
New form of the art competitions

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As it is known, the modern Olympic art contests were founded by Coubertin himself. The mighty maker of the modern Olympic Games wanted to emphasize the close connexion between sports and arts by them.

There are scholars who have doubts about the existence of such competitions in Olympia. They are not right. Dikaiarchos, the Philosopher and Historian (grammateus) of the 4th century, A.D. wrote a work about the ancient art contests and in the third book of his work he dealt only with the Olympic ones. It is a pity that his book has been lost and we know only its title. By the way Dikaiarchos himself also figured as an orator in Olympia. Herodotos, the great historian attended the Olympic Games in 444 and read some parts of his historical work in which he glorified the immense merits of Athens in conquering the Persian army at Marathon. As Philostratos says, Herodotos was at that time much more celebrated in Olympia than the Olympic winners and all remarked when recognized him: "This is Herodotos, who so beautifully exalted our victories against the Persians." After Herodotos' success it came

in fashion to invite the greatest philosophers, poets, artists to Olympia in order that they might introduce themselves and their works, ideas to the pilgrims, to the Olympic public.

We have data that the great representatives of Greek spirit and art were crowned in the very same manner as the winning athletes. This was the form of the ancient Olympic art contests.

I see here the possibility of connecting my proposition to the ancient form of the art contests.

Let us confess, the inclusion of the modern art contests in the Olympic programme was not successful. The great figures of universal art had not taken notice of the existence of such competitions. Except in 2-3 cases as Pellegrini of Italy and Turski of Poland none of them took part in the competitions. The reason was the deficient propaganda of the Organizing Committees and the National Olympic Committees.

The competitors of the art contests and the Olympic spectators were strangers to each other, they seldom became members of the National Olympic teams.

It was an error that the art contests were regarded as a sideshow. The art *exhibitions* cannot substitute the fine arts *competitions*. *My proposition is:*

Let us invite to the Olympic Games some great artists of the chief branches of art, as literature, music, sculpture, painting, architecture and there may be added to them e. g. oration and recitation too.

The invited artists would show their works, would deliver lectures about themselves, about their art, about the effect of the Olympic Games on the different branches of art. They would live in the Olympic Village with the Olympians, would visit the Olympic delegations. Musicians would entertain the youth, all these artists could saturate the souls of Olympians with the beauty of arts, would afford them new motives to form their future lives.

They might be invited by a permanent Olympic Art Committee of Sportive Arts which is still to be founded.

The expenses of the invited artists would be covered by the Organizing Committees and by the competent National Olympic

Committees. (In our opinion, only by the *National Olympic Committees* and not by the Organizing Committee. *Editor.*) The artists should be rewarded as well. For that purpose we could found a prize, named : *Pro litteris et artibus Olympicis*. Besides our Committee could buy their prominent works for our Museum, could publish their excellent works.

If we succeed in winning the great artists for the Olympic Movement, we can try to return to the form of the modern Olympic art contests too but *mutatis mutandis*, that is to say, removing their errors, first of all the method that the prizes could be also retained.

If we realize the first or the second or a combined form of my propositions, I am convinced the art contest will be more lively, the interest in them will increase and we can do our best in preserving the immense value inherited from the classical founders of the high Olympic Movement, the Greeks and the immortal founder of the new era, Coubertin himself.