



**DOERR DALLAS
VALUATIONS**



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THE OLYMPIC GAMES THE HISTORY & MEMORABILIA

The Paris 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games are about to commence – historic tournaments where sports people from all over the globe assemble to compete for arguably the most prized award in elite sport – the Gold Medal.

The Olympic symbolism is today immediately recognisable – the rings; torches; the gold, silver and bronze medals – all icons of the event. Whilst precursors to the modern Olympics were held throughout the 19th century, the first true modern Olympic Games was held in Athens in 1896. The idea had been cemented by French aristocrat Pierre de Coubertin (Baron de Coubertin) (1863-1937) founder of the International Olympic Committee.

The 1896 'Games of the I Olympiad' was on a much smaller scale than that of the games today – with just 241 all male athletes competing, the majority of whom were Greek, and others from just 19 nations. For these inaugural games the winners received a silver, rather than a gold medal.



Athens 1896 Olympics Silver 'First Place' Winner's Medal
(Lot 6001, Olympic Memorabilia - RR Auctions, 22nd July 2021)

In July 2021 RR Auctions sold one of the Athens 1896 'Silver' winners medals. They were designed by Jules-Clement Chaplain (1839-1909), one of the most important medalists of the late 19th century. As is often the case it had been presented to a now unknown recipient. Despite this it sold for a total price of just over \$180,000 (Lot 6001, Olympic Memorabilia – RR Auctions, 22nd July 2021).

The second Olympic Games were held in Paris in 1900 as part of the World's Fair during that year. The Olympics in their infancy were often held in conjunction with other, then larger events, in the hope of generating interest. A broader field of sports were involved in 1900 with men and women both competing. The events included Polo, Croquet and Tug of War, which was an Olympic Sport between 1900 and 1920! Bizarrely, ballooning was also one of the events – with competitors aiming to travel by balloon and land on a target. In July 2012 Sports Memorabilia Auctioneers, Graham Budd sold a participation medal for this very event – presented to Abel Corot the Balloonist who finished in 9th place – it sold for a modest £300 (Lot 23, Graham Budd, 24th July 2012).

The third Summer Olympics were held in the American city of St. Louis, in 1904, again as part of the World's Fair. Golf was one of the early sports included in the Olympic roster. In 2016 Christies, London offered the 1904 Olympic Gold Medal awarded to amateur golfer Robert E. Hunter (1886-1971). The medal was actually cast from solid gold (gold medals were only truly gold for two Olympic Games). Estimated at £20,000 – 30,000, it sold for a total of £206,000 (Lot 521, Out of the Ordinary, Christies London, 14th September 2016).

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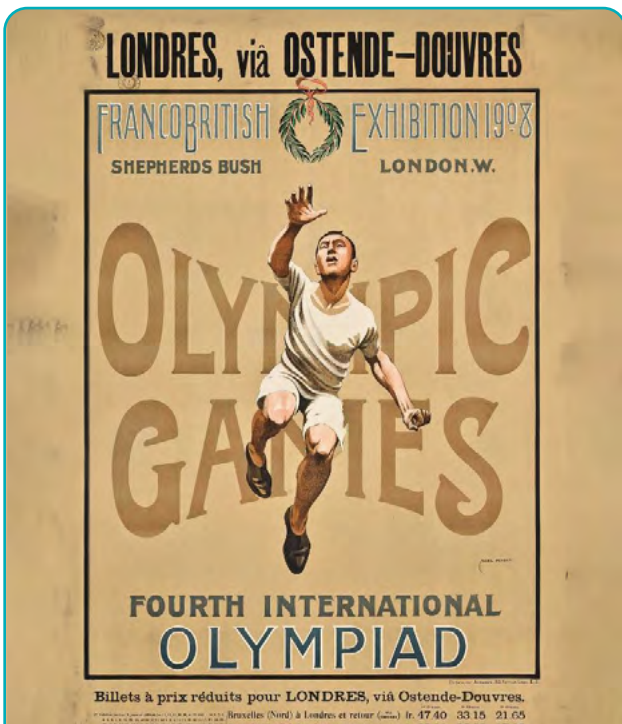
Robert E. Hunter (1886-1971), American Amateur Golfer gold medal (Lot 521, Out of the Ordinary, Christies London, 14th September 2016)

For the fourth tournament in 1908 the host city selected was Rome. However, the location was altered, when the Italians decided against holding the competition after Mount Vesuvius erupted in 1906. London stepped in to hold the games. This time the tournament coincided with the Franco-British Exhibition at the newly constructed 'White City'. The promotional poster for London 1908 offered information on travel to London from Europe as well as location of the event. This rare piece is seldom offered for sale. Ahead of London 2012 Games, Christies held a sale containing Olympic posters. The Alfred Edwin Johnson work illustrated by Noel Pocock sold for £15,000 (Lot 4, Vintage Posters, Christes London, 18th April 2012).

As the games continued many of the now familiar symbols were established. The instantly recognisable logo of the games – the Olympic rings – were introduced in 1913, having been designed by the (aforementioned) Pierre de Coubertin. They represent the five continents and competitors coming together.

Art and design have an important connection with the Olympics – surprisingly in fact between 1912 and 1948 Olympic Gold, Silver and Bronze medals were awarded for painting, sculpture, architecture, literature and music amongst other areas of the arts. Famous artists including Sir William Nicholson and Dame Laura Knight were Olympic medal winners.

The Paris 2024 Games marks the third occasion which the city has held the competition. The second was one hundred years ago in 1924. Winners of Gold Medals during the 1924 games were additionally presented with a vase produced by the great French porcelain manufacturer Sevres. The vases feature four medallions, decorated with different sports. In April 2024 auctioneers Bonhams/ Skinner Marlborough sold an example featuring cycling, tennis, sailing and shooting, it achieved a total selling price of \$12,160 (inc. BP) (Lot 95, Eric van Rooy Estate, Bonhams/Skinner, 15th-25th April 2024).



Alfred Edwin Johnson, illustration by Noel Pocock, Fourth International Olympiad (Lot 4, Vintage Posters, Christie's London, 18th April 2012)



Paris Summer Olympics Vase (Lot 95, Eric van Rooy Estate, Bonhams/Skinner, 15th-25th April 2024)

Appreciation of art and design has always been important at the Olympics (as the Gold medal competition for art show). Influential artists have designed objects and promotional material for the Olympics throughout the events history. Posters are one area where this has been obvious.

Early posters, as with the London 1908 example, frequently included information about the forthcoming games with representations of Athletes. The 1928 Amsterdam Olympics was typical of this type, designed by Joseph Rivers the poster included a central image of a runner. One was sold by Cheffins in October 2022 for £3,000 (excluding BP) (Lot 326, Art & Design, Cheffins, 27th October 2022).



London has also held the Olympics on three occasions. To promote the London 1948 Games an eye-catching poster design was created by Walter Herz (1909-1965), including landmarks and a central discus thrower – a statement of British post-war optimism. One hundred thousand were printed over two formats, resulting today, in versions appearing on the open market consistently. Swann Galleries USA sold a double-crown style poster in February 2020 for \$3,750 (Lot 204, Vintage Posters, Swann Auction Galleries, 13th February 2020).



The torches, used to relay the flame from Athens and eventually lighting the ceremonial cauldron are sought by collectors of Sporting Memorabilia. Often manufactured entirely of metal, they ordinarily feature Olympic rings clearly in their designs. Like the posters, relay torches from the 1948 Games pop-up for sale regularly.

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An original torch from the 1948 London Olympiad
(Lot 257, Dawsons, 28th September 2023)

In September 2023, one of these aluminium torches designed by Ralph Lavers (1907-1969) reached a hammer price of £3,000 at Dawsons Auctioneers (Lot 257, Dawsons, 28th September 2023). Torches of similar design were used during the 1950s. In November 2022 Welsh auctioneers Anthemion sold a bearers-torch from the 1956 Melbourne Olympics – the hammer fell this time at £5,500 (Lot 724, Anthemion Auctions, 23rd November 2022).

The designs for the 1960s Olympics reflected modernist and abstract movements of the period. Italian Sculptor Silvio Gazzaniga (1921-2016) most famously designed the FIFA World Cup trophy. He also designed the bronze Trophy awarded at the first Paralympics held Rome, 1960. One such sculptural piece, presented to an unknown athlete, was sold at Mallams Auctioneers in March 2018 for £380. (Lot 376, Modern Living, Mallams, 7th March 2018). The Collection of Phyllis & Jerome Lyle Rappaport.

The 1964 Tokyo games were the first to produce an official set of posters designed by Yusaka Kamekura (1915-1997). The most notable of these is titled 'The Rising Sun and the Olympic Emblem' featuring simply a red circle, Olympic rings, text of the host city and year. In January 2022, Chicago based auctioneers Potter & Potter sold this lithograph poster for \$1,200 (excluding buyers premium) (Lot 0488, Potter & Potter, 29th January 2022).



Tokyo Olympics, 1964
(Lot 0488, Potter & Potter, 29th January 2022)

The 1968 Mexico City poster was similarly striking. Inspired by Op-art the design was a collaboration between Lance Wyman, Eduardo Terrazas and Pedro Ramirez. Poster specialists Antikbar sold a copy in August 2019 – reaching £3,400 (hammer, excluding BP) (Lot 3603, Vintage Posters, Antikbar, 3rd August 2019).



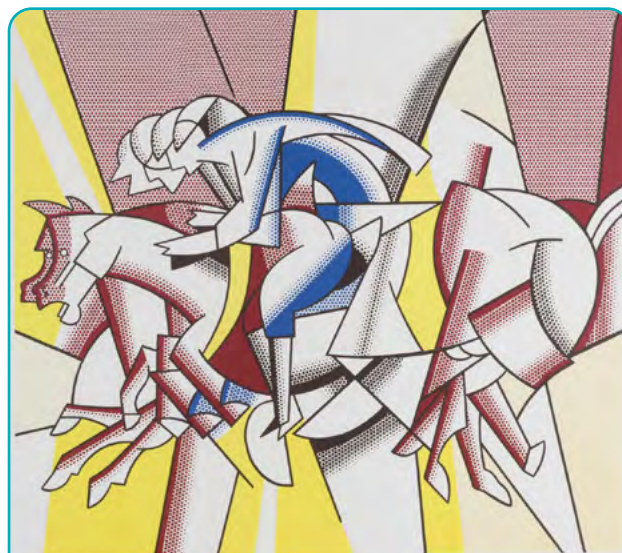
Mexico City Olympics, 1968
(Lot 3603, Vintage Posters, Antikbar, 3rd August 2019)

David Hockney (b. 1937) designed posters for both the 1972 Munich Games and 1984 Los Angeles Games. In June 2012, Sotheby's offered Hockney's partially completed pencil design for the 1972 poster, featuring a diver – the work eventually sold for £169,250 (total including BP). The final poster often appears at auction and is part of a set created by several artists for the Munich games. In March 2024 an example of 'The Diver' poster was offered at Forum Auctions reaching a hammer price of £600 (Lot 61, Editions, Forum Auctions, 12 March 2024). Also, during the same month Bonhams London sold Hockney signed limited edition print of the 1984 Los Angeles swimming pool design for £11,250 (Lot 26, Bonhams, 26th March 2024).



David Hockney, partially completed pencil design for 1972 Munich Games poster (Lot 174, Sotheby's London, June 2012)

Pop artist, Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997) also produced a poster design for the Los Angeles 1984 Games. A signed limited-edition version of the dynamic work 'The Red Horsemen' sold at Bonhams Los Angeles in January 2024 for a total of \$5,632.



Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games

Roy Lichtenstein, 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, 'The Red Horseman', (Lot 110, Bonhams Los Angeles, 9 – 19 January 2024)

For the London 2012 Games several notable British artists were commissioned to produce poster artwork, including Bridget Riley (b. 1931). An offset lithographic copy of this work 'Rose Rose' was sold at Rosebery's London in June 2023 for £650 (excluding BP).

Such is the global recognition for the Olympics – when memorabilia directly relating to some of the most famous events (for both the Summer and Winter games) appears on the open market it can command very high prices.

Famous sporting names often establish their status at the Olympics. Gymnast, Olga Korbut has long been associated with advancing the sport and acrobatic routines. In February 2017, American auctioneers Heritage offered Olga Korbut's Team USSR Gold Medal from Munich 1972 Games. The overall price here was \$66,000.

In February 2024, Christies New York offered the Men's Long Jump Gold Medal awarded to Bob Beamon at the 1968 Mexico City games. Beamon, achieved sporting greatness beating the World Record during the competition, leaping 8.9 meters – 55cm further than any jump prior. His World Record stood from 1968 until 1991 and remains the Olympic record! This fascinating piece sold for a total of \$441,000 (including B.P).



Bob Beamon's 1968 Olympic Gold Medal
(Lot 11, Christie's, February 2024)

Basketball legend Michael Jordan, is one of the most famous sportsmen in history. In June 2023 Sotheby's offered the Reebok jacket worn by Jordan whilst receiving his 1992 Olympic Gold Winners Medal alongside his USA teammates dubbed 'The Dream Team'. The performance of 'The Dream Team' during the Barcelona games is one of the most influential in Olympic history. The Reebok jacket controversial, due to Michael Jordan's famous association with the Nike brand. This important piece of memorabilia was signed by Jordan and offered with an estimate of \$1m – \$3m. The garment achieved a sales total of just over \$1,500,000 (Lot 1, The Dream Team, Sotheby's, 29th June 2023). While his signed and worn Nike 'Air Jordan VII' sneakers also used during the 1992 Olympics sold for \$114,300 (Lot 2 as before) (inc. BP).



Michael Jordan 1992 Summer Olympics
'Dream Team' Signed Reebok Jacket (Lot 1,
The Dream Team, Sotheby's, 29th June 2023)

Michael Johnson is one of the fastest men in history and one of the most famous names in athletics. In March 2024 auctioneers Heritage offered a pair of 'Gold' Nike running spikes worn by Michael Johnson whilst representing team USA during the Atlanta 1996 Olympic Games. Johnson achieved gold in both the Men's 200m and 400m sprint competitions – breaking World Records in the process. The stylish pair sold for \$68,750 (inc. B.P.) (Lot 90347, Treasures from Planet Hollywood, Heritage Auctions, 24th March 2024).



Michael Johnson Olympics-Worn Nike
'Gold Shoe' (1996). (Lot 90347, Heritage Auctions,
24th March 2024)

At the opposite end of the collecting spectrum and what seems a very affordable piece – a shirt worn by footballer Mohamed Salah during the Egypt v Brazil match at the London 2012 Olympic Games. The then 20-year-old was eligible to play in the team due to his age (Olympic Games Football competition is between Under-23 age group). The jersey was offered by Julien's in America in 2017 (prior to Salah's cementing his status as a Liverpool FC legend) the shirt sold for just \$192!

With the Olympics just around the corner – sporting legends will be made, and the memorabilia of the future created.

Finally therefore to quote Founder Baron de Coubertin: "The important thing in life is not the triumph, but the struggle, the essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well."