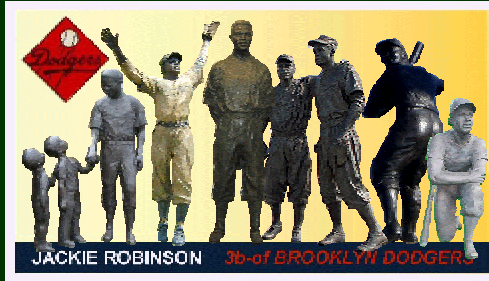


The Seven* Statues of Jackie Robinson



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The Sporting Statues Project

- 🔍 **Documenting** the sporting statuary: www.sportingstatues.com
- 🔍 **Developing theory** around its existence and form:
 - 🔍 Why are statues of sportsmen being erected?
 - 🔍 Why a dramatic increase since the mid-1990s?
 - 🔍 Explaining similarities and differences in the UK, US, European and world statuary?
 - 🔍 What does the form and location of this artistic genre say about sport, fan culture and wider society?
 - 🔍 Do subject choices reflect history, memory, sympathy, victor's justice or any other motivations?
- 🔍 **Testing theory and predicting the future:**
 - 🔍 Can we model and predict subject selection?



The Seven Statues of Jackie Robinson

- 🔍 Describing the existing Jackie Robinson statuary.
- 🔍 How does it compare with, and fit into the wider North American baseball statuary?
- 🔍 What do the consistent themes underlying the design and presentation of the Jackie Robinson statuary tell us about the motivations behind its construction?
- 🔍 What does the location of the Jackie Robinson statuary tell us about the motivations behind its construction?
- 🔍 How much of the 'real' Jackie Robinson does the statuary depict? What is remembered and what is forgotten?



The Jackie Robinson Statuary

- 🔍 Jackie Robinson is currently depicted by 7 permanently-sited full-body figurative statues sited within North America, more than any other baseball player. Additional busts / 'giant heads'!



The Jackie Robinson Statuary

'Jackie Robinson'
Location: Jackie Robinson Stadium, UCLA
Unveiled: 27th April, 1985
Sculptor: Richard Ellis
Instigator: Mack Robinson (brother)
Funder: Fans, friends, commercial funding - money raised by specially created charity foundation



The Jackie Robinson Statuary

'Jackie Robinson'
Location: Originally planned for site of Delorimier Downs, eventually sited at Stade Olympique
Unveiled: 16th May, 1987
Sculptor: Jules Lasalle
Instigator: City authority
Funder: City authority, commercial and private donors



The Jackie Robinson Statuary

'Jackie Robinson'

Location: Jackie Robinson Ballpark, Daytona, Florida



Unveiled: 15th September, 1990

Sculptor: Jules Lasalle

Instigator: Local journalist (Bill Schumann), city authorities

Funder: City authority, commercial and private donations – fundraising organised by committee



The Jackie Robinson Statuary

'Jackie Robinson'


Location: Jersey City



Unveiled: 26th February, 1998

Sculptor: Susan Wagner

Instigator: Jackie Robinson Foundation

Funder: City authority, with commercial and private donors



The Jackie Robinson Statuary

'Jackie Robinson'


Location: Stamford, Connecticut



Unveiled: 15th October, 1999

Sculptor: Maceo Jeffries

Instigator: Cecelia DaRosa (Stamford resident)

Funder: Commercial and private donors, city authority



The Jackie Robinson Statuary

'Pee Wee Reese and Jackie Robinson'


Location: Coney Island, Brooklyn



Unveiled: 1st November, 2005

Sculptor: William Behrends

Instigator: Stan Isaacs and Jack Newfield (journalists), committee headed by NYC authorities

Funders: NYC Mayor's Fund, Yankees and Mets, private and commercial donors



The Jackie Robinson Statuary

'Character and Courage'


Location: National Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown

Unveiled: 1st November, 2008

Sculptor: Stanley Bleifeld

Instigator: Bob Crotty (fan) and NBHOF

Funder: Bob Crotty



Comparison with wider Baseball Statuary

- Compared to the wider North American baseball statuary, which as of June 1st, 2012 numbers 169 subject-specific statues of 145 distinct players, managers, broadcasters and executives...

Red:
'Club' statues

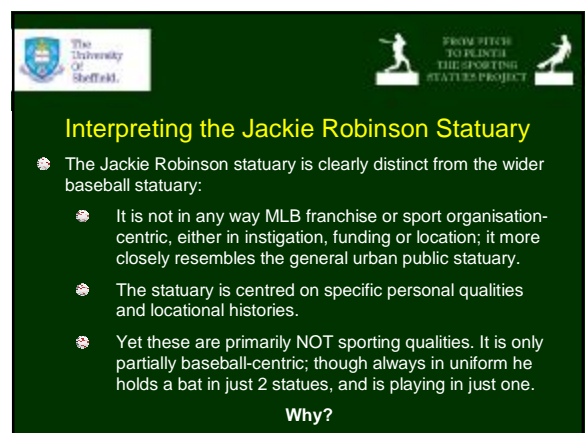
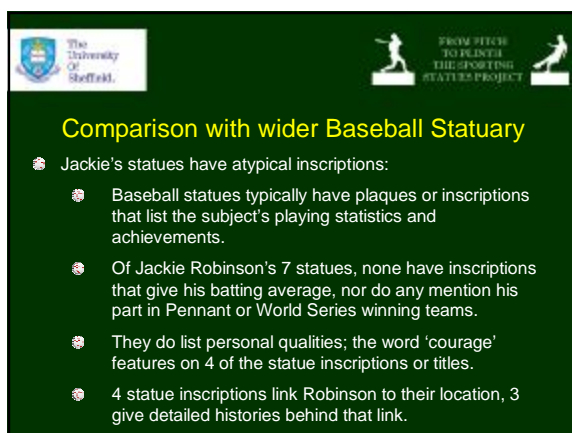
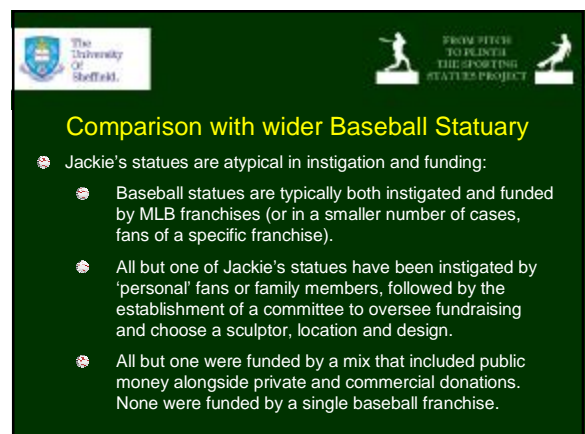
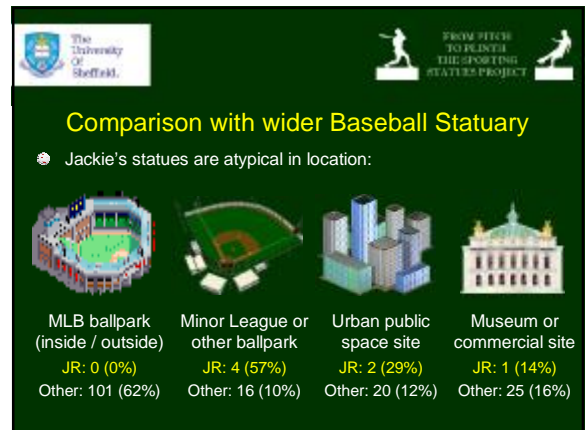
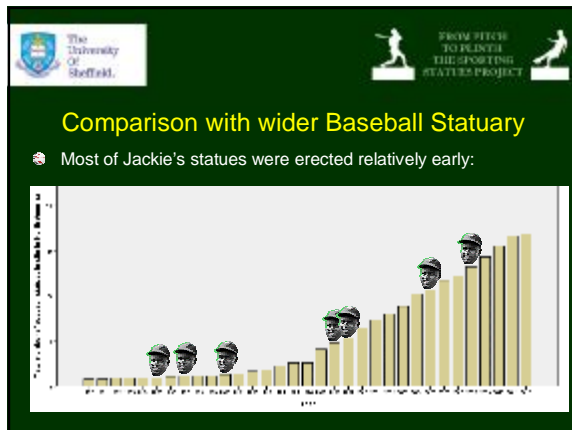
Yellow:
'Native Son' statues

Green:
'Fan' statues

Blue:
National/Museum statues

Pink:
Other statues





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THE SPORTING STATUES PROJECT

Interpreting the Jackie Robinson Statuary

- “The processes of remembering *and* forgetting are integral to acts of social memory” (Osmond et al, 2006). Statues enable the commissioner (and artist) to highlight or conceal what they wish the viewer to remember and forget.
- When utilised by sports organisations, statues of former players, as with retro stadia, are typically mimetic objects also offering an interpretable visual evocation of nostalgia (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005; Stride et al, 2012).
- Jackie’s story may not be seen as inspiring the folksy nostalgia and idealised environment that MLB franchises wish to create. Franchises show respect via his retired shirt number.
- More specifically, Robinson’s franchise, the Dodgers, may not wish to recall a past from before moving to LA.

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Interpreting the Jackie Robinson Statuary

- The Mets promised a Jackie Robinson statue at Citi Field...



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Interpreting the Jackie Robinson Statuary


- Yet to conclude that Jackie Robinson had an influence far beyond the game, and hence the characteristics of his statuary reflect that rather than MLB franchise branding concerns, is simplistic...
- The Robinson statuary tells us as much about how the communities where the statues are located want others to see them as about Robinson the player and man...

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Interpreting the Jackie Robinson Statuary

- ‘Jim Crow’ map



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Interpreting the Jackie Robinson Statuary

- **UCLA...** accepted black players on its sports teams, unlike some other alternative Universities of greater sporting repute.
- **Montreal...** “I owe more to Canadians than they’ll ever know”. In return Montreal has sought to portray itself as a racially tolerant utopia (when in reality black residents were typically ignored in their poverty due to their small numbers; Williams, 1997).

The Jackie Robinson statue at Montreal seeks to reinforce this perceived tolerance: through design (white and black children are placed together, being greeted by Robinson), and through the inscription (which links all resident “Montrealers” to Robinson’s struggle).

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Interpreting the Jackie Robinson Statuary

- **Daytona...** statue plaque notes “this is the site of the first racially integrated Spring Training game... The Daytona Beach community is proud to have hosted that legendary game and spring training, both of which are viewed as milestones in the history of sports and civil rights.”

“This is more than just a statue... it is a statement of our community’s excellent past achievements in race relations...” Senator Edgar Dunn, Daytona, speaking at press launch of statue campaign.

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- Daytona... the ballpark committee has now added further 'tolerance branding' including a Jackie Robinson Museum, plaques giving further details of his story, and 'Barrier Breaker' information boards for other black athletes with no specific connection to Daytona e.g. Althea Gibson
- Stamford... the Robinsons were being obstructed from moving to several Connecticut towns; stirred into action by a newspaper article, Stamford clergy and estate agents proactively encouraged the Robinsons to move there.



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- Brooklyn... *"Pee Wee and Jackie showed the courage to stand up for equality in the face of adversity, which we call the Brooklyn attitude. It is a moment in sports, and history that deserves to be preserved forever here in Brooklyn, proud home to everyone from everywhere."* Marty Markowitz (Brooklyn Borough President).

Statue inscription tells the story behind this faction statue, noting that the event depicted took place in Cincinnati, and with the negative aspects highlighted in capitals.


Robinson and Reese's membership of the Brooklyn Dodgers team is mentioned 3 times in 7 sentences.

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Interpreting the Jackie Robinson Statuary

- Statuary only partly baseball-centric - Jackie Robinson is always depicted in playing uniform but only once playing.
- Statistics show Robinson to be a truly great baseball player; yet statue designs ignore his great playing qualities, notably base stealing and offensive/defensive speed.
- Robinson's career is considered to mark the beginning of the post-long ball era in baseball.
- "the father of modern base-stealing"* (Falkner, 1995).



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Conclusions

- The Jackie Robinson statuary does represent branding: the 'tolerance branding' of cities and communities: this is indicated by location, design and inscriptions.
- These communities want us to remember how they accepted Jackie Robinson when others didn't, and hence bask in the reflected glory of their forefathers' enlightened attitudes.

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Conclusions

- Has the desire to use the image of Jackie Robinson to reflect tolerance overly influenced the manner of his portrayal and disguised a crucial point? It was not just his presence as a black baseball player and his dignified behaviour that broke the colour bar so quickly – it was his sporting performances:
- "He knew he had to do well. He knew that the future of blacks in baseball depended on it. The pressure was enormous, overwhelming, and unbearable at times."* Duke Snider (teammate).
- "We can win only if we can convince the world that I'm doing this because you're a great ballplayer..."* Branch Rickey (GM).

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Conclusions

- Yet his statues do not acknowledge his playing ability or record either through design or inscriptions.
- The end result of this is to present a one-dimensional Robinson; whilst the statuary 'remembers' his influence on American society, it 'forgets' a key part of the process by which he changed it.
- By this act of forgetting it avoids a perhaps uncomfortable truth: that the colour bar was broken so quickly by Robinson and his wider influence was so great because he proved to be a sporting asset that won games.



Sporting Statues Project

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Interviewees (sculptors and statue project organisers):

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