Athens 2004. Designing the Emblem for the Olympic Games
Athens embraces the world

“The circular shape of the olive wreath is a powerful symbol, capturing a multitude of meanings both for Greece and the Games. It is a symbol of infinity and simplicity, and can also be seen as an extension of the Olympic rings, and in a broader sense, the circle of life.”
-Rodanthi Senduka – Creator of the Olympic Emblem – Athens 2004 Olympic Games

Designing the Olympic emblem for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games posed a dual challenge. It had to embody both the character and individuality of the host city and the fundamental tenants of the Games; a celebration of humanity, the nobility of athletic endeavour, and the gathering of diverse cultures.

For this international competition for an Olympic emblem, there were 242 proposals submitted from 14 countries from around the world, resulting in a total of 700 emblems proposed.

A strategic partnership between Red Design Consultants and Wolff Olins produced what can be considered one of the most successful Olympic emblems of the modern era.

Last but not least, Red Design Consultants not only succeeded in winning the competition, they also received the 2nd award for an additional submission.
Inspiration behind the emblem
the olive wreath, the olive tree

The olive wreath, itself a symbol of Athens, reinforces the significance of the Olympic emblem. In the ancient Olympic Games the olive wreath was the highest possible honour an athlete could be awarded. The current emblem establishes a connection between modern-day Olympic tradition, and the Olympic ideals of ancient times.
Inspiration behind the emblem
use of color

The essence of modern Greece is captured by the emblem through the use of colours blue and white. The meaning extends beyond the colours themselves, and the physical things they represent, producing an emotional reaction, and suggesting purity, peace, life force and youth, the spirit of the Olympic Ideal. Thus, the chromatic identity of Greece implies a broader meaning for all Olympic participants and spectators.
Embracing the World

The emblem resonated within Greece and around the world, bringing the international Olympic brand to a local level and then sending it out on a global scale.

“Everyone’s attention will be drawn to this emblem, not only before and during the Olympic Games, but also for many years to follow. It will forever be part of the history of the Olympics.”

Juan Antonia Samarang - President of the International Olympic Committee
Newspaper Ethnos, 01/10/199