

INVITATION SUITE

A Decade of Decadence: Back to the 1980s

This arts fundraising invitation dropped out of a flying DeLorean time machine. Taking cues from the performing arts center's current season of Broadway shows—*The Wiz*, *MJ the Musical*, and *Back to the Future*—it celebrates all things 1980s. The text on the back of the chrome holder shows how the invitation can be removed and popped up to be used as a paper fortune teller (think 1980s middle school recess). The copy and visuals harvest cultural moments such as Susan Kare's early interface icons for Apple, the era's neon colored fashions, and campy popular television shows like *Dynasty*. The entire piece is intended to be a playful invitation to a fundraising event and a keepsake reminder of a joyful and generous community.

INSPIRATION:

The invitation nests within a larger event system that reflected the performing arts center's Broadway season line up of *The Wiz*, *MJ the Musical*, and *Back to the Future*. The optimistic exuberance of the 1980s, with all its pseudo-techy visuals, big hair, and bigger shoulder pads, was the inspiration for an interactive and fun invitation.

TYPOGRAPHY:

By the mid-1980s, the personal computer had been revealed to be the next big thing. This meant more everyday people were interacting with digital interfaces. Susan Kare, employee number 10 at Apple, drew heavily upon her fine art experience in mosaics, needlepoint, and pointillism to create pixel-based icons and typefaces for early computers. The pixel-based images and bitmap-style type in the Decade of Decadence invitation refer back to Susan Kare's groundbreaking and personality-driven solutions. The headline type, Centra, is a typographic expression of modernism.

STRUCTURE:

Although the average 1980s middle-schooler could whip up a fortune teller within minutes, my invitation fortune teller was painstakingly crafted through a close collaboration with a talented printer. Producing thousands of the invitation required an high attention to detail and many hours of handwork. The result is a piece that elicited delight in recipients as they recalled light-hearted moments of their own childhood—all the better to prompt them to support much needed arts-in-education programs for the performing arts center.

OUTCOMES:

Behind the leg warmers and laser lights lies the gala's true purpose; every paddle-raise fuels The Bushnell's statewide arts-in-education and community-impact programs, from classroom residencies to free student performances. An annual fundraiser, this invitation and branded event delivered once again; raising funds, revealing the arts in action, and changing lives across Connecticut. This year's event was one of the most successful to date!