

The Lost Men Project

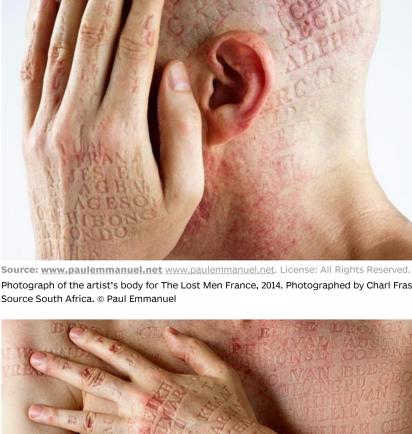
Contributed by [Matthijs Sluiter](#) on Mar 16th, 2018. Artwork published in circa 2004.

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The Lost Men France, 2014, Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, Northern France. Five (5 m x 5 m) pigment-printed photographs on silk, steel, 200 metres. Photographed by Paul Emmanuel. Courtesy of Art Source South Africa.



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Photograph of the artist's body for The Lost Men France, 2014. Photographed by Charl Fraser. Courtesy of Art Source South Africa. © Paul Emmanuel



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Photograph of the artist's body for The Lost Men France, 2014. Photographed by Charl Fraser. Courtesy of Art Source South Africa. © Paul Emmanuel

The Lost Men Project is an ongoing series of installations by South African artist Paul Emmanuel.

Paul Emmanuel website:

The viewer encounters an installation, engaging concepts of memorial and public grief – a temporary, once-off, personal expression in a selected public arena. The names of men who have died in conflicts from the site are pressed into Emmanuel's skin which is photographed before the bruising fades. These photographs of his marked body are then printed onto silk sheets which are hung outdoors and left to the wind.

After encountering an early work in the Lost Men series in a Museum Meermanno exhibition – a video of disappearing impressions of names on Emmanuel's skin, plus a block of metal type that was used in the making of – I asked Paul Emmanuel a few questions about his work.

How have you gone about to choose a specific typeface and size for your works? Was this simply a matter of what type was easily attainable, or were there other considerations?

I generally use **Palatino** or **Times** for all phases of The Lost Men, because the serif engages with the past. Most traditional memorials, whether they are inscribed in stone or some other "permanent" material, use a serif. It was a trial and error process for finding the right size of the letters because of the physical properties of the skin on my body and the relationship between the size of the text and the size of "me" and the numbers of the fallen. If the text is too small, its legibility is compromised because the skin and flesh underneath the skin cannot be effectively pressed into the tiny crevasses of the shapes of the letters.

Human flesh has a limit on registering wounds that are legible at small scales. I do not think there is a limit on larger scale legibility. At larger scales, it becomes more about the sheer number of names that I cover my body in. Wars are about the numbers and the scale of the loss. As the scale of The Lost Men series increases I have tried to literally obliterate myself in the lists, the loss is so great that no one body can "speak" about it.

I'm not sure if there is a 'serif or sans serif majority' in gravestones or memorials, but picking a serif for The Lost Men seems a logical choice. Do you think we associate serifs with authority, facts?

Maybe architecture has subtly coded ways. I think that we are conditioned to recognise these codes from an early age. I think that there have been studies to demonstrate that children listen to and trust adult men wearing dark colours and suits rather than shorts and T-shirt. Men in suits signify authority and therefore are to be obeyed. Perhaps the visual codes of "trustworthiness" and "facts" are built into institutions of memory too, which is why I always want to question that idea with previously excluded histories.



The different stages of The Lost men Project have different ways of 'typesetting' – some use lead type, in another you have stuck synthetic letters one-by-one in moulds of you body.

Yes exactly, lead type was used for The Lost Men Grahamstown and The Lost Men Mozambique, set by an old man here in Johannesburg called Bert Calrose. He died a year or two after setting those names for me, he had a wonderful studio in the city with all the old antimony type machines that would set the type on the spot. I watched him do it. He had a small market of setting type the old way for wedding invitations etc.

Then with more budget and a desire to literally almost obliterate my body in names so that I almost disappear in them by immersing myself in a cast of names, we made The Lost Men France. The installation that went up in France (The Lost Men France) had a bigger budget, so we could produce moulds to impress the names.

Would you consider a block of type, as displayed in Meermanno, a work of art, or are they merely tools?

Absolutely I consider the block of lead type an artwork in itself, it is a remnant of a process. There is actually a [touring museum exhibition of the remnants](#) of The Lost Men France, in which the moulds are exhibited as artworks. I often think of The Lost Men as a process or 'performance' in a way because of the installation's liminality, all that remains are the remnants – the photographs, the videos, the moulds and other artifacts as evidence that something has happened.

Unfortunately, there's no end to wars – will there be an end to your Lost Men project?

My plan is to create the final phase of The Lost Men with an installation for a site in the USA, and because of my father's Lebanese (Christian) ancestry, I plan to use Arabic script on my body.

Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts!



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The Lost Men Mozambique, 2007. Photographs of the making of by John Hodgkiss.



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The Lost Men Mozambique, 2007. Photographs by John Hodgkiss used for the installation.



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The Lost Men Grahamstown, 2004. Photographed by Andrew Meintjes



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Typefaces

- Times
- Palatino

Formats

- Art/Illustration
- Exhibition/Installation

Topics

- Activism
- Art

Designers/Agencies

- Paul Emmanuel

Tagged with

- war
- skin
- war memorials
- temporary
- installation art
- memorials
- metal type
- awareness
- unconventional materials
- embossed/debossed
- flags
- photography
- death

Artwork location

- Australia
- France
- Mozambique
- Netherlands
- Grahamstown
- Thiepval
- Maputo Province

In Sets

- hi (andrea j. wang)
- Progressive (Jijjam)

1 Comment on "The Lost Men Project"

Florian Hardwig says: Mar 16th, 2018 10:53 pm

A fascinating project. Thank you for pointing me to Paul Emmanuel and his work, Matthijs! It reminds me of "impress", a photograph created by Katharina Gattermann at HBK Braunschweig in the mid 2000s. While she used pretty much the same technique, her work evokes quite different associations, as you rightly noted. Katharina used a Garamond that was available at the academy's typesetting studio.

Post a comment

Name *

Email - will not be published *

Website

Your response *

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More Times in use

L10	Baton	GRECO ADORNADO	BOWL TIMES
Times	Times	Times	Times
		Arial	

More in Activism

Academica	PLAAK	Romantica	Sybilla
Dia			Muller

More in Exhibition/Installation

Lyon	BC Sklonar	Antarctica	Geogrotesque Stencil
Geneva		unidentified type	Geogrotesque

More Fonts In Use

Satura	Geotica	Druk Text W.	Baton
Berling Nova	Quadraat	Druk	
Bosis	Quadraat Sans		