

Alternative Olympics poster for London 2012

In November 2011, prominent British artists unveiled posters at the Tate that they had been commissioned to produce for the London Olympics. Not surprisingly they were uncritical of the Games. However, modern art is supposed to be challenging. So, in this spirit here is my series of posters examining some of the paradoxes in the Olympics. That's not to say that everything about the Games is negative but that there are many unasked questions about them. They are all mainly connected with the wider determinants of health.

Branding the posters

All the posters would have the same slogan at the top. This would include a symbol reminiscent to the Olympics rings with one ring detaching itself and rolling away. The text would say 'The ring of truth'. (The symbol would only be similar to the official logo for legal reasons.)

At the bottom there would also be identical text on each poster. This would say "The London Games, Who gains?"

The posters themselves

- Even if we win 100 medals GB Ltd is still in deep do-do
- Why should I support someone I don't know, doing something as trivial as running 100m, just because they're 'British'? *I'd rather cheer on old Mrs. Patel running for the bus*
- Whatever being British is, it isn't a flag on an athlete's vest. *It's time to rethink what patriotism might really mean*
- No one other than us remembers most British medal winners. *In 2008 China won 100 medals. Can you name any of their athletes?*
- In 2012, V is for vicarious not victory. *Do something to make you feel proud of yourself rather than watching other people's achievements*
- Wouldn't it be more honest if the winners got a Big Mac and a Coke rather than a medal? *Who chose the sponsors! So much for the myth of sport promoting health*
- Do we really need professional runners now that they've invented email and the phone? *Sport: Keep it fun, Keep it amateur, Keep it in perspective*
- No Olympics Games has ever made a nation healthier. *The arts strangely enough have. (Shouldn't the Tate be celebrating this?)*

They are rather text heavy to be truly effective posters, but then again the official ones didn't really work on these terms either. Pictures could be added of course. The real purpose of them though would be to stir up debate.

Mark Burns, 2011

Mail
Law rings
Law Games words
Patel
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