

Involving the viewer in an intimate and direct way: Paul Emmanuel at his exhibition, *The Lost Men*, on the Monument hill.
pic: Tessa Anne Comrie/*Cue* photographer

Hanging on the hill

Preview – **The Lost Men**
By Dianne Tipping-Woods
Cue Reporter

Paul Emmanuel has hung Grahamstown's past out on a line in an exhibition entitled *The Lost Men*. Like washing from the Monument, 21 pieces of silk voile blow in the wind. They ripple against the landscape, changing in the sunlight.

"Specific pieces of my body were impressed with lead type, and then photographed," Emmanuel explains. "They were the names of the men who died in the Makana wars. The Xhosa names were never recorded except in stories told by the white soldiers. They aren't even full names." He recounts how the imprints had to be photographed before they began to fade. Then the photographs were transferred onto the silk panels.

Emmanuel's exhibition exploits the landscape historically and geographically. "It's that sort of contrast; an ironic juxtaposition with this and the Monument," he explains. "I wanted to oppose so much of what the Monument is about, like permanence, granite, hardness, brick and mortar. I'm playing with the ideas of memory on a direct level, with the weather, the elements, changing conditions."

Emmanuel believes memory is about impermanence. "There's a particular poignancy and sadness associated with this idea," he says. "Even photography is about impermanence because it's about capturing the moment, in all its specificity."

His exhibition uses this idea, but the various elements work together to capture so much more than a single moment.

Emmanuel says he wanted to do something that involved the viewer in a direct way. He says *The Lost Men* is not just a political work. It is also a very personal work about his life.

"I want to communicate in an intimate and direct way. I want people to be surrounded by the work rather than have the distance between a viewer and something on a wall. One of the fabulous things about having an outdoor exhibition is that it is not removed from the general public and me. As an artist, I can access a wider audience. People who've never seen art before may in some way have their perceptions changed. My work may stir up memories and emotions, especially in an older audience, with more of a connection to the past. Some people may even be offended, but that's not what I intend," he says smiling.

The Lost Men is a site specific installation and Emmanuel plans to travel with it when the Festival is over. The names will change in accordance with the location but the concept will remain the same. He is documenting the exhibition at every stage and says everybody who has had a part in the production has written something about it. He adds, "We want to record how it changes and develops from site to site."

***The Lost Men* is on the Monument hill daily from 10:00 to 16:30. There is a walkabout with the artist daily from 10:00 to 11:00.**