

## 21 Icons Season III to Focus on Young South Africans with Gary van Wyk Behind the Camera

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by Libby on Sep 30th, 2015

A young South African photographer has taken over the reigns from [21 Icons](#) photographer Adrian Steirn, bringing a new perspective to the highly acclaimed documentary photography project.

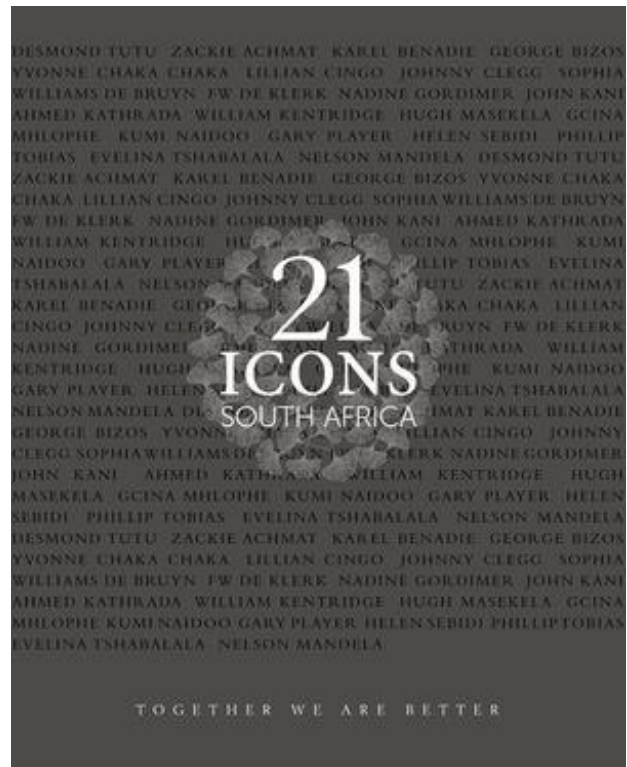


*21 Icons* is an intriguing visual journey celebrating the lives, achievements and essential goodness of some of South Africa's greatest citizens, including heroes like Nelson Mandela (the inspiration for the project), [Desmond Tutu](#), [Gcina Mhlope](#), [Nadine Gordimer](#) and [Pieter-Dirk Uys](#). It combines fine-art portraits, short films, written narratives and a feature length documentary.

Season one chronicled "A Journey to Freedom" and season two looked at "The Promise of Freedom" – both shot in black and white. Season three will focus on "The Future of a Nation" with Gary van Wyk stepping out from behind the scenes to become the main *21 Icons* photographer with Steirn stepping in as behind-the-scenes photographer. This new season will be done in colour, focussing on the younger generation of South Africans.

"We've got a young South African shooting the best of young South Africa – there is something very, very beautiful about that," Steirn says in the short film shot to introduce Van Wyk to fans of the *21 Icons* project.

Read Van Wyk's short biography and watch the showreel on him to see what you can expect from this exciting new season of *21 Icons*:



*Gary Van Wyk is a South African photographer whose passion for exploration and ability to connect with people have seen him document some of the most notable individuals and moments of his country's young democracy.*

*Van Wyk's journey as a photographer began during an internship at Independent Newspapers in 2003. Still a student at the time, he was quickly hired and started to work as a full-time photographer for the news group. Since then, working both for various media houses and in his own capacity, Van Wyk's images have gone on to appear in numerous local and international publications. He has gained access to some of the 21st century's most significant people, travelling across the globe while on assignment. Nelson Mandela, Oprah Winfrey and Desmond Tutu are among Van Wyk's most notable subjects, and he has worked in locations as remote and diverse as Nepal, New York, the Amazon rainforest and the mountains of the Caucasus.*

*In recent years Van Wyk has been a crucial part of 21 Icons Seasons I and II, capturing the nuances and intimate moments of each shoot for in his distinctive reportage style. In Season III, Van Wyk takes over from Adrian Steirn as the principal portrait photographer for the season, making a departure from the black-and-white photographs that defined past seasons by choosing to shoot each portrait in colour. The move is a photographic tribute to the energy and vision that drives the icons of Season III, South Africa's next generation of leaders and influencers.*

*Van Wyk is based in Cape Town, where he works at Ginkgo Agency.*

- [More: 21 Icons](#)



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So far visual artist Athi-Patra Ruga, activist Jes Foord, community leader Thulani Madondo and Africa's top wheelchair tennis player Lucas Sithole have been featured. The other 17 young icons will be revealed every week up to 14 February 2016 when the last round will be published online.

Visit the [21 Icons](#) website to see their profiles, short films and stunning photographs:

Read *MyJoburg*'s report on season three and their interview with both photographers:

*While this generation does not have a foot in the past, only a respect for it, each of these icons has already started a compelling journey to make good on those opportunities afforded by their forefathers. Often, they have been motivated by the pursuit of a personal goal, but their struggle to achieve their objectives has impacted positively on those around them. In overcoming their personal challenges, these people have proved themselves to be selfless individuals who act for the benefit and greater good of others – true icons.*

- [Complete article: MyJoburg](#)

#### Book details

- *21 Icons* by Adrian Steirn, Harriet Pratten  
[Book homepage](#)  
EAN: 9780992216900  
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