

**Hector Guimard** - Paris Métro Entrance

**Hector Guimard** was one of the signature French, *Art Nouveau* architects of the 19th and 20th century. He was commissioned to design the Metropolitan entrances for the new underground railway in Paris. **Hector Guimard's** Paris Metropolitan entrances marked a new stage of development in the late 19th century. All of the entrances are designed in the *Art Nouveau* Style, the new style of Art in the 19th century, that drew its inspiration from nature, natural and organic forms. The gate's curvilinear lines and patterns were inspired by vines and flowers, all made of cast iron with fan shaped glass roofing. This blend of design, architecture and natural characteristics are what make it distinctly *Art Nouveau*.

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**Guimard** process the media and materials used on the entrances in a very typical *Art Nouveau* manner. Based on Naturalistic and Organic features, **Guimard** uses curves and tendrils in the metal, along with vine like ornamental features littering the surface. The structure is endowed with these *Art Nouveau* decorations which give it the Natural, Organic feel which was the focal point of the style. This can be seen in multiple areas on the structure and the way in which **Guimard** has designed the metal framework and fencing to the structure are distinctive of the style. **Guimard** uses this metal work to give the structure an almost truly organic feel, as if the entrance had not been built but had simply just grown to that form. This idea is enhanced through the fact **Guimard** has used only natural colours for the structure, even the writing on the sign is far from the normal, formal writing style of the 19th century which makes people aware that the Metropolitan is a very modern form of transport.

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The structure emphasises a new mode of transport, but also highlights the new style in art of the time with the craftsmanship which stays true to the materials and concept. **Guimard** demonstrates how *Art Nouveau*, or "new art" in French, was a new, non-historical style in The Metro entrances are a prime example of *Art Nouveau* architecture. **Guimard** has manipulated the metal work with ornamental, organic features, taking inspiration from what was seen and not from historical art forms. The symmetrical, floral lights frame the Metro sign, both lighting the entrance and advertising

the new form of transport which **Guimard** was attempting to emphasise. He uses this new decorative style to give people the message that the Metro is a new way to go, the spring-like Art Nouveau motifs convey the idea that there has been a “spring” in public transport that will transform the city. The whimsical entrance attracts passengers and helps them get over any worries they have about going underground.

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