TOM SCHOOLS

Activity sheet

TEACHERS

# SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY

THE OLYMPIC MUSEUM

# Contents

# How to use this sheet

Sports photography is about sharing a moment, an instant in time. It captures the intensity of sports competition, and freezes a fleeting moment. It relies on the talent and creativity of the photographers, as well as on the technical advances that have made it possible to capture those ephemeral events.

This activity sheet gives an insight into these different aspects through a series of exercises. They will help students to develop their ability to document their work, understand, create and carry out a project.

The exercises can all be done separately. Once you have completed all these activities, you will be able to mount your own sports photography exhibition.

This document should be used in conjunction with the information sheet on the same topic.

**An information sheet gives all the elements to familiarize with sports photography and to discover the keywords used when analysing an image.**

→ Download from: www.olympic.org/education
  > Teaching materials

**An educational video explains how to shoot with short exposures, and provides the tools for conducting a practical in-class workshop on the visual image.**

→ Available in french from: www.olympic.org/pedagogie

ACTIVITY 1: DOCUMENTING YOUR WORK
## The history of sports photography

EXERCISE 1
# The sports photography timeline

### AIMS
- To test your memory.
- For older children, to understand the chronology of different innovations.

### EQUIPMENT
- Scissors.
- Print out appendices 1, 2 and 3.

Analysing sports photography also involves identifying its place in history, within a context strongly influenced by technological developments and the historical situation.

This exercise will introduce the students to the history of sports photography, and test their memory with a game.

## Discovering the timeline

The teacher introduces the class to the timeline, using the visuals and other materials included in the appendix. A copy of the documents is given to all the students, who should take some time to familiarise themselves with it.
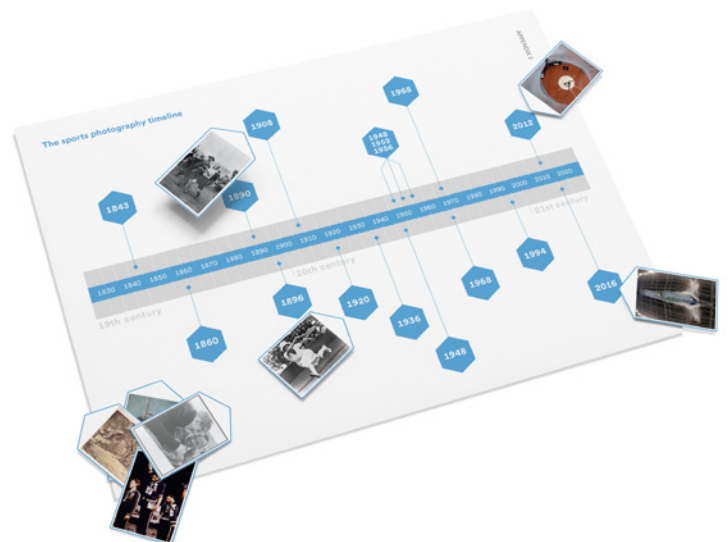


### For older children (12-15 years)
## comprehension

Working with the teacher in small groups, the older children try to place the card groups (image + story) on the timeline.

## Game

Working in pairs, the students try to match the "image" cards with the appropriate "story" cards. The students take turns.

The student with the most correct pairs wins.

ACTIVITY 1: DOCUMENTING YOUR WORK
**The history of sports photography**

EXERCICE 2
# Discovering historical sports photographs

Students are invited to analyse 14 historical sports photographs, choose the one that makes the biggest impression on them, and present their choice to the class.

## AIMS

- To compare and analyse the photographs.
- To think about their meaning and the messages they convey.
- To explain the emotions they provoke and build an argument.

## EQUIPMENT

- Printout of appendix 1.

## Discovering historical sports photographs

The teacher distributes the sets of photographs in the appendix to the class. The class analyses each photograph together. For each photograph, the class describes the photo and what it represents, and the students give their initial impressions.
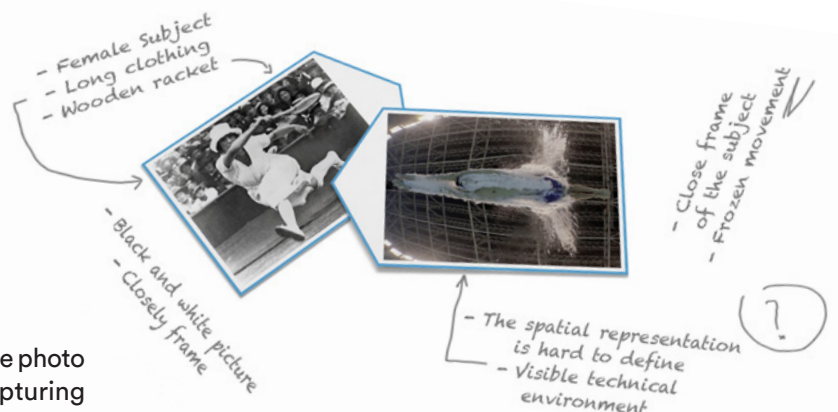
## Group discussion

The students break off into small groups and discuss the photograph that has made the greatest impression on them. They need to make a final choice of photo to present to the class.

## Presentation to the class

Each group presents its choice to the rest of the class and explains what they think about it.

For older children (12-15 years)
## technical argument

Older children can be invited to defend their favourite photo on the basis of specific criteria: composition, capturing a decisive moment, viewpoint, message, technique, etc.



- Female subject
- Long clothing
- Wooden racket

- Black and white picture
- Closely frame

- Close frame of the subject
- Frozen movement

- The spatial representation is hard to define
- Visible technical environment

?

ACTIVITY 2: DECODING AND CREATING
## Sports photography, art and messages

EXERCISE 1
# Exploring photomontage

### AIMS
- To absorb various different artistic fields.
- To work on image composition.
- To experiment with a variety of artistic techniques.

### EQUIPMENT
- Paper, scissors, glue, coloured paper, felt pens, paints, crayons.
- Sports photographs and magazines, photos printed off the internet.

This exercise introduces the principles of photomontage and invites students to create their own photomontage.

## Discovering photomontage

A photomontage is a composition made up of several images or parts of images, put together to create a new photograph. Photomontage can be accomplished with collage, through the developing process itself or using software. The meaning of this new creation is thus different from that of the original photograph.

Berlin-based artist Jens Ullrich has a highly original approach to photomontage. At the 2012 Olympic Games he created a series of works where the bodies of athletes in motion were partially replaced by photographs of statues in a similar pose.

www.van-horn.net/artists/jens-ullrich/selected-works.html

## Artistic practice

Following Jens Ullrich's approach, students are invited to create their own photomontages, combining modern photographs with images of ancient statues.

*Careful: like Jens Ullrich, you have to try to match up the positions of each of the photos in the photomontage, like a jigsaw puzzle!*



Collage sample created by the artist Jens Ullrich.

ACTIVITY 2: DECODING AND CREATING
## Sports photography, art and messages

EXERCISE 2
# The messages of sports images

This exercise focuses on students' ability to read an image. They are given the keys to decoding an image, and invited to label them.

### AIMS

- To analyse the means by which various different messages are conveyed.
- To give a reasoned personal analysis of an image.

### EQUIPMENT

- Selection of Olympic photos from the Rio 2016 Games, from the appendix. Print one set for each student. The images could also be displayed digitally. Teachers may also use their own selection of images.
- Glossary/key to analysing the images.
- Print out appendix 4 and 5.

## Analysing images

Students work individually on analysing the images.

For each photograph they have to answer the following questions from appendix 4:

- » What is this image of?
- » Is it a portrait? Is it an action photograph?
- » What is the sport?
- » What are the highlights of the image?
- » What techniques has the photographer used?
- » What are the photographer's intentions?
- » What is the context of the image?
- » What is its purpose?
- » What did the photographer choose not to show?
- » What do you understand from this image?

To help them answer the questions, students may refer to the glossary from the information sheet on sports photography.

→ See information sheet, p. 20:
   www.olympic.org/education

## Creative work

Each student then chooses the image or images with the strongest message, and thinks of a caption for this image or images. The captions may be funny or thought-provoking, or they might contain a play on words. But they must add something to the meaning of the photos.

## Presentation to the class

If they wish, students may present an image to the class along with their chosen caption. They should explain their choice in terms of how they interpreted the image, focusing on the message the photographer is trying to convey.

ACTIVITY 3: COMPLETING A PROJECT
**Sports photography, fieldwork**

EXERCISE 1
# Sports journalism

## AIMS

- To conduct field research.
- To use a camera independently and correctly.
- To explore the main elements of a fixed image (composition, colour, light, depth of field, pace, movement, field of view, planes, etc.).

## EQUIPMENT

- Film or digital camera, mobile phone camera, colour printer, screen, projector, computer.

In this exercise the students, working alone or in groups, attend a sports competition at their school, in the neighbourhood where they live, or even just another class's PE lesson.

During this fieldwork, they will play the role of sports reporters, documenting the sports event through images.

## On-the-spot reporting

In small groups, students pick a sports event to report on. Once at the sports event, they record it in photographs, as a reporter would, taking shots of the action, portraits and images of the spectators.

## Analysing the data collected

Back in class, the students sort through the photographs and choose the ones that best convey the messages they want their work to express.

## Post-production and presentation

Depending on the tools they used and what is available, the students prepare their work for presentation. If the photos are digital, they could be cropped and edited. They can print out the photographs on a printer, or in the school's photo lab if it has one. They could also prepare a digital slide show.

## Presentation

Each group is invited to present their selection of photographs during class discussion time. This time is used to present the projects and compare different interpretations of the same event.

**Sports photography, fieldwork**

EXERCISE 2
# The sports photography exhibition

## Exhibition project

Students work on a sports photography exhibition project. This exhibition can be used to display all the materials created through this activity sheet (timeline, selection of historical photographs, artistic decisions, alternative captions, on-the-spot reporting) or just some of them.

There are two methods for staging this exhibition: students may either work together on all the aspects, or they can split up into groups which each take responsibility for a specific task.

Don't forget to think about the design and scenography of the exhibition, how the photos are to be displayed, communication and publicity and, of course, dismantling the exhibition at the end!

**AIMS**
- To take part in and contribute to a group project.
- To convey a message.
- To complete a project.

**EQUIPMENT**
- Scissors, colour printers, hanging materials, cardstock for labels, pens, computers, coloured crayons and felt pens.

This exercise gives students an opportunity to pass on a message about sports photography, as a modern art form that bears witness to a moment in time, capturing the beauty of the human body and its abilities.

## Curating the exhibition

The students decide on the purpose of the exhibition.

» Will it be a retrospective of sports photography?
» Or will it show the students' original creations, based on the techniques of chronophotography or photomontage, for instance?
» Would they like to prepare a more journalistic exhibition of sports photographs?
» What 'message' about sports photography do they want this exhibition to convey?

Once the theme has been chosen they need to select the photographs and decide on how the exhibition will be organised (e.g. chronologically, by theme, by artist).

## Outreach

During the exhibition, visitors must be welcomed and guided. This is where the outreach team comes in: these people must be thoroughly familiar with the exhibition and eager to share what they know with the public.

Guided visits could be scheduled for set times, and/or the exhibition could be open continuously, with members of the public able to find out information about the project.

APPENDIX 1
# Reference historical
# sports photographs (1 / 2)

Print out this page in A4 format on heavy paper or mount
the sheet on cardboard before cutting out the pictures.

APPENDIX 1
# Reference historical
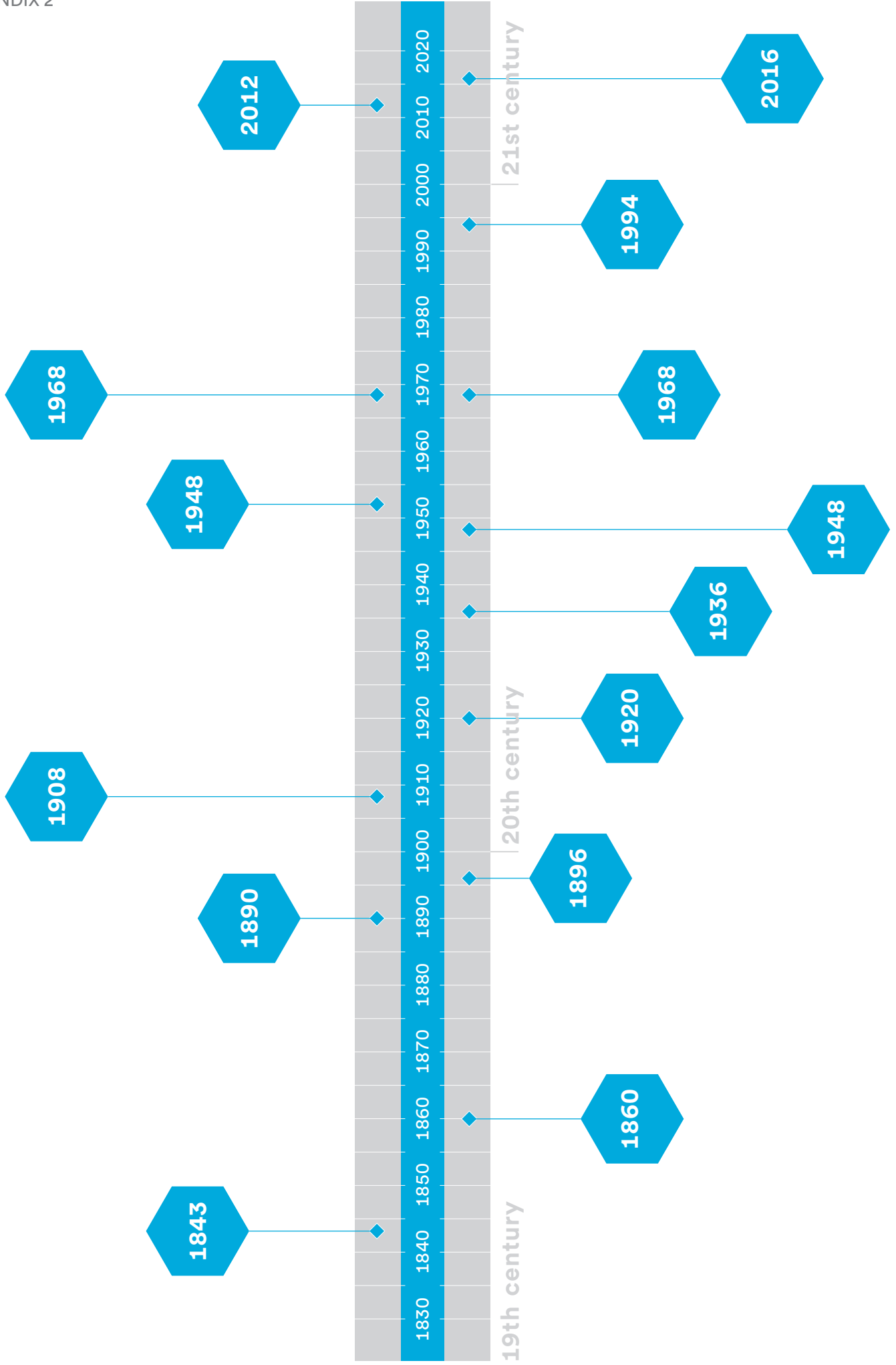# sports photographs (2 / 2)

Print out this page in A4 format on heavy paper or mount
the sheet on cardboard before cutting out the pictures.













## The Sports photography timeline (next page)

Print out this page in A3 format.

## The sports photography timeline



2012

2016

1994

1968

1968

1948

1948

1936

1908

1920

1890

1896

1843

1860

21st century

20th century

19th century

1830 1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020

## "Story" cards (1/2)

Print out this page in A4 format on heavy paper or mount the sheet on cardboard before cutting out the pictures.

### Studio time: suggest action without moving

In 1843, it was impossible to photograph athletes in action. In those days, photographers had to rely on a few tricks! For example, this tennis player has a metal framework hidden behind him, which would have helped him to hold this position for several minutes. By the end of the session he was probably suffering from serious pins and needles!

### Extreme photography: a significant achievement

In the mid-19th century, the Bisson brothers were among the rare photographers to leave their studio to take shots outdoors, travelling as far as the slopes of Mont Blanc. That was a serious challenge. The expedition had to take at least 25 people, to help carry 250 kilos of glass plates, tripods and chemicals.

### Chrono-photography: deconstructing movement

At the end of the 19th century, 2 photographers, Marey and Demenÿ, perfected a technique that superimposed several images taken within a short space of time. This was called chronophotography. It provided a way of deconstructing movement, which made it easier to analyse and understand it.

### The Olympic Games: immortalising memories

The arrival of smaller cameras that could be used outdoors, along with compact rolls of film, encouraged photographers, whether amateur or professional, athletes or spectators, to take cameras with them to immortalise the first modern Olympic Games of 1896 in Athens.

### Athletes: creating legends

This photograph is of marathon runner Dorando Pietri, winner of the Olympic event in London in 1908. It is considered the first great sports photograph. The athlete's joy was short-lived; he was later disqualified for receiving assistance at the end of the race. It's tough when you break the rules.

### Women athletes: an evolving image

Grace and elegance are the words that come to mind when describing early photos of women athletes. In 1920 Suzanne Lenglen revolutionised the sports world. This elegant tennis player, the first international tennis star, became an ambassador for women's sport and an icon of her time.

### The iconic photograph: writing history

This shot of Jesse Owens of the USA and Luz Long of Germany at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin has a very symbolic dimension. Taken in the context of Nazi Germany, the photo shows the friendship between the two men, and symbolises two other Olympic values: excellence and respect.

APPENDIX 3
## "Story" cards (2/2)

Print out this page in A4 format on heavy paper or mount the sheet on cardboard before cutting out the pictures.

**The photo finish: overcoming human limitations**

At the 1948 Olympic Games in London, Omega had perfected the "magic eye", a camera placed on the finish line, which shot film continuously. The photo finish – halfway between photograph and film, showed precisely who had won in cases where several athletes crossed the finish line at almost the same time.

**Boxing photography: action in centre stage**

Boxing is an ideal subject for sports photography. The boxing ring offers an enclosed area, the lighting is powerful (bright enough for good photographs), and the photographer is close to the action. All these ingredients make it possible to tell a dramatic story in pictures.

**Amateur photography: capturing the moment**

This unique photograph of Bob Beamon's long jump at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico was taken by British amateur photographer Tony Duffy. This professional accountant happened to be in the right place at the right time to capture the decisive moment of the athlete's record-setting jump.

**Instant impact: sending a message**

This 1968 photograph of African-American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos has left its mark on history. With their gloved fists raised and eyes turned away from the American flag, the athletes were protesting against the treatment of black Americans.

**Artistic photography: stylised action**

The rapid technological advances of the late 20th century, with the arrival of digital photography and remote-controlled cameras, and the competition between photography and television, gave sports photography a more aesthetic dimension, as seen in this shot taken from an unusual viewpoint.

**Aerial photography: devising a lternative solutions**

In 2012 at the London Olympic Games, regulations meant that photographers were not allowed up in the air to take high-angle shots. They used the ingenious solution of remote-controlled cameras mounted on robots, which could be controlled from a computer.

**Underwater robotic photography: unusual vantage pointss**

Al Bello (11 Olympic Games), recorded a first in Rio in 2016 by bringing a robot with him. This camera at the bottom of the Olympic pool enabled him to take this unprecedented and almost perfect shot of champion Michael Phelps, from underneath.

APPENDIX 4
# Guide to analysing photographs

Name

Surname

Stick your image here
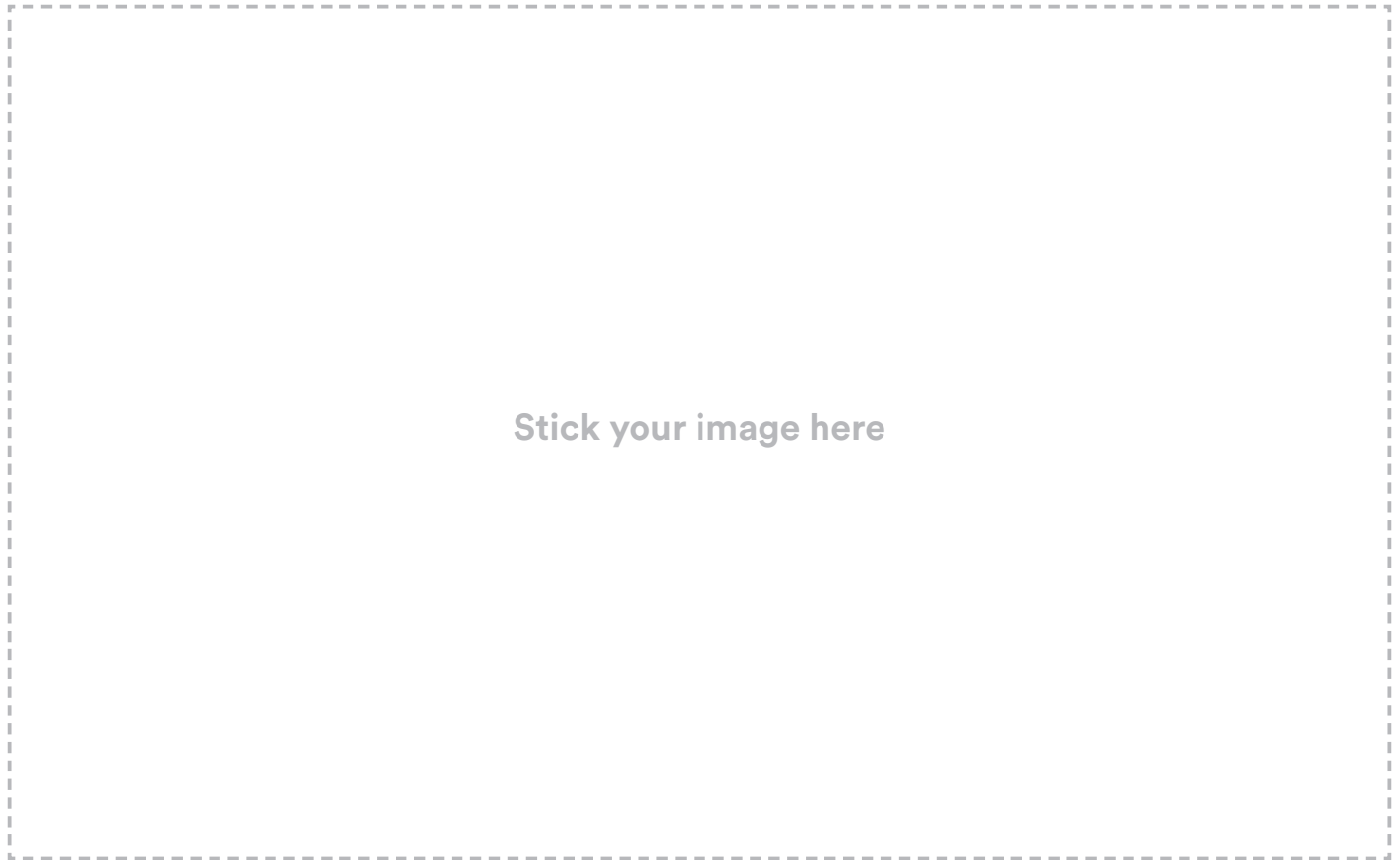
Which caption would you give to this image?

What is this image of?

What are the photographer's intentions?

Is it a portrait? Is it an action photograph?

What is the context of this image?

What sport does this image focus on?

What might its purpose be?

What are the highlights of the image?

What did the photographer choose not to show?

What techniques has the photographer used?

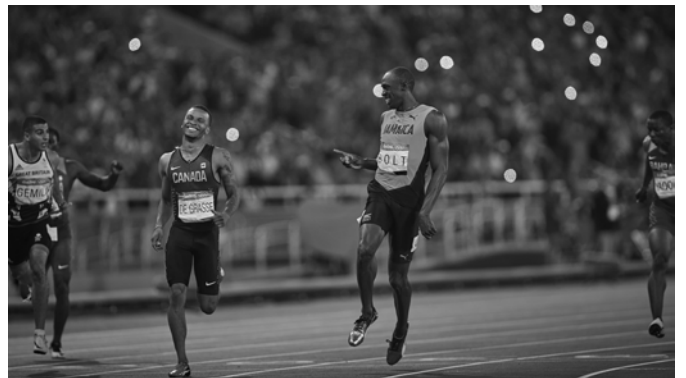What do you understand from this image?

APPENDIX 5
## Selection of photos from the Olympic Games Rio 2016 (1 / 2)

APPENDIX 5
# Selection of photos from the Olympic Games Rio 2016 (2 / 2)

# Credits

## COUVERTURE

**Anonyme**
*Olympic Games London 1908, athletics, marathon men
– Dorando PIETRI (ITA).*
© 1908 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**John Huet**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, athletics, women's high jump final
– Blanka VLASIC (CRO) 3rd.*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Jason Evans**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, athletics, synchronised swimming, women's team,
free routine – Russian team (RUS) 1st.*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Jason Evans**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, judo, +100kg (heavyweight) men's final
– Teddy Riner (FRA) 1st, vs Hisayoshi Harasawa (JPN) 2nd. Following
his win, Teddy Riner asks the Brazilian spectators to stop whistling.*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Jason Evans**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, Synchronised Swimming, team Women, Free
programme – a swimmer from the team of People's Republic of China (CHN)
2nd, getting prepared behind the scenes.*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

## PAGE 5

**Jens Ullrich**
*Flieger Nr. 18 Livitation*, 2011, Collage on Nettle, 113 x 177 cm.
unique Courtesy Van Horn, Düsseldorf

## PAGE 9

**Rübelt Lothar**
*Olympic Games Berlin 1936, athletics, men's long jump
– Luz Long (GER) 2nd and Jesse Owens (USA) 1st.*
© 1936 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Anonymous**
*Olympic Games Mexico 1968, athletics, men's 200m, medals ceremony
– Peter Norman (AUS) 2nd, Tommie Smith (USA) 1st and John Carlos
(USA) 3rd.*
© 2017 / International Olympic Committee (IOC) / United Archives.

**Tony Duffy**
*Olympic Games Mexico 1968, athletics, men's long jump
– Bob Beamon (USA) 1st.*
© 1968 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Etienne-Jules Marey**
*Untitled, ca. 1890.*
© Collection Musée Marey, Beaune, France

**David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson**
*Mr. Laing or Laine, 1843.*
© National Galleries of Scotland

**Anonymous**
*Olympic Games London 1908, athletics, men's marathon
– Dorando Pietri (ITA).*
© 1908 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Al Bello**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, swimming, 200m butterfly, final
– Michael Phelps (USA).*
© Al Bello / Getty Images

**Anonymous**
*Triple Olympic champion Laszlo Papp (HUN) (1948, 1952, 1956).*
© Keystone / Getty Images

## PAGE 10

**Pawel Kopczynski**
*Olympic Games London 2012, Discus, men's final – Lawrence Okoye (GBR).*
© IOPP Pool / Getty Images

**Anonymous**
*Olympic Games Antwerp 1920 – Suzanne Lenglen (FRA).*
© Getty Images

**Albert Meyer**
*A fencing match in the Zappeion, in the presence of the Greek royal family, 1896*
© 1896 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Auguste-Rosalie Bisson**
*Ascent of Mont Blanc, 1860*
© George Eastman House, gift of Eastman Kodak Company; ex-collection
Gabriel Cromer

**Anonymous**
*Olympic Games London 1948 – Photo finish of the men's 100 m final.*
© 1948 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Simon Bruty**
*Olympic Games Lillehammer 1994, men's ice hockey, quarter final
– Finland (FIN) 3rd vs. USA.*
© 1994 / Allsport Zoom

## PAGE 15

**John Huet**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, artistic gymnastics, men's individual all-around
– Samuel Mikulak (USA) hugs another athlete.*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**John Huet**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, men's diving – A diver prepares for a practice dive.*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**David Burnett**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, weightlifting, -48 kg women – Sri Wahyuni Agustiani
(INA) 2nd with her coach.*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**John Huet**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, BMX cycling, women's individual final
– Alise Post (USA) 2nd, at the finish line with the US flag.*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**John Huet**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, athletics, women's high jump final
– Blanka Vlasic (CRO) 3rd*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Jason Evans**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, synchronised swimming, women's team,
free routine – Russian team (RUS) 1st*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

## PAGE 16

**Jason Evans**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, judo, +100kg (heavyweight) men's final
– Teddy Riner (FRA) 1st, vs Hisayoshi Harasawa (JPN) 2nd. Following
his win, Teddy Riner asks the Brazilian spectators to stop whistling.*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**John Huet**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, men's individual épée final – Sangyoung Park (KOR)
1st vs. Geza Imre (HUN) 2nd*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**John Huet**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, boxing -52 kg (flyweight) men's heats – Jianguan Hu
(CHN) 3rd (left) vs. Narek Abgaryan (ARM) (right).*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**John Huet**
*Olympic Games Rio 2016, athletics 200m men's semi-final – Andre De Grasse
(CAN) 2nd and Usain Bolt (JAM) 1st exchange smiles at the finish line.*
© 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)