

Strand 5: Crafts in the Origins of Design

Definitive abstract for paper presentation at the *coupDefouet* International Congress

Klein Tires: Advertising and *Modernisme* in early 20th century Barcelona.

The company Klein, which was founded at the turn of the 20th century, began production of pneumatic tires at a factory located in the Poblenou area in Barcelona in 1905. Klein was the only local company of this type in Spain for nearly two decades, and was competing against strong foreign and import brands such as Michelin, Continental, Dunlop or Pirelli. A differentiated advertising strategy, which was based on the contributions of local artists, culminated in the Klein Poster Competition in 1917. The competition attracted important artists such as Ramon Casas, Josep Triadó and other Catalan and Spanish artists who were involved in the development and establishment of the *Modernisme* in Catalonia and in promoting the *Art Noveau* in Spain. This paper, which has been based on the study of contemporary sources, recalls the corporate history and the advertising influence of Klein's activity in modernist Barcelona.

Neumáticos Klein: Publicidad y Modernismo en los inicios del siglo XX en Barcelona

La casa Klein, fundada en el debut del siglo XX, comenzó en 1905 la producción de neumáticos desde su fábrica en el barrio barcelonés del Poblenou. Klein fue la única compañía autóctona de este tipo que existió en el mercado español durante prácticamente dos décadas, compitiendo con potentes marcas foráneas y de importación como Michelin, Continental, Dunlop o Pirelli. Una actividad publicitaria diferenciada, basada en la aportación de los artistas locales, culminó en 1917 con la convocatoria del Concurso de Carteles Klein. El concurso atrajo a figuras de la talla de Ramon Casas, Josep Triadó y otros artistas catalanes y españoles que participaron en el desarrollo e implantación del *Modernisme* en Catalunya y en la difusión del *Art Noveau* en España. El presente artículo, basado en el estudio de fuentes de la época, rescata la historia corporativa y la influencia publicitaria de la actividad de Klein en la Barcelona modernista.

Curriculum Vitae

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Pau Medrano Bigas (Barcelona, 1965) is an Associate Professor in the Design and Image Department at the Facultat de Belles Arts Sant Jordi de l'Universitat de Barcelona. Holder of a Degree in Fine Arts, he is a member of the Gracmon-Grup de Recerca en Història de l'Art i del Disseny Contemporanis de l'Universitat de Barcelona. He has been working as a graphic designer and art director in the publishing sector during the last eighteen years, and is currently combining his teaching and researching activities with his doctoral thesis in "design, illustration and advertising in the pioneering tyre companies (1900-1930), under Dr. Anna Calvera Sagué's tutelage.

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