

Local news

21 Icons reveals its 18th icon

JOHANNESBURG – The incredible short film and portrait series, 21 lcons South Africa Season III, The Future of a Nation, will showcase Kopano Matlwa Mabaso, a South African medical doctor pursuing a PhD in Public Health at the University of Oxford.

about 1 hour ago

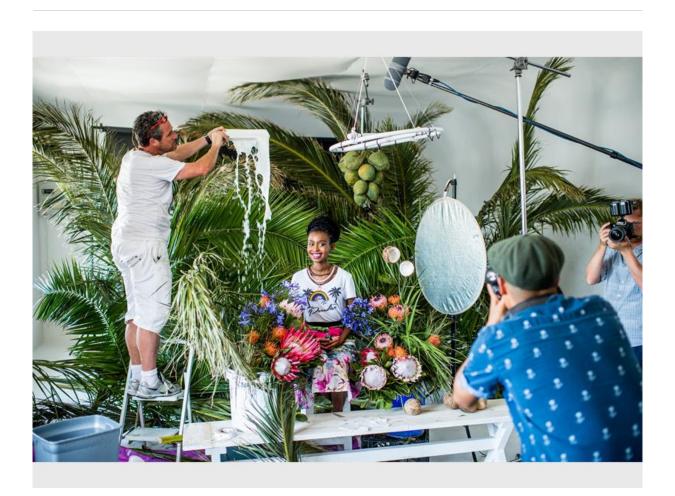


Photo: Andy Ellis SETTING UP: Garrin Bowden sets up as Gary Van Wyk photographs Kopano Matlwa Mabaso at Platinum Studios in Cape Town for 21 Icons South Africa.

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"My discomfort provoked me to write. Growing up in post-apartheid South Africa as a black, young South African, I was grappling with my sense of identity in a very complicated country. So I wrote about this discomfort," said Matlwa Mabaso.

She was chosen to appear in 21 lcons as a voice for the next generation of South Africans who are dealing with issues such as race, poverty and gender as well as coming to grips with their sense of identity. Mabaso has also been acknowledged for her role in making healthcare more equally accessible and for establishing educational support programmes.

Mabaso is a University of Cape Town (UCT) and Rhodes scholar and holds an MBChB from UCT and an MSc in Global Health Science from the University of Oxford. She also co-founded Waiting Room Education by Medical Students, a health promotion organisation educating patients and their families on common health conditions in the waiting rooms of mobile clinics.



"I could never choose between medicine and writing. Anton Chekhov said, 'Medicine is my wife, and writing my mistress', and that makes complete sense to me. I love them both." Born in Pretoria, Mabaso was only nine years old when South Africa birthed its democracy in 1994. Her debut novel, Coconut, was published in 2006 and explains her experience growing up as a young black girl in the new South Africa and the complexities associated with finding a sense of belonging.

"Coconut began when I was in high school, trying to figure out my own identity, and often what was considered to be good was everything white, and the challenge of finding a place and meaning as a black young South African."

Her portrait, captured by principal photographer for the project, Gary Van Wyk, is titled Imagined Reality.

"Using various props, a colourful 'wonderland' is constructed which echoes Mabaso's love for discovering characters, health solutions and deconstructing embedded cultural ideas, such as 'coconut' and 'the rainbow nation'. Seated among multiple palm tree leaves wearing a rainbow charm necklace – a severed coconut to her left and milk spilling to her right – she is imagined as the conjurer of a fantasy world which breaks boundaries through creativity," Van Wyk explained.

Mabaso's short film will be aired on SABC 3 at 7.27pm and will be repeated the next day at 5.57pm on the same channel.

Details: @21lcons; www.21lcons.com

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