



Allen's own work involves recasting media as artscape. And integral to the process is how the exporting of culture and media always involves a similar recasting. Using



stamps and newspapers — at the moment his artistic medium is essentially the collection — his recent work has explored the graphic and cultural footprint that SA makes in America. (Ernie Els is America's number one SA-flavoured news item, with Nelson

Mandela coming in at number two).

With *Cards*, the exhibition currently occupying the mezzanine level of the gallery, he has collected over 2000 military trading cards issued between 1938 and 2001. These trading cards, like baseball cards or bubble gum cards, are distributed and sold through private companies and marketed primarily to boys between the ages of seven and 14. Collectively, they represent a graphic history of war the American way. Like so much of the bric-a-brac of modernity, each card is a tiny art-directed masterpiece. And it's fascinating to see the evolution of modern war, the initial focus on the soldier having given way almost completely to the beautifully engineered industrial machine that drives our wars in the 21st century. It is a wall of death where death itself is not graphically present. And the overwhelming scale of it all forces us to walk away.