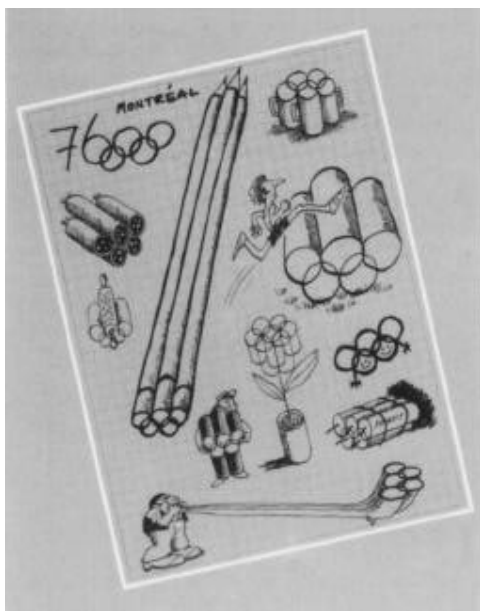


HUMOUR, EXPRESSIONS AND NOSTALGIA

THREE WINTER EXHIBITIONS

There are many ways of approaching sport to give it its artistic dimension. Every year, the Olympic Museum in Lausanne tries its hand at this exercise in taste in the form of temporary exhibitions which it presents for the benefit, primarily, of the Lausanne public — a regular public is not necessarily an indulgent one — but also of passing visitors, sports officials, athletes and tourists who happen to be in the Olympic capital. Since the start of this winter season, there have been three exhibitions, each one casting a new, different and revealing light on the possibilities of enhancing the appreciation of sport by means of the image : caricature, photograph or painting. This three specialities make an attractive show, especially when the exhibition area is not as extensive as could be hoped. The future Olympic Museum, the construction of which is due to begin soon, will be much more generously endowed in this respect and the temporary exhibitions will have the benefit of extensive areas set aside within it for the purpose.

The caricature and the humorous drawing are among the livelier arts. The combination of graphic skill and the ability to make people laugh out loud, smile or wince, is not a common gift. Jürg Spahr is a caricaturist living in Basel (SUI), where, under the name of Jüsp, he exercises his mischievous and pointed humour on sport and, it appears, a number of other subjects besides. At the start of the cold season, this retrospective of forty years of cartoons and portraits, published day after day in two Basel newspapers, provided a dose of good cheer ! An anecdotal view of an entire age, a mad dash taking in events on the run. Nothing escapes Jüsp. In each event, he finds an element of the ridiculous : the Olympic Games and all that goes with them are, for him, a choice morsel. With great sureness of touch, for the image is precise, he builds up a portrait which is complex but always on target. The details of his drawings reveal their author as a true connoisseur of sport. Over and above his natural penchant, Jüsp, the connoisseur, puts a masterly finger on a number of home truths. How can one refuse to acknowledge them when they are presented with such aptness and



The photographs, which replaced the humorist's drawings at the end of December, also owe their existence to newspapers. They were used by dailies and weeklies to illustrate current events in sport. But it was to liberate them from this form of servitude and to give them a new lease of life that this exhibition was conceived. Readers of the *Olympic Review* have already made the acquaintance of Mr. Jean-Paul Maeder, who covers on its behalf the Olympic meetings in Lausanne. The photographs are his, a selection of his work which he chose to present in this context. A series of expressions — the exhibition was entitled "Regards" — which illustrate his favourite medium, the portrait. An athlete's eyes are a distillation of his experience. A person's whole "psychology" is expressed in the eye, which, in its turn, fashions the face : in it, we may read effort, joy or distress. The portraits — close-ups, full length and half-length shots — are all unique. Knowing the difficulties encountered by sports photographers in approaching their "target" and the skill and fast reflexes needed to capture the intensity of performance, we cannot help but admire the quality of the work. But the

Olympic Museum

“Expressions” of Jean-Paul Maeder, placed one beside another, reveal something else, a multi-dimensional world of sport which stretches the imagination, a history of the stadium which leaves a lasting impression.

After photographic impact, a return to charm with the delicate touches of watercolour and line. Carlo Pellegrini was an Olympic poster artist active around the turn of the century, who earned this historic title with a gold medal won in the art competitions at the Games in Stockholm in 1912, where he presented a triptych on winter sports. A prolific production of post-cards, then in their first heyday, posters and drawings of all kinds, marked by the naïveté and freshness we associate with the “Belle Epoque”, bears candid witness to the infancy of winter sports. Pellegrini, an Italian who died in Geneva, never strayed far from the mountains. Haunting the Italian, Swiss and French Alps, he committed to paper in a fairy-tale setting a multiplicity of techniques and equipment — a whole society discovering the joys of the snow. The colours are those of the ancestors of the “comic”, the picture books of many a childhood. A minor art, no doubt, that of illustration — a cunning one, none the less, which saw the vast potential of the picture post-card — but an art all the same, which brings us the tastes and customs of a bygone age and leaves the visitor savouring a pleasant whiff of nostalgia.

