

# The Beijing Summer Olympic Games Symbol Design Competition

## The Pulse of Asia

The Beijing Olympics is going to be held in 2008. Taking this event as an opportunity, China is expected to undergo drastic change. In 2003, nominated by the Beijing Olympics Organizing Committee, I entered the symbol design competition. The design introduced here received an honorable mention but was not selected as the final symbol. I am happy with how I made it and how I understood its function, and I would like readers to appreciate it as a way of thinking about Asia's design.

Design in China, diametrically opposed to that in Japan, appeals through details. I thought it would be fascinating if the symbol were to impart a complex, serene aura that would shake up the conventional modern symbol, which is oriented toward simplicity.

Every portion of this symbol is comprised of pictograms (ancient writing symbols) representing a variety of sports. As you may know, written Chinese with its units called "characters," uses ancient writing symbols. I produced pictograms that employ this Chinese tradition. The aggregate of symbols indicating the various athletics motifs forms a complex, centripetal symbol.

A modernist tendency is design through systematic and geometric organization. Japanese designers who studied design in Europe created these kinds of pictograms for the Tokyo Summer Olympics in 1964. For the Munich Summer Olympics in 1972, Otl Aicher (1922-1991) designed pictograms in which all the forms were situated at respectively unified angles, like 90° or 45°. It seemed to me that with this work of Aicher's, systematic graphic design had nearly reached its conclusion.

This symbol does not have the severe structure of systematic design, but exhibits a more generous hieroglyphic nature. All of these pictograms are designed based on curved lines drawn freehand. The athletes move dynamically around the central "日" that is the symbol of the sun. Thus I expressed an image like the pulsing earth, as a whole.

On the one hand, the individual pictograms function as a motion graphic. Because the structure is designed as a simple wire frame, they can execute charming movement with extremely minimal data. I'd like you to imagine them dancing in the corner of your TV screen.

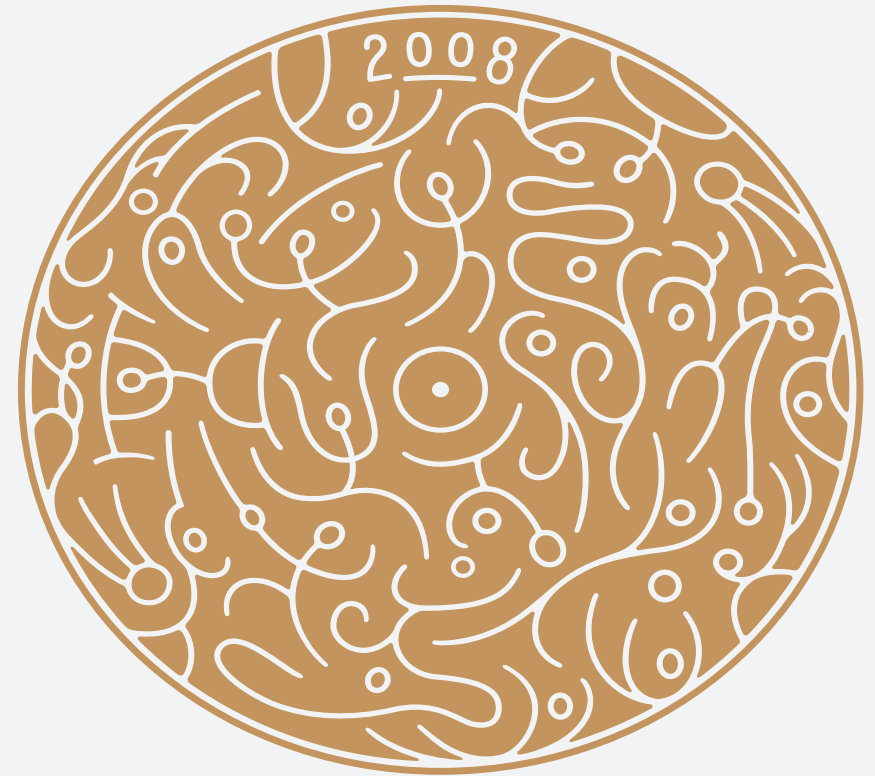
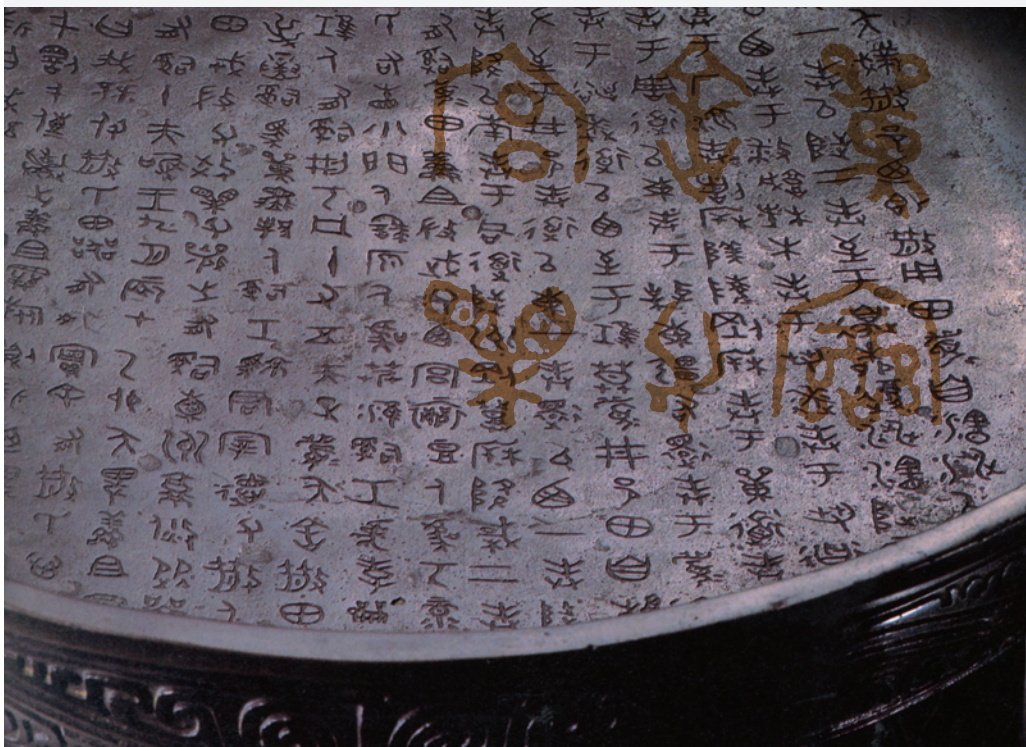
As the symbol is made up of pictograms, there is a smooth continuity between it and the signage. It's fun to imagine the individual pictograms, isolated from the symbol, moving as motion graphics.

This symbol also functions as a Chinese seal. There are two styles, "white," or white on red, and "red," or red on white: a sort of Ying and Yang. Making these two types seemed to allow for convenient classification. And because the seals may be used at smaller sizes, three densities are available, insuring a stable impression at various sizes. If the symbol were actually carved into stone as a seal, it would probably be an interesting tool. Someday I would really like to have it carved by a Chinese craftsman. It will be my private memento of the Beijing Olympics. The photos feature simulated images of the admission ticket to the opening, the athletic games, and the shopping bag.

Design in Asia is about to bloom. There will come a day when the East will maintain a position relative to the West, and the two will associate with one another in a true sense, and together influence world culture.

Asia is blessed with the resources of dazzling histories and cultures. Yet it gives the impression of having been buried by modernization or Westernization. But no, Asia's histories and cultures may be embedded, but not in the ground. They are buried in the depths of our sensory perceptions or in the abyss of our memories. By unearthing them little by little, we will see the subsequent birth of completely new design. From the tip of Asia, I hope to continue to communicate their vital pulse.

This integration of the hieroglyphic motifs of sports-playing people represents our globe, which pulsates with the joy and excitement of opening the festival of peace that is the Olympic Games in Beijing. Reminding us of the traditional seals of China, this figure also symbolizes strength of another kind: 5,000 years of history, the culture of China and the spirit of the East.



The individual athlete motifs would also serve well as the universal pictograms for the various Olympic sports.

Proposal | 10.30.2003



fencing



rhythmic gymnastics



weightlifting



gymnastics



tennis



short-distance race



rifle shooting



baseball



volleyball



hammer throw



long jump



pole jump



swimming



judo



trampoline



table tennis

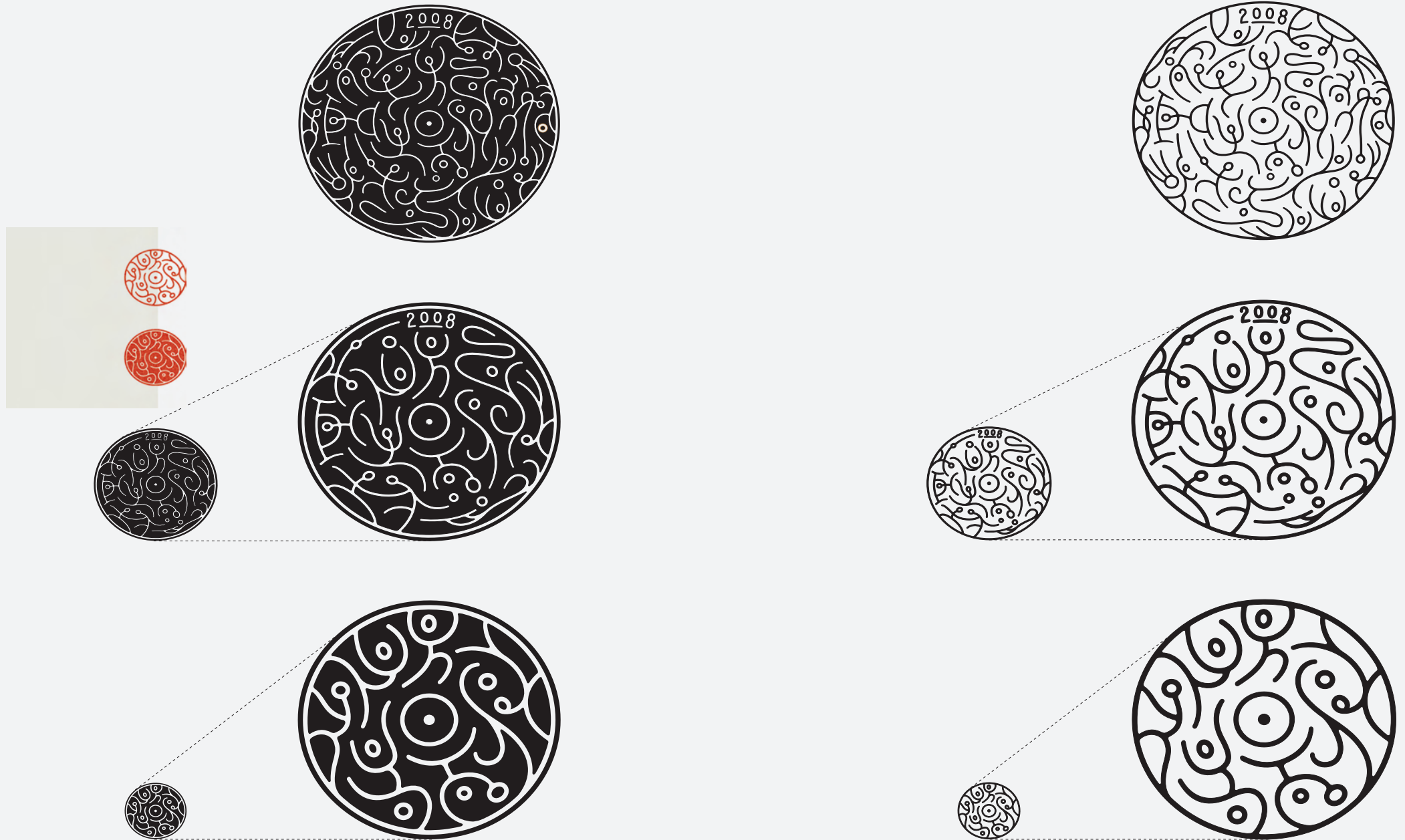


basketball



bowling

The simplified logo should be used for logo applications smaller than 30mm in diameter.





## Applications

### Tickets



### Bags

