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Local News

21 Icons works with Ashley Uys

JOHANNESBURG– The 10th icon to feature in 21 Icons South Africa Season III, The Future of a Nation is biotechnologist and entrepreneur Ashley Uys.

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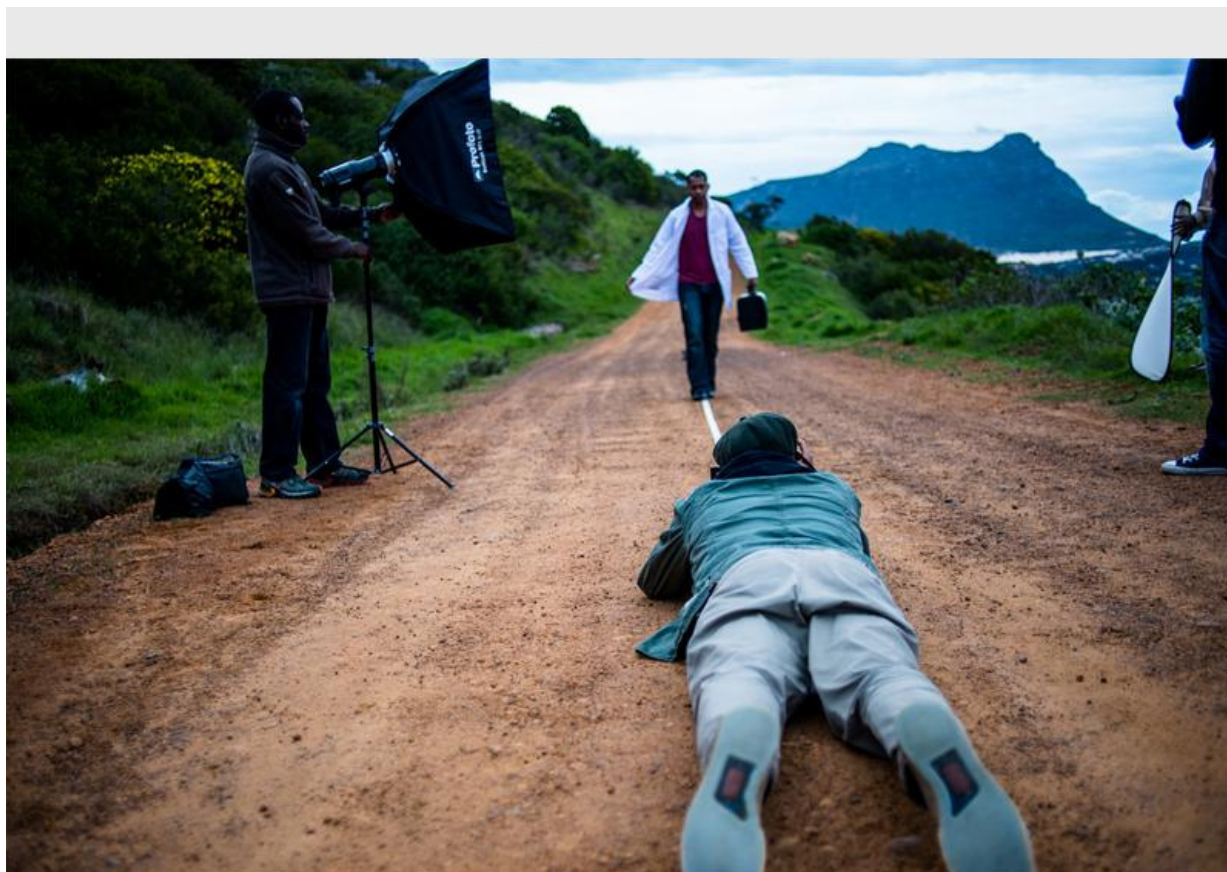


Photo: Andy Ellis **HARD AT WORK:** Gary Van Wyk photographs Ashley Uys in Cape Town as part of Adrian Steirn's 21 Icons South Africa Project.

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The 33-year-old came from humble beginnings in Belhar, Cape Town, but always dreamed of becoming a scientist. Uys was selected to be part of 21 Icons because he has developed medical products that can detect life-threatening diseases and reduce high-risk fatalities through accurate and timeous diagnosis.

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His development of a self-testing malaria kit has led to global recognition, as the tests' reliability and affordability present a more promising health future for people in low-income areas.

Uys is also the managing director of Medical Diagnostech and OculusID. During his portrait sitting he told photographer, Gary Van Wyk, that it was while he was growing up in Belhar that he first noticed how kids were no longer participating in recreational activities and 'wheeling and dealing' on the streets. "Kids were doing less sport and hanging around at the corner. You could see they were up to no good. That transition [active to apathetic] encouraged me to look at inventions and things that could impact socially in our community," he said.

He explained in a conversation with Van Wyk how he used that window of opportunity to transform his ideas into problem-solving innovations that can make a positive impact in areas such as the Cape Flats where alcohol and drug abuse is on the rise. "Our products benefit communities in terms of accessibility, availability and cost. They are there for everybody," he said.

His portrait is titled, Knowing and not Knowing. Van Wyk explained the inspiration behind it, "Uys is photographed walking along a dirt road in Hout Bay, traversing a straight white line – representing the visible linear result that appears on the tests themselves. The portrait imagines Uys walking the line between information and unawareness, fear and courage, and speaks to a generation of Africans for whom knowledge brings empowerment."

Check out Ashley Uys short film preview:



Uys' short film and his portrait will be aired on SABC 3 on Mondays at 5.30pm.

Details: www.21icons.com

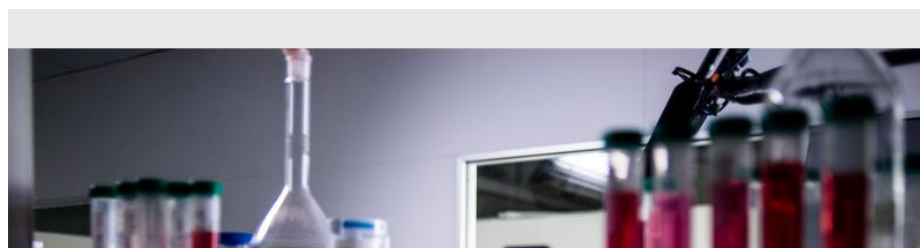




Photo: Andy El's LAUGH ABOUT IT: A light moment during the interview with Ashley Uys. This picture was shot in Cape Town as part of Adrian Steirn's 21 Icons South Africa Project.

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