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Stage-worthy Design

Canadian design studio Atelier Zébulon Perron has created a café of escapism at the Les Grands Ballet Canadiens institute in Montréal, using bespoke, playful tutu and fringed lighting pieces throughout.





Located in downtown Montréal's Wilder building, home of Les Grands Ballet Canadiens, is Café Constance, a space for social gatherings. The café, completed in February 2022 by Atelier Zébulon Perron, pays tribute to Constance Pathy, a Member of the Order of Canada, a generous patron of the arts, and former leader of Les Grands Ballets. The multifunctional space in the lobby welcomes visitors as a meet-and-mingle locale before productions, a traditional café environment for those in the building, and transitions into a cocktail hour evening venue. The main focus of the design was to create something "warm and whimsical in the heart of a contemporary institutional building". "We adopted a theatrical approach in order to build a sort of spectacle that is really quite literal," explains Zébulon Perron, founder and lead designer of the design firm. "The idea was to create something that seems completely out of place, and that captivates the imagination in a strange and wonderful way."

One of the firm's primary challenges was to create this stimulating

design whilst maintaining a functional space. A more intimate, human-scaled environment was achieved through the addition of a marquee above the bar area. Bevelled glass, mirrors and backlighting on the back bar suggest a theatrical element that is reminiscent of a wardrobe setting, and a dollhouse-esque atmosphere. The Marquee is custom fabricated in powder-coated steel with integrated sockets for dim-to-warm LED Tala Sphere I light sources.

"Café Constance channels elegance, grace, and movement through its tribute to the arts," says Perron. "Collectively, all of its design elements interact in an eclectic atmosphere with unique character."

Further adding to the whimsical nature of the space, the design team took inspiration from Muybridge's famous stop motion sequences and featured custom-designed tutu lamps that flow through the café and taper its expanse to a more intimate scale. These custom-fabricated tutu shades are formed of crinoline and also feature dim-to-warm COB LED light sources. Each blush-coloured shade is unique in shape,



which adds to the ethereal flow.

Banquettes and stools upholstered in colourful leather, fringed lampshades, and an antique English communal table further contribute to the magical universe of Café Constance, wrapped in the warm embrace of vivid and lively floral fabrics and wallpaper patterns. These fringed lamps were custom-made in brass tubing and fittings with sockets for dim-to-warm LED Tala lamps and shades sourced from British vendor Lotus Lampshades. The communal “Library” lamp was also custom-fabricated for the venue in brass with integrated dim-to-warm LED lighting and a brass chainette fringe.

“The tongue-in-cheek approach to Café Constance aimed at creating a fun and fantastical space within the more austere backdrop of the building's contemporary architecture,” concludes Zébulon Perron.

“That play on contrasts extends to the design within the space as well, with hints of Victorian elements and boudoir intimacy animated by intricate colours, patterns, and light fixtures.”

www.zebulonperron.com

Images: Alex Lesage

Design Details

Café Constance, Montréal, Canada

Interior Design: Atelier Zébulon Perron

Lighting Specified: Bespoke designs by Atelier Zébulon Perron, Lotus Lampshades, Tala

Atelier Zébulon Perron has created a whimsical design for the newly opened Café Constance in the lobby of the Wilder building, home of Les Grands Ballet Canadiens. The theatrical design includes dancing tutu pendants in a beautiful blush tone, along with brass fringed floor and table lamps, which add a dollhouse-like vibe to the space.