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## Taino Revival

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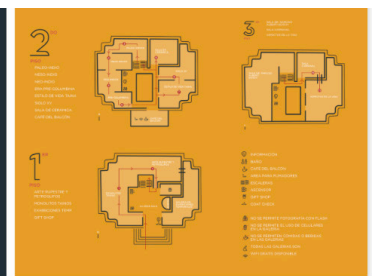
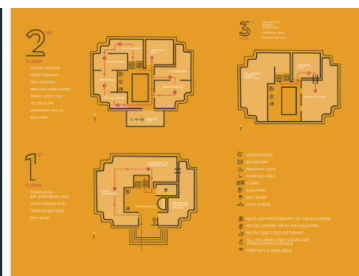
museo de la identidad  
DOMINICANA

## TAINO REVIVAL:

A REBRAND OF MUSEO DEL HOMBRE DOMINICANO  
BY CARLA ZORRILLA

## THESIS STATEMENT

The Taino people were the first known inhabitants of La Hispaniola. They started a foundation of culture for the Dominican Republic that currently lives in the museum, El Museo del Hombre Dominicano. This museum is one of the most important promoters of our identity to the world, which means that how it looks and what is in it is ultimately how we present ourselves to the rest of the world. Which is why, as an effort to protect our identity and heritage, I propose this revamp and rebrand.





## PROJECT GOALS AND BACKGROUND

The Tainos are among the first inhabitants of La Hispaniola. They traveled North from South America and lived in the island for more than 5,000 years before they were discovered by the Spanish settlers. Some of the early chroniclers who recorded the encounter described them as good and peaceful people with rich cultures and extensive belief systems. In fact, the word 'taino' in their language (the Arawakan language) means "good" and "noble". Even though around 100 years after Christopher Columbus arrived 95% of their population had died off, their culture is so rich that it is still alive and present today through art, religion and in the soul of the Caribbean people.

As Dominicans we seem to have forgotten or overlooked the role that this heritage plays in our lives and it is to the point where there is a widespread belief that being of Taino descent is looked down upon or makes you outdated. Very few people nowadays seem to be interested in maintaining this culture alive but among those who do there is a large portion of artists and historians whose work mostly resides in one of the most important museums in the Caribbean, El Museo del Hombre Dominicano. This museum is one of the most important promoters of our identity to the world, which means that how it looks and what it is in it is ultimately how we present ourselves to the rest of the world. Which is why, as an effort to protect our identity and heritage, I proposed this revamp and re-brand of this museum.

## CURRENT IDENTITY

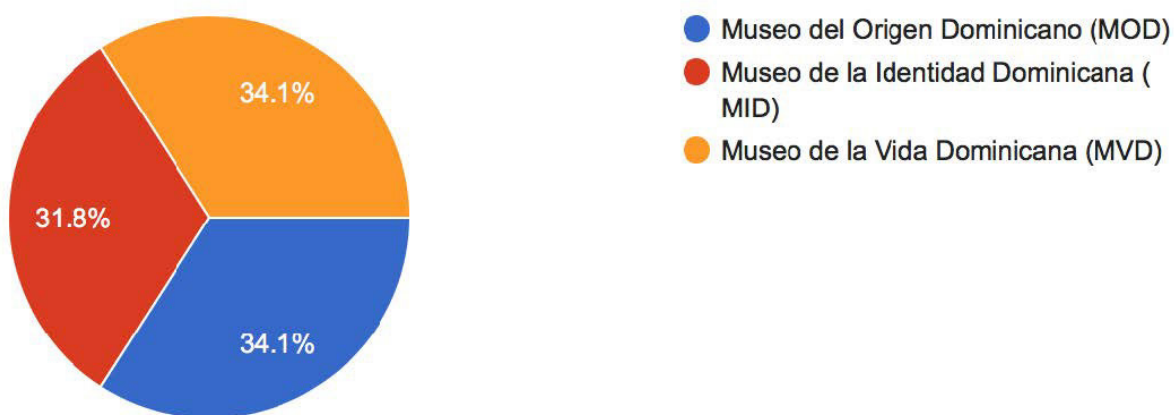


## THE NAME CHANGE

The first thing I decided to tackle was the name. The museum has been around for more than 30 years and the name doesn't seem to be specific as to what the museum is about. I didn't want to come up with something irrelevant again so I came up with three main points that I wanted to keep in mind about what the museum does:

- 1 It holds a record of our history
- 2 It promotes and stores Dominican art
- 3 It celebrates Dominican culture

After coming up with about 40 name ideas, I narrowed it down to three and held a poll among 40 Dominicans to see which one was more popular.



The results weren't exactly conclusive but luckily I also asked people "What would you expect to find at a museum with this name?". I compared all of the answers and eventually came up with El Museo de la Identidad Dominicana.

museo de la identidad  
DOMINICANA

## VISUAL SOURCES

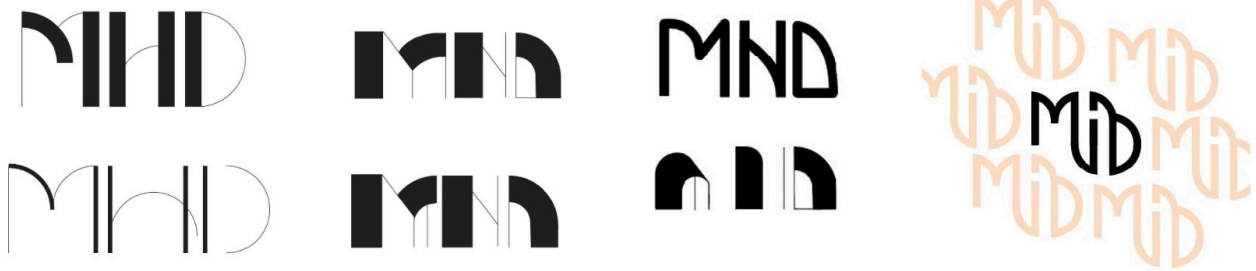
These are Taino zemis. The zemis were deities or ancestral spirits housed in sculptural forms. The majority of these sculptures were created by carving stones with string.



## THE LOGO

The first couple of sketches I was looking for things that looked too similar to Taino aesthetics, and by being too focused on that I ended up with things that looked nothing like Taino but a little more Art Deco. So I moved away from that and started exploring things that felt like Taino style but weren't exactly it. And although these were cool, they weren't exactly what I was looking for. As I sketched and sketched I seemed to be moving farther and farther away from what I wanted. At this point I decided to take a step back, set up some constraints and start over again.

## INITIAL SKETCHES



The logo, for me, had to complement the name subtly but reasonably, so I wrote these three things that I wanted it to look like:

- 1 Taino heritage
- 2 Current art
- 3 Future art

So, in a way, the logo had to allude to the past, the present and the future at the same time. As far as the Taino part of it, I started replicating some traditional art making from the Tainos, such as carving and reductive methods. I utilized a lot of different materials to see if each material could yield something new.



As I was experimenting I noticed that as I removed I was also creating new things. I specifically decided to focus on these shapes that were getting created and started coming up with things that looked like these:

MOOD

MOOD

MOOD

MOOD

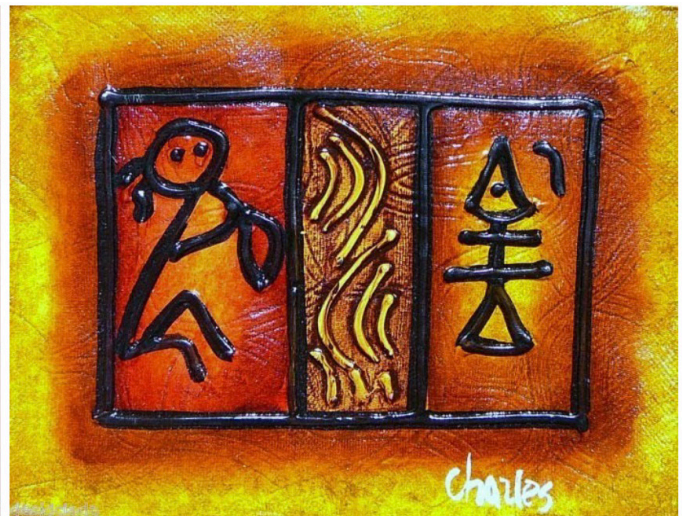


And although these had potential I felt like they were still too much like Taino. I kept sketching and eventually refined the shapes to come up with three, one for each letter. Then I designed a wireframe to hold these together; a wireframe that represented the future. These two items combined became a representation of the present, and they complemented each other the same way that our past is a complement of our future.



### THE COLORS

The colors were then taken from paintings like these, which are modern reproductions of Taino cave paintings.



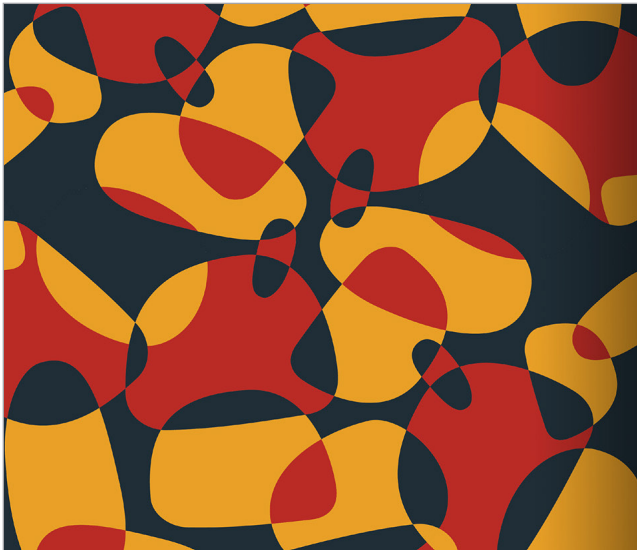
## THE PATTERNS

As I colored it, I also noticed that when these shapes were repeated over and over they were reminiscent of the patterns found in some of their zemis. And eventually these became a part of the branding as well. I used them to separate the Spanish pieces from the English pieces.



## THE BRAND BOOK

Lastly, I designed a brand book where all the story, research and goals could live. This brand book could serve as a takeaway and explanation for the brand and also a way to spread it.



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### UNA CONEXIÓN TANGIBLE ENTRE EL PRESENTE Y EL FUTURO

A TANGIBLE LINK BETWEEN  
THE PRESENT AND THE PAST

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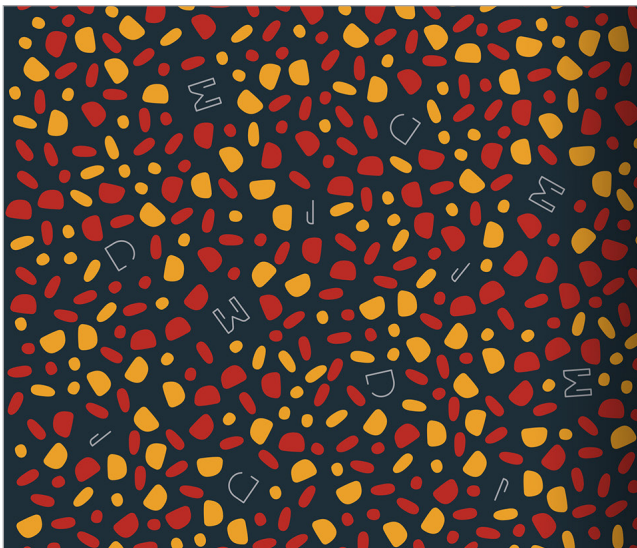
## 1 NUESTRA MISIÓN OUR DUTY

El Museo del Hombre Dominicano, que se encuentra en el corazón de la República Dominicana, es el hogar de una de las colecciones más grandes de artefactos Taínos en el Caribe. Fue inaugurado en el Día de la Raza de 1973, cientos de años después de el Descubrimiento de América, para proteger las partes tangibles de nuestra herencia cultural. En él se encuentran todas las huellas de nuestro pasado y sirve como uno de los promotores más importantes de nuestra identidad al mundo.

Este museo espera convertirse en la conexión primaria entre el mundo moderno y el pasado. Encargada con el trabajo de preservar artefactos de importancia cultural, religiosa e histórica se ha convertido en uno de los records más fundamentales de nuestra historia. Su trabajo no solo es proveer educación e interacción de cara a cara con sus visitantes pero también es un enlace tangible entre el pasado y el presente. Todas las manifestaciones de nuestra cultura, desde nuestros comienzos hasta hoy, se puede encontrar allí y ser utilizada para educar a extranjeros y futuras generaciones.

*The Museum of the Dominican Man, located in the heart of the Dominican Republic, is home to one of the biggest collections of Taíno artifacts in the Caribbean. It was inaugurated on the Day of the Race (Columbus Day) in 1973, hundreds of years after the Discovery of America, to protect all of the parts of our cultural heritage. It contains all of the footprints of our past and serves as one of the most important promoters of our identity to the world.*

*This museum hopes to become the primary connection between the modern world and the old world. Charged with the duty of preserving artifacts of cultural, religious and historical importance it becomes one of the most fundamental records of our history. It provides a face to face interaction and learning experience; a tangible link between the past and the present. All manifestations of our culture, from our beginnings to today, can be found there and ultimately be used to educate outsiders or future generations.*



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## 4 IN THE FUTURE EN EL FUTURO

The museum hopes to become more involved in the lives of the Dominicans to always remind them of where we come from and that our culture is something to be proud of. Our heritage is what defines us and what makes us different from the rest of the world and being proud of our heritage is being proud of who we are. Furthermore, taking care of and promoting this rich history is also important so that we can be able to teach the world about who we are. Which is why as the museum that carries most of this history, we promise to do our best to preserve the image of the Dominicans.

*El museo desea estar más involucrado en las vidas de los dominicanos para siempre recordarles de donde venimos y que nuestra cultura es motivo de orgullo. A nosotros nos define y nos diferencia nuestra herencia, y estar orgullosos de esta es estar orgullosos de quienes somos. Como el museo encargado de cuidar y promover esta historia, prometemos hacer lo mejor que podemos para preservar la imagen de los Dominicanos.*

## CONCLUSION — IN THE FUTURE

This rebrand was meant as a way to promote the Taino heritage and culture. I hope that this new image better represents who we are and how rich our culture is. As a part of the rebrand I proposed that the museum opens up the galleries for local artists to showcase their work, and not just limiting it fine art, but also music and literature. Proposing more collaborations with schools to provide more hands on and face to face experience with historical artifacts. Provide several spaces to allow for multiple events to be held within, and provide several hangout spaces for visitors.

Ultimately, I hope for the museum to become more inclusive and provide a space for the arts community to come together, expand and be celebrated. To provide an inviting home for all of the tangible parts of our identity and history, and hopefully encouraging more interest in our heritage among the rest of the country. I eventually want to present this to the ones responsible for the museum and hope that it gets adapted and starts a wave of change in the way we think of our Taino heritage.

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