

La Vie Bohème INVITATION

This invitation is a blend of 19th century paper structure, Hector Guimard's Paris Metro station typography, modern themes of alienation and community through the prism of *Moulin Rouge! the Musical*, Art Nouveau flourishes, and pink... and then MORE pink. Never enough pink. Basically, a happy disorder of joy and vitality — just like the era it attempts to encapsulate.

The invitation structure is an historic form called a “tunnel” book. The overall effect is an illusion of depth and perspective — tunnel books were handy in the time before access to photography or film to help explain how a space looked in three dimensions. The form dates back to the mid-18th century and was originally called a “peep-show”, which is also an additional, fun connection to the Moulin Rouge.

This performing arts center hosts an annual gala that celebrates and connects to its current season as they fundraise for their arts and education programs. Based on the Baz Luhrmann film and set among the bohemians of Belle Époque Paris, the touring Broadway production, *Moulin Rouge! the Musical*, was a highlight of the 2024 season and the perfect base to imagine an evening full of drama and delights.

Nonchalance, light-heartedness, and ‘joie de vivre’ are the words that could best sum-up this unique period from in the history of France — and that were the defining characteristics of our event identity. We took bits and pieces from the era for our event identity system and blended them with modern typefaces and technology. From the Art Nouveau style of the time and its curvilinear, nature-inspired forms, various bracketing and hierarchical devices were built. The primary typeface, *Metropolitaines*, is taken directly from Hector Guimard's Paris Metro stations. The supporting tiled typeface mimics the mosaic tiling within the highly decorative Metro station interiors. The invitation structure is an historical form called a “tunnel” book. Many tunnel books were sold as souvenirs at the Paris Exposition of 1889 to commemorate the Eiffel Tower and other buildings created for the world fair. Our invitation tunnel book has a background lithograph of the 1900 Exposition grounds, highlighting the latest technological development, the hot air balloon. Images of this same exposition show children riding ostriches and various other wonders of the natural world. Dancers at the Moulin Rouge also used ostrich feathers in their costumes and hair adornments.

The gala identity applied across a multitude of pieces — from large, animated digital banners to table numbers to the accompanying invitation — was inspired by this joyful, sometimes outrageous, fantastical atmosphere of La Vie Bohème!



