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Copper Key in New Paralympic Medals

The medals for the London 2012 Paralympic Games will be made in Britain and were designed by Lin Cheung, a practising jewellery artist and senior lecturer in Jewellery Design at Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design, London. Each medal also has a common feature: copper.

The gold medals are composed of 92.5% silver, 1.34% Gold and the rest is copper (with a minimum 6 grams of gold in each). The silver medals are 92.5% silver with the remainder being copper, and the bronze medals are 97% Copper, 2.5% Zinc and 0.5% Tin.

Lin Cheung's designs were inspired by Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, with one side of the medal representing her outstretched wing. Cheung says this was chosen to symbolise forward flight, power and lightness.

The design on the medal's reverse has been molded directly from a cast of the Nike of Paionios, which resides in the British Museum.

Cheung says that the designs for the front and back "clearly talk to each other, through the sculptural qualities of the goddess's tunic on one side and her imagined wings on the other."

Around 100 designers were initially approached by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games in the hunt for the medal designs. Cheung's design was eventually selected from a shortlist of six.



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