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Ludwick Marishane on 21 ICONS

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"Success is the ability to pursue your own challenge, to focus only on that challenge."



On 25 October 2015 on SABC 3 at 19h27, the acclaimed short-film series 21 ICONS will feature the eighth icon of its third season: Award-winning social student entrepreneur Ludwick Marishane. He is the founder and managing director of Headboy Industries Inc., after having invented DryBath® at the age of 17. He holds a Bachelor of Business Science, majoring in Finance and Accounting at the University of Cape Town.



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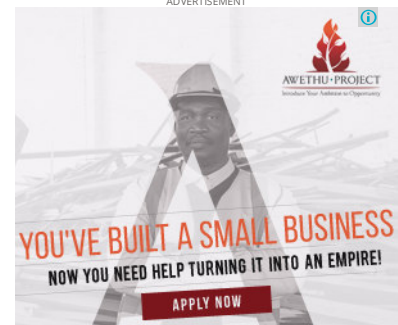
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The 25-year-old from Limpopo, was rated as the best student entrepreneur in the world by the Global Champion of the Global Student Entrepreneurs Awards 2011. That same year, Google named him one of the 12 brightest young minds in the world and TIME Magazine dubbed him one of the “Top 30 under 30 people that are changing the world” in 2013.

21 ICONS tracks South Africa’s story 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.

Young South African talent Gary van Wyk (34) has stepped 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 as one of the photographers 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.

Marishane has been selected for 21 ICONS South Africa Season III for his pursuit of a sustainable society through the development of the DryBath® Gel product, the world’s first bath-substituting lotion that saves 80 litres of water every application becoming more relevant with global water scarcity, and his role in creating a mindful contribution to youth development.

The innovative no-water cleansing gel is antibacterial and biodegradable. For rural residents in South Africa, where clean water is hard to come by, this has made a world of difference.

DryBath® is an affordable solution to achieve personal hygiene without having to be dependent on stagnant community water infrastructure development and the tedious process of boiling water and bathing over a bucket with copious amounts of soap.

It all started one day while sunbathing during his Grade 11 year in high school. One of his friend’s quipped that he was too lazy to bathe and pondered why someone had not come up with an idea to invent something that one can apply to the skin that would eliminate the need to bathe. And Marishane thought, “Why not?”

Within six months, the teenager had devised the formula for the gel and in less than a year, he had written up a 40-page business plan, applied for a patent and launched his start-up, called Headboy Industries.

Marishane sees himself as a visionary and would like Africa to be the first to benefit from his skills. DryBath® was made to cater to poverty-stricken areas in Africa and Asia where clean water is scarce and to prevent illness and death from easily treatable diseases like trachoma, diarrhoea, etc. Earlier this year the United Nations acquired the product for humanitarian aid and relief in destitute and disaster areas.

He says, “We used the bucket bathing method when we were growing up so you boil water with a kettle, you put it in a small bowl, you wash yourself, and if you grew up in the black community, you grew up where they teach us to use a lot of soap. The more soap you use, the cleaner you are and it’s only recently that we figured out why that logic was so tough and it’s because of how soap acts. Soap is a surfactant on your skin so if you’ve got oils on your skin, natural oils on your skin, soap will remove those oils.”

As an only child and his father’s economic freedom, he was fortunate enough to attend a good school in Johannesburg, and his dad pushed him to go for greatness and to achieve more and be more.

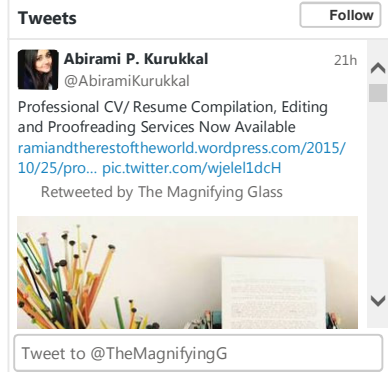
Marishane reflects that by Grade 4 he was the top student and racked up As for all his subjects and his dad said to him, “I’ve shown you what hard work can do if you put your mind to it. Now it’s going to be your choice. I’m not going to hold you accountable to it anymore,” and I think by that time the bug bit and I realised that if you actually grapple with the challenge, you can actually get good at it.”

He philosophises that the youth needs to figure out a problem and if they care enough, obsess about it and pursue and figure out how to solve it.

At the same time, his mother, who lived on the financial fringe of society, provided him with the emotional intelligence to seek out ways to improve the poor communities where he grew up.



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During a portrait sitting, Marishane tells Van Wyk how his dad ignited his entrepreneurial passion and that combined with a love of science allowed him to indulge his curiosity. He came up with many inventions for different opportunities that he encountered. In Grade 9, he formulated his own biodiesel fuel, invented a 'healthy' cigarette and in Grade 10, Ludwick authored a mobile dictionary and attempted to publish a nationwide security magazine.

The film gives an insightful and inspiring glimpse of his belief that the most important skill that the school system can teach kids is the ability to empower themselves through learning and educating themselves. He says, "It's possible. The potential is there. We need to teach kids the value of the information they can access. The tools are there, we can't say they're not. It's the mind-set and the skill-set necessary to use these tools that's most important."

For the portrait 'The Solution' which will appear digitally on the Monday after his short-film is released, Van Wyk describes the visual elements, "Taking inspiration from the name of his invention, DryBath, Marishane is photographed seated in an empty bathtub. Located in a kraal in Crossroads in Cape Town, with cows surrounding the tub, the portrait references not only his inspired innovation but his humble beginnings in rural Limpopo."

On the future of South Africa, Marishane comments, "We're one of the most economically unequal countries in the world and the challenge of fixing that problem is what gets me excited about South Africa."

Van Wyk concludes by asking the audience to share their stories on social platforms and answering the question: "What do you stand for?"

Followers are encouraged to share their personal triumphs or to nominate a member from the community who is making a profound difference.

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