Olympic Summer Games Posters from Athens 1896 to London 2012

Reference document

Presentation and visuals of the official posters for each edition of the Olympic Summer Games

December 2013
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Introduction: the Olympic posters

This reference document presents the official posters of the Olympic Summer Games, from their first edition in Athens in 1896 to London in 2012.

Official posters and Image of the Games

Since their debut in 1896, the modern Olympic Games have had a close relationship with image. Among the photographs of the sports competitions, official films and TV broadcasts, there are also the posters created by the organisers to promote the Olympic Games. Firstly they were the covers of the Official Report or programme of the Games or posters for a particular sport that fulfil this function.

It was on the occasion of the 1912 Games in Stockholm that the idea of an artistic contest to produce an official poster for the Games appeared for the first time. From then on, the host cities became responsible for promoting and advertising the Games.

Until the middle of the 20th century, it was customary for the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) to design only one or two Games promotional posters. This number then greatly increased in the 1960s. Indeed, from then on, the OCOGs generally produced several series of posters to illustrate the various aspects of the Games. It thus became common to publish for example one series of posters related to the sports, another on the cultural events and another showing the mascot.

These posters, published by the various OCOGs, are referred to here as “official posters”. It has become a tradition that, after each edition of the Games, the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) chooses the Image of the Games from among the official posters. This is the poster used to illustrate the Games once they are over, hence the name.

This document presents a picture of the Image of the Games for each edition, accompanied by a brief description of the work. The name of the artist, the printer and the design process are included when available. In addition, some observations are made with regard to the creation context. When there are other official posters, these are presented briefly.

Reflection of an era

The Olympic posters reflect the artistic, political and social context of their era. They play a double role: in addition to announcing the Games, they provide a foretaste of their image, of their look.

At the start of the 20th century, the posters provided a privileged means of publicity. More than simple artistic works, they provided the public with the necessary practical information on the Olympic Games. Indeed, radio was not used before the 1928 Summer Games in Amsterdam, while TV
appeared for the first time at the 1936 Games in Berlin. The first Olympic posters were therefore essential for the communication and promotion of the Games.

From the middle of the 20th century, both the design and the function of the posters evolved under the impetus of two key turning points.

Firstly, a cultural expansion clearly marked the design of the Olympic posters. Until the middle of the 20th century, the celebration of the Olympic Games had always been entrusted to cities in Europe and North America. As of the 1956 Games in Melbourne, and Sapporo 1972 for Winter, the Games would also be held in Oceania, Asia and Central America, thereby introducing new artistic influences.

Secondly, the computer age offered artists unusual techniques and practically unlimited creative possibilities to propose designs that were otherwise unachievable. The arrival of this new technology meant a real rupture in the textual content of the Olympic posters and their use as a means of information. Certain information such as the dates and places of the Games, which once would have necessarily been featured, is now easily accessible on the Internet. Consequently, the “modern” Olympic posters have contained minimal text and focused more on the emblems, images and symbols. Today, the posters seek mainly to convey an ambiance and a style, and focus on the values and the ideals of the Games.

Although the specific informative role of the posters has therefore decreased over the years, they still remain an integral part of the marketing strategy implemented for each edition of the Games: “even in this day and age when electronic communications predominate, when visual images are broadcast instantaneously, the message contained in graphic art cannot be supplanted. Perhaps it is even all the more essential”¹.

Browsing the Olympic posters is therefore an invitation to retrace the history of the Games in a pictorial journey through the ages and the continents.

Athens 1896

Artist: Unknown  
Printer: K. Grundmann, Athens  
Lithograph with lithotint

Description: The image shows the goddess Athena, holding in her hand an olive crown given to the winners. At the top of the image is the wording 776 BC - 1896 - the dates of the first ancient Olympic Games and the first modern Olympic Games in 1896.

The goddess stands before a view of the Acropolis and the Panathenaic Stadium. This Stadium was initially built in Ancient Greece to host the Panathenaic Games, in homage to the goddess Athena. It was restored for the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. In the shape of a horseshoe and built entirely in white marble, it is the emblem of the re-establishment of the Olympic Games. In 2004, it hosted the Olympic archery competitions.

Context of creation: No official poster was created for the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens. The cover of the Official Report later became the Image of the Games for this first edition of the modern Olympic Games.

Find out more about Athens 1896 on olympic.org
Paris 1900

Artist
Jean de Paléologue

Printer
Chardin, Paris

Lithograph in colour

Description
The poster shows a female fencer dressed in black even though women did not take part in Olympic fencing competitions until 1924. She holds the foil, epee and sabre weapons of fencing and the Olympic nature of the competition is not mentioned on the poster. In the context of the history of sport, showing a female athlete was unusual at the time.

Context of creation
The 1900 Games were held during the Universal Exhibition in Paris. In reality there were various international sports competitions, including some that were recognised as Olympic. No official poster was produced specifically for these Games. However, for the first time, posters were created by the Organisers for some sporting contests. Examples include posters promoting athletics, rowing, gymnastics and fencing. It is the poster promoting fencing that is now used as the Image of the Games for 1900.

Find out more about Paris 1900 on olympic.org
St. Louis 1904

**Artist**  
St. John

**Printer**  
Reproduction of the programme cover

**Description**  
It was the cover of the daily programme of the Universal Exhibition that became the *Image of the Games* for the 1904 Games.

With its curved lines, the image has an Art Nouveau style, offering an overall view of the city of St. Louis.

**Context of creation**  
The 1904 Games were held within the framework of the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition. The Olympic events were included as part of this Universal Exhibition and were spread out over several months.

Find out more about [St. Louis 1904](http://olympic.org) on olympic.org
## London 1908

**Artist**  
A.S. Cope

**Printer**  
Hudson and Kearns Ltd,  
London

**Half-tone in colour**

### Description

The poster shows the Stadium at Shepherd's Bush. Behind the high jumper are, in the centre, the swimming pool and the cinder running track.

### Context of creation

The OCOG did not produce a poster to promote this edition of the Games. It is the cover of the official programme that would later be used as the *Image of the Games* for London 1908.

Find out more about [London 1908](http://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Stockholm 1912

**Artist**  
Olle Hjortzberg

**Printer**  
A.Börzells Trycheri A.B.,  
Stockholm

**Lithograph in colour**

**Description**  
The poster shows athletes twirling their country’s flag, with that of Sweden in the foreground. They are walking towards the common objective of the Olympic Games.

Although its artistic quality was not disputed, the poster was the subject of numerous criticisms when it was published. The nudity of the figures caused shock, despite the addition of ribbons on the original design. For this reason, the poster was banned in China.

Also, Swedish diplomacy was worried about the order of the flags featured on the poster. As these were arranged according to artistic criteria and not diplomatic, there was a fear of offending other nations’ sensibilities. This concern was justified, as some countries seemed reluctant to display the poster.

**Context of creation**  
For the first time, an official poster was specially created with the aim of promoting an edition of the Olympic Games.

An artistic contest was organised to create the official poster. After having consulted renowned Swedish artists, the Organising Committee chose Olle Hjortzberg’s project.

**Distribution**  
88,500 copies were distributed in 16 different languages. Mini posters in three colours were also produced, and 30,900 copies were distributed in five different languages. The posters were sent to 636 cities in 30 countries.

Find out more about [Stockholm 1912](#) on olympic.org
Stockholm 1912: More official posters

The Swedish Olympic Committee also produced a poster for swimming, and one for equestrian events (presented here).
Antwerp 1920

**Artist**
Walter Von der Ven and
Martha Van Kuyck

**Printer**
Stockmans and Cie
Van Dieren and Cie

**Lithograph**

**Description**
In Belle Epoque style, the poster shows a discus thrower in the foreground, an allusion to the ancient Olympic Games. Behind him are various swirling flags, attached to each other. In the background we can see the symbolic monuments of Antwerp: Notre Dame Tower, the Grote Markt, the Town Hall, and at the top right the coat of arms of the city.

**Context of creation**
In 1914, while Antwerp was still a candidate, the Provisional Committee of the Games of the VII Olympiad produced a document entitled *Aurons-nous la VIIe Olympiade à Anvers en 1920?* (Will we have the Games of the VII Olympiad in Antwerp in 1920?). The aim was to convince the IOC that Antwerp could host the Olympic Games. Once Antwerp was elected, the Games Organisers decided that the design featured on the cover of this document would become the official poster.

**Distribution**
90,000 copies of the poster were produced in 17 languages, including a bilingual French / Flemish series, uniquely destined for Belgium.

40,000 small posters of 30 x 20cm size were also distributed, inspired by the design of the official poster, but offering a view of the port in the background instead of the original city panorama.

Find out more about [Antwerp 1920](http://olympic.org) on olympic.org
<table>
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<th><strong>Paris 1924</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Artist</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Printer</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Lithograph</strong></td>
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**Description**
The poster shows a group of athletes making the Olympic salute. In front of them are palm leaves, a symbol of victory, and the city of Paris coat of arms. The French flag floats in the background.

**Context of creation**
A contest was set up by the Organising Committee to produce the official poster. One hundred and fifty projects by artists were received, of which two were kept and used to promote the Games: that of artist Jean Droit (above) and that of the artist named Orsi. Jean Droit’s poster later went on to become the Image of the Games for Paris 1924.

**Distribution**
Some 10,000 copies of each of the posters by Droit and Orsi were printed, over half of which were destined to be sent abroad.

Find out more about [Paris 1924](http://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Paris 1924: More official posters

In 1924, the poster by Orsi, was considered as the second official poster of the Games.
Amsterdam 1928

**Artist**: Emil Huber

**Printer**: Unknown

**Description**: The image shows a runner brandishing a laurel branch, a symbol of victory. The wording *Olympische Spiele 1928 – Amsterdam* appears on a blue background. The flag of the Netherlands floats in the foreground, shielding the athlete’s nudity.

Find out more about [Amsterdam 1928](https://www.olympic.org) on olympic.org
Los Angeles 1932

**Artist**  
Julio Kilenyi

**Printer**  
Union Litho Co. Inc

**Description**  
The poster shows the Ancient Greek custom of proclaiming a sacred truce to allow the athletes, artists and their families to travel in safety to take part in or attend the Olympic Games. Tradition dictated that messengers (spondophores) travel from city to city to announce the date of the competitions and demand an end to conflict before, during and after the Games.

The poster is a clay model that was photographed then painted to create a 3D effect. It was the first time for the summer posters that the Olympic rings appeared on the Image of the Games.

The artist, Julio Kilenyi, also created the commemorative medal of the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

**Distribution**  
The OCOG collaborated with some 6,000 foreign newspapers and magazines to ensure the poster was published in them. A poster campaign was also implemented at the national and local level a few months before the opening of the Games.

Find out more about [Los Angeles 1932](http://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Berlin 1936

Artist Werner Würbel

Printer Lithograph in colour

Description The poster shows the four-horse-drawn chariot on the Brandenburg Gate, a symbolic monument of the city of Berlin. In the background is the figure of a crowned winner. In the foreground the place and date of the Games are mentioned. The Olympic rings feature at the top of the poster.

Context of creation The OCOG organised an artistic contest that brought together 49 German artists, who submitted a total of 59 poster projects. None of these projects corresponded to the three instructions given by the OCOG’s Publicity Commission: to indicate the importance of the Games, attract attention to the city of Berlin, and promote the Olympic Games in an effective and understandable way abroad.

To have an official poster of the Games, the OCOG subsequently held a second contest with other artists, and in the end it was Werner Würbel’s project that was kept.

Distribution 243,000 copies of the poster were distributed in 19 languages in 34 countries.

Find out more about Berlin 1936 on olympic.org
Berlin 1936: More official posters

Two other posters were published by the Games organisers. One promoted the sailing competitions in Kiel (presented here), and the other the Olympic torch relay, which took place for the first time for the Games of the XIth Olympiad.
London 1948

Artists: Walter Herz

Printer: McCorquodale & Co Ltd, London

Lithograph in eight colours

Description: The poster presents an image of the marble statue of the Townley Discobulus (original displayed at the British Museum), with the Olympic rings, superimposed over a view of the Palace of Westminster in London. The classic and modern symbols of the Olympic Games are combined with one of the most symbolic monuments of the host city: the Clock Tower and Big Ben.

Context of creation: Due to a lack of time, no contest was organised to design the official poster of the Games. The OCOG chose from the projects that were spontaneously submitted to it.

Distribution: 100,000 copies of the poster were printed in three different formats. Their distribution in the UK and abroad was made possible thanks to the collaboration of travel agencies assuring the links between London and the rest of the world.

Find out more about London 1948 on olympic.org
London 1948: More official posters

One poster published by the OCOG promoted the Olympic art exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum.
Helsinki 1952

Artist Ilmari Sysimetsä

Printer OY. Tilgmann AB

Offset

Description

The poster shows a bronze statue of Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi, a famous athlete who won a total of twelve Olympic medals, including nine gold, at three editions of the Summer Games (1920, 1924 and 1928).

The statue was realised by the Finnish sculptor Wäinö Aaltonen, known for his statues of eminent Finnish citizens. It was commissioned by the Finnish government following the feat achieved by Nurmi at the 1924 Games, where he won five of his Olympic gold medals.

The figure of the runner is superimposed over a part of the Earth, which shows Finland outlined in red. The original version of the poster, which dates from 1940, was modified slightly to reflect the context of 1952: the dates were changed and the borders of the country were adapted to reflect those of the time.

Context of creation

The Organisers already had a poster project that had been produced for the 1940 Olympic Games that were cancelled owing to the Second World War. However, they decided to organise a contest to produce a new poster for the 1952 Games. In 1950, 277 projects were sent to them, but none succeeded in equalling the one created 10 years earlier by Ilmari Sysimetsä. It was therefore decided that his would be the official poster of the Games.

Distribution

The poster was published in two formats and 20 different languages. In Finland, it was displayed in train stations, post offices and sports clubs.

Find out more about Helsinki 1952 on olympic.org
Helsinki 1952: More official posters

A welcome poster, produced in 25 different languages was also displayed in the bedrooms of the Olympic Village. Its shows a photograph of the countryside, below the Finnish flag and the Olympic flag.
Melbourne / Stockholm 1956

**Artist**  
Richard Beck

**Printer**  
Containers Limited, Melbourne  
Lithograph in colour

**Description**  
The poster totally moved away from the figurative style of previous Olympic posters, which markedly used symbols. With a pure design, it presents a three-page invitation that opens up towards the reader, standing out on a bright blue background. The Olympic rings features on the first page, and a colour reproduction of the coat of arms of Melbourne on the last page.

It was the first summer *Image of the Games* not to feature a human figure.

**Context of creation**  
The OCOG asked five artists to submit their poster projects. It was the one by Beck that became the *Image of the Games*.

**Distribution**  
70,000 copies of the poster were printed and sent to shipping companies and airlines, National Olympic Committees, banks, tourism agencies, sports clubs and post offices.

Find out more about Melbourne / Stockholm 1956 on olympic.org
Melbourne / Stockholm 1956: More official posters

**Artist**  
John Sjösvärd

**Printer**  
Esselte, Stockholm  
Offset

**Description**  
The bottom half of the poster shows the wording **XVI Olympiadens Ryttartävlingar 1956 Stockholm 10-17 Juni** on a black background. The upper half, set against a marble background, illustrates a statue of a rider on his horse. It was inspired by one of the Parthenon sculptures and symbolised the link between the ancient and modern Games.

**Context of creation**  
Due to the Australian veterinary rules on equine quarantine, the equestrian events could not take place in the Games’ host city. They thus took place in Stockholm, Sweden. It was on this occasion that the Organising Committee of the Equestrian Games of the XVI Olympiad published the poster.

**Distribution**  
40,000 copies distributed with text in English, French, German and Swedish.

Find out more about Melbourne / Stockholm 1956 on olympic.org
# Rome 1960

**Artist**  
Armando Testa

**Printer**  
I:G:A:P:  
Offset

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**Description**  
This poster is a modern adaptation of the Belvedere capital, which was originally found at the Baths of Caracalla in Ancient Rome. In addition to the pools, the baths housed spaces to practise sport. The capital shows a scene of acclamation of a victorious athlete, crowning himself with the right hand and holding the palm of victory in his left hand, according to Roman custom.

The she-wolf, the symbol of Rome, feeds the twins Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of the city. The image was inspired by the famous bronze statue exhibited at the Palace of the Conservators in Rome.

**Context of creation**  
Three contests were necessary to obtain the official poster that would correspond to the criteria imposed by the Italian National Olympic Committee: to represent an allegory encompassing the idea of Olympic sport in Rome, the Olympic rings and the words *Games of the XVII Olympiad – Rome – MCMLX*.

A first contest gathered 249 projects but none succeeded in convincing the jury. The OCOG therefore organised a second competition involving twelve Italian artists. However, the Italian National Olympic Committee was still not convinced by the result of the competition and suggested appointing a highly renowned Italian artist to propose a new project.

It was finally Armando Testa who realised a poster for which the Italian National Olympic Committee established exactly what it wanted to be displayed on it. It was approved and became the official poster for Rome 1960.

**Distribution**  
290,000 copies (including 120,499 destined for abroad) in 11 languages. The distribution of the poster in Italy was realised in two stages: first, 60,000 copies were displayed in April 1960. Then the remaining copies were displayed on the route of the Torch Relay and in the cities that hosted the eliminating rounds of the Football Tournament: Florence, Grosseto, Livorno, Pescara, L’Aquila and Naples.

Find out more about [Rome 1960](https://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Tokyo 1964

**Artist**  
Yusaku Kamekura

**Printer**  
Toppan Printing Co. Ltd.,  
Tokyo  
Two-colour offset

**Description**  
The poster shows the emblem of the 1964 Games in Tokyo, which reinterprets the idea of the Rising Sun of the Japanese national flag, a simple and dynamic symbol.

The technique used was a multi-coloured photo engraving, an achievement of the Japanese graphics industry. The poster was the subject of much praise, for both the quality of its printing and its design, and won the Milan Poster Design Award.

**Context of creation**  
Four official posters were published successively for the 1964 Games. They were all created by Kamekura. The first was called *The Rising Sun and the Olympic emblem*, and it was this one that remained as the *Image of the Games*.

**Distribution**  
100,000 copies.

Find out more about [Tokyo 1964](http://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Tokyo 1964: More official posters

Here, in publication order, are the three other posters belonging to the set produced by Yusaku Kamekura.

*The Start of the Sprinters’ Dash* is a photograph of start in athletics. Photographers Osamu Hayasaki and Jo Murakoshi assisted Kamekura with producing this work. The models were athletes from the US forces stationed at the air base in Tachikawa, and Japanese amateur athletes. The shot was taken in the National Stadium on an icy cold night, and over 60 attempts were required to obtain the perfect result. For Hayasaki, it was “the most stimulating mission of [his] career”.

*A Butterfly Swimmer* shows Koji Iwamoto (a swimmer from the University of Waseda) photographed in action in February 1962, at Tokyo Metropolitan covered pool.

This poster is called *An Olympic Torch Runner*. Here, we see the athlete Tanaka from the athletics team of the University of Juntendo.

Last update: December 2013
Mexico City 1968

Artist
Pedro Ramirez Vazquez
Eduardo Terrazas
Lance Wyman

Printer
Miguel Galas S.A., Mexico City
Offset

Description
The Mexico 68 emblem appears in the centre of the poster, surrounded by black and white parallel lines that give the impression of movement and recall the motifs of the Indian Huichol people. The Games emblem forms the central graphic element of most of the posters for Mexico City 1968.

The square format of the poster differs from the usual format.

Context of creation
From the combination of the five rings and year of the Olympic Games, Pedro Ramirez Vazquez, Eduardo Terrazas and Lance Wyman designed the Mexico 68 emblem. It was then developed to create the official poster and everything associated with the look of these Games (programmes, volunteers’ uniforms, etc.). Information, aesthetics, functionalism - such was the motto to follow when creating the official poster.

Distribution
For the first time, different series of several of “thematic” posters were created by an OCOG on the occasion of the Olympic Games.

In total, over two million copies of 159 different posters were distributed.

In June 1968, the Mexico 68 poster featured in the Word and Image exhibition organised by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The Olympic Identity Programme was also present at the 14th Triennale in Milan, in June and July 1968.

Find out more about Mexico City 1968 on olympic.org
Mexico City 1968: More official posters

The sports posters

This series comprised 18 posters, of which a total of 287,000 copies were made. They were taken from the cover of the programmes for each sport that were published by the OCOG.
The *culture* posters

Nineteen posters made up this series. Some 190,500 copies were distributed.
The Mexico 68 posters

This series which was designed to promote Mexico 68 included 41 posters of which a total of 1,694,000 copies were printed.
**Munich 1972**

**Artist**
Otl H. Aicher

**Printer**
Mandruck, Munich
Offset

**Description**
The poster shows the silhouette of the roof in the shape of a tent like the Olympic installations. The Olympic tower stands in the background. At the top are the dates of the Games, as well as the official emblem, chosen from among 2,332 projects; the spiral symbol is an allusion to the dynamism of sport and the city.

The poster was based on a photograph whose colours were re-worked to correspond to the palette established for the visual identity of the Games, which involves homogeneity between all the posters.

**Context of creation**
Originally, the organisers called upon Otl Aicher, Director of the Ulm School of Design, to create a poster as part of the general look of the 1972 Games. However, his proposal was not adopted at that time.

Instead, in June 1969, a contest was organised to create the Munich official poster. Eleven artists were invited by the organisers to participate. They could propose a maximum of two projects each. The posters had to comprise: a scene from Munich (preferably the silhouette of the roof in the shape of a tent), the emblem of the Games created by Otl Aicher and the words Munich 1972. In addition, the poster had to be adapted to the overall image of the Games and adopt the primary colour and the three complementary colours.

In November of the same year, the jury chose three projects from the proposals received. When none of the three convinced the Executive Committee, they returned to the poster project of Aicher. After minor modifications were introduced to the design, the Committee finally chose it as the official poster.

Find out more about Munich 1972 on olympic.org
1972 Munich: More official posters

The sports posters

The 21 posters that make up this series were realised from photographs, with the aim of making them as readable as possible in all cultures. The posters suggest the idea of movement, particularly through the horizontal lines.
The synthesis between art and sport is found at the heart of the visual identity of these Games. The artistic posters allow for the cultural aspect of the Games and the host city and country to be publicised. They were widely distributed in cultural institutions such as universities and museums.

David Hockney

Allen Jones

Pierre Soulages

Piero Dorazio

Otmar Alt

R.B. Kitaj
The Africa posters

A publicity campaign was organised specifically for Africa. An artistic contest was set up in collaboration with the German African Society, and called on African artists to propose posters that would stimulate interest in the Olympic Games across the whole continent. The theme and the style of the posters were left a free choice of the competitors.

Among the many projects submitted, that by Kenyan Ancent Soi won the top prize. The poster, *Young Runners* alluded to black Africa. The poster that took second prize represented the Arabic countries of North Africa. This was the artwork by Algeria’s Kamardine Krim, which shows a dove. These two posters were used to promote the 1972 Games across the whole of Africa.

Ancent Soy

Kamardine Krim
## Montreal 1976

**Artist**
Ernst Roch and Rolf Harder

**Printer**
Ronald, Briton Timerman Limitée, Montreal
Lithograph

**Description**
Entitled *The invitation*, the poster shows the five ring Olympic symbol, which is reflected by successive waves, thus inviting athletes from every country to the 1976 Olympic Games.

**Context of creation**
Ernst Roch and Rolf Harder were part of the team of artists tasked with creating the posters for the 1976 Games in Montreal.

The OCOG produced a visual programme that brought together an aesthetic and graphic unity capable of reflecting the particular character of Montreal 1976. The main colour of the visual identity of these Games was red, and seven other colours: blue, grey, green, orange, yellow, purple and crimson.

Find out more about Montreal 1976 on olympic.org
Montreal 1976: More official posters

The thematic posters

This series of eight posters includes the one that was chosen as the *Image of the Games* (see previous page). They each show a key theme of these Olympic Games.
The sports posters

The second series of posters published by the Organising Committee shows the 21 sports on the programme of the Games of the XXI Olympiad. Each poster aimed to communicate the action and instantaneity of the sport that it illustrated. The OCOG therefore opted for photographs, which are more explicit than drawings.

For the elaboration of these posters, the artists went to the site of the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich to select 21 photographic negatives from the 200,000 available there. Each photo had to fulfil precise criteria: be easy to reproduce and enlarge, clearly show a movement that respected the rules of the sport in question, and be as spectacular as possible.
The culture posters

This series comprises 80 posters: one for the Montreal 1976 *arts and culture* programme, and the others presenting each of the events.
Moscow 1980

**Artist**  
Vladimir Arsentyev

**Printer**  
Offset Printing Polygraph Experimental Workshop, Moscow  
Offset

**Description**  
The poster shows the Games emblem, which is made up of three red elements: the Olympic rings, the track of a stadium and the five-pointed star placed above, evoking the stars of the Kremlin.

**Context of creation**  
The poster that would become the *Image of the Games* was designed by Vladimir Arsentyev. It featured the emblem of the Games which was also created by the artist.

Find out more about [Moscow 1980](https://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Moscow 1980: More official posters

Plakat Publishers, in collaboration with the OCOG, published 250 different Olympic posters, for a total of 18,750,000 copies. They were designed by famous and amateur artists and art students.

The sports posters
Los Angeles 1984

**Artist**  
Robert Rauschenberg

**Printer**  
Alan Lithograph, Los Angeles  
Offset

**Description**  
The *Image of the Games* included the emblem of the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, the *star in motion*. Its design of three interlocked star shapes evokes the spirit of competition between equals. At the same time its horizontal bars are intended to represent the speed of the athletes’ pursuit of excellence. The stars convey both the national and international aspect of the Games as they are present on the US flag, as well as on the flags of more than 47 other nations.

**Context of creation**  
16 famous Los Angeles artists were invited to produce posters as part of the Olympic Art Festival. Among these, the work by Rauschenberg became the *Image of the Games* for Los Angeles 1984.

Find out more about [Los Angeles 1984](http://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Los Angeles 1984: More official posters

The **arts posters**

The Organising Committee invited 16 famous artists to create posters. This series comprises 15 works and includes the poster by Robert Rauschenberg which became the *Image of the Games* (see previous page).

Carlos Almaraz

April Greiman & Jayme Odgers

Jennifer Bartlett

David Hockney
The *Ernie Barnes* posters

Ernie Barnes, an athlete who became an artist, was asked by the OCOG to create posters based on his sporting experience. These works evoke the ethnic diversity of Los Angeles, the emotion of the sports competitions and the perseverance of athletes. Four posters illustrate sports, and one has the theme of community involvement.
The sports posters

Each sport is illustrated by a poster taken from the cover of the respective explanatory brochures that were published by the OCOG.
The designer posters

The OCOG chose 12 artists from Los Angeles to create a series of posters each representing a different Olympic sport.

Laurie Raskin
Arnold Schwartzman
Keith Bright
Don Weller
Ken Parkhurst
John Von Hammersveld
Seoul 1988

Artist
Prof. Cho Yong-je

Description
The poster symbolises the motto of this edition of the Games: *Harmony and Progress*. The rings are in bright colours to show that the Olympic ideal promotes peace worldwide. The image of the athlete carrying the Olympic torch symbolises mankind’s progress towards happiness and prosperity. The design was produced by computer and the colours used are a mix of light blue and bright orange, which symbolise the *Land of the Morning Calm*.

Context of creation
In June 1984, the OCOG asked Prof. Cho Yong-je of the National University of Seoul to produce the official poster for Seoul 1988. In January 1985, the artist proposed two projects from which a Selection Committee chose the official poster in April of the same year.

Find out more about Seoul 1988 on olympic.org
Seoul 1988: More official posters

The sports posters

This series comprised of 27 posters which promoted sports was produced by Prof. Cho Yong-je and his associates. The photographs of athletes in action were taken during the Asian Games in Seoul (1986) and the Olympic Games in Los Angeles (1984).
The culture posters

This series was made up of 12 posters produced by 12 Korean artists. It aimed to present Korean culture to the rest of the world.

- **Folk Play and Farmer’s Dance**, Kim Kyo-man.
- **Drum dance**, Kim Yong-ki.
- **Bride’s Coiffure**, Na Jae-o.
- **Woman Fan Dancer**, Kim Hyun.
The arts posters

At the request of the OCOG, Lloyd Shin Gallery selected 20 pioneering figures in modern art and five Korean artists recommended by local artist organisations to create this series of art posters.

Message of Peace - Korean Olympic Games, Yaacov Agam, (Israel)

Olympic Robe, Jim Dine (USA)

Composition, Pierre Soulages (France)

Human Mask, Nam Kwan, (Korea)

Hexas, Victor Vasarely (Hungary)

Iron Cross, Rufino Tamayo (Mexico)
## Barcelona 1992

**Artist**  
Josep Maria Trias

### Description

Four official posters were produced by the Organising Committee to promote the overall event. The poster by Josep Maria Trias was chosen as the *Image of the Games.*

The poster shows the official emblem of the Games. It evokes an athlete leaping over an obstacle which is represented by the Olympic rings. The simple lines of the silhouette reduce it to a head (from the blue of the Mediterranean), arms (bright yellow and open as a sign of hospitality) and legs (bright red, a symbol of life).

At each inflection point on the emblem, as well as on the Olympic rings, Trias added a grading of colours, to accentuate the dynamic aspect of the image.

### Context of creation

The artist takes inspiration from the emblem of the Games that he also created, and adds minimal modifications to it.

### Distribution

In total, 2,940,000 posters were distributed by the Organising Committee.

Find out more about [Barcelona 1992](http://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Barcelona 1992: More official posters

The OCOG published a total of 58 different posters grouped in four series: the general posters, the designers posters, the painters posters and the sports posters.

The general posters

This series was comprised of four posters that included the *Image of the Games* (see previous page).

The designers posters

For this series of 18 posters, the most famous design companies in Spain selected 18 artists who represented the various fashionable trends in Barcelona, Catalonia and the rest of the country.
The painters posters

For this set of eight posters, the OCOG called upon leading painters on the international arts scene.

Eduardo Arroyo
Antoni Clave

Eduardo Chillida
Jean-Michel Folon

Guillermo Pérez Villalta
The sports posters

This series of 28 posters combines images of sports and the Earth to evoke the universal nature of the Olympic Games. These photographs were selected from a batch of 5,000 images from photographic archives worldwide. The images of the Earth were provided by NASA.
Atlanta 1996

Artist  Primo Angeli

Printer  Colour lithograph

Description  To celebrate the centennial of the modern Olympic Games, the poster combines classic and contemporary symbols.

The athlete is at the centre of the illustration, on a background of the Olympic colours. Through this drawing, the artist’s intention is to represent equally a man and a woman, as well as all the ethnicities of the participants at the Olympic Games.

Context of creation  The poster programme for the 1996 Games in Atlanta comprised a total of 63 works, divided into four series. One of these contained posters produced by external companies commissioned for the visual identity of the Games. It was from that series that the IOC President chose the poster by Primo Angeli as the Image of the Games.

Find out more about Atlanta 1996 on olympic.org
1996 Atlanta: More official posters

The Look of the Games team posters

Each of the six companies appointed to develop the visual identity of the Games had to produce a poster. The subject was a free choice, which is why these works have very different themes, such as the athletes, the dove of peace and the pictograms. This series includes the poster that was chosen as the Image of the Games (see previous page).
The arts posters

This series which comprised 11 posters by 11 different artists was the fruit of a free approach, aiming to convey the Olympic spirit. They address themes such as women and sport or the Olympic Village. Most of these posters were diffused in limited editions.

Emma Amos

Michele Delacroix

Paul Goodnight

Patricia Cajiga
The sports posters

This series of posters was realised by Japanese born artist Hiro Yamagata. He created one poster for each sport on the programme. Each poster includes the name of the sport, the artist as well as the dates of the Games.
Sydney 2000

**Artist**  
FHA Image Design

**Printer**  
Colour offset

**Description**  
The poster features *Millennium Man*, the silhouette-like athlete represented by typically Australian shapes and colours that was the emblem of the Games. Millennium Man is placed against a blue background that recalls the water of Sydney harbour. Its shadow takes a more human form that is suggestive of an Olympic torchbearer. The famous Opera House appears at the bottom of the poster.

**Context of creation**  
The Organising Committee commissioned several designers from various artistic movements to produce the posters. In total, 50 different posters were published.

**Distribution**  
All the official posters for Sydney 2000 were distributed by Ink Group Publishers Pty Ltd.

Find out more about [Sydney 2000](http://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Sydney 2000: More official posters

The sports posters

Olympic sports are shown on these posters featuring photographs of athletes on colored backgrounds.
The sports posters: special series

The eight posters of this special series commissioned by the OCOG to Ing Design (artistic director David Terrazas) each represented a sport and reaffirmed the blue water line that was central to the visual identity of the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.
The designer posters

This series of seven posters was produced by eight famous Australian artists who were appointed by the Organising Committee.

Ken Cato

Mimmo Cozzolino and Phil Ellett

David Lancashire

Michael Leunig

Mascot poster

The name of this poster combines the central theme of the promotional campaign of the Games with the names of its three mascots: Share the Spirit, Syd, Millie, Olly. It was created by Mark Sofias and Matthew Hatton.
Athens 2004

**Artist**
Wolff Olins Consultants
Red Design Consultants

**Printer**
Colour offset

**Description**
The poster shows the emblem of the Games, also created by Wolff Olins and Red Design Consultants. It shows a crown of olive leaves – an allusion to the ancient Olympic Games, where it was awarded to the victors.

The olive branch forms an open circle, symbolising an invitation to take part in the Games. The blue and white colours of the background are symbolic of the Greek countryside, and recall its sea and sky.

**Context of creation**
A product of the collaboration between Wolff Olins and Red Design, *the Image of the Games* was inspired by the historic legacy of the city, linked to its modern aspect.

Find out more about [Athens 2004](http://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Athens 2004: More official posters

The sports posters

This series of posters was inspired by the sports pictograms which were stylised adaptations of ancient Cycladic figures.
The arts posters

This edition of the Games being those of the XXVIII Olympiad, the Organising Committee appointed 28 Greek artists to create 28 posters for the artistic series.

Dimitris Arvanitis

Christos Caras

Pavlos

Marios Spiliopoulos

Theodoros

Manolis Zacharioudakis
Beijing 2008

**Artist**  Unknown

**Description**  The *Image of the Games* is one of the posters of the *Sophisticated for a Harmonious Olympic Games* series. Its shows doves flying above a mountainous landscape.

The *Dancing Beijing* emblem of the Games is featured at the top of the poster. It represents a silhouette that forms the Chinese character *jing* (which means capital) in reference to Beijing, *the capital of the north*.

**Context of creation**  The selection of the official posters, including the *Image of the Games*, was the result of a long process. In the end, it was the artistic team of Prof. He Jie, Vice-Dean of the Academy of Arts and Design of Tsinghua University, who was selected.

**Distribution**  The *Beijing Morning Post* was designated as the official publisher of the posters produced by the Organising Committee. Before the Games, it was planned to distribute approximately 100,000 copies.

Find out more about [Beijing 2008](https://olympic.org) on olympic.org
Beijing 2008: More official posters

The posters produced by the Organising Committee illustrate the concept of Green Games, High-tech Games and People’s Games, all embodying the slogan of the Games One World, One Dream.

The thematic posters: “Sophisticated Beijing for a Harmonious Olympic Games”

This series which comprises three posters, including the one that was named as the Image of the Games (see previous page), employs the style of traditional Chinese painting. Here, we find the classic landmarks – the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven – and the modern venues of the Games – the Beijing National Stadium (also known as the Bird’s Nest) and the National Aquatics Centre (the Water Cube). This combination underlines the link between sport and culture, between the Olympic Games and China.

The people posters: “Smiling Beijing and Inclusive Olympic Games”

This series comprises three posters. The hospitality of the Chinese people is seen on the smiling faces of various generations. It is the illustration of the slogan of the Games One World, One Dream. In the background are symbolic Chinese landmarks: the Forbidden City, the Great Wall and the Temple of Heaven.
The sports posters: “Robust Beijing to exceed the dreams”

This set of 10 posters combines the images of athletes on backgrounds of coloured lines, following the visual identity of Beijing 2008.

The volunteer posters

Each of the five posters that make up this series illustrates a different aspect of the mission of the volunteers at the 2008 Olympic Games. These posters were distributed to the Games volunteers for Beijing.

Medal: Every success is a result of our hard work

Honeycomb: Every sacrifice gives you the pleasure of maturing

Rubik’s Cube: Every cooperation shows the spirit of teamwork
London 2012

Artist: Rachel Whiteread

Description: The poster, named *LOndOn 2012*, shows circles in the Olympic colours superimposed over each other. It is a clear reference to the five rings that make up the Olympic symbol. These circles, which appear as marks made by bottles or glasses left on a table, symbolise the memory of a social and festive meeting, such as the meeting of athletes in the stadium at the Opening Ceremony of the Games.

Context of creation: The Organising Committee worked in collaboration with a group of 19 regional art galleries across the UK from the Tate and Plus Tate Group to select artists responsible for creating the official posters of London 2012. Together, they established a long list of over 100 artists to be considered. Finally, it was a jury composed of renowned experts in the arts field who reduced this list to 12 individuals of whom 6 each designed a poster for the Olympic Games.

The jury’s main objective was artistic excellence. Three of the 6 artists selected to design the Olympic Games posters had won the Turner Prize.

Find out more about *London 2012* on olympic.org
London 2012: More official posters

Divers
Anthea Hamilton

Rose Rose
Bridget Riley

For the unknown runner
Chris Ofili

Swimming
Howard Hodgkin

Work No. 1273
Martin Creed
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