



**The Griffin
– guardian of
northern gold**

ерное Общес

The Griffin is usually defined as a mythical creature that is half eagle, half lion. This iconic creature became the symbol of UPM thanks to an 1899 design competition.

Today, UPM's The Griffin is the oldest corporate logo used continuously in Finland. The recognizable logo plays a role in strengthening the company's position as the innovative leader of the forest based bioindustry.



Logo origin

Towards the end of the 19th century UPM needed a distinctive trademark, particularly for Russian trade. One of the predecessors of the present UPM, Kymmene Aktiebolag, turned to two artists with a request for a suitable design. The artists, Hugo Simberg and Louis Sparre, were well known in the Finnish art scene.

Simberg's griffin was the declared the winner and the company purchased it in 1899. It was approved for official use a few years later.

Designer

Hugo Gerhard Simberg (1873-1917) was a talented Finnish painter and graphic artist. Simber was known for his gloomy style and macabre, supernatural topics. His most famous piece is *The Wounded Angel* (1903). Visual artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela, a pioneer of the Finnish national style of art, acted as Simberg's teacher.

The Griffin

The Griffin is a mythical creature featured in the UPM logo. Why did Simberg choose a mythological animal to represent a Finnish company? One very probable reason is symbolism.

The oldest griffins can be found in the ancient fables of Assyria and Babylon. According to ancient belief, griffins are endowed with the speed and strength of the king of birds and beasts. These characteristics made it the highly-revered guardian of golden treasures for ancient peoples' like the pharaohs of Egypt and the gods of ancient Greece.

In the northern context, the griffin watches over the green gold inherent in the forests. It also has a counterpart in Finnish mythology and is associated with a Finnish word that refers to a spirit hovering over treasures hidden underground.



HUGO SIMBERG
1899



DAGMAR KÄRNÄ
1942



TOPI VALKONEN
1956



ERIK BRUUN
1981



ESA OJALA
1989

Development

Five graphic artists have modified The Griffin in the past hundred years.

- In the 1940s, it was first redesigned by Dagmar Kärnä, a technical designer working in the Kymi Corporation's engineering department.
- In the 1950s, Kymi's own graphic designer, artist Topi Valkonen gave The Griffin its heraldically appropriate design. His design was in use until the end of the 1980s.
- Professor Erik Bruun, who did a lot of graphic design work for the Kymi Corporation, produced several variants of the griffin. They were used, for example, in Högfors cast-iron goods in the 1970s and on Kymi's paper roll and bale wrappers, as well as labels between 1969-1995.
- The present design of the griffin was made by graphic designer Esa Ojala in 1989 when Kymmene Group's logo was modernised. Following the merger of Kymmene Corporation and Repola Ltd. and its subsidiary United Paper Mills in 1995, he created a new logo for the UPM-Kymmene Corporation by combining The Griffin with UPM, short for United Paper Mills.



Different uses

Over the years, The Griffin has become a recognizable, iconic symbol for UPM and the brand's visual identity staple, thanks to consistent use.

The Griffin has decorated UPM advertisements, as well as marketing and communications materials for decades. On UPM products, the logo is often seen as an assurance for high quality.

It has also been used as an artistic and ornamental motif; griffins have been hewn in granite, etched on glass, carved in wood and embroidered on wall rugs and fabrics.

The most striking of all the variants is undoubtedly at Kuusankoski where the symbol was born. The façade of the old head office of Kymi Corporation is graced by a two-meter griffin relief embossed in copper and picked out in 23 carat gold leaf.





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