

## SPORT AND ART

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**Keywords:** actor, harmony, game, integration, art, mastery, Olympic games, SpArt, SpArtian games, sporting event, sport, sportsperson, artistic presentation, erotica, aesthetics

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### Summary

A theoretical analysis of the mutual relations between sport and art that are disputable but are ever changing, is presented. The distinct key features, important for an understanding of the essence of sport and art, the main components of modern culture, are considered. Attention is especially paid to modern understanding of their convergence and integration. The topic is discussed in an extended time span, including a brief excursion into ancient times and concluding with presentation of extravagant freaks of a modern reality. Methods of influence exerted by sport and art on people are demonstrated, and relations between people, involved in these processes, are evident. A special consideration is given to education and re-education of the youth towards cultivation of healthy and well-educated future generations of people.

### 1. Introduction.

**On-going debates:** Sport and art are the basic components of modern culture. The main problem in understanding of the mutual relations between sport and art is in the definition of the degree of their convergence or autonomy.

Through smooth penetration practically into all spheres of life and social relations, sport is inevitably enriched by the diversity of the world. Therefore, thanks to sport, it is possible to understand society's priorities and its ways of development. The international sports competitions help us to understand the condition of a certain

social and cultural system, the level of health of a nation as a whole. Of course, sport influences public life and culture.

Art is versatile too and hardly yields to absolutely precise gradation. Art is the skill requiring good proficiency and taste. The Danish physicist, the Nobel Peace Prize winner Niels Bohr told about the ability of art to evoke the mental harmony, which can not be subjected to any analysis. He explained this miracle by freedom of game and imagination, assisting in the development of a person. By the way, sailing and skiing supported physical and mental potential of this great thinker of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in good condition. Early art *feng shui* also teaches how to strengthen health and to prolong one's life. The system, possessing such knowledge, is called the gymnastics of the Supreme Ultimate (*Tai Chi*, "Great Ridgepole"). Currently, according to statistics, over 300 million people in the world practice its concepts. Being unique and, of course, a heritage of the Chinese civilization, Tai Chi serves today its highest purposes. In other words, art facilitates orientation of a person in ambient space, influencing him/her through emotions.

Art also is a branch of practical activity with an inherent system of procedures and methods, including also close knowledge of the subject. In deep understanding of art as a creative process, it can be partly defined as the ability of a person to transform the world around him/her and also himself/herself by his/her original way according to the laws of beauty. Art competitions at theater, cinema, and ballet emphasize the importance of such ability and skills at showing artistic image. A similar kind of competitiveness is adopted from game sports. Through the latter, a pivotal role is played by commentators of sports meets, in promoting the public image of sports, persistently trying to converge sport with art by using such expressions as "artistic gymnastics", "artistic sports".

The artistic image bears itself aesthetic pleasure. In aesthetically finished subject, the substance is clearly visible and expressed in its quality and functions. Thus, the thing or the phenomenon should correspond not only to versatility of its system of coordinates, but also should be in resonance with the person. The perception of art is not subjected to age, occupation or any other factors, identifying the person. Everybody admires the variant resonating together with his/her own soul. Therefore, ethical and aesthetic influence of art on the person always exists.

Jacques-Yves Cousteau is well known as a person from the art world and a sportsperson. Actually, at the beginning of his creative development, Cousteau launched a film studio for conspiracy of the process of invention and construction of an independent underwater breather. As a matter of fact, Cousteau and engineer Ganjan have grown new human body organ "for grafting". Cousteau has expressed his love to the ocean in films "The World of Silence" that has gained the first Oscar, and "The History of the Red Fish" that has received the second Oscar in 1959. Sometimes it is very difficult to draw a distinction between art, commerce and altruism (unselfish enthusiasm). Cousteau's documentary serials certainly aesthetically and beautifully popularized diving, but the equipment mentioned in films was made by the companies also launched by him. Besides aqualungs, the crew of "Calypso" was that first group of people which tested diving suits, electroscoters

and many other novelties of that time. But on the other hand, due to art of cinema, people have been familiarized with these sports inventions.

Thus, sport and art not only differ from each other, but also converge in many aspects. The difference in their nature does not yield to transformation, but there are the other aspects, which can help in bringing together these components of culture. As in any serious debate, besides two strictly opposite points of view on connections between sport and art, intermediate opinions recognizing the simultaneous presence of some common features and contrasts, are also noticed. Nevertheless, analysts have a steady and prevailing assurance that sport adopting some methods and features from art will never become art. Sport can not be included in the class of culture spheres reflecting reality by artistic images.

Taking into account the natural features of art, we can approach the problem of its interaction with sport more rationally. First of all, it is necessary to understand the degree of convergence of certain kind of sport or sport in general with the aesthetic culture and the possibility for sport to reach that threshold of mastery. Then it is important to analyze how sport can reflect reality by means of artistic images. Those kinds of sport, which meet these requirements, can influence a person approximately to the same degree as art.

In the comparison of a sportsperson and an artist, who are actually mutually opposed subjects of the said dispute, more precise outlines of convergence and separation processes between these two elements of culture are arising.

In the discussion of convergence of sport and art, we use the term “integration”. The urgency of this phenomenon arises due to current reality. The spiritual-intellectual level of sportspersons and the physical form of artists depend on successful promotion of integration. Then the society, accordingly, continues its development already in new conditions. Among the many features of sport, we notice the tendency of certain kinds of sport approaching erotica instead of art, though erotica can be art, but in the given circumstances its deliberately low-standard character is far from ideal. Therefore success of practical steps of integration, certainly, is important for a society, and integration can become its original global idea uniting and developing people in physical and intellectual aspects.

Currently, besides other well know art workers, the former General Director of UNESCO, Spanish scientist, public figure, poet and writer Federico Major Zaragoza actively supports the idea of integration of sport and art. Since 1999 and till now, he leads the Foundation for a Culture of Peace.

## **2. Whether Sport can be treated as an Art?**

### **2.1. Aesthetic Features of Sport**

We start talking about beauty when the form and content are in harmony with each other. In an example with a sportsperson, one of the components of beauty is sportsmanship and the other components directly depend on the sphere of

sportsmanship. Thus, beauty in sport depends on a particular kind of sport, and, consequently, it meets different requirements.

Sometimes, people choose bodybuilding for improving parameters of their bodies. And they really achieve the dreamt appearance, and even become professionals, but their organism starts functioning abnormally. To get distinct relief of muscles, a bodybuilder reduces the level of fat in his/her body from 15% down to 5-6%. He/She also squeezes water from his/her body down to its minimum. Consequently people participating in bodybuilding competitions are exhausted, dehydrated and demineralized. We admire the athletic build, but behind the appearance there is a heap of health problems. Drugs bring temporary relief, but excessive dosage of medication leads to side effects. In this case, the price for the beauty of the body is health. Actors have to flesh out or lose weight (not by their own will), too, if, according to a context of a role, the character is to have another weight category. And many roles are connected with serious risk to life, and, especially, if actors are not substituted by stunt men (sometimes by sportspersons, involved in film production).

It happens that sportspersons sacrifice their lives to find their own harmony. In the 1950-60s, Marlon Brando in the film “The Wild One” has created a common style for bikers adopted by youngsters of today’s California. Yes, they are sportspersons, but they construct artworks from their motorcycles using different details. They find harmony in search of components for motorcycles. They live for the moment, because they constantly put their lives in peril riding their “masterpieces”. People can see their creations for a moment in extreme action or in detail on photos exhibited proudly in art galleries.

Thus the concept of beauty changes. In fact, Le Corbusier initially emphasized the necessity of understanding of all art details for aesthetic perception, that obviously contradicts mentioned deviations, but such brutal behavior is dictated by laws of new times. Nevertheless, the aesthetic component is inherent to all kinds of sport, though in a varying degree, and it helps to bring some sports closer to art, especially in the kinds of sport where sportspersons show their sportsmanship in full.

Upgrading technical equipment, the sport accessories, implies artistry that has nothing common with pure art. But, nevertheless, more artistic sportspersons win more often. A steady tendency of increase of the role and value of the aesthetic factor, even for weightlifters and boxers, is seen in sports. So, the boxer, showing sportsmanship in a ring, applies the necessary qualities in his/her own life, training will and tempering character to bring up own firmness and purposefulness. Sharpness or elegance of movements and flexibility of the sportsperson is admired by fans. Aesthetic potential of sport is often aimed at the masses and compels them to be emotionally involved with teams and sportspersons and to take up sports. So it finds the response in aesthetic component of human culture.

The technical and tactical aspects of sportsmanship are under strong influence of a trainer, sports organizations, providing special conditions for bringing the best out of a sportsperson’s potential. And initially all his/her actions have a precise orientation

and concentration during which the sportsperson forgets everything around except the present training or competition, and it gives him/her and to spectators a condition close to aesthetic pleasure.

American scientist Lowe said that if the painter has a canvas, the sportsperson has a body, and he/she expresses himself/herself or follows the mercenary purposes which can be both a recognition, and money. Paul Frayssinet correlates sport with a category of the applied art, ranking with music, poetry or dance. He also bases his judgment on the theory of body operation in sport; such a concept has its followers also in many kinds of art. The well-known choreographic artist, Kasyan Yaroslavovich Goleyzovsky, fully shared the point of view of A. Ya. Tairova, regarding the development of the “synthetic” actor. He suggested giving the actor the opportunity to develop his/her own physical features at plastics, “ballet gymnastics”, fencing, acrobatics, juggling trainings. This way the actors feed themselves by aesthetics from the sports side.

But it is obvious, that artwork is immortal in comparison with sportspersons. And the sportsperson at the finish of his/her career (when time of records is up), can only, using sportsmanship, continue to influence spectators by aesthetics.

## **2.2. Artistic Expression of the Reality in Sport**

Well-known Russian scientist V. I. Stolyarov supposes consideration of art as a high level of workmanship in any (including sports) activity or assessment of the aesthetic character of a play under the “laws of beauty”; of course, sport can be treated as an art. But the principal difference between sport and art is in the fact, that sportspersons do not create artworks and the artistic image is not created at all.

A sportsperson of a high level shows an image of himself/herself, bringing into elements of his/her program as many personal features as possible. But he/she does not transform into an actor. Contact of the sportsperson with public brings aesthetic pleasure that is mutual.

Football analyst Jeffrey Green reveals the union of sport and art in codes of laws and rules inherent to them, and, certainly, in their creative influence on the emotional background proceeding from spectators and participants of action. The reaction of the viewing audience in sport and art, according to the opinion of Polish philosopher Zbigniew Krawczyk, can be treated as a creative process. The German philosopher H. Lenk agrees with these points of view.

Sport administrators also support them. The term “Sport is an art” does not cause any doubts for Nikolaos Nissiotis, and he explained it at the opening of the 26th session of the International Olympic Academy. By the way, summarizing the said events, the Canadian scientist Fernand Landry said, that sport with its records is one of the forms of artistic activity, i.e. sport is art, and has emphasized its ability for a long time constantly to involve people in training and self-perfection. And the honorable vice-president of Olympic committee of Russia V. S. Rodichenko underlines, that sports competition, as a creative process, implies a decision-making and creates original values, both for the process, and for its fans.

In the closed world of martial arts there were always its own rules, but in their transfer to sports rings in modern times, considerable constraints on their frameworks, which, certainly, strongly restrict aggression initially incorporated in these kinds of sport, have appeared. Currently the concept of martial arts acquired a new meaning. Today the main thing is a victory (control) over oneself in such arts, overcoming one's own weakness and deficiencies, achievement of harmony with oneself, the world around, the nature and space. These desires are connected to certain public ideals and reflect the force of a person's character, its moral greatness, and power of spirit. The Grand Master, the Knight Commander of the Order of Knights of Malta, ninja with a martial ordination title IEMOTO - the custodian of ancient traditions and holder of martial Zen-Buddhist title Siroy Hosi - White Star, the winner of an engraved sword of the Master, Sergey Trofimov said that mentally unbalanced people can not be accepted to the clan of ninja. The best fight is that which has not happened. His mental slogan is "You should not kill somebody!" He transfers his own deep professional knowledge to the generations of XXI century at his own school. Any form of modern martial art consists of holds of different schools. So, sharpness and dynamics go from karate, fluidity goes from Aikido. But competitive implication prevails in all techniques. And these are the tactics and strategy. An instructor imparts to his/her students the culture of spirit, concentration of mental forces. Without these features any martial art is useless, and real life also loses its inner sense.

Harmony of martial art is in a certain philosophical approach and maintaining traditions. The main ideas collapse if these components are neglected. In one of the prisons of the state of New Mexico the judge forces convicted people to study Far East gymnastics Tai Chi as a punishment, explaining such sentence by the necessity for prisoner to reach harmony in the perception of the world. Such trainings teach them control over their own impulsivity and to overcome their anger which is one's own enemy inside their minds. Thus, a force of harmony has already put many misled souls on a right way.

The integral components of the martial art Sumo are the same, "spirit-techniques-body". In the early Middle Ages Sumo tournaments were a part of royal celebrations. During the times of feudal strife Sumo becomes a means of training of mind and body of soldiers-samurais. From XVI century the tournaments are described in fiction, fighters appear at Kabuki Theater, and pictures of their fights decorate the interior. This kind of sport is not equally popular in all countries. Of course, social mind set significantly influences the popularity of martial arts, but the situation changes as soon as organizers add brilliance to a show. Somebody in the West finds aesthetic pleasure even in female combats. By the way, in Japan, the motherland of this national wrestling, such appreciation of fight of extremely plump women is a rarity.

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### **Biographical Sketch**

**Eugenia Solodovnikova** was born in Moscow. She is a journalist, scriptwriter and designer.

Since 1997, she works for the International magazine about leaders and for leaders “VIP-premier” published in Moscow since June, 1991. Since 2003 and till now, she is an editor of a section “Society” of the magazine. She has published at the largest Russian and international printing agencies more than 3000 articles and interviews with the world famous scientists and cultural workers, cosmonauts, sportspersons, politicians. The list of interviewees includes: Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexy II (magazine “VIP-premier”, January-February 2004, an exclusive interview); Nobel prize winner Vitaly Ginzburg (an exclusive interview: “Science, including physics, still exists in Russia”, magazine “VIP-premier”, April-May 2005); Nobel prize winner Zhores Alfyorov (“Science is an engine of a civilization”, magazine “VIP-premier”, April-May 2005). She is an author of a script of a documentary film “Unona and Avos. Hallelujah to Love!”, and also of several TV programs on style on Russian TV. As a designer, she has issued three catalogues on knits, has a registered trade mark, 9 patents for industrial design and a patent for the invention for animals, marked by two gold medals at the International exhibitions in Geneva and Brussels. She has carried out 7 personal exhibitions of clothes, and a series of TV programs and interviews on Russian and foreign TV. Over a period of three years, she conducted a special program on fashion and a style on radio. She is a winner of many international contests held in Russia. Her designs are in private collections, including abroad. She is the editor of an issue of the International magazine “ART PRESTIGE” devoted to the fifth, anniversary, Week of Haute Couture in Moscow.

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