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Tokyo 2020 Olympics logo scrapped amid plagiarism claim

1 September 2015 | [Asia](#)



The logo for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics Games has been scrapped after allegations that it was plagiarised.

The Games organising committee said there were too many doubts over the emblem for it to be used. A Belgian artist had complained that his design was stolen.

Logo designer Kenjiro Sano had admitted copying online material for a previous project, Japanese media reported.

In July, a new Olympic stadium design was scrapped amid a row over its cost.

The logo was unveiled only last month, based around the letter T and a red circle representing a beating heart - which critics said resembled the Japanese flag.

Its withdrawal is a highly unusual move.



Tokyo 2020/ Theatre de Liege

Judge for yourselves - how the logos compare side by side

"We're certain the two logos are different," Toshio Muto, director general of the Tokyo organising committee, told a news conference.

"But we became aware of new things this weekend and there was a sense of crisis that we thought could not be ignored.

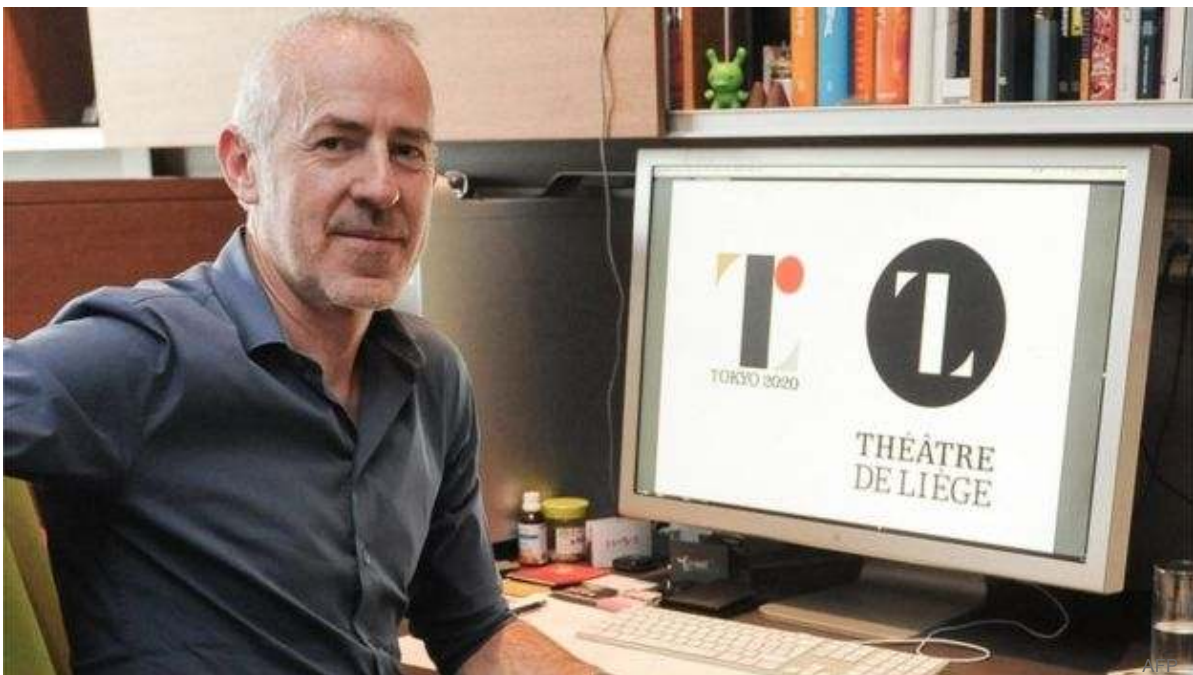
"We have reached a conclusion that it would be only appropriate for us to drop the logo and develop a new emblem. At this point, we have decided that the logo cannot gain public support."

Belgian designer Olivier Debie claimed that the design was similar to his 2013 logo for the Theatre de Liege. He and the theatre had filed a lawsuit to prevent it being used.





Kenjiro Sano stood by his Olympic design - but he and his team are accused of copying many other works



Olivier Debie went to court to stop Tokyo 2020 using the image

Mr Debie expressed surprise at the organisers' decision on Tuesday as they had publicly backed the design only days earlier.

He told BBC Radio 5 live: "I thought the Olympic committee was a big machine and I didn't dare to take action against them."

But the director of the Theatre de Liege had told him they had to "do something" and they sought the help of good copyright lawyers.

He said the logo, devised in 2011, had been official for two years and would have been available on sites like Pinterest around the world.

While Kenjiro Sano has denied plagiarising the logo, he has admitted his team did copy other work for a beer promotion and faces several other accusations of plagiarism.

"I want Mr Sano to provide an explanation. I feel like we have been betrayed," said Tokyo Governor Yoichi Masuzoe.



Japan scrapped the original stadium design amid a row over spiralling costs

Japan was seen as a safe pair of hands to host the Olympics, but Tuesday's developments cap an awkward month for the organisers.

The stadium delay means it will not be ready for the 2019 Rugby World Cup. A promise to keep most venues within eight kilometres (five miles) of the Olympic Village has also not been kept.

There may also be repercussions for lucrative sponsorship deals as Japan Airlines and other sponsors have already started using the logo.

Organisers say there will be another competition to decide a new logo "as soon as possible".

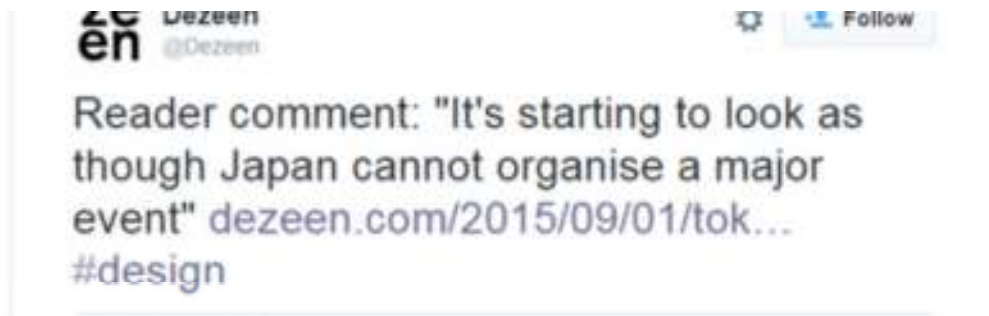
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