

Press release | For immediate release

Steel, hessian and the structures we learn to live with

Peffers Fine Art presents *Hedonic Adaptation: Structures of Survival and Repair*, a dialogue between Edoardo Villa and Tshepo Sizwe Phokojoe for HEAT 2026.

Cape Town - Peffers Fine Art presents *Hedonic Adaptation: Structures of Survival and Repair*, bringing a focused selection of Edoardo Villa's welded steel sculptures into dialogue with hessian works by contemporary South African artist Tshepo Sizwe Phokojoe.

Opening to the public on Thursday 6 August 2026, the exhibition responds to HEAT Festival's theme, *Ctrl + Z*, which asks what undoing might mean beyond the effortless logic of a keyboard command. In lived history, damage cannot simply be reversed. *Hedonic Adaptation* asks a different question: what happens when people and societies become accustomed to structures that should remain unsettled, and how might art make those structures visible again?

Villa and Phokojoe are separated by generation, biography and medium. Villa's life in South Africa began through the rupture of the Second World War. Wounded and captured in North Africa, he was sent to the Zonderwater prisoner-of-war camp and remained in South Africa after his release in 1947. He went on to develop a powerful sculptural language in cut and welded steel, transforming industrial material through compression, verticality, balance and an enduring concern with the human form.

Phokojoe, born and raised in Soweto, works primarily with hessian and thread. The material enters his practice as both social archive and intimate inheritance – it evokes sacks, transport, migration and improvised shelter, while the manipulation of cloth connects to knowledge first encountered through his mother. His gathered, knotted and fraying forms explore home, displacement, belonging and the repeated labour of making a place to live.

The exhibition does not reduce this encounter to hard versus soft, old versus new, or monument versus shelter. Villa's steel is cut, heated and joined; Phokojoe's cloth bears loads and becomes architectural. A welded seam and a sewn seam both mark a decision about what must hold.

"The histories of the artists are not equivalent," says Ruarc Peffers. "What connects them is the demand they place on material. Each builds a structure capable of carrying pressure, memory and a human presence. The exhibition asks us to look again at what we have learned to accept, and at the forms of attention through which repair might begin."

The public programme includes *Steel, Cloth and the Work of Repair: Edoardo Villa and Tshepo Sizwe Phokojoe* on Saturday 8 August at 11:00. Artist Tshepo Sizwe Phokojoe will be joined by HEAT curator, writer and photographer Nkgopoleng Moloi and Andrew Lamprecht, Curator of Historical Paintings and Sculpture at the Iziko South African National Gallery.

Hedonic Adaptation: Structures of Survival and Repair opens at Peffers Fine Art, First Floor, Radio House, 92 Loop Street, Cape Town, on Thursday 6 August 2026. The exhibition continues to 28 August 2026.

Media and sales enquiries:

Ruarc Peffers, ruarc@peffersart.com, +27 84 444 8004

Gloria Makochieng, gloria@peffersart.com, +27 63 772 0661