



21 ICONS
SEASON II
SOUTH AFRICA

Adrian Steirn



MEDIA RELEASE

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Johannesburg – 30 July 2014 - 21 ICONS South Africa is launching a second season, following the success of the debut season, which had a global following of 130 million.

Season two reveals more extraordinary stories about SA's global icons, and will continue to honour the legacy of Nelson Mandela, who taught us to keep looking forward and work to improve the world we live in.

21 ICONS is an annual collection of unique narrative portraits and short films by Adrian Steirn, who is one of Africa's pre-eminent photographers and filmmakers. It captures 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.

This season's icons include Albie Sachs who was appointed by Nelson Mandela in 1994 to serve as a judge on the Constitutional Court of South Africa; Imtiaz Sooliman, founder of the Gift of the Givers Foundation; Frene Ginwala, a journalist and politician who was the first female, and longest-standing, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa; 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.

The intention is to inspire ordinary citizens to learn from, and emulate, the lives of these remarkable South Africans.

Steirn comments, "I've met many people whose stories are incredibly powerful – it's a true privilege to discover more about the human spirit and share these individuals personal accounts, their positive character traits and their propensity to influence and shape perceptions and transform societal norms for the better, impacting the communities around them."

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

Launching on Sunday 03 August, **21 ICONS South Africa** series two will debut with Albie Sachs, celebrating one of the nation's iconic individuals in a short film that will be screened on **SABC 3 at 20h27** and it will run for 21 weeks. The first of 21 Portraits will be revealed in the City Press on 3rd August and readers can collect the series starting with the portrait posters of Albie Sachs and Imtiaz Sooliman on Sunday 10 August.

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 Imtiaz Sooliman, as told to Steirn: "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. Through competitions, panel discussions and other activities, **21 ICONS** will relay the message that South Africa has an endless list of icons, and that everyone, regardless of race, creed or socio-economic standing, can act with integrity and make a positive impact and influence changes to our world today.

In the spirit of sharing and storytelling, a new interactive workshop is set to introduce children to the icons who shaped South Africa's turbulent and colourful past. The Museum of African Design (MOAD) in the Maboneng precinct, which is currently hosting a **21 ICONS** exhibition, has invited a number of schools to experience the



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exhibition free of charge. This has enabled the youth to identify the important character traits of these remarkable individuals and debating the difference between being a bystander and being an “up stander”.

The portraits from season one will be auctioned off later this year, and all revenue generated will be donated to charity of each icon’s choice. For Steirn, this tangible aspect of helping to provide financial aid to important causes is an important part of **21 ICONS South Africa’s** quest to give back to the country.

The **21 ICONS** project has gained traction worldwide, with international icons looking to become a part of the project. This development will see **21 ICONS** going global at the end of the year to celebrate some of the social masters around the world.

Season two of **21 ICONS South Africa** is proudly sponsored by Mercedes-Benz South Africa, Momentum Asset Management, Nikon, Deloitte and the department of Arts and Culture.

Says Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) divisional manager for Group Corporate Affairs, Mayur Bhana: “What the world today needs most is a generation of young people who are empowered to make sound moral choices, and above all who are not afraid to stand up for a set of beliefs that will sustain cohesion in our developing society. South Africa has an abundance of stories of ordinary people who have achieved the extraordinary, and have made a positive contribution to the social fabric of our country. Mercedes-Benz South Africa continues to support the **21 ICONS** initiative because we believe that this project exposes our nation to the kind of role models whose example can continue to guide us on our path to greatness. We are very excited about the dialogue that this project has already stimulated and will continue to create in season two.”

Aisha Mohamed, Head of Bouquet – SABC 3, says the series is a coup for the channel to premiere: “It is a great honour for SABC 3 to bring the second season of this wonderful series of **21 ICONS** short films to South Africa. This world-class locally produced series will once again be a weekly highlight on our schedule. We are proud to be the official television partner of the project in South Africa.”

“In a country obsessed with building itself and where we pick at our national sores and all appoint ourselves co-governors, both our 21 Icons and 100 World Class projects are an effort to showcase fine South Africans doing interesting and path-breaking work. They are our breather. The opportunity to sit back, look, aspire and declare ‘What a fine country’ and what fine South Africans,” says Ferial Haffajee, Editor-in-Chief at City Press.

The **21 ICONS** App features additional information about the icons, the project and its creators to provide a fully interactive experience. Download it from iTunes App Store: <http://tinyurl.com/lf3cfzm> or Google Play: <http://tinyurl.com/ovtcy45>

Viewers and followers of **21 ICONS South Africa** will be able to follow it on Twitter: @21icons; view on the website at www.21icons.com; or comment at www.facebook.com/21icons.

The identities of the remaining 16 icons will be revealed on a weekly basis and their press material supplied and updated on the **21 ICONS South Africa** website accordingly. As soon as the short film has premiered on SABC 3, it will also be also distributed internationally through online networks.

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NOTE TO EDITORS

21 ICONS South Africa is an annual collection of photographs and short films of South Africans who have reached the pinnacle of achievement in their fields of endeavour. These men and women have been an inspiration through their extraordinary social contribution. It is not a definitive list and does not denote any ranking.

The short film-series documents the conversations between Steirn as the photographer and filmmaker and the icons. Each short film provides insight into both the subject and photographer’s creative approach to the portrait.





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On behalf of **21 ICONS South Africa**

Issued by: **Grapevine Communications**
Tel : 011 706 9600
Fax: 011 706 9365

Heidi Pretorius
Project Management
heidi@honeybell.co.za
SA Mobile: +27 82 940 3464

