

Pamela Allara

**Mechanized Bodies: From the Armored Body to Technological Vision**

Permanent War: The Age of Global Conflict, School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA, January, 2015.

“I would like to say that I am committed to deconstructing limiting cultural assumptions concerning masculinity. But the truth is there is no such cleverness ... I am not sure if my work comes from a profound intellectual grasp of social realities. It comes out of being a sensual participant in the world ...”

*3SAI: A Rite of Passage* explores transitions in male identity through the head shaving ritual of young military recruits at the Third South African Infantry Battalion (3SAI) in Kimberley, South Africa. The construction of masculinity through military indoctrination and the loss of human potential that process entails has been Emmanuel's dominant theme. The head shaving becomes a symbolic castration that prepares them for the rigid routines they experience, as their potential selves – expressed by their t-shirts – fly into the air in the intercut installation, *The Lightweights* (2007).

Born in 1969 in Kabwe, Zambia, Emmanuel now lives in Johannesburg. A graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand, Emmanuel was the first recipient of an Ampersand Foundation residency in New York in 1997. In 2004, he mounted the first of his site-specific installations, *The Lost Men*. *The Lost Men Grahamstown* consisted of banners depicting the artist's body embossed with the names of Xhosa and British soldiers who died in the Xhosa Wars, (1820s – 1850). *The Lost Men Mozambique* followed in 2007, and most recently, he created *The Lost Men France* (2014), at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, as part of the commemoration of the centennial of World War I. His solo museum exhibition *Transitions* travelled to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art in 2010. *3SAI: A Rite of Passage* won the 2009 jury prize at Edinburgh's 4th Africa-in-Motion International Film Festival and the 2010 Best Experimental Film Award at the 5th Sardinia International Film Festival.