

CAPETOWN

Following the release of his third album, *Caustic Love*, Scottish singer-songwriter and Brit award nominee **Paolo Nutini** will be performing in South Africa. **WHEN** March 18 to 19 at Kirstenbosch at 5pm and March 21 at Sowing the Seeds, Emmarentia Dam, Johannesburg, at 10am. **INFO** Tickets available through webtickets.co.za

The theme for the sixth **Cape Town Carnival** is Elemental: Celebrating Fire, Water, Air and Earth. The carnival features spectacular floats, exciting costumes and vibrant song and dance, and this year's lead performer is Nigerian-born Chima Okafor. **WHEN** March 14. **WHERE** Green Point Fan Walk. **INFO** Visit capetowncarnival.com

FRANSCHHOEK VALLEY

Oesfees brings together farm-workers and owners from the Franschhoek Valley with thousands of music lovers and top perform-

ers. The festival is also a showcase for the Music van de Caab project run by Adriaan Brand, who rose to fame with the rock band Springbok Nude Girls. An important part of the festival is the performances by Solms-Delta's very own home-grown bands among all the top talent. Guests can look forward to amateur and professional bands, the sounds of goema, Cape jazz, langarm, vastrap and boeremusiek. Rustic local cuisine is served all day. **WHEN** March 21. **INFO** Visit solms-delta.com

JOHANNESBURG

Artist Proof Studio is collaborating with Newtown tenants and cultural hubs to host the **Open Newtown**, as part of the Newtown Rejuvenation Initiative. A commemorative exhibition will be held to celebrate the legacy of one of Jozi's creative pioneers, Nhlanhla Xaba, who died in a fire at the studio in 2003. The exhibition presents seminal works and unsigned artist's proofs

by Xaba, as well as tribute works and images by former students of the studio. Supported by the department of arts and culture's Mzansi Golden Economy programme, the initiative seeks to expose the public to the depth and range of exciting activities and creativity in Newtown. **WHEN** March 14 to 15. **WHERE** Events will centre around the famous Bassline music venue and the new Newtown Junction shopping mall. Participating organisations, such as the Artist Proof Studio and the Market Photo Lab, will be open to the public to showcase the work they produce and the education opportunities they offer. **INFO** Visit Twitter.com/ArtistProofJHB

A tribute to **André Brink** and his work will honour his legacy through readings of extracts of his books in as many languages as possible. **WHEN** March 13 at 6.30pm. **WHERE** Alliance Française, 17 Lower Park Drive, Parkview. **INFO** Visit ifas.org.za

The **Festival of Fame** is a showcase of music, dance, visual art and drama that features a host of top-quality National School of the Arts productions, including some original works from students. There is also a selection of award-winning professional productions curated by Assitej South Africa. The school's major production is *Fame – the Musical*, about life and its journeys for students at the New York School of the Performing Arts. With its professional directorial team of Mark Hawkins, Janna Ramos-Violante, Nic Michaletos, Wilhelm Disbergen, Akhona Bozo and Charlie van Rooyen, and featuring professionals Jonathon Taylor, Lala Tuku, Helen Desbois and Dean Roberts as the teachers performing alongside the school's rising stars, this production at the Mandela Theatre at the Jo'burg Theatre is not to be missed. Other highlights include *The Donkey Child*, a seminal collaborative work by Lindiwe Matshikiza and the Hillbrow Theatre, *Dance Spec-*

trum, *The Epicene Butcher* and the multinominated and award-winning *The Champion* by Khayaletu Anthony, directed by Khayaletu Mofu. **WHEN** Until March 15. **WHERE** Jo'burg Theatre and various venues at the National School of the Arts. **INFO** Tickets range from R60 for a full-day pass (R60 for school block bookings) and R100 for evening and weekend shows at the Jo'burg Theatre. Visit festivaloffame.co.za for the programme and joburgtheatre.com for bookings.

PRETORIA

The play **Township Funeral** revolves around an "after-tears party". Friends and foes of the deceased, Oupa, a gangster kingpin, meet after his funeral to celebrate his life and death. The big question on everybody's lips is "who really murdered Oupa 'Mdala' Motsheeng? **WHEN** March 19 to 29. **WHERE** Momentum Theatre at the State Theatre. **INFO** Visit statetheatre.co.za

Meditation on war and subterfuge

The cerebral edge of Stephen Hobbs's art is shown in this wide-ranging and thoughtful exhibition

Melvyn Minnaar

'Camouflage" – a delicious word and an inspiring concept, especially for an artist – is both the visual theme and metaphorical construct of Stephen Hobbs's latest tight and thoughtful show.

The word seems somewhat prescient, for Hobbs's art doesn't normally allow effortless entry. A second and third look, as well as contemplation, are required tickets for *Permanent Culture* at David Krut in Cape Town.

Yet, for all his rigid conceptual grounding (isn't his art always mostly about art?), there is surprisingly beautiful stuff to look at, as well as some entertaining, even humorously theatrical, accoutrements.

The range is wide: high-crafted prints in various media, *makarapa*-styled genuine World War I helmets, a coffee-table vitrine of a mini real garden/topographic layout, papier-mâché mannequin heads ("puppets to confuse the enemy"), mirrors, but not smoke (*Pop-up Forest II*). And then a kind of ersatz studio/workshop assemblage of work-in-progress, samples and so forth.

Hobbs has set up a very site-specific installation. It has the pleasing sensitivity and precise execution of a devoted hobbyist.

A cute report penned by Justin Fox, *The Hobbsian Line*, which accompanies the exhibition, is an ode to playing war games and building balsa-wood model planes.

"Site specific" here means history, fiction, research, inventive thinking and, yes, construction. Overall the installation in the long gallery can even be read as a play-play "war room" without disturbing the serious artistic investigation.

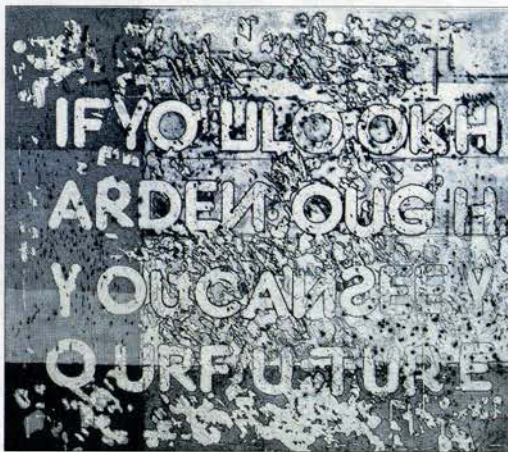
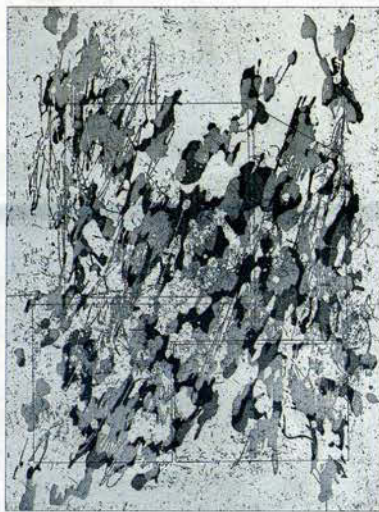
The David Krut gallery – a lovely, unassuming old structure under the tall Newlands trees at Montebello – is, as Hobbs points out, in itself "camouflaged" – both in the literal sense and from the grand, high-profile, high-street, high-art galleries doing business in Cape Town.

Not entirely an "alternative space", it connects actively with and reflects the process of art-making through its print workshop, publishing and exhibition programme.

The Hobbs studio trappings stuck higgledy-piggledy on the walls suggest more than a peep at his inventive practice. It invades the room as "art-making space" without surrendering its showcase job.

The place and aura of Cape history that lingers have led Hobbs to the military link with the camouflage theme – one that he has explored for some time in his urban Johannesburg environment. His preparation led to investigation of the numerous old battlements surrounding Cape Town. And then the ghosts of their history.

Set off by fusing the dapple of daily shadow play from the trees outside the gallery, captured as photographs and manipulated into attractive woodcut prints (*Gap in the Canopy* and *In the Canopy*), he creates a



Hidden meaning: Camouflage is an apt theme for the Stephen Hobbs exhibition *Permanent Culture* that requires careful examination to reveal the full story

Do we make and engage with art to conceal, to expose, to confuse? If mimesis is a permanent construct of culture, if camouflage is fashion, where are truth and reality hiding or to be found? What is the role of the artist?

At this point the irony of the military association, however sentimental, historical, play-play or otherwise, comes vividly into play in Hobbs's installation.

In the famous camouflage scene in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, when the renegade king's opponents attack, masked as trees, the ambivalence of truth and falsehood plays out: "I ... begin/ To doubt the equivocation of the fiend/ That lies like truth;/ 'Fear not, till Birnam wood/ Do come to Dunsinane'; and now a wood/ Comes toward Dunsinane."

Perhaps the idea of camouflage is that we never show the world or one another the authentic anyway. Negotiating camouflage is finding your way through the dabbled dazzle of the forest and not quite knowing where it is going.

Permanent Culture is on at David Krut, Newlands, Cape Town, until April 25

kind of organic camouflage pattern, which is then picked up in a number of other pieces.

Of course, one is ever aware of the deep irony of this "beauty" used in the nature of war and death.

In etchings, this light-hearted leafy scribble becomes camouflage of a different kind as it obscures the actual outlines of an antique Cape Peninsula gun battery.

Blurring the "lines of sight" in another set of etchings, printing the same plate in multiple ways over and

over in *Main* and *Kruger*, camouflage becomes an abstract concept of crisis.

If this is the cerebral edge of Hobbs's art, an attractive visuality proposes other art historical references. After all, weren't the Cubists involved in World War I inventions of hiding guns, soldiers and armaments?

And so Hobbs returns to one of his enduring themes: art about art and environment, as the show's title proposes.