

Bosman, N. MOMENTS OF CHANGE: JOBURG ART FAIR FEATURED ARTIST PAUL EMMANUEL ADDS YET ANOTHER INTRICATE LAYER TO HIS 'TRANSITIONS PROJECT', in CityVibe, The Citizen newspaper, The Citizen, Johannesburg, South Africa, September

Five years ago, Paul Emmanuel exhibited *Transitions*, a mammoth artistic undertaking examining ritual and rites of passage through five drawings hand incised into exposed and processed colour photographic paper and an award-winning film *3SAI: A Rite Of Passage*.

Later this month, at the Joburg Art Fair, he will debut his second (and much anticipated) body of work entitled *Transitions Multiples*. It's been a long and immensely satisfying journey, building on an underlying personal theme that Emmanuel says presents him with endless artistic inspiration.

"Everything is related, I cannot get away from that," he muses. "I'm fascinated by my own personal history, my own personal placement in my country, where we sit in the rest of the world, and also the collective history of where we find ourselves doing what we're doing."

As with his drawings, Emmanuel's lithographs see the artist working reductively (this time in the *manière noire* – "black method" – printmaking technique), scratching nuances of light and shade out of a pitch black surface. As with all of Emmanuel's work, the message is directly linked to the medium.

In the case of the five lithographs, each one of which consists of three images that have been glued together to form a triptych, working from dark to light is a means for Emmanuel to explore his fascination with the darker side to our nature.

"In South Africa, and in the rest of the world, we live in the shadows of certain things that come from our past, and the way we step forward into the future is coloured constantly by those darkneses, by those things we have to own up to and embrace."

The medium of film too presents the artist with an opportunity to extend and play with the theme of time that so haunts the *Transitions* project.

"Film is a very powerful medium for what I was doing, because it's a time based and so much of what I do involves the element of time," Emmanuel explains. "I love film because it allows you to map change, you can see before and after, in a single gesture and the speed of film allows you to play with changing the meaning of an event."

Emmanuel gives the example of the army head shaving scenes he has captured in his award winning film *3SAI: A Rite of Passage*. The minute he slows down the action of head shaving, it changes the meaning; it goes from this indifferent production-like head shaving which is dispassionate, to something that becomes sensual and quite dreamlike.

There is a common photo-like quality to Emmanuel's drawings and lithographs that speaks to his obsession with capturing images and moments of change. In *Transitions Multiples* the

artist takes this engagement even further, using his impressions and multiple images to talk about the idea of the collective, and becoming either part of or lost in the system.

While Emmanuel basks in the honour of being the FNB Joburg Art Fair's featured artist, he also has two shows in the USA this month: *Transitions* which is showing at the prestigious Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and *Transitions Multiples*, also showing at Goya Contemporary in Baltimore.