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## The Visual Identity of Sports and Athletes in Modern Croatian Mass Media – a Contribution to the Iconological Interpretation

The author establishes basic parameters in order to facilitate understanding of the contemporary visual identity of sports and sport practitioners. This identity is created by the mediation of contemporary mass media. According to the author's hypothesis – and based on a research project carried out from 2006 to 2009 – the mass media are determined to establish a sport identity using the model of stylistic formation from the time of Romanticism. Therefore, the romantic idea of a creative genius appears in the context of a contemporary understanding of sport competition as well. The final conclusion that the author presents underlines a strong connection between mass media, a sports setting and visual arts.

**Key words:** athlete, sports, medium, mass communication (mass media), modernity, Romanticism, genius