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21 ICONS CONTINUES TO CELEBRATE THE EMBODIMENT OF NELSON MANDELA

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What started as an attempt to capture Nelson Mandela's portrait, 21 Icons has become so much. Now in its third season, the velocity from global interest shows no sign of it slowing down.

21 Icons is now a visual celebration of the people who have continued Nelson Mandela's legacy by shaping their worlds, situation and those of others for the better. The project showcases these inspirational South African's achievements through photographic portraits and films in order to gain as genuinely intimate perspective on these spectacular people as possible.



In season 3 photographer [Gary van Wyk](#) captures the icons portrait which is then auctioned off for charity their choosing – Nelson Mandela's portrait alone raised 2 million for the Nelson Mandela Childrens Hospital and WWF South Africa.

Having grown the project from a living room to an international masterpiece, 21 icons is a celebration of the spirit of ubuntu.

21 Icons Season 3 – Episode 1: Athi Patra Ruga

Season three kicked off showcasing internationally acclaimed visual artist Athi Patra Ruga.



"I use colour to disarm people."

Ruga's colourful 'Azania' series explores a world without apartheid, colonisation or cultural identity, only unity exists. In this series Athi encourages an equal discourse of positivity, reconstructing themes of the past for a younger generation to consume.



"I want to create art that is accessible...I don't want my art to separate anyone."

His work utilises fashion design as well as performance and contemporary art in an attempt to subvert current ideologies and political standings creating a positive culture not based on biology, geography or ancestry – A hybrid concept of interlinking body, art, intelligence, sensuality, pop culture and craft together.

Check out the behind the scenes clip of his feature below.



Experience more Icons

21 Icons behind the scenes is on SABC every Sunday from 6 September at 19:27. Alternatively follow their movements on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Also check more from Athi Ruga [here](#)

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Jordan Coetsee

Jordan is a Johannesburg based student currently studying at Wits. In his free time he loves to dabble in music, socialize and screenprint.

"Life isn't about finding yourself, its about creating yourself"

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