

# Evolution of Advertising Communication in the Pre-war: Analysis of Federico Ribas' Advertising Portfolio for Gal Fragrance House (1916-1936)

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**Abstract:** This article contains a study of 1,436 pieces of printed advertising which were illustrated by Federico Ribas Montenegro for the Gal Fragrance House between 1916 and 1936.

Through the use of a double-level analysis –technical and figurative– some interesting findings concerning the narrative and iconography of the catalogued ads were obtained. By studying the discourse of the advertisements for a company who changed the history of advertising in Spain, one can see evidence of sociocultural changes as well as how advertising evolved from being an artisanal craft into a more technical and systematic industry as a result of the application of scientific principles.

**Keywords:** Federico Ribas; Gal Fragrance House; Heno de Pravia; advertising communication; Pre-war period.

**Summary:** 1. Introduction. 2. Methodology. 3. Results. 4. General Observations. 5. Conclusions. 6. References. 7. Other sources.

Translation by **the Author**.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. The Symbiotic Relationship Between Federico Ribas and Gal Fragrance House

Despite having had a career as a multifaceted artist, Federico Ribas Montenegro (Vigo, 1890 - Madrid, 1952) will always be remembered as the eternal artistic director of Gal Fragrance House. This illustrator worked for the greatest and most noteworthy part of his professional career at the heart of the advertising department of this company (from 1916 to 1936 and again after his exile in Argentina from 1949 to 1952). Ribas' graphic output for Gal was so prodigious that the influential art critic José Francés attributed the astronomical number of 6,800,422 drawings to him in a two year period working for the company.

Emeterio Melendreras commented on the obvious exaggeration of this claim. However, he did recognize its significance as evidence that his output was a *vox populi* phenomenon: "[...]by merely accepting the words of José Francés –who knew the artist well– without further investigation shows the extent that the enormity of his output had been ingrained into the minds of the people" (Melendreras, 2003: 75).

Compared with the rudimentary nature of contemporary advertising campaigns, the Gal Fragrance House's advertising output was characterized by sound planning and the graphical and conceptual continuity that Ribas' graphic style conferred. In fact, Ribas's work as the artistic director at Gal reached such a level that it was credited with the creation of an homogenous and characteristic style - The Gal Style, as noted by Antonio Caro: "[...] it developed into the *Gal style*, mixing mischievous indulgence of the audience with artistic subtlety, making this one of the first Spanish companies to try to create a common advertising style across its wide range of products" (Caro, 2001: 32).

Their advertising messages escaped from the denotative approaches based on just communicating information to introduce connotative elements that drew the consumer into the idealized world of the product. With the artistic freedom that came with the role of artistic director, Ribas devised campaigns based on his unique aesthetic. However, his acute sense of marketing always prevailed over his artistic pretensions.

Given the scarcity of case studies of this advertising artist, the main objective and motivation for this study was to contribute to a greater understanding of the professional output of this artist through an analysis of a representative sample of previously catalogued works. The aim is to draw inferences about the preeminent esthetic and formal techniques employed in the graphic advertising output of Rivas for Gal Fragrance House.

## **1.2. Historical Relevance of the Gal Fragrance House**

The growth and economic boom in the perfume and cosmetics sector in the Interwar period was spectacular, as indicated below:

The cosmetics industry also grew at an amazing rate and reached fourth place, behind the automobile industry, cinema and alcoholic beverages. There were all kinds of beauty products available to women: moisturizing soaps for the skin, powders, depilatories, pills to dissolve fat from within and bath salts to do the same from the outside and devices to remove it by rubbing the body (Litvak, 1993: 37).

Specifically, the first two decades of the Twentieth century were a period of great development for the perfume industry in Spain, as can be verified by the founding dates of the most important companies: Perfumería Gal was founded in 1901, Perfumería Floralia in 1914, Perfumería Parera was founded in Badalona in 1915 and Myrurgia was founded in

Barcelona in 1916. The rivalry between these companies had a positive impact on the evolution of their graphic design as they fought to add prestige to their ads by employing some of the most well know commercial artists of the time.

Within the sector, Gal Fragrance House was a paradigmatic example as a driving force in commercial advertising during the time period studied. The historical importance of Gal Fragrance House in the Spanish advertising industry is due to two extraordinarily important achievements, given the state of the fledgling advertising system at the time: the creation and integration of an artistic department into the organizational structure of the company and the running of one of the first educational advertising campaigns in the history of marketing in Spain.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Empirical Support

During the period that Ribas was artistic director, Gal ran a number of advertising campaigns which covered the main advertising media of the time: press ads, poster, illustrated prospectuses, window displays and an internally distributed magazine called *Pompas de Jabón* (Soap Bubbles), the first in-house publication in Spain. But the most successful of these advertising media was the illustrated press wherein they placed full page ads on a weekly basis. For this reason, the main media used in this investigation has been periodicals, not daily press and specifically illustrated magazines.

To determine the media to be studied it was necessary to monitor the periodicals published in Madrid during the specific time period (1916-1936) when the published advertisements by Federico Ribas occupied a preeminent position thanks to the frequency of its appearance. After this initial appraisal, the scope of this study was evaluated using the following criteria:

- Publications aimed at the general public - the published works of interest were logically included in widely distributed media.
- Specific media in which the author continued a strong collaboration over a sufficiently long period of time.
- Magazines which were classified as being of "General Interest".
- The length of time that the publication existed.

Initially, the study began by examining five different magazines which met the established criteria: *Blanco y Negro*, *La Esfera*, *Nuevo Mundo*, *Estampa* and *Crónica*. However, as the study progressed, documentary evidence was sought in other publications which did not meet the above criteria. This was essential in the development of the case study as they contained advertisements which were not found in the aforementioned media. Other media

which was included into the corpus of this research on advertising messages were *Buen Humor*, *La Vanguardia* and *Vida Gallega*.

The advertisements appeared regularly in continuous and on-going campaigns across the decades of the timescale of the study. It is worth noting that in *Blanco y Negro* two ads appeared in each issue whilst in the other publications there was normally only one. The double economic outlay in advertising was due to the fact that the target audience of this magazine included the most likely consumers of the products advertised. The ads were normally full page; however, from 1929 they started to use formats of half a page or less in the magazines *Estampa* and *Crónica*.

## 2.2. Analytical Process

After the exhaustive collation and cataloging of 1,436 different ads from Gal Fragrance House by Federico Ribas in the above mentioned publications from between 1916 and 1936, a detailed analysis of the insets was carried out. The double-level analysis applied was adapted from the categorization system expounded by Professor Susana de Andrés del Campo in her dissertation "Estereotipos de género en la publicidad de la Segunda República Española: *Crónica y Blanco y Negro*" (Andrés, 2002). The present investigation and the aforementioned thesis present a series of converging points regarding the approximate chronology of the subject matter and the media selected for empirical research that means replication of these categories is worthwhile and feasible.

### A. Technical analysis

On one side a technical analysis was carried out to study the content and arguments of the advertising messages. In short, the advertising technique used in the development of the ads is directly related to the codification of their verbal portion.

- 1) The Promise of the ads' message. The following variables were evaluated:
  - Approval by the opposite sex: where the ad promises that the use of the product will guarantee the admiration of or success with the opposite sex.
  - Wellbeing: in the cases where the ad promises an increased level of satisfaction or quality of life to the potential consumer.
  - Beautification: if the message promises that the product will make the consumer more beautiful or will improve their physical appearance.
  - Social Success: in the case where the use of the advertised product will promote emulation and improved social relations.
  - Practicality: if the benefit of the product is derived from its practicality (for example if it will save the end-user time or money).
  - External Reward: whereby the advertised product will have a beneficial effect on third parties.
  - Health: if reference is made to the products health benefits for the user or consumer.

- Other Rewards: when the message focuses on the excellence and quality of the product or the raw materials used therein, or makes no specific promise to the consumer.
- Undefined: when the message of the ad does not explicitly promise anything.

2) The Assertion of the Ad. In this category, five variables were established:

- Rational: when rational arguments or reasoning are employed to convince the consumer to purchase, use or avail of the product or service.
- Emotional: when this same aim is achieved by appealing to the senses or emotions.
- Both: when the ad's message clearly combines both of the above (rational and emotional).
- Undefined: where the ad presents no argument or presents one that cannot easily or clearly be ascribed to one of the above categories.

2) The Target Audience at whom the ad is aimed:

- Male.
- Female.
- Mixed.
- Infants.
- Undefined.

## B. Figurative Analysis

As part of the figurative analysis, the following five categories were defined to classify the visual content of the ads:

1) Number of characters: this category refers solely to the presence of people. A numeric score was given depending on the number of people showed.

In the cases where the central figure in the ad was an animal or a figure not easily recognizable as a person, this score was left blank. Therefore, in these cases the type of figure nor the framing was studied given that this section only focuses on human figures.

2) Central Figures in the ad:

- Male.
- Female.
- Couple: made up of two adult figures (one man and one woman).
- Various male figures.
- Various female figures.
- Mixed sex groups: made up of figures of both genders and of those pairs where the age difference means that they are not a couple (i.e. a mother and child).
- Infants.
- Various child figures.
- Product.

- Typographic: wherein the main visual element of is text.
- Others: when the central figure is none of the above.

3) Framing or presentation of the central figure: The basis for categorization comes from different shots from the world of cinema.

- Full body shot: when the entire human body is shown.
- Three-quarter shot: if the figure is shown from the head down to the knees.
- Medium shot: a shot where the person is captured from the head to the middle of the chest or the waist.
- Detail: if the image only shows a specific part of the human body. These are specified when they show: "Mouth" or "Hand(s)".
- Combined shot: if the image is of various parts of the human body which do not correspond to the above mentioned.

Where the central figure is not human, this section is left blank. Where there are various figures in the ad, the framing of the main character will be addressed (i.e. the most important or largest figure).

4) Location of the central figure: This refers to the place where the central character uses the advertised product.

- Private place: Closed spaces with limited access which cannot be classified as in the home (for example, inside a car).
- Public place: Understood to mean an exterior space.
- Home: Any of the distinct parts of the house. In cases where the figure is shown at the dressing table or in the bathroom, these are specifically mentioned.
- Workplace: when the figure is shown in a place where they carry out their professional work.
- Point of sale: where the space shown is the shop or premises where the product is purchased.
- Undefined: when the space cannot be categorized due to a lack of visual information.

5) Activity shown:

- Consumption: when the central figure(s) are shown buying, using or consuming the advertised products or services.
- Personal Care: if the activity shown is of people looking after their personal hygiene (shaving, brushing hair, getting dressed, putting on makeup, etc.).
- Culture: where the activity portrayed enriches the culture or education of the character(s) shown (reading, playing musical instruments, etc.).
- Sport: when the central figure(s) are participating in sporting activities.
- Home life: when the activity shown is in a domestic setting but does not belong in the other categories.
- Inactivity/relaxation: the person is shown doing nothing, enjoying their free time, without any apparent activity.

- Leisure: the activity shows the person at a social event such as a party or other celebrations.
- Professional: the activity shows the person carrying out activities related to their profession.
- Tourism: this group includes activities related to travel and holidays.
- Undefined: wherein the activity cannot be easily classified into one of the above categories.

### 3. Results

The obtained results give an idea of the advertising monopoly that Gal held in the printed press and a valuable statistical dataset that gives an insight into the huge advertising budget of the company.

The following are the results obtained after applying the analytical process to the ads for the following products / product lines of Gal Fragrance House (the figure in parenthesis is the number of ads found, from largest number to smallest): Heno de Pravia Soap (643), Dens Toothpaste (189), Añeja Toilet Water (163), Gal Hair Oil (125), Gal Shaving Soap (81), Fixol (47), La Cibeles Soap (40), Various (29), Flores de Talavera Powder (20), Jardines de España (23), Flores de Talavera (16), Flores de Primavera Essence (14), Jardines de España Essence(9), Gal Talcum Powder (8), Gal Powder (5), Gal Pomade(4), Gal Cream (4), Lanolin and Tar Soap (3), Gal Almond Paste(3), Gal Shampoo (2), Kopos (2), Trini Rice Powder (2), Perla Soap (1), Trini Essence (1), Tar Soap (1) and Trini Cream (1). It was decided that an individualized analysis of each product should be made given that each one is aimed at a specific target audience in specific terms and approach. An overall analysis or grouping of products would not show this aspect.

#### 3.1. Heno de Pravia Soap: the star product

Quantitatively, Heno de Pravia Soap is the most advertised product from Gal with a total of 643 different ads. The following is a technical and figurative analysis which reveals social customs associated with the use of this personal hygiene product.

The quintessential promise made in the ads for Heno de Pravia Soap was beautification in 46% of the cases (equivalent to 295 ads). The ads for this product focused on using metaphors to praise the cosmetic effects, normally associating this with the youthful look obtainable by using the product. Many different methods were employed; often the message would focus on the product's ability to increase the beauty or feel of the skin (fig. 1) or emphasizing the product's protective qualities against adverse weather conditions (fig. 2).



1. *Estampa*, nº 84, 08/20/1929.

2. *La Esfera*, nº 345, 08/14/1920.

3. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1411, 01/28/1921.

Heno de Pravia Toilet Soap, which nowadays is categorized as a personal hygiene product, was marketed as a facial cosmetic; this was a distinctive characteristic relative to other soaps on the market. In this way the ads presented the soap as having the same effect as creams and beauty treatments; the soap was even marketed as being the secret of eternal youth (fig. 3).



4. *Blanco y Negro*, nº 1917, 02/12/1928. 5. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1446, 10/07/1921. 6. *La Vanguardia*, 02/01/1924.

A further 13% (80 ads) did not make any definitive promise in particular; they simply aimed to market the soap as the best on the market by affirming the excellence of the product. The copy in these ads - "Heno de Pravia Soap is the best soap" or "Where you wash isn't important when you use Heno de Pravia Soap", for example - cannot be assigned to any of the above defined categories. (fig. 4). A similar percentage (12% or 78 ads) focus the attention on specific characteristics of the product - its purity, the intensity of the scent,



its softness, the lather it produces, etc., as well as more intangible properties such as its unmistakable fragrance.

A smaller number, 8% of the ads (54 images) base their central argument on the positive benefits for third persons: other family members, especially the children. In fact, the majority of these ads show the soap as being the favorite of the children (fig. 5) with the aim of persuading the mother –the person responsible for household purchases– and enticing her into buying the product (fig. 6). Furthermore, the product is advertised as being "neutral" –that it doesn't contain caustic materials– thus being ideal for those with sensitive or irritable skin, as is often the case with children.

A noticeably smaller percentage of the ads focus on the increased wellbeing that using the product would give (7%, 45 ads). In a smaller percentage the ads' message presents the product as a source of health (6%, 36 ads), enticing the reader to look after their body inside and out.

Despite the low representation there are a small number of ads which promise social success in their message (4%, 24 ads). These are noteworthy from a sociological perspective. These ads constantly allude to the fact that it is the soap used by "Chic people". This message loads the ads with connotative meaning far beyond the real value obtained by using the product (fig. 7). To refer to this elite sector of society who attended events such as horse races and social acts like parties and balls, terms such as *gente bien* ("good folk") and "people of taste" are also used (fig. 8). In this way, the product becomes a sign of prestige and a show of distinction for the buyer who, by purchasing and using the product, is seen to be endorsing their status. Thus these ads are clearly categorizable into the so-called *Pre-Fordism* style of advertising which reinforced elitist and conspicuous consumption (Alonso & Conde, 1994: 66).



7. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1395, 10/08/1920. 8. *Blanco y Negro*, nº 1750, 11/30/1924. 9. *La Esfera*, nº 325, 03/27/1920.

In a more advanced part of the analysis of the persuasive content, there are some images of ads which allude to approval by the opposite sex (3%, 22 ads), highlighting the supposed seductive effect that the product would bestow. An example of this is an ad whose graphic part shows a woman being flattered by two prospective suitors (fig. 9). The verbal part of the ad emphasizes the power of physical attraction attained by using this product.

This analysis shows that this toilet soap was supposed to help retain a youthful, smooth and feminine appearance, thus making the user more attractive and admired by members of the opposite (male) sex and could even help keep the husband interested, despite the passing of the years. This can be seen in the following text from one such ad: “[...] the attractiveness of your fine skin is guaranteed. Even after so much time, your husband will find you just as young as that day you first set up home together” (fig. 10). Even a happy marriage was claimed as one of the benefits that the loyal user of this product could achieve through its regular use” (fig. 11).



10. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1700, 08/20/1926. 11. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1707, 10/08/1926. 12. *La Esfera*, nº 428, 03/18/1922.

Lastly, the least used technique was highlighting the product's practicality (9 ads). Despite these messages being aimed predominantly at women, when the ads focused on practicality they spoke directly to the male reader, appealing to the values of *Fordism* such as practicality and saving money.

In general terms, the primary means used to argue for the benefits of the product in these messages is rationality (70%); the ads attempt to give objective reasons or statistics which, in some cases, are too general to be precise. For example: "To affirm, one must have proof. We can affirm that Heno de Pravia Soap is a magnificent toilet soap as we have the proof that nowadays 50 out of every 100 Spaniards –as well as many foreigners– use it with enthusiasm" (fig. 12). Similarly, they make superlative claims such as it is the most popular or the most widely used by the general public, without providing any hard evidence to back this up. This makes the information much less credible.

In 22% of the ads, the main argument is undefined; in only 7% do they appeal to emotional reason and in just 2% (an almost irrelevant amount) do they make use of a combination of rational and emotional arguments. There is evidence of an evolution in this respect; at the start of the studied period the message is not defined but towards the 1930s there is an abundance of messages appealing to rationality in their text.

The target for these ads is primarily feminine, representing 75% (490 ads) of the images analyzed. 18% (114 ads) are aimed at both sexes whilst only a small sample (5%) is aimed at men as potential purchasers of the product.

Infants were also a primary objective; they were reached through the maternal figure or the maid / nanny who was responsible for the children's cleanliness. Normally the ads which focus on images of infants and children show them drawn with a touch of ingenuity. Children were frequently characterized as innocent and well-fed babies enjoying their bath-time or playing with the soap bubbles. On the other hand, children would be shown crying inconsolably as they wanted to be washed with the soap of the ad (fig. 13).



13. *La Esfera*, nº 341, 07/17/1920.      14. *La Esfera*, nº 332, 05/15/1920. 15. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1894, 05/09/1930.

In terms of iconography, Ribas prefers to focus attention on one central figure (77%, 496 ads) whilst ads with two central figures represent only 15% (93 central figure).

In the ads for Heno de Pravia, women are the key both as potential purchasers and potential users. For this reason the ads show the typical traits of the target audience. Indeed, the ads contain a single female figure in 61% of the ads for Heno de Pravia (392 ads), only 9% (54 ads) have a single male figure, 46 ads (7%) show a child and a pair of adults of either sex appear in 40 ads (6%). The remainder (less than 6% of the total) are ads which show mixed sex groups, the product itself, etc.

The framing used by Ribas to show people in the ads are: full-body (36%, 219 ads); medium shot of the female figure (27%, 166 ads) followed by images of the female face (16%, 98) and hands (8%, 50 ads).

That these ads tend to mainly show the full female figure is due in part to the fact, in that period, the soap was a product which was used for washing the entire body –for men as well as women– whereas nowadays it is mainly used as a soap for washing the hands and maybe the face. Ribas tended to suggest female nudity by portraying women wrapped in almost transparent towels which allowed the buttocks to be seen (fig. 14).

Due to the intended use of this product, Ribas frequently illustrated feminine hands (fig. 15) in a multitude of positions. He demonstrates great interest in close-ups and isolated parts of the body: hands using the product, being dried afterwards, playing musical instruments such as the violin or the piano, taking a young man's hand during a dance, wearing gloves, playing cards and so on. In other ads, in the category of *publicidad de designación* [the hand or index finger pointing towards the product] (Péninou, 1972: 110) the sole purpose is to draw attention to the product.

Analysis of the context of the ads' imagery shows that in a significant percentage the physical space can be characterized as being "non-defined" (61%, 395 ads). In 16% (104 ads) the setting is in public places, mainly outdoors. To extoll the virtues of the product's origins, Ribas produced numerous traditional illustrations set in the region of Pravia showing shepherds and other country folk in a rural environment, with specific imagery from the Asturian countryside. In 13% (81 ads) of the cases, the place where the people are located corresponds to the various parts of the bathroom –the bath, the shower and the sink.

But the analysis shows that in a majority of cases –35% (225 ads)– the activity shown in ads for Heno de Pravia is not clearly defined. Despite this, in those ads which do allow the main figure's activity to be identified, they are activities related to personal care (22%, 144 ads) or activities related to leisure such as attending events, balls and parties (10%, 66 ads). In a further 8% (51 ads) the central figure is shown in a passive pose of self-contemplation.

This attitude of inactivity compares with 7% (43 ads) showing the main figure taking part in some kind of sport - physical exercise was a primary characteristic of the "modern woman" as is confirmed by the commercial copy of the ads themselves. Through sports, the *sports girl* –a name used frequently in the press– shows off her body whilst also establishing her social status and for this reason these activities are shown as being beneficial to both physical and mental wellbeing. However, it is necessary to place the "modern Eve" in the context of an urban environment and a minority social class of the privileged few as this prototype of a modern, sporty liberated woman was an ideal to aspire to in a Spain which was, at that time, fundamentally rural. These ads recommend the use of the product after physical exercise and there is a marked tendency to show elitist sports such as aviation, equestrianism, skiing, golf (fig. 16) and tennis (fig. 18). In fact, the importance of physical exercise started to become popular and references to competitions and sporting events appeared frequently in weekly illustrated magazines as well as in ads.



16. *Blanco y Negro*, nº 1627, 03/27/1925. 17. *La Esfera*, nº 399, 08/27/1931. 18. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1383, 07/16/1920.

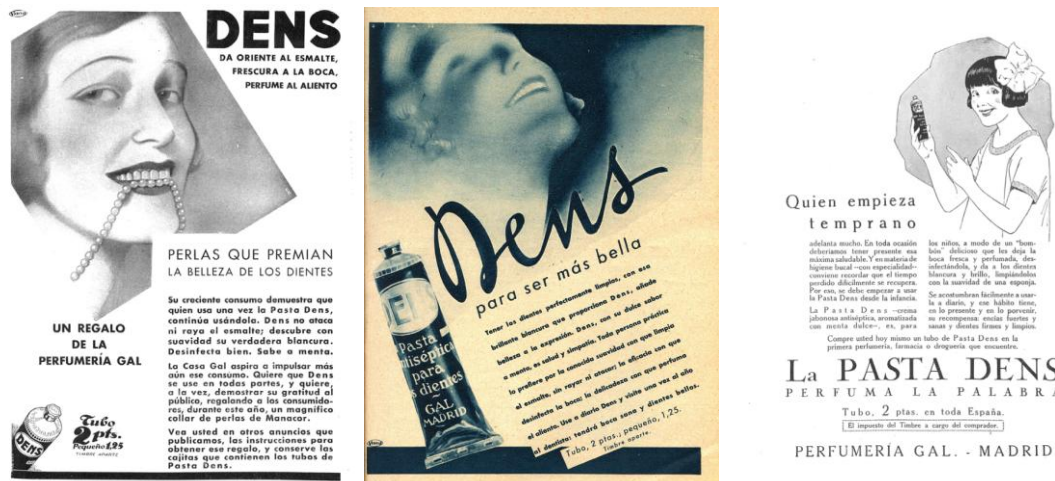
In a comparatively small proportion the advertising shows the main characters at their work (5%, 31 ads), establishing social relationships (5%, 29 ads) or engaging in activities related to tourism (3%, 20 examples). Meanwhile, there are a small number of ads which show scenes of home life, use of the cultural good or the purchase or acquisition of the product itself.

### 3.2. Dens Toothpaste: the toothpaste that makes you beautiful

Dens Toothpaste is the second most advertised product after Heno de Pravia Soap with a total of 189 ads encountered. The main promises made in the ads for Dens Toothpaste are that it would make the user more beautiful and that it would improve their health. Both these ideas appear in equal numbers (36%, 67 examples of each). It is surprising that in half of the catalogued ads the message is not focused on the oral health benefits of cleaning using toothpaste but rather on the increased beauty of the user thanks to the whitening of their teeth.

Both the verbal and visual messages are centered on comparing the teeth to pearls with lines such as "A pearl for each tooth". Sometimes the visual simile consisted in an image of a woman with a pearl necklace between her teeth (fig. 19).

Given that Dens Toothpaste was the subject of an advertising campaign targeted specifically at children, another of the promises most frequently made was the reward to others (12%, 23 ads). The idea was that the mothers would take care of their children's oral hygiene and that they would become loyal to the brand from an early age (fig. 21).



19. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,901, 06/27/1930. 20. *Vida Gallega*, nº 622, 03/10/1,935. 21. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,646, 08/07/1925.

Rationality is the main argument used in these advertisements, appearing in 90% of the examples. Rational stimuli were believed to be more effective than emotional ones due in large part to the fact that this was a new product being introduced to the market and it was felt necessary to provide as much information as possible to the reader.

As for the specific target for this product, the majority of the ads are targeted specifically at women in 60% of the cases (109 ads) and at both sexes in a proportion of 26% (50 ads).

In 80% of the ads, the illustration depicts one single character. In the majority of cases this figure is a woman (54%, 98 ads), represented as the potential user of the product. The principal framing used is the head or face (43%, 78 ads) which allows the teeth to be highlighted or depicted more clearly. This is followed by medium-shots (26%, 47 ads) which allow the figure to be shown posing with the product in their hand. The analysis clearly shows that the most repeated imagery and wording in these ads is related to the smile. This is an attempt to not only demonstrate the positive effects of the product but to also create complicity and an emotional attachment between the reader and the brand.

As for the setting of the ads, 90% show no definitive location as they are composed of a figure (or part of) against a neutral background. Finally, the activity that the figures are engaged in is not clearly defined in 52% of the cases (99 examples) and in 27% of the ads the figure is shown in the process of cleaning their teeth.

### 3.3. Añeja Toilet Water: the perfume that slims

At the end of the 1920s and the start of the next decade, public life demanded that women took great care over their appearance which they did by going to the gymnasium, by dieting and by using products such as toilet water. This product was primarily associated

with feminine personal care and was presented as a cosmetic which could help to reduce body fat. The advertising messages from the early 1930s redefined a concept of beauty which was based on the physical form, as can be seen in the forceful nature of the following examples: "It's no longer enough to have a pretty face. Your body, svelte and harmonious, needs to conform to the modern concept of beauty - to be healthy and agile" (fig. 22).

The most frequently recurring promise made in the ads analyzed is that of the reward of wellbeing (31%, 51 ads). In these cases, the scented water was presented as a product able to restore strength and eradicate fatigue in those who used it.

The second most repeated promise is that of the health benefits bestowed, found in 24% (40 ads) of the pieces analyzed. In these examples, the product's curative properties are highlighted such as in the ad which describes the product as an efficient remedy for colds and catarrh (fig. 23). A smaller number of ads (18%, 29 pieces) allude to other benefits related to the attributes of the product such as strength, purity and the intensity of the fragrance.



22. *Nuevo Mundo*, n° 1,929, 01/09/1931. 23. *Blanco y Negro*, n° 2,325, 02/09/1936. 24. *Nuevo Mundo*, n° 1,895, 05/16/1930.

On the subject of the type of argument used, 80% of the messages attempt to persuade the reader through the use of rationality and 7% appeal to the emotions. The remaining ads do not have a clearly defined argument or show a mixture of the two (rational and emotional).

The analysis shows that the profile of the target audience to whom the ads were aimed was predominantly feminine (60%, 89 ads). There were equal numbers of examples (20%, 32 ads) directed at men as there were directed at both sexes.

As for the number of persons shown in the ads, 72% (118 pieces) show an illustration of

one single central figure. Taking into account the gender of this central figure, the majority were women (47%, 76 ads); 23% showed men (38 ads) and a smaller percentage showed just the product itself (9%). The framing of the human figure most frequently showed the full body; this was seen in 50% of the ads (75 examples).

As found with the other Gal products, the location is not defined in the majority of the ads (54%, 88 ads). Due to the prominence of sports in these illustrated ads, the location was defined as in a public space –places where one could do physical exercise– in 16% of the cases (27 ads). 15% of the ads for Añeja Toilet Water (24 ads) are set in the bathroom and the character portrayed is shown in the act of applying the product in a moment of intimacy.

The activities most frequently shown in these ads, in descending order are: personal care (28%, 46 ads); sporting activity (24%, 38 ads); non-defined (20%, 33 pieces). This last group of ads has no defining details to draw any conclusions from in this respect.

### **3.4. Gal Hair Oil: the successor to hair-growth treatments**

Gal Hair Oil was the fourth most advertised product from Gal Fragrance House with a total of 125 ads catalogued. The predominant marketing promise in these ads was of the health benefits (52%, 65 ads) followed by the promise of beautification (28%, 35 examples). As this was a treatment for hair, marketed as preventing hair loss, the ads urged the public to be proactive and to start using the product at the slightest sign of hair loss. This type of ad followed the classic formula of problem-solution, presenting the product as the definitive answer to this aesthetic problem. Often the illustrations portrayed people with a sad expression as they observed their hair falling out (fig. 25).

It should be noted that Gal Hair Oil was initially marketed as an infallible remedy to hair loss but the message progressively changed and became more realistic in the promises made, referring to the product's ability to eliminate dandruff and to condition or smooth the hair. These promises are made from a rational viewpoint in the majority of the cases (76%, 95 ads).

Although a large number of the ads focus on hair loss, they were mainly targeted at a female audience (73%, 92 ads) with a noticeably smaller proportion aimed at men (17%, 21 ads).

The illustrations in these ads generally showed one single figure (87%, 109 ads), the majority of whom were female (66%, 83 pieces). Analysis of the type of framing chosen by Ribas to represent the main figures shows that the medium shot (33%, 40 ads) was the most prevalent followed by shots of the head or face (30%, 37 ads) and full body shots (26%, 30 ads). Many ads for Gal Hair Oil showed women with long, flowing hair; presumably as a result of using the product. Other ads with a referential function drew



parallels between plants or the leaves of trees and female hair.



25. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,445, 09/30/1921. 26. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,449, 10/28/1921. 27. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,917, 10/17/1930.

Looking at the locations chosen, the majority of the ads omit all spatial references; 70% (86 pieces) have a non-defined setting. The most frequently chosen activity shows people engaging in their personal care (42%, 53 ads) followed by unspecified activities (37%, 46 examples).

### 3.5. Gal Shaving Soap: for the practical man

Gal Shaving Soap was a product aimed specifically at men in 95% of the analyzed ads. The messages for products from Gal Fragrance House aimed at men –Gal Shaving Soap and FixolHair Cream– focused on the description of the usefulness of the product. Thus, the arguments presented are related with practical values (efficiency, speed or affordability) rather than aesthetic values.



28. *La Esfera*, nº 287, 06/28/1919. 29. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 2,050, 06/22/1933. 30. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,972, 12/25/1931.

Furthermore, the illustrations show a predominance of single male figures (76% of the ads)

in the process of shaving. On a small number of occasions the ads were aimed at women, in their role as wife, alluding to the promise of third-party rewards.

Shaving was presented as a troublesome activity and the majority of the messages focused on the practicality (76%, 60 ads) or on the ease or speed that the product's use would offer. As far back as 1919, an ad with the tagline "Why is Gal shaving soap so widely used?" was published. For seven reasons" (fig. 28). This ad was along the lines of the philosophy of American advertising - the ad using reason to answer the question "why?". The ad gave the potential customer seven reasons based on the description of the product's properties to justify why it should be bought.

### 3.6. Fixol: the hair cream for the "man-about-town"

The ads for Fixol were aimed solely and exclusively at men in 100% of the cases (47 ads). The promises made in these ads were mainly based on practicality (94% of cases, 44 ads), followed by the promise of social success - but this was only present in a very small number of ads (6%, 3 examples). The arguments centered on rational arguments in 100% of the examples analyzed. They make claims about the power to maintain one's hair in place all day long and in the product's ability to tame even the most unruly hair in any situation that modern life may throw up (activities related to leisure time such as driving a car or playing sports).



31. *La Vanguardia*, 07/26/1927.

32. *Estampa*, nº 77, 07/02/1929.

33. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 2,049, 06/16/1933

Besides these attributes, the ads also made intangible promises related to the consumer's status in society such as good humor, correctness, impeccability and the good impression that its use would cause. The wording of the ads analyzed presented the product as being indispensable for a gentleman in society and the use of hair cream was considered to be a sign of distinction.

In accordance with the target audience to whom this product was aimed, the figures most

frequently represented were men (81% of cases, 38 ads). The framing chosen in 50% of the ads (22 pieces) showed only the man's head so as to show off his smooth and perfectly styled hair. The figures represented are aristocratic types, in the style of cinema heart-throbs. They are in the mold of the new male model as described by Susana de Andrés (2002: 157): "[...] the 1920s brought a new masculine model - thinner, less stocky, with better hairstyles and good grooming. They took greater care of their physical appearance - not just their clothing but their features and complexion as well. In the advertising from the time of the Second Republic this new model of masculinity persevered; it was thought to show elegance and was the model to which almost all the upper classes aspired". In short, they were men from the elite classes with impeccable appearance.

### 3.7. La Cibeles Soap: the soap that saves

At the complete opposite end of the spectrum is La Cibeles Soap, aimed exclusively at a female demographic with a low socio-economic profile –specifically housewives– and 95% of the ads focused on practicality. Some of the ads even focused on children as a reflection of the fact that women started housework from an early age. The aim was to capture loyal customers from infancy, as can be seen in the following ad: "The future housewife uses La Cibeles Soap to wash her dolls' clothes. When she sees how soft it is and how well it cleans, she thinks that, when she is older, it will be best to always buy La Cibeles Soap" (fig. 34).

The image contains three distinct advertisements for La Cibeles Soap.   
 1. **Left Ad:** Illustrates a young girl washing a doll's clothes. Text: "Con Jabón LA CIBELES lava la futura ama de casa las ropitas de su muñeca. Y al ver lo suave y lo bien que lava, piensa que cuando sea mayor comprará siempre Jabón La Cibeles." It lists prices for different soap varieties and includes the Gal logo.   
 2. **Middle Ad:** Shows a hand holding a coin. Text: "Señora, no mire usted a diez céntimos de economía cuando compre jabón de lavar!" Below, it describes the soap's benefits: "Jabón La Cibeles, a un tiempo duro y esponjoso, es el más conveniente para el batido del agua, para la duración de la ropa y para las manos de la lavandera." It also includes the product name and the Gal logo.   
 3. **Right Ad:** Shows a woman washing clothes. Text: "¡Da gusto lavar la ropa con el Jabón La Cibeles!" It describes the soap as "duro y esponjoso" and "permite que el ama de casa ahorre, que la lavandera se muestre contenta, y la ropa limpia y bien cuidada, con el menor gasto posible." It includes the product name and the Gal logo.

34. *La Vanguardia*, 04/26/1927. 35. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,634, 05/15/1925. 36. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,640, 06/26/1925.

The numeric results obtained show that saving money was the principle argument used to promote sales of this product, with continual use of terms related to *Fordism* such as cheap and economic. In some specific cases the ads proclaim that is "the soap that saves" and thus the wording of the ads shows a clear tendency to use rational arguments in 100% of cases (40 ads).

Although the soap was actually more expensive than other soaps on the market, the advertiser tried to convince the potential purchaser that the initial outlay would be compensated for by its long life (fig. 35). In fact, some of the messages focused on justifying the higher price as being due to the quality of the product and others made reference to its advantages in times of economic crisis. This was all due to the fact that the target audience was working class women with low social profiles and scarce economic resources who had to meet the household expenses on a limited income.

As a general rule, the central figure in the ads analyzed was a single female (72%). In particular, the labor profile of these women was of a hard-working laundress going about her housework (60%, 24 ads) and this image was also the visual identity of the product. Normally, the figure was shown doing the laundry –washing or hanging out the clothes– with a look of total satisfaction. All these ads attempted to impregnate this arduous manual labor with a touch of optimism; any hint of repression was eliminated and doing the laundry was shown as a motive for pride for women. Similarly, this domestic chore was shown as being a pleasant task for the laundress as it seemed to imply no physical effort (fig. 36).

### **3.8. Flores de Talavera: for chic people**

The 16 ads found for the Flores de Talavera range of products (made up of soap, lotion, powders and essence) were published in a timeframe spanning the years 1917 - 1920. However, a further 20 ads were found specifically for the Flores de Talavera rice powder which were published from 1922 to 1924.

As with Heno de Pravia Soap, the Flores de Talavera product range was aimed principally at women who belonged to an exclusive social class called "Chic People"(fig. 37), constituting 70 % (11 examples) of the ads analyzed. These are the ads which show the greatest disparity of focus, using emotional arguments in 38% of cases (6 ads) and an undefined argument in 56% (9ads). Similarly, the promises made vary from undefined in 31% of cases to beautification in 20% and social success in the same proportion.

As for the ads for Flores de Talavera rice powder, this product is aimed at a target audience exclusively made up of women (100%, 20 pieces) and thus the principle promise was that of beautification (75%, 15 ads). In general, the main selling point focuses on the physical characteristics of the product and its ability to buff the skin, giving a smooth, matte finish and even to lighten the tone.



37. *La Esfera*, nº 289, 07/12/1919. 38. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,452, 11/18/1921. 39. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,489, 08/04/1922.

For these reasons, the figures shown in the ads were always female (100% of cases, 20 ads), normally framed in a medium-shot (50%, 10 examples) or close-ups of the face (30%, 6 pieces). They show the women in activities related to their personal care (in front of the mirror or at the dressing table, applying the product to their faces).

### 3.9. Jardines de España: the scent of Spain

The Jardines de España product range was launched onto the market in 1923 although the ads which are included in this study come from the period 1925-26. In the sample of ads collected, 23 ads for this range of products were found. The slogan was "Jardines de España scents the world"; there were a further 9 examples found advertising the Jardines de España essence which were analyzed separately.

The ads for the entire product range generally focused on the intensity, long-lastingness and originality of the perfume and thus the promise made by the ads comes into the category of other rewards. They prefer to highlight the objective attributes of the product rather than the benefits to the potential buyer. The illustrations in these ads mainly show female figures (70%) whose dress emphasizes the "national" character of the product, accompanied by floral motifs (fig. 41).

The Jardines de España essence was also aimed solely at a female audience in 56% of the ads analyzed (5 pieces). In accordance with the elite target audience of these ads, there are constant references to "distinction".

The iconographic motifs used repeatedly in almost all of the examples analyzed were, as a general rule, landscapes of gardens and fountains as a backdrop or as the main image itself (fig. 42). This tendency was due to the attempt to associate the fragrance of this product

with the freshness and serenity of these open spaces; however, the preeminence of public spaces in the illustrations in place of human figures, gives them a certain level of impersonality when taken as a whole.



40. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,792, 05/25/1928.41. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,811, 10/05/1928.42. *La Esfera*, nº 584, 03/14/1925.

### 3.10. Flores de Primavera Essence: the unisex perfume

In the sample of ads collected, 14 examples for Flores de Primavera essence were found, all published during the year of 1925. The ads for this product were aimed at a mixed audience and used promises based on emotional arguments in 50% of the cases (7 ads). The majority of the figures in the illustrations are stylized representations of women in passive poses; they are shown breathing in the aroma from the bottle or wetting a handkerchief with the perfume.

### 3.11. Gal Talcum Powder: the precursor of deodorants

Eight distinctive ads for Gal talcum powder were found, published between 1932 and 1933. In 100% of cases they are aimed at a female audience as this product was destined for use by babies as well as being recommended for women. Thus, 63% of the ads (5 examples) focus on third party reward; i.e. the physical benefits that the use of the talc would give to children. The figures represented in the ads were of a single woman (50%), a single infant (25%) or a mixed-sex group composed of mother and baby in the remaining 25%.

It should be noted that in the ads aimed at an adult audience, the product was marketed as a precursor to deodorants (fig. 44).

LLUVIA SANA Y SUAVE




Tras el lavado o el baño, el niño recibe una grata sorpresa: la lluvia sana y suave de los finísimos Polvos de talco GAL. Rocíe con ellos el tierno cuerpecito. Le evitará molestias del sudor, roces de las prendas, irritaciones y escoqueduras. Son polvos especiales, suavísimos y absorbentes. Lo mejor para el niño y también para usted.

**POLVOS DE TALCO GAL**  
 boratados y perfumados

**El sudor, vencido**



No olvide usted, después del baño o al tiempo de vestirse, esta precaución higiénica que le producirá un gran bienestar durante el día: Polvos de talco GAL. Lo más agradable y útil contra el sudor, iritaciones, escoqueduras y otras molestias. Para niños y para mayores.

El talco es de calidad especial: los polvos finísimos y muy absorbentes. Delicias la suavidad y frescura que dan en el cuerpo y la sultura que dan a las prendas.

**Polvos de talco GAL**  
 boratados y perfumados

43. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 2,019, 11/18/1932. 44. *Crónica*, nº 142, 07/31/1932.

### 3.12. Other Products

The following is a global analysis of the products which were represented in the sample by less than five published ads each.

In 1930, Gal Fragrance House launched a product range onto the market with the name Serie Amarilla [*Yellow Series*] which included Gal powder (a product for which 5 published ads were found), Gal Pomade (4 ads), Gal Cream (4 ads), Gal Almond Paste (3 examples), Gal Shampoo (2 ads) as well as products for which no ads were found including hair lotion, hair cream, cold cream, rice powder, bath salts and eau de Cologne.

As opposed to the neutral rice powders, Gal powders were more similar to modern-day makeup as they added color to the skin. These ads made references to the "art of powdering" and the illustrations all show *glamorous* ladies as they apply the product. There is just one example where the product is not being self-applied - another person's hand is applying the powder to the woman's back (fig. 45).



**REFINAMIENTO**

La luz eléctrica revela el más ligero error de una toilette. Por eso, la mujer refinada busca entre los matices de los Polvos Gal, aquel que mejor conviene a su escote y al color de su vestido. Estos polvos sutiles, transparentes, igualan el cutis sin ocultarlo. Se fabrican en seis tonos de acuerdo con los colores de piel que han puesto de moda los más famosos especialistas de belleza.

**Polvos GAL**  
 SERIE AMARILLA

Caja 2 PTS  
 1 Unidad Jarate

DE LA MISMA SERIE AMARILLA  
 Jabón de tocador Ph. 1,25  
 Crema cosmética y líquida Ph. 2,00  
 Pólv. de Alendón Ph. 3,00

**BAÑOS DE SOL**

**Crema GAL**  
 SERIE AMARILLA  
 "Emulsión" o líquida. Ph. 3,20

ALGUNAS PRECAUCIONES GENERALES. Evitar el uso prolongado en las zonas de la cara y el cuello. Evitar el uso prolongado en las zonas de la cara y el cuello. Evitar el uso prolongado en las zonas de la cara y el cuello.

**Color tostado, pero cutis suave**

Adquiera usted el color tostado que proporcionan los baños de sol sin perder la suavidad de la piel. Si la piel bronceada es causal de acné, la piel suave es patrimonio de belleza.

Tome las precauciones que su médico le recomienda para evitar posibles molestias y perforaciones. Siga un método gradual, lento, hasta alcanzar el grado perfecto de pigmentación; lávese siempre con Crema de Pravia, el jabón de confianza por su pureza y su fuerza, y use la protectora Crema Q al (Serie Amarilla), delicias por lo refrescante y por su olor a rosas.

Pastilla. 1,25  
**Jabón HENO DE PRAVIA**  
 PREPARADORA GAL. - MARIB. - BUENOS AIRES

**SUS CABELLOS LUCIRÁN MÁS**

Deportes, reuniones y jiras brindan ocasión a la mujer moderna para lucir los galos de su cabello. Cuidese de que el suyo brille más. Use Brillantina Gal (Serie Amarilla), cristalizada o líquida. Está perfumada delicadamente. Aplicada al terminar de peinarse, da un brillo especial de buen tono, que acusa distinción. Sus vivos reflejos proporcionan al peinado más gracia y atractivo.

**Brillantina GAL**  
 SERIE AMARILLA

Líquida Ph. 1,75  
 Cristalizada Ph. 2,00  
 2 ml. Ph. 2,00  
 Shampooing líquido Ph. 2,00

DE LA MISMA SERIE AMARILLA  
 Loción Capilar (Perf. de) Ph. 3,50  
 Espar. para el cabello Ph. 2,00  
 Shampooing líquido Ph. 2,00

45. *Blanco y Negro*, nº 2,073, 02/08/1931. 46. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,950, 07/24/1931. 47. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,912, 09/12/1930

Only four illustrated ads were found for Gal cream, a product whose promises were fundamentally based on beautification of the user as well as protection against inclement weather. Some of the illustrations use visual metaphors whereby the cream creates a fine veil to protect the feminine face. The ads for this cream show an evolution in the amount of female flesh shown, coinciding with the incipient fashion for sun bathing and heliotherapy which included showing off one's body on the beach (fig. 46). Through the study of the pages of ads from Gal, there is evidence of a transition over two decades from the fashion for rice powder which kept the skin pale to the new Eve style of bronzed skin.

Gal Pomade was a hair fixing pomade which was aimed at women as potential purchasers in 100% of the cases. The illustrations showed women with elegant hairstyles, usually from the side or above so that the hair could be clearly seen (fig. 47).

The Gal Almond Paste was a cream used for hand care. Only three ads for this product were found, all aimed at the female audience; two of these illustrations show a close-up shot of female hands.

Only two examples were found of ads for Gal shampoo. They were for a product that was new on the market and they explain the process of applying the product. The message of these ads shows clear evidence of hyperbolizing the effects of the product (fig. 48).



48. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,927, 12/26/1930. 49. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,533, 06/08/1923. 50. *Nuevo Mundo*, nº 1,664, 12/11/1925.

Lanolin and Tar Soap ads show illustrations of animals in a rural setting to show the origins of the raw materials (fig. 49) or show figures of children - this product was indicated for use on sensitive skin with the aim of preventing irritation.

Kopos is a product that is scarcely featured in the sample - only two examples of ads were encountered. Aimed solely at women, it was a soap to be used for washing delicate fabrics which would have been found in all modern homes of the times, as can be seen in the ads for this product (fig. 50).



Finally, as part of the Trini product range, the following published ads were found: Trini rice powder (2), Trini essence (1) and Trini cream (1), which highlight the Spanish origins of the products.

#### **4. General Observations**

The printed publicity for Gal Fragrance House was characterized by the representation of a symbolic universe with the aim of exercising influence over the feelings of women and there was a constant appeal to their sense of beauty. The prominence of women in the commercial output of the company was due to the fact that they were seen as the potential market as consumers and users of the company's cosmetics and perfumes. For these reasons, Prat Gaballí placed great importance on the role of women in the process of product acquisition and as the main target audience for advertisers. This was due to the fact that they were the ones reading the ads and also to their role as an intermediary between the marketing and their families.

In general, the illustrations in the ads drawn by Ribas attempted to associate the brand with concepts such as refinement and sophistication; these ideas were transmitted through his representation of stylized feminine figures in different contexts and settings. In his illustrations for Gal, Ribas portrayed a cosmopolitan society –characterized by strong aristocratic imagery– during its hedonistic heyday. This style became the central motif in his marketing work for the company. The appearance in many ads of maids, servants and nannies –the ones responsible for the daily care of the children, washing the clothes, preparing the bath for the lady of the house, the stocking of bathroom and cleaning products and so on– is indicative and revealing of the high-bourgeois class at whom the majority of these ads were aimed.

The ads were targeting a minority social group who valued the care of their physical appearance and who aspired to a certain level of sophistication through the use of the most select products. A common denominator in the advertising illustrations of Federico Ribas is the distinction and refinement of his well-dressed characters who live in a world of frivolity, dominated by leisure activities and populated by young people in bathing costumes, driving open-top cars, women preening themselves in preparation for social events, etc.

There are a multitude of sociological factors that came together in an era when the Deco style erupted and the imagery of this style was especially obvious in the ads for Gal that were published in the years 1932 and 1933. Dynamism, speed and movement which had been exalted by the Futurists were reflected in the presence of elements of daily urban life such as the car, airplanes, trains, etc. The car appeared on numerous occasions as an object of luxury and comfort which, more than anything, made independence and mobility real possibilities for the women of the time. As can be seen through the analysis, there is a

common recurrence of themes which strengthen the simple association with hygiene - themes such as sports and dances.

In general the so-called "modern woman" is the iconographic motif most widely employed in these ads. She was a dynamic, independent woman who practiced sports, drove, traveled, dated, danced; in short, she was liberated from the repressive bonds which until that time had constrained her to the home. Through the iconographic repertoire of Ribas it is possible to perceive changes in the prevailing patterns of behavior which were faithfully reproduced in his commercial illustrations. The loosening of strict morals that began in the 1920s and the freedom and independence that women achieved are graphically projected through the advertising imagery.

One of the most frequently portrayed scenes in the ads for Gal was of the woman in the bathroom (either the rituals before or after the bath or during that moment itself) which allowed the viewer access into the intimate and private lives of these women. Ribas repeatedly illustrated ephemeral subjects such as the feminine toilette: women sat on the edge of the bathtub, just about to get into the water or already bathing as well as sat at the dresser, brushing their hair or applying face powder whilst holding a hand mirror. In effect the mirror was a narcissistic icon which appeared frequently in Ribas' works due to its close association with the beauty rituals and its great symbolic value.

More than anything, these themes reflect what has been defined as a "break with the traditional concept of privacy" which, here, consists of making public scenes which had hitherto taken place in the strictest privacy. It is worth noting that, probably due to corporative rules, Ribas never illustrated women in the nude; they were modestly covered by fine towels or fabrics which nevertheless allowed their figures to be appreciated.

## 5. Conclusions

After the in-depth analysis of the sample of ads, it can be affirmed that, from a technical point of view, the ads target the viewer with marketing promises which appeal primarily in terms related to the ideas of beautification as well as to health, practicality and wellbeing; they use more rational arguments than emotional ones to persuade the reader to purchase the products. Firm indicators allow the conclusion to be drawn that the target audience was predominantly female, as this group was the main consumer and the one responsible for the wellbeing of the family and the household finances.

Federico Ribas was responsible for translating these promises and values into effective commercial images using the aesthetic and formal resources as detailed below: From a figurative point of view, Ribas tended to illustrate a single protagonist who, in the majority of cases, was female. This had the intention of provoking a process of identification in this main target audience. The preferred framing of his human subjects shows that the full-body

shot, the medium-shot and close-ups of the head or face were, in this order, the most often repeated. The location or figurative space in a large part of the ads is undefined as Ribas tended to use plain backdrops, avoiding background architecture. When the location is visually identifiable, the most frequently represented setting was in the home (usually in domestic spaces such as the bathroom or at the dresser), followed by public spaces. As was found with the identification of the settings, the activities undertaken by the central figures in the ads were also undefined in the majority of cases. Over time there are signs of the onset of so-called modern advertising; the product becomes more visually important in the imagery of the ads; this can be seen in the constant treatment of the figures as visual hyperbole.

In conclusion, Ribas transformed the way in which Gal advertised its products and created a totally modern graphical concept for the company. His graceful lines and elegant figures reinforced the company's personality in its marketing, providing a world of elegant refinement –only comparable to Floralia or Myrurgia– creating an identification between the company and the artist. Indeed, the aesthetic evolution of the advertising for Gal Fragrance House is parallel to and, at the same time, the result of the technical mastery of Federico Ribas. Both in the figurative and technical aspects of Gal's advertising there is a noticeable evolution thanks to the adoption of the parameters established by scientific advertising.

This study, covering two key decades of Spanish advertising, reveals changes in marketing communications: there was a qualitative leap from the time when the persuasive argument, either informative or referential, was limited to the emphatic exaltation of the product to the following period based on appealing to the individual or social group with the idea that the use of the product could be justified through solid reasoning and argument to persuade the potential customer, amid growing competition.

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