

Film series honours Madiba by celebrating icons of today

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Athi-Patra Ruga- 2015 SBYAA for Performance Art.

Image by: Adam McConnachie

Twenty-one young South Africans are proving that to be an icon no longer requires spending 27 years in prison.

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Changing the myth that significant accomplishment requires Nelson Mandela-like gravitas are 21 young people featured in the short-film series 21 ICONS - as part of the project's third season.

The previous two seasons, inspired by Nelson Mandela, featured stalwarts like George Bizos, Nadine Gordimer, Desmond Tutu, Albie Sachs, Hugh Masekela and Sophie Williams de Bruyn.

The series uses photography, film and narrative to showcase South Africa's nation-building journey.

The third season is not about diminishing the legacy of the past or the role that anti-apartheid activists

played, but about looking towards the hope that the future offers and the role that young people are playing.

While the previous seasons were captured in black and white, this season will be in colour and will shed light on extraordinary individuals under the age of 35.

Among those to be featured are performing artist Athi-Patra Ruga, wheelchair tennis player Lucas Sithole, rape activist Jes Foord and Thulani Madondo - co-founder of the Kliptown Youth Programme.

Foord, gang-raped in 2008, has since founded an organisation to change rape victims into rape survivors. One of her initiatives, the Cinderella Project, provides underprivileged girls with matric dance dresses.

Madondo, 33, described his involvement in community projects as "humbling". Not only does he provide pupils with breakfast before school, but his organisation also feeds them after school and helps them with homework and computer literacy.

"It's about being morally accountable. I may not be making a lot of money but I'll know that I made a difference.

"Not everything needs money - it should be about passion," he said.

Behind-the-scenes footage will air on SABC3 over the next couple of weeks.

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