

# You Won't Believe What Chicago's Statues Are Saying

By [Megy Karydes](#) | 8/14/2015

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[web.archive.org/web/20160512120025/http://www.midwestliving.com:80/blog/travel/you-wont-believe-what-chicagos-statues-are-saying](http://www.midwestliving.com:80/blog/travel/you-wont-believe-what-chicagos-statues-are-saying)

“They didn’t like me when I first arrived,” the call begins. “They judged me, as people do.” Joan Miró’s 39-foot-tall statue known as Miró’s Chicago can finally tell her story thanks to [Statue Stories Chicago](#), a public art installation that gives voice to 30 Windy City sculptures.



*Photo courtesy of Statue Stories Chicago*

The project, produced by Sing London and funded by The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, used local writers who drafted scripts for statues, such as the [lions guarding the Art Institute of Chicago](#). Actors, public figures and comedians like *30 Rock*'s Jack McBrayer recorded the 2-

minute stories, which visitors can access by scanning a QR code with their smartphone and then receiving a call from the narrator at each of the participating sculptures. It's a new way to interact with the city's artistic gems, visit parks and learn some fascinating history.



Here's a sampling of the statues and their accompanying recordings:

"Hello? Hello? Can you hear me? Is that you, human?" The recognizable voice of Cloud Gate in Millennium Park is none other than *Friends* actor and Lookingglass Theatre ensemble member David Schwimmer. The sculpture argues that it's not a bean, as most people like to call it, but rather "a gateway to the, well, clouds, I suppose, or more. Or maybe just an extraordinarily fashioned looking glass."



*Photo courtesy of Statue Stories Chicago*

Comedian Bob Newhart admits in his recording that he could hardly resist the opportunity to give his statue, located at the far east end of Navy Pier, something to say. He invites guests to lie down on the bronze couch and have their picture taken but warns visitors, “It’s not as comfortable as it looks—it’s bronze.”



*Photo courtesy of Statue Stories Chicago*

Alexander von Humboldt never set foot in the park that bears his namesake, but his contributions to the fields of astronomy and zoology were significant and inspired many scientists, including Charles Darwin. The narrator of the recording shares Humboldt's story through the eyes of a lizard by his foot: “So are you thinking, *A lizard in Chicago is like a fish out of water?* Not so. I’ve come to feel very at home here in the park. I was born in Berlin, but the whole world was his home.” You’ll have to visit the statue to find out why locals felt this park should bear his name.



*Photo courtesy of Statue Stories Chicago*

Actress Amy Morton gives voice to the hands of Jane Addams, a pioneering social worker and leader in women's suffrage. "When a hand touches a hand, a wish can come true," she says. "Hands tell stories." Her story can be heard in the Chicago Women's Park and Gardens in the South Loop.

“But what's in a name? A statue by any other name is still just a fancy hunk of metal hanging out in the park,” declares William Shakespeare, who comes to us via comedian Jack McBrayer. The Shakespearean line “Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown of pigeon” takes on a new meaning in Lincoln Park.



Statue Stories Chicago is free and open to the public through summer 2016.