

FW shows a new side in 21 Icons

De Klerk agrees to a pose he says is 'against his nature'

FORMER president FW de Klerk — whose portrait is published today — at first refused to participate in the 21 Icons South Africa project.

"I don't consider myself an icon," he said in his first interview since taking part in the project. "I do not like the glorification of individuals."

De Klerk relented only after photographer Adrian Steirn, the creator of the project, explained the aim of 21 Icons South Africa and told him that former president Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu would also be taking part.

"The three of us . . . we are the only three living recipients of the Nobel peace prize in South Africa," said De Klerk.

He said that the other reason he consented to jump on board was that the project forced the

nation to refocus its attention on the "accord we reached between 1990 and 1996", referring to the end of apartheid and the formation of a democratic state. He hoped the project would remind South Africans to work together again in a peaceful manner.

De Klerk said his idea of a portrait was being photographed behind his desk wearing a suit and tie. But Steirn convinced him to pose barefoot in a yoga lotus position — something that was "against my nature".

Steirn wanted to shoot something that represented what De Klerk had done for South Africa.

"I thought it would be such a great mix of a man alone and a man at peace," Steirn said.

To him, it is a frank portrait of an elderly man not afraid to show his vulnerability.

The photo shoot took place in

the Franschhoek Pass in the Western Cape.

Steirn said the portrait spoke of a man at peace on a number of levels — with what lay behind him and his role in it, and his confidence in the future of South Africa.

In a short film that will be flighted on SABC3 at 6.57 tonight, De Klerk recalls the day in parliament he put South Africa on a new course when he announced the unbanning of the ANC and other political organisations, as well as Mandela's release from prison.

● Find your portrait of De Klerk inside the Sunday Times today. The size of the poster has changed — it is now bigger — and we will republish the Mandela poster in the new size in the next few weeks. Next week we will publish a portrait of Tutu.



A MAN AT PEACE: Adrian Steirn takes a portrait of FW de Klerk sitting in the lotus position for the 21 Icons South Africa project

Gays pedal with pride in Vietnam

HUNDREDS of people will pedal through Hanoi on bicycles this weekend to mark Vietnam's second gay pride parade.

The scale of events across Vietnam reflects wider acceptance of debate on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in several Southeast Asian countries.

Just a few years ago in Vietnam, the only representation of gay people in the media was of petty criminals and prostitutes.

Now, training for journalists and campaigns are challenging those negative stereotypes.

Despite some speculation that Vietnam could become the first country in Southeast Asia to legalise same-sex marriage, it was not included in a recently approved proposal on revisions to the Marriage and Family Law. However, the draft does remove the article banning such unions. — Sapa

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