

# Art and Sport

## THE NEED FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Olympism links sport to culture and education. These few words say it all, yet are just a beginning. The programme is immense and never-ending.

Coubertin wrote in 1919 that, in restoring the Olympic Games, he had set his sights far ahead, rather than looking close by. Indeed, he foresaw the Olympic Games developing with all that they had encapsulated in Antiquity, that is, sport and culture. The term culture should be understood in its overall sense, with all that characterizes the various civilizations in their expressions, conduct and ethical relations. Meanwhile art, in its modern sense, and education both form a part of culture.

Coubertin understood the complexity of his project, which was to include art contests in the programme of the Olympic Games at the same level as the sports events. He waited until the

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V Olympiad to put his plan into practice. He had little in the way of enthusiastic support from the organizers of the Games of this Olympiad in Stockholm; nevertheless the contests took place. It seemed likely that they would become a set part of the programme. Contests were organized until the XIV Olympiad in London in 1948, and then stopped. Looking back, it is interesting to note that very

few of the artists who took part in these contests made a lasting impression. I do not intend to look for a reason for this phenomenon, but what I do see is that the elimination of this art contest at the Olympic Games did not break the link between sport and culture, which is the essence of Olympism. This link simply developed in a different way. Cultural Olympiads are organized, and are increasingly grandiose. Their programme is spread over the four years preceding the opening ceremonies of the Games of the Olympiad and the Olympic Winter Games.

The organizing committees contact all the countries in the world and the greatest artists contribute to this prestigious festival, which above all enables the people of the host country to discover, understand and see artists and works from other continents.

Since the end of the 19th century, the world has undergone great change; society has been transformed; and sport has created its own culture. This is what was noted at the forum organized by the IOC's Cultural Commission in 1997. The dynamism of this new culture has shattered the artificial barriers which maintained culture as an exclusive domain reserved for the elite. The opening and closing ceremonies at the Olympic Games are one of the best examples of this evolution. These ceremonies are the result of creative work which combines culture and traditions, be they national or continental, with Olympic traditions and symbols. This message sent, and received on television by billions of spectators, is becoming universal. Multicultural barriers are falling, com-



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munication is developing thanks to sport and the art world is no longer separated from that of sport.

We were able to see this recently when we organized an international Olympic contest of graphic works and sculpture. This contest was open to all art school students as well as to all athletes affiliated to a sports federation. The level of participation in this contest (seventy NOCs organized it on a national level) has shown, and this had to be done, that sport and art currently intermingle and that

young people no longer make any negative distinction between these two spheres.

It is well-known that the IOC's authority depends to a great extent on the ongoing efforts and new initiatives in the field of culture and education. The Executive Board and the Commission for Culture and Olympic Education are well aware of their task in this area.

Indeed, the need for intercultural education has never been more apparent than in the globalized

world of today. Olympic education should become as multicultural as it is intercultural through the exploration and celebration of cultural diversity within the Olympic Movement. In a word, Olympism is the universal crossroads and the link for young people in the world, where the aspirations of each and every one of them can be found.

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## THE WINNING WORKS

"Olympic Art and Sport 2000 Contest"



"The Fire of Olympus", by Darya Moroz.



"Clinging", by Chen Chi-Ran.



"Olympic Sport": by Zakria Mohamed Soliman.