

# The Cultural Olympiads

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## Introduction

In its (eventually, unsuccessful) candidature file to host the 2012 Olympic Summer Games, New York made a point of commemorating the long but largely unknown history of the Cultural Olympiad as a key component of the Games celebration. By 2012, the official Olympic Games cultural programme was turning 100 years old and had been hosted as a compulsory part of the Games hosting process at every Summer edition since Stockholm 1912. This, argued the New York bid, was a motif for reflection and celebration about the contribution of the arts and culture to the modern Olympic Games (New York Candidature File 2008: 180-181).

The notion that the Games should complement the showcase of elite sport competitions with a programme of arts and cultural activity was central to the vision of Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the Modern Olympic Movement. It was a notion inspired by Coubertin's interpretation of the Ancient Greek Games tradition, which involved the showcase of human excellence in a variety of forms, from athletics to music and poetry. Despite Coubertin's original vision, the Olympic cultural programme or 'Cultural Olympiad' has a mixed history and is one of the least visible and appreciated components within the Olympic Games hosting process. This chapter offers an overview of the programme's evolution (from its original presentation in the form of Olympic Art Competitions to its latest incarnation as a four-year Olympiad); it discusses key trends and challenges, and briefly touches on potential future developments given the new thinking emerging in the context of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Agenda 2020.

## From Art Competitions to Cultural Olympiads

### *Origins: The Conference on Art, Letters and Sport, 1906*

The principle of holding an arts festival in parallel with the celebration of sporting competitions is embedded in the foundations of the Olympic Movement. The Movement was founded in 1894 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a French pedagogue who sought to revive the ancient Greek tradition of quadrennial celebrations of athletics and the arts that had been held in Olympia from 776 BC to 395 AC. In the Ancient Games, athletes were called to showcase their talents in parallel to philosophers, scholars, poets, musicians, sculptors and high-profile leaders. Coubertin defined such gathering of talents as the 'spirit of Olympism', and Olympism was in turn defined as the simultaneous training of the human body and the cultivation of the intellect and spirit, together viewed as manifestations of the harmoniously educated man. On this basis, Coubertin's ambition was to create an environment in modern society where artists and athletes could, again, be mutually inspired. In support of this ambition, the Olympic Charter establishes that 'blending sport with culture and education' is a fundamental principle of Olympism (IOC 2015: 13).

As discussed in Chapter 2, Coubertin's ability to coordinate and attract the attention of critical decision makers around the world led to the re-birth of the Games in 1896 – Athens – and to their continuation in 1900 – Paris – and 1904 – St Louis. Nevertheless, none of these Games incorporated arts activities alongside the sporting events. To change this, Coubertin convened a 'Consultative conference on Art, Letters and Sport' at the *Comedie Française* in Paris in 1906. He invited artists, writers and sports experts to discuss

how the arts could be integrated into the Modern Olympic Games. The invitation stated that the purpose of the meeting was to study ‘to what extent and in what form the arts and letters could take part in the celebration of modern Olympic Games and become associated, in general, with the practice of sports, in order to profit from them and ennoble them’ (Carl Diem Institute 1966: 16).

The original proposal tabled at this first meeting established the following as a possible cultural programme to develop at each Games edition (see Table 1). Note, in italics, the first indications of a possibility for ‘competitions’ to emerge.

*Table 1: Programme for the 1906 Conference, circulated by Pierre de Coubertin*

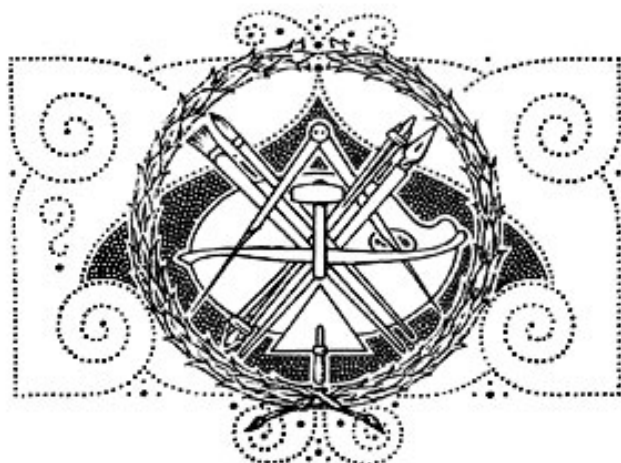
Dramatic art	Outdoor productions; essential principles; recent writings; sports on stage
Choreography	Processions; parades; group and coordinated movements; dances
Decoration	Stands and enclosures; mats, badges, garlands, draperies, clusters; night festivals; torchlight sports
Literature	<i>Possibility of setting up Olympic literary competitions</i> ; conditions for these competitions; sporting emotion, source of inspiration for the man of letters
Painting	Individual silhouettes and general views; <i>possibility of and conditions for an Olympic painting competition</i> ; photography as aid to the artist
Sculpture	Athletic poses and movements and their relationship with art; interpretation of effort; objects given as prizes; statuettes and medals

Source: Muller (2000, pp. 609-610) Emphasis by author

As a result of the conference and in order to ensure a clear association of the arts with the modern Olympics sport programme, Coubertin proposed the creation of an arts competition and requested it to be a compulsory part of every Olympic Games celebration from then on (Coubertin, cited in IOC 1997a: 92). This competition was called the ‘Pentathlon of Muses’ and involved the awarding of medals in five classic art categories: sculpture, painting, music, literature and architecture.

The organisation of the first ‘Pentathlon of Muses’ was designated to a special commission in the context of the London 1908 Olympic Games, the first Games edition after the 1906 Consultative Conference. Nevertheless, time constraints and disagreement over the programme contents led to its cancellation at the last minute (see: Burnosky 1994: 21-22). Consequently, the first official Olympic arts competition did not take place until the Stockholm Games in 1912.

*Figure 1: Original emblem for the Pentathlon of Muses (Stockholm, 1912)*



Source: Coubertin, P. (2000) *Olympism. Selected Writings*. Lausanne: IOC, p. 628.

## *Olympic Art Competitions: Stockholm 1912 to London 1948*

From 1912 in Stockholm until 1948 in London, arts competitions were organised in parallel to the sporting competitions and artists, like athletes, competed and won gold, silver and bronze medals (see Stanton 2000). However, regulations and contest parameters changed considerably due to difficulties in defining the different competition sections and disagreement in defining the most appropriate subject for the works presented. Over the years, the competition's sections changed from the five areas composing the 'Pentathlon of Muses' to a long list of sub-categories that tried to account for an ever increasing range of art-form variations. The appropriate theme for Olympic artworks was also controversial, as there was disagreement over whether or not to restrict the entries to works inspired in or portraying sports activities exclusively. Initially, it was compulsory to present a sporting theme but, with the growth in abstraction as an international artistic trend, this proved difficult and limiting in areas other than architecture or design for sports buildings (Burnosky 1994: 23).

Also problematic was the dominant Western bias in the definition of cultural value and aesthetics, as most judges and competitors were European and, in consequence, it was rare that non-western artists were awarded a medal. Other problems were of a logistical nature, in particular, transport difficulties for large sculptural works which were accentuated due to the inconsistent funding and operational support received from respective Games organising committees.

A further (and, eventually, determinant) limitation to the appeal and success of the cultural programme was due to the regulation of amateurism in the Olympic Movement.<sup>1</sup> The 'amateur' regulation implied that, as in the case of athletes at the time, the participation of professional artists capable of making a living out of their art, could not be accepted as part of the official Olympic programme. In the arts context of the 1930s and 1940s this became even more problematic than in the sporting context. This was because most artists were considered professional in their devotion to their vocation and high quality artistic expression was equated with professionalism (IOC 1949, cited by Burnosky 1994: 34).

Most disappointing for Coubertin and his closest supporters was the poor audience participation attracted by the arts competitions. As noted by Hanna, "[c]ultural celebrations based on sport were increasingly irrelevant; while people ... watch[ed] competitive sport, their interest did not extend to sport in art" (p. 108). This was a remarkable set-back to the promotion of Coubertin's ideals, as a major reason for holding cultural events alongside the sports competitions was to inspire discussion and the promotion of ideas among all Olympic participants and spectators.

In this context, the Berlin 1936 Games edition stands out: in contrast with other host cities where Olympic arts manifestations had played a minor role, the so-called 'Nazi Games' presented a cultural festival of unprecedented dimensions for which a large scale national and international publicity campaign was created to ensure maximum recognition and participation. The Official Games report states:

Because of the slight interest which the general public had hitherto evidenced in the Olympic Art Competition and Exhibition, it was necessary to emphasise their cultural significance to the Olympic Games through numerous articles in the professional and daily publications as well as radio lectures. (Berlin Organising Committee 1937, vol.2)

The Berlin Games in 1936 offer the most ambitious example of Olympic art programming in this first period. This has been seen by many as evidence of culture and the arts being used for propaganda purposes, a view that is hard to question given that the Berlin Arts Committee programme was actually chaired by a representative of the Reich Ministry of Propaganda (Berlin Organising Committee 1937). The Games had been identified by the local host as an opportunity to promote the ideals of Nazi Germany and cultural activity was seen as a good vehicle to represent the supremacy of the Arian race and Western civilisation. This, in turn, meant, that the cultural programme was taken as seriously as the sporting competition programme and it thus secured high levels of investment and public visibility.

Cultural innovations brought in at the Berlin Games included the first Olympic torch relay, travelling from Ancient Olympia in Greece (symbolic cradle of the Olympic

Games) to the Berlin stadium; and the first artist-led Olympic film, Leni Riefenstahl's 'Olympia'. These cultural manifestations became as central to the Olympic experience as the sport competitions, both during Games time and in subsequent visual and broader narrative representations of the 1936 Olympic edition. Notably, the torch relay and the principle of producing an official Games film have become a key part of the Games staging process and its symbolic representation to this day.

The 1940 and 1944 Olympic Games and related arts programmes were not held because of World War II, but by the time of the London 1948 Games, the appointed organising committee succeeded in paralleling the sports with arts competitions. After the cultural programme ended, the British Fine Arts Committee that had been set up on occasion of the Games compiled a 'report of juror's suggestions for future arts contests' (Good 1998: 33). This was intended for use as a guide to subsequent organising committees as, to that date, there had been no operational framework about how to produce an Olympic arts programme. Good (1998) explains that 'the recommendations included reducing the number of arts categories' and concluded that the 'interest in the exhibitions would be greater if they were more closely linked up with the Games themselves and if a more intensive press campaign had been organised' (p. 20). By 1950, however, the problems and difficulties that had been common to most Games editions were perceived to be far greater than the benefits and achievements brought by hosting Olympic art competitions. To review the situation, an extended discussion process took place within the IOC from 1949 in Rome to 1952 in Helsinki. As a result of this process, which involved a detailed assessment of the 'amateur' nature of Olympic contributions, it was decided that from 1952 on, the presence of the arts in the Olympics would take the form of cultural exhibitions and festivals instead of competitions.

### *Olympic Art Exhibitions and Festivals: Helsinki 1952 to Seoul 1988*

The first official (and non-competitive) Olympic arts festival was held at the Melbourne 1956 Games, after several rushed changes in focus for the cultural programme in Helsinki 1952. The Melbourne festival was coordinated first by a Fine-Arts Subcommittee, elected in 1953 and then by a Festival Sub-Committee created in 1955. The festival had two major components: one of visual arts and literature, and another one of music and drama. Exhibitions and festivals were staged simultaneously in the weeks leading up to and during the Games and featured local, national and international artists and performers. A special book on Australian arts was published after the Games, entitled 'The Arts Festival: a Guide to the Exhibition with Introductory Commentaries on the Arts in Australia'. The Official Report of the Melbourne Games concluded that 'the change from a competition to a Festival was widely welcomed, since the Festival provided a significant commentary on Australia's contribution to the Arts' (cited in Good 1998: 29).

This new stage in the Olympic cultural programme tradition brought opportunities as well as challenges for the integration of the arts and culture as a core dimension of the Olympic staging process. On the one hand, Games organisers had greater freedoms to define the purpose of such programmes and determine who should be presenting what type of work. On the other, eliminating its competitive nature led to completely divorcing the programme from national delegation following and related patriotic sentiments. This situation accelerated the trend towards diminishing numbers of Games participants (particularly, athletes, but also sport fans) being involved or interested in the cultural programme; and it led, during the first new editions, to a loss in international focus. As highlighted by the Australian report, the programme was now mainly a platform for local cultural representation and directed according to the specific interests of the host authorities (mainly, Ministries of Culture or related bodies), with much less of a direct involvement and regulations from the top Olympic structures or other sporting bodies.

In this new context, some Olympic host countries saw the programme as an important opportunity to make a statement about a point in their history, and as an opportunity to profile the host nation, far and beyond what was possible within the sporting

arenas or the highly regulated Olympic ceremonies and protocol. Despite their disconnect from the sporting world, host cities became increasingly ambitious in their treatment of the arts festivals, progressively aligning them with the 'growing arts agenda' that developed after the Second World War including an aspiration to address 'audience development, access, and inclusion' in the arts (Gold and Revill 2007: 73).

After a few editions focused on the presentation of national heritage almost exclusively (from Melbourne 1956 to Tokyo 1964) the late 1960s and 1970s saw an upsurge in contemporary cultural initiatives and some radical re-thinking about the role and relevance of the arts as a component of the Games staging process and a key vehicle to project the Olympic city. Mexico in 1968 presented what remains, to this day, one of the most ambitious and innovative Olympic festivals, spanning throughout one year and acting as a showcase, not only of the best of Mexican heritage and folklore, but also the best Mexican contemporary arts, placing these in the context of leading international artists and art companies at the time, which were also invited. The ambition and quality of the programme proved that while Mexico may have been considered a country that was part of a 'developing world' from an economic point of view, it was at the avantgarde and represented a 'first world' in terms of art and culture. Crucially, Mexico viewed the Olympic cultural programme in a more holistic fashion than other Games hosts and, beyond the arts, incorporated discussions about education, science as well as advertising, design and communications that were, in turn, used to promote and explain the value of the Games (see: Mexico Organising Committee for the Olympic Games 1969).

Montreal in 1976 also presented an innovative cultural programme, exploring the national identity of Quebec and Canada, but also attempting to recover the original Coubertin aspiration to explore the connections between art and sport, a topic that had become secondary since the end of the art competitions. The linkages between art and sport were presented, not just as a theme, but as an staging process, involving the introduction of arts activity within sporting venues, in particular, the main Olympic Park avenue and the areas surrounding the stadium.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, other areas where artists and related creative practitioners made major contributions were the design of banners and logos to dress the city and signpost Games venues – what is now termed 'the look of the Games'. The imagery for Mexico 1968, Tokyo 1964 and Munich 1972 are all exemplars of avantgarde visual design rather than simple marketing and branding exercises, and they can be viewed as leading examples of urban cultural policy innovations emerging out of the Games. These elements of the Games were, however, rarely treated as part of the official cultural programme (Mexico 1968 being a notable exception), and subsequent editions of the Games (excepting Barcelona 1992 and Torino 2006, see below) have failed to use 'the look of the Games' as an expression of advanced and place-sensitive creative practice.

Figure 2: Cultural Olympiad pictograms complementing the sport pictograms, Mexico 1968



Source: Mexico Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, 1969  
(Courtesy of the IOC)

Find below a summary of the key format variations and characteristics of Olympic cultural festivals in this period. As the table makes abundantly clear, each Olympic host approached their cultural programming with different priorities and the length of activities varied significantly, from four weeks in Helsinki and Melbourne, to one year in Mexico 1968.

Table 2: Olympic Arts Festivals, Summer Games (1952-1988)

Olympiad	Length	Content and Themes	Highlights
<i>Helsinki 1952</i>	4 weeks	International exhibitions of architecture, painting, graphic arts, sculpture, literature, music	Submitted musical compositions performed in a concert
<i>Melbourne 1956</i>	4 weeks	National (Australian) culture	Exhibition: Showcase of Australian Art
<i>Rome 1960</i>	6 months (*) 3 weeks	National (Italian) culture with an emphasis on history; sporting references in exhibition programme	Exhibition: Sport in History and Art; Medieval historical pageants
<i>Tokyo 1964</i>	7 weeks	National (Japanese) high art and traditional culture	Exhibition: Ancient Japanese Art Treasures
<i>Mexico City 1968</i>	1 year	International; high art and indigenous culture; Nation-wide celebration of culture Overall title: Cultural Olympiad	World Folklore Festival; Ballet of the 5 Continents; International Exhibition of Folk Art; Exhibition of selected works of world art; New Fire Ritual at Teotihuacán
<i>Munich 1972</i>	3 months (*) 6 weeks	International; high art and folk culture Overall title: Olympic Summer	Exhibition: World Cultures and Modern Art International folklore festival Avenue of Entertainment: live performance in the Olympic Park
<i>Montreal 1976</i>	4 weeks	National: showcase for Canadian provincial culture	Exhibition: Mosaicart – Canadian visual arts Artisanage – Craft demonstration Canadian festival of popular arts

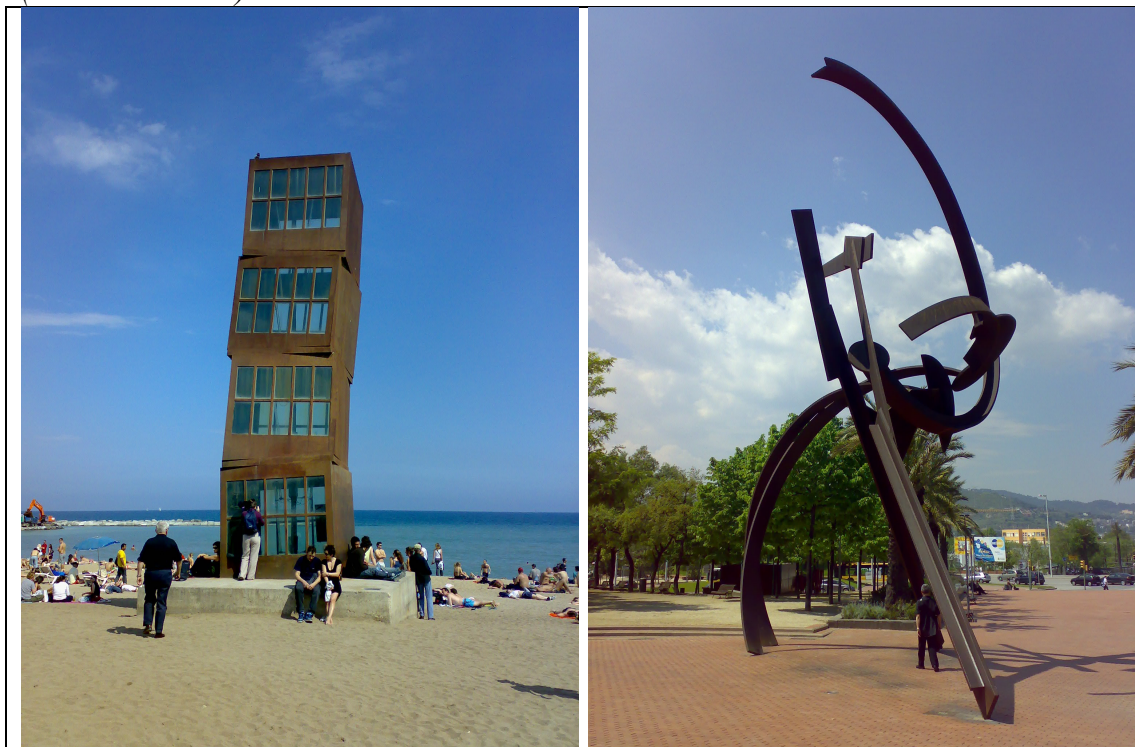
			The Celebration – live outdoor performance
<i>Moscow 1980</i>	1 year (*) 5 weeks	National: mass participation, high art and folk culture; national art of the peoples of the USSR	Exhibition: One hundred masterpieces from the Hermitage Collection Exhibition: Moscow in Russian and contemporary art Exhibition: Sport – Ambassador of Peace Opera and Classical music
<i>Los Angeles 1984</i>	10 weeks	7 weeks: international festival for domestic consumption 3 weeks: LA and US culture for international Olympic audience	Exhibition: A day in the country – Impressionists in the French landscape Performing arts programme Art commissioning programme
<i>Seoul 1988</i>	7 weeks	Korean high culture and traditional culture for an international audience; international artists and companies; contemporary culture for a domestic audience	International festivals in folk culture, dance, theatre, music, song The Olympiad of art – contemporary sculpture park International modern art competition Street Festivals and Han River Festival

(\*) Length of cultural festival including exhibition runs and pre-Games programme  
Source: Adapted from compilation by Gold and Revill (2007, p. 74)  
from official reports of Organising Committees

### ***Cultural Olympiads: Barcelona 1992 to London 2012***

Another stage in Olympic cultural programming was initiated with the Barcelona 1992 Olympic bid, which proposed that the implementation of a Cultural Olympiad should in fact take place during the four years of the Olympiad – from the end of one Games edition to the start of the next. Barcelona's Cultural Olympiad thus started in 1988, at the end of the Seoul Games, and evolved up to 1992 with a different thematic emphasis for each year. Garcia (2000) notes how this decision stems out of the organisers' vision for the Games as a platform to improve the city's urban landscape and assist in Barcelona's international projection far beyond the Olympic staging period. Indeed, Barcelona 1992 has come to be remembered and portrayed by the international media as the Games that placed the city at the heart of the Olympic experience.

*Figure 3: 'Art in the Street' programme, connecting the city and its waterfront. (Barcelona 1992)*



Photography by: Beatriz Garcia

The festive use of public space during Games time was central to Barcelona's perceived success. However, beyond its contemporary public art programme, it is less clear whether the official Cultural Olympiad programme (largely restricted as it was to traditional arts venues such as the opera house and museums), played much of a role within the Olympic city's narrative (see Garcia 2000).

Regardless of the actual effectiveness of specific activities within the 1992 Cultural Olympiad, the four-year format was maintained in subsequent summer Games editions up to 2012. This was on the initiative of respective host cities rather than an IOC directive, as there has never been a formal requirement to create a four-year cultural programme as a build-up to the Games competition fortnight. This stage in Olympic cultural programme development has also been characterised by two additional phenomena, resulting in large part from the commitment to multi-annual cultural programming. On the one hand, there has been a clearer alignment of the Cultural Olympiad with local and national cultural policy ambitions than ever before; on the other, the programme has faced growing operational tensions.

The first phenomenon means that priority objectives for the Games have become more clearly aligned with established cultural, social and economic agendas. From a cultural point of view, the Games period has been used not only to expand sport audiences but also cultural and arts audiences; furthermore the Games have been used not only to grow sporting facilities, but to advance broader local creative development aspirations (Garcia 2012). From a social perspective, it is now common for the Games and its Cultural Olympiad to aspire to improving community inclusion, expanding access to marginal or deprived communities, and strengthening local or national identity (Garcia 2004a). Finally, from an economic perspective, it is increasingly widespread to present a Cultural Olympiad as a catalyst to advance urban regeneration, reposition the host city and grow cultural tourism (Garcia 2004a, 2004b).

In parallel to the above, new tensions have also emerged, mainly due to the high professionalisation and global mediatisation of the Games (Garcia 2012). Most notably, the branding tension between 'official' Olympic arts events, sporting competitions and related Games activity has become increasingly apparent and has led on to varied attempts at



establishing separate Cultural Olympiad or Olympic Arts Festival brands (Garcia 2001, 2012). The Cultural Olympiad of Athens 2004 provides an example of the extremes organisers have been ready to go to in order to establish a strong Olympic cultural programme identity and brand. The programme was given a prime position within the event hosting process, as the city celebrated the contribution of Greece and Greek heritage as the cradle of European civilization and the birthplace of the Olympic Games. The Cultural Olympiad was thus utilised as a platform to convey ancient Olympic values and claim ownership of the Games in ways not accessible to other Olympic hosts. This involved the establishment of a Cultural Olympiad Foundation in 1998. The Foundation had backing from UNESCO and it aimed to become a permanent institution to coordinate Olympic cultural programming in the same way that the IOC coordinates the sporting programme. However, at the time of writing, more than a decade on from the establishment of this institution, the role of this foundation remains unclear, providing yet another indication of the persistent challenges embedded within the Olympic cultural programme tradition. (The issue of branding for the Cultural Olympiad in other Games editions is discussed further at the end of this Chapter).

Returning now to the most unifying trend within this period; a common feature in most Games editions between 1992 and 2012 was the design of annual thematic festivals, one for each year of the Olympiad. In Barcelona, the themes evolved from a 'Cultural gateway' in 1988, to the 'Year of Culture and Sport' in 1989, the 'Year of the Arts' in 1990, the 'Year of the Future' in 1991 and the 'Olympic Art Festival' in 1992. Atlanta also covered a wide range of subjects during the four years of festivals, arranged into two main themes: 'Southern Connections' within the United States, and 'International Connections'. Sydney offered a taste of the many and diverse Australian cultural communities through presenting an indigenous festival in 1997 ('Festival of the Dreaming'), a festival dedicated to multicultural groups and the waves of immigration in 1998 ('A Sea Change'), and international festivals in 1999 ('Reaching the World') and year 2000 ('Olympic Arts Festival') (see: Garcia 2012). Finally, Athens reflected on major philosophical and humanistic principles by exploring the notions of 'Man and Space', 'Man and the Earth', 'Man and the Spirit' and 'Man and Man'.

By the time of Beijing 2008 and London 2012, however, this trend was changing yet again. Instead of annual thematic festivals, both Games editions opted for generic mass participation countdown events without any specific theme emphasis other than the aspiration to generate excitement around the Games build-up (eg. the 'Open Weekend' initiative for London). It was not until their respective Games years that both Beijing and London presented a more ambitious 'Olympic Arts Festival' with a clearly curated and strong international focus (eg. 'London 2012 Festival', see Garcia 2013). In addition to this, London went further than other Games editions by also presenting the most extensive national cultural programme to date, with themed programming organised, not per year, but per UK region and thus resulting in twelve distinct Olympic regional cultural programmes (see Garcia 2013).

Rio 2016 is the first summer Olympic Games edition not to organise a four year Cultural Olympiad since Seoul 1988. This opens what could become a new stage in Olympic cultural programming, as the focus becomes less about the overall duration and more about the ways in which the cultural programme can shape or project the host city and be part of the 'Olympic experience'. The implications of such change are briefly discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

## **Culture at the Winter and Paralympic Games**

While this monograph focuses predominantly on the Olympic Summer Games hosting process, it is worth mentioning some of the crucial differences in cultural programming that arise within the Olympic Winter Games and the Paralympic Games. As events that share similar operational frameworks but are delivered in a smaller scale, their approach to organising the Cultural Olympiad provides a rich counterpoint that, from an Olympic city point of view, at times, has proven to be more effective than that delivered by Summer Games editions.

### *Winter Games (1956 onwards)*

The artistic programme of the Winter Games was not formally established until Cortina d'Ampezzo in 1956 and started at quite a small scale. More ambitious cultural programmes comparable to the Summer Games began with Grenoble 1968, the same year that Mexico hosted their year-long international Cultural Olympiad. In the four most recent Winter Games – Salt Lake City 2002, Torino 2006, Vancouver 2010 and Sochi 2014 – it is apparent that the ambition of Olympic host cities to attract attention building on a cultural discourse has kept growing and is aligning with broader urban cultural policy agendas (see also Müller, Messing and Preuss 2006; Garcia 2012).

Given the smaller scale of operations at the Winter Games, there are interesting nuances that allow for different kinds of cultural programming and have resulted in a growing differentiation from Summer Games protocols. This differentiation has evolved since Salt Lake City in 2002. One of the most noticeable is the establishment of a 'medals plaza' as a distinct mixed-venue within the host city centre. This is a space where medals are awarded to athletes, thus extending and changing the ceremony that would normally take place within sport venues exclusively. The justification for this extension has been that winter sports take place mainly within mountain resorts away from any urban conurbation and have thus a low capacity to generate a festival atmosphere. The staging of a medals plaza as an additional Olympic venue has allowed organizers to intensify the experience of the winter Olympic city. Integral to the medal plaza ceremonies is the programming of cultural activities in addition to the presentation of the winning athletes. For instance, in Torino and Salt Lake City, it was typical for medals ceremonies to be followed by feature performances by international singers and musicians. This is one clear example in which the Winter Games has affected the Olympic protocol in a way that is conducive to more effective and better integrated city programming.

*Figure 4: Medals Plaza, a way to connect sport with its city and cultural context (Torino 2006)*



Photo by: Beatriz Garcia

Another relevant development has been in the approach to dressing the city during Games time. In Torino 2006, the traditional *Look of the Games* programme, dedicated to highlight sporting venues, was complemented by a comprehensive *Look of the City* programme,

dedicated to promoting Torino's cultural assets in a manner reminiscent of Mexico 1968 (see Garcia and Miah 2007).

Innovation continues to occur at the Winter Games. For instance, the Cultural Olympiad of Vancouver 2010 lasted four years, a first for any Olympic Winter Games, and it became a visible element within the city's dressing strategy, with dedicated 'culture' flagpoles in the years leading to the Games and during the Games fortnight in 2010. Further, also in Vancouver, the launch of a Cultural Olympiad Digital Edition (CODE) allowed the profiling of new technologies that resulted in creative artform interventions as well as ways to engage disperse communities throughout Canada. These communities were invited to reflect on their sense of identity via social media environments and share them within a dedicated online platform, Canada CODE, that became one of the most effective mechanisms to generate nationwide involvement in the Games (Klassen 2012).

Following on Vancouver, Sochi 2014 also presented a four year Olympiad and adopted the annual thematic focus approach that had been common to previous Summer editions. In Sochi, the themes evolved from a year of cinema in 2010, to theatre in 2011, music in 2012, museums in 2013 and a combined international arts festival in 2014.

### *Paralympic Games (2000 onwards)*

With regard to the Paralympic Games, cultural programming has remained a low priority until the turn of the century. Sydney 2000 was the first Games edition to work towards a high profile Paralympic Cultural Olympiad and proposed a single team to manage both the official Olympic and Paralympic cultural programme. Further, in the wake of Sydney 2000, a series of agreements between the IOC and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) resulted in closer synergies between the two Games, including the decision to establish a single organising committee which effectively means that all key programmes are organised under the same operational framework.

In the context of London 2012, the team responsible for the cultural programme committed to expanding such organisational synergies into an all-encompassing Games cultural policy narrative, where there was no distinction between Olympic and Paralympic cultural activity. Indeed, the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad incorporated a celebration of long established UK disability arts organisations as part of its four year national programme and a range of regional cultural programmes placed an emphasis on presenting activity that questioned the notion of 'normality' as a way of bridging the gap between perceptions of 'abled' or 'disabled' bodies, be it in the realm of sports or arts. Further, the Games-time 'London 2012 Festival' spanned over both Olympic and Paralympic fortnights without interruption, thus acting as a symbolic bridge between both events. To maximise visibility, London also created a distinct label and brand for its disability arts programme: 'Unlimited' (see: Garcia et al. 2013).

The sharing of a common team and a single programme of activity places the Cultural Olympiad in a significant position to promote greater synergies between Olympic and Paralympic Games in the years to come. This is because all other Games programmes, from the sport competitions to symbolic events such as the torch relay or the ceremonies, follow a different planning and delivery cycle. This could help assert the added-value brought by a flexible approach to Games cultural programming.

### **Main trends, challenges and opportunities for culture at the Games**

The dynamic nature of the Cultural Olympiad is manifest in the diversity of formats, objectives and management structures put in place to implement it since it was formally launched over 100 years ago. While the sports competitions and infrastructural dimensions of the Olympic sports programme have become extensively rationalised and standardised, the cultural programme has remained an area open to free interpretation by respective hosts up to this day. This section offers a brief summary of key programming trends, highlighting the way they have evolved over time.

### *Thematic focus: from sporting heritage to contemporary fusions*

The Olympic cultural programme has explored a wide range of art forms and varied approaches to its thematic emphasis. It started with a clear and exclusive focus on *classic art forms* (fine arts) under a mainly Western (European) canon. Interestingly, during the time it operated as an art competition, rather than just focus on the showcase of old masters and well-known works of art, it effectively encouraged the production of ‘new’ artworks that can be considered a major contribution to the development of Olympic cultural heritage. This is because the art on show had to be inspired by Olympic Games ideals as well as sporting achievement. Ultimately, despite the controversies regarding the status of contributing artists as professional or amateur, the founding focus of the Olympic cultural programme resulted in the production of a series of distinct artworks, many of which form the permanent art collection at the Olympic Museum in the IOC Headquarters.

As already suggested, the move away from competitions into art exhibitions and festivals led, in the first instance, to abandoning the production of new ‘Olympic’ artworks and prioritising instead the showcase of the host’s best-known and longest established national artists and cultural expressions. The focus continued to be on classic artforms but the remit broadened into national folklore displays. A majority of hosts during this time opted to showcase their national artistic heritage almost exclusively (eg. Melbourne 1956, Rome 1960, Tokyo 1964).

By the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, however, a majority of hosts placed a new (up to that point, unprecedented) emphasis on contemporary art and many promoted international art showcases. The most outstanding examples within this period were Mexico 1968, Munich 1972 and Los Angeles 1984, all of which presented world-class artists and invested in new contemporary art commissions to be presented during Games time. Munich and Los Angeles went a step further in their attempts at linking contemporary art trends with the Olympic narrative by introducing the notion of an ‘Olympic art poster’ series. While the production of Olympic posters was a tradition that had started with the first Modern Games in 1896, renowned artists had never been involved in their production. The point of distinction in Munich, Los Angeles and, subsequently, Sarajevo 1984 and Barcelona 1992, was that world leading artists of the time were commissioned to produce a visual statement representing Olympic achievement without the need to produce a literal representation of sport.

From 2000 onwards, in line with global cultural policy trends, many Western country hosts expanded into what is commonly termed as cultural fusion and innovation as part of their Cultural Olympiad programming. This has involved pioneering cross-sector collaborations between the arts, health and technology fields, amongst others. This approach has often been articulated as an attempt to use the Games to showcase local aspirations for greater cultural integration and social change rather than just focus on the presentation of well-known cultural icons, as had been the dominant trend up to the 1950s. Vancouver 2010 and London 2012 are two key exemplars in this area. The ‘cultural fusion’ narrative is, however, mainly a Western construct that contrasts with the approach by most Eastern Games hosts. The latter have continued to prioritise the showcase of traditional arts and their most valued cultural heritage over cross-sectoral collaborations (eg. Beijing 2008, Sochi 2014), but this is expected to change with Tokyo 2020, which is a Games edition that highlights youth and technology as a top priority within its cultural narrative.

Despite the broadening of topics and format interests, the one area that has remained secondary since the demise of the art competitions has been the exploration of *links between art and sport*. While at every Games edition there are art communities that, on learning about the existence of an Olympic cultural programme, argue in favour of exploring such connection, examples of truly innovative and meaningful collaborations in this domain remain scarce, and most attempts at an art and sport fusion have been unsuccessful from an audience or media-attention point of view. The only exception to this have been the few examples of Olympic art poster series, a tradition briefly recovered by London 2012, but only undertaken by four out of sixteen Art Exhibition and Cultural Olympiad summer editions, plus one winter Cultural Olympiad edition.

Figure 5: Art and sport links, as represented via the rare tradition of Olympic art posters (London 2012 edition)



Source: London 2012 Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (Courtesy of the IOC)

### *Vision and priority objectives*

The progressive expansion in Cultural Olympiad thematic and format focus is reflected in the expansion of programme objectives and priorities. From a chronological point of view, it is possible to detect a move from traditional cultural objectives (eg. the showcase of cultural icons and traditions) into broader political, economic and social objectives.

Table 3: Evolution of dominant Cultural Olympiad objectives

Key objectives	Dominant Characteristics	Key exemplars
Cultural (dominant up to the 1950s)	i) Celebrating classic cultural icons ii) Showcasing and promoting <i>host traditions and folklore</i> (dominant in the 1950s but also common in the majority of subsequent Games editions, complementing other objectives).	Tokyo 1964, Mexico 1968, Montreal 1976, Moscow 1980, Seoul 1988; the most recent edition with a strong ‘folklore’ component has been Sochi 2014.

Political (1960s-1980s)	i) overcoming negative international associations and stereotypes about the host nation (eg. violence, authoritarianism)	Tokyo 1964, Munich 1972, Moscow 1980, Beijing 2008, Sochi 2014;
	ii) encouraging or reigniting local/national pride	Tokyo 1964, Moscow 1980, Barcelona 1992, Sochi 2014
	iii) presenting a distinct local (small nation) story / narrative	Montreal 1976 (on Quebec) Barcelona 1992 (on Catalonia)
Economic (1990s onwards)	i) repositioning a city (or country) from a low (or outdated) profile into a more desirable and globally competitive image in order to attract tourism & inward investment	eg. Barcelona, Sydney and Torino worked to strengthen their contemporary cultural tourism offer and stand out vis-à-vis established/ more traditional (rural, heritage, beach) tourist images of Spain, Australia or Italy and long-term city rivals such as Madrid, Melbourne or Milan
	ii) entertaining crowds, assisting with city navigation during Games time	
Social (2000s onwards)	i) reconciliation with indigenous cultures;	Sydney 2000: eg. <i>Festival of the Dreaming</i> ,
	ii) representation of marginal communities (low income groups, religious minorities etc)	Vancouver 2010: eg. showcasing artwork from homeless groups,
	iii) empowering youth and disabled communities;	London 2012 : eg. <i>Unlimited</i> , disability arts programme

Source: author's elaboration, building on official Cultural Olympiad reports (1992 onwards)

An analysis of programming choices and priority objectives as showcased in available documentation at the Olympic Studies Centre in Lausanne (1952-1996) and Olympic organising committees since Sydney 2000,<sup>ii</sup> suggests that the vision behind most Cultural Olympiad editions fall within one or several of these four broadly defined typologies:

1. Politics and identity
2. Economic regeneration
3. Entertainment, look & feel
4. Cultural and social change

Find below a brief commentary over the ways in which such typologies have materialised, supported by specific examples that prioritise the most recent Games editions.

#### *Politics and identity: Growing or reigniting national pride*

This first typology includes Cultural Olympiad programmes that prioritise a local or national target audience and focus on direct, live participation opportunities rather than media coverage. The two most dominant approaches within this typology are a focus on folklore and popular traditions, or a focus on celebrating classic national cultural icons:

- *Folklore and/or popular traditions:* Cultural Olympiads with this kind of focus tend to be embraced by host communities and perceived as meaningful at grassroots levels; however, such programming is often invisible to – or not much appreciated by – visitors and the international media, particularly when it involves local references considered obscure by external audiences. Recent examples include the nationwide choral singing and folklore dances presented (nationally) in the lead to Beijing 2008 and Sochi 2010. In both cases, these showcases were celebrated as a first (unprecedented) attempt at a nationwide cultural programme open to exploring the diversity of Chinese and Russian cultures respectively.

- *Celebration of classic national icons*: This approach can be a source of pride for local communities but, if not carefully assessed and communicated taking into account community sensitivities, it can be perceived as tokenistic or seen to aim at international tourists rather than host citizens. Recent examples include Athens 2004 with its extensive programming of classic Greek theatre in iconic ancient venues, London 2012's programming of an International Shakespeare Festival or the many world-class Russian ballet galas presented during Sochi 2014.

### *Economic regeneration: City reimagining and tourism projection*

Securing an economic return has become a common priority for Olympic cultural programming since the 1990s, particularly for cities that view the Games as a key platform to join the league of so-called 'world cities' or globally successful cities. The main approaches within this typology are:

- *Focus on classic and internationally renowned cultural icons* : as noted above, this tends to be popular with international audiences but it may be viewed as tokenistic or lacking in innovation by local communities if it is not appropriately complemented by traditional or modern cultural expressions. Beyond the examples presented in the previous section, it is worth noting a line of programming in London 2012 which was dedicated to celebrating and pushing forward the tourist appeal of well-known British heritage sites such as Stonehenge, Hadrian Wall, the Tower of London etc. (see Garcia 2013b)
- *Projection of modern cultural icons and emerging creative industries*: this is aimed at both local and international audiences and tends to prioritise a 'connoisseur' audience rather than the general public. Cultural programmes with this kind of focus appeal to high-spending cultural tourists and can be very effective in the positioning of host cities as world-class cultural and creative centres. Recent examples include the final Olympic Arts Festival in Sydney 2000, which presented all of its performing arts programme at the Opera House; as well as the London 2012 Festival, which presented itself as a distinct component of the London Cultural Olympiad, dedicated to celebrating the most excellent and advanced cultural expressions in the UK (Garcia 2013).

### *Entertainment, 'Look & feel': Crowd management, city animation and city dressing*

This typology tends to be the least ambitious from a cultural policy and long-term urban strategy point of view but is useful as part of the Games hosting process as it helps address short-term needs regarding crowd control and city dressing to create a (manageable) festive atmosphere in the public realm, outside the sporting venues. The two main programming formats within this typology could be labelled as:

- *Entertainment'*: ie. a focus on open air activity to entertain and divert the crowds): this was championed by Sydney 2000, which launched the now firmly established tradition of 'Live Sites' as hubs for free activity and entertainment throughout the city during Games time
- *Look and feel'*: ie. a focus on visual and graphic design interventions to dress the city as well as sporting venues in a recognisable, unifying look.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there were some excellent examples of Cultural Olympiad integration within what we now understand as the 'look & feel' of the Games. As briefly suggested earlier, Mexico 1968 and Munich 1972 developed cultural iconography components that were, simultaneously i) innovative (avant-garde) from an aesthetic point of view; ii) unique to the local host and iii) useful as a Games dressing tool and entertainment aid. However, in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, the approach to city and Games venue dressing has shown a lowering of cultural ambition in favour of easily replicable (thus increasingly standardised)

formats (Garcia 2011). This is a trend that may change in the wake of London 2012, where graphic design was once-more aligned with place-specific cultural narratives, in particular, the interest in projecting the UK as a world leading and youth-oriented creative industries centre (see Garcia 2015, 2013a).

### *Cultural and social change : Creative innovation and community empowerment*

This is the most ambitious of all Cultural Olympiad typologies and the one with greater potential to deliver sustainable and meaningful legacies. It is, however, also the hardest to achieve as it requires long-term planning to enable adequate linkages between widely diverse stakeholders. If associated with Olympic values and understood as a Games-related opportunity and outcome, it can provide a key platform to add credibility to the Games experience amongst often hard-to-reach communities of interest.

The main approaches and exemplars that fall under this category are as follows:

- *A catalyst for cultural advancements* : this occurs when the Cultural Olympiad or specific activities are seen primarily as a catalyst for artistic and creative innovation, an opportunity to push forward a cultural agenda that may have stagnated before the Games were awarded. This has commonly involved dedicated investment on public art during Games time (eg. Barcelona 1992 ‘Art in the street’, Sydney 2000 ‘Sculpture by the Sea’, Torino 2006 ‘Luce di Artista’); the use of unusual spaces to present arts activities for the first time (eg. London 2012 artistic interventions in remote iconic sites such as Stonehenge; showcase of ‘hidden’ areas in London); working with new technologies or promoting emerging habits (eg. Vancouver 2010 ‘ Cultural Olympiad Digital Edition’, London 2012 ‘Pop-up’ events, reliant on social media)
- *Social transformation*: this occurs when the programme is used to advance specific or multiple social agendas in line with Olympic (and Paralympic) Games values such as: empowering youth (eg. Beijing and Sochi: Country-wide youth singing programmes; London: youth-oriented programme presenting the work of over 6,000 young or emerging artists), expanding opportunities to engage with or show the work of disabled artists (eg. Sydney 2000: *Invincible Summer*; London 2012: *Unlimited*); working with marginal communities (Sydney: *Festival of the Dreaming*, led by contemporary Aboriginal artists; London: collaborations with homeless communities and the unemployed).

### *Delivery formats*

Despite the ongoing development and expansion of cultural programme objectives and thematic priorities, the underlying challenges in terms of visibility and linkage between artistic programming and other Games activity have remained practically the same throughout one century. Good (1998) argues that the shift from art competitions to exhibitions did not solve the problem of adequate programme integration because it did not address the ‘management issues’ that had been repeatedly raised in official Games reports up to the 1950s (p. 31). As argued by Masterton (1973), Garcia (2012) and Miah & Garcia (2012) these problems have been accentuated by the absence of an international cultural organisation comparable to the international sports federations in its ability to coordinate and support Olympic arts initiatives. Subsequent attempts to address this gap (such as the proposal to establish a permanent Cultural Olympiad foundation in Greece) have lacked sufficient international backing to become viable models. Instead, as is the case with other cultural event networks, learning and transfer of knowledge regarding operational issues has relied on personal connections and informal word-of-mouth rather than being a thoroughly documented and transparent process.



As a result, there is not established model of delivery for the Cultural Olympiad. As noted in the previous section, up to 1992, the duration of a Cultural Olympiad would vary considerably. Since 1912, the only formal request by the IOC is that ‘cultural activities take place during the time the Olympic Village is open’ (IOC 2015) but few Olympic hosts have limited their cultural programming to that period. As such, we find variations ranging from four weeks in Helsinki 1952 and Melbourne 1956 to four years in the summer editions of Barcelona 1992 to London 2012 (see Table 2).

Other key variations that affect consistency and easy identification of the programme are its geographical spread and the approach to branding and communications.

### *Geographical spread*

While most Olympic Games editions have concentrated their cultural programmes in the host city (mainly within central areas or, in some cases, within the Olympic park and related Olympic venues), with the growth in duration of cultural programming, a parallel ambition has been to involve communities beyond the host city to ensure that the Games are owned at a regional and national level – and, sometimes, internationally. This has brought an additional challenge, as the more disperse the activity, the more difficult it has been to ensure that the programme is widely visible and recognised – particularly from the perspective of media coverage (García 2001).

The first nation-wide cultural programme took place in Mexico 1968, with various attempts at following this trend taking place in the lead to Sydney 2000, Athens 2004 and London 2012. London established an Olympic first by supporting the creation of thirteen regional ‘Creative Programmer’ posts that coordinated and encouraged Olympic cultural activity in their respective regions, without depending directly on the Olympic Organising Committee for the Olympic Games. This facilitated opportunities for legacy but also made it harder to establish a clear identity and brand.

Find below a summary table indicating specific focus of cultural programming locations:

*Table 4: Geographical locations for the Cultural Olympiad*

<i>City centre - famous cultural venues:</i>	This has been the most common approach since 1912 and is the most popular location of Cultural Olympiad events to this day
<i>City centre – public spaces / street:</i>	This has grown particularly since the late 1960s and is an important area of development as a complement to the so-called Live Sites (ie. open air entertainment around large screens) so that the street entertainment on offer is not just generic but an opportunity to showcase host cultures or explore innovative creative practices
<i>Olympic venues / Olympic Park:</i>	There are few good examples in this area. The scarce presence of cultural programming in Games venues has limited its impact and relevance for Olympic fans. Munich 1972 & Montreal 1976 developed artistic programming within the Park, but most editions tend to offer generic entertainment programmes not related to the distinct aspirations of their Cultural Olympiad. London 2012 has been the first Games to develop a contemporary public art programme within the Olympic Park embodying its vision for innovative, unusual, sustainable and locally representative artistic practices.
<i>Host regions/ nationwide/ internationally:</i>	There has been a growing interest in nationwide programming since Barcelona 1992, as the flexibility afforded by multi-annual programming viewed as a valuable platform to engage communities beyond the host city, welcoming diverse interests and forms of cultural expression. The most accomplished example of nationwide cultural programming is London 2012.

Source: author’s elaboration, building on Cultural Olympiad archives (official reports)

## Promotional frameworks

From a promotional point of view, little is known about the approach to communicating and attracting interest on the Cultural Olympiad before the advent of global branding techniques and the creation of comprehensive Olympic marketing guidelines (see Chapter 7). However, such techniques have been rarely applied to the cultural programme. With the notable exception of Mexico in 1968 the visibility and imagery association between the official cultural programme and the sporting competitions has been minimal.

A common approach to identify and promote the cultural programme has been the creation of a dedicated visual icon, often a variation on the main Olympic Games iconography (see Figure 6). In a few instances, the approach has been to create a different brand altogether. This was the case in Barcelona 1992 and Athens 2004. However, in such cases, authors have argued that there were important communication gaps and a lack of promotional synergy with mainstream Olympic activity (Garcia 2000, Panagiotopoulou 2008).

Whether employing a derivate icon or a distinct brand, the most common challenge for promoting and establishing a clear branding association between the cultural programme and the rest of the Games are the commercial restrictions imposed on the use of the Olympic rings. The Olympic rings are the most well known symbol of the Games and one of the most recognisable brands worldwide. However, Cultural Olympiad activity has rarely been granted access to this asset due to the fact that the main, global, Olympic sponsors do not tend to play a part as funders of cultural programming nor agree to be official presenters of artworks during Games time. Instead, most Cultural Olympiad activities are funded by alternative sources which, at times, include competing commercial sponsors. (For a more detailed discussion on Olympic financing and branding regulations, see chapter 6) .

Figure 5: Cultural Olympiad visual icons (1984, 1992, 2000, 2004, 2012)

Los Angeles 1984 (a variation on the main Games emblem, no Olympic rings)



Barcelona 1992 & Sydney 2000: Two visual identities (pre-Games time, Games time); all include the rings



Athens 2004: Different identity, unrelated to Games emblem (no rings)



London 2012: Variation on main Games emblem (no rings)



Source: Visual archive of respective Games editions by their Organising Committees (Courtesy of the IOC)

Given the long established concerns regarding the difficulty for the Cultural Olympiad to be promoted appropriately, the London 2012 culture team engaged on extensive Games branding discussions from the moment they were awarded the event. Their objective was to establish a Cultural Olympiad brand that did not conflict with Olympic sponsor interests but allowed cultural contributors to search alternative sources of funding or acknowledge their own long term sponsors. This resulted in the establishment of an ‘Inspired by 2012’ mark, a visual icon that was clearly associated with the London 2012 Games but did not include the Olympic rings. This approach was deemed as successful by many British cultural partners and also benefited other types of Games-related programming, beyond the Cultural Olympiad, such as educational, volunteering and business oriented initiatives (see Garcia 2013a,b).

Figure 6: ‘Inspired by 2012’, a London 2012 brand excluding the Olympic rings



Source: London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Organising Committee (Courtesy of the IOC)

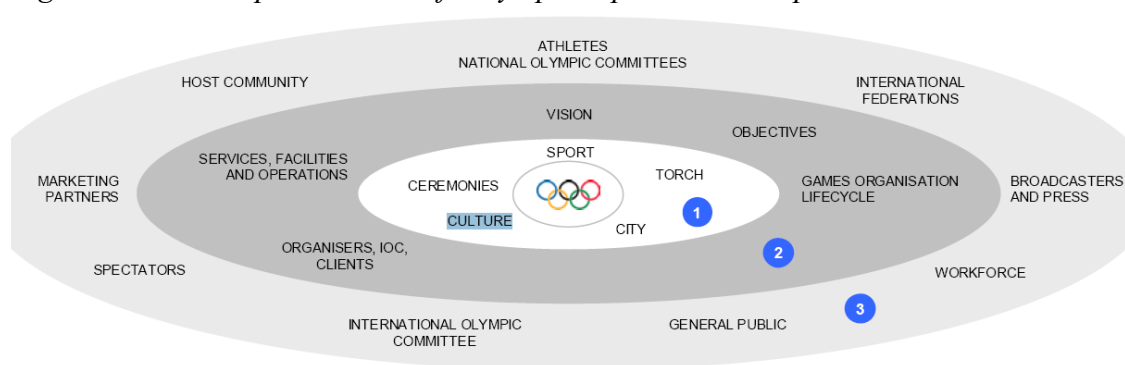
It is as yet unclear whether the ‘Inspired by’ initiative can be replicated in other Games contexts and become an avenue for branding cultural activities without conflicting with Olympic sponsor interests. At the heart of this branding debate, lays the question of who the Cultural Olympiad is for and what counts as cultural value at the Olympic Games. This is because, for as long as Cultural Olympiad programming cannot be promoted in association with the Olympic rings, it is unlikely it will be perceived as a core Olympic component and will continue to be excluded from international Games-oriented media coverage. Instead, the trend to position the Cultural Olympiad as a programme of local and/or national interest, of merit to host communities as a provider of context and background to the sporting competitions, and as an opportunity for direct engagement and participation, particularly for those not able to access sport competition tickets and attend official Games venues. This divorces the Cultural Olympiad from other aspects of the Games capable of generating global

media spectacle, such as the opening and closing ceremonies. It also divorces the Cultural Olympiad from the original aspiration by Coubertin, which was to ensure it played a central role in the appreciation of the sport competitions and provide context to the athletic achievement.

### *The future*

Since 2014, with the nomination of a new IOC president, the IOC has embarked on a comprehensive visioning exercise framed as Agenda 2020 (see IOC 2014). A commitment within this exercise is to rethink the role of culture in the Olympic Games hosting process and overcome the programme’s traditional marginalisation. This is in line with the expanding debate over the need for ‘legacy’, sustainability and a ‘360 degree’ Olympic management experience (IOC 2009: 27), a term that refers to the IOC’s ambition to better integrate all Games programming dimensions and ensure that the sporting competitions are rooted within each of the Olympic cities where they take place.

*Figure 7: Visual representation of ‘Olympic experience’ components*



Source: IOC (2008) – Author’s emphasis

These aspirations may have important implications for the future of the Cultural Olympiad. Firstly, this new approach has impacted on the Candidate City bidding guidelines, discouraging the traditional relegation of ‘cultural programming’ to a separate (minor and final section) chapter in the bid proposal, to make it, instead, a core dimension of the Olympic city and spectators experience that is presented within the introductory, framing sections to the bid. While the effects of such change are still to be seen, this suggests a push for organisers to think more creatively about ways to embed their cultural proposals within the Olympic Games hosting process rather than treat them as a separate – and easy to isolate or ignore – programme of activity.

Further, for the first time, the IOC has established a ‘Culture and Heritage’ department, with staff working on a dedicated cultural strategy and policy framework to guide in the delivery of programming that contributes to the development of a distinct Olympic narrative. This team is also looking into options to ensure that Games branding and media relations guidelines are better attuned to the needs of the cultural programme.

Regardless of the possibility for clearer and more strategic regulations from the IOC perspective, host cities have also become more effective and strategic in their profiling of culture around the Games hosting process. Be it as a political, economic, social or broader cultural objective, local organisers have become well aware of the importance of contextualising the Games as a global mega-event within a distinct and meaningful cultural programme in order to secure a sustainable legacy. This suggests that the role and relevance of future Cultural Olympiads will keep growing, and the demand for greater clarity and effectiveness in their delivery framework will also expand. Olympic cities may come to prominence through the opportunity to host 16 days of international elite sport competitions, but they tend to be best remembered (and differentiated, from one to the next) by their ability to showcase unique skylines, public spaces and approaches to celebration that are sensitive to

their specific heritage and diverse community values, as well as engaged with emerging and globally relevant creative practices.

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<sup>i</sup> In the original conception of the Olympic Games, a key criteria for inclusion as an Olympic competitor was the need to be an amateur athlete, that is, not to be a full time professional and compete in sport for financial or commercial gain. This rule was also applied to the arts competition, and caused controversy as it became a challenge to attract artworks of the right quality if contributors could not be professional artists. Avery Brundage, was elected as IOC president in 1952 and was strongly opposed to any form of professionalism in the Olympic Games. His views prevailed during the lengthy revision of Olympic Arts Competitions formats and priorities that took place between 1949 and 1952 and led to their replacement by Arts Exhibitions.

<sup>ii</sup> Analysis conducted by the author over documentation stored at the Olympic Museum – Olympic Studies Centre relating to every Olympic official cultural programme between Helsinki 1952 and Atlanta 1996, plus Cultural Olympiad materials and observations collated during fieldwork visits to Olympic summer and winter host cities from Sydney 2000 to Sochi 2014.