the nation. So it is good to know for example if a particular type of cotton, or fur from an animal, shell or plant, that's not from the region was introduced to the community over generations. The newly introduced tools, resources sometimes influence how a nation might visually show themselves. You see a little bit more of that in African indigenous nations in how they incorporate glass or different types of metals. It's sometimes hard to research some of that stuff but its really important in knowing why certain indigenous nations visually represent themselves the way they do.

Q2. Raheel Malkan: What can be done to tackle the problem of Pan-Indianism? How can graphic designers create visually distinct identities for different indigenous groups?

Sadie Red Wing: The reason why you want to be a little bit more distinct in geographically representing different Indigenous nations is because each nation has a knowledge on how to take care of a particular type of land. So, up north, where it might be a little bit more cold, a little

bit more tundra, as you get up towards Alaska. Those nations are experts on how to make a living in those conditions. The same is true for people who live in the prairies or along the coast down in Mexico. It wouldn't make sense to visually replace something Mayan or Aztec with something Alaskan. This feels like common sense but yet again, it does happen.

If you want to respectfully represent an Indigenous community, land tropes are always going to be the easiest to avoid stereotypes. As a graphic designer, if you are working with an Indigenous nation and you are in a particular type of region, the easiest form of research is to know what living things are Indigenous to that area, because that is what the local demographic sees. So instead of using a headdress or a stereotypical pattern, go look at what flowers grow in that region. See how flowers in Alberta are different from flowers in Hawaii. There are just so many different types of petals, shapes and colours. They're beautiful! Highlight them! We don't need to use triangles and squares all the time.

As another example, if one comes from a place where there might be a greater wood culture, as you get closer to the Pacific, by Vancouver. There are so many beautiful shades of browns and greens within that dense woodland. As well as a lot of wood carving. Highlight that! It sounds repetitive but it really all starts from a particular type of land. Once you start noticing the resources on that land, their function and the colours they bring about. And if you then decide what you want to make out of them. It develops a sense of visual sovereignty for that nation and that's really the way of honoring them."

Q3. Raheel Malkan: Raheel: What is the appropriate way of collaboration for designers working with indigenous communities?

Sadie Red Wing:

In collaboration between a non-indigenous designer with an Indigenous tribe. I think there has to be a sense of knowing that there are protocols. As well as understanding that collaboration must take place in a respectful and non exploitative manner.

Attendees

Adolfo Ruiz, Raheel Malkan

Q1. Raheel Malkan: The existing Tlicho guideline is limited to color, logo, and typography. etc. If you were to expand it, what elements would you consider adding?

Adolfo Ruiz: I feel like I've already gotten such a big sneak peek of yours. I think what you added was brilliant. I think the idea of including spiritual knowledge, material culture, clothing, animals and habitat is interesting. You're pushing the very idea of a brand guideline into elements of intangible cultural knowledge like spirituality. Things that maybe traditionally at least

in a western context would expect to see in a museum. And I think that's really interesting because that's all connected to the visual language and identity of the Tlicho.

Q2. Raheel Malkan: What is the appropriate way in which a visual communicator should work or collaborate with indigenous communities?

Adolfo Ruiz: Any collaboration with an Indigenous community starts with building relationships. That's just essential because it helps to build trust, which is very important. But what is also important is taking the time to build the relationship and having a respectful way of going about things. It is not a corporate or commercial setting where you are in and out in a matter of a few days or hours. Taking the required time to build trust is essential to the ethics of the research. And finally getting to know and following the cultural protocols of the community when possible is vital.

We need to think about how the university can come to the community or the student experience can come to the community. To bring in experiential learning in collaboration with communities into the classroom is absolutely a vital thing, where we move beyond the bricks and mortar space of a university. When possible we need to try and bring the classroom into the land, and specifically the communities' land. It is necessary specifically for collaborations and the better understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and to inform design programs. Also, where possible we should have community members, visit the classroom to come and share their knowledge with the students. This is easier said than done.

Exchanging gifts. Taking the time to have a conversation that maybe has nothing to do with the research, but it's still indirectly connected to the bigger picture of what's happening. So, yeah, those are all important things that I don't think they ever get talked about in a conventional design program, because usually you don't need to think about that in many corporate contexts.

And obviously just standard things that you would do for any other project like getting to know the background history and culture of the context you're working and through third party material, obviously is important.

I just think there needs to be more projects whether it's collaborations between outside researchers or designers or artists and Tlicho Community members or fully derived from within the Tlicho community. Either way I think there just needs to be more projects happening of that nature, it would be good to see and I think your initiative is really interesting.

Q3. Raheel Malkan: How can designers ensure that the research benefits reach back to the community?

Adolfo Ruiz: Giving something to the community that you think they need based on what you think is interesting or relevant. But it really needs to start with a dialogue. And the best way to give back is to create something that has practical applications, to be honest, like, what you're doing I think is something that will have practical applications. Creating an educational tool, creating something to help revitalize, cultural language, These are all I think are important contributions. Visual communication design, specifically I think is really key in this day and age. Much of our knowledge resides online and I think visual communication designers can play an

important role in helping to create a visual language like you're doing that is respectful and sensitive.

Attendees

Thomas Andrews, Raheel Malkan

Q1. Raheel Malkan: What are some important aspects of Tlicho visual and material culture?

Thomas Andrews: In terms of visual aspects historically the role of dogs was really important as well. And all of the material culture that comes with dogs like harnesses and sleighs and carryalls and all of that. Canoes were another thing that were really important traditionally. So birchbark canoes and there are a variety of forms of those too. But then that evolved into a whole number of different kinds of boats which they used to cross the landscape. So dog teams in winter time and canoes in summer time. Snowshoes and moccasins were absolutely important. Because people walked as much as they rode across the landscape. So those would be really important visual cues as well. Both of which with the coming of colonial times were the only thing that survived because people still needed to walk across the landscape. But traditional clothing completely, virtually disappeared. But snowshoes, mukluks and moccasins are still used today.

An important aspect of Tlicho material culture is that there are gendered or sex roles. So, women do certain tasks and men do certain tasks and a lot of material culture that we see is created either by the men or by women. So that separation is an important component to it as well.

Q2. Raheel Malkan: How to avoid a homogenous portrayal of indigenous people?

Thomas Andrews: The way to avoid homogenous portrayal of Indigenous peoples is to dive into the literature of whatever group you're working with and into whatever literature exists on their own specific material culture and study it and learn their motifs. Like the authors of those books eventually you will get to a point where you could walk into a museum and if there were no labels, you would have enough experience to be able to identify the ones that were Tlicho as opposed to others because of your familiarity with the different styles and motifs. It's only through hard work and careful observation that you can make sure you don't fall into that trap of homogenization of Indigenous culture.

A good example of misrepresentation of indigenous culture is the Inukshuks, which show up all over the place, But they had a very specific use and were restricted to a very small part of the world, which is a Canadian Arctic, but you find them in Vancouver, you find them in Yellowknife, even, and just not appropriate.

Another one that bothers me isTurtle Island. Turtles don't exist in the Northwest Territories. There are no turtles in the Tlicho world. There are terms within each language that are

appropriate to use, so using Turtle Island is borrowed from a translation of another Indigenous language. To be appropriate you have to be geographically correct and use terms in Tlicho if you're talking about the Tlicho. For them, it's not Turtle Island but it's 'Deh' which is their word for the land.

Q3. Raheel Malkan: How can we revive indigenous visual vocabulary?

Thomas Andrews: That's really interesting. Obviously one way would be to build many of the programs that Gavin started trying to develop printing studios in the North. So that in an indigenous community people can have the space and the training and the capacity to express their own artistic traditions.

If Tlicho women are sewing floral patterns today because they were forced to do so at residential schools. Should we maybe be taking women to museums to discover patterns, so they can see what their grandparents did or their great-grandparents did in terms of art traditions. In trying to revive that entire dictionary of artistic language that a lot of which has been misplaced or overwritten or maybe completely lost.

Ethics

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Table of Contents

1.1 Study Identification

Please answer <u>all relevant questions</u> that will reasonably help to describe your study or proposed research.

1.0   *** Short Study Title** *(restricted to 100 characters)*:
Indigenous Visual Language: On designing appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories & culture.

2.0   *** Complete Study Title** *(can be exactly the same as short title)*:
Indigenous Visual Language: On designing appropriate visual communication for the Tlicho community, stories & culture.

3.0   *** Select the appropriate Research Ethics Board (***Detailed descriptions are available at here***):**
Research Ethics Board 1

4.0   *** Is the proposed research:**
Unfunded

5.0   *** Name of local Principal Investigator:**
Raheel Malkan

6.0   *** Type of research/study:**
Graduate Student

7.0   **Investigator's Supervisor***(required for applications from undergraduate students, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and medical residents to REBs 1 & 2. HREB does not accept applications from student PIs)*:
Gavin Renwick

8.0   **Study Coordinators or Research Assistants:** People listed here can edit this application and will receive all email notifications for the study:

Name	**Employer**

There are no items to display

9.0   **Co-Investigators:** People listed here can edit this application and will receive email notifications *(Co-investigators who do not wish to receive email, should be added to the study team below instead of here). If your searched name does not come up when you type it in the box, the user does not have the Principal Investigator role in the online system. Click the following link for instructions on how to Request an Additional Role.*

Name	**Employer**

There are no items to display

10.0   **Primary Admin Contact** *(a member of study team):*

11.0   **Study Team:** *(co-investigators, supervising team, and other study team members) - People listed here cannot view or edit this application and do not receive email notifications.*

Last Name	First Name	Organization	Role/Area of Responsibility	Phone	Email
Renwick	Gavin	University of Alberta	Supervisor		

1.4 Conflict of Interest

1.0   *** Are any of the investigators or their immediate family receiving any personal remuneration (including investigator payments and recruitment incentives but excluding trainee remuneration or graduate student stipends) from the funding of this study that is not accounted for in the study budget?**
○ Yes ● No

2.0   *** Do any of investigators or their immediate family have any proprietary interests in the product under study or the outcome of the research including patents, trademarks, copyrights, and licensing agreements?**
○ Yes ● No

3.0   *** Is there any compensation for this study that is affected by the study outcome?**
○ Yes ● No

4.0   *** Do any of the investigators or their immediate family have equity interest in the sponsoring company? (This does not include Mutual**

Funds)

○ Yes ● No

5.0   *** Do any of the investigators or their immediate family receive payments of other sorts, from this sponsor (i.e. grants, compensation in the form of equipment or supplies, retainers for ongoing consultation and honoraria)?**

○ Yes ● No

6.0   *** Are any of the investigators or their immediate family, members of the sponsor's Board of Directors, Scientific Advisory Panel or comparable body?**

○ Yes ● No

7.0   *** Do you have any other relationship, financial or non-financial, that, if not disclosed, could be construed as a conflict of interest?**

○ Yes ● No

Please explain if the answer to any of the above questions is Yes:
Not applicable

Important
If you answered YES to any of the questions above, you may be asked for more information.

1.5   Research Locations and Other Approvals

1.0   *** List the locations of the proposed research, including recruitment activities. Provide name of institution, facility or organization, town, or province as applicable**
Edmonton, Alberta

2.0   *** Indicate if the study will use or access facilities, programmes, resources, staff, students, specimens, patients or their records, at any of the sites affiliated with the following** *(select all that apply):*
Not applicable

List all health care research sites/locations:
Not applicable

3.0

Multi-Institution Review

* 3.1 Has this study already received approval from another REB?

○ Yes ● No

4.0 **If this application is closely linked to research previously approved by one of the University of Alberta REBs or has already received ethics approval from an external ethics review board**(s)**, provide the study number, REB name or other identifying information. Attach any external REB application and approval letter in the Documentation Section – Other Documents.**
Not applicable

2.1 Study Objectives and Design

1.0 *** Provide a lay summary of your proposed research which would be understandable to general public**

In 2023, I began a creative collaboration with the Tłı̨chǫ community, in the region of Northwest Territories in Canada. As a visual communicator my initial aim for this research was to create an online tool for the traditional Tłı̨chǫ stories and visual history. I would also research on ways in which a designer would build such an archive. While at this point I had the stories for the project, I realized I did not know how to visually represent this community in a culturally appropriate manner. A quick search on the internet also revealed that there exists very little material on ways of collaborating with indigenous nations when it comes to creating visual communication.

While there exists a lot of "Pan-Indian" imagery on the web on how to represent Native American cultures. There are very few projects that take into account the different signs, motifs, and symbolism that give each community their unique visual character when designing for them. How does a First Nation "brand" language look different than a Metis way of visual communication? How can designers identify and use distinct visual systems when creating artworks for different indigenous communities?

To address these questions, my research focuses on ways visual designers can build a community-focused brand guideline to visually represent an indigenous nation. For this as a case study I will work with the Tłı̨chǫ Done of the Northwest Territories.

The eventual design outcome i.e the Tłı̨chǫ brand book will serve as a useful tool for designers working to represent the Tłı̨chǫ in future visual projects. The research it takes to build this "brand" guideline will also serve as a useful guide for any researchers looking for ways on appropriately collaborating with indigenous nations when creating visual projects.

2.0 *** Provide a full description of your research proposal outlining the following:**

- **Purpose**
- **Hypothesis**
- **Justification**
- **Objectives**
- **Research Method/Procedures**
- **Plan for Data Analysis**

Purpose:

The purpose of this research is to create the Tłı̨chǫ brand book that will serve as a useful tool for designers working to represent the Tłı̨chǫ in future visual projects. The research will also serve as a useful guide for any researchers looking for ways on appropriately collaborating with indigenous nations when creating visual communication projects.

For this purpose non-structured interviews will be conducted with industry/academic experts in the field of visual communication, native-studies, and education.

Hypothesis and justification:

There exists a lot of "Pan-Indian" imagery on the web on how to represent Native American cultures. However very few projects that take into account the different signs, motifs, and symbolism that give each community their unique visual character when designing visual artworks. How does a First Nation "brand" language look different than a Metis way of visual communication? How can designers identify and use distinct visual systems when creating artworks for different indigenous communities? This research will focus on ways on returning an indigenous nation their visual identity.

Objectives:

Six non-structured interviews will be conducted to fulfil the following two objectives.

1) Three interviews will be conducted in the field of Visual Communication to investigate the current state and shortcomings of appropriate representation of indigenous communities in visual culture.

2) Three interviews will be conducted in the field of Native-Studies. Preferably with academics working with the Tłı̨chǫ directly to understand their needs.

Research Method:

A Nehiyaw-inspired Methodology

An indigenous research framework inspired by Plains Cree traditions but also shared by other tribal groups (as identified in literature by indigenous scholars) suggests the following steps for investigators conducting qualitative research.

1) Researcher Preparation: At this stage the researcher considers a holistic epistemology and questions his relationship and positioning to the study.

2) Research Preparation: This step includes considering of the specifics such as selecting participants, methods for gathering knowledge, interpretation and 'tapwe' (truth and trust).

3) Decolonizing & Ethics: This step involves the application of a decolonizing lens to the study.

4) Gathering Knowledge: Conducting the actual research activity. In the context of this study, conducting the six non-structured interviews with the research participants.

This methodology honours sharing story as a means for knowing. Conversation is a non-structured method of knowing. While this seems like another way of saying interview, the term interview does not capture the full essence of the approach. For this is very much a combination of reflection, story, and dialogue. The research framework considers engaging with the participant's stories- their experiences with culture and methodologies as a primary method of research.

5) Making Meaning: This step of the indigenous inquiry involves analysis of data through recognition of patterns but also considers observation and contextual knowledge. It draws upon external and internal sources and is highly interpretative, combined with a form of inductive analysis.

This step also includes 'tapwe' which means to speak the truth. It is about validity and credibility. To show community accountability, efforts will be made at making meaning by debriefing with other indigenous graduate students/scholars throughout the process. Added effort will be made to keep the language of this research as accessible as possible, so that is not mystifying but rather useful to a range of individuals who comprise the indigenous community.

6) Giving Back: This step involves sharing of the final outcome and all research back with the community.

Plan for data analysis:

Please refer to step five "Making Meaning" under the Research Method section.

3.0   **Describe procedures, treatment, or activities that are above or in addition to standard practices in this study area** *(eg. extra medical or health-related procedures, curriculum enhancements, extra follow-up, etc)*:
Not applicable

4.0   **If the proposed research is above minimal risk and is not funded via a competitive peer review grant or industry-sponsored clinical trial, the REB will require evidence of scientific review. Provide information about the review process and its results if appropriate.**
Not applicable

5.0   **For clinical trials, describe any sub-studies associated with this Protocol.**
Not applicable

2.2 Research Methods and Procedures

Some research methods prompt specific ethical issues. The methods listed below have additional questions associated with them in this application. If your research does not involve any of the methods listed below, ensure that your proposed research is adequately described in Section 2.1: Study Objectives and Design or attach documents in the Documentation Section if necessary.

    1.0   *** This study will involve the following**(*select all that apply*)
Interviews and/or Focus Groups
Research focusing on First Nations, Inuit and Metis Peoples

NOTE 1: Select this if you are directly collecting health information as part of your protocol OR will be conducting a chart/record review/reviewing health data secondarily. This includes anonymized or identifiable health information.

NOTE 2: Select this option if this research ONLY involves analysis of blood/tissue/specimens originally collected for another purpose but now being used to answer your research question. If you are enrolling people into the study to prospectively collect specimens to analyze you SHOULD NOT select this box.

NOTE 3: This section is intended to reflect the secondary use of non-health data. Do NOT select this if you are using data that originally came from health sources, i.e., anonymized administrative data.

2.5 Interview and/or Focus Groups

    1.0   **Will you conduct interviews, focus groups, or both? Provide detail.**
Six non-structured interviews will be conducted to fulfil the following two objectives.

1) Three interviews will be conducted in the field of Visual Communication to investigate the current state and shortcomings of appropriate representation of indigenous communities in visual culture.

2) Three interviews will be conducted in the field of Native-Studies. Preferably with academics working with the Tłı̨chǫ directly to understand their needs.

2.0   How will participation take place (e.g. in-person, via phone, email, Skype)?
The participation will take place over a secure Zoom meeting or a phone call. If by Zoom participants will be informed they have the right to keep the camera off if needed.

3.0   How will the data be collected (e.g. audio recording, video recording, field notes)?
The data will be collected in the form of audio recordings with prior consent acquired from the participants. The audio will be recorded with the audio-only recording option provided by Zoom and the file will be saved securely on the computer accessible only to the Principal Investigator. If the interview takes place over a phone call the data will be recorded in the form of written notes.

2.8 First Nations, Inuit and Metis People

1.0   * If you will be obtaining consent from Elders, leaders, or other community representatives, provide details:
A document of support has been obtained from the Tłı̨chǫ Government for this research.

2.0   If leaders of the group will be involved in the identification of potential participants, provide details:
Not applicable.

3.0   Provide details if:
• property or private information belonging to the group as a whole is studied or used;
• the research is designed to analyze or describe characteristics of the group, or
• individuals are selected to speak on behalf of, or otherwise represent the group

In developing the tlicho brand the research will be designed to describe the characteristics of the group.

4.0   * Provide information regarding consent, agreements regarding access, ownership and sharing of research data with communities:
A document of support has been obtained from the Tłı̨chǫ Government for this research.

5.0   Provide information about how final results of the study will be shared with the participating community *(eg. via band office, special presentation, deposit in community school, etc)***?**
The final brand book will be shared with the Tłı̨chǫ Government.

6.0   Is there a research agreement with the community?

● Yes ○ No

Provide details about the agreement or why an agreement is not in place, not required, etc.
The Tłįchǫ Government has accepted the proposal for this research. A letter of support referring to this agreement is attached in the Documentation section.

3.1 Risk Assessment

1.0   * **Provide your assessment of the risks that may be associated with this research:**
Minimal Risk - research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research (TCPS2)

2.0   * **Select all that might apply:**

Description of Possible Physical Risks and Discomforts

No   Participants might feel physical fatigue, e.g. sleep deprivation

No   Participants might feel physical stress, e.g. cardiovascular stress tests

No   Participants might sustain injury, infection, and intervention side-effects or complications

No   The physical risks will be greater than those encountered by the participants in everyday life

Possible Psychological, Emotional, Social and Other Risks and Discomforts

No   Participants might feel psychologically or emotionally stressed, demeaned, embarrassed, worried, anxious, scared or distressed, e.g. description of painful or traumatic events

No   Participants might feel psychological or mental fatigue, e.g intense concentration required

No   Participants might experience cultural or social risk, e.g. loss of privacy or status or damage to reputation

No   Participants might be exposed to economic or legal risk, for instance non-anonymized workplace surveys

No   The risks will be greater than those encountered by the participants in everyday life

3.0   * **Provide details of all the risks and discomforts associated with the research for which you indicated YES or POSSIBLY above.**

Not applicable

4.0   *** Describe how you will manage and minimize risks and discomforts, as well as mitigate harm:**
Not applicable

5.0   **Is there a possibility that your research procedures will lead to unexpected findings, adverse reactions, or similar results that may require follow-up** *(i.e. individuals disclose that they are upset or distressed during an interview/questionnaire, unanticipated findings on MRI, etc.)***?**

    ◯ Yes   ⬤ **No**

6.0   **If you are using any tests in this study diagnostically, indicate the member(s) of the study team who will administer the measures/instruments:**

Test Name	Test Administrator	Organization	Administrator's Qualification

There are no items to display

7.0   **If any research related procedures/tests could be interpreted diagnostically, will these be reported back to the participants and if so, how and by whom?**
Not applicable

3.2 Benefits Analysis

1.0   *** Describe any potential benefits of the proposed research to the participants. If there are no benefits, state this explicitly:**
The eventual design outcome i.e the Tłı̨chǫ brand book will serve as a useful tool for designers working to represent the Tłı̨chǫ in future visual projects. The research it takes to build this "brand" guideline will also serve as a useful guide for any researchers looking for ways on appropriately collaborating with indigenous nations when creating visual projects.

2.0   *** Describe the scientific and/or scholarly benefits of the proposed research:**
The research required to build this "brand" guideline will also serve as a useful guideline for any researchers looking for ways on appropriately collaborating with indigenous nations when creating visual communication projects. The Tlicho government will be in charge of sharing this document with researchers when appropriate.

3.0   **If this research involves risk to participants explain how the benefits outweigh the risks.**
Not applicable

4.1 Participant Information

1.0   ***** **Will you be recruiting human participants** *(i.e. enrolling people into the study, sending people online surveys to complete)***?**

        ⬤ **Yes** ◯ No

1.1 Will participants be recruited or their data be collected from Alberta Health Services or Covenant Health or data custodian as defined in the Alberta Health Information Act?

        ◯ Yes ⬤ **No**

4.2 Additional Participant Information

1.0   **Describe the participants that will be included in this study. Outline ALL participants** *(i.e. if you are enrolling healthy controls as well)*:

Six non-structured interviews will be conducted to fulfil the following two objectives.

1) Three interviews will be conducted in the field of Visual Communication to investigate the current state and shortcomings of appropriate representation of indigenous communities in visual culture.

2) Three interviews will be conducted in the field of Native-Studies. Preferably with academics working with the Tłı̨chǫ directly to understand their needs.

2.0   ***** **Describe and justify the inclusion criteria for participants** *(e.g. age range, health status, gender, etc.)*:

1) For the interviews conducted with individuals in the field of visual communication, the inclusion criteria is that they be of an expert in the aforementioned field. There will be no discrimination on the basis of age or gender.

2) For the interviews conducted with individuals in the field of native studies, the inclusion criteria is that they have experience in working with the Tłı̨chǫ. There will be no discrimination on the basis of age or gender.

3.0   Describe and justify the exclusion criteria for participants:

Not applicable

4.0   Participants

4.1 How many participants do you hope to recruit *(including controls, if applicable?)*
6
4.2 Of these, how many are controls, if applicable?

4.3 If this is a multi-site study, how many participants do you anticipate will be enrolled in the entire study?

5.0   Justification for sample size:
This study is both indigenous and qualitative in nature. The focus is on in-depth and non-structured interviews with select individuals as opposed to collection of data in large quantities.

ID: Pro00094766   **Pro00094766**
Status: Approved   4.4 Recruitment of Participants (non-Health)

4.4 Recruitment of Participants (non-Health)

1.0   Recruitment

1.1 How will you identify potential participants? Outline all of the means you will use to identify who may be eligible to be in the study *(i.e. response to advertising such as flyers, posters, ads in newspapers, websites, email, list serves, community organization referrals, etc.)*
1) To identify experts in the field of visual communication I will use official university websites.

2) To identify experts in the field of native-studies/education. I will work with the Tlicho Government to seek referrals.

1.2 Once you have identified a list of potentially eligible participants, indicate how the potential participants' names will be passed on to the researchers AND how will the potential participants be approached about the research.
The potential participants will be approached with a participation and consent form to seek their participation in the research.

2.0   Pre-Existing Relationships

2.1 Will potential participants be recruited through pre-existing

relationships with researchers*(e.g. Will an instructor recruit students from his classes, or a physician recruit patients from her practice? Other examples may be employees, acquaintances, own children or family members, etc.)*?

○ Yes ● **No**

3.0 **Will your study involve any of the following?***(select all that apply)*
None of the above

4.5 Informed Consent Determination

1.0 **Describe who will provide informed consent for this study***(i.e. the participant, parent of child participant, substitute decision maker, no one will give consent – requesting a waiver)*
The participant will provide an informed verbal consent for this study at the beginning of the interview.

1.1 Waiver of Consent Requested
If you are asking for a waiver of participant consent, please justify the waiver or alteration and explain how the study meets all of the criteria for the waiver. Refer to Article 3.7 of TCPS2 **and provide justification for requesting a Waiver of Consent for ALL criteria (a-e)**
Not applicable.

1.2 Waiver of Consent in Individual Medical Emergency
If you are asking for a waiver or alteration of participant consent in individual medical emergencies, please review our guidance document. **Justify the waiver or alteration and explain how the study meets all of the criteria outlined in** Article 3.8 of TCPS2 (a-f)
Not applicable.

2.0 **How will consent be obtained/documented? Select all that apply**
Verbal consent

If you are not using a signed consent form, explain how the study

information will be provided to the participant and how consent will be obtained/documented. Provide details for EACH of the options selected above:
A verbal consent will be sought from the participants at the beginning of the interview and will be mentioned in the final transcribe of the interviews. As some of the participants will be from the Tłı̨chǫ community itself a verbal consent would be the appropriate method.

3.0 **Will every participant have the capacity to give fully informed consent on his/her own behalf?**

⬤ Yes ⭕ No

4.0 **What assistance will be provided to participants or those consenting on their behalf, who may require additional assistance?** *(e.g. non-English speakers, visually impaired, etc.)*
Not applicable.

5.0 *** If at any time a PARTICIPANT wishes to withdraw from the study or from certain parts of the study, describe when and how this can be done.**
At the end of each interview the participant will be informed about a 14 day period during which they can choose to withdraw from research. The participant can inform the principal investigator about the withdrawal through email notification, information about which they will be provided with at the end of the interview.

6.0 **Describe the circumstances and limitations of DATA withdrawal from the study, including the last point at which participant DATA can be withdrawn** *(i.e. 2 weeks after transcription of interview notes)*
The participant can withdraw their data within two weeks from the day the interview will be conducted.

7.0 **Will this study involve any group(s) where non-participants are present? For example, classroom research might involve groups which include participants and non-participants.**

⭕ Yes ⬤ **No**

ID: Pro00094766 **Pro00094766** 5.1 Data Collection
Status: Approved

5.1 Data Collection

1.0 *** Will the researcher or study team be able to identify any of the participants at <u>any stage</u> of the study?**

⬤ Yes ⭕ No

2.0	**Primary/raw data collected will be** *(check all that apply)*:
	Directly identifying information - the information identifies a specific individual through direct identifiers (e.g. name, social insurance number, personal health number, etc.)

3.0	**If this study involves secondary use of data, list all original sources:**
	Not applicable

4.0	**In research where total anonymity and confidentiality is sought but cannot be guaranteed** *(eg. where participants talk in a group)* **how will confidentiality be achieved?**
	Not applicable

5.2 Data Identifiers

1.0	*** Personal Identifiers:** will you be collecting - at any time during the study, including recruitment - any of the following *(check all that apply)*:
	Surname and First Name

2.0	**Will you be collecting - at any time of the study, including recruitment of participants - any of the following** *(check all that apply)*:
	There are no items to display

3.0	*** If you are collecting any of the above, provide a comprehensive rationale to explain why it is necessary to collect this information:**
	The full name and profession of the participant is important to collect in order to justify the credibility of the data gathered during the interview.

4.0	**If identifying information will be removed at some point, when and how will this be done?**
	Not applicable.

5.0	*** Specify what <u>identifiable</u> information will be RETAINED once data collection is complete, and explain why retention is necessary. Include the retention of master lists that link participant identifiers with de-identified data:**
	The full name and profession of the participant is important to collect in order to justify the credibility of the data gathered during the interview.

6.0	**If applicable, describe your plans to link the data in this study with data associated with other studies (e.g within a data repository) or with data belonging to another organization:**
	Not applicable.

5.3 Data Confidentiality and Privacy

1.0 *** How will confidentiality of the data be maintained? Describe how the identity of participants will be protected both during and after research.**
The full name and profession of the participant is important to collect in order to justify the credibility of the data gathered during the interview. Should the participant choose to not be identified in the final research, the principal investigator will not include them in the final research document.

Recordings and transcripts (where identifiers are attached) will be encrypted in addition to password protection.

2.0 **How will the principal investigator ensure that all study personnel are aware of their responsibilities concerning participants' privacy and the confidentiality of their information?**
The Principal Investigator will ensure all participant's privacy and confidentiality. And will discuss the same with the Supervisor.

3.0 **External Data Access**

* 3.1 Will <u>identifiable</u> data be transferred or made available to persons or agencies outside the research team?
◯ Yes ⬤ No

5.4 Data Storage, Retention, and Disposal

1.0 *** Describe how research data will be stored, e.g. digital files, hard copies, audio recordings, other. Specify the physical location and how it will be secured to protect confidentiality and privacy.** *(For example, study documents must be kept in a locked filing cabinet and computer files are encrypted, etc. Write N/A if not applicable to your research)*
-A secure Google Drive will be created for each individual participant to store the data, accessible by the researcher, the supervisor and the respective participant.
-Electronic data that contains identifiers will be encrypted in addition to password protection.
-Audio/video recordings as raw data will be retained for 5 years.

2.0 *** University policy requires that you keep your data for a minimum of 5 years following completion of the study but there is no limit on data retention. Specify any plans for future use of the data. <u>If the data will become part of a data repository or if this study involves the creation of a research database or registry for future research use, please provide details.</u>** *(Write N/A if not applicable to your research)*
All data (including audio recordings) will be retained for at least 5 years.

3.0

If you plan to destroy your data, describe when and how this will be done? Indicate your plans for the destruction of the identifiers at the earliest opportunity consistent with the conduct of the research and/or clinical needs:
Not applicable.

Documentation

Add documents in this section according to the headers. Use Item 11.0 "Other Documents" for any material not specifically mentioned below.

Sample templates are available by clicking HERE.

1.0 **Recruitment Materials:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

2.0 **Letter of Initial Contact:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

3.0 **Informed Consent / Information Document(s):**

3.1 What is the reading level of the Informed Consent Form(s):

3.2 Informed Consent Form(s)/Information Document(s):

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
Ethics Consent Form(0.05)	0.05		

4.0 **Assent Forms:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

5.0 **Questionnaires, Cover Letters, Surveys, Tests, Interview Scripts, etc.:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
📄 Interview Guide(0.01)	0.01		

6.0 **Protocol/Research Proposal:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

7.0 **Investigator Brochures/Product Monographs:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

8.0 **Health Canada No Objection Letter** *(NOL)*:

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

9.0 **Confidentiality Agreement:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

10.0 **Conflict of Interest:**

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
There are no items to display			

11.0 **Other Documents:**
For example, Study Budget, Course Outline, or other documents not mentioned above

Document Name	Version	Date	Description
📄 Tlicho Government Support Letter 2(0.03)	0.03		

Final Page

You have reached the end of the ethics application.
Click 'Continue' or 'Exit' below.

To submit for ethics review, click "SUBMIT for REVIEW" on the left side of the screen.

NOTE: Only the Principal Investigator can submit an application in Pre-submission (ie: the first time it is submitted).