

# The Cultural Olympiad of Barcelona in 1992

## Good points and bad points. Lessons for the future

---

Miquel de Moragas

Director of the Institute of Communication and the Centre for Olympic Studies  
Autonomous University of Barcelona



The Centre d'Estudis Olímpics (CEO-UAB) publishes works aimed to facilitate their scientific discussion. The inclusion of this text in this series does not limit future publication by its author who reserves the integrity of his rights. This publication may not be reproduced, neither partially nor totally, without the author's permission.

The text was presented at the Symposium "Olympic Arts and Culture Festivals: Recent Experiences and Future Design", held in Chicago on the 23-24 June 2008.

Ref. WP049

To refer to this document you can use the following reference:

Moragas, Miquel de (2008): The Cultural Olympiad of Barcelona in 1992: Good Points and Bad Points. Lessons for the Future [online article]. Barcelona: Centre d'Estudis Olímpics UAB. [consulted: dd/mm/yy]  
<[http://olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/wp049\\_eng.pdf](http://olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/wp049_eng.pdf)>

[Date of publication: 07/2008]

**Table of contents:**

1. Brief historical introduction. What cultural programme are you proposing?
2. Barcelona'92: global success, good points and bad points of its Cultural Olympiad.
3. The Cultural Olympiad within the context of the city's cultural policy
4. The organisational model: The Cultural Olympiad separated from the Organising Committee of the Games
5. The proposed model:
  - a. The "Olympiad": 4 years of programming
  - b. Autumn festivals.
  - c. Olympic Arts Festival (summer of 1992)
6. Economic considerations and funding
7. Unfulfilled objectives
8. Cultural interpretation of the separation of Olímpia Cultural, SA (OCSA) and the Barcelona Olympics Organising Committee (COOB'92)
9. Communication and corporate image of the Cultural Olympiad.
10. Conclusions. Lessons for the future.

## 1. Brief historical introduction. What cultural programme are you proposing?

The idea of organising the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona dates back to 1979 with the initial conversations between Narcís Serra, at the time the Mayor of Barcelona, and J. A. Samaranch, who was then the Ambassador for Spain in Moscow. These conversations became official in 1982, when J. A. Samaranch was now the Chairman of the International Olympic Committee (July 1980) and Narcís Serra was appointed Spain's new Minister for Defence in the Socialist Government of Felipe González. Pascual Maragall (also a socialist), elected Mayor of Barcelona in 1983, enthusiastically took up the challenge of leading the project. The work involved in Barcelona's candidature got under way immediately afterwards, in 1984, and reached its climax in 1986 in Lausanne with Samaranch's famous phrase: "a la Ville de...Barcelona"<sup>1</sup>.

The candidature document contained a bold response to question 13 of the IOC questionnaire: "What cultural programme are you proposing?" The response of Barcelona's candidature to this question was, in reality, based on one principal argument: we will do it bigger and better than anybody else, we will have a Cultural Olympiad with a duration of four years.

In the end, not all the promises could be fulfilled, demonstrating that cultural programming, like cultural policy programmes in general, do not allow improvisations, but instead require solutions of great complexity that are impossible to tackle without the necessary planning and theoretical reflection and without the agreement of all the parties (actors) involved.

Why now, so many years on, should we discuss the Cultural Olympiad of Barcelona? We believe this issue should be discussed for two reasons. For the benefit of the Olympic Movement, in order to discover, from that past experience, any lessons for future Cultural Olympiads and Olympic cultural policy in general. Also for the benefit of Barcelona and Catalonia in order to rethink, in a critical way, their cultural policies using the unique experience of having organised one of the major global events of our age.

## 2. Barcelona'92: global success, good points and bad points of its Cultural Olympiad

The Barcelona Games received a highly positive evaluation from various actors, not only the IOC Chairman, Samaranch, when he closed the Games with the famous phrase "The best Games in history", or the representatives of the International Sporting Federations and the National Olympic Committees, but, in a more general way, from numerous independent actors, including the international press and broadcast media, as evidenced in various academic studies<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Moragas, M.; Botella, M. (eds.) (2002): *Barcelona: l'herència dels Jocs: 1992-2002*. Barcelona: Olympic Studies Centre, UAB; Barcelona City Council; Planeta, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Moragas, M.; Botella, M. (eds.) (1995): *The keys to success: the social, sporting, economic and communications impact of Barcelona'92*. Bellaterra: Publications Service of the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Kennett, C; Moragas, M. (2006). "Barcelona 1992: evaluating the Olympic legacy", in A. Tomlinson & C. Young (eds.), *National Identity and Global Sports Events Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Moragas, M. (2004). "Barcelona'92: a city convinced of its success movement", in J. Findling & K. Pelle (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Modern Olympic Movement*. Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, p. 225-234.

The keys to the success of Barcelona'92 can be found in the multiple effects derived from the Games: in the urbanistic renewal of the city, in the economy of the region, in the social participation of citizens, in the sports facilities and results, in the communicative impact before the international media and in the resulting medium-term effects on consolidating its tourism industry, etc.

Within the context of this overall success, the Cultural Olympiad appears as a series of good points (multiple activities) and bad points (difficult fit within the central organisation of the event), with a major contribution to the project: the added value its approach signified in the candidature dossier. Later, as we will see, the true Olympic cultural programme was implemented outside the strict framework of the Cultural Olympiad, in the organisation of the principal festivals and rituals of the Olympic Movement.

### 3. The Cultural Olympiad within the context of the city's cultural policy

To interpret the Cultural Olympiad of Barcelona, we need to refer to the important role played by the Public Administration in the olympic organisation model of Barcelona 92<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, it should also be borne in mind that in Europe, and in particular in Catalonia, the Public Administration plays a key role in the cultural sphere, in terms of both infrastructure (auditoria, museums) and cultural management (theatre, communication media, festivals), with a private initiative that is very much subject to and dependent on subsidies. As we will see, private foundations, in particular the cultural foundations of banks, played a role that was only visible at the end of the Cultural Olympiad, coinciding with the hosting of the Olympic Arts Festival.

The period during which the Games were prepared and hosted coincided with numerous election campaigns<sup>4</sup> and this was also a period of fierce political confrontation, particularly visible in the sphere of culture, between Barcelona City Council (run by the socialist party) and the Autonomous Government of Catalonia (run by the Catalan nationalist party), in a confrontation that was expressed in ideological terms as the axis of "nationalism" - "cosmopolitan municipalism".

In 1985 various attempts for a "cultural pact"<sup>5</sup> to agree the cultural policy of Barcelona and Catalonia on infrastructure with regard to museums, theatre and music venues, libraries, the linguistic normalisation programme, etc. had failed.

---

<sup>3</sup> Botella, J. "Politics", in Moragas, M.; Botella, M. (eds.) (1995): *The keys to success: the social, sporting, economic and communications impact of Barcelona'92*. Bellaterra: Publications Service of the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

<sup>4</sup> From Barcelona's nomination to host the XXV Olympiad (18 October 1986) until 1992, the year of the Games, there was only one year (1990) without elections. This entire period coincided with a fierce rivalry between the President of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, Jordi Pujol (Catalan nationalist centre) (1980-2003) and the Mayor of Barcelona, Pasqual Maragall (socialist) (1982-1997).

<sup>5</sup> In 1985 the Catalan Minister for Culture (Joan Rigol) had already proposed a "cultural pact" between the different administrations with powers in the field of culture. However this process ended the same year with the resignation of the aforementioned Minister. The *El País* newspaper attributed this resignation to a failure to progress in the pact: "One of the fundamental reasons for the resignation of Rigol was the attack from the Convergencia (nationalist) party on his policy of opening up towards the opposition, accused of being pro-Socialist and contrary to the cultural pact it had negotiated" (*El País*, 12 December 1985).

In 1986 the (Catalan nationalist) Minister for Catalan Culture at the time, Max Cahner, wrote in the *Avui*<sup>6</sup> newspaper of the inconvenience of the framework project of the Cultural Olympiad, submitted through the candidature, being confined exclusively to people among the socialist ranks related to Pasqual Maragall.

Unlike what happened in the other aspects of the organisation of the Games, the state administration played a minor role in the Cultural Olympiad. In 1992, the Spanish government had other significant platforms of cultural projection: the celebration of the 5<sup>th</sup> centenary of the “discovery of America” and the Universal “Expo” of Seville. As far as the Barcelona Games were concerned, the symbolic representation of the State focused on the presence of King Juan Carlos and, in general, the Royal Family, both in the competitions, and in the award ceremonies.

All of this affected the Cultural Olympiad, which ended up being sidelined in the major pacts and general agreements between the Administrations and social institutions for the organisation of the Games, as a minor activity within the context of the major event that was being prepared.

#### 4. The organisational model: The Cultural Olympiad separated from the Organising Committee of the Games

The first organisation structure of the Barcelona 1992 Olympics Organising Committee (COOB'92) included a Culture Division responsible for managing the cultural project, with an initial budget of 3.5 billion pesetas<sup>7</sup>. The events of the “*Pórtico Cultural*” to the Olympiad (reception of the Olympic flag, official opening of the Barcelona'92 exhibition in autumn 1988), were even organised by this Culture Division, albeit, according to the press, with little success, in terms of public and the participation of artists<sup>8</sup>.

A few days later, however, it was agreed to separate the Cultural Olympiad from the organisation of the COOB'92, by establishing the Olimpiada Cultural Sociedad Anónima (OCSA), with capital provided by the Organising Committee itself, but with separate administration, business premises and organisation<sup>9</sup>.

As a result, the Cultural Division of the COOB'92 had a rather short life. Not so the Communication Division, which, from that moment on, would have maximum cultural responsibilities within the Olympic organisation, given that it was responsible for all processes involving symbolic production: the design and image of the Games, the torch relays and the opening and closing ceremonies.

The history of OCSA, unlike that of the COOB'92, was affected by various dismissals, resignations and changes in its management<sup>10</sup>. At the heart of these dismissals, resignations and management changes,

<sup>6</sup> “Barcelona Provincial Council (*La Diputació*) coordinates the cultural olympiads”, in *Avui*, 20 November 1986.

<sup>7</sup> In August 1992 the exchange rate between the US \$ and the former Peseta was 1 US\$ = 93.05. FedStats [online]. <<http://www.fedstats.gov>>. Updated: 12.03.2007. [Query: 10.04.2008]

<sup>8</sup> “Approximately 20,000 people, somewhat fewer than expected, attended the opening ceremony of the Cultural Olympiad of Barcelona on Saturday night. The musical macro-festival *La nit (La noche)*, which was attended by the King and Queen and Princess Cristina, did not achieve the success of other multitudinous recitals organised in Barcelona. *El País*, 9 October 1988.

<sup>9</sup> COOB'92 (1993): *Official Report Games of the the XXV Olympiad Barcelona 1992*. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana. Vol. 2, p. 78.

<sup>10</sup> In November 1998 the General Manager of COOB'92, Jaume Clavell, was dismissed. “The legal basis of the dismissal was the attitude of insubordination displayed by the General Manager in the light of the separation of the Cultural Olympiad from the COOB'92.

were three principal problems:

- a) The funding and sponsorship programme of OCSA, differentiated from the funding of the Games.
- b) The difficulty of inserting a cultural programme within the organisation of the Games (on the part of both the cultural actors and the olympic organisers).
- c) The difficulty of reaching agreement among the political actors involved in the cultural sector.

## 5. The proposed model

### 5.1. The “Olympiad” with a duration of 4 years

The cultural programme of the Barcelona candidature proposed to offer “more than anybody else”, by adopting an “Olympiad” time format of 4 years in duration, thus differentiating itself from previous organisers and other candidatures, who focused their cultural offer on cultural activities that were principally concentrated in the same year the Games were to be held.

This plan involved annual themes: 1989 year of sport, 1990 year of arts, 1991 year of the future, as well as the inclusion of a “*pórtico (Gate) cultural*” (*Gate*) (1988) and the proposal for a more intensive period of activities during the final months leading up to the Games, entitled the Olympic Arts Festival (1992).

This thematic-time criteria was completed with a proposal to organise “Autumn Festivals” every year, with a comprehensive programme of top cultural events, adopting the model of the cultural policies of certain large European capitals, such as Berlin or Paris, which concentrate the cultural offer of excellence during this season of the year.

This entire programme was inspired by the beginnings of a new “ideology” in cultural programming, which was being proposed as a distinctive identity for Barcelona: creative, renewable, with few concessions to the commercialisation of art, truly cosmopolitan, etc.

Added to this were some wide-ranging cultural policy objectives, which subsequently could not be fulfilled in the period between the commencement of the Olympiad and the closing ceremony of the Games.

The “olympiad” turned out to be too short to achieve such objectives. Some of them were achieved years later, while others are still pending in the present Catalan cultural agenda.

### 5.2. Autumn festivals

One of the principal goals of Cultural Olympiad was the organisation of a series of artistic, musical and theatrical activities concentrated during the same period of the year (autumn). The Olympic Arts Festival in

---

Clavell pointed out that said separation affected his powers”. (*El País*, 12 November 1988).

The new company, chaired by the Mayor of Barcelona Pasqual Maragall, had as its Vice-President the entrepreneur Leopoldo Rodés (a key figure in the international promotion of Barcelona’s candidature) and as its Managing Director, Pep Subirós, an advisor on cultural issues to the Mayor of Barcelona, with Margarita Obiols as its Executive Director. In November 1989, Leopoldo Rodés resigned, as did Pep Subirós in 1991. The Cultural Olympiad closed with the incorporation of Romá Cuyás to the project, the executive of a large Catalan

1992 would be the culmination of these programmes in the period leading up to the hosting of the Games.

According to the internal documents of the Cultural Olympiad<sup>11</sup>, the Autumn Festivals should be the framework for implementing its “programming proposals in the areas of music and performance arts, in collaboration with the public administrations, pre-existing music festivals and theatre ... in order to offer the Catalan capital a coherent and brilliant start to the season, with national and international projection, in the areas of theatre, dance, music, opera, etc”.

It proposed the “participation of all active agents in the local artistic panorama and the staging of truly international and wide-ranging projects, with the most significant creators of the moment”.<sup>12</sup>

In 1990, for example, the “Autumn Festival” had 5 sub-programmes:

1. The festival theatres (with an offer of 36 performances)
2. Dance (with an offer of 8 performances)
3. Music (with an offer of 20 performances)
4. Small-format “marquee” performances (with an offer of 16 performances)
5. Exhibitions (4 photographic exhibitions)

According to data published in the Official Report de Barcelona'92, it was not until 1991 that Barcelona City Council, the Ministry of Culture of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia and Olimpiada Cultural SA (OCSA) managed to sign an agreement for organising the autumn festivals, when the previous Festivals of 1989 and 1990 had already been staged.<sup>13</sup>

### **5.3. Olympic Arts Festival (summer of 1992)**

The Cultural Olympiad would culminate in the organisation of a special programme, to coincide with the final months of the “Olympiad”, called the Olympic Arts Festival.

This major Festival consisted of more than 200 activities, from April to August 1992<sup>14</sup>, adopting, to a certain degree, the same format as the “Autumn Festivals”, albeit this time with the increased involvement of various private entities (bank foundations), in accordance with the following structure:

---

publishing house and the former Secretary General for Sport in Spain, as its Executive Vice-President.

<sup>11</sup> Olimpiada Cultural (19??): [Press document]. Olympic Studies Archive.

<sup>12</sup> Olimpiada Cultural (19??): [Press document]. Olympic Studies Archive.

<sup>13</sup> COOB'92 (1993), vol. 2, p. 364.

<sup>14</sup> COOB'92 (1993), vol. 4, p. 323.

<b>OLYMPIC ARTS FESTIVAL</b> June to August 1992	
<b>TYPE OF ACTIVITY AREAS</b>	<b>APPLICATIONS</b>
Music	. Concerts (classical and popular) . Opera
Dance	Multiple performances, participation of main local groups
Theatre	Local groups, some international groups
Exhibitions	. Olympic Movement (Not fulfilled) <sup>15</sup> . Technology, life, design, etc. . Art: . Medieval . Contemporary
Traditional performances	( <i>Sardana</i> dance, Human towers)
Traditional feasts	(San Juan Festivities)
Cultural events in the Olympic Village	(Not fulfilled)
Various	. Stamp collecting . Barcelona Awards
<b>VENUES</b>	<b>PRINCIPAL ACTORS</b>
. Renewed cultural infrastructure (Not fulfilled) . (Emblematic) open spaces of the city . Internationally renowned locations (tourist references) . Olympic venues (excluded for the CO)	. Universal Catalans (musicians, painters, architects, sculptors) . (Gaudí, Miró...) . World famous international artists
<b>PRIVILEGED THEMES</b>	<b>ABSENT THEMES</b>
. Art and sport . The environment . Avant-garde art . Design	. Olympic Movement . Politics . Science

## 6. Economic considerations and funding

The initial budget forecast by the Organising Committee for the Cultural Olympiad was 3.5 billion pesetas<sup>16</sup>. To complete this budget, Cultural Olympiad had two additional sources of funding: revenue from ticket sales and television rights and sponsorship revenue. In the end, as we can see in the following table, the contribution of the sponsors was limited (1.633 billion pesetas) and the funding through television rights virtually non-existent.

The final budget, always considered insufficient by the organisers, was 6.615 billion pesetas, 59.3% contributed through COOB'92, 24.6% through sponsors and 15.9% through own resources (tickets, in particular). (See table)

<sup>15</sup> The commemorative exhibition of the XXV Olympiad of the modern era was to be called: "The History of the Olympic Movement from its origins to the present day".

<sup>16</sup> In August 1992 the exchange rate between the US \$ and the former Peseta was 1 US\$ = 93.05. FedStads [online]. <<http://www.fedstats.gov>> . Updated: 12.03.2007. [Query: 10.04.2008].

The budget of Olimpiada Cultural S. A. (in millions of pesetas) <sup>17</sup>						
	1989	1990	1991	1992	Total	Total US \$
<b>Income</b>						
COOB'92, S.A. contributions	910	850	1.240	925	3.925	42,18
Sponsors' contributions	54	172	191	1.216	1.633	17,55
Others	196	227	321	313	1.057	11,36
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1.160</b>	<b>1.249</b>	<b>1.752</b>	<b>2.454</b>	<b>6.615</b>	<b>71,09</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
General expenses	310	277	285	356	1.228	13,19
Programmes	1.307	1.048	954	2.078	5.387	57,90
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1.617</b>	<b>1.325</b>	<b>1.239</b>	<b>2.434</b>	<b>6.615</b>	<b>71,09</b>

The managers of the Cultural Olympiad<sup>18</sup> claimed that the lack of agreement between OCSA and COOB'92 was one of the principal causes of its financial difficulties, in particular its marginalisation from the Olympic sponsorship programme, but also the increased costs derived from the need to duplicate administrative services (premises, staff, etc.). However, the Cultural Olympiad was able to benefit from the tax privileges it had agreed for the organisers of the Olympic Games and the Expo of Seville, held in the same year<sup>19</sup>.

The Olympic sponsors (TOP Sponsors) showed no interest in sponsoring the cultural activities, and what is more imposed their rules of incompatibility to prevent other companies funding the Cultural Olympiad, arguing that they had previously paid for the exclusive rights for the respective major product ranges. Consequently, the Cultural Olympiad was unable to benefit from the huge income represented by television rights during the 90s and the implantation of the TOP (The Olympic Partners) sponsorship programme, initiated in Seoul in 1988.

"I personally – declared Pep Subirós- had the naivety to think that we would obtain financial resources on our own, but in this we were blocked by a series of constraints from the Olympic project"... "We had the drawback of being closely linked to the COOB, in the sense that when the COOB signed an exclusivity

<sup>17</sup> COOB'92 (1993), vol. 2, p. 78-79.

<sup>18</sup> "Interview with Pep Subirós", in Guevara, M. T. (1992): *Estudio comparativo de los programas culturales olímpicos desde México'68 hasta Barcelona'92: elementos para la definición de un proyecto cultural para Puerto Rico'2004*. Director: Miquel de Moragas. Dissertation and working paper nº. 12, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Olympic Studies Centre.

<sup>19</sup> "The public limited company *Olimpiada Cultural SA*, shall enjoy, in respect of corporation tax, the same tax treatment as the Barcelona 1992 organising committee, with regard to the activities or operations within its powers, the undertaking of which it has been instructed to perform". *Law 5/1990, of 29 June, on budgetary, financial and taxation measures* (Originating from Royal Decree-Law 7/1989, of 29 December), contained in *Official State Bulletin*, nº. 156, available online at: [http://www.boe.es/g/es/bases\\_datos/doc.php?coleccion=iberlex&id=1990/15348](http://www.boe.es/g/es/bases_datos/doc.php?coleccion=iberlex&id=1990/15348) [Query: 10.04.2008]

agreement, this affected us and in the end the COOB kept the money”<sup>20</sup>.

So, for example, in the publications of the Olympic Arts Festival, only Barcelona City Council, the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, the airline Iberia and a few local communication media companies appeared as sponsors.

The sponsors TOP were not interested in the cultural activity and the Cultural Olympiad was constrained by the exclusivity of the Olympic sponsors.

## 7. Unfulfilled objectives

The ambitious project of a Cultural Olympiad with a duration of 4 years, with such a large thematic offer, and so many major commitments for cultural policy in the city, in the end had various shortcomings.

In my opinion, such shortcomings originate from poor forecasting of achievable objectives and from poorly calculated aims, as if in cultural planning it was simply enough to operate on the basis of intuition, without the appropriate prospective analysis. This serious problem of cultural policy in Barcelona was demonstrated once again in the development of another major cultural project in the city: the Barcelona’2004 Universal Cultures Forum (which has continued in Monterrey (Mexico) in 2008)<sup>21</sup>, whose initial promises were not fulfilled to a satisfactory degree either. In Barcelona we are quite familiar with the severity of a reiterated question: What is the Cultural Olympiad? And years later: What is the Universal Cultures Forum?

The principal objectives foreseen but not fulfilled are as follows:

- a) To reduce the historic lack of cultural infrastructure (inherited from the Franco era).
- b) To revitalise cultural heritage.
- c) To create a new critical mass of actors and artists.
- d) To encourage creativity and cultural innovation.
- e) To promote local groups on an international scale.
- f) To coordinate the cultural activity of the different public administrations.

These were aims and objectives that were difficult to fulfil. As an example of an exaggerated aim, we can mention the case of the Barcelona Awards of the Cultural Olympiad, designed to “cover those areas not included in the Nobel repertoire ... which ... will count on the projection and support of the communication networks, which will guarantee comprehensive news coverage in both hemispheres”<sup>22</sup>. In fact, the Barcelona Awards had little international impact, except in the case of the communication media closest to the award winners.

---

<sup>20</sup> Guevara, M.T., [cap.] “Interview with Pep Subirós”.

<sup>21</sup> *Universal Cultures Forum 2007* [online]. <http://www.monterreyforum2007.org/> [Query: 10.04.2008]

<sup>22</sup> COOB’92 (1986a), p. 49.

More significant was the lack of foresight concerning the impact of the Cultural Olympiad on the cultural infrastructure of Barcelona (clearly lacking at the time). Initially, it was believed that what had effectively occurred in the case of town planning would also occur with culture: that the Games would help overcome the shortcomings of Barcelona, inherited from the Franco era, by acting as a catalyst to accelerate the construction of facilities.

It was believed that the Games would be the opportunity to accelerate the construction of necessary cultural infrastructure, such as the Music Auditorium, the Contemporary Art Museum, or the renovation of the National Art Museum of Catalonia in Montjuïc<sup>23</sup>.

By contrast, the reality was quite different: all of this infrastructure was officially opened several years after the Games. The Music Auditorium opened in 1999, the Barcelona Contemporary Art Museum (MACBA) in 1995, while National Art Museum of Catalonia in Montjuïc was redeveloped in 1990 and its grand oval room was used for various olympic protocols in 1992; however, its grand collection of Roman art was not officially opened until 1995.

Another of the major objectives of the Cultural Olympiad was the continuation, years afterwards, of the “Autumn Festivals”, defined as “the seed of an organism that has to survive the Olympic Games in order to guarantee in the future the continuation of what was initiated within the framework of a broad institutional cooperation (this refers to the public administrations)”<sup>24</sup>. The “Autumn Festivals” did not continue and collaboration between administrations remains a pending issue in our present cultural agenda.

The time to plan and manage cultural policy proved to be even slower than the time necessary for the construction of town planning, telecommunications or road infrastructure.

## **8. Cultural interpretation of the separation of OCSA and the COOB'92**

The separation of OCSA and the COOB'92 had not only major financial and administrative consequences, but also major cultural consequences. The first of these, in my view, was the progressive separation of the Cultural Olympiad from the symbolic references and rituals of the Olympic Movement. Although it is true that the Cultural Olympiad had begun with the hosting of an exhibition on sport, it is also true that one of the principal activities planned for the Olympic Arts Festival in 1992 disappeared in the end: a major exhibition on the olympic movement and its 100 year history.

This does not mean that the Barcelona Games did not have an olympic cultural programme, but that the olympic cultural programme was developed outside of the Cultural Olympiad. The olympic cultural programme was included in the ceremonies, in the rituals and in the design of the communication and the image of the Games. However the Cultural Olympiad remained expressly on the sidelines of these major

---

<sup>23</sup> Guevara, M.T., [Cap.] “Interview with Pep Subirós”.

cultural and communication events: “Some managers of the COOB, Pep Subirós claimed, tried to minimise the role of the Cultural Olympiad from the outset. Explicitly, there was an absolute refusal that OCSA would play a major role at the olympic ceremonies, including the opening ceremony, the closing ceremony and the olympic torch ceremony”<sup>25</sup>.

The cultural causes of the separation? With the passing of time, casting aside the more circumstantial and personal aspects, it can be said that the cause of the separation lay in the lack of agreement in the logistics of planning, production and timing of the activities between the cultural organisers and the olympic organisers.

The olympic organisers wanted to distance themselves from the complexity and improvisation they attributed to cultural debate, within the context of the political rivalries mentioned previously. The precision required by olympic organisation, which works with set dates, was considered incompatible with the way in which cultural organisers work. For their part, the cultural organisers, somewhat unenthusiastic about the olympic or sports organisers, preferred to distance themselves, considering these managers to be people with little sensitivity towards cultural issues.

Pep Subirós declared in 1992 that “... Cultural projects normally have a specificity of conception of the need for ideas, which do not have to be known, understood or shared by anybody whose job is to manage sporting or business matters in general”<sup>26</sup>.

This lack of agreement was also influenced by the perception within COOB'92 that the cultural olympiad was no more than a complementary activity, and not essential to the success of the Games. Less fortunate, I should point out, was the education programme, possibly the greatest shortcoming in the memory and in the olympic legacy of Barcelona'92.

## **9. Communication and the corporate image of the Cultural Olympiad**

Another problem of the Cultural Olympiad of Barcelona'92 lay precisely in its erratic communication and image policy. These even led to an unjustly negative assessment of the host of activities carried out by the Cultural Olympiad.

Extending the activity to four years and a wide variety of formats presented an excessively fragmented corporate image, starting with the heterogeneous nature of the names of the following references: Cultural Olympiad, Autumn Festival, Olympic Arts Festival. Other activities organised by OCSA were not appropriately identified.

However, it was not only the name (so important in the communication of today) that diluted the image of

---

<sup>24</sup> Festival de tardor de Barcelona (1r : 1989 : Barcelona, Catalunya).

<sup>25</sup> Guevara, M. T. op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Id. Ibid.

OCSA, but also the inappropriateness of its iconic identifiers. OCSA gave itself two different logos during its period of development. Initially, it used an institutionally-inspired logo associated with the general image of the olympiad in a manner similar to how the sponsors identified themselves.

However this logo was replaced in February 1992 by a new, less institutional symbol, to coincide with the presentation of the Olympic Arts Festival. The new design, the work of the advertising executive Leopoldo Pomés, was the principal motif of an advertising campaign for the Festival, relating the bunch of flowers in the new image with the spirit of the cultural diversity, dialogue and fraternity inherent to the olympiad.

OCSA also gave itself its own mascot (Nosi), which was to co-exist alongside Cobi. This mascot (also designed by Mariscal), with a significance difficult to relate to the cultural programme (other than the fact that a doll with an oversized head could symbolise cultural creativity), was hardly used in the corporate image of the Cultural Olympiad or in its activities.

### Corporate image of the Cultural Olympiad, Barcelona 92

Logo  
(up to 1992)  
Designed by J. M. Trias



© 1991 COOB'92 S.A. All rights reserved. TM

New logo  
(in 1992)  
Designed by Leopoldo Pomés



Mascot (Nosi)<sup>27</sup>  
(hardly used)  
Designed by Mariscal



## 10. Conclusions. Lessons for the future

As an initial conclusion to these considerations, I would like to emphasize that the programming of a cultural activity should be considered a task as complex as programming the logistics, the economy, the technology or the town planning. The poor results of the Cultural Olympiad of Barcelona'92, in contrast with other aspects of its organisation, are due, in part, to the lack of preparatory discussions on the content and specificity of the Cultural Olympiad within the context of the Games and the cultural policy of the city.

The cultural managers of the olympic city should not overlook the importance of the olympic phenomenon, as a cultural phenomenon in itself. They must dismiss the notion that the sole or principle point of contact between the Olympic Movement and culture is one of arts applied to sport. The Olympic Movement and

<sup>27</sup> COOB'92 (1993), vol. 2, p. 359.

the Games are a cultural phenomenon. Culture is not an added value to the Games. It is its core value.

One of the main problems of planning the cultural programmes of the Games, and major events in general, is the correct identification of a clearly differentiated target audience: the local population, visitors (tourists) during the Games and the members of the organisation itself (colloquially known as “the Olympic family” in the case of the Games). Experience has shown that the main target audience of cultural programming are the citizens of the organising city, bearing in mind that the event is being staged within an international context.

The Cultural Olympiad must be able to combine two apparently opposing questions: the need to integrate its programme within the annual calendar of the city’s cultural policy (autumn festival, summer festival, etc.) as an exceptional event. Its exceptional nature is its internationalisation. The Cultural Olympiad has to be integrated within the annual programme of the organising city, but must also exceed it, incorporating within its logic both the global and sporting dimension of the event.

The Cultural Olympiad must be committed to the major cultural challenges of our age: diversity, sustainable development, cooperation and not just excellence, as the core value associated with the Olympic Movement.

The Cultural Olympiad must be conceived considering the overall legacy of the Games. For example, it is legitimate to consider its utilisation as a pretext for remedying the lack of cultural infrastructure in the olympic city. However, the legacy must also be considered in intangible terms: the image of the city itself projected on a global scale and the participation of the local community in the international debate on culture.

The Cultural Olympiad signified a major effort by the community in order to identify itself before worldwide public opinion, in other words, in order to choose the cultural expressions that identify it.

The Cultural Olympiad must not distance itself from the more specific symbolic production of the Games, especially the torch relays and the opening and closing ceremonies.

It is necessary to reinforce the idea that the heart of the olympic cultural programme lies in the participation/celebration of the city in the event. In this regard, the torch relay –and the local street party that accompanies it– is one of the central aspects of the olympic cultural programme.

Remembering Barcelona’92. The Cultural Olympiad of 1992 organised interesting events but, on the whole, did not have the importance or significance of the Games as a whole.

The Barcelona Games left an importance cultural legacy, yet the contribution of the Cultural Olympiad to

---

this legacy was rather limited, which does not mean that the cultural legacy of Barcelona was not significant, only that it was created outside the strict programme of the Cultural Olympiad, in other areas more directly related to the hosting of the Games, particularly in the ceremonies, in the olympic torch relay, in the celebrations and the peaceful co-existence in the streets, at the party in the stadium, where the Olympic Movement is truly a major cultural phenomenon.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CASTELLET, J. M. (1989): "The challenge of the Cultural Olympiad". *Catalònia: Culture*. Nº. 12, p. 34-37.
- COOB'92 (1986a): *Solicitud de candidatura al Comité Olímpico Internacional para la celebración en Barcelona de los Juegos de la XXV Olimpiada*. [Barcelona?]: [Olympic Office]. Document that forms part of the 6 volumes of the Candidature Dossier.
- COOB'92 (1986b): *Request to the International Olympic Committee by the Barcelona candidature for the hosting of the games of the XXVth Olympiad*. [Barcelona?]: [s.n.], "[Chapter] 13, What cultural programme do you propose?", p. 48-55.
- COOB'92 (1993): *Official Report Games of the the XXV Olympiad Barcelona 1992*. 5 volumes. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana. Also available online at: *LA84 Foundation*. [http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports\\_frmst.htm](http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports_frmst.htm) [Query: 05.05.2008]
- COOB'92 (1989): *Organigrama, activitats i personal del COOB'92, S.A. Novembre 1989*. Barcelona: COOB'92.
- CUYÁS, M. (1992): "The Cultural Olympiad, a four-year project", in *Catalònia: Culture*. Nº. 27, p. 19-21.
- FESTIVAL DE TARDOR DE BARCELONA (1r : 1989 : Barcelona, Catalunya): *I Festival de tardor de Barcelona: del 30 de setembre al 26 de novembre de 1989*. Barcelona: Olimpíada Cultural.
- FESTIVAL DE TARDOR DE BARCELONA (2n : 1990 : Barcelona, Catalunya): *II Festival de tardor de Barcelona*. Barcelona: Olimpíada Cultural.
- GARCIA ESPUCHE, A. (1990): *El Quadrat d'Or: Centre de la Barcelona modernista*. Barcelona: Olimpíada Cultural.
- GARCÍA, B. (2002): *The Concept of Olympic cultural programmes: origins, evolutions and projections: university lecture on the Olympics* [online]. Barcelona: Olympic Studies Centre (UAB). <http://olympicstudies.uab.es/lectures/web/pdf/garcia.pdf> [Query: 10.04.2008]
- GUEVARA, M. T. (1992): *Estudio comparativo de los programas culturales olímpicos desde México'68 hasta Barcelona'92: elementos para la definición de un proyecto cultural para Puerto Rico'2004*. Director: Miquel de Moragas. Dissertation and working paper nº. 12, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Olympic Studies Centre.
- HARGREAVES, J. (2000): *Freedom for Catalonia? : Catalan nationalism, Spanish identity and the Barcelona Olympic Games*. Cambridge: University Press, p. 106.
- KENNETT, C.; MORAGAS, M. de, "Barcelona 1992: evaluating the Olympic legacy", in A. Tomlinson & C. Young (eds.): *National Identity and Global Sports Events Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- MAC ALOON, J. (1981): *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

MESSING, M. (1998): "The Cultural Olympiads of Barcelona and Atlanta from German tourists' point of view", in Norbert Müller (ed.): *Coubertin et l'Olympisme: questions pour l'avenir: le Havre 1897-1997. Rapport du congrès du 17 au 20 septembre 1997 à l'Université du Havre*. Lausanne: Comité International Pierre de Coubertin, p. 276-280.

MORAGAS, M. de (2004): "Barcelona'92: a city convinced of its success movement", in J. Findling & K. Pelle (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the modern Olympic movement*. Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, p. 225-234.

MORAGAS, M. de; BOTELLA, M. (eds.) (1995): *The Keys to success: the social, sporting, economic and communications impact of Barcelona'92*. Bellaterra: Publications Service of the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

MORAGAS, M. de; BOTELLA, M. (eds.) (2002): *Barcelona: l'herència dels Jocs : 1992-2002*. Barcelona: Olympic Studies Centre, UAB; Barcelona City Council; Planeta, 2002.

MORAGAS, M. de; MacALOON, J.; LLINÉS, M. (eds.) (1994): *Olympic ceremonies: historical continuity and cultural exchange. (International Symposium on Olympic Ceremonies, Barcelona-Lausanne, November 1995)*. Lausanne: International Olympic Committee.

MORAGAS, M. de; MORENO, A.B.; KENNETT, C. (2003): "The Legacy of the symbols: communication and the Olympic Games", in Miquel de Moragas, Christopher Kennett & Nuria Puig (eds.), *The Legacy of the Olympic Games 1984-2000: International Symposium Lausanne, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2002*. Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, p. 279-288.

MORAGAS, M. de; RIVENBURG, N. K.; LARSON, J. F. (1995): *Television in the Olympics*. London: John Libbey.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1988): "Olimpiada Cultural Barcelona'92: programa 1992". *La Vanguardia*. 2 folders.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1988): *Olimpiada Cultural: Barcelona'92*. Barcelona: COOB'92, Culture Division Multilingual : Catalan-Spanish-English-French text.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1989): *Planeta esport*. Barcelona: Olimpiada Cultural.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1990): *Barcelona: la ciutat i el 92*. Barcelona: Olimpiada Cultural.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1990): *El Modernisme: Museu d'Art Modern*. Barcelona: Olimpiada Cultural. 2 volumes.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1990): *El Quadrat d'Or. Guia: 150 cases al centre de la Barcelona Modernista*. Barcelona: Olimpiada Cultural.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1990): *Olimpiada Cultural presenta: mostra modernisme 1990*. Barcelona: Olimpiada Cultural.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1990): *Olimpiada Cultural, S.A.: Memòria 1989 = Olimpiada Cultural, S.A.: Memòria 1989*. Barcelona: Olimpiada Cultural.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1991): *Olimpiada Cultural, S.A.: Memòria 1990 = Olimpiada Cultural, S.A.: Memòria 1990*. Barcelona: Olimpiada Cultural.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1991): *Olimpiada Cultural: resum programa 1989; programa 1990*. Barcelona: Olimpiada Cultural.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1992): *Festival Olímpic de les Arts: roda de premsa de presentació*. Barcelona: COOB'92.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1992): *Olimpiáda Cultural* [video recording]. [Barcelona]: Studio Pomés. 1 videocassette (VHS) 25 s : col. (PAL), so. 1992 LAUS Awards. Title taken from the LAUS label. Cultural Olympiad Commercial.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1992): *Olimpiáda Cultural Barcelona'92: programa 1992*. Barcelona: Olimpiáda Cultural.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1992): *Organismes: Olimpiáda Cultural gener – juny 1992*.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1992): *Organismes: Olimpiáda Cultural juny - agost 1992*.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (1992): *Programa Olimpiáda Cultural Barcelona'92*. Barcelona: Olimpiáda Cultural; Lunweg Editores.

OLIMPIÁDA CULTURAL (DL 1990): *Premis internacionals Barcelona'92 : Antoni Gaudí, Pau Casals, Narcís Monturiol, Joan Miró, "El Brusi", Joan Antoni Samaranch*. Barcelona: Olimpiáda Cultural.

SUBIRÓS, J. (1992): "The Cultural Olympiad: objectives, programme and development", in M. Ladrón de Guevara & M. Bardají (eds.): *Olympic Games, media and cultural exchanges: the experience of the last four summer Olympic Games*. Barcelona: Olympic Studies and Sport Centre, p. 84-86.