



## Art competitions at the Olympic Games

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## > INTRODUCTION

This document traces the origins and provides an overview of the art competitions held at the Olympic Summer Games from 1912 to 1948. It contains biographical information about some of the landmark winners of the competitions and the full list of medallists for each edition. Based on information from the minutes of the IOC Sessions in the 1950s and the various editions of the Olympic Charter, it also reveals how these competitions were replaced by art exhibitions, which subsequently became a full cultural programme related to the Games. In addition, the document looks at other arts initiatives launched by the IOC, such as the various competitions set up at the start of the 2000s primarily to promote the Olympic values through the visual arts, literature and music.

This reference document was written by Alain Lunzenfichter, a French Olympic and sports journalist, over the course of five decades. The views expressed are those of the author. This content is made available by The Olympic Studies Centre with no resulting obligation.

## > AN IDEA BY PIERRE DE COUBERTIN

In 1904, 10 years after the creation of the IOC and the revival of the Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who had always advocated the need to simultaneously develop both the body and mind, suggested introducing art onto the Games programme. This proposal was a return to the roots of the Games given that, in antiquity, cultural contests were held alongside sports events. This was the case, for instance, at the Nemean Games, the Isthmian Games and the Pythian Games. At the ancient Olympic Games, the only non-sports competition was the “herald and trumpet” contest, which was added in 396 BC at the 96<sup>th</sup> Olympiad. It therefore came as no surprise when the Frenchman decided to add a series of cultural contests called the “Pentathlon of the Muses”. Coubertin often reiterated that the Games were not simply world championships, but rather the quadrennial festival of universal youth: “It was no mere happenstance that brought together writers and artists at Olympia long ago, gathering them around sports in antiquity. This incomparable assembly achieved the prestige that the institution enjoyed for so long.”<sup>1</sup> In 1904, the IOC President, writing in *Le Figaro*, said: “The time has come to take the next step, and to restore the Olympiad to its original beauty. In the high times of Olympia, the fine arts were combined harmoniously with the Olympic Games to create their glory. This is to become reality once again.”<sup>2</sup>

It would be almost another two years before this idea came to fruition. Olympism needed a new lease of life following the Paris 1900 and St Louis 1904 Games editions, both of which had received criticism. Coubertin, the reviver of the “sporting” Games, decided to convene a “Consultative Conference on Art, Letters and Sport” on 23 May 1906 in the foyer of the Comédie Française. This gathering was to “organise the dynamic involvement of literature and the arts in the restored Olympic Games”.<sup>3</sup> Around 60 participants, including 30 artists and five IOC Members, attended the event.<sup>4</sup> The conference achieved its desired goal and, once again, Coubertin had successfully communicated his vision: “The plan to establish five competitions for architecture, sculpture, painting, literature and music was approved unanimously. From now on they will be part of each Olympiad, on a par with the athletic competitions. The only requirement is that the topics selected must be inspired by the idea of sports or must deal directly with athletic topics [...] Winning works may be exhibited, performed or staged during the Games, depending on whether paintings, statues, symphonic poems or dramatic works are involved. But in any event, the winners of these competitions will take part in the general distribution of prizes along with the victorious athletes.”<sup>5</sup> The only competition instructions related to the sculptures, with objects not permitted to exceed 80cm in height, width or length. The winning works were to be exhibited, published or performed during the Games.

<sup>1</sup> Pierre de Coubertin, “Aarau, Prague, Los Angeles”, *Bulletin du Bureau International de Pédagogie Sportive*, Lausanne, n.d. [1993], n°9, p. 6

<sup>2</sup> Pierre de Coubertin, “L’Olympiade romaine”, *Le Figaro*, 50<sup>th</sup> year, n°218, 4 August 1904, p. 1

<sup>3</sup> Pierre de Coubertin, speech at the Opening of the Advisory Conference on the Arts, Literature and Sports, delivered in the foyer of the Comédie Française in Paris on 23 May 1906

<sup>4</sup> Norbert Müller, *One Hundred Years of Olympic Congresses 1894-1994*, IOC, 1994, p. 70

<sup>5</sup> Pierre de Coubertin, “Une Olympiade moderne”, *Revue Olympique*, January 1910, [p. 10](#)

## > A PROGRESSIVE INTEGRATION

For the London Games in 1908, the lack of time meant that it was impossible to organise a proper art competition. It was therefore at the Games of the V Olympiad in Stockholm that the arts programme was first introduced. There were still challenges ahead for Coubertin, however, as the idea was met with a lack of interest from the Swedish national arts academies and the architecture department of the Swedish Technical Academy. Faced with this situation, Coubertin made preparations to organise the contest himself and even took part in the poetry category under the German flag, most likely as a smokescreen. Under two pseudonyms, Georges Hohrod and Martin Eschbach, he submitted [\*Ode to Sport\*](#), which received the first prize of a gold medal. It was also the only work of literature to win a medal at these Games. But where did these two pseudonyms come from? They were probably taken from the names of two small towns in Alsace, specifically in Haut-Rhin, which was part of Germany at the time. The Baron, who was married to an Alsatian woman, Marie Rothan, was familiar with the area and the towns of Hohrod and Eschbach-au-Val.

The art competitions were progressively integrated into the Games. As with the sports competitions, medals were awarded; although sometimes, when the projects submitted did not find favour with the jury, medals were not distributed.

The popularity of the contests grew as the editions went by. While barely a dozen nations took part in the competition in Sweden and only five competed in Antwerp in 1920, at the 1924 Games in Paris 23 nations entered a total of 189 works. In Amsterdam in 1928, artists from 18 nations submitted 1,150 works in architecture, painting and sculpture, with 62 musical or literary works also entered. The exhibition was held at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and was attended by over 100,000 visitors. In Los Angeles, in 1932, 31 countries took part in the contests, with 1,100 works exhibited at the Los Angeles Museum, drawing 384,000 visitors. At the Games in Berlin in 1936, 740 works were submitted. This was almost half the number of the previous editions; a number of countries withdrew from the art competitions owing to the political context.<sup>6</sup>

At the Games in London in 1948, the works were showcased at the prestigious Victoria and Albert Museum, but the competition ran into several obstacles. Some National Olympic Committees (NOCs) reported that, due to a lack of interest in the art competitions, other NOCs, in particular those from the Americas and Oceania, had not sent any major artists. The works were generally considered to be of poor quality, and the museum's high admission price, which deterred the general public, was subject to criticism. In addition, the jury members had trouble deciding between the competitors due to the excessive number of sub-categories, which had the effect of detracting from the works of real quality. The presence of professional artists looking to subsequently sell their pieces was also at odds with the rules on amateur competition in the sports events. As a result, after the London 1948 edition, the decision was taken to revamp the art competitions.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Stanton, *The Forgotten Olympic Art Competition*, Trafford, 2000, p. 164

## > END OF THE COMPETITIONS AND NEW INITIATIVES

At the London 1948 Games, there was little interest in the art competitions, and the quality of the works was deemed “mediocre”.<sup>7</sup> The future of the competitions was discussed numerous times at the IOC Sessions, giving rise to several about-turns and changes of approach. At the IOC Session in Rome in 1949, it was decided that the art competitions would be replaced by art exhibitions in which there would be no winners or medallists, as it was considered illogical to allow professional artists to take part and receive medals when only amateur athletes could take part in the sports competitions.<sup>8</sup> At the 1950 Session, it was confirmed that the Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG) Helsinki 1952 would organise the art exhibitions.<sup>9</sup> However, in 1951, the art competitions were brought back, and it was decided that the winners would indeed receive medals.<sup>10</sup> But the Helsinki OCOG objected to this decision, as it did not have sufficient time to incorporate the competitions into the programme. Following this refusal, the art competitions were definitively dropped from the Olympic Games. In 1954, it was decided that each Organising Committee would stage a fine arts exhibition, in which no medals would be awarded.<sup>11</sup> The 1956 Games in Melbourne were the first at which such an exhibition was held.

The transformation of the Games-time art competitions into exhibitions was duly reflected in the Olympic Charter. Between 1921 and 1946, the Charter stated that, in addition to the sports, the Organising Committee “must at the same time supervise the five art competitions (architecture, painting, sculpture, music and literature) which form an integral part of the Olympic Games”.<sup>12</sup> From 1949 until 1990, the Olympic Charter stipulated, with some variations between versions, that the OCOG “shall arrange, subject to the approval of the International Olympic Committee, an exhibition of the Fine Arts (Architecture, Literature, Music, Painting, Photography and Sculpture) and fix the dates during which these exhibitions shall take place. The programme may also include ballet, theatre or symphony concerts. This section of the programme should be of the same high standard as the sport events and be held concurrently with them in the same vicinity. It shall receive full recognition in the publicity released by the Organising Committee.”<sup>13</sup>

Since 1991, a cultural programme (now also known as the Cultural Olympiad) with a broader scope has been held in place of the art exhibition. “The OCOG must organise a programme of cultural events which shall be submitted to the IOC Executive Board for its prior approval. This programme must serve to promote harmonious relations, mutual understanding and friendship among the participants and others attending the Olympic Games.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore, ever since the Barcelona Games in 1992, a Cultural Olympiad has been held in conjunction with the sports competitions. It is an interdisciplinary programme comprising exhibitions, concerts, films, shows and folklore events. For both the Summer and Winter Games, the Cultural Olympiad is

<sup>7</sup> Andrea Petersen, “The Art Competition at the Olympic Games from 1912 to 1948: A Project Description”, *Olympic Review*, n°222-223, April-May 1986, [p. 253](#)

<sup>8</sup> Angelo Bolanaki, “Report on Art Exhibitions”, *Bulletin du Comité International Olympique*, n° 27, June 1951, [p. 34](#)

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the 45<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Copenhagen 1950, pp. 7-8

<sup>10</sup> Minutes of the 46<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Vienna 1951, p.23

<sup>11</sup> Minutes of the 49<sup>th</sup> IOC Session, Athens 1954, pp. 13-14

<sup>12</sup> Olympic Charter of 1946, Section III, Rule 3, [p. 10](#)

<sup>13</sup> Olympic Charter of 1958, Rule 31, [p. 21](#)

<sup>14</sup> Olympic Charter of 1991, Rule 44, [p. 43](#)

staged by the OCOG over a period of four years prior to the Games and culminates during the Games themselves.

Even though the art competitions had ended, it was still the OCOGs' responsibility to organise cultural events in the framework of the Olympic Games. This mission was fully embedded into the activities of the OCOG, which defined the concept, duration and organisation of the events, with a dedicated budget. Naturally, cultural bodies and local institutions gradually became vital partners for setting up these events, which increasingly grew in scope.

Thus, the organisers of the Olympic Games Rome 1960 staged two exhibitions in particular, one on sports photography and the other on sport in history and art. The latter was open for six months<sup>15</sup>. In 1964, for the first edition of the Games to be held in Asia, the OCOG decided to showcase Japanese art in all its forms, through a programme structured around exhibitions on ancient items (paintings, sculptures, calligraphy, craftwork items, etc.), modern art and artistic performances, such as the traditional theatre forms of Kabuki and Noh.<sup>16</sup>

The Organising Committee for the Games in Mexico City in 1968 organised a Cultural Olympiad spread out over one year, with around 20 events, some which were organised in the provinces<sup>17</sup>. Making it accessible to as many people as possible was a key element of the cultural programme put in place by the organisers of the Games in Munich in 1972. This programme attracted 1.85 million visitors over six weeks, particularly at the "Avenue of Entertainment", an open-air stage located in the Olympic Park<sup>18</sup>. Visitors to the Games in Montreal also enjoyed a highly varied programme that was accessible in various locations hosting the sports competitions. This programme promoted Canadian cultural diversity<sup>19</sup>.

Four years later, almost 45,000 artists came together for the 5,500 cultural events organised in Moscow. Other cities hosting the sports competitions were not left out, with them also hosting concerts, ballets and other artistic performances. Those in the USSR who were unable to go to the venues could enjoy radio and TV broadcasts of the artistic performances<sup>20</sup>.

While in 1976 and 1980 the focus was placed on local artists and national culture, the Organising Committee for the 1984 Games in Los Angeles developed a concept split into two parts: an international programme reflecting the diversity of cultures present at the Olympic Games and in Los Angeles itself, and a more national part to showcase the wealth of Californian and US culture<sup>21</sup>.

This concept was repeated in part in 1988 at the artistic festival at the Seoul Olympic Games, which attracted over 9.5 million visitors who came to admire – among many other things – the performances of artists from 73 countries. This festival allowed South Korea to establish cultural exchanges with Communist countries for the first time in its history<sup>22</sup>.

After that, the cultural programme (also known as the Cultural Olympiad), which has a broader scope, replaced the original artistic event. This growth was reflected in the Olympic Charter: "The OCOG must organise a programme of cultural events which shall be submitted to the

<sup>15</sup> Official Report of the Games of the XVII Olympiad, Rome 1960, [vol. 1, pp. 299-325](#)

<sup>16</sup> Official Report of the Games of XVIII Olympiad, Tokyo 1964, [vol. 1, pp. 269-280](#)

<sup>17</sup> Official Report of the Games of XIX Olympiad, Mexico City 1968, [vol. 2 chapter 9](#)

<sup>18</sup> Official Report of the Games of the XX Olympiad Munich 1972, [vol. 1, chapter 16](#)

<sup>19</sup> Official Report of the Games of the XXI Olympiad 1976, [vol. 2, chapter 50](#)

<sup>20</sup> Official Report of the Games of the XXII Olympiad Moscow 1980, [vol. 2, chapter 12](#)

<sup>21</sup> Official Report of the Games of the XXIII Olympiad Los Angeles 1984, [vol. 1, chapter 25](#)

<sup>22</sup> Official Report of the Games of the XIV Olympiad, Seoul 1988 [vol. 1, chapter 14](#)

IOC Executive Board for its prior approval. This programme must serve to promote harmonious relations, mutual understanding and friendship among the participants and others attending the Olympic Games.”<sup>23</sup>

The Cultural Olympiad for the Barcelona Games in 1992 offered an interdisciplinary programme composed of exhibitions, concerts, films, shows and even folklore events.

Since then, cultural programmes put in place by the OCOGs are organised in the four years prior to the Games (although they are not obligatory), and culminate in a cultural festival during the Games themselves, as the Olympic Charter stipulates that the programme of cultural events must run at least for the period that the Olympic Village is open<sup>24</sup>.

“Adding to the festive atmosphere of the Games, Olympic Games Culture includes projects and events that showcase local, national and international culture, foster cross-cultural dialogue, and celebrate the Olympic values to engage the broadest possible audience. This is accomplished through the cultural programme, which is an opportunity to engage a wide cross-section of the Host Country’s population and visitors from around the world in the spirit of the Games and Olympism — including young people and those with diverse interests beyond sport. The cultural programme enables the development of long-term cultural projects with significant legacy value; it culminates in a dedicated cultural festival during the Olympic Games. [...] This programme shall culminate with a cultural festival, which shall operate for at least the entire period during which the Olympic Villages are open.”<sup>25</sup>

The cultural events take place in the host region or cities, or even throughout the country or even in the digital world. Even if they are not directly linked to sport, they help to create a festive atmosphere, promote the rich local culture, generate interest in the upcoming Games and enable as many people as possible to enjoy the Olympic experience.

More recently, and independently of the cultural events put on by the Organising Committees, the IOC began awarding prizes for cultural performances that boosted the development of Olympism in the world. The prizes varied between competitions: normally cash prizes were awarded, but trips to the Games, trophies and diplomas were also given out. The process of selecting the works was carried out first at national level by the NOC, and then by an international jury made up of experts and members of the IOC’s Culture and Education Commission, which has since been split into two new commissions.

In the Cultural Olympiads from 2000 to 2012, the Sport and Art contest, which comprised “sculpture” and “graphic works” categories, gave non-professional artists the opportunity to submit works that celebrated the Olympic values during the Games. On each occasion, the three winners and the five other participants recognised for their efforts received a diploma and a cash prize. The four editions of the Sport and Art contest proved to be a success: in total, 381 candidates submitted works.

The Sport and Literature contest was held in 2001, 2005 and 2009. Its objective was to promote literature and knowledge of Olympism among young people. The winners in each category were awarded trophies following national competitions organised by the NOCs.

<sup>23</sup> Olympic Charter of 1991, Rule 44, [p. 43](#)

<sup>24</sup> Olympic Charter of 2019, Rule 39, [Cultural Programme](#)

<sup>25</sup> Host city Contract – Operational Requirements IOC, June 2018, [Chapter 10 Culture, pp. pp. 61-63](#)

Photographers and solo and group singers also had their own competitions, in 2006 and 2008 respectively. Once again, the selection process was carried out first at national level by NOCs, then at international level by experts. Through these competitions, the IOC helped to promote artistic diversity and Olympic education, highlighting, in the words of former IOC President Jacques Rogge, “the catalysing role that sport, like art, can play in today’s society, as an instrument to improve people’s quality of life and well-being.”<sup>26</sup>

In recent years, the links between Olympism and culture have been further enhanced with the implementation of Olympic Agenda 2020, the strategic roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement. Recommendation 26, to “further strengthen the blending of sport and culture at the Olympic Games and in-between”, led, among other things, to the introduction of an Artists in Residence programme at the Games, which was integrated into the Cultural Olympiads organised by the OCOGs. The programme saw three artists invited to Rio 2016 and experiment with new ways to express the art of the Olympic Games<sup>27</sup>: JR, a contemporary French artist; Tilman Spengler, a German writer; and Gerald Andal, an up-and-coming online artist from the United States. In PyeongChang in 2018, for the first time in the history of the Games, four Olympians<sup>28</sup> who are also artists were at the heart of the Cultural Olympiad. With a series of short *films d’auteur* that blended fiction and reality, and 15 paintings depicting the Olympic winter sports disciplines, they brought the Olympic values to life through art and exchanges with the athletes in the Olympic Village.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> [“IOC reveals winners of 4<sup>th</sup> Sport and Art contest”](#), news story, IOC website, 12 June 2012

<sup>27</sup> [“Artists in Residence: Rio 2016”](#), IOC website

<sup>28</sup> Alexia Pappas (GRE), middle-distance running; Roald Bradstock (GBR), javelin throw; Lanny Barnes (USA), biathlon; and Jean-Blaise Evéquoz (SUI), épée

<sup>29</sup> [“Olympic Art Project”](#), IOC website

## > FAMOUS PARTICIPANTS

The art competitions were held over seven editions of the Olympic Summer Games, from 1912 to 1948. Over 1,500 artists and architects from 51 nations – mainly Germany, France, the United States, Great Britain, Italy and Belgium – took part in the contests over the course of these seven editions.

One name that stands out is Switzerland's Alex Walter Diggelmann, who won three medals (one gold, one silver and one bronze) in painting at the Olympic Games Berlin 1936 and London 1948. A Danish writer, Josef Petersen, took silver in literature at three editions of the Games: Paris 1924, Los Angeles 1932 and London 1948.

Some 20 art competition participants<sup>30</sup> also took part in the sports events, in nine different sports.<sup>31</sup> Two of these athletes managed to win a medal in both sport and art: the USA's Walter Winans and Hungary's Alfred Hajos. The American began his Olympic career at the age of 56 at the Olympic Games London 1908. He competed in several shooting events and claimed gold in the double-shot running deer event. Four years later, in Stockholm, he won silver in the 100m team running deer, single shots events. An equestrian sculptor, he also took gold at these Games for a piece entitled *An American Trotter*.

Hajos, meanwhile, was a highly skilled swimmer who, at the inaugural Olympic Games of the modern era in Athens in 1896, won gold medals in both of his events: the 100m freestyle and the 1,200m freestyle. Twenty-eight years later, at the Paris 1924 Games, he claimed silver in the architecture event for his *Design for a stadium* project.

The most surprising athlete was undoubtedly Switzerland's Günter Oskar Dyhrenfurth, a geologist and Himalayas specialist who, at the age of 49, won the gold medal for alpinism at the Games of the XI Olympiad in 1936 for his expeditions in the Himalayas in 1930 and 1934. In Berlin, he also took part in the literature competition with *Dämon Himalaya*, but his entry was not deemed worthy of a medal.

One of the most famous art competition participants was Avery Brundage, who went on to serve as IOC President for 20 years (1952-1972). Brundage made a name for himself in athletics at the Stockholm 1912 Games, before going on to take part in the literature contest at Los Angeles 1932 and Berlin 1936. In California, he received an honourable mention for his essay *The significance of amateur sport*, a cause for which he was an advocate throughout his career. In 1935, one year before he became an IOC Member, he expressed doubts about the art contests because, in his view, they were at odds with the ideals of amateur competition. Brundage considered that amateurs played sport "for the love of the game itself without thought of reward or payment of any kind".<sup>32</sup> In 1936, he submitted another essay, *The Olympic Games*, which did not find favour with the judges.

<sup>30</sup> Yves Baudrier (FRA), Avery Brundage (USA), Günter Oskar Dyhrenfurth (SUI), Alfred Hajos (HUN), Frantisek Hoplicek (TCH), Dezsö Lauber (HUN), Robert Lips (SUI), Eskil Johannes Lundahl (SWE), Miltiade Manno (HUN), Paul Martin (SUI), Alexandre Maspoli (FRA), Michel Ravarino (MON), Teofil Savniky (HUN), Hans Schöchlin (SUI), Kay Schroder (DEN), Edgar Seligman (GBR), Jerzy Skolimowski (POL), Klaus Suomela (FIN), Helen Wills (USA) and Walter Winans (USA)

<sup>31</sup> Athletics, rowing, fencing, gymnastics, weightlifting, aquatics, tennis, shooting and sailing

<sup>32</sup> Allen Guttman, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement*, Columbia University Press, 1984, p.116

The art competition participant who holds the record in terms of longevity is probably Switzerland's Hans Erni, who died in 2015 at the age of 106. The London 1948 Games saw him submit three projects – *Mural study, gymnast 1*, *Mural study, gymnast 2* and *Pintare olympic, with 10 etchings*; he did not receive a medal, but this edition marked his entry into the Olympic world, which he would not leave again until his death. Juan Antonio Samaranch, who served as IOC President from 1980 to 2001, was one of his biggest admirers, and in 1992 awarded him the Olympic Medal for the Arts. At the time, 31 original works by Erni depicting the various Olympic sports were displayed in the entrance hall at the former IOC headquarters building in Lausanne. The artist also produced an allegorical piece on the Olympic Games, which had pride of place in the former IOC Executive Board meeting room. What is more, Samaranch was behind an initiative to put on an exhibition of the Swiss artist's work in his home town of Barcelona. For the Catalan, Erni<sup>33</sup>, through his paintings, sculptures, frescos, murals, posters and postcards, "expressed both his attachment to humanity and his concerns for the future". Samaranch evoked these sentiments at a tribute evening for Erni at The Olympic Museum in Ouchy on 2 May 2006.<sup>34</sup>

Another Swiss also made his name at the Olympic Games – Paul Martin, who became the first Swiss athlete to take part in five editions, from 1920 to 1936. Over the course of his Olympic career, he broke 18 records in middle-distance running, won the silver medal in the 800m at the Paris 1924 Games, and finished sixth in the 1,500m in 1928. Martin, at that time a medical student, moved to the United States in 1929 to hone his surgery skills. He also wrote books, while continuing his athletics training. At the Berlin Games, he was eliminated in the qualifying round in the 800m and 1,500m events. He also submitted an entry in the literature competition – *The Light of the Stadium* – but did not receive medal recognition. In 1952, he published *Tenth of a Second*, which contained a preface by Thierry Maulnier, a future member of the Académie Française. Martin received the Olympic Order in 1982.

France's Alexandre Maspoli, who won the bronze medal in the weightlifting two-hand lift event at the 1906 Intercalated Games in Athens<sup>35</sup>, embarked on a second career as a sculptor. He submitted two entries at the Paris 1924 Games – *Ball being thrown* and *The mask of Pheidippides* – but his works were not considered medal-worthy by the judges.

The USA's Helen Wills, Olympic champion in the tennis singles and doubles in 1924, was less successful eight years later in Los Angeles, as none of her 12 entries in the painting category received recognition from the judging panel. The same was true for Great Britain's Edgar Seligman, who won two consecutive silver medals in the team épée (1908 and 1912) before trying his luck, unsuccessfully, in painting at the Paris 1924 and Amsterdam 1928 Games.

Julien Médecin, who took bronze in the architecture category at the Paris 1924 Games, was the only Monegasque to receive a medal in the art competitions. He secured a place on the podium thanks to his *Stadium for Monte Carlo* project. Another noteworthy performance from Monaco came from Michel Ravarino, who, bucking the trend, started out at the age of 22 in the art events, at Amsterdam 1928, before switching to sport when he was 30 and continuing until the age of 54. Having failed to clinch a medal in architecture for *Plan for a stadium*, he

<sup>33</sup> In 1992, Erni painted the portrait of the UN Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, which is on display at the organisation's headquarters in New York. One of Erni's frescos can also be found in the entrance hall of the UN building in Geneva.

<sup>34</sup> "[A young man of 97](#)", news story, IOC website, 4 May 2006

<sup>35</sup> He also finished fourth in the weightlifting one-hand lift and 18<sup>th</sup> in the standing long jump.

competed in the shooting competitions in 1936, 1948 and 1960 – in the pistol and small-bore rifle events – with a best-placed finish of 36<sup>th</sup>.

Another Olympic artist turned Olympic athlete was Swiss painter Robert Lips, who submitted works at the Berlin 1936 and London 1948 Games, without medal success. He also competed in the team épée in London, finishing fifth.

While all the participants in the art competitions in the first few editions had been individuals, all of a sudden, at the Olympic Games Amsterdam 1928, submissions started coming in from American companies, official entities and participants with unusual names. Entities included the city government of Turin, the Italian Ministry of War and the companies Lockwood, Greene & Co, Rebori, Wentworth & Dewey and Zantzinger, Borie & Madary, while pseudonyms used included “Beyond reason”, “Et quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt”, and “Tella tuta tonis metuenda supremis”.

Fifteen participants<sup>36</sup> had entries submitted to the art competitions posthumously, with Josue Dupon the only one to win a medal. Canada’s Tait McKenzie, who won bronze in the sculpture category at Los Angeles 1932, also “took part in” the London 1948 Games, 10 years after his death in 1938, after one of his works was submitted to the jury.

Rembrandt Bugatti was an Italian sculptor, known internationally for his animal sculptures. His brother, Ettore, founded the automobile company that bears his name. Rembrandt submitted one of his pieces at Stockholm 1912, but failed to convince the Olympic Games judges. In January 1916, he committed suicide in his workshop in Paris, at the age of 31. As a posthumous tribute, Ettore and his son Jean used a sculpture created by Rembrandt in 1904, an elephant standing on its hind legs, as the bonnet ornament for the Bugatti Type 41 Royale. These various examples of athletes who were also artists, or artists who managed to transcend sport with their creations, serve as confirmation that Baron Coubertin, who initiated the art competitions, was right to have sensed an undeniable link between these two worlds: “Sport must be seen as an art producer and an opportunity for art. It produces beauty since it fathers the athlete, a living sculpture.”<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Bellows George (USA); Borschke Karl (AUT); Coleman Glenn (USA); Dryak Alois (TCH); Dupon Josue (BEL) – obtained a bronze medal for *Equestrian Medals* at the Berlin 1936 Games, having died in 1935; Eakins Thomas (USA); Gillett Frank (GBR); Hale Philip (USA); Hofner Otto (AUT); Homer Winslow (USA); Hübner Ulrich (GER); McKenzie Tait (CAN); Moreau Luc Albert (FRA); Rumsey Charles (USA); and Toman Ladislav (TCH)

<sup>37</sup> Pierre de Coubertin, *Leçons de pédagogie sportive*, La Concorde, 1921, pp.116-117

## > OLYMPIC GAMES ART COMPETITION MEDALLISTS

### ARCHITECTURE

#### ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

**1912:** 1. Eugène-Edouard MONOD / Alphonse LAVERRIÈRE (SUI) for “Building Plan of a Modern Stadium” ; silver and bronze medals not awarded.

**1920:** gold and bronze medals not awarded ; 2. Holger SINDING-LARSEN (NOR) for “Project for a gymnastics school”.

**1924:** gold medal not awarded ; 2. Alfred HAJOS / Dezsö LAUBERT (HUN) for “Plan for Budapest Swimming Stadium” ; 3. Julien MÉDECIN (MCO) for “Stadium for Monte Carlo”.

**1928:** 1. Jan WILS (HOL) for “Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam” ; 2. Ejnar MINDEDAL RASMUSSEN (DEN) for “Swimming Pool at Ollerup” ; 3. Jacques LAMBERT (FRA) for “Stadium at Versailles”.

**1932:** 1. Gustave SAACKÉ / Pierre BAILLY / Pierre MONTENOT (FRA) for “Circus for Toros” ; 2. John RUSSELL POPE (USA) for “Design for Payne Whitney Gymnasium, New Haven” ; 3. Richard KONWIARZ (GER) for “Design for Schlesierkampfbahn, Breslau”.

**1936:** 1. Hermann KUTSCHERA (AUT) for “Skiing Stadium” ; 2. Werner MARCH (GER) for “Reich Sport Field” ; 3. Hermann STIEGHOLZER / Herbert KASTINGER (AUT) for “Sporting Centre in Vienna”.

**1948:** 1. Adolf HOCH (AUT) for “Skisprungschanze auf dem Kobenzl” ; 2. Alfred RINESCH (AUT) for “Water sports Centre in Carinthia” ; 3. Nils OLSSON (SWE) for “Baths and Sporting Hall in Gothenburg”.

#### TOWN PLANNING

**1928:** 1. Adolf HENSEL (GER) for “Stadium at Nuremberg” ; 2. Jacques LAMBERT (FRA) for “Stadium at Versailles” ; 3. Max LÄUGER (GER) for “Municipal Park at Hamburg”.

**1932:** 1. John HUGHES (GBR) for “Design for Sports and Recreation Centre with Stadium for Liverpool” ; 2. Jens Hovmöller KLEMMENSEN (DEN) “Design for a Stadium and Public Park” ; 3. André VERBEKE (BEL) for “Design for a Marathon Park”.

**1936:** 1. Werner MARCH / Walter MARCH (GER) for “Reich Sport Field” ; 2. Charles DOWNING LAY (USA) for “Marine Park, Brooklyn” ; 3. Theodor NUSSBAUM (GER) for “Municipal Planning and Sporting Centre in Cologne”.

**1948:** 1. Yrjö LINDEGREN (FIN) for “The Centre of Athletics in Varkaus” ; 2. Werner SCHINDLER / Eduard KNUPFER (SUI) for “Swiss Federal Sports and Gymnastics Training Centre” ; 3. Ilmari NIEMELÄINEN (FIN) for “The Athletic Centre in Kemi”.

## SCULPTURE

### STATUES

**1912:** 1. Walter WINANS (USA) for “An American Trotter” ; 2. Georges DUBOIS (FRA) for “Model of the entrance to a modern stadium” ; bronze medal not awarded

**1920:** 1. Albéric COLLIN (BEL) for “La Force” ; 2. Simon GOOSSENS (BEL) for “Les Patineurs” ; 3. Alphons De CUYPER (BEL) for “Lanceur de poids et coureur”.

**1924:** 1. Konstantinos DIMITRIADIS (GRE) for “Lanceur de disque finnois” ; 2. François HELDENSTEIN (LUX) for “Vers les Jeux Olympiques” ; 3 ex. Jean René GAUGUIN (DEN) for “Boxer” and Claude-Léon MASCAUX (FRA) for “Sports medals”.

**1928:** 1. Paul LANDOWSKI (FRA) for “Boxeur” ; 2. Milo MARTIN (SUI) for “Athlète au repos” ; 3. Renée SINTENIS (GER) for “Footballeur”.

**1932:** 1. Mahonri Mackintosh YOUNG (USA) for “The Knockdown” ; 2. Miltiades MANNO (HUN) for “Wrestling” ; 3. Jakub OBROVSKY (CZE) for “Odysseus”.

**1936:** 1. Farpi VIGNOLI (ITA) for “Sulky Driver” ; 2. Arno BREKER (GER) for “Decathlon Athlete” ; 3. Stig BLOMBERG (SWE) for “Wrestling Youths”.

**1948:** 1. Gustaf NORDAHL (SWE) for “Homage to Ling” ; 2. Chintanomi KAR (GBR) for “The Stag” ; 3. Hubert YENCESSE (FRA) for “Nageuse”.

### MEDALS

**1928:** 1. Edwin GRIENAUER (AUT) for “Médailles” ; 2. Christian Johannes Van Der HOEF (HOL) for “Médailles pour les Jeux Olympiques” ; 3. Edwin SCHARFF (GER) for “Plaque”.

**1932:** 1. Jozef KLUKOWSKI (POL) for “Sport Sculpture II” ; 2. Frederick McMONNIES (USA) for “Lindbergh Medal” ; 3. Robert TAIT McKENZIE (CAN) for “Shield of the Athletes”.

**1936:** gold medal not awarded ; 2. Luciano MERCANTE (ITA) for “Medals” ; 3. Josue DUPON (BEL) for “Equestrian Medals”.

**1948:** gold medal not awarded ; 2. Oskar THIEDE (AUT) for “Eight Sports Plaques” ; 3. Edwin GRIENAUER (AUT) for “Prize Rowing Trophy”.

### RELIEFS

**1936:** 1. Emil SUTOR (GER) for “Hurdlers” ; 2. Jozef KLUKOWSKI (POL) for “Ball” ; bronze medal not awarded.

**1948:** gold and silver medals not awarded ; 3. Rosamund FLETCHER (GBR) for “The End of the Covert” .

## PAINTING <sup>38</sup>

### PAINTINGS

**1912:** 1. Giovanni PELLEGRINI (ITA) for “Winter Sports”; silver and bronze medals not awarded.

**1920:** gold medal not awarded ; 2. Henriette BROSSIN De POLANSKA (FRA) for “L'Élan” ; 3. Alfred OST (BEL) for “Joueur de football”.

**1924:** 1. Jean JACOBY (LUX) for “Trois études sportives” ; 2. Jack BUTLERS YEATS (IRL) for “The Liffey Swim” ; 3. Johannes Gerardus Van HELL (HOL) for “Patineurs”.

**1928:** 1. Isaac ISRAËLS (HOL) for “Le cavalier rouge” ; 2. Laura KNIGHT (GBR) for “Boxeur” ; 3. Walter KLEMM (GER) for “Patineurs”.

**1932:** 1. David WALLIN (SWE) for “At the Seaside of Arild” ; 2. Ruth MILLER (GBR) for “Struggle” ; bronze medal not awarded.

**1936:** gold medal not awarded ; 2. Rudolf Hermann EISENMENGER (AUT) for “Runners at the Finishing Line” ; 3. Tsuguharu FUJITA (JPN) for “Ice Hockey”.

**1948:** 1. Alfred R. THOMPSON (GBR) for “London Amateur Championships” ; 2. Giovanni STRADONE (ITA) for “Le Pistard” ; 3. Letitia HAMILTON (IRL) for “Meath Hunt Point-to-Point Races”.

### DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLORS

**1928:** 1. Jean JACOBY (LUX) for “Rugby” ; 2. Alexandre VIROT (FRA) for “Gestes de football” ; 3. Władysław SKOCZYLAŚ (POL) for “Posters”.

**1932:** 1. Lee BLAIR (USA) for “Rode” ; 2. Percy CROSBY (USA) for “Jackknife” ; 3. Gerhardus WESTERMANN (HOL) for “Horseman”.

**1936:** gold medal not awarded ; 2. Romano DAZZI (ITA) for “Four Sketches for Frescoes” ; 3. Shujaku SUZUKI (JPN) for “Classical Horse Racing in Japan”.

### GRAPHIC ARTS

**1928:** 1. William NICHOLSON (GBR) for “Gravures sur bois de douze sports” ; 2. Carl MOOS (SUI) for “Posters” ; 3. Max FELDBAUER (GER) for “Mailcoach”.

**1932:** 1. Joseph WEBSTER GOLINKIN (USA) for “Leg Scissors” ; 2. Janina KONARSKA (POL) for “Stadium” ; 3. Joachim KARSCH (GER) for “Stabwechsel”.

**1936:** 1. Alex Walter DIGGELMANN (SUI) for “Arosa I” ; 2. Alfred HIERL (GER) for “International Automobile Race on the Avus” ; 3. Stanislaw OSTOJA-CHROSTOWSKI (POL) for “Yachting Club Certificate”.

### APPLIED ARTS AND ENGRAVINGS

**1948:** 1. Albert DECARIS (FRA) for “Swimming Pool” ; 2. John COPLEY (GBR) for “Polo Players” ; 3. Walter BATTISS (RSA) for “Seaside Sport”.

<sup>38</sup> N.B. The names of the categories in the painting competition varied between editions. For ease of reading, certain categories have been grouped together.

1948: gold medal not awarded ; 2. Alex Walter DIGGELMANN (SUI) for “World Championship for Cycling Poster” ; 3. Alex Walter DIGGELMANN (SUI) for “World Championship for Ice Hockey Poster”.

## LITERATURE

### LITERATURE

1912: 1. Georg HOHROD / Martin ESCHBACH (GER) pseudonyms of Pierre de Coubertin (FRA) for “Ode to Sport” ; silver and bronze medals not awarded.

1920: 1. Raniero NICOLAI (ITA) for “Canzoni Olimpioniche” ; 2. Andrea Theodore COOK (GBR) for “Olympic Games of Antwerp” ; 3. Maurice BLADEL (BEL) for “La louange des Dieux”.

1924: 1. Géo-Charles (FRA) for “Les Jeux Olympiques” ; 2ex. Josef PETERSEN (DEN) for “Euryale” and Margaret STUART (GBR) for “Swords Songs” ; 3ex. Oliver GOGARTY (IRL) for “Ode to the Tailteann Games” and Charles-Antoine GONNET (FRA) for “Vers le Dieu d'Olympie”.

1932: 1. Paul BAUER (GER) for “Am Kangchenzonga” ; 2. Josef PETERSEN (DEN) for “The Argonauts” ; bronze medal not awarded.

### LYRIC WORKS

1928: 1. Kazimierz WIERZYNSKI (POL) for “Laur Olimpijski” ; 2. Rudolf G. BINDING (GER) for “Reitvorschrift für eine Geliebt” ; 3. Johannes WELTZER (DEN) for “Symphonia Heroica”.

1936: Felix DHÜNEN-SONDINGER (GER) for “The Runner” ; 2. Bruno FATTORI (ITA) for “Profili Azzurri” ; 3. Hans STOIBER (AUT) for “The Discus”.

1948: 1. Aale TYNNI (FIN) for “Laurel of Hellas” ; 2. Ernst Van HEERDEN (RSA) for “Six Poems” ; 3. Gilbert PROUTEAU (FRA) for “Rythme du stade”.

### DRAMATIC WORKS

1928: gold and bronze medals not awarded ; 2. Lauro De BOSSIS (ITA) for “Icarus”.

1936: no medal awarded.

1948: no medal awarded.

### EPIC WORKS

1928: 1. Ferenc MEZŐ (HUN) for “L'histoire des Jeux Olympiques” ; 2. Ernst WEISS (GER) for “Boetius von Orlamünde” ; 3. Carel Theodorus SCHARTEN / Margo SCHARTEN-ANTINK (HOL) for “De Nar uit de Maremmem”.

1936: 1. Urho KARHUMÄKI (FIN) for “Avoveteen” ; 2. Wilhelm EHMER (GER) for “For the Top of the World” ; 3. Jan PARANDOWSKI (POL) for “Dysk Olimpijski”.

1948: 1. Giani STUPARICH (ITA) for “La Grotta” ; 2. Josef PETERSEN (DEN) for “The Olympic Champion” ; 3. Eva FÖLDES (HUN) for “The Well of Youth”.

## MUSIC

### MUSIC

**1912:** 1. Riccardo BARTHELEMY (ITA) for “Olympic Triumphal March” ; silver and bronze medals not awarded.

**1920:** 1. Georges MONIER (BEL) for “Olympique” ; 2. Oreste RIVA (ITA) for “Marcia trionfale”; bronze medal not awarded.

**1924:** no medal awarded.

**1928:** no medal awarded.

**1932:** gold and bronze medals not awarded ; 2. Josef SUK (TCH) for “Into a New Life”

**1948:** gold and silver medals not awarded ; 3. Gabriele BIANCHI (ITA) for “Inno Olimpico”

### SOLO AND CHORUS

**1928:** no medal awarded.

**1936:** 1. Paul HÖFFER (GER) for “Olympic Vow” ; 2. Kurt THOMAS (GER) for “Olympic Cantata, 1936” ; 3. Harald GENZMER (GER) for “The Runner”.

**1948:** 1. Zbigniew TURSKI (POL) for “Olympic Symphony” ; 2. Kalervo TUUKKANEN (FIN) for “Karhunpyynti” ; 3. Erling BRENE (DEN) for “Vigour”.

### INSTRUMENTAL AND ORCHESTRA

**1928:** gold and silver medals not awarded ; 3. Rudolph SIMONSEN (DEN) for “Symphony No. 2 Hellas”.

**1936:** 1. Werner EGK (GER) for “Olympic Festive Music” ; 2. Lino LIVIABELLA (ITA) for “The Victory” ; 3. Jaroslav KRICKA (TCH) for “Mountain Suite”.

**1948:** gold medal not awarded ; 2. John WEINZWEIG (CAN) for “Divertimenti for Solo Flute and Strings” ; 3. Sergio LAURICELLA (ITA) for “Toccata per pianoforte”.

## > FURTHER READING

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- Jean-Paul Callède, "Textes et écrivains français à l'heure olympique ! Les concours littéraires des Jeux Olympiques", *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, 2 vol., 2012-2013.
- Karl Lennartz, Stephan Wassong et al., *Special edition: Olympic Art Contests*, *Journal of Olympic History*, vol. 14, May 2006, special edition, 83 p.
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- Pierre de Coubertin, "Speech at the Opening of the Advisory Conference on the Arts, Literature and Sports, delivered in the foyer of the Comédie Française in Paris on 23 May 1906", *Selected Writings*, International Olympic Committee publication, 2000, pp. 611-612.
- Richard Stanton, *The Forgotten Olympic Art Competitions*, Trafford, 2000, 412 p.
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## > CREDITS

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### IMAGE

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