

IFAS-Culture & Research. PUBLIC INSTALLATION AS PART OF THE OFFICIAL COMMEMORATION OF THE WORLD WAR ONE CENTENARY IN FRANCE, in Extra! magazine, Institut Français, Johannesburg, South Africa, December.

The Lost Men France is the third installation artwork in visual artist Paul Emmanuel's ongoing *Lost Men Project* – a series of unique, site-specific, temporary, land-art interventions engaging with concepts of loss, memorials, memory and public grief. The installation is an 'anti-monument', does not glorify war and raises questions around issues of masculinity and vulnerability, who is valorised and how.

The Lost Men project comprises three phases to date. Two installations have already been implemented: *The Lost Men Grahamstown* in South Africa in 2004, marking a decade of South Africa's democracy and *The Lost Men Mozambique* in 2007. *The Lost Men France* is the third phase and will be exhibited between 1 July and 1 October 2014, 2016 & 2018.

Each installation's artwork is unique in imagery, structure and format; however the project's conceptual basis remains consistent throughout. The concept for each phase is related to the specific site in the country selected and is intended to re-consider significant events that defined South African history. Each new installation artwork is temporarily installed on its selected site for a defined period only and then never again.

The Lost Men France relates to the Thiepval Memorial in the Somme department, Northern France. The area around Thiepval village and the Thiepval Memorial bears witness to the battlefields of the Somme. The existing Thiepval Memorial is the largest British World War One memorial in the world.

South Africa was a British dominion at the outbreak of World War One and therefore joined with the Allied Forces. The names of white only South African servicemen who died in the 1916 Battle of Delville Wood are inscribed on the walls of Thiepval Memorial, which excludes the names of thousands of black servicemen. In contrast to the existing memorial, *The Lost Men France* will be a non-partisan artwork and makes no political statements. It will depict the names of black and white South African servicemen and will include the names of soldiers from the other Allied Forces as well as those of German soldiers who died in battlefields all over the Western Front.

Visitors will encounter the installation while walking down a farm road, within viewing distance and accessible from the Thiepval Memorial grounds. They will be invited to engage with the artist's personal response and creative expression within a public arena on this specific site as well as the historic event which took place there.

"In this work I also question the exclusion of certain people from traditional monuments, in particular black South African servicemen not honoured on the walls at Thiepval." says Emmanuel. "I am as many are, affected by these terrible historic battles. A war has lasting psychological effects that are passed from generation to generation; we lose humanity, gentleness and vulnerability, feeling, empathy and sensitivity. We lose dignity, treasured relationships, potentiality, hope and the future. We become defined by ideologies that can

confine and define our world-view. As Thiepval Memorial bears witness to the memory of thousands of lost servicemen, so *The Lost Men France* will also bear witness. It is a non-partisan artwork that aims to stimulate contemplation about all of this”.

Paul Emmanuel Artist

Born in 1969 in Kabwe, Zambia, Paul Emmanuel graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1993. Emmanuel employs various media, including photography and film to reveal layered visions concerned with his identity as a white male living in post-apartheid South Africa.

The Lost Men France is supported by La Mission du Centenaire de la Première Guerre Mondiale, Institut Français Paris and Johannesburg and the National Arts Council of South Africa. Art Source South Africa are managers of Emmanuel's *Lost Men* project. www.the-lost-men.net

About the World War One Centenary

One hundred years on, we are all connected to the First World War, either through our own family history, the heritage of our local communities or because of its long-term impact on society and the world we live in today.

From 2014 to 2018, across the world, nations, communities and individuals of all ages will come together to mark, commemorate and remember the lives of those who lived, fought and died in the First World War.

IWM (Imperial War Museums) is leading the First World War Centenary Partnership, a network of local, regional, national and international cultural and educational organisations.

The First World War Centenary Programme proposes a vibrant global programme of cultural events and activities, and online resources, to connect current and future generations with the lives, stories and impact of the First World War. www.1914.org