



21 ICONS SEASON THREE (THE FUTURE OF A NATION) FEATURES LUCAS SITHOLE

Lucas Sithole – *“We all have our dreams. We all have our choices. But it’s up to us if we wake up and chase our dreams or stick with our choices.”*

On 27 September 2015 on SABC 3 at 19h27, the acclaimed short-film series 21 ICONS will feature the fourth icon of its third season: Paralympian wheelchair tennis player and South Africa's top quadriplegic wheelchair tennis champion, Lucas Sithole.

21 ICONS traces South Africa’s history over the course of its three seasons, moving from the fight for freedom to the country’s growth during democracy, and concluding with a vision of the future. 21 ICONS is a celebration of individuals who inspire multitudes through their impact, integrity and influence.

As a world-class communicator of powerful stories, 21 ICONS uses photography, film and narrative to showcase the pivotal moments of South Africa’s nation-building journey. To watch the 21 ICONS promo video, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HqT7RjG-Bg>

Gary van Wyk (34) will step up as principal photographer for the third season. In previous seasons, Van Wyk has been a crucial part of 21 ICONS camera work, visually recording the nuances and intimate moments of each shoot in his distinctive reporting style. Adrian Steirn, who conceived the project, continues his involvement capturing the behind-the-scenes images.

This season has been envisaged as a tribute to the country’s future, shedding the spotlight on youth icons all under the age of 35. Their energy and drive has been captured in coloured portraits; a major departure from previous seasons which featured black-and-white fine arts portraits

Sithole has been selected for 21 ICONS South Africa Season III to showcase that people can make the best of their situation if they are able to surpass adversity and strive to be the best version of themselves. Sithole is one of the faces of the Wheelchair Tennis South Africa organisation and optimistic about his role in society. He believes that by focusing on an end goal we can all have an impact on others and the world we live in. He is actively involved in promoting tennis to disabled people and advocating diversity in the sport and fights against stereotyping and intolerance of people with disabilities.

“I think if I wasn’t disabled, and if God didn’t give me this chair I wouldn’t be a motivator to the youth and to other kids living with disability...I give them hope that there is a life in a wheelchair,” he says.

During a portrait sitting, Sithole tells Van Wyk how his life abruptly changed at age 12 when he was hit by a train in Dunhouser, KwaZulu-Natal. He lost both his legs and most of his right arm in the accident. However, this did not stop him from reaching for dreams and setting big goals. Despite being a triple amputee he set out to strive for greatness and has reached his goals. The preview is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z90oRPoh6H8>

The film gives an insightful and inspiring glimpse into South Africa’s most successful and accomplished wheelchair tennis player. Sithole achieved in ten years what most athletes spend a lifetime working toward – becoming one of the top disabled athletes in the world and the first African to win a Grand Slam title.

For the portrait ‘*Against the Odds*’, which will appear digitally on the Tuesday after his short-film is released, Van Wyk describes the visual elements, “Sithole is photographed on a tennis court, racquet in hand, seated in the chair that he has collected his numerous titles in. With his fierce stare to camera and his racquet poised for battle, the lines of the tennis court converge to form V’s for ‘Victory’ at different angles, representing Sithole’s personal and professional battle to become the best at what he does.”

On the future of South Africa, he comments, “Everything is possible as long as you put your mind to it and you are ready to work hard for it.”





PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

Lucas Sithole, the former soccer-playing boy from a small mining town in KwaZulu-Natal, tells photographer Gary Van Wyk about his journey to becoming Africa's top wheelchair tennis player, and why he won't quit until he is number one.

ABOUT 21 ICONS SEASON III

By making accessible the personal stories of individuals whose work has inspired the lives of many, the purpose is to show the way forward for a new generation to aspire to be socially conscious and active citizens. These young men and women have been an inspiration through their extraordinary social contribution. It is not a definitive list and does not denote any ranking.

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.

The narrative storyboard incorporates the icons' descriptions of the people and social advances that have created opportunities for them. By sharing their personal stories and what they have done with their freedom, the short-films communicate these stories to inspire the next generation to follow in their footsteps and move forward collectively as a new democracy.

Following the broadcast on Sunday evenings, the icons' portraits, taken by Van Wyk, will be published online and on digital platforms immediately available for individuals to engage and interact with these 21 remarkable new South African icons.

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Season three debuts on Sunday 6 September 2015 and broadcasts for a further 20 weeks, with a short film screened every Sunday on SABC 3 at 19h27.

This is an exciting opportunity for South Africans to engage with, and among, themselves to drive nation building and cohesion in a way that redefines the South African identity.

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

Social Media:

Twitter: [@21Icons](https://twitter.com/21Icons)

Hash-tag:

Instagram: [@21icons](https://www.instagram.com/21icons)

Website: <http://www.21Icons.com>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/21Icons>

Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/21ICONS/>

Social Media handles for Lucas Sithole:

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Lucas986Lucas>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/lucassithole/>



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