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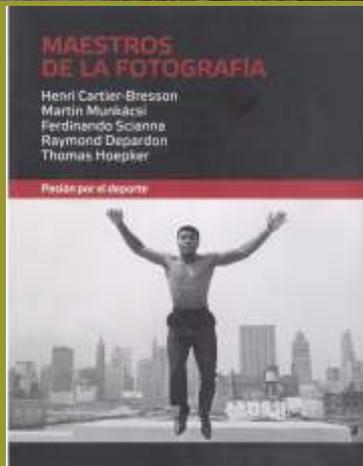
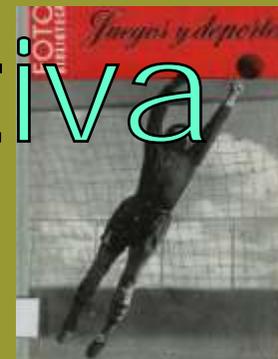


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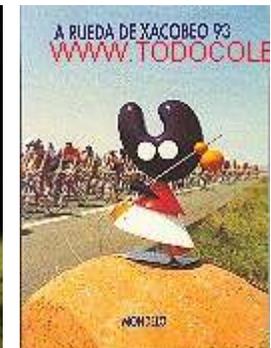
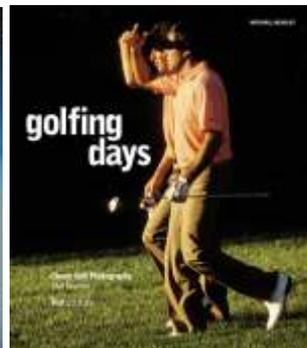
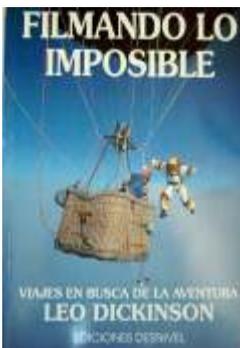
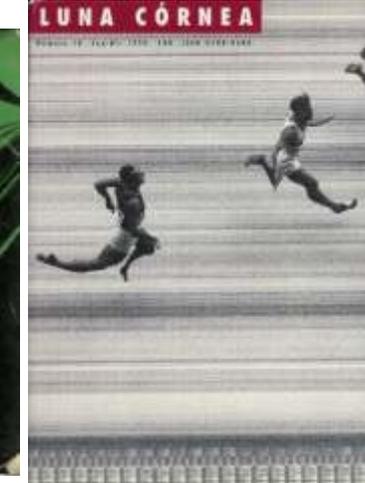
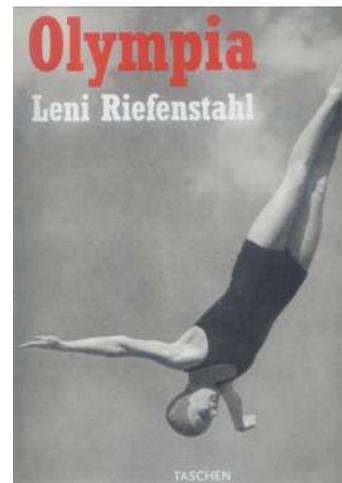
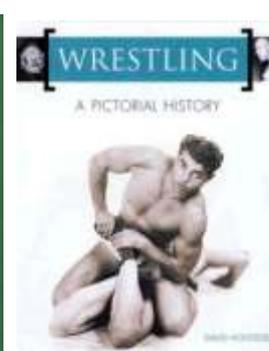
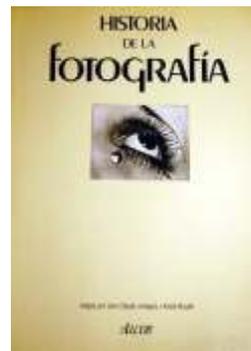
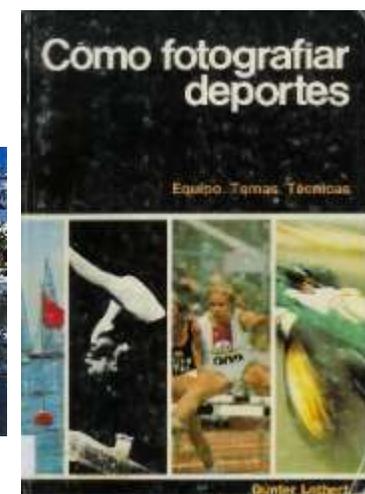
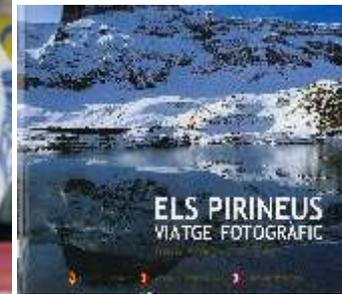
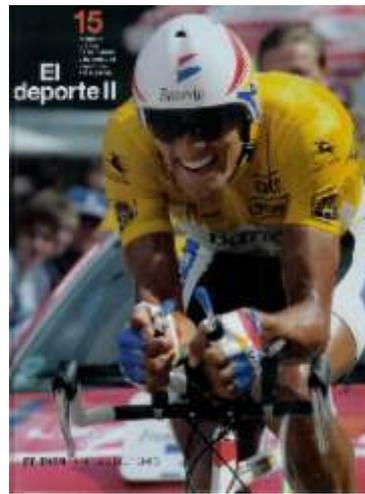
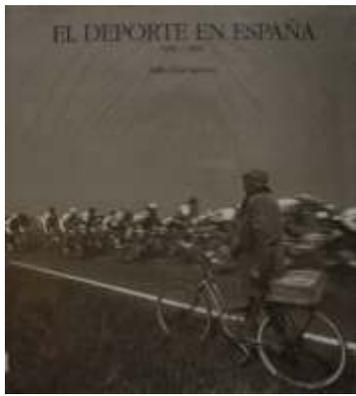


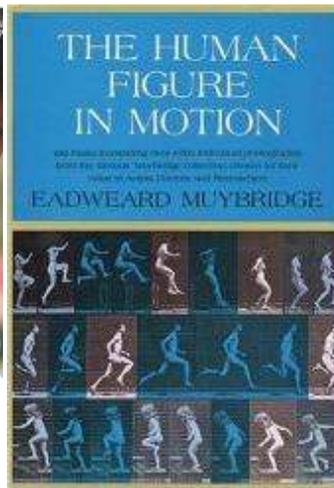
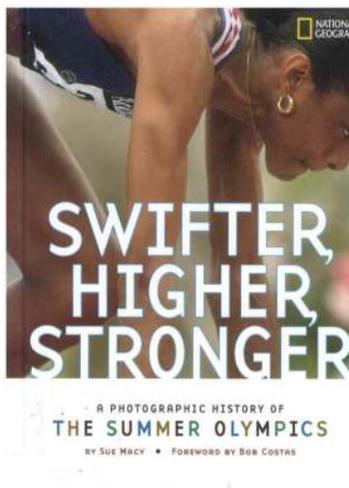
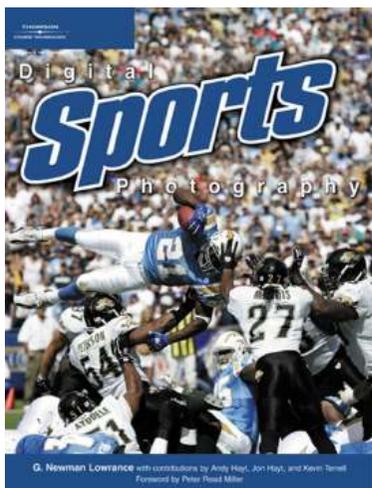
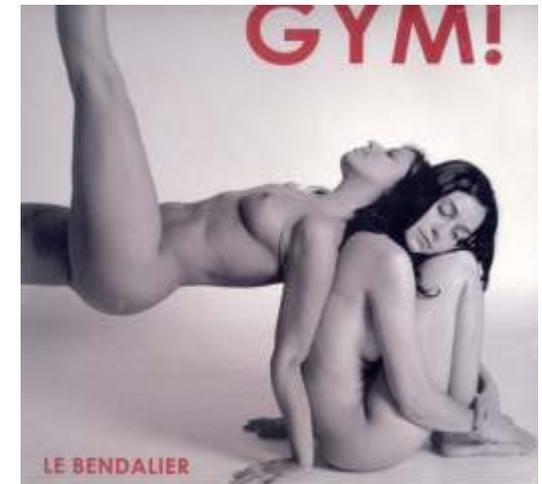
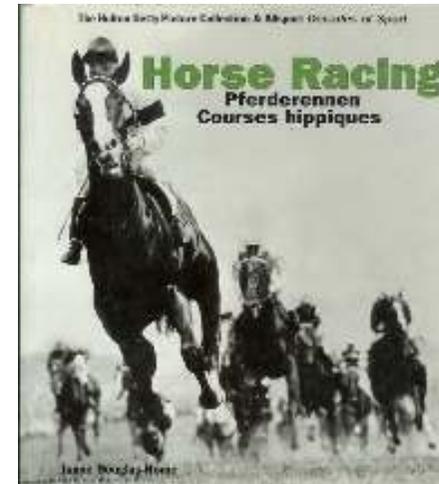
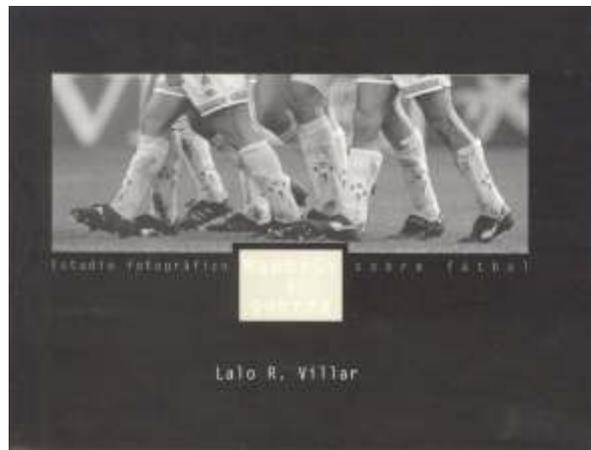
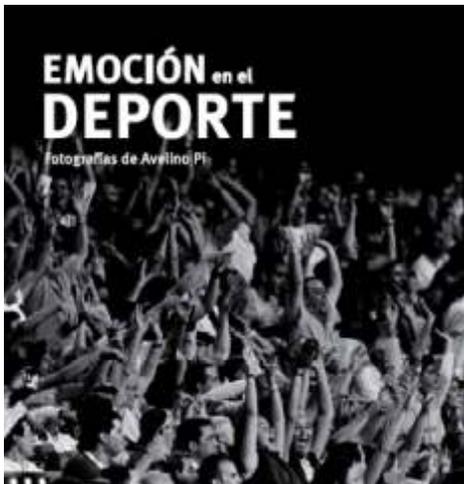
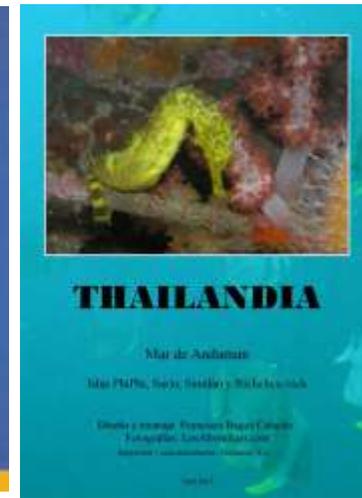
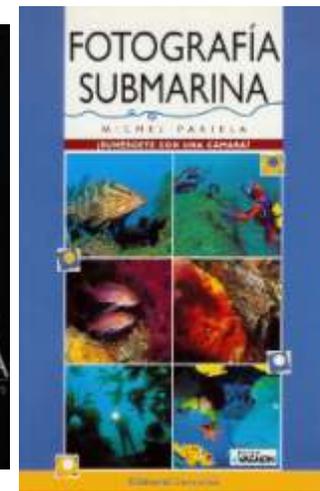
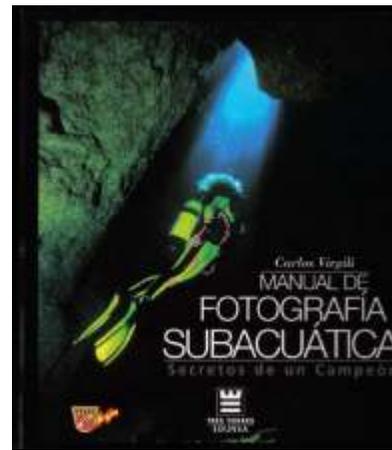
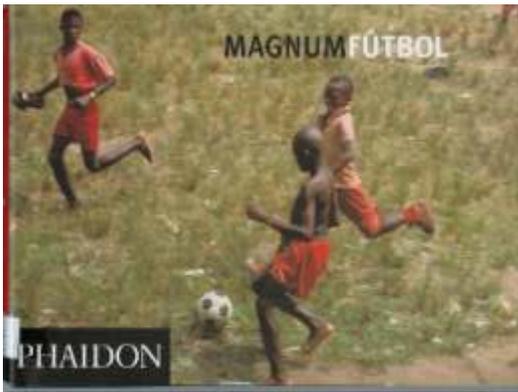
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The Aesthetics of Sports Photography

STOARD LIZZY

When reading newspapers there are some pages I usually just quickly leaf through – the sport pages. This is in part because the photographs that accompany the reports do not yield an arresting experience. Although a football enthusiast, not once have I ever been struck by photo-journalistic spreads of the sport. The aesthetic experience of the game and the joy and excitement of seeing the individual players' agile movements, usually fine into complete patterns that potentially culminate into magnificent goals – normally not all this can be distilled into a single still photo. Nevertheless, it seems like a long dry spell between inspired coverings and moments of surprise, at least as far as sports photography is concerned. Sports report photography is a pictorial genre with a very conventionalized profile, underscoring the impression that if you've seen one photo you've seen them all.

This being the case, I was struck a few years back when I came upon some unusual, aesthetically and challenging photographic motifs of athletes. I discovered these in recently published works about the avant-garde art of the Russian Revolution, yet soon found that these photos had originally been part of a context of sports reporting. It was not just the aesthetic qualities of the pictures that woke my attention; I was also struck by their great prevalence within Russian avant-garde aesthetics as a whole. In the context of sports, "avant-garde" is in itself a surprising notion, especially seen in relation to contemporary avant-garde culture where "sport" and "avant-garde" are generally thought to be incommensurable entities. In contrast to Russian sports photography, which was a product of the activity of what even then was well-known – experimental artists, the origins of contemporary sports photography are relatively anonymous professionals.

In this paper I will examine the aesthetics of sports photography by contrasting two different instances of this pictorial genre: the photographic culture we find in today's sports reporting in Norway and that of the Russian avant-garde. My intention is to show how these have their respective origins in different conceptions of sports in general, the role of sports in society, art, the significance of aesthetics, and finally how they are based on different understandings of photography as a medium for expression. My goal is to set a very noticeable yet little esteemed cache of the visual culture of our own time into a historical perspective, and in doing so with a strategic move that is in fact similar to the Russian avant-garde aesthetic; hopefully make strange that which is all too well known.

