

Event: Paul Emmanuel: *Remnants*

Venue: Reservoir, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa

Opening: 19:00 on Thursday 25 May 2017

Walkabout: 10:00 on Friday 26 May 2017

Oliewenhuis Art Museum is proud to announce that acclaimed artist Paul Emmanuel, will showcase his poignant solo exhibition *Remnants*, in the Reservoir at Oliewenhuis Art Museum from 25 May – 9 July 2017. Following its showing in 2016 at Boston University's 808 Gallery, Massachusetts, USA, the expanded *Remnants* exhibition is presented for the first time in South Africa at Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein.

Remnants, could be viewed as the aftermath of the third phase of Emmanuel's ongoing *Lost Men* project – a series of site-specific, temporary, outdoor, installations engaging with loss, memory, memorialization and public grief. These unique, once-off *Lost Men* 'counter-memorials' have been installed on sites in South Africa, Mozambique and France.

In July 2014, *The Lost Men France* was temporarily installed adjacent to the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme in northern France. This arresting, thought-provoking installation encapsulated Emmanuel's continuing investigation into 'lost men' – this time, the fallen of the battlefields of World War I. The remains (or remnants) of the silk banners comprising this counter-memorial now form part of the exhibition *Remnants*, presented in the Reservoir at Oliewenhuis Art Museum.

The Lost Men France (2014) was a counter-memorial installed on a farm road adjacent to the enormous Thiepval Memorial that commemorates the 72,246 missing British and South African servicemen who died in the Battles of the Somme of the First World War between 1915 and 1918, with no known grave. White South African servicemen are memorialized on Thiepval Memorial, while Black South African servicemen are not. Contrastingly, *The Lost Men France* counter-memorial comprised five large silk banners printed with images of the artist's body. The images displayed the names of French, German, South African and Allied servicemen painfully impressed into his skin, without reference to rank, nationality or ethnicity.

Emmanuel used his own body as his canvas onto which he impressed randomly selected names of the fallen from all nations. This imprinting process left painful marks on his skin. The artist's imprinted, naked body and inflamed skin was then photographed and then these images were transferred onto the fragile and ephemeral banners made from pure silk. These banners were then suspended in an installation on a specific site adjacent to the imposing brick and mortar Thiepval Memorial, to hang in a series along either side of a farm road. The banners, with the images of Emmanuel's impressed and bruised skin, presented a counter-memorial to the traditional Thiepval Memorial that commemorates those lost in this terrible conflict often referred to as – "The war to end all wars".

These delicate silk banners were exposed to the harsh climate of northern France from July – October 2014 and were reduced to shreds by the wind and rain, leaving behind only the torn and faded remains of the original installation, resonating with the shattered relics still buried under the Somme fields of grain. Remains of the bones of servicemen who fell on this battlefield, are still dug up today by farmers ploughing their fields.

For this exhibition, the remnants of these banners are complimented by a series of new ethereal

drawings, prints and video works by the artist.

“These ‘Remnants’ ...” as Pamela Allara, researcher at the African Studies Center, Boston University, USA, states: “ ... are powerful metaphors for physical and emotional suffering, a memorial to the *sine qua non* of war: the violation of the human body and the concomitant destruction of human decency”.

Paul Emmanuel is a renowned artist, living and working in Johannesburg. Currently he is working on *The Lost Men USA* and a new project titled *Substance of Shadows*. *Remnants* is presented courtesy of Boston University Art Galleries and project managed by Les Cohn of Art Source South Africa.

Paul Emmanuel: Remnants will be opened by André Croucamp at 19:00 on Thursday, 25 May 2017 in the Reservoir, Oliewenhuis Art Museum.

At 10:00 on Friday, 26 May 2017 Paul Emmanuel will present an informative interactive walkabout.

Entrance for both events is free of charge. For more information please contact Oliewenhuis Art Museum at 051 0110 525 (ext 200) or oliewen@nasmus.co.za

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Visiting Hours

Mon to Fri 8:00 - 17:00

Sat 9:00 - 16:00

Sun & Public Holidays 9:00 - 16:00

Closed on Good Friday & Christmas Day

Oliewenhuis Art Museum is a satellite of the National Museum, Bloemfontein, an agency of the Department of Arts and Culture.



Boston University Art Galleries



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