

Alhadeff, P. SOUTH AFRICAN ARTIST'S WORK "THE LOST MEN FRANCE" TO REMEMBER SOLDIERS KILLED ON THE SOMME, in Centenary News online news bulletin, Centenary Digital Ltd. London, UK, December.

An installation by the contemporary South African artist, Paul Emmanuel, will be displayed on the former battlefields of the Somme as part of France's official commemorations for the Centenary of the First World War.

The work, called *The Lost Men France*, will depict the names of French, German, South African and allied servicemen who died on the Western Front, without reference to their rank, nationality or ethnicity.

"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 who extensively researched the battles of the First World War during a four-month residency in France in 2012.

The installation, featuring a series of silk banners (pictured below), will be located within view of the Thiepval Memorial, one of the most distinctive and imposing monuments to the dead of the Great War. More than 72,000 British and South African servicemen who have no known grave are remembered there.

A cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves also lies at the foot of the memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the offensive in 1916 which cost tens of thousands of lives.

The Lost Men France is Paul Emmanuel's latest project in a series of artworks exploring concepts of loss, memory and public grief. It was selected for display by La Mission du Centenaire de la Première Guerre Mondiale, the official body responsible for planning and implementing France's Centenary programme.

Non-Partisan

For Emmanuel, this is a non-partisan artwork, an "anti-monument" that does not glorify war, aimed at stimulating contemplation.

"I am as many are, affected by these terrible historic battles," he says. "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 the Thiepval Memorial bears witness to the memory of thousands of lost servicemen, so *The Lost Men France* will also bear witness."

Names of servicemen who fell on the Somme will be cast in moulded letters and pressed into Emmanuel's skin. The wounds on his body will be photographed and then printed onto large, semi-transparent silk sheets. Hung on steel supports along a 600-metre stretch of farm road, these will be left to move with the wind.

Announcing France's Centenary programme in November 2013, President François Hollande urged people to visit this and other sites of remembrance with the words "trace the paths of memory".

**The Lost Men France* will be shown from 1st July 2014 – 1st October 2014 adjacent to the Thiepval Memorial in the Somme department, Picardy, Northern France. The banners will be re-installed during 2016 and 2018.