

## Art and Sport

*as seen by Willi Daume,  
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The question of the association between art and sport, and between the culture of sport and that of the mind, has always been eminently controversial from both these approaches.

In the face of art, sport has never had an easy task, though no more than art in the face of sport. Baron de Coubertin's treasured idea of organising Olympic art competitions (literature, music, painting, graphic arts, sculpture and architecture) on the occasion of the Games has not withstood the test of time. The difficulty inherent in the amateurism problem was largely responsible—for example, it is hard to imagine an amateur architect—together with the difficulties of having the works judged which consequently led to the drop in quality since the great artists of the world did not—understandably—accept to submit to such Olympic selection. However, only the highest level of artistic quality can meet Olympic standards. Pierre de Coubertin, too, resolutely declined in the circumstances to permit a medium quality art, an art which at all events, in his own words, “commands less attention in modern times”. In the end, the IOC had no choice when it decided to forgo Olympic art competitions as from 1952 and to be satisfied with art exhibitions. Nevertheless even these, like almost all the other activities which are pursued in the fields of sciences and fine arts on the occasion of the Olympic Games, have been of very irregular quality at the Games held since then.

W.D.

