

Art and Sport



Wrestling scene in Etruscan painting (6th and 5th century B C).

In Italy *

The Palace of Exhibitions in Florence served as the setting, this year, for the 9th national biennial of "Sport and Art". Sponsored by the Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano (CONI), this exhibition was divided into various sections: painting, sculpture (trophies and medals), graphic art, engraving, photography, poetry and philately. A special hall was devoted to the memory of several artists, recently deceased, for whom sport represented a favourite theme.

From the point of view of both quality and quantity, the participation was a brilliant success and, owing to the value of the works presented, this biennial was one of the most remarkable events in Italian artistic life this year.

By offering an opportunity of seeking, in the dynamic, muscular and nervous tension of athletes, the seeds of poetry and movement which have inspired so many masterpieces in the past, this event shows better each year how it is possible to close the gap that has gradually appeared in our century between the worlds of art and sport.

1960 - Rome

To celebrate the 17th Olympiad, CONI gave the public an opportunity of seeing these masterpieces by organising various cultural events such as the "*Exhibition of Sport in History and Art*". This exhibition gave visitors a representative view of everything that ancient, mediaeval and modern Italy owed or owes to sport as a source of artistic inspiration. It enabled sports historians to examine a whole mass of iconographic and bibliographical material, often previously unpublished or unknown. The many works of art with sporting themes brought to light by archeological excavations in Etruria, Sicily and the Po Valley, have enriched our knowledge more especially regarding Greek sport. Among the Etruscans or Romans, although sport was practised, it was sometimes considered far too superficially or even tentatively. The exhibits shown in 1960 formed the starting point for subsequent studies and research. The section devoted to *sports constructions* made it possible to examine a completely new theme thanks to

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the reconstruction, in scale models, of stadia, amphitheatres, circuses and gymnasias, as well as to discover the importance of sport in architecture and town-planning in Italy, both in ancient times and in the modern era. The Roman tradition of sports architecture remained very persistent and active from the Renaissance down to the 19th century and even, in new technical forms, till today.

A “*Sport and Art*” catalogue, showing the major works of this exhibition, was published. As this invaluable text is now unfortunately out of print, it is planned to issue a new printing.

The participation of contemporary artists

The principal masters of contemporary art in Italy now use the theme of sport in their works and cooperate directly with the CONI. Each year, a collection of their work (etchings, lithographs, serigraphs) is published by CONI in luxury art book form. Works by Eva Fischer, Corrado Cagli, Carlo Levi, Ugo Attardi, Angelo Canevari, Amerigo Tot, Enotrio, Piacesi, Trubbiano, Tornabuoni, Cordio, Trotti, Mazzullo and Tommasi-Ferroni appear there among others.

Eminent sculptors, like Greco, Mazzullo and Tot, have made it possible to renew *CONI's trophies* by creating unique works of art—a new medal, a plaque or a cup—combining great artistic value with sporting significance.

CONI's cultural activity reaches into all fields of art without exception. The 33rd edition of the *International Festival of Sports Cinema* was held at St. Vincent this year and not at Cortina d'Ampezzo as in the past; the first prize was won by the Polish cinema.

For the fourth time, an *international exhibition of humorous drawings* on the subject of sport, organised in Ancona this year, showed us many facets of sports humour, ranging from the grotesque to the paradoxical, from the absurd to the sarcastic, but always gaily and amusingly done, achieving in a single drawing, often without a caption, a sort of visual Esperanto easily understood by all.

Literature

In the literary field, CONI is proud to have helped reverse a trend which considered, on the one hand, that the “relationship between

literature and sport was a difficult one and that writers were unwilling to tackle this theme” and, on the other hand, that “sport was a world full to overflowing with light and life, while Italian writers, even the most provocative or iconoclastic, were, at best, all imbued with crepuscular gloom, lamenting over the wounds of the world and seeming to delight in weeping over their own sad lot!”

Publishers therefore did not have much to offer the mass of potential readers to be found among sports enthusiasts. In actual fact however, there are very few Italian poets or writers who have never dealt with the theme of sport in their works, and CONI is now concentrating on making them known, and helping them to reach a wider public. Thanks to CONI's literary competition, publishers have discovered and adopted the theme of sport. What is more, writers of school text-books are devoting more and more space to sport whereas even only a short while ago they practically never mentioned the subject. They have probably discovered that the gradual development of sport in schools had to correspond to the real facts in which children are interested.

Cover of a collection of short stories.

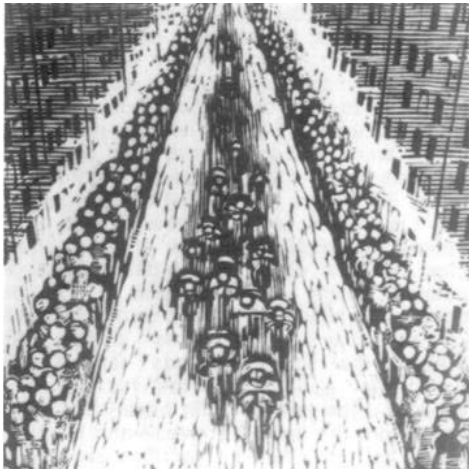


In Poland

The Polish Olympic Committee has awarded Olympic laurels to the most remarkable works dealing with the theme of sport during the 1972-76 Olympiad. Below we list the prizewinners.

Golden Laurels

Graphic art: Mrs. Emilia Nozko-Paprocka, in particular for her work *"The main body"* (our photograph).



The bunch by Emilia Nozko Paprocka.

Sculpture: Mr. Kazimierz Karpinski, for his work entitled *"The Champion of the Future"* (which was shown in our Nr. 80-81, page 363).

Cinema: Messrs. Tadeusz Makarczynki and Bohdan Tomaszewski, authors of the film *"Marathon"*, recounting the Olympic history of this event.

Silver Laurels

Literature: Mr. Grzegorz Młodzikowski, for his article *"20 Olympiads of Modern Art"*.

Journalism: Mr. Tadeusz Olszanski for his series of reports *"The Magic of the Games"*.

Architecture: Mr. Jerzy Turnieniecki, for his plans for a sports palace.