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WATCH: The art of self expression

JOHANNESBURG – The famous 21 Icons has officially kicked off by releasing its first, highly-anticipated short film interview and portrait of visual artist Athi-Patra Ruga ... and it shouldn't be missed.

September 11, 2015



Photo: Adrian Steirn WORK IN PROGRESS: Athi-Patra Ruga is photographed in his studio in Cape Town as part of the 21 Icons South Africa Project.

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The portraits, which were shot in black and white for the first two seasons are, this time, all in glorious, vivid colour in the spectacular third season of **21 Icons**.

Athi-Patra Ruga's portrait labelled, Self Expression, is the picture of vulnerability and soul. When speaking at the launch of the third season of 21 Icons, Ruga said, "I feel like today, in

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order to have some catharsis and move forward as a people, we have to be vulnerable, to question what we're not ready to answer and to question what we are not ready to face."

Ruga was selected to be a part of 21 Icons South Africa Season III, to honour his art forms that represent a counter proposal to ideas of nationhood and belonging, as well as the artistic process when creating both processions and tapestries. The portrait and short film were shot in his studio in Woodstock.

In the portrait, Ruga stands naked from the waist up with a flood of colour washing across his bare chest, his hand resting on his chest. The picture itself is simple, yet gorgeous thanks to all its colour and the look of utter peace on Ruga's face.

Principal photographer for 21 Icons season three, Gary van Wyk said, "An image from his [Ruga's] Azania series is projected directly onto his bare torso, illuminating a look of strength in his face and immersing him in his own art. Highlighting Ruga's utilisation of his own body as one of his primary mediums of expression, the portrait constructs an increased intimacy between the artist and his art."

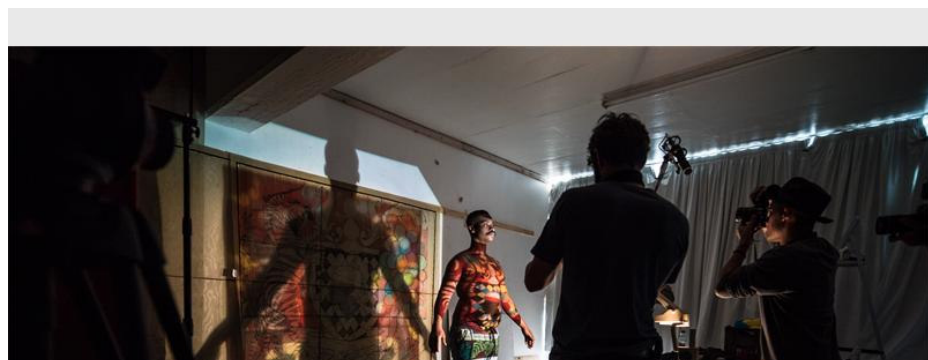
The short film that was screened alongside the release of this first portrait on 6 September gives the viewer an insightful glimpse into Ruga's life and reveals what power performance art has. It pushed boundaries between fashion, performance, and contemporary art, reaching people of all colours and levels of social classes and breaking down stereotypical views on race, sexuality and gender identity.

[Check out Athi-Patra Ruga's video here:](#)

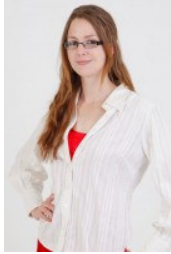


21 Icons will release a short film every Sunday at 7.30pm on SABC 3.

Details: www.21icons.com



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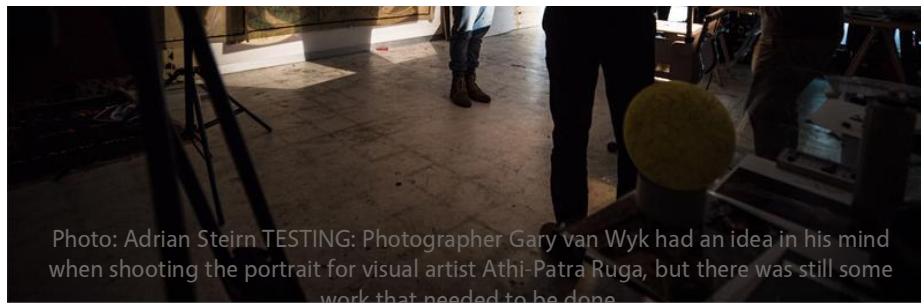


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