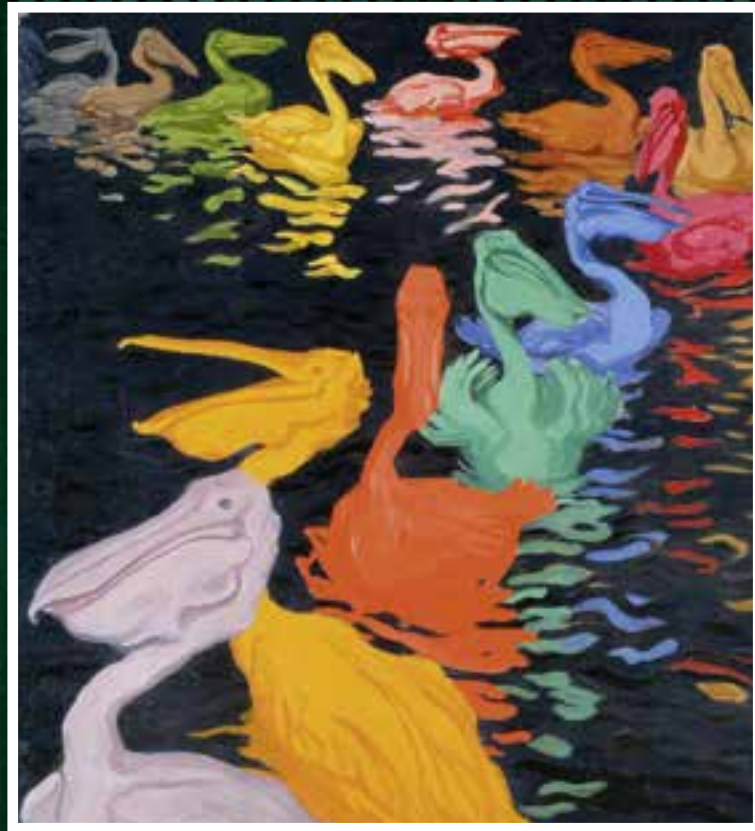


Pelikan



THE BRAND

Detmar Schäfer

The Pelikan trademark in word and picture.

How it developed over time.



The Wagner family coat of arms as a trademark on the "Large Honey Paints" before 1873



Günther Wagner's trademark on the "Small Honey Paints" c. 1873



Trademark as registered in 1878



1898



E. W. Baule 1910



O. H. W. Hadanck 1922



O. H. W. Hadanck 1932



O. H. W. Hadanck before 1937



O. H. W. Hadanck 1937



Drawing ink, 1896



1907



1913



1921



1925



Karl Schulpig 1926



1934



1937



1968



2003

From the little farmhouse in Gross Munzel to Hainholz outside Hanover. Carl Hornemann initially produces his paints all by himself with a little help from his wife.



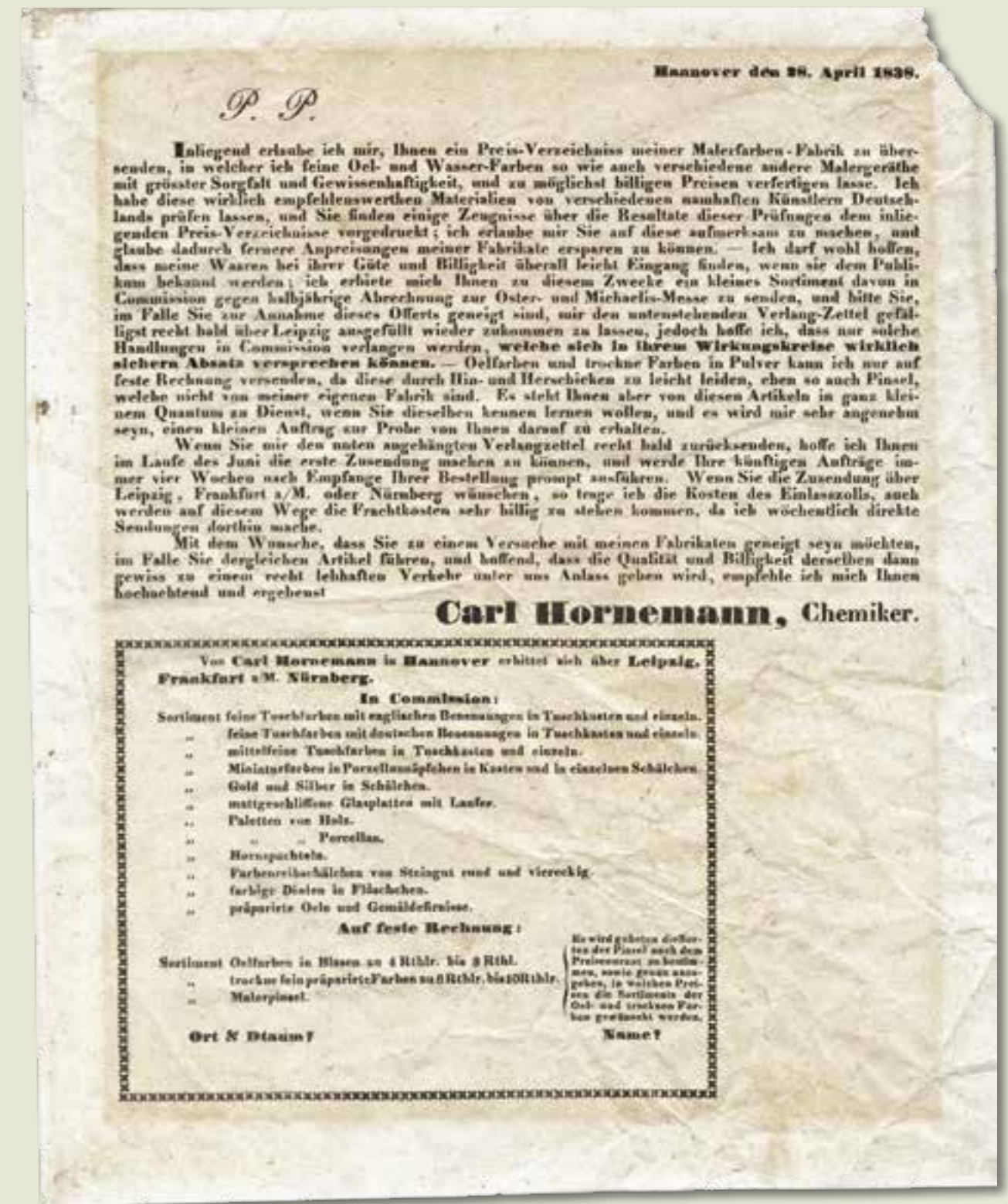
Children's paint No. 18, "Feather Badge", bore a device reminiscent of the badge of the Prince of Wales.

From Carl Hornemann's range, apparently from the years around 1860.



It was Günther Wagner who created the PELIKAN pictorial trademark. Günther Wagner started working for Carl Hornemann's ink and paint business as a chemist and workshop manager on 14 December 1863. Carl Hornemann had registered his business in Hanover in 1832. Shortly afterwards he moved his little firm to a farmhouse in Gross Munzel, nowadays part of the town of Barsinghausen, where he cooked his inks and moulded his paints. The date of the official establishment of the business is nowadays considered to be 28 April 1838 - the day on which the first price list appeared. Carl Hornemann's decision to try his hand at producing paints can hardly have come as a surprise. His father had taught the children of King George V of Hanover to draw, and had kept a shop selling artists' supplies in what was then the smartest district of Hanover, close to the Leine Palace. The son studied chemistry in Munich, and so acquired the requisite knowledge. After completing his studies he travelled backwards and forwards across Europe by stagecoach, selling paints, varnishes, drawing inks, endorsing inks and oils that he had made himself.

In 1842 Carl Hornemann purchased a piece of land on Engelbosteler Damm in Hainholz, then still an independent village outside Hanover, and moved his operations there. In its early years the undertaking remained a modest one. Due to the advanced state of industrialisation that had already been achieved in Great Britain, the sector was dominated by British firms. French paints too enjoyed a good reputation. Accordingly, it was difficult for a young German business to win over customers. In order to be able to hold his own on the market at all, Carl Hornemann gave his paints French or English names and had colour shade names in English imprinted on them. One paint intended for children bore a device reminiscent of the badge of the Prince of Wales. In addition there were a multiplicity of other motifs reflecting the taste of the times, such as gryphons, eagles, lions, unicorns, crowns and coats of arms.



Günther Wagner himself designs the PELIKAN pictorial mark for the “Small Honey Paints”.

The circular shape is dictated by the nature of the product – a set of very small round paint pans.

“In order to create a similar, round, so-called ‘honey paint’ for children, similar to the one (I think it is Bourgeois’s) with the dolphin with a little genie riding on it carrying a lamp (or a paintbrush), I decided to use my family coat of arms, and in order to do so I had to turn the upright oval into a circle. And so I drew the picture on that paint (then No. 21) as a proprietary sign [...]”

Günther Wagner on the origin of the PELIKAN pictorial mark, in a letter to Fritz Beindorff, his son-in-law, dated 3 April 1921.

It may have been around the beginning of the 1870s that Günther Wagner made his decision to use a picture of a pelican as a trademark on his products. He recognised the signs of the times, and step by step developed a characteristic and unmistakable symbol that would distinguish his products from those of his competitors on the market for watercolours and for writing and drawing inks, a market that was already booming and overcrowded. The rise of the concept of the trademark (or in legal terminology, “trade mark”) is closely linked to the progressive industrialisation that characterised the 19th century. The idea of defined proprietary rights to the exclusive use of trademarks was a corollary of the economic liberalism of the time, as expressed in the legal provisions of 1869 establishing the “freedom to trade” and to set up businesses.

It was Günther Wagner himself who, on the basis of his family coat of arms, designed the PELIKAN pictorial trademark for his “Small Honey Paints”. Honey paints were a type of watercolour, common at the time, in which honey was used as a binder. According to an 1873 price list, small round pans of honey paint were offered in tin boxes containing 12, 18 or 24 different colours, the paint pans being glued to the metal of the box. In designing the trademark, Günther Wagner abandoned what he called the “oval” shape of the shield on which the pelican was displayed in his family coat of arms. The change from “oval” to round was dictated by the circular shape and the small dimensions of the pans containing the “Small Honey Paints”. But Günther Wagner did take over the number of chicks in the nest – namely three – from the coat of arms.

Thus it was Günther Wagner who personally created those major features of the pictorial trademark that have remained constant right down to today: the proportions of the bird and the nest and the circle enclosing them. Even if the drawing of the pelican on the “Small Honey Paints” did not yet display the artistic quality of a professionally designed logo, it can nevertheless already be seen to possess the simplicity and coherence of a good trademark, which in those days was still far from being a matter of course.



Kinder-Farben.

Abbildungen der Farben in natürlicher Größe auf folgender Seite.
 Samtliche Farben mit Ausnahme des Französisch Grün bei den mittelfeinen Nr. 61—80 sind unschädlich.

Lose Farben

sortiert in 24 Tönen per 100 Stück.
Kartonsort ohne unten.

Nr.		1/2	3/4
55	Feinstes Fließrad	1	—
56	Hamburger Wappen	2	50
57	Greif-Farben	2	50
70	Oesterreichischer Adler, rund	1	25
58	Superfeine Locomotive	1	50
26	Kreuz-Farben	4	—
27	Ch. Tempel-Farben	4	25
62	Große Honigfarben	3	75
63	Mitteltroße Honigfarben	2	50
21	Kleine Honigfarben	1	50
60	Feinstes Rapsöl	7	25
17	Englisch Wappen	3	75
58	Extrafein Ackermann	2	75
18	Feder-Wappen	2	—
20	Palette und Malergeith	1	50
19	Französische Farben	1	75
2	Große Adlerfarben	7	—
4	Kleine Adlerfarben	4	—
61	Feinstes Ackermann	7	50
33	Pagode	15	—
34	Schiff-Farben	6	—
35	Extrafeine groÙe Honigfarben	5	—
135	Lafond-Farben	5	—
36	Extrafeine mitteltroÙe Honigfarben	4	—
75	Feinste Farben in Bleisäpfchen	7	50
75	per Gross	7	—
80	per Dutzend	4	50
80	runden Glasösen mit Glasdeckeln	4	50
80	per Dutzend	4	50

Sortiment der Kinderfarben.

Weiß	Chromgelb II	Lichtgrün
Schwarz	Orange	Französisch Grün
Salmorath	Gamboge	Preussisch Grün
Kinnobler	Neapelgelb	Saffgrün
Bother Lack	Violett	Gelber Ocker
Venetianisch Roth	Preussisch Blau	Römischer Ocker
Rosa	Lichtblau	Gehr. Sienna
Chromgelb I	Ultramarin	Sepia.

Bei mittelfeinen Farben (Nr. 61—90): z. in der Liste oben: tritt für Saffgrün und Orange — Indigo und Neutralfarbe ein.

A word mark specially for writing inks.

Ornamental initials for the 2001, 3001, 4001 and 5001 writing and copying inks.



An international advertising campaign dating from around 1900 drew unashamedly on the prejudices prevailing at the time. The idea of a “victorious” product derives from the assumption that one’s own culture is “superior”.



In 1892 the firm added black ferro-gallic ink to its range of products. Thanks to technical advances, the steel nib had by then prevailed over the goose-feather quill. Ferro-gallic ink flowed very evenly, and had the advantage that contact with the oxygen in the air caused the ferrous salt to oxidise as it dried, so that once on the paper the ink turned deep black. Thus the writing did not fade, as it did with the logwood (campeachy) inks that had been in general use previously. The increased use of ferro-gallic inks was given a boost by a decree issued by the Imperial Chancellor’s Office making it mandatory to use them as a precaution against the falsification of documents. Being indelible, they not only withstood sunlight; they also made it possible for later alterations to be shown up at any time under a quartz lamp. The new type of ink was therefore of “archival quality”, especially suitable for use in official documents, registrars’ certificates and notarised deeds.

Accordingly it was an important step forward for the firm, which was already doing good business with its drawing inks, to go in for the manufacture of ferro-gallic inks. Right from the beginning PELIKAN writing inks had been given a word mark of their own, one characterised by the ornamentation of the initial letter. Clearly, the embellishments and the varying thicknesses of the strokes were intended to demonstrate the properties attributed to the product.

This logotype assigned specifically to PELIKAN inks survived the art nouveau period, and

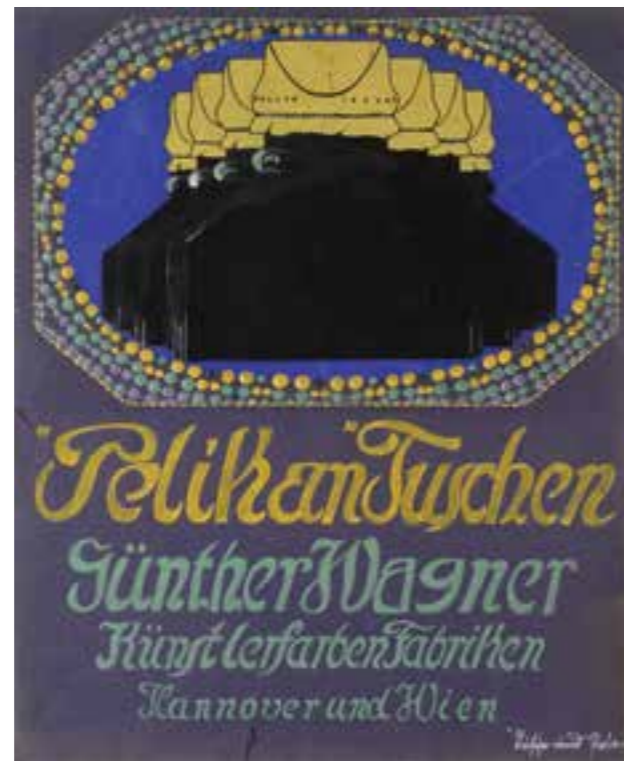
was still being used to identify this particular class of products right on into the 1930s. It adorned both the big one-litre refilling bottles and the smaller bottles. As a result of the introduction of the piston-action fountain pen with its differential screw mechanism in 1929, the expressive design with its ornamental flourishes started to disappear as from the early 1930s, first from the fountain pen ink and then, after 1937, from the “4001” brand as well.



The 1909 poster competition attracted a largish number of designs in the new style of the day: what became known as "Sachplakate" or "object posters". The aesthetics of art nouveau had had their day: the focus of the object poster was entirely on the product and its name, and no longer on any naturalistic depiction of a pelican or on representations of people.

In accordance with this shift of emphasis, these posters are dominated by striking illustrations of the products with large areas of flat colour; despite which, these early object posters continue to display a high level of artistic quality.

Among the pioneers of this new functional objectivity in advertising design that started to appear around 1903 were Lucian Bernhard and Julius Klinger, for both of whom Günther Wagner was among the many firms they worked for.



In the end, the English PELICAN and the French PÉLICAN become PELIKAN all over the world. The brand is more powerful than any linguistic rules.

PELIKAN inks labelled in French, English and German.

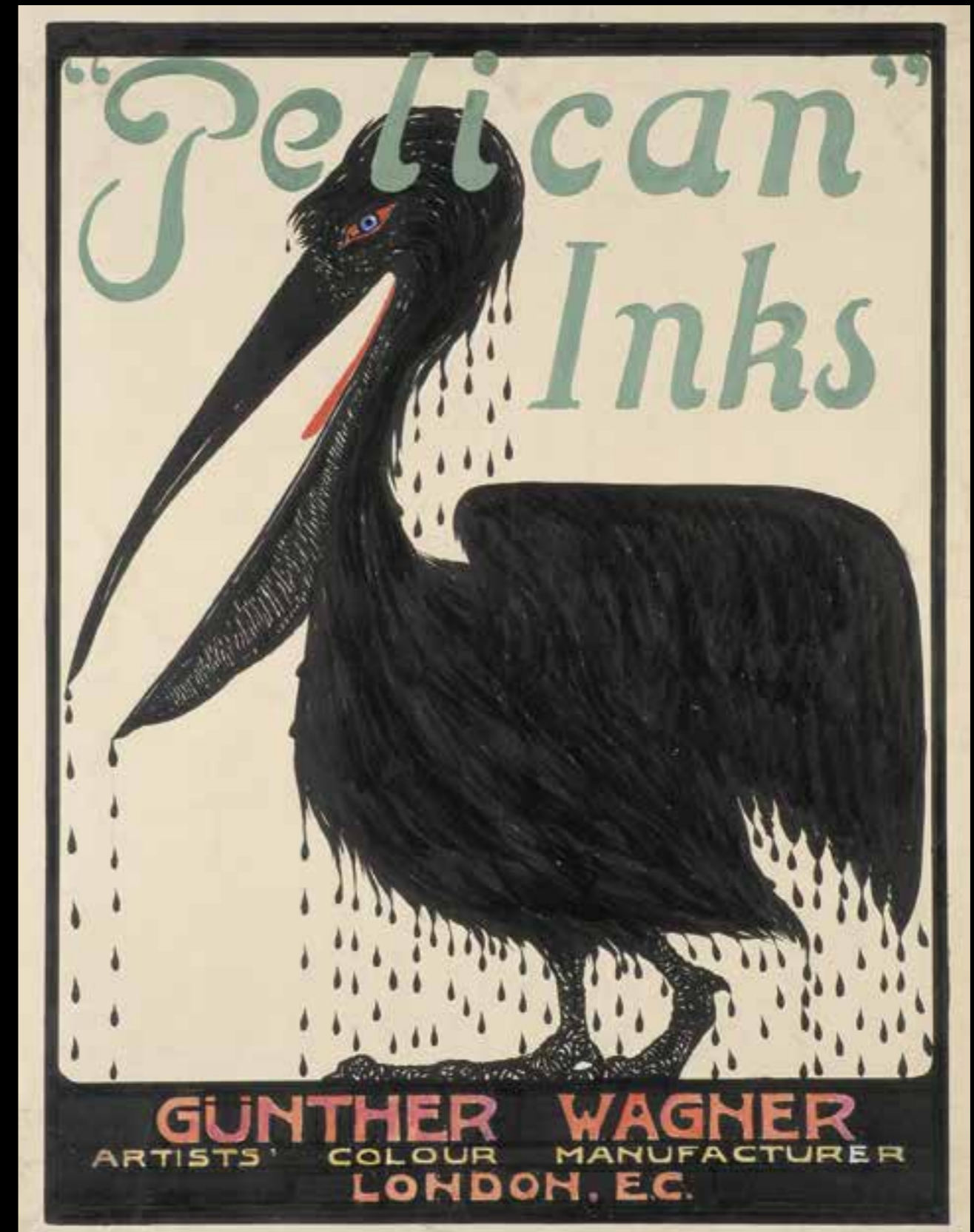
From a multilingual advertising leaflet for the international market, early 1920s.

It is a fundamental rule of modern brand management that a brand is not bound by linguistic considerations. Brands are neither declined nor conjugated, and they have no plural forms. Nowadays, no marketing person would ever speak of “Pelikan’s positive features”. And the same applies to the use of brands in international business and trade. The pure doctrine of marketing would never permit a brand name to be translated into the local language anywhere, since this would negate its uniqueness and detract from its power to set a product apart from its competitors.

In the early days of brand awareness, over 100 years ago, this was of course not the case.

It seemed an obvious step to translate the word “Pelikan”, which is drawn from everyday vocabulary, at least into the world’s most important trading languages. The business had always had an international orientation; the firm had maintained a distribution warehouse in London since as early as 1896, a branch in Paris since 1903, a distribution warehouse in New York since 1911, and another in Buenos Aires since 1928.

The entire English-speaking market was furnished with price lists translated into English. Both in these price lists and in the product labelling and packaging for these international markets the word mark PELICAN appeared in the version of the brand current at any given time, i. e. initially with inverted commas, later without, then oblique, and later again more upright.



One chick gets “thrown overboard”. A debate about strokes, plumage and the pros and cons of black and white.



Proposal III



Proposal IV



Proposal I



Proposal II

In his reply of 17 September 1937, Fritz Beindorff dealt in detail with the pros and cons of each of the draft designs. He thought the design marked with the Roman numeral III, in which the trademark was drawn with equally thick lines throughout, to be the most suitable for engraving purposes. But as he pointed out, it still had the same disadvantage as the old version, namely that it was difficult to distinguish “how much of the spaces between the lines is bird and how much is background”.

The design numbered IV, with its detailed depiction of the pelican’s plumage, is no doubt the most original. Beindorff saw this version as having advantages for printed matter, since the representation “is the most accommodating to the unpractised eye”. But he saw it as disadvantageous that the illustration “could easily become indistinct when scaled down to be used on the labels of tubes, bottles etc.” The clear “distinction between background, nest and bird”, on the other hand, he regarded as a positive factor.

Of the other two proposals, Beindorff preferred Version II, since the pelican stands out more sharply against the white background than the white bird does in Version I. He described the latter as “woolly and inexpressive”. A feature that all the designs had in common was that the nest now accommodated only three baby birds, instead of four as in the past. Beindorff remarked that he could “bring himself to agree to one of the young birds being thrown overboard”, from the point of view that “even the three remaining chicks are still too close together and difficult to make out, especially when reduced in size.” All in all, Beindorff was very satisfied with the modernisation, and saw all the proposals as still retaining a sufficiently close resemblance to the old brand.

This very extensive and detailed correspondence shows the extent to which artist and entrepreneur mutually spurred each other on. It will not have been easy for Fritz Beindorff to accept the reduction in the number of baby birds, as he expresses very graphically in the formulation “thrown overboard”.



It's official: the General Court of the European Union puts its seal on the successful modernisation of the PELIKAN brand.

Pelikan

1937

Minor modifications were also made to the typography of the word element. As the initial “P” was felt to be too narrow and compressed, it was decided to make its upper part, or “lobe”, more open and give more swing to the loop. The ball termination at the foot of the letter, which had previously been dominant, was considerably reduced in size. In the case of the “e”, the counter – the enclosed space within the letter – was made noticeably rounder and more open, and the stroke of the “l” was slimmed down considerably.

Pelikan

2003

Also conspicuous is the fundamental redesign of the “k”; here, the counter has disappeared completely, and instead the tail or “leg” is emphasised. The counter of the “a” is also rounder in appearance. The first products to which the new Corporate Design had been applied were presented in April 2003; after which the entire PELIKAN range was brought into conformity step by step.

Even the General Court of the European Union has recently had to concern itself with the two versions of the PELIKAN brand. In a ruling of 13 December 2012 the court first drew attention to the differing number of baby birds, and to the differences in the design of the letters “P” and “k”. But in view of the similarity of the rest, the court ruled that these changes did not have any material impact on the overall impression made by the trademark. The average consumer, at any rate, would scarcely notice the difference.

Thus it is now official that the intention to modernise the PELIKAN logo has been successfully implemented by means of this cautious redesign. Only if the familiarity of the brand is maintained going forward by keeping any modifications to the logo scarcely perceptible can the brand's potential, which is firmly seated in the minds of customers, continue to be exploited in future.

In 2013, to mark the company's 175th anniversary, PELIKAN is bringing out a limited edition of the M101N fountain pen. This writing instrument with the traditional piston-action mechanism is based on the 101N “lizard” model of 1937.





before 1873



1878



1937

How the baby bird got into the nest, and how many when.

The PELIKAN brand tells an entire story, compressed into a single sign. It is the story of the mother pelican's love and affection for her chick, which, as we know, will one day open its wings and fly.

Famous artists such as Kurt Schwitters, El Lissitzky, Wilhelm Wagenfeld, O. H. W. Hadank and many more were deeply involved with the PELIKAN trademark and brand, and helped to shape them.

The oldest representations of the PELIKAN pictorial logo from the time before 1878, previously unknown, are published in this book for the first time. These earliest depictions show three baby birds in the nest. Why did this become four, then two, and latterly only one?

Leuenhagen & Paris

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