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## 21 Icons season three to feature Athi-Patra Ruga

1 SEP 2015 13:03

*"Performance art is about looking for the mundane in everyday life, and augmenting it so that people can actually see the art in it."* - Athi-Patra Ruga

On 6 September 2015 on SABC 3 at 7:27pm, the acclaimed short-film series 21 ICONS will feature the first icon of its third season: The National Arts Festival's 2015 Standard Bank Young Artist for Performance Art, 31-year-old [Athi-Patra Ruga](#).



21 ICONS traces South Africa's history over the course of its three seasons, moving from the fight for freedom to the country's growth during democracy, and concluding with a vision of the future. 21 ICONS is a celebration of individuals who inspire multitudes through their impact, integrity and influence.

As a world-class communicator of powerful stories, 21 ICONS uses photography, film and narrative to showcase the pivotal moments of South Africa's

nation-building journey.

Gary van Wyk (34) will step up as principal photographer for the third season. In previous seasons, Van Wyk has been a crucial part of 21 ICONS camera work, visually recording the nuances and intimate moments of each shoot in his distinctive reporting style. Adrian Steirn, who conceived the project, continues his involvement capturing the behind-the-scenes images.

This season has been envisaged as a tribute to the country's future, shedding the spotlight on youth icons all under the age of 35. Their energy and drive has been captured in coloured portraits; a major departure from previous seasons which featured black-and-white fine arts portraits.

Ruga has been selected for 21 ICONS South Africa Season III to honour his art forms that represent a counter proposal to ideas of nationhood and belonging, the artistic process when creating both processions and tapestries as well as his means of communicating his views on integration and acceptance.



During a portrait sitting, Ruga describes his journey as a performance artist, visual explorer and content creator; how he created characters that could challenge people's non-acceptance of differences in relation to structure, ideology and politics.

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MICHAL WRONSKI

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The film gives an insightful and inspiring glimpse into Ruga's life and reveals the power of using performance art to explore and push boundaries between fashion, art, and contemporary art to reach people of all ages and levels of social classes and breakdown their stereotypical views on race, sexuality and gender identity.

For the portrait 'Self Expression', which will appear digitally on the Tuesday after his short-film is released, Van Wyk describes the visual elements, "Ruga stands upright, shirtless, with his hand pressed to his chest. An image from his 'Azania' series is projected directly onto his bare torso, illuminating a look of strength in his face and immersing him in his own art. Highlighting Ruga's utilisation of his own body as one of his primary mediums of expression, the portrait constructs an increased intimacy between the artist and his art."

On the future of South Africa, Ruga comments, "We have a future and it is a bright one! The only challenge we have is ourselves."

**Social media:**

21 Icons engages with the public through:

- Twitter: @21Icons
- Website: <http://www.21icons.com>
- Mobisite: [www.21icons.com](http://www.21icons.com)
- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/21icons>
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