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21 ICONS SEASON II FEATURING FIRST ICON ALBIE SACHS



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“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.” – Albie Sachs

21 ICONS South Africa will be featuring former **Constitutional Court judge Albie Sachs**, in the first of its second series of **South African portraits and short films** on **Sunday 03 August on SABC 3 at 20h27**. The film gives an insightful and inspiring glimpse into Sachs’ life as an Apartheid activist, his role in drafting the Constitution and his views on the South Africa of today. The preview is available on **YouTube**.

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. The series 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. To watch the 21 ICONS promo video, visit: http://youtu.be/U7_9DBTLq0U

For the portrait, a poster of which will appear in the weekend paper on the same day, Steirn describes the visual elements as a man who had sacrificed, who had lost a part of himself, physically and emotionally, with a view to

seeing a whole South Africa, a democratic South Africa come together. “The portrait was conceptualised to reflect his sacrifice, forgiveness and dedication to upholding justice, as well as his commitment to a democratic South Africa,” comments Steirn.

Albie Sachs’ 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’ nominated charity, The Constitutional Court Trust, celebrating the Court’s role in the transition to democracy.

In the 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 car bomb attack – as a disability. To the contrary in an intimate conversation with Steirn: “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.”



Sachs’ 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 that the event “brought back an energy and vitality and rightness”, and that even if he could, he wouldn’t 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. And you’re not waiting for retaliation, you’re not in the world of hit and hit back. 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.

He brought this spirit to life as one of the authors of the Constitution and a Constitutional Court judge; a role he says “was part of dreams, of our destiny, of our life, of our thinking”.

Although he balks at the idea of iconoclasm, there’s no doubt that he is a global icon for human rights: the recent recipient of Taiwan’s inaugural Tang Prize for rule of law, he also holds the Academy of Achievement Golden Plate Award and the Reconciliation Award. An acclaimed author and two-time recipient of the Alan Paton Award, Sachs is also a patron of the arts, having selected the art for the Constitutional Court.

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.

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](#) or [Google Play](#).

For more information, follow us on [Twitter](#): @21 ICONS, [Pinterest](#) or visit www.21ICONS.com.

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

Former Constitutional Court judge and anti-Apartheid activist, Albie Sachs, talks to filmmaker Adrian Steirn during a portrait sitting about the meaning of fairness and democracy, as well as his role in ensuring these values are enshrined in South Africa.

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