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"When you walk a journey there are always people around you, and embracing that sense of community is how you get far." - Thato Kgatlhanye.



On 18 October on SABC 3 at 7:27pm, the acclaimed short-film series 21 ICONS will feature the seventh icon of its third season: social entrepreneur Thato Kgatlhanye who co-founded Rethaka Trading and the innovative initiative

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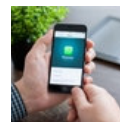
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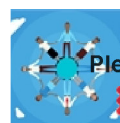
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The 22-year-old who hails from the small town of Mogwase, just outside of Rustenburg, had big dreams from a young age. She attributes her nature to serve others to her mother, who is a healthcare worker, and her entrepreneurial spirit to her father, who runs a successful taxi business.

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.

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.

Kgatlhanye has been selected for 21 ICONS South Africa Season 3 as an inspiring social entrepreneur and humanitarian who stands as an example of how with tenacity and determination anyone can overcome great odds and find solutions to address South Africa's social issues.

She says, "As much as it feels like I'm walking a tightrope every day, I'd rather that than be the person that's looking up at the person walking the tightrope."

Through the establishment of the non-profit organisation, Repurpose Schoolbags, she has made a



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sustainable contribution to the environment by using reinforced plastic shopping bags to create recycled school bags for disadvantaged learners thereby empowering multitudes of lesser-resourced learners across South Africa.

This a collaborative project with society at large, as her organisation partners with private schools who acknowledge the need to go green and collect plastic bags on their behalf and people who go to land fill sites and collect plastic from waste.

Aimed at children in rural communities, the bags serve to waterproof their books during the rainy seasons. The bags are fitted with retro-reflective material that improves the bag's visibility ensuring child-safety.

It also features a solar power point that enables schoolchildren living in households with limited access to electricity to use the bags as an energy source to read, study and do their homework, thereby eliminating the danger of shack fires caused by paraffin lamps.

For the portrait '*Entrepreneur*' which will appear digitally on the Monday after her short-film is released, photographer Gary van Wyk describes the visual elements, "Along the branches of a large, old tree located in Cape Town's Klein Constantia, multiple solar powered lights in glass jars are hung. Kgathanye stands strong at the foot of the tree, one of her innovative

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schoolbags in hand. The portrait is a literal representation of her work with Repurpose Schoolbags while also referencing her illumination of pressing social issues facing the rural child."

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21 Icons engages with the public through:

- Twitter: [@21icons](#)
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