

OLYMPIA PART ONE: FESTIVAL OF THE NATIONS/ OLYMPIA ERSTER TEIL: FEST DER VÖLKER (1935)

LOCATION

Olympic Stadium, Olympischer Platz 3, 14053 Berlin



DEDICATED TO THE HONOUR and fame of the world's youth (zur Ehre und zum Ruhme der Jugend der Welt), Riefenstahl's aesthetically seductive *Olympia* documents the 1936 Berlin Olympics by focusing upon the perfected bodies of the competitors. Physical prowess and flawless human form unite to celebrate athletic achievement. While eschewing obvious propaganda techniques to verbally indoctrinate viewers with the principles of National Socialism, Riefenstahl uses her formidable artistic and editing skills to portray those same values visually. Riefenstahl's stunning cinematography and ground breaking camera techniques revolutionized the film industry. *Olympia* won Best Film at the 1938 'Venice Film Festival' and Best Foreign Language Film at Japan's 1941 'Kinema Junpo Awards'. In this sphere of 'soft propaganda' film-making, the Olympic Stadium emerges not as a backdrop for the perfected bodies of the athletes, but rather as the epicentre of the Aryan people that National Socialism was constructing. Riefenstahl uses opening scenes of ancient Greek statuary, Mt Olympus and a crumbling Acropolis to position the Olympic Stadium as a modern temple of National Socialism. A revitalized German nation becomes the modern heir to the mantle of perfection and superiority; the stadium represents a temple that teeming masses of spectators enter to worship the athletes' success while being anointed with the values of National Socialism. Juxtaposing the remnants of ancient Greek civilization with the grandeur of the Olympic Stadium, Riefenstahl references a forthcoming new global era and bestows legitimacy upon the Fascist regime. Her dramatic camera use accentuates the perfection of the Olympic Stadium and the power of cinema in cultivating public opinion and conveying political messages. ➡ **Carson Phillips**

Directed by Leni Riefenstahl

Brief scene description: Passing the torch

Timecode for scene: 0:01:05 – 0:22:48



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