

Celebrating SA's icons

Second season of '21 Icons South Africa' launches on SABC3 this weekend

THE second season of *21 Icons South Africa* launches on SABC3 this weekend following the success of its debut season, which had a global audience of 130 million.

Series two reveals more extraordinary stories about South Africa's global icons, including former Constitutional Court judge Albie Sachs.

Pietermaritzburg-based Imtiaz Sooliman, founder of the Gift of the Givers Foundation; Frene Ginwala, a journalist and politician and longest-standing Speaker of the National Assembly; Francois Pienaar, the former Springbok captain who is best known for leading South Africa to victory in the 1995 Rugby World Cup; and Herman Mashaba, veteran South African entrepreneur and founder of hair-care brand Black Like Me, will also be featured.

The aim of the series, which includes narrative portraits and short films by Adrian Steirn, is to capture the essence of South Africans who, through their own ingenuity and extraordinary social contribution, have embraced the transformative power of cohesion and the fostering of dignity to make a sustainable difference in the community.

The idea of celebrating our nation's living icons is important to Steirn, who believes it ensures that their legacy is maximised and not confined to memory and history books.

Sachs sums up the beauty of living in the present in a conversation with Steirn: "It's that intermediate moment, so it's filled with the energy of the past and the possibilities of the future. It's a great time to be in, the present."

Steirn believes that the determined and positive attitude reflected in the icons is the future of South Africa. Evidence of this is displayed in the words of Sooliman, who told him: "We have a great generation of people coming up looking beyond the colour, looking beyond the race, and I think in time this is going to be a great country — it's already a great country; it's just going to get even better."

One of the goals for this season is to stimulate public participation and dialogue in the project, and in so doing, create future icons. And, in the spirit of sharing and storytelling, a new interactive workshop is set to introduce children to the icons who shaped the country's turbulent and colourful past.

The Museum of African Design in the Maboneng precinct, which is currently



Albie Sachs greets photographer and filmmaker Adrian Steirn and his team prior to the portrait shoot as part of the 21 Icons South Africa series.

PHOTO: GARY VAN WYK



Albie Sachs hugs his wife Venessa at their home in Clifton, Cape Town, prior to the portrait shoot for the 21 Icons project.

PHOTO: GARY VAN WYK

hosting a *21 Icons* exhibition, has invited a number of schools to experience the exhibition free of charge.

The portraits from season one will be auctioned off later this year, and all revenue generated will be donated to

charities of each icon's choice.

— Arts Editor.

• The series begins on SABC3 tomorrow (August 3) at 6.57 pm. It will run for 21 weeks.

ALBIE SACHS

"I'm proud of our flag ... It represents the triumph of humanity, the will to find a common basis for living together in one country."

• Viewers and followers of *21 Icons South Africa* will be able to follow the series on Twitter @21icons, view the website at www.21icons.com; or comment on the Facebook page: 21icons.
• arts@witness.co.za

AN INSPIRING ACTIVIST-JUDGE

THE first episode of *21 Icons South Africa* will feature former Constitutional Court judge Albie Sachs.

The film gives an insightful and inspiring glimpse into Sachs's life as an apartheid activist, his role in drafting the Constitution and his views on the South Africa of today.

His portrait, along with 20 other icon portraits, will be sold at a charity auction next year. The funds raised through the sale will be donated to Sachs's nominated charity, The Constitutional Court Trust.

In tomorrow night's film, Sachs describes how he doesn't see the loss of his arm — an injury he sustained when his anti-apartheid activities saw him become a victim of a bomb attack — as a disability. "Losing my arm was part of a journey that brought great happiness to me ... and led to a world where my seven-year-old son won't have to fight the way we had to fight," he says.

Sachs's anti-apartheid activities saw him imprisoned in solitary confinement twice and ultimately exiled, first in London and then Mozambique.

And then, in 1988, came the car bomb that would change his life. In addition to his arm, the bomb took the sight in one eye — and yet, Sachs insists the event "brought back an energy and vitality and rightness"; and that even if he could, he would not return to the way he was.

Nor does he resent the people who tortured him: his philosophy is that living with rage eats you up. "You live with a sense of transcendence, of getting beyond, of transformation and it elevates you, and it makes it possible for you to live with a sense, not of immunity, but with a sense of dignity and pride. We are in the world of looking in the eyes of the other and seeing the possibilities that human beings have, of bringing about real change," Sachs says.