



Olympic Design

Munich 1972



Political Agenda

The 1972 Munich Olympics were held in Germany only 36 years after the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games which had taken place under Nazi regime. West German Government wanted to present a new democratic and progressive Germany on a world stage. According to Schiller "The Federal Republic, the city of Munich, and the representatives of the West German sports world were faced with the multiple tasks of presenting the world with a new Germany, envisioning and accelerating dramatic urban development, and making the Olympics speak to a new generation."

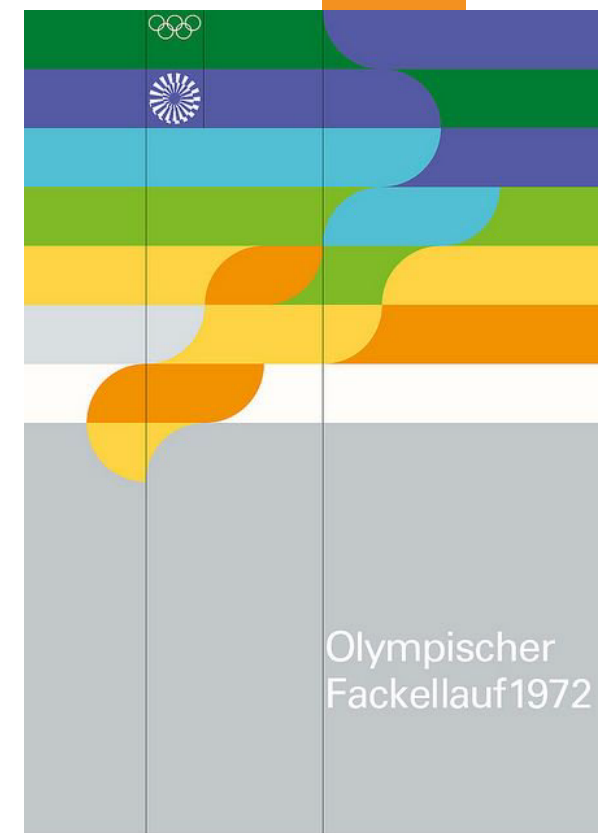
The Organizers and designers had a steep task ahead of them. The Olympic design team, headed up by Otl Aicher, took on the task of "rebranding" Germany to the world. Aicher stated that it was "imperative to deliver the "correction to Berlin" that the world was expecting." He also went on to say that "Trust cannot be gained through words, but instead only through visual proof... it is not about explaining that his Germany is different, but about showing it."

And that he did. The design system that Aicher put together was bold and optimistic. A blue solar logo and bright colors (the blue, yellow, and green of the Olympic rings) helped with the happy aesthetic. Aicher's team was quick to remove red and black or any colors associated with the Nazi dictatorship from the color scheme. Instead he used colors that reflected the beautiful west German landscape.

References were made to *the cheerful games*, *the happy games*, and *the rainbow games* when referring to the 1972 Munich Olympics.



Otl Aicher



Olympic Poster Design



Design System & Environmental Scale

Aicher said "The Munich Olympics should have an unforced character and be open, carefree, and relaxed. Celebratory not in the traditional institutional sense, but in terms of playful improvisation." (Schiller) Aicher's carefully "calibrated mood" was created by combining three basic elements: scripts, colors, and signs. Every Olympic text was printed in the "fresh and practical" Univers (whose name I find particularly fitting to the use in this case.)

The bright colors that all printed materials appeared where the most striking feature. Aicher painted Munich as the "Games under the rainbow." The core colors of light blue and green, supported by silver and white, and supplements by yellow, orange, dark green, blue and occasionally even brown, defined the Munich palette and offered visitors the change to "experience humanity as a unified whole, as a model of society without violence or borders."

These colors were used to create a unified system that codified the Olympics from interior to exterior signs, products to services, the full design system was immersive. Even the Olympic staff wore color coded uniforms so that if anyone needed help, they knew where to go.

This design system scaled up to the environmental level as well. Flags, signage, buildings graphics, and temporary structures stood out clearly through their signal colors.



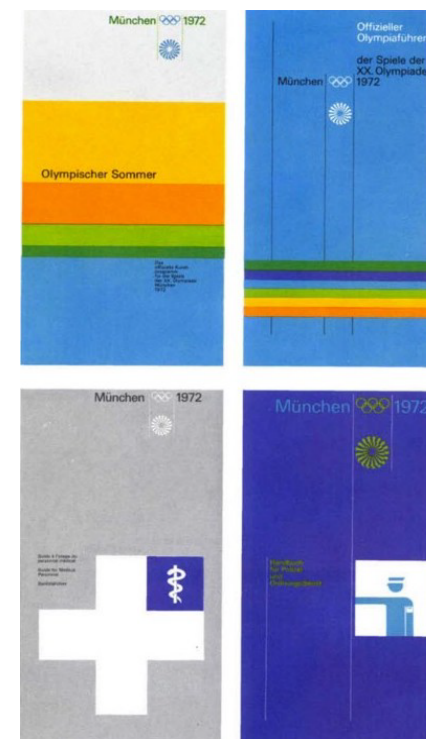
Environmental Graphics



Uniform Design



Olympic Flags



Informational Booklet



Event Poster Design



Pictograms

Jameson said that "the political form of postmodernism, if there ever is any, will have as its vocation the invention and projection of a global cognitive mapping, on a social as well as a spatial scale." Though overly-simplified, I see manipulation of the wayfinding graphics and design systems for the Olympics as a "global" way of traversing the events and event locations. These graphic institutions were created for a multinational visitor, allowing individuals to traverse the events. The use of the pictogram as a representational dialect is a radical new form of global communication that endows the individual subject with a new heightened sense of place in the global system. Allowing for people to travel and negotiate the world in a universal way.

Televised global events like the Olympic festivals also spread consumer culture. Allowing for a commodification of culture. Schiller said that the IOC (International Olympic Committee) and the host nation was not based on a donor recipient

model like a traditional NGO, but "the IOC kept at least one protective hand on its precious commodity, admonishing, cajoling, and even threatening host nations when expectations were disappointed or remotely contravened."

In this sense, the Olympics itself was turned into a commodity. It was no longer used to promote nationalism and cultural identity but used to increase capital and tourism for the host nation.

Though the design system for the 1972 Olympics was well designed, this aestheticism was used to create an entire branding system for the games. Novel-seeming goods, like the Olympic mascot, the dachshund "Waldi" (the first official Olympic mascot) was created to "sell" the Olympics as well as branded products. The Olympics had been turned into a potential money-making product for the host nation.



Postmodernism

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Waldi, first official Olympic mascot



Publicity

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