

Panathlon International Cultural Foundation– Domenico Chiesa



How it was born.

The name of this Foundation shows its nature: it is organically functional to Panathlon International and dedicated to the patron who made it possible. Domenico Chiesa, one of the founders of the Club of

Venice, has served Panathlon for all his life starting from June 12, 1951. He has covered, with continuity, the most different assignments, from secretary to board member, to international vice president and Honorary Member Co-founder. After his sudden death (November 19, 1994) it was discovered that he was the anonymous patron he had invoked in the Report of the Central Board at the Assembly of Rapallo (June 4-5, 1994). This was revealed in the article that Antonio Spallino published in n. 1/1995, (pages 3-4) written to remember the deceased. There was no written record of that wish. When the Chiesa family became aware of their relative's wish, they generously decided to honour him by donating the considerable sum of 400 million liras - it was 1997 - with the condition that Panathlon International would increase that capital with a contribution not less than half of the legacy. The 200 million were collected by clubs and individual Panathletes expressing the will to provide Panathlon with a useful tool for the diffusion of its values.

Purpose.

In the constitutional act, the purpose is "the creation of an award to be assigned periodically to one or more works of visual art inspired by sport". The Foundation "will also be able to promote other cultural initiatives and publications aimed at achieving the objectives established in the statute of Panathlon International", (...) "if their funding is ensured by the fruits of resources other than those coming from the investment of the initial capital, which remains "intangible", or from sponsorships.

The cultural basis of the operation.

Pierre De Coubertin, in conceiving the birth of the modern Olympics, was inspired by the concept of paidéia (παιδεία), that is, training, education, according to the pedagogical model widespread in Athens in the fifth century BC. It should be remembered that in the second half of the European nineteenth century there was a strong appeal to the values of harmony that many archaeological excavations evoked.

Think of the discoveries of Heinrich Schliemann in Troy, Mycenae, Tiryns, and Ernst

Curtius in Olympia with the discovery of Hermes with Dionysus by Praxiteles, which stimulated great interest in Greek civilization. It was strong in De Coubertin, in reviving the spirit of Olympia, the idea of combining Art and Sport. The history of the Art Olympics or the cultural events connected with the Olympic Games between



Ugo Carà - Nuotatrice (1986)

1912 and 1948 are well known. Attempts to reinstate them as a complement to the Olympics were numerous and had mixed fortunes. It is interesting to recall how, during the XXXII General Assembly of Panathlon International held in Trieste in May 1986, a round table was held on the theme "The restoration of art contests in the context of the Olympic Games", cited not only in the Review of P.I., but also in the Enciclopedia dello Sport of Treccani. On that occasion, which celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the Club of Trieste, there was the inauguration of the statue "The swimmer" by the sculptor Ugo Carà. In the 11th issue - December 1986 of the Review there are the interventions of Sisto Favre ("Arts and Olympics"), Jean François Pahud ("philosophical and historical Considerations"), Henrique Nicolini ("Art, Sport and Olympism"), Christian Garrabos ("Myths and sports images of the 20th

century") and the "final resolution" of that round table in the Congress Palace. The resolution called for the reinstatement of art competitions associated with the Olympic Games, beginning with those in Barcelona. The contests "would cover architecture, furniture art and design, sculpture, painting, music, dance, literature,



Prassitele, *Erme con Dioniso* (350-330 a.C.)

photography, cinematography and television, having as their only limitation the fact that they be inspired by the idea of sports."

Of absolute importance, in the following June, was the "XI Art and Sport Exhibition" set up at Palazzo Strozzi by the Panathlon Club Firenze. Approximately 200 works were exhibited from the competition previously announced, alongside which, out of competition, there were works by famous artists: Renato Guttuso, Franco Messina, Giacomo Manzù, Aligi Sassu, Emilio Greco, Primo Conti, Antonio Berti, Giuseppe Cesetti, Ugo Attardi, Gastone Breddo, Giovanni Colacicchi, Gianni Dova, Pericle Fazzini, Mario Rossello, Mimmo Rotella. The award ceremony, under the high patronage of the President of the Republic, was held in the Salone dei Dugento in Palazzo Vecchio. For over thirty years the club has carried out this meritorious activity and always at a high or very high level.



**XI^a MOSTRA
ARTE
E SPORT**

Foto a fianco: davanti alla scultura di Messina, presidente (Gardanghi) e segretario (Frangi) del Panathlon Firenze, Riccardo Saldarelli e il vicesindaco Ventura.
Foto sotto: un momento della premiazione nel Salone dei Dugento, in Palazzo Vecchio.



Domenico Chiesa's dream.

In the cultural climate described above, Domenico Chiesa dreamed of being able to find a permanent collaboration with the Venice Biennale, awarding works that were inspired by sport and its values. He believed in this so much that he financed the Foundation that would be created ad hoc in the ways and with the resources described above



Canaletto, *Regata sul Canal Grande* (1732)
- London, National Gallery.

Recent History.

In the celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the Club of Venice, the Foundation realized the first edition of the prize that Domenico Chiesa dreamed of. This was due to the commitment of President Vittorio Adorni, Antonio Spallino who led the Cultural Commission of P.I. and the Club of Venice. From the very first meetings with Prof. Paolo Baratta, president of the Biennale, and with the director of the Visual Arts sector, Harald Szeemann, the commitment appeared improbable. In the end, the international jury led by Szeemann chose

and the winner was the Swiss Urs Luhti for an installation that occupied the entire Swiss pavilion at Gardens of the Biennale. It was a solemn award ceremony during the celebration of the club's fiftieth anniversary in the Sala dello Scrutinio in the Ducal Palace. Subsequent considerations made by the Foundation highlighted the impossibility of maintaining such a commitment even every four years: it was too onerous in absolute terms and the visibility that could be obtained in future editions was disproportionate. Times had changed. Contemporary and avant-garde art could not admit themed exhibitions and sport could only be a metaphor to represent social instances or human principles dramatically violated. For this reason, the Foundation changed step and created the "International Competition of Graphic Arts", which for years allowed clubs to enter high schools to organize meetings with students and challenge them to render on canvas or paper the values and suggestions perceived in sports. The 18 editions that have involved clubs since 2003 have produced appreciable results from a formal point of view, albeit with ups and downs, and the Foundation has had the satisfaction of exhibiting an anthology of the best works of 17 editions at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, with an exhibition that was much visited and appreciated within the IOC, so much so that the Organizing Committee of the Winter Youth Olympic Games, held in Lausanne, selected 4 works exhibited, together with the panathletic charters and our symbols and publications in the stand that the panathletes of Lausanne set up and manned in the old town where international sports federations and cultural associations were present.

The last edition of the contest, which followed some editions positively participated and qualitatively among the best, has seen a fall in internationality, which led the Board of the Foundation to suspend the 2019-2020 contest, which would have been awarded in this year of pandemic. A choice of consistency considering that the internationality of the last contest could not be justified by the presence of only one country (Chile) outside Italy. A choice that, unfortunately, also turned out to be unintentionally prophetic.

The future of the Foundation.



The section of PI website with the information about the Foundation.

Constitutional Act, Statute and Precision Act are included in <Finality>.

Given the nature and the constraints of the Foundation, the Board of Directors that will be appointed by the International Board of Panathlon International for the four-year period that began with the elections in Osimo, will have to resume its activities by implementing the latest decisions taken to broaden the range of activities to multiple fields of visual arts, taking into account the most modern means related to information technology and open to contributions of ideas and proposals that the same base of P.I. can propose. Currently, the most compelling

constraint is economic resources. At a time when returns on capital investment are scarce, it is necessary for P.I. to support the Foundation by entrusting it with the realization of part of the cultural activities, such as promotional campaigns or other. In a relationship that to some extent already exists, but which should perhaps be organically defined. Clubs and panathletes have the possibility to contribute to the forms foreseen until now. The Domenico Chiesa Awards, launched by Vittorio Adorni, on the model of what exists in the most important

service clubs, to pay homage to personalities, panathletic or not, who have significantly contributed to spread the culture of Panathlon and the values of Olympism, are a prestigious recognition, second only to the Flambeau d'Or. On the website you can make donations as "Friends or Supporters of the Foundation". If clubs and Panathletes will be able to perceive the Foundation as their own resource and if the Foundation will be able to propose useful projects to the activities of the clubs themselves, the actions that P.I. will be able to develop will receive a significant benefit.