

# Memoirs of a Logo

## Preface

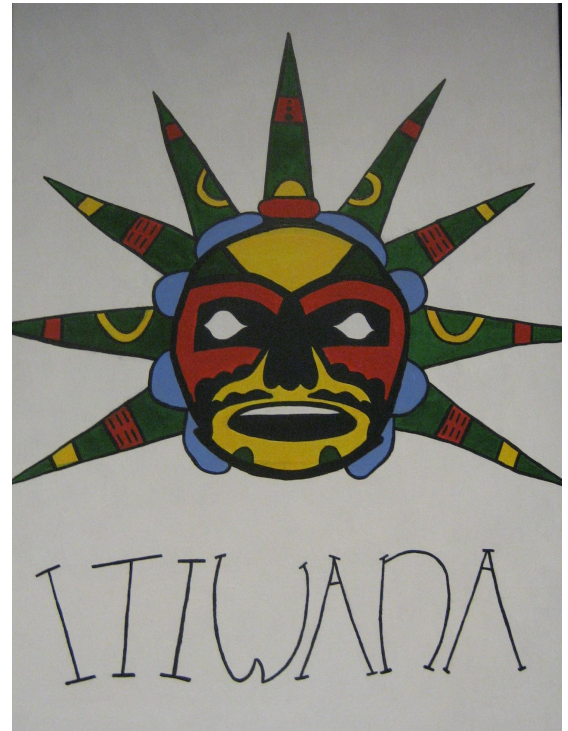
Dear reader,

Thank you for being interested in the process of our logo change. As the Logo Think Tank, we have been working for more than a year now to create a new logo and we appreciate you taking the time to inform yourself about this process. In changing our logo, we realised just how much we did not know of how the original logo was made and what its cultural and religious connotations were to the Kwakiutl, who created these sun masks. In this essay, we will show you the reasons for and the process of changing the logo. In doing so, we hope to create a memoir of sorts that explains the narratives of all the people involved. We hope this clarifies the developments of how the logo was created and viewed through the past 30 years, and why it is now time to change it.

Kind regards,

The Logo Think Tank

Char, Kim, Nèri, Thaïsa, Thirza, Veronie, and Wilke



# The Making of the Sun Mask Logo

Itiwana was established in August of 1994. Previously, Cultural Anthropology students could come together at WDO, the ICA and Feminist Anthropology Club (VENA). But there was no coherent association or location to gather. The gatherings started as post-fieldwork discussion of everyone's travels, and as such, Itiwana's logo had a corresponding theme. The creator of the logo, then-student Wilmy van Uft, stated that the logo was inspired by the sun mask of the Kwakiutl, a collection of Native American tribes (Wilmy van Uft in *Grenzeloos: Antropologie in Leiden*<sup>1</sup>). It was also chosen as it corresponded with the then-logo of WDO, also a mask, and made in quite a rush. The current colours of the mask were added in later years and incorrect with the original colours. While the use of the sun mask as a logo seemed acceptable at the time, we have now realized the negative effects this has with regard to cultural appropriation and would like to make a change.

## Arguments for changing the logo

Over time, we have heard multiple arguments from fellow students for changing the sun mask logo into something else. This section serves as a short, non-exhaustive overview of these arguments, to give you an image of discussions we have had.

- As a Dutch student association, we need to be aware of our position in broader society; we are a student association in a country that has played a large role in colonial and settler history in North America, including the regions that use images of sun masks. We also do not have any Kwakiutl students or staff, and courses barely teach about colonial history in these regions. We need to be conscious about why we would want to use imagery that is both not culturally 'ours' and that we do not know the history of.
- There has been no communication with Kwakiutl tribes prior to using the logo; we have only been in touch with Kenny Bowekaty, a Zuni representative, in 2021. He acknowledged that he, as an individual from one specific tribe, did not feel comfortable giving us consent to keep using the sun mask image as a logo. While he also did not argue strongly against using the sun mask as he also felt like it was our choice to make, it is clear to us that we do not have full consent to use this image as our logo.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1

- We acknowledge that the use of the sun mask as our logo reduces the original spiritual meaning of the mask to a mere image that looks nice visually. Until 2021, there have been no efforts to explore or explain the meaning of the mask publicly (such as on the website), showing that we were using the image without knowledge of its meaning, without crediting the source, and without consent.
- Not only is the use of the sun mask uninformed, but it also builds upon a stereotypical representation of Native Americans that reduces their narrative to an oversimplified and Western representation of who they are. We do not want to contribute to generalising images of specific cultural groups.
- Over the past years, multiple members have voiced their doubts about the logo in the context of cultural appropriation. This shows that an increasing amount of students were uncomfortable using the logo, for example on merchandise. We take this as a sign that students of anthropology are ready for a change.
- While we acknowledge that at one point, the study of 'non-Western civilisations' was central to anthropology in Leiden, it is no longer the focus of our studies and anthropology as a whole worldwide. The sun mask therefore no longer aligns with current-day anthropology.
- Similar changes have been made by other study associations in The Netherlands. Recently, the study association of anthropology of the UvA has changed their name to 'Casa' for the same reasons as described above. This shows that our concerns are not only present in our student community, but also in others. Just like the WDO has now (for some years) also changed their logo away from a mask.

## The process of changing the logo

In early 2021, board 28 of Itiwana realized that many students felt relatively uncomfortable with our logo. They decided to attempt to change the logo before the summer, for which they had a few months left. Acknowledging the need to create a logo by members and for members, a drawing competition was started, with the idea that members could then vote for their favourite logo. At the same time, the board decided to organize an 'itiwana day' to bring attention to why the logo change was happening, and with the idea to invite someone from a Kwakiutl tribe to finally be in touch about our use of their sun mask image.

## **The Itiwana day**

In order to create more awareness and have a place to organize the information around our logo, board 28 (2020-2021) organized an “Itiwana day”. This day we talked about how our logo’s history. The full minutes can be found under ‘Report & Policy’ and then board XXVIII, ‘notes of the Itiwana day’.

Summarized we talked to Igor Boog, one of the founders of Itiwana who told us about the founding of Itiwana and how, kind of rushed there was a need of a logo, Igor explained that someone created a logo and due to the rapid growth and general hectic of setting up a whole new study association they just went with it. Furthermore, Igor Boog said that they never discussed or thought about cultural appropriation but that now it is obviously good to take a look at a shows how we try to revise the way we position ourselves in the world.

Then we talked to Kenny Bowekaty, Zuni and tour guide of the Zuni, and ex-archaeologist. He introduced himself as part of the Ashiwi tribe, highly interested in archaeology and anthropology and now on a mission to teach people the true customs of the Ashiwi tribe. He also explained that he can tell us about the meaning of “Itiwana” but that he cannot tell us much about our logo because this is not from a Zuni but rather a Kwakiutl tribe, which he knows little of. Moving to the meaning of “itiwana” he told us some of their myths and history and explained that for Ashiwi, Itiwana is more than a meeting place: it is the name of their village.

Afterwards, there was a discussion on the logo’s drawn in the drawing competition and what options we have for developing a logo.

## **The drawing competition**

About 25 drawings were sent in to the drawing competition, with some members sending in multiple drawings. Board 28 decided to make a selection out of these drawings through social media and email polls, and a couple of drawings were selected to be presented at the General Assembly: Logo Change on June 16th, 2021. At this general assembly, the board aimed to choose a final design. However, at the general assembly, multiple people expressed being unable to relate to the logo with the most votes, and there was no large majority of votes: out of 62 votes, the logo with the highest number had only 12 votes, and the runner up 6. The majority of the attendees communicated that they wished to be more involved in the process rather than just the final decision. The designers of the logos also expressed that they would feel uncomfortable with their logo designs being altered, such as mixing two favourite logos together, as this would no longer be their design. We also were unable to find a temporary replacement

for the sun mask logo. A vote was issued, resulting in that we keep using the sun mask logo until a replacement was voted on, as to not be logo-less in the meantime. We came to the conclusion that a longer process was necessary, and as such, the idea for a Logo Think Tank was formed.

## The Making of the New Logo

On October 5th 2021, the Logo Think Tank was installed. We started the year off with multiple brainstorm sessions aimed at Itiwana members. At these activities we made mood boards, asked people which words or shapes they associated with Itiwana and their preferences for colour and feel. We then hosted two polls on Instagram, the most used social media platform of students, to ask whether people agreed with the results of these brainstorm sessions. With these polls in hand, we started working out ideas for a new logo. The original sketches provided us with seven options (can still be viewed on the website) which were yet again voted on through Instagram, and a survey. From there we had two clear leads, dubbed 'The Compass' and 'The Camera Shutter'. Char van Straten, a member of the Logo Think Tank, made three versions of these options<sup>2</sup> which were again voted on through Instagram and via a survey sent to both current and alumni members. A large majority of votes went to 'The Compass' design. We also received many preferences regarding the colour scheme of the logo. This resulted in the options we currently have sent to you to be discussed and voted upon in the General Assembly: Logo Change on April 17, 2023.

### **Methods of communication**

Over the process of changing this logo, we wanted as much input from members as possible. For every decision, we tried to involve members by sharing polls and questionnaires, as well as organizing a brainstorm event. We soon realized that, the more time something took, the fewer people participated. In general, we had three different ways of communicating with our members.

1. Instagram polls
2. Questionnaires distributed via email and the website
3. Events and talking to members in person.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2

We organized one big brainstorming. Sadly, not many members came, and we decided that we also had to focus on very accessible ways to contribute to the changing of the logo. So we shared everything that came out of this event on Instagram and watched what members thought. From this, we started to work on visualizing and creating concrete ideas.

On Instagram, we generally had between 80 and 120 responses on multiple choice questions and about 5 - 20 responses to open answer questions.

On surveys, we generally got around 10 responses.

This information was always combined, and together we think members had good opportunities to give their input, and the results (especially on Instagram) show that many people were on multiple stages involved in the making of this logo. We understand there are always options for more and better input, but we are very happy with the amount of people that contributed, and we really think we gave every current and alumni member (2021-2022) ample opportunity. We also stress that this was the most important aspect of this logo change. While the committee and board were very involved, they did not decide on any logo on their own and always tried to involve as many people as possible in order to create a logo from a truly collaborative effort.

# Appendix 1

## Nadia Teunissen in gesprek met Wilmy van Ulft



FOTOSIEP MEKVENCHT

Wilmy van Ulft studeerde culturele antropologie van 1991 tot 1997. Ze onderbrak haar studie voor een jaar om door Australië, Nieuw-Zeeland en Indonesië te reizen. Nu is ze werkzaam bij PUM Netherlands Senior Experts in Den Haag. Afrika en de mensen die de studie volgden trokken haar het meeste in antropologie. Wilmy was de ontwerper van het Itiwana-logo. Nadia Teunissen sprak haar hierover.

### Wat symboliseert het logo?

Tja, het logo is nogal inderhaast gemaakt. Het is nagetekend van een foto van een Kwakiutl zonnemasker. De zon is het middelpunt van ons sterrenstelsel, Itiwana is voor de Zuni's the middle place: het middelpunt van hun universum. De studievereniging moest de centrale plek voor de studenten CA-SNWS worden.

### Hoe zijn jullie op het idee gekomen?

We wilden aansluiten bij het logo van WDO, ook een masker. Ik kreeg van Frank Schipper twee zwart-wit kopietjes uit een boek, twee maskers, met de vraag daar een logo van te maken. Ik ben met beide maskers aan de slag gegaan en uiteindelijk hebben we voor het zonnemasker-logo gekozen. De oorspronkelijke kleuren van het masker waren overigens zwart, wit, rood en groen. Maar scanners en kleurenprinters had in 1993 nog niemand thuis en kleurenkopietjes waren duur, dus het masker werd zwart-wit.

### Wat vindt u nu van het logo? Zou u het zo laten of aanpassingen maken?

Ik heb het altijd een beetje een boos kijkend masker gevonden. En met die stekels ziet het er wat angstaanjagend en onvriendelijk uit. Ik zou het nu milder maken. En wat eenvoudiger misschien, minder druk, wat meer gestileerd. Maar ik zou wel bij een masker blijven. Ik zag dat het logo op de website nu ingekleurd is. Dat vind ik een verbetering, alleen zouden de kleuren dus eigenlijk zwart, wit, rood en groen moeten zijn.

### Wat vindt u naast het logo nog meer karakteriserend voor Itiwana?

Voor mij staat Itiwana vooral voor energie. Er was toen een heleboel positieve energie. Iedereen had zin om iets moois te maken, van die nieuwe studievereniging.

**'Ik heb het altijd een beetje een boos kijkend masker gevonden'**

### Wat is uw mooiste, opvallendste of meest bijzondere ervaring met Itiwana?

Ik herinner me vooral de eerstejaarsweekende: Kula-race op de Nieuwkoopse Plassen, waterpijpen, hersengerechten en Afrikaanse dans in een scoutinggebouwtje. Dat was in mijn tijd eigenlijk meer de taak van het Mentoraat, maar ik ben ook vanuit het Mentoraat bij de oprichting van Itiwana betrokken geraakt.



### Mochten uw capaciteiten grenzeloos zijn, wat zou u voor een dag willen doen?

Voor mijn werk hou ik me momenteel bezig met maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen (MVO). Als ik zou kunnen, zou ik iedereen ervan overtuigen dat MVO echt belangrijk is. Net als maatschappelijk verantwoord consumeren trouwens. Denk na over de effecten van wat je doet, produceert, consumeert. Wat betekent het voor het milieu of voor andere mensen? Er zijn in deze wereld rivieren die blauw gekleurd zijn door de verfstoffen van jeans. Dat water wordt vervolgens gebruikt om landbouwgronden mee te irrigeren. Ik zou willen dat iedereen beseft dat dat anders moet en ook kan. Volgende keer misschien een shirtje van bio-katoen? Elke kleine verbetering is er één.



Het oorspronkelijke masker in kleur.

Appendix 2

