



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ATTENTION: NEWS/ENTERTAINMENT
DATE: 3 DECEMBER 2013

21 Icons portrait of Nelson Mandela breaks records for charity

The 21 Icons South Africa portrait of Nelson Mandela has been bought by a private collector for a record sale price of \$200,000 that will be donated to the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital and WWF.

The portrait, by Adrian Steirn, depicts Nelson Mandela's face reflected in a mirror and was the first of 21 signed portraits of iconic South Africans to be unveiled during the debut season of this three-year project. It was bought by a New York art collector and achieved the highest-ever value for a South African photograph.

"I wanted Madiba to hold a mirror so that we could see a man reflecting on his life. As he reflects on his life, we reflect on his legacy and our future," says 21 Icons creator and photographer Adrian Steirn.

The remaining portraits, including those of Desmond Tutu and F.W. de Klerk, will be auctioned at an event in March 2014, with proceeds donated to the charity of each icon's choice.

Eykyn Maclean, a New York and London-based gallery, facilitated the sale of the Mandela portrait. The anonymous buyer said about the portrait, "I am honored to own what has already become an iconic image of one of the greatest statesmen the world has ever known. In a single frame the photographer has captured the essence of dignity, principle, conviction and courage in this great man from whose life's work and dedication to a greater cause we all have much to learn, and by which I am inspired daily."

And while Eykyn Maclean specialises in Impressionist and 20th century European and American Art, the signed portrait of Nelson Mandela was a rare and

valuable find for the gallery. "Adrian Steirn's medium is photography, his tool a camera, but thanks to his skill as an artist in the centuries-old tradition of portraiture, Steirn preserves for posterity a visual manifestation of the innermost character of his subjects – as exemplified in his spellbinding portrait of Nelson Mandela," says gallery co-owner Christopher Eykyn.

The first season of *21 Icons South Africa* highlights the contribution of men and women who have helped shaped the South African nation on the journey from suppression to democracy. The short films capture the intimate, often poignant conversations between Steirn and the subject as he shoots their portrait. The stories of these South African 'heroes' are published weekly online and in print, and are also televised every Sunday on SABC3 at 18h57, until 15 December 2013.

The record sale of the portrait is providing a significant boost to the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital telethon organised by the SABC Foundation and broadcast live on 5 December on SABC2's Morning Live and SABC3's Espresso. The state-of-the-art hospital, currently under construction in Johannesburg, is scheduled to open late in 2014 and will be a 200-bed facility providing world-class paediatric care to Southern Africa's children, irrespective of their social and economic status.

The construction of a children's hospital has been a lifelong dream of Nelson Mandela and he has tirelessly campaigned for funds for its construction. Swati Dlamini, his granddaughter, who has been closely involved with the 21 Icons project, said the family was thrilled that its sale has raised \$200,000 for the hospital as well as WWF.

Says Swati Dlamini, "To see this beautiful and moving portrait of our father and grandfather raise such significant sums for causes dear to him is heartwarming for our family. And for the project overall to raise crucial funds for so many important South African charities is a fitting tribute to Madiba as well as the other icons."



Adrian Steirn commented: “To document this group of iconic individuals and, through their portraits, to benefit their chosen charities was fundamental to our ambition for this project. It’s our way of giving back to South Africa. I am delighted to support the Children’s Hospital in honour of Nelson Mandela, the inspiration for 21 Icons.”

21 Icons turns the spot light on world-famous activists and politicians like Nelson Mandela, F.W. de Klerk, Desmond Tutu, Sophia Williams De Bruyn, Nadine Gordimer, Kumi Naidoo, artists like William Kentridge, Johnny Clegg and Yvonne Chaka Chaka and Helen Sebidi, and sports heroes such as Gary Player and Evelina Tshabalala.

Public participation is invited on **Twitter: @21icons**;
www.21icons.com and
www.facebook.com/21icons.

For more information about the Eykyn Maclean Gallery please go to www.eykynmaclean.com.

21 Icons South Africa is proudly sponsored by Mercedes-Benz South Africa, Nikon and Deloitte and supported by The Department of Arts & Culture as a nation-building initiative.

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