

Minors, D. WITSIE IS FEATURED ARTIST AT AFRICA'S ONLY ART FAIR, in Wits Alumni magazine, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, September

Print artist and filmmaker Paul Emmanuel (BA Fine Art 1994) was the featured artist at the fourth FNB Joburg Art Fair, which took place from 23 – 25 September 2011 at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg. This is the only art fair on the African continent and the only art fair in the world to focus on African contemporary art. Here Emmanuel exhibited his new body of work, *Transitions Multiples*, for the first time in South Africa, following its debut in the United States at the Maryland Institute College of Art and at the Goya Contemporary earlier this month.

Transitions Multiples forms part of Emmanuel's original Transitions Project, which the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C exhibited in 2010, when Emmanuel was the first South African artist to exhibit there solo.

Zambian-born Emmanuel uses installations, printmaking, drawing, photography and film to explore issues of his identity as a young white male living in post-apartheid South Africa. His art explores the spaces between the rituals and rites of passage that mark the passing of one life phase into another.

The *Transitions* project comprises five hand-printed lithographs, a film, a touring museum solo exhibition and a book (in progress), edited by Dr Christine Mullen Kreamer, director and chief curator of the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian Institution.

Emmanuel began printing the five lithographs for *Transitions Multiples* in 2009 while in residence at the Wits School of Arts printmaking department. "Maintaining the relationship with Wits was so important for me after graduation," he comments. "Your professional network and support base starts with your classmates and lecturers."

The *Transitions Multiples* lithographs reflect the broader project's exploration of post-colonial male identity. Each lithograph is composed of three parts; each image printed and glued separately. The technique requires painstakingly scratching millions of incisions into a black substrate to achieve subtle grading of darkness and light, which reveals the images. Each is individually entitled: *Number 05000674PV*; *Parade of shadows*; *Table number 12*; *Field of flames*; and *Platform number 5*.

Kreamer commented that Emmanuel's technique was "a unique drawing process and spectacular when you understand what he's done."

The 14-minute film Emmanuel wrote and directed, entitled *3SAI: A Rite of Passage*, features images of the head-shaving of new recruits at the Third South African Infantry Battalion (3SAI) in Kimberley. These images intersperse with time-lapse sequences of the Gariep Dam, and images of a land art installation called *The Lightweights*. This installation covered half a hectare of Free State farmland and comprised 1 000 T-shirts, 2 000 clothes pegs and ten 100-metre-long washing lines.

3SAI: A Rite of Passage was nominated for Best Experimental Film at the 9th In the Palace Short Film Festival in Bulgaria in 2011. The film won Best Short Film in the 4th Africa-In-Motion International Short Film Competition in Edinburgh, UK (2009) and Best Experimental Film at the Sardinia International Film Festival in Sassari, Italy (2009). The film has featured in no fewer than nine international film festivals in countries including South Africa (at six national museums between 2008 and 2010), Canada, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands.

Emmanuel has been working full time on the *Transitions* project since 2004. His labour - and research-intensive project approach enables him to explore a central concept – in this project, the way in which society constructs perceptions and performances of a masculine identity - through several media and interventions over a number of years.

“The works making up the two *Transitions* bodies of work took six years, seven months and two days of scratching to complete,” says Emmanuel. “It really is rewarding to be recognised by the industry for the years of work that have been put into this project.”