

[21 Icons Season 3] Thulani Madondo

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"I want the world to know that South Africa is the Promised Land because it is so rich in its diversity. The spirit of 'Ubuntu' really exists... We shouldn't doubt and underestimate ourselves while overestimating other people. That's the worst mistake we (can) make." - Thulani Madondo.

Madondo has been selected for 21 ICONS South Africa Season 3 to demonstrate active citizenry is characteristic of true heroes. He uses his own life story to inspire individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to follow in his footsteps by highlighting the potential and possibility of what can be achieved when an individual focuses their attention on furthering their education. Madondo's selfless efforts to provide social outreach and upliftment for his community have earned him several humanitarian accolades. He also stands as an example of how tenacity and determination can overcome great odds.

Madondo is a social entrepreneur and humanitarian who founded the Kliptown Youth Programme in 2007, a non-profit organisation that provides extracurricular support to less fortunate children from the Kliptown community. The Kliptown Project Gumbboot dancers, part of the KYP's Performing Arts and Culture initiative, have travelled globally to perform the distinct South African art form.

KYP's mission is to provide opportunities that will enable young people to rise out of poverty. It seeks to develop young and dynamic individuals who are willing to contribute effectively for the betterment of the greater community. Through tutoring, athletic, and arts programmes, KYP provides a life to the children of Kliptown that is not defined by survival, but by the ability to be active community members, to have dreams, and to have hope about the future.

About the portrait

Taken by Season 3 photographer Gary van Wyk, the portrait titled '*Africa Rising*'? Madondo is photographed in Mandela Park, a township in Cape Town's Hout Bay. Wearing the gumboots that he uses to teach local Kliptown kids traditional gumbboot dancing, he is pictured leaping above the roof of a shack.

Emphasising his humble beginnings, the portrait imagines him literally rising above his circumstances - a feat he believes is possible for anyone through education.

View the video

About 21 Icons Season 3

The short film-series documents the conversations between Gary Van Wyk as the photographer and filmmaker and the icons. Each short film provides insight into both the subject and photographer's creative approach to the portrait.

Behind each portrait lies a carefully planned concept that captures not only the essence of each icon visually, but also in spirit and in terms of their unique legacy.

Season three of 21 ICONS South Africa is proudly sponsored by Mercedes-Benz South Africa.

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