

21 Icons Season 3 Features Thulani Madondo

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– by Mytvnews Team

Thulani Madondo ?

“People need to be reminded that they are powerful and they can still achieve whatever they want to achieve, because at the end of the day you are what you think you are.”



On 20 September 2015 on SABC 3 at 19h27, the acclaimed short-film series 21 ICONS will feature the third icon of its third season: co-founder and current executive director of the Kliptown Youth Program (KYP), Thulani Madondo.

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

Madondo has been selected for 21 ICONS South Africa Season III to demonstrate active citizenry is characteristic of true heroes. He uses his own life story to inspire individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to follow in his footsteps by highlighting the potential and possibility of what can be achieved when an individual focuses their attention on furthering their education. Madondo’s selfless efforts to provide social outreach and upliftment for his community have earned him several humanitarian accolades. He stands as an example of how tenacity and determination can overcome great odds.

During a portrait sitting, Madondo tells Van Wyk how he stayed in a one-room corrugated shack in Kliptown, an informal settlement in Soweto with a population of 45 000, where he shared the space with seven siblings and his mother without electricity or running water, so he understands the challenges facing the youth in this area. He recognised from a young age that in order to break the poverty cycle he needed to do whatever he could to put himself through school financially, and so he washed cars and traded with spaza shop owners by sourcing products in bulk for re-sale.

The film gives an insightful and inspiring glimpse into Madondo’s life, his work as social entrepreneur, humanitarian and education activist who provides extracurricular support to less fortunate children from the Kliptown community. One of the programmes on offer is the performance of gumboot dancing to a global audience.

For the portrait ‘Africa Rising’, which will appear on the same day that his short-film is released, Van Wyk describes the visual elements, “Madondo is photographed in Mandela Park, a township in Cape

Town's Hout Bay. Wearing the gumboots that he uses to teach local Kliptown kids traditional gumboot dancing, he is pictured leaping above the roof of a shack. Emphasising his humble beginnings, the portrait imagines him literally rising above his circumstances – a feat he believes is possible for anyone through education.”

On the future of South Africa, he comments, “I want the world to know that South Africa is the Promised Land because it is so rich in its diversity. The spirit of ‘Ubuntu’ really exists. We shouldn’t doubt and underestimate ourselves while overestimating other people. That’s the worst mistake we (can) make.”