

Game Changers

Leading British artists have interpreted the upcoming London Summer Olympic Games in a series of posters evoking athletic grace, the thrill of competition, and the triumph of the human spirit.

Tracey Emin, renowned for her sexually explicit art, describes her poster for the Paralympics as a "love letter." Below the words "You inspire me with your determination and I love you," it depicts two kissing birds and the Paralympic "Agitos" symbol of three feathery strokes.

"When we watch the Paralympics, we always have this absolute adoration of 'Wow, I'm wasting my life. I've got to get up. I've got to change my life. How can they do it?'" Emin says.

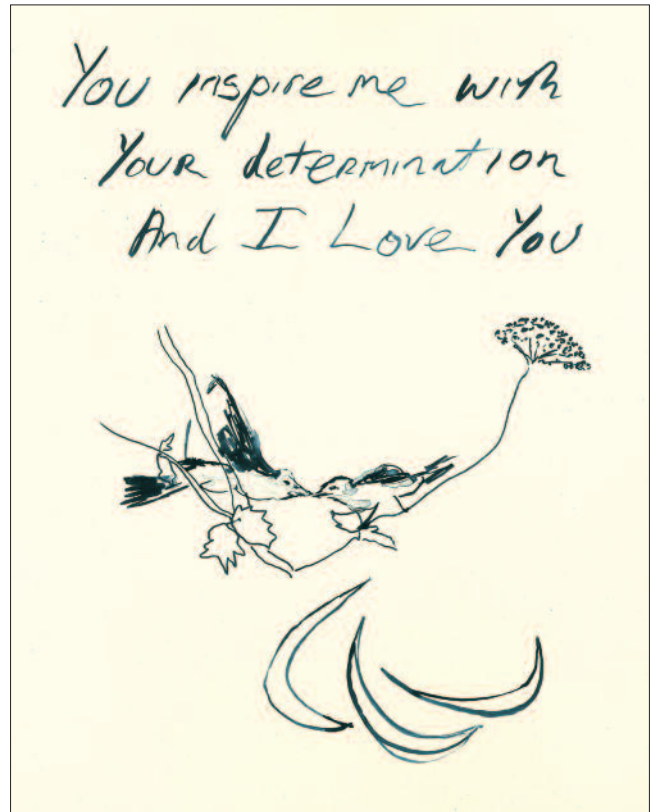
She was one of 12 artists,

from grantees **Howard Hodgkin** and **Bridget Riley** to fellow Young British Artists **Rachel Whiteread** and **Gary Hume**, who were commissioned to design six posters for the Olympics and six for the Paralympics. Each one offers an artist's perspective on the games in distinctive styles. The posters sell for seven pounds apiece and will be displayed at Tate Britain in London from June 21 to September 21.

Anthea Hamilton deploys her characteristic collage of styles in *Divers*—which shows two inverted legs silhouetted before a gigantic pool, reaching up toward the five Olympic rings. Her aim was to trigger multiple readings, all of which she says are equally valid. "It could be a



Anthea Hamilton's *Divers*, a poster for the Olympic Games.



Tracey Emin's *Birds*, a poster for the Paralympic Games.

gymnast balancing rings, a choreographed interpretation of the Olympic torch, 'V' for 'victory,' a diver disappearing into the water, a synchronized swimmer, or the whole image could even be upside down," she says.

The other artists involved are **Fiona Banner**, **Martin Creed**, **Bob and Roberta Smith**, **Michael Craig-Martin**, **Chris Ofili**, and **Sarah Morris**. "Our aim was always to take it back to the original concept of giving great artists the freedom to create something that represents what they feel the games are," says **Paul Woodmansey**, a spokesman for the London Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games.

Since 1912, each Olympic host city has commissioned posters for the games. Past participants include **Andy Warhol**, **Roy Lichtenstein**,

and **David Hockney**, but more recently graphic designers have usurped the role.

Among the most powerful of the new designs is *Superhuman Nude*, Banner's study of a Paralympic cyclist poised for competition. In the vein of her earlier "wordscapes," the artist transcribes the athlete's physical pose using such sensual vocabulary as "nipples weightless" and "pulsing, hot saddle shadow between thighs."

Phrases like "stiletto cleat where a foot should be" embrace the cyclist's disability and reinforce the superhuman aspect suggested in the work's title. "That prosthetic limb seemed like an advantage," Banner says of her piece's inspiration. "In no way was this person disabled by it. In fact, they were enabled by it."

—Elizabeth Fullerton