Beat: Sports

LES FRANCISCAINES, NEW EXHIBITION "SPORT, FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE GESTURE"

FRANCE HOSTING THE SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES

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USPA NEWS - With this New Exhibition "Sport, for the Beauty of the Gesture", Les Franciscaines is Part of this exciting Year, where France is hosting the Summer Olympic Games, exactly One Hundred Years after having organized them in 1924. It was Natural that the City thus displayed its Interest in Sport because, as Residents and Summer Visitors know, Deauville is a Sports City...

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- The Exploration of the Sporting Gesture in its Artistic, Technical and Spiritual Dimension

For Several Years, certain International Teams have been coming to benefit from the Pôle Omni'Sports and its High-Level Equipment. To show the Extent of the Age of this Interest, let us recall for example that René Lacoste came here to secure France's Qualification for the 1927 Davis Cup, and that Golf has been played here since the 1920s.

More surprising perhaps, and the Exhibition reveals it, there were Open-Air Rings which saw some Boxers fight... Not to mention the Sports which are not deliberately mentioned in this Reflection, in particular Equestrian Sports or Equestrian which will one day be treated in a Vast Exhibition on Horses.

The Originality of the Initiative at the Franciscaines lies in the Subject that the Commissioner, Thierry Grillet, chose to talk about Sport: zooming in on the Primary Unit of Each Discipline: the Gesture and, sometimes, the Founding Gesture for a Discipline .

This Approach, which puts the Athlete, his Body and his Technique, under the Microscope, leads to the Heart of Sport and its Functioning. What is moving in the Competition, apart from the Intensity of the Stakes, if not the Beautiful Gesture of the Athlete. The one through which a Sport brings to the Highest Level what it is, the Alliance of Strength and Grace.

The Exhibition therefore looks at Numerous Disciplines - mainly Olympic - to admire Emblematic Gestures, such as the Serve in Tennis, the Penalty in Football, the Touch in Rugby, the Throw of the Discobolus, etc...

Thus it is the Gesture of Sport, but revised and transcended by the Arts, which is deployed in the Different Moments of this Exhibition. In each Discipline selected, the Monumental Gestures are evoked in some way literally through the Photographs in the Background of the Newspaper l'Équipe. Then each Discipline, with its Champions, its Achievements, is reinterpreted through Ancient, Modern or Very Contemporary Works of Art - thanks to Remarkable Loans granted by the Country's Major Museum Institutions, notably the National Sports Museum in Nice but also the Georges Pompidou center, the Gobelins and many others.

Finally, a So-Called Extrapolation Work allows us to see the Gesture and its Meaning differently... What is the Essence of Tennis, Rugby, Diving to take just a few Examples covered in the Exhibition? This is what Photographers, Artists, Filmmakers, Sculptors, Designers reveal, in their Productions, capturing in the Second or at the End of a Long Meditation, the Beauty in effort.

This Meditation on the Gesture of the Athlete benefits from the Exceptional Support of the National Institute of Sport, Expertise and Performance (INSEP), also a Partner of this Event with Loans of the First Chronophotographs of Georges Demeny, who was first the Assistant of Etienne-Jules Marey at the Physiological Station of the Parc des Princes in the Bois de Boulogne before conducting his Own Research on Movement at the Normal School of Physical Education in Joinville where the French Army worked - before 1914 - on the Physical Performances of the Soldier.

- Understanding Sports Movement

Without Doubt there is no better Celebration of Man in Movement than that given, through Astonishing Photographic Images at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries, by the Doctor Physiologist, Professor at the Collège from France, Étienne-Jules Marey, assisted by his Trainer, Gymnast and Violinist, Georges Demeny.

They represent a Patient Effort to understand what happens when a Man alks, jumps or runs.

From 1882, and for more than a Decade, in the Physiological Station of the Parc des Princes, the two Researchers questioned the Movements of Animals (Horses in particular, but also Birds - because Marey imagined making them the Model of Aircraft) and Humans, to try to understand in depth the Mechanisms behind the Gestures of Living Things.

The Technique of Chronophotography, developed by Marey, which allows the Successive States of a Body in Movement to be fixed on the same Glass Plate, establishes a True Science of Gestures.

Getting rid of the Illusion that Simple Sight provides Sufficient Information about Locomotion, this Photographic Mechanism allows Scientists to go beyond the Anatomical Paradigm in the Explanation of Gesture. The Functioning of the Running Body involves a whole System of Bones, Tendons, Ligaments and Joints which can be compared to that of the Machine, with its Ropes, its Levers, its Pulleys.

However, Anatomy alone fails to account for Movement. The Kinetics of Bodies, the Kinematics of Trajectory, the Dynamics of Momentum also contribute to the Production of Speed.

The Images of Chronophotography thus allow, by breaking down the Movement, by geometrizing it (through the Artifice of the Black Suit and White Bands fixed on the Limbs) to reveal its Truth - the Curvilinear outline of the Center of Gravity, the Oscillations of the Head, etc. Thanks to this first Rapid Imagery of the Body, Man, for the first Time in his History, understands himself in Movement, can measure his Gesture and try to draw General Laws.

After separating from Marey, Georges Demeny, once installed in his Own Laboratory in Joinville, worked with "Elite Subjects". It is by examining them that this Pedagogue intends to develop a "French" Method of Physical Education - we are at the Age of Nationhood - which will improve the Performance of the Infantryman (the Man who short is first a Soldier). Thirty Years after the Defeat of Sedan, the Patriotic Dimension of Physical Exercise continues to inspire Educational Approach. For the Race, it is the monitor Steiner serving as Guinea Pig , appearing no less than eighty times in Demene's Chronophotographs. The Precision of Demeny's Photographic Equipment promotes a Vision that is both Realistic and Artistic. Steiner, in Movement, offers the Fascinating Spectacle of a Powerful Corpse in profile.

The Drawing of his Muscles in Action, the Highlighting of the Trajectory, the Measurement of the Energy expended allow us to document an Ideal Type of Runner.

But the Chronophotographic Spectacle does not exclude the Artistic Perception of this Sculptural Nude which is well worth the Statues of Praxiteles. The Oblong Plaque where, on a Black Background, stands out the Athlete with his Bulging Muscles, so well defined that one would think he had been Skinned, recounts in four Pauses the Gesture of the Runner, but also gives him the Beauty of a Drawing.

The Eye, equipped for a Century with Successive Optical Technologies of Chronophotography, Kinogram, Slow Motion or Magnifying Glass, has been able to penetrate the Mystery of Movement and dissolve it in Measurements, Curves, Intensities.

But he could never quite explain the Beauty of the Gesture. Which only belongs to the Individual, to the Way he makes Movement, a Gesture.

- Exhibition Journey

* Introduction
* Tennis, Sculptural Gesture
* Archery, Philosophical Gesture
* Rugby, the Touch and Gesture of the Dancer

* Running, Treading with Winged Feet
* The Dive, Seraphic Gesture
* High Jump, Hippie Gesture
* Boxing, Jazz Gesture

Source: Les Franciscaines Deauville
Guided tour with the Curator of the Exhibition Thierry GRILLET
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