

GLADSTONE

Jo Lawson-Tancred, "5 of the Most Memorable Artist-Designed Olympics Posters," Artnet, July 24, 2024

artnet news

Pop Culture

5 of the Most Memorable Artist-Designed Olympics Posters

Artists like Robert Rauschenberg, Rachel Whiteread, and Eduardo Terrazas have made iconic Olympics posters.

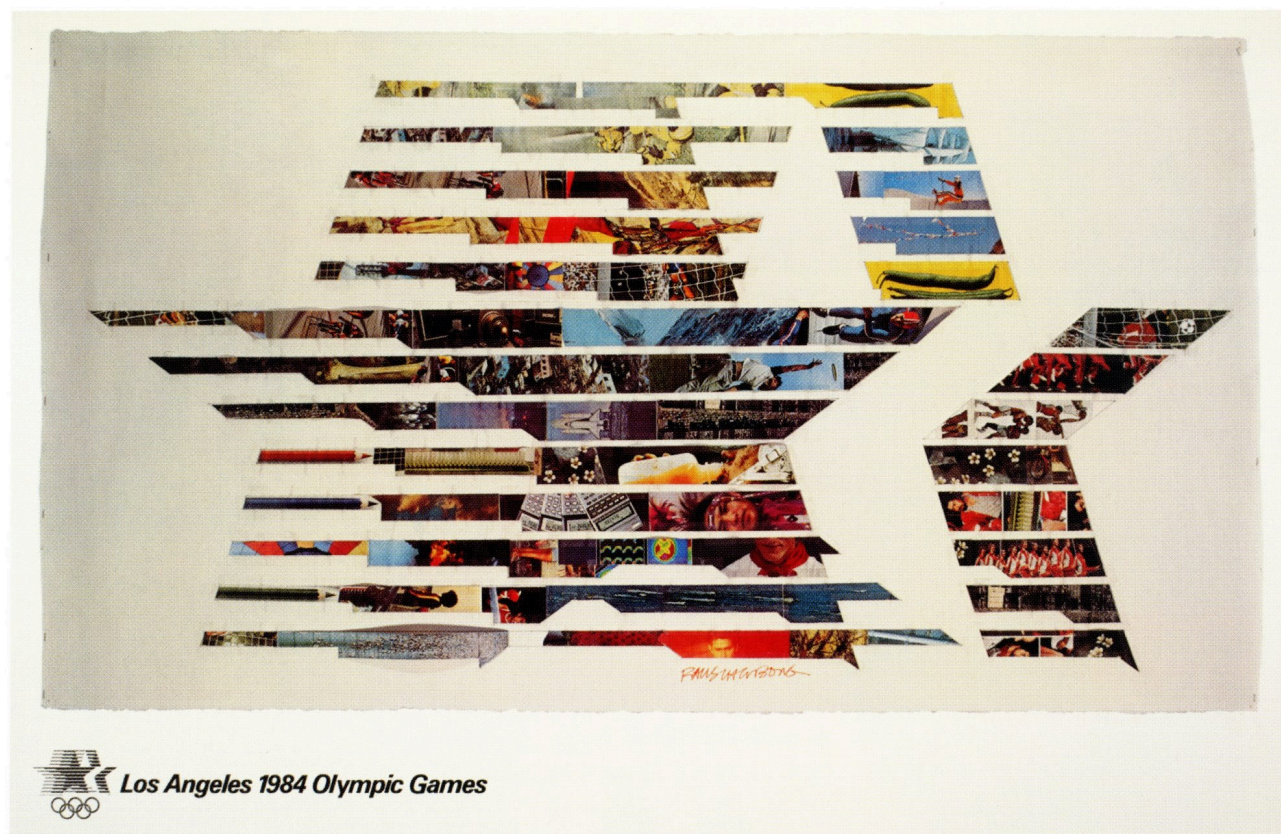
Jo Lawson-Tancred July 24, 2024

To celebrate this summer's Olympics and Paralympics in Paris, the organizers have released two new posters by French illustrator Ugo Gattoni. Placed side-by-side, the artworks create a richly detailed, colorful map that shows the French capital coming alive with a flurry of activity and excitement. A fantastical reimagining of the city merges many beloved monuments like the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, and the Grand Palais into a huge open-air stadium filled with ecstatic crowds cheering on world class racers.

"[The design's] originality lies in its surreal and utopian aspect, both in its composition and in the thousands of details it features," said Gattoni, who packed the semi-immersive posters with charming vignettes representing 29 Olympic sports and 18 Paralympic sports. This impressive—you could even say "olympian"—feat was managed thanks to a whopping 2,000 hours of drawing over a period of six months. Who said art isn't a serious sport? More exciting still, for the world's aesthetes-turned-athletes, a [new public artwork](#) to commemorate the games by Alison Saar will also be unveiled in Paris next week.

On the eve of Paris 2024's hotly-anticipated opening ceremony on July 26, Artnet News takes a look back at some of the most memorable artist-designed Olympics posters from history.

Robert Rauschenberg, Los Angeles 1984



Robert Rauschenberg's poster for the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1984. Photo: Fireshot/ Universal Images Group via Getty Images.

A veritable "who's who" of midcentury artists submitted designs for the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, including David Hockney, Lynda Benglis, Roy Lichtenstein, and John Baldessari. Of the 16 contenders, Robert Rauschenberg came out on top when his design was selected as the games' official poster. Peering closely at his photomontage, which is arranged as a sleek "star in motion," the viewer can find a few examples of sporting activity mixed up with seemingly random images that speak to the era, like stacks of calculators, a man in a fetching red neckerchief, and a rocket. Conceptual!