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# Around the World in Eight Football Statues



Dr Chris Stride, University of Sheffield  
The Sporting Statues Project

## The Sporting Statues Project

'The monuments erected by a people... reveal who the people really are.'

*Kirk Savage, Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation.*

# The Sporting Statues Project

## Project goals and progress

- Documenting statuary: [www.sportingstatues.com](http://www.sportingstatues.com)
  - Providing context for case studies, a resource for further research collaborations and a site for disseminating research. World football statues database unveiled in April 2014, joining existing databases for UK sport, US baseball, world cricket.
- Developing theory around existence and form:
  - Four papers published, three under review, collectively assessing genre history, design, process, motivations, and subject selection in football and baseball.

# The World's Football Statuary

- Over 250 subject-specific statues or statue groups
- 125 statues with anonymous subjects
- 320 distinct players depicted
- 95% of statues erected since 1995



Further information on every statue at  
[www.sportingstatues.com](http://www.sportingstatues.com)



# The World's Football Statuary

Location types:



Stadium? City of birth? City of club?  
Training Ground? Museum/Hall of Fame?  
Gallery? Graveyard? Nationally significant site?

# The World's Football Statuary

## Project Instigators and Funders:



# The World's Football Statuary Project Instigators and Funders:



# The World's Football Statuary Designs:



Action?



Triumph?



Posed?

Personal (family) memories?

Flashbulb memories?





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# Around the World in Eight Football Statues



# Around the World in Eight Football Statues

## #1 Thierry Henry, Emirates Stadium, Arsenal FC

- ⚽ (Re)establishing identity
- ⚽ Authenticity
- ⚽ Multivalence
- ⚽ Flashbulb memory



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- ⚽ Flashbulb memory

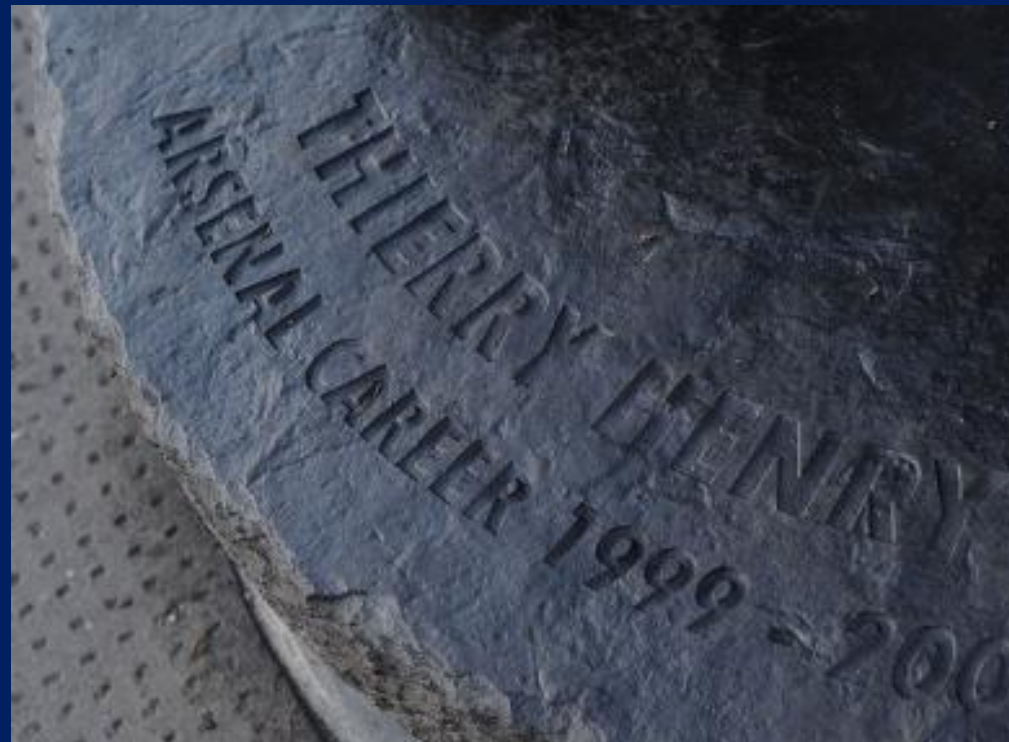




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# Around the World in Eight Football Statues

## #2 Coen Mouljin, De Kuip, Feyernoord, Rotterdam

### ⚽ Nostalgia...

- ⚽ for a mythical golden era
- ⚽ for more located, loyal heroes
- ⚽ for childhood





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# Around the World in Eight Football Statues

## #3 Footballer, Sundby Idrætspark, Copenhagen

- ⚽ Vitalistic art: art to represent an ideal physical state
- ⚽ Classical Greek sculpture, with added contemporary, shapes and movements
- ⚽ Western Europe, 1900-1940
- ⚽ Cultural Olympiads provided ideal showcase





# Around the World in Eight Football Statues

## #3 Footballer, Sundby Idrætspark, Copenhagen

- 🏈 Non-subject-specific statues make up a third of football statues
- 🏈 Artist-led projects almost all of this type



# Around the World in Eight Football Statues

## #3 Footballer, Sundby Idrætspark, Copenhagen

- ⚽ Artist-led = greater freedom compared to commission / competition
- ⚽ Less stereotypical results!



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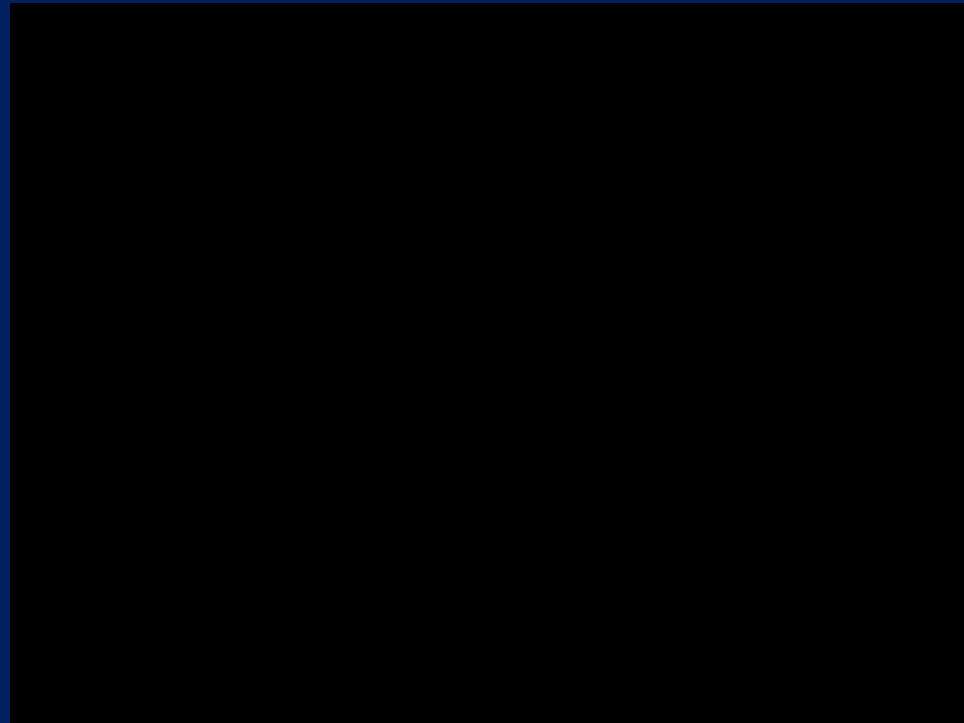
# Around the World in Eight Football Statues



# Around the World in Eight Football Statues

## #4 Dragan Mance, Novo Groblje, Belgrade

- Tragedy and commemoration
- Mourning cultures
- Creating collective memory



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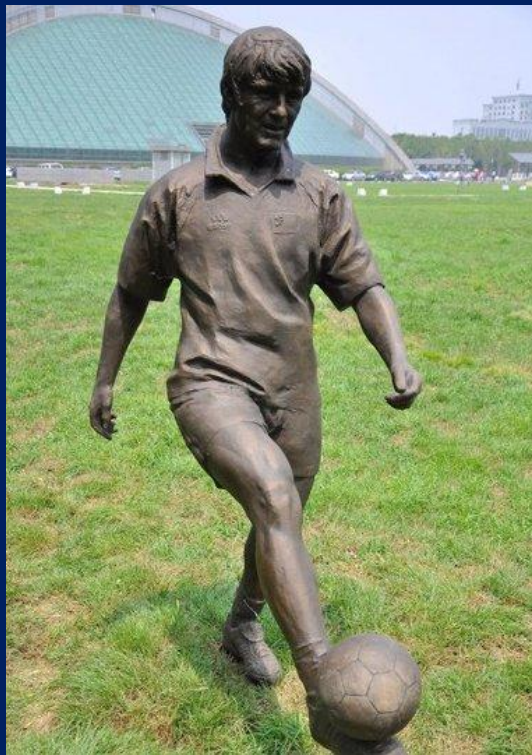
## #5 China WC 2002 Squad, Kepa Park, Shenyang

- ⚽ Basking  
in  
reflected  
glory
- ⚽ Changing  
locations,  
changing  
meanings



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# Around the World in Eight Football Statues



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## #6 Angel Labruna, CA River Plate, Buenos Aires

- ⚽ Fan activism
- ⚽ Identity
- ⚽ Proclaiming territory
- ⚽ Rivalry, contagion and one-upmanship





## Around the World in Eight Football Statues

### #6 Angel Labruna, CA River Plate, Buenos Aires

- ⚽ Creating and reinforcing community
- ⚽ Claiming ownership of club's history and 'the game'
- ⚽ Spare capacity?







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# Around the World in Eight Football Statues

## #7 Pele (x3), Três Corações

- ⚽ Civic identity
- ⚽ Hometown hero



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- ⚽ But again interpretations can change over time... the meanings of statues are not permanent...



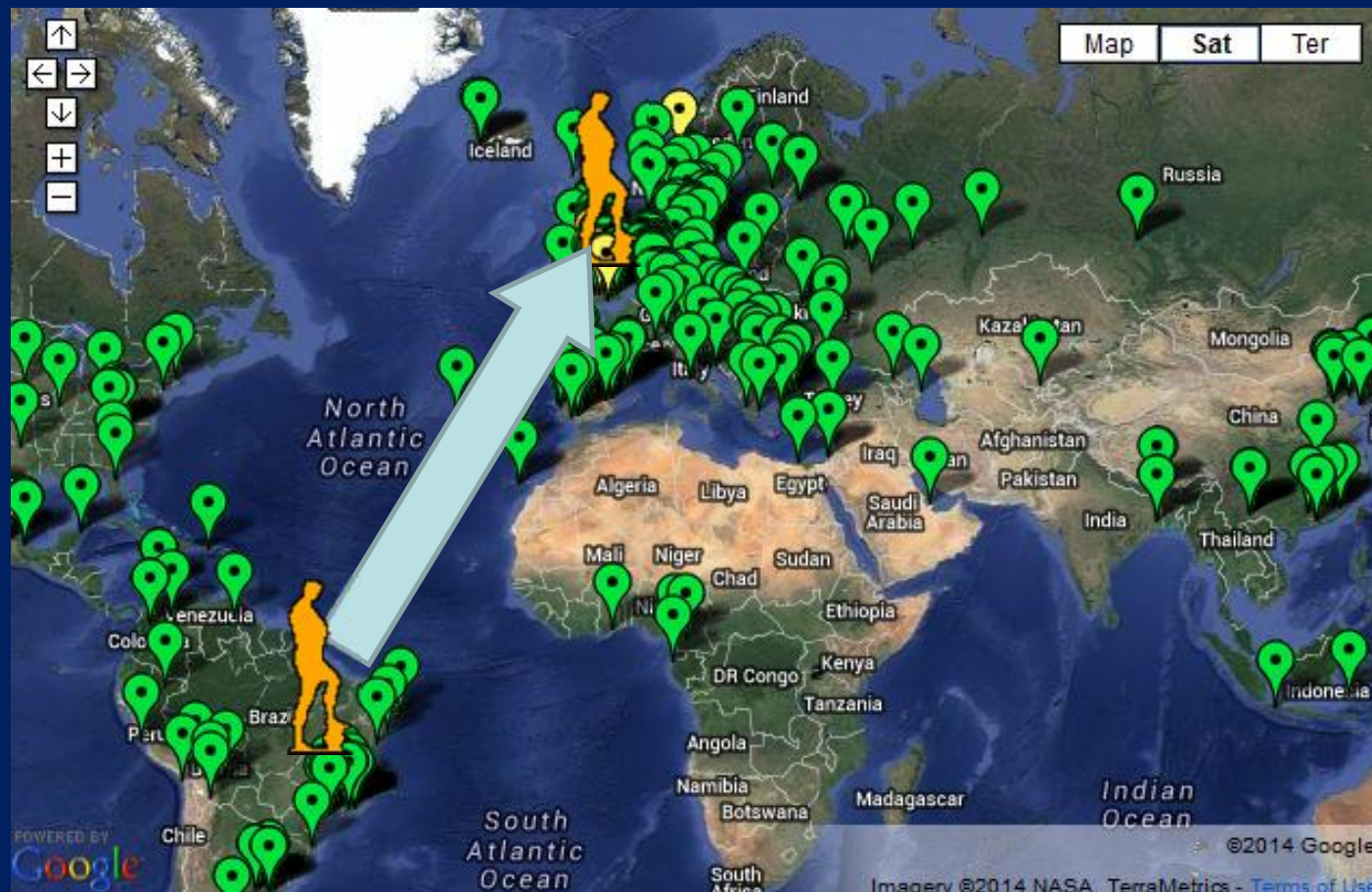
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⚽ ...and  
neither is  
their  
physical  
structure!



# Around the World in Eight Football Statues





# Around the World in Eight Football Statues

## #8 Celebration Statue, West Bromwich

- 🏈 Education?
- 🏈 Storytelling?



# Around the World in Eight Football Statues

## #8 Celebration Statue, West Bromwich

- ⚽ Reparations?
- ⚽ Tolerance Branding?





# Sporting Statues Project

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