

paul emmanuel transitions

touring museum exhibition
project concept document & media kit



paul emmanuel

transitions

is presented by



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DETAIL FROM PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS
DRAWING TITLED (1) 730 X 3050 MM (2008)
HAND INCISED EXPOSED PHOTOGRAPHIC PAPER
COURTESY SPIER CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION
& ART SOURCE SOUTH AFRICA

... copying my own photographic recordings of transient moments in a vain attempt to uncover what really happened ...

– Paul Emmanuel in **Conversations on the Transience of Light** by André Croucamp in TRANSITIONS, Art Source South Africa, 2008

In late 2004 I was exploring how the military influenced and perpetuated notions of masculinity in South Africa. One morning, while thinking about moments of change, I decided to photograph an actual military recruit head shaving while it was happening – to witness to an unfolding drama. After some research, I discovered that there were only two remaining military bases in South Africa which still perform this obligatory ‘rite of passage’ on their premises, one in Oudtshoorn and the other, Third South African Infantry Battalion (3SAI) in Kimberley. I phoned the Kimberley base, spoke to the Officer-in-Command and arranged a visit to photograph head shavings from the January 2005 intake.

I remember feeling apprehensive of what I would find. I did not do military service. I only had references to military experiences told to me by my older brother and friends, who described their head shaving experiences of the apartheid military regime of the 1980s – their stories of feeling dehumanised, lots of shouting, indifference, bigotry and fear.

Instead, I found a very different setting ... quiet lawns with well tended flower beds full of roses. Lines of recruits waiting

patiently. No shouting. No authoritarianism. No evidence of the violent breaking down of the human spirit. Compared with the horror stories related to South Africa’s past, the equanimity of the scene was arresting. I was spellbound.

These liminal moments of transition, when a young man either voluntarily – or is forced to – let go of one identity and take on a new identity as State Property with an assigned Force Number, prompted me to ask many questions: What was I actually witnessing? What is a “Rite of Passage” and how have similar “rituals” helped to form and perpetuate identities and belief systems throughout history? Why was I so powerfully drawn to and transfixed by these dramatic spectacles of subtle change and moments of suspended possibility and impossibility?

And so began an intensely reflexive outward and inward journey, in and beyond my studio, which was to last four long years ...

– Paul Emmanuel 2008



Liminal moments in shifting white male identity.

BACKGROUND TO THE WORK

In previous and concurrent works, namely AFTER-IMAGE and THE LOST MEN PROJECT, Emmanuel produced installations and a major drawing engaged with public and private loss, memory and constructions of male identity. His interest in the 'documentary' nature of photography and the printmaking concept of leaving impressions, have informed new works over the past three years.

CONCEPT

A photograph is only a fragment, and with the passage of time its moorings become unstuck. It drifts away into a soft abstract pastness, open to any kind of reading.

– Susan Sontag in **Melancholy Objects**,
in ON PHOTOGRAPHY,
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1977

DETAIL FROM PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS
DRAWING TITLED (2) 730 X 3050 MM (2008)
HAND INCISED EXPOSED PHOTOGRAPHIC PAPER
COURTESY SPIER CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION
& ART SOURCE SOUTH AFRICA

PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS comprises a series of five ostensibly 'photographic' works which, when examined closely, are revealed as sensitively hand-drawn, photo-realist sequences of images. These film-like progressions obsessively capture liminal moments of five transitory stages in life.

A sixth work titled 3SAI: A RITE OF PASSAGE – a 14 minute film produced by the artist – documents the head shaving of new recruits at the Third South African Infantry Battalion (3SAI) in Kimberley. This is one of two South African military training camps which still performs the obligatory hair shaving of army

recruits when they join the South African National Defence Force. For the artist, these moments which he observed, raised a number of questions. During South Africa's Apartheid era, obligatory head shaving was an enforced rite of passage for thousands of white male conscripts. This film extends the content of the second of the five drawings.

The remaining four drawings individually explore liminal experiences within a society and how these resonate with the artist. Unidentifiable men subjected to a transition of identity through different processes and in different contexts – the "ritualistic" stripping

of one identity, and the apparent unresisting acceptance of another identity. These societal markers have particular relevance and meaning to the artist as a young, white, gay South African male.

PROCESS

In an attempt to hold on to a significant and fleeting moment the artist has obsessively scratched away the black exposed and processed emulsion of photographic paper, drawing with a fine steel blade to carefully reveal, in a process of photo-realist rendering, every shadow, every highlight. Portentous events, (observed by the artist) – which take

DETAILS FROM PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS DRAWINGS TITLED (2), (3), (4) 730 X 3050 MM (2005 – 8) HAND INCISED EXPOSED PHOTOGRAPHIC PAPER COURTESY SPIER CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION & ART SOURCE SOUTH AFRICA



minutes in situ to capture on light sensitive material (the photographs) – are painstakingly recaptured and have been drawn over a period of four years. In the drawing process, the rust coloured mid-tones are revealed and derived from the photographic emulsion being partially worn away by little more than the weight of the blade.

'The production of this body of work is a love-affair with concept and surface.'

The production of the film 3SAI: A RITE OF PASSAGE, involved the artist in extensive theoretical and practical research to develop the skills required for film making to enable him to collaborate professionally with a film production company.

THE EXHIBITION

PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS creates – through a poignant visual and aural experience for the viewer – a contemplative space to meditate on transitory life stages. It aims to stimulate thoughts on patriarchy and poses questions around perceptions of masculinity, the passage of time and the human condition.



PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS PROVENANCE AND CONFIRMED FUTURE MUSEUM VENUES TO DATE:

- **Apartheid Museum** Johannesburg, South Africa 27 Sept – 31 Dec 2008
- **Oliewenhuis Art Museum** Bloemfontein, South Africa 15 Jan – 31 Mar 2009
- **William Humphreys Art Gallery** Kimberley, South Africa 15 April – 15 May 2009
- **KZNSA Gallery (KwaZulu-Natal Society of Arts)** Durban, South Africa 2 June – 21 June 2009
- **Albany History Museum, National Arts Festival** Grahamstown, South Africa 2 – 11 July 2009
- **Spier Gallery (Spier Estate)** Stellenbosch, South Africa 26 Nov 2009 – 31 March 2010
- **National Museum of African Art Smithsonian Institution** Washington DC, USA 12 May – 22 August 2010
- **Kunst:raum Sylt Quelle Foundation** Rantum, Sylt, Germany 1 Feb – 31 April 2011
- **Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)** Baltimore, USA 2011

Further proposals have been submitted to major museum venues in Europe and the USA.



PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS COMPRISES THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

- (1) **An enclosed, viewing space projecting a high definition video entitled 3SAI: A RITE OF PASSAGE**
The viewer experiences film cinematically in a separate viewing space. The film includes a stereo soundtrack and runs for 13 minutes, 58 seconds. It complements the touring museum exhibition on a continuous loop but also exists as a single, independent, edited video artwork in a signed and numbered edition of ten.

- (2) **An installed exhibition of five large framed drawings**
Each float-mounted, box-framed drawing measures 730 x 3050 mm. The content of the works capture portentous moments over a passage of time. They depict unidentifiable male subjects of varying age – sometimes in traditional institutions such as the military as well as religious and secular institutions which have shaped the way in which male identity has been defined. For example the work titled **(2)** depicts a sequence of five ostensibly ‘photographic’ images capturing moments during the head shaving of a young military recruit. This particular drawing captures an unknown young man subjected to a transition of identity through a fast-paced head shaving process – the ritual stripping of one identity – and the unresisting acceptance of another identity as property of the State. The military is an institution which has been instrumental in forming perceptions of masculinity, especially in apartheid-era South Africa. The five drawings are exhibited courtesy of the Spier Contemporary Collection, South Africa.



EXHIBITION VIEWS OF PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON DC, USA, MAY 12 – AUGUST 22 2010
PHOTOS: FRANKO KHOURY



(Left) A photo of the artist scratching away the emulsion of black exposed photographic paper with a blade to incise each image. The drawings are hand incised onto a single piece of exposed and processed colour photographic paper. Each sequence of five images took the artist an average of six months to complete. The box-framed TRANSITIONS drawings are suspended from the ceiling and are installed in a specific sequence, to be viewed one work at a time. Hung approximately two metres apart with four drawings hung back to back with a 10 cm gap between.

Size of each framed drawing: 730 x 3050 mm (2005 – 2008)



▲(1) ▼(2)





▲(3) ▼(4)



▼(5)



3SAI

A RITE OF PASSAGE



Says Stefanie Van de Peer, Co-director – Africa in Motion Film Festival

Congratulations, (on winning the jury prize)! We really loved your meditative film. The imagery and the silence, combined with the beautiful photography and the symbolic lyricism truly elevate the mundane action of shaving the heads of recruits.

A **FORMAT** PRODUCTION AN **ART SOURCE SOUTH AFRICA** PROJECT A **PAUL EMMANUEL** FILM
PRODUCER **MATTHEW KRAMER** PRODUCTION MANAGER **NATALIE STANGE**
EDITOR **MATTHEW KRAMER** DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **ERAN TAHOR, IVAN LEATHERS, ROBERT WILSON**
PROJECT MANAGER **LES COHN** ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK **WILBERT SCHUBEL**
DIRECTOR AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **PAUL EMMANUEL**
www.paulemanuel.net

This film explores rites of passage and transitions in male identity through a poignant visual and aural presentation of the head shaving “rituals” of young military recruits.

Conceived as an editioned video artwork for a touring museum art exhibition, 3SAI: A RITE OF PASSAGE is a short interpretive documentary in the non-verbal, experimental genre. The film has no plot or script. It is a poetic sequence of high quality footage documenting the head-shaving rituals of young recruits at the Third South African Infantry Battalion (3SAI) in Kimberley, South Africa. Combined with evocative landscape imagery, time-lapse and slow-motion cinematography as well as a compelling soundtrack, this presentation of a universal male rite of passage asks us to re-examine these poignant moments of transition in masculine identity and consider what is captured and what is lost ...



FORMAT

3SAI: A RITE OF PASSAGE is a high-definition 1080p, single channel video projection (aspect ratio: 16 x 9) with stereo soundtrack. The output format of the film is a Blu-ray disc (PAL). The running time of the film is 13 minutes 58 seconds. Filmed in colour on 35 and 16 mm film as well as high definition video with various scenes shot at up to 200 frames per second slowing the action to the required level. Evocative ambient sounds of razors and other head shaving paraphernalia are creatively combined with compelling sound design and composition.

The projection featured in the PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS touring museum exhibition is supplied with a custom designed audio visual system.

3SAI: A RITE OF PASSAGE (STILLS)
SINGLE CHANNEL HIGH DEFINITION VIDEO (2008) 14 MIN
COURTESY FORMAT DIGITAL PRODUCTION & ART SOURCE SOUTH AFRICA



THE LIGHTWEIGHTS COTTON T-SHIRTS CLOTHES-PEGS STEEL 100 X 300 M
FREE STATE SOUTH AFRICA 22 – 24 JUNE 2007 COURTESY ART SOURCE SOUTH AFRICA

SYNOPSIS

We open on the emptiness of the Gariep Dam on the plains of the Karoo, South Africa. The image is ambiguous. The ripples on the muddy water look like ripples in desert sand. The image is broken violently by the crashing sound of a railway train coupling. We cut to a line-up of young recruits waiting for their obligatory hair shaving at 3SAI. We join the queue. We witness a monotonous sequence of indifferent head shavings. The industrial hum of an electric razor. The rhythm of a production line which increases in pace and intensity. Suddenly at the peak of this syncopated spectacle we are cast into a twilight realm of slow-time. We break through the military machine and witness a new head shaving – in slow motion and in close detail. There is now an intimacy and vulnerability that was not seen before – an altered state, abstracted, de-contextualised and open to interpretation. This then fades back into the contemplative spaces of the Gariep.

The work critically engages the medium of film itself in the way it plays with time, changing the possible meanings of an experience as time slows down. What is captured? What is lost?

View a reduced-size, online version of the short promotional film (1 min) and/or extracts from the film (1 min 43 sec) at: www.paulemanuel.net

3SAI: A RITE OF PASSAGE is a feature of a touring museum solo art exhibition entitled PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS. In this exhibition Emmanuel explores these themes using a variety of different media. PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS premiered at The Apartheid Museum in 2008 and has toured to five additional national art museums in South Africa. It then began its international tour at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in Washington DC, USA in 2010. PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS will continue to tour selected international museum venues in Europe and the United States. 3SAI: A RITE OF PASSAGE is also independently screened at selected international film festivals in the non-verbal, experimental genre as well as selected video-art exhibitions and art biennales.



upcoming gallery exhibitions: transitions: prints & multiples – a suite of hand printed lithographs

BACKGROUND TO THE TRANSITIONS PROJECT: PHASE I

PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS is a touring museum solo exhibition which premiered at The Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg and has been shown at five additional national museum venues throughout South Africa. It began its international tour at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in Washington DC and is scheduled to tour internationally over the next three to five years. PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS comprises a series of five ostensibly 'photographic' works which, when examined closely, are revealed as sensitively hand-drawn, photo-realist sequences of images. These film-like progressions obsessively capture liminal moments of five transitory stages in life.

A sixth work titled 3SAI: A RITE OF PASSAGE – a 14 minute film produced by the artist – documents the head shaving of new recruits at the Third South African Infantry Battalion (3SAI) in Kimberley, South Africa. This film has been shown on a number of international film festivals and in 2009 was unanimously selected the winner by an international jury on the Africa in Motion Film Festival, Edinburgh and won Best Experimental in the Sardinia International Film Festival in Italy. Initiated in collaboration with Art Source South Africa and managed by Les Cohn, the PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS touring museum exhibition now forms part of the Spier Collection, one of the largest collections of contemporary South African art.

PHASE II – TRANSITIONS PRINTS & MULTIPLES

In 2009 work began on phase II of the TRANSITIONS PROJECT. In a co-publishing arrangement between the artist and Art Source South Africa, Emmanuel began production of a suite of hand drawn, hand printed lithographic series with images based on TRANSITIONS concepts.



(LEFT) PAUL EMMANUEL PRODUCING THE TRANSITIONS HAND PRINTED LITHOGRAPHS PHOTOS: ANDRE CROUCAMP



Five lithographic triptychs (three images each) will be completed by February 2011. Each triptych will be hand printed, hand coloured, assembled, signed and dated by the artist in a limited edition of 35.

The technique applied to produce the lithographic images is the *manière noire*, or “black method”. In a tradition reminiscent of the old masters such as Rembrandt and Caravaggio, the artist works on a large flat limestone, slowly scratching the image into a layer of black ink with a blade, methodically working from dark to light. The completed image is inked up by hand and printed from the stone by the artist onto Fabriano Rosaspina archival paper. The image on the stone is re-inked for each print. Each impression is an *original print*, as the artist has created each one by hand. Each print is signed and numbered by Emmanuel 1/35 to 35/35. After the edition is printed, the image on the stone is erased for the production of the next image, thereby guaranteeing the edition’s integrity and rarity. Due to the time-consuming nature of the process, each triptych takes the artist about 3 to 6 months to complete, with the final triptych completed by February 2011. A certificate of authentication accompanies each triptych.

Signed, titled and dated impressions of each editioned TRANSITIONS lithographic triptych by Paul Emmanuel are available for purchase from Art Source South Africa. Selected commercial gallery showings of TRANSITIONS: PRINTS AND MULTIPLES are planned for 2011 onwards.

THE TRANSITIONS BOOK

The production of a substantial book on THE TRANSITIONS PROJECT began in 2010. This significant publication documenting THE TRANSITIONS PROJECT is planned for international distribution. Texts will be written by – amongst others – Dr. Anthony Downey, Dr. Achille Mbembe and Prof. Jane Taylor.

(LEFT) PAUL EMMANUEL PRODUCING THE TRANSITIONS HAND PRINTED LITHOGRAPHS PHOTOS: ANDRE CROUCAMP





Born in 1969 in Kabwe, Zambia, Emmanuel graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1993.

In 1997, The Ampersand Foundation made him the first recipient of the prestigious Ampersand Fellowship, which afforded him a three-month residency in New York. His first solo show in 2000 at the Open Window Gallery, Pretoria, was followed by three subsequent solo exhibitions in the Western Cape and Johannesburg in 2003 – 2005. In 2002, he was awarded first prize for AIR ON THE SKIN, in the Schumann-Sasol Wax Art Competition.

Emmanuel employs various media, including photography and film, to reveal layered visions

concerned with his identity as a young white male living in post-apartheid South Africa.

In 2004, Phase I of his ephemeral memorial installation, THE LOST MEN PROJECT, was launched on the Grahamstown National Arts Festival main visual arts programme to public acclaim. In April 2007, phase II of this project took place in Maputo, Mozambique.

In September 2008, his touring museum exhibition entitled TRANSITIONS premiered at The Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, featuring his critically acclaimed short film 3SAI: A RITE OF PASSAGE. In 2009 this short, non-verbal, experimental won the jury prize in the Short Film Competition at the 4th

Africa-In-Motion Film Festival of the Edinburgh International Film Festival, UK. In the same year it was also officially selected for the 12th Antimatter International Film Festival in Victoria, Canada and the Design Indaba Expo National Film Festival in Cape Town, South Africa. In 2010, it was officially selected for the 39th International Film Festival Rotterdam, The Netherlands, the 19th Séquence Court-Métrage International Film Festival, Toulouse, France and the 7th Sedicicorto International Film Festival, Forlì, Italy. The film also won the Best Experimental Film award on the Sardinia International Film Festival in Sassari, Italy 2010. Emmanuel lives and works in Johannesburg.

Solo exhibitions & public installations (c=catalogue)

- 2011 PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, USA (c)
- 2011 PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS, Kunst:raum Sylt Quelle Foundation, Rantum, Sylt, Germany (c)
- 2010 PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC, USA (c)
- 2009-10 PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS, Spier Old Wine Cellar Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa (c)
- 2009 PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS, Albany Museum, National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa (c)
- 2009 THE LOST MEN, Kunst Raum Sylt-Quelle, Rantum, Sylt, Germany
- 2009 PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS, KZNSA Gallery (KwaZulu-Natal Society of Arts), Durban, South Africa (c)
- 2009 PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS, William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley, South Africa (c)
- 2009 PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein, South Africa (c)
- 2008 PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS, Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa (c)
- 2007 THE LOST MEN MOZAMBIQUE, Catembe Ferry Jetty, Maputo, Mozambique
- 2006 AFTER-IMAGE, Villa Arcadia, Johannesburg, South Africa (c)
- 2005 AFTER-IMAGE, Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, South Africa (c)
- 2005 AFTER-IMAGE, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein, South Africa (c)
- 2004 AFTER-IMAGE, University of Stellenbosch Art Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa (c)
- 2004 THE LOST MEN GRAHAMSTOWN, Monument Hill, National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa (c)
- 2003 AIR ON THE SKIN, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2000 PAGES FROM CATHEXIS, Open Window Contemporary Art Gallery, Pretoria, South Africa



Selected group exhibitions, film screenings & events (c=catalogue)

- 2010 7th SEDICICORTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Forlì, Italy
- 2010 BLACK BOX, Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, Illinois, USA
- 2010 VIDEOGUD/VIDEOKÖNST, Gävleborg, Uppsala & Dalarna, Sweden
- 2010 5th SARDINIA FILM FESTIVAL, Sassari, Sardinia, Italy
- 2010 19th SÉQUENCE COURT-MÉTRAGE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Toulouse, France
- 2010 39th INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 2009 4th AFRICA-IN-MOTION INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Filmhouse Cinema, Edinburgh, UK (c)
- 2009 ON MAKING: INTEGRATING APPROACHES TO PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH IN ART AND DESIGN, University of Johannesburg, South Africa (c)
- 2009 12th ANTIMATTER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Open Space Arts Centre, Victoria, Canada (c)
- 2009 ADDING SUBTRACTIONS, Fordsburg Artists' Studios, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2009 DESIGN INDABA EXPO FILM FESTIVAL, Cape Town International Convention Centre, South Africa (c)
- 2006 NAVIGATING THE BOOKSCAPE, ARTISTS BOOKS AND THE DIGITAL INTERFACE, (touring) Aardklop National Arts Festival, Potchefstroom, FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg, South Africa (c)
- 2004-7 WALDSEE 1944, (touring) Collegium Hungaricum, Berlin, Germany; 2B Galleria, Budapest, Hungary; Hebrew Union College Museum, New York, USA; Florida Holocaust Museum, USA; Hibel Museum, FAU-Jupiter, Florida, USA; Ben Uri Gallery, London, UK; Alper JCC, Miami, Florida, USA (c)
- 2003 THE AMPERSAND FOUNDATION (2nd exhibition), Warren Siebrits Modern and Contemporary, Johannesburg, South Africa (c)
- 2002 THE SASOL WAX IN ART COMPETITION, Sasolburg, South Africa (c)
- 2001 BAG FACTORY SHOW, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2000 AFTER NEW YORK, Civic Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1999 POSTCARDS FROM SOUTH AFRICA, Axis Gallery, New York, USA
- 1998 SOUTH AFRICAN PRINTMAKING, Stockholm, Sweden (c)
- 1997 BAG FACTORY GROUP EXHIBITION, Mexican Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa
- 1996 ARTISTS' BOOKS IN THE GINSBERG COLLECTION, Johannesburg Art Gallery, South Africa
- 1995 THE FIRST FOUR YEARS, Civic Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1994 OPEN BITE – A NEW LOOK AT INTAGLIO PRINTMAKING, Civic Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

Awards & Fellowships

- 2010 BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM: 5th Sardinia International Film Festival, Sassari, Italy
- 2009 BEST SHORT FILM: 4th Africa-in-Motion Short Film Competition, Africa-in-Motion International Film Festival, Edinburgh International Film Festival, UK
- 2002 FIRST PRIZE: SASOL Wax In Art Competition, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1997 THE AMPERSAND FELLOWSHIP: The Ampersand Foundation, New York, USA
Visiting artist & internship: Center for Book Arts, New York, USA
Internship: Alma on Dobbin, New York, USA

Residencies

2009 KUNST:RAUM SYLT QUELLE FOUNDATION, Rantum, Sylt, Germany

Public & corporate collections

- National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution (USA)
- Kunst:raum Sylt Quelle Foundation (Germany)
- William Humphreys Art Gallery (South Africa)
- First National Bank (South Africa)
- Spier Contemporary Collection (South Africa)
- Hollard Insurance Company Limited (South Africa)
- Johannesburg Securities Exchange (South Africa)
- Johannesburg Art Gallery (South Africa)
- Gauteng Provincial Legislature (South Africa)
- Vodacom Limited (South Africa)
- MTN Limited (South Africa)
- Oliewenhuis Art Museum (South Africa)
- Sasol University of Stellenbosch Museum (South Africa)
- Pretoria Art Museum (South Africa)
- University of South Africa permanent collection (South Africa)
- Standard Bank (South Africa)
- SASOL Limited (South Africa)
- South African Broadcasting Corporation Limited (South Africa)
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Chamalieres (France)

Solo catalogues & monographs

2008 TRANSITIONS. Texts by André Croucamp and Robyn Sassen. Art Source South Africa. Johannesburg, South Africa. (ISBN 978-0-620-41945-1)

2004 AFTER-IMAGE. Text by Julia Charlton. Paul Emmanuel. Johannesburg, South Africa. (ISBN 0-620-32295-0)



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Art Source South Africa visual arts consultants are the project managers for all aspects of TRANSITIONS – an artists’ project by Paul Emmanuel.

About Art Source South Africa

Art Source is a visual arts and culture consultancy occupying a unique niche within the contemporary South African arts sector. Launched in 2001 as a response to a gap in the rapidly maturing art market, Art Source handles an array of activities within the sector from fund raising and strategy development to curation, project development and management. It services a range of clients and interfaces between the worlds of cultural development at community and individual levels, corporate sponsors and sources of public donor funding. Specialising in strategic project development and career management of Fine Artists, Art Source South Africa has undertaken projects as diverse as contemporary visual art exhibitions, rural craft development projects, as well as initiated local and international artist exchanges which often include community outreach programmes.

Les Cohn

Art Source cc (est. 2001) was established and is managed by Les Cohn, a qualified artist and an experienced arts administrator. She holds a BAFA from Michaelis School of Art, University of Cape Town and graduated with a Higher Diploma in Fine Arts from the Technikon Witwatersrand (now The University of Johannesburg). She was awarded a Technikon Merit Medal. Les Cohn gained a Diploma in Arts and

Culture Management, from the P & DM School, Graduate School of Business, University of Witwatersrand. Les Cohn is a dynamic fine artist and arts project consultant, well networked within the South African cultural sector. Her unique combination of qualifications, extensive experience in development and management positions and various board connections, position her ideally to take a leading role in industry initiatives.

Taryn Cohn

After completing a BA Fine Art (hons) from the University of Stellenbosch, Taryn went on to obtain a Master of Philosophy in Cultural Development under the co-supervision of Stellenbosch University’s department of Sociology and the Technikon Witwatersrand Faculty of Art, Design & Architecture (now The University of Johannesburg) under Kim Berman. Since 2002 she has worked in various capacities within the realm of arts management and cultural marketing. Her past projects and clients include The Sasol Wax Art Award, The Brett Kebble Art Award and The Zenex Foundation. She was also Marketing Manager of Constitution Hill, among others. Her areas of speciality include marketing and communications for art and development projects, financial management, project management and strategy.

The Washington Post

At Smithsonian's African art museum: Rites of passage, drawn precisely

By Michael O'Sullivan
Washington Post Staff Writer
Friday, May 21, 2010; WE15

"Paul Emmanuel: Transitions" is about invisible lines, in more ways than one.

The first sense is literal. To make the five "drawings" that form the core of the show at the National Museum of African Art, the South African artist used a razor-sharp blade to incise tiny lines in the black surface of exposed photographic paper. The result is a series of engraving-like images that, on casual inspection, are indistinguishable from photographs. Look more closely, however, and you'll see evidence of the cut marks, but they're so fine that the surfaces look slightly soft and fuzzy, like felted fabric.

The technique alone is remarkable. But there's another kind of line in this show. As the title suggests, it's the kind that we cross, without knowing it, only to realize -- sometimes years after the fact -- that we're no longer the people we once were.

In this case, the drawings document what Emmanuel terms "masculine rites of passage": circumcision, military head shaving, marriage, a father's birthday and, in the show's most literal interpretation of its title, commuters passing through subway turnstiles. Each drawing consists of a sequence of five images, arranged like pages of a book, to be read left to right. They're based on photographs the artist took.

What Emmanuel has done, in effect, is to hit the pause button on life and then to study it, like a forensic scientist, one frame at a time. "I wanted," he says in an interview, "to obsess over a moment."

Each moment concerns at most only a matter of minutes. Sometimes mere seconds. In one, a middle-aged man is helped up from his seat at his father's 90th birthday party. In another, a military barber buzzes bald the scalp of a new recruit. In a third, a baby boy is, er, snipped. Each of the drawings -- the artist considers a group of five a single drawing -- took six months to complete.

By freezing actions that are fleeting and painstakingly teasing them apart, Emmanuel invites us to share his obsessiveness, looking for something that isn't really there. Not what's happening, in other words, but what it means.

What we find is sometimes unexpected. In the circumcision pictures, for instance, there's a surprising tenderness. Rather than the violent drama, blood and tears that Emmanuel says he expected -- and that we might, too -- there's an eerie quiescence, as the baby sleeps through

the whole thing. Questions about the controversial procedure linger in the air. However, the art is scrupulously neutral.

The head-shaving pictures are similarly ambiguous, suggesting both violence and tenderness. This is even more apparent in a 14-minute film that accompanies the show, in which barbers from the Third South African Infantry are shown, in slow motion, buzz-cutting one young soldier's head after another. Reduced to its most elemental gestures -- a hand brushing hair clippings from the skin, for instance -- this initiation into a life of danger takes on new meaning and can be seen as an intimate, almost sensual act.

In the end, Emmanuel's "Transitions" isn't just about men. We all live too fast, he seems to be saying, men and women, young and old. What would we see if we could slow down the milestones that whiz past us on the highway of life and hold onto them for just a minute longer?

PAUL EMMANUEL: TRANSITIONS Through Aug. 22 at the [National Museum of African Art](http://www.nmfa.si.edu), 950 Independence Ave. SW (Metro: Smithsonian). 202-633-1000 (TDD: 202-633-5285). <http://www.nmfa.si.edu>. Hours: Open daily 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission: Free.



The transition to new perspectives

WILLIAM DOBSON

ON FIRST impression it would appear you are looking at five black-and-white pictures. On closer inspection of Paul Emmanuel's exhibition, *Transitions*, it transpires that what you are faced with is a series of pictures portraying the transitions that face the white male in modern South Africa.

Exploring life's progression from circumcision to old age, the works have been obsessively incised by hand into photographic paper, exposed and processed, thus rendered completely black.

The exhibition also includes a 14-minute film of men having their heads shaved as part of their initiation into the army – a rite of passage that shifts identity from civilian to state property. Although conscription has ended and this change is voluntary, the artist asserts that this idea remains relevant to a society in which the white male is battling to figure out his role.

The use of different media is indicative of Emmanuel, who is unable to categorise himself into a single discipline. For him, the medium and the process are as important as the artwork itself.

While the pictures are based on photographs he has taken, the effort to create the final work – months spent scratching with a steel blade "into the black paper" – is, he says, as significant as the end result.

It adds depth and richness, as well as emphasising that the ephemeral images are in fact created over months, years and lifetimes. For instance, one image shows the coronation of a man of Lebanese extraction at his wedding, a cultural phenomenon common in families of Middle Eastern origin, as Emmanuel himself is, and another a scene

from a grandfather's 90th birthday celebration.

There is in Emmanuel's work a sense of liminality – that idea of ambiguity, openness and indeterminacy, that disorientation leading to new perspectives. Identity is in a constant state of flux, especially for white males in a country such as South Africa.

Emmanuel sees a struggle to embrace the radical changes, positive and negative, happening all the time, a fear of something new. The idea of patriarchy has been a dominating influence, yet now there is a dichotomy.

There has been a huge shift to freer and looser ideals, yet as men and women reevaluate their roles, conservative values try to assert and establish themselves.

This is reflected in Emmanuel's work – images of rites

and rituals that seem often to have been almost predetermined, such as circumcision, marriage, and death.

He points to a society which on one hand has begun to re-embrace religion in a conservative manner as an affront to globalisation, yet on the other is beginning to come to terms and be comfortable with its multicultural identity and other previous taboos.

There is a duality in Emmanuel's thinking. While his artwork is intimate and incredibly personal, through its very nature it becomes collective.

He strives for timelessness, and hopes that despite the exhibition being a reflection on his life and how he relates to society, it will be as relevant in 100 years as it is today, causing people to stop, think, and perhaps even change their perceptions.

He points to the image of a baby's circumcision, an image that in previous generations would have evoked very different associations to now – in the past to religion, now seen as a cosmetic or hygienic procedure.

Again, the same is true of the head-shaving ritual, something that will resonate in a manner different for men over 40, who lived through conscription, from that of young men for whom joining the army is voluntary.



UTES OF PASSAGE: Artist Paul Emmanuel explores the shifting identity of white males in his exhibition *Transitions*.

Transitions is to be displayed in the Smithsonian National Museum of Art in Washington later this year. The short film, *3SAI: A Rite Of Passage*, won the jury prize in the Short Film Competition at the fourth Africa-In-Motion Film Festival at the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

The exhibition is on display at the Spier Old Wine Cellar Gallery until March 31.

● See www.spierwines.co.za or www.paulmanuel.net



ART PIG

Alex Dodd

One of the juicier cultural by-products to emerge out of Damien Hirst's recent \$198-million Sotheby's auction was a crisp and catty debate between art critic Robert Hughes and writer Germaine Greer. When Hughes took a stand against Hirst, expressing the unpopular view that 'art as spectacle loses meaning', Greer went for the jugular, claiming that Hirst's work was beyond Hughes's analytical reach, and that his criticism of Hirst's ego-maniacal Bond Street greed fest was quite simply missing the point. 'Hughes doesn't understand a good deal of art – doesn't get Basquiat or Baselitz, for example,' wrote Greer in *The Guardian*. 'What is being presented as aesthetic sensibility is, in fact, moralism, of a kind that has always bedevilled innovative artists.' Personally, I think it is Greer who is missing the point.

Just because lazy, hollow installations and mass-produced art objects are the flavour of the moment doesn't mean we have to accept them in bent and covered silence. In an age of the radical dematerialisation of the art object, in which concept tends to be king, I celebrate Hughes's courage in boldly pointing out that the emperor is wearing no clothes. 'No wonder so many business big shots go for Hirst: his work is both simple-minded and sensationalist, just the ticket for newbie collectors,' he writes. Hughes is the only writer I know of to have pointed out the gross absurdity of Hirst's prices – \$12-million for a dead shark, \$10 000 for a mere photograph of a diamond-encrusted skull – when half the hungry world would be happy to have a bit of old pickled shark fin for supper.

To drive home her point, Greer satirises Hughes's love of Lucian Freud, jeering at the fact of him being impressed by the laboriousness of Freud's work. 'Ha ha ha!' jeers Greer from her invisible throne of contemporary derisiveness. But again, I'm with Hughes on this matter of labour. I may well be a child of the 20th century, but personal labour in art often impresses me. Evidence of sweat excites me – even more so of late, for recently I have witnessed two major art prizes (the MTN New Contemporaries and the Sasol Wax Art Award) being awarded to the most chilly, unaffectionate installations I have had the displeasure and bewilderment of encountering.

(As for the Sasol Wax Art Awards evening, pass the spittoon, Sheila. I haven't endured a more awful evening since that ostrich farm in the Karoo, New Year's Eve circa 1999. I thought nothing could be more dismal than the table arrangements, which agglomerated mirror balls with wooden hearts and cabbages dunked in wax, until the deputy minister of Arts and Culture, Ntombazana Botha, opened her mouth. It was all down hill from there.)

But just as I was about to drown in a small flagon of post-modern despair, I set out on the M1 South to experience Paul Emmanuel's current exhibition, *Transitions*, at the Apartheid Museum. A continuation of Emmanuel's lifelong engagement with issues of masculinity, this exhibition is an exploration of 'moments of shifting white male identity and liminal spaces'. Simultaneously humble and majestic, it entirely restored my faith in art's capacity to awaken and transform. And left me with a desire to proselytize and punt, to encourage every likeable and deserving citizen of this mad republic to haul their asses down south for a dose of real profundity. If it was evidence of hard labour that I was after, I found it there in Emmanuel's insanely dedicated drawing technique – the exhibition took the artist over four years to research and create. Not that personal effort is my sole criteria in assessing the power of an artwork. But when it is unavoidably, irrevocably evident, it does somehow make a difference.

Transitions comprises a series of five ostensibly 'photographic' sequences of images which, when examined closely, are revealed to be drawings which have been sensitively hand-incised into photographic paper with a blade. You can't help but marvel at the madness of sheer painstaking application. There is something miraculous in the object that stands before you – something magical, sublime and beyond the ordinary. But this superior level of draftsmanship is something I have come to expect from Emmanuel. It was his film, *3 SAI A Rite of Passage*, that left me wordless. For he has managed to translate that excruciatingly sensitized essence of his drawings into a whole new medium. The film documents the head shaving of new recruits at the Third South African Infantry Battalion in Kimberley, one of two national military training camps, which still performs the obligatory hair shaving of new recruits. With its haunting soundtrack, it succeeds in taking the viewer out of flat documentary reality for 12 perfect minutes – and in that sublime stretch of time outside of time, the world becomes charged with emotional and symbolic resonances that render even the fleeting expression on a young boy's face quite unforgettably nuanced. You're in a stark mess hall in Kimberley circa 2008, but it might as well be *Death in Venice*.



Paul Emmanuel, *Crowning*. Detail from *Transitions 3*.

3 SAI A Rite of Passage

film: Paul Emmanuel

review: Mary Corrigan

It wasn't the typical setting for a film preview. With an array of garden, lounge and dining chairs lined up in front of a white wall that would function as the screen, Paul Emmanuel had created a makeshift cinema in his loft apartment in Milpark for the screening of *3 SAI A Rite of Passage*, which is part of his *Transitions* exhibition at the Apartheid Museum.

Haunted by the *Hansie* movie preview, the small clutch of arts journalists gathered in Emmanuel's loft apartment looked apprehensive. It also didn't help knowing that the discipline of film is a completely new avenue for Emmanuel. He is a fine artist by trade, and though he has five solo exhibitions under his belt, he is not known as a video artist – the designation for those who employ film as their medium of expression.

Video art has experienced a bit of a revival on the South African art scene. The Spier Contemporary Award exhibition earlier this year boasted quite an array of video artworks and the exhibition that Simon Njami curated for the

Jo'burg Art Fair, called *As You Like It*, was dominated by video art. Almost every important exhibition of late has featured a video artwork. It's an immediate form of expression that demands viewers attention in ways that static objects can't. But it is mostly prized by artists for its capacity to represent altered states. Its dynamic nature allows artists to visibly map change. This is probably why it appealed to Emmanuel; his new exhibition is focused on transformation, the shifts in male identity.

Billed as a cinematic art film *3 SAI* (the Third South African Infantry Battalion), *A Rite of Passage* promised to be something different from the outset. And it didn't disappoint. Emmanuel is an obsessive art maker, not in the sense that he is simply fixated with his craft but the meticulous and detailed etchings for which he is known are clearly the result of a compulsive hand and thinker. How was this approach going to translate into film? And, more importantly, how did Emmanuel concede control of his art? After all, creating a film is not a solo project; ultimately, its success depends on the chemistry between all its co-creators. Perhaps this is why Emmanuel's art film took so long to craft. It is mind-blowing to think that it took Emmanuel and his team more than

four years to produce just 12 minutes of film. Drawing from art, photography and the documentary film genres, Emmanuel's film probes the politics of male identity through a series of non-narrative vignettes that move between images of vast and barren landscapes to army recruits being inducted into the South African National Defence Force. In this way Emmanuel juxtaposes reality with abstraction or truth with lyricism.

Most video art tends to draw on performance art; a set of artificially constructed or contrived actions that are designed to elude meaning. Emmanuel's film, however, captures slices of reality. The individuals in his film may be performers but they are presented as real-life folk undergoing change.

The poetic or lyrical imagery depicting picturesque landscapes that are spliced in between creates these two parallel worlds: one of control and order and another of wild, sensual abandon. They could also signify the contrast between one's empirical and emotional experiences of the world. Neither realm is static, however, even the seemingly untouched natural landscapes.

Using time-lapse photography techniques, Emmanuel shows this outwardly unchanging topography to be in a constant state of flux. In contrast, young men are shown

having their hair shaven as they enter the army in real time, presenting a different kind of shift.

The two worlds aren't necessarily separate and, as the film progresses, elements in the young men's lives filter into or are echoed in, the empty landscapes, such as the physical connection between blond hair falling and the honey strands of grass blowing in the wind.

Whatever compromises Emmanuel may or may not have made in assuming this new medium, the end result is impressive. The film's intellectual or conceptual dimensions are challenging, stimulating and rich; probing white identity, maleness, race and, on a more transcendental level, the link between our cognitive and emotional selves. Emmanuel has also achieved what no South African video artist has to date: he has created an artwork which fully utilises or exploits the qualities that only film can offer.

So many artists today are wont to employ various mediums in their art making, including photography, digital art and film, but more often than not they have no technical mastery over their medium. How can they, when they flit from paint to photography and then to sculpture? And though the value of art is no longer measured by the artist's proficiency with his

or her medium, one can't deny the impact that a well-crafted object can have on the overall communication. This is why big-wig artists such as Damien Hirst pay folk to make his art for him rather than fiddling with mediums that he is not completely au fait with.



Paul Emmanuel's 12-minute film *3 SAI A Rite of Passage* which captures the abstract with reality.

Fine artist shows a flare for video

Artist Paul Emmanuel's 12-minute film is both an intellectual and aesthetic triumph

With *3 SAI A Rite of Passage*, however, Emmanuel has created an artwork that has value as a cinematic initiative and not just as an art object. Most video artworks in this country have absolutely no visual appeal; they are completely concept driven. But *3 SAI A Rite of Passage* is as aesthetically pleasing as it is intellectually exciting.

□ *3 SAI A Rite of Passage* is part of *Transitions*, an exhibition by Paul Emmanuel that is showing at the Apartheid Museum until December

