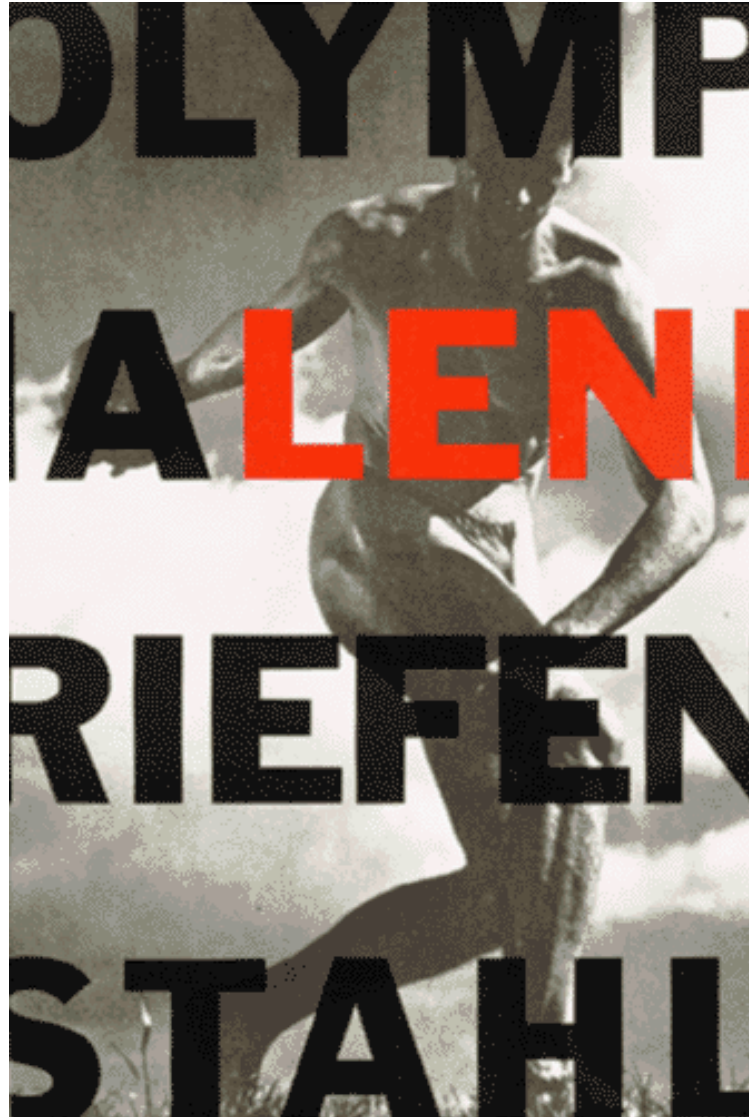


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Olympia

Leni Riefenstahl

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Leni Riefenstahl : Olympia before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Olympia:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A toss-up between this edition and the later Taschen one
By Allan Tong
This is a modern, English-language version of the original German book. It's a big, heavy book and crammed full of images from Riefenstahl's landmark film for the IOC in 1936. Horizontal photographs are printed across the top of a single page and not spread (centerfold-style) across two pages. The good thing about that is that it preserves the image, but the image is small. That said, the book works better when a sequence of images, say four to a two-page spread,

illustrates an action sequence. Reproduction is a little muddy, a little too grey at times, but I can't fairly say if anything can be done about this, since I don't know what the original images look like. At times I wish I had the later Taschen edition, which is slightly larger and does bleed photos across pages. I gave away a copy years ago as a gift, and regret not replacing it. Bottom line: either edition will serve you well. Get this book to understand good sports photography.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Your coffee table is naked without this book! By Nelson Aspen
The glorious work of Leni Riefenstahl (admit it: love her or hate her, she is incredibly gifted as a photographic artist!!) is shown off on the printed pages of this impressive edition. Fans of her films will love it... sports fans will love it... anyone impressed by the beauty of the human form will love it. You must fall into at least one of those categories, eh? A treasure for your library!

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Man as Athlete: Leni Captures the Olympic's Hellenic Spirit
By Interplanetary Funksmanship
In the 1937 preface to the first edition of this book, Leni Riefenstahl remarked 'it is the timeless document of a great idea -- a hymn to beauty and competitive endeavour.' Sixty-five years later, the graceful images of athletes competing in the 1936 Berlin games has more than withstood the test of time and validated Riefenstahl's original estimation of this work's ground-breaking importance, not only as a document, but as an exercise in the aesthetics of the idealised beauty of the human body in movement. Leni Riefenstahl was something of a Renaissance woman: Photographer, motion picture director, editor, dancer, skier, and all-around athlete, no one could have been a better match for documenting the 1936 Olympics on film, from which stills were culled to create this volume. True to the spirit of Ancient Greece, it is fitting that it was captured on silver nitrate by this gifted cinematographer christened Helene (her birth name, for which 'Leni' is a German nickname). Actually, the term 'stills' does injustice to the photographs contained with -- so alive are they, capturing the essence of athleticism and motive power. The beginning of the book is devoted to Ancient Greece, and documenting the ruins which monumentalise her greatness: The Parthenon, Myron's discus thrower, the gods, such as Apollo and Achilles. Riefenstahl has brought many of the famous statues of athletes alive, as she photographs naked men and women engaged in the ancient sports, such as the javelin throw, the shot put, eurythmics, dance and the discus throw. Her athletes epitomise the grace, sensuousness and taut, muscular efficiency of the male and female bodies. Another striking sequence is of the young Greek torch bearer, who ignites the torch at Athens and delivers it on his long route through Thermopylae, the Grecian shore, Delphi and Corinth. The poise and determination in the runner's body and eyes convey the Olympic spirit with the same glowing certitude as the eternal flame, which the runner holds aloft like a beacon in the night. Once in Berlin, the bulk of this volume is dedicated to the athletes themselves. Leni's cameramen captured all the events, and some of the images are just astounding for their sense of motion and eloquent simplicity of composition. Among my favourites are: p. 60, the Flame from Greece, which shows a German youth standing before the crowd of athletes, holding the flame erect before lighting the stadium torch; p. 62, Start of the 80 meter hurdles, as seen from the timekeeper's point-of-view, the lines demarcating the oval track's lanes sweep into a bird's eye view of the pensive hurdlers as they await the starter's gun; p. 68, Jesse Owens in the starting blocks, the great athlete is the very embodiment of concentration; pp. 98, 99, German Gisela Mauermayer, discus thrower, shows the female athlete in motion, and in joyous release on her way to the gold medal; p. 137, shadows of marathon runners, which convey the fleeting rush of the events; p. 247, finale, which shows the Berlin Olympic stadium encircled by pillars of searchlights just before the flame is extinguished. 'Olympia' is, to me, the greatest expression of graceful motion ever captured by a photographer. A tone poem for camera, these images better convey the concept of motion than 99% of the movies today, which are motion pictures in name only.

.com Leni Riefenstahl was an incredibly gifted filmmaker, regardless of her politics. Fortunately, politics didn't obscure the perfection of the film "Olympia", made at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, from which these stark, beautiful black-and-white photographs were made. Riefenstahl pioneered innovative camera angles and techniques in order to create a strong vision of the Olympics. She presents athletes as artists -- practitioners of the art of sport. Through her lens, we view the epitome of the beauty of athleticism, the excitement of competition, and the zenith of human idealism. Very highly recommended.

From Library Journal
Riefenstahl presents a photographic record of the 1936 Olympic Games captured during the filming of her famous documentary, Olympia. The more than 300 black-and-white photographs reveal both the athletes and the filmmakers at work. Note that the author was active in Nazi propaganda and the 1936 games were held in Berlin, so the book includes a few shots of Hitler, swastikas, etc. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. Language Notes Text: English (translation) Original Language: German