



Michelin House, François Espinasse, London. Photograph.



Unknown author, *The Michelin man at the Motor Show circa 1912*, Lithograph, 1912.

A GRAPHIC LEGEND SINCE 1898

Bibendum, the symbol and mascot of Michelin tyres, appeared in advertising in 1898. The first picture of the enormous pneumatic creature was used in a print run of three thousand posters - something unheard of at the time and which was, without doubt, the first mass advertising campaign. Bibendum was the creation of two unusual businessmen, André and Édouard Michelin, in collaboration with the artist Marius Rossillon under his pseudonym of O'Galop. The former seem to have been devoted, Phileas Fogg-like admirers of Jules Verne's enthusiastic interest in the future, while O'Galop was a bohemian artist from Montmartre, considered the pioneer of cartoons and whose

caricatures were published in important satirical reviews such as *Le rire* and *L'assiette au beurre*.

The imagination and collaboration of these three men produced an image of a character that was at first irreverent, quarrelsome and yet gallant, but, in time, his attitude and expression changed to become today's friendly, helpful Bibendum.

The constant presence of Bibendum in the street - in three dimensions and in colour prints on paper and metal - his appearance in primitive documentaries of the silent screen, and his active participation in the earliest car races and all other sorts of spectacle, such as fairs and carnival processions in very different and distant places, meant that he soon went beyond his initial advertising purpose and came to be recognised as an outstanding figure of modern popular culture.

Bibendum thus took up an exceptional place alongside other commercial creations, such as the smiling, hygienic baby of Cadum soap, Nipper, the obedient fox-terrier of His Master's Voice, or the mysterious Portuguese gentleman of Sandeman wine.

It is not surprising, then, that Michelin's surprising pneumatic creature should come to be the central character in paintings, sculptures and stories by important artists and writers such as Salvador Dalí, Adolf Hoffmeister, Ilia Ehrenburg and Ramón Gómez de la Serna. Bibendum was also identified, albeit accidentally, with the premises of the futurist movement led by Marinetti, which, with blind faith in scientific and technological progress, impatiently awaited the arrival of a new, immortal man, whose wounds could be patched over like punctured tyres. It could be said that Bibendum formed part of the "modern spirit" that enlivened many cities during the first three decades of the last century, when, according to Fernan Léger, the calendar on the wall was replaced by the poster and, as the poster-artist Cassandre said, the Eiffel Tower was illuminated from the ground up to the flag, loudspeakers blasted throughout the city and shop-windows blazed like the best music-hall scenes.

Bibendum was, then, possibly the most eventful graphic novelty which, because of both his formal design and the humorous components that characterised him from the start, not to forget the intelligent diffusion of the character by the company he represented, was immediately accepted by all sorts of public.

Bibendum thus became a good companion on the road to the utopias taken by avant-garde artists and writers. He was also a key factor in the birth of advertising and, likewise, was recognised as a symbol of modernity announced by the 20th century, when, at last, it seemed that the majority of people, without exception, were going to enjoy social improvement and technological progress.

However, reality was very complex and Bibendum was not left to one side in that Europe which, after one world war, lived over two decades of false contentment attempting to hide a crisis of civilisation, marked by the growing class struggle, the strengthening of nationalist movements, the impact of the Soviet revolution and the retrograde movements that put terrible dictators into power. Consequently, Bibendum was not absent from the graphic propositions marking art since the end of the 19th century. Indeed, once his presence in art-nouveau had begun, under the graphic tutelage of Jules Chéret, Toulouse-Lautrec and Pierre Bonnard, who had predominantly influenced the work of O'Galop, Bibendum evolved along the lines of the characteristic treatment of art-déco, underwent the typographic and photographic manipulations of avant-garde advertising art and, likewise, was affected by the flat colours and aerographic hazes of influential French poster-art in the 1920's and 1930's.

After the Second World War, graphic design, heavily pressed by market demands, moved away from the ideologies of modern art and surrendered to the commercial web that established the rules in the world of advertising.

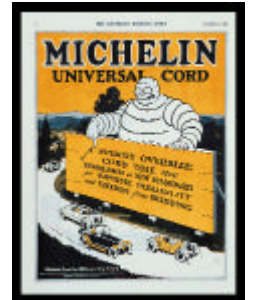
Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that the Bibendum's evolution in these years was removed from these aesthetic impositions. Under the constant supervision of the company, which had its own graphic design studio, the pneumatic mascot maintained a development in tune with the passage of time and continued to present the essential characteristics that have always made it stand out, even today, in the advertising universe.

The exhibition **Nunc est bibendum** brings to the public a myth of modern advertising art, following an itinerary based on both chronological lines and the evolution of graphic art. It includes over a hundred works, from posters to three-dimensional figures, photographs, objects, graphic pieces meant for the press and guides for the automobilist, as well as a section dedicated to the peculiar architecture of Bibendum House in London, with the design plans, a model of the building and an original stained-glass window.

The exhibition centres on work using Bibendum most related to artistic proposals from the end of the 19th century to the mid-20th century. It has therefore been organised on the basis of work by O'Galop, Roger Broders, René Vincent, Georges Bourdin, A. Renault, Albert Philibert, Fabien Fabiano (pseudonym of Marie Jules Coup de Frejac), Francisque Poulbot, Stanley-Charles Roowles and Raymond Savignac, among others.



A. Renault. *Pneu Velo Michelin*. Lithograph, 1913.



Arthur Edrop. Advertisement in the Sunday Evening Post. Lithograph, 1920.



Roger Broders. *Auto-circuits nord-africains...* Lithograph, 1922.



Unknown author, *Michelin*, Lithograph, 1927.



Michelin Studio. *Le pneu special....* Lithograph, 1934.

A GRAPHIC LEGENT SINCE 1898

CENTRO ANDALUZ DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO
Monasterio de Santa María de las Cuevas
Avda. de Américo Vespucio nº 2
Isla de la Cartuja. 41071 - SEVILLA

Avda. de Américo Vespucio nº 2
Camino de los Descubrimientos s/n

Buse router C1 and C2

Until June 30th

Tuesday to Friday: 10 - 21 h.
Saturday: 11 - 21 h.

July 1st to August 31st

Tuesday to Friday: 10 - 15 h.
Saturday: 11 - 15 h.
Evenings: Wednesday to Saturday 20 - 24 h.

Sundays: 10 - 15 h.
Closed Mondays and holidays

Tickets on sale until 30 minutes before closing.

Phone: (34) 955 037 070
Fax: (34) 955 037 052
caac@juntadeandalucia.es
www.caac.es

