

# The Cultural Olympiad: objectives, programme and development

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I have always thought that among the great cultural elements of the Games, surely the most important, the most decisive, are the ceremonies, and I have often thought that the Cultural Olympics as such should take part in the ceremonies. And, in fact, we have made a step in this way by speaking with those in charge.

The tradition of an important cultural presence at the Olympics existed back at the times of the ancient Games, and was restored by Baron de Coubertin when the Olympic Games of the modern era was set up. However, we believe that the cultural proposal in the strict sense of relatively conventional cultural activities or actions we are doing in the Olympic Project of Barcelona is something totally new.

First, it is a novelty for its extension. Traditionally, along this century, the Olympic Games have been accompanied by a cultural proposal, but limited in time -which does not mean it has not been of great quality in many cases- to the weeks immediately previous to and the weeks during which the Olympic Games were held. In a certain way, it was a cultural product very secondary to the Games, an animation product around the sports events, something absolutely legitimate and important.

We'll have something like that in Barcelona'92 too. We shall have an Olympic Arts Festival-a name already consecrated by history- which will mostly have that role of a certain back-up, a strengthening, a cultural prestige to the Games.

Apart from what we'll be doing in '92, and which responds a little to tradition accumulated in this century, we have already spoken about carrying out a wider cultural programme, both in duration -four years- as its subject scope and objectives. We put forward a programme of four years, which started just when the Games at Seoul terminated. The first we did was to organise a great City Fiesta to receive the Olympic standard from Seoul and we made a first exposition, three years ago, on the impacts it could be foreseen the Olympic games would have on Barcelona. We started that way because our general idea is that the Games be a success, but most of all, it is that this event be an important boost for the city. The fact that the Games are a great opportunity for renewal and modernisation of the infrastructure, of communications, transit, etc., we wanted to carry it to the cultural area, and use the four years: of the Games to give a special boost to both cultural life as the city's cultural infrastructure.

In this sense, we have let ourselves be guided by basic guidelines, which are those which have inspired all our activities, and which we sum up here.

On one hand, we tried, in our cultural environment -which is Catalan, first of all, then, more generally Spanish, and after that more generally European-, to have some of the great historic wealth of our culture in some way, more recognised than it has been historically. Not only internationally recognised -which we also aim at- but, rather, recognised internally. In this sense we have recently carried out an important experiment, which is a great complex cultural manifestation around the theme of Modernism -we call Modernism the cultural and artistic expressions produced at the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX-. The most relevant personality of this movement is Antoni Gaudí, but he is not alone. This is a

value known for a long time which the Japanese discovered ten years ago and who have converted it into a legend, but, on a wider international scale and internally, this phenomenon of Modernism was still not sufficiently valued. Even recently, modernist buildings have been destroyed because their importance was not sufficiently recognised. With this operation we have done a degree of internal and external recognition which has been achieved and which I think should have placed the defense of this heritage at a practically unattackable level.

Together with this recognition of our history's heritage, our tradition, we play the card of potentiation of the capacity of innovation. It is the case of this small country, poor in natural resources but, instead, with a wealth of creative resources. One of the things we sell here is design. In one way or another, design is one of the great cultural expressions. One of the things which has potentiated and is still clearly potentiating the Cultural Olympics is all that which could be a certain «creative sophistication» because we believe that it is one of the bases of a possible competitiveness as a city for the future.

Recognition of tradition, potentiation of creation and, all of this, when possible, in a system of coproduction, exchange, no longer with an attitude of «we'll do everything ourselves».

In the field of culture the operations of coproduction are very often difficult, but they also very often are absolutely necessary. In the case of a small culture, like the Catalan one, it is even more necessary. If there is no opening there is no oxygen, no life. Only the small cultures ready to open themselves up a little and soak things from the outside are able to survive. The Olympic period is an exceptional opportunity for this contact, for this exchange.

There is one last element, very difficult to evaluate -what I have said up to now can be measured in concrete programmes, in visitors, in spectators, in money spent-, but that we have set as a target for the Olympic Games. You must recognise that in these last three or four years Barcelona is undergoing a very great physical change, and that means it is facing big problems in day-to-day life -the matter of traffic is the most obvious, but there are lots more, like the dust, the pollution ... all which comes with a very intensive process of renewal of the city-. Of course, the Cultural Olympics cannot fix that but not waiting for the moment of the Games to have everything ready and well presented, and have a great organisational success, can help. It is something positive that, right from the beginning, from the moment the Games start to be organised, events be organised which have a sense in themselves, as in the case of cultural events, many of which are projected to the future. We think we have done a great job of explaining where the city was going with the Olympic project. We believe it has helped to establish a complicity, a conscience of what the Olympic project implied and, in this sense, I believe we are being a good support for the Olympic project in general.

Finally, the whole Cultural Olympics is looking towards, to say it in some way, not only 92, but also 93: to have improved the city's cultural life a little, to have contributed to creating facilities, cultural infrastructures, and see that the city of , 93, thanks to the drive coming from the Olympic Games, be absolutely positive.

With this I want to say that not all the projects of the Cultural Olympics are necessarily connected with sport.

What the Olympics Charter demands, and what we are trying to do, is that the cultural programmes tied to the Olympic Games have the same level of quality as the sports competitions, not that they be cultural programmes on sports themes. We have carried this out to the end and we have tried to develop a substantial programme with regards to cultural matters, very secondary to the projects of the city. At all times in close coordination and fraternity with the Olympic Project in general, but at the same time with a strong autonomy.

This has translated, for instance, into an important organisational matter. The Cultural Olympics is managed by an autonomous company, a company set up by the Organising Committee of the Games, but which has created a special instrument to carry out the cultural programme. A company called *Olimpíada Cultural, Societat Anònima*, with its own status and own function, dependent on the Olympic consortium, but with an important capacity of autonomous management to be able to deal with the cultural projects with the specialisation they require and with the speed these projects demand.

Lastly, I shall deal with the matter of financing. The truth is that the Cultural Olympics is possible only thanks to the Olympic Games, generally speaking. At the end of 1988 a general budget was made for the four years to the tune, in round figures, of five thousand million pesetas -to be exact, five thousand one hundred and twenty-. Of these 5120 million pesetas, the Games Organising Committee contributed three thousand five hundred million, and this amount came from its own generation of resources -television rights, the sale of mascots, sale of tickets-. Of the whole of resources generated by the Olympic Games, three thousand five hundred million pesetas, a little more than 3%, were devoted to specifically cultural ends in the limited sense -apart from the ceremonies, the logo elements, etc.-. Also, besides these resources the COOB provided, the *Olimpíada Cultural, S.A.* also has the capacity of generating additional resources through specific sponsoring, editions, sales, etc.

We have calculated -and, even if we are a little behind in the objectives, we shall not finish this year- we shall generate some one thousand five hundred or one thousand six hundred million pesetas more, so that at the end, in these four years, there will have been a net investment in culture, as direct fruit of the Olympic Games, of five thousand million pesetas. In this sense, undoubtedly, the cultural contribution the Olympic Games made in Barcelona, apart from many others, will have been decisive.