

Los Angeles, 2/14/1985

Maria,

I write you from Los Angeles, the Olympic city of 1984, which from its official status has returned to its normal laid-back self. In the city-scape some signs of the Games are still visible, such as a poster here and there, some leftover souvenirs in the airline terminal gift shops, and the 25 foot tall, bronze 'Olympic Gateway' by Robert Graham still controversial but no longer in the spotlight.

This triumphal arch, located on the axis of the entrance to the Colosseum in Exposition Park, lent itself splendidly to being traversed by a runner carrying the symbolic torch during the opening of the Games. On top of the gate Graham placed two naked figures about six feet tall, modelled after a male water polo player and a female high-jumper, who both competed in the '84 Games. Unfortunately these sculptures, representing the Olympic ideal of beauty and strength, are headless, claiming antiquity before their time.

In contrast to Graham's Gateway, Maria, you downplay the Olympic ideal by undercutting its perfection, and hierarchical system. The title 'Overdruk' in Dutch is a pun; it has the double meaning of 'printing over' and 'pressing too much', pushing beyond limits. You wrote me that the three circles in primary colors red, blue, and yellow, are overprinted with, respectively, bronze, metal and gold powder; that is, the essential values of Mondrian which you believe in, are covered up with glitter and gold. Bronze, silver, and gold symbolize to you not only the 'pressure' the athletes competing in the Olympics undergo, but also the coercion placed upon the artists. I guess it's true that artists as well as athletes start out trying to achieve their goal as an end in itself,

but the pressure of the economic system in which they have to function influences their attitudes; sometimes they fall victim to it, sometimes not. I like the way you level the hierarchical set up of prizes. The three circles are printed over three stages of folding (by hand). The bronze circle is most intact when the paper is folded out into its original size. When the paper is most folded, and most objectlike, the circle in gold is complete but most broken by folds, a simultaneous representation of the perfect and the imperfect.

That the print shows the facts of its making offsets a formalistic effect preventing it from being merely a decorative commodity. Apparently you do not give in to the incompleteness, corruption, uncertainty and stress of today, but continue to search for ways to glue together the pieces of the broken mirror in a form we can still enjoy!

Coosje