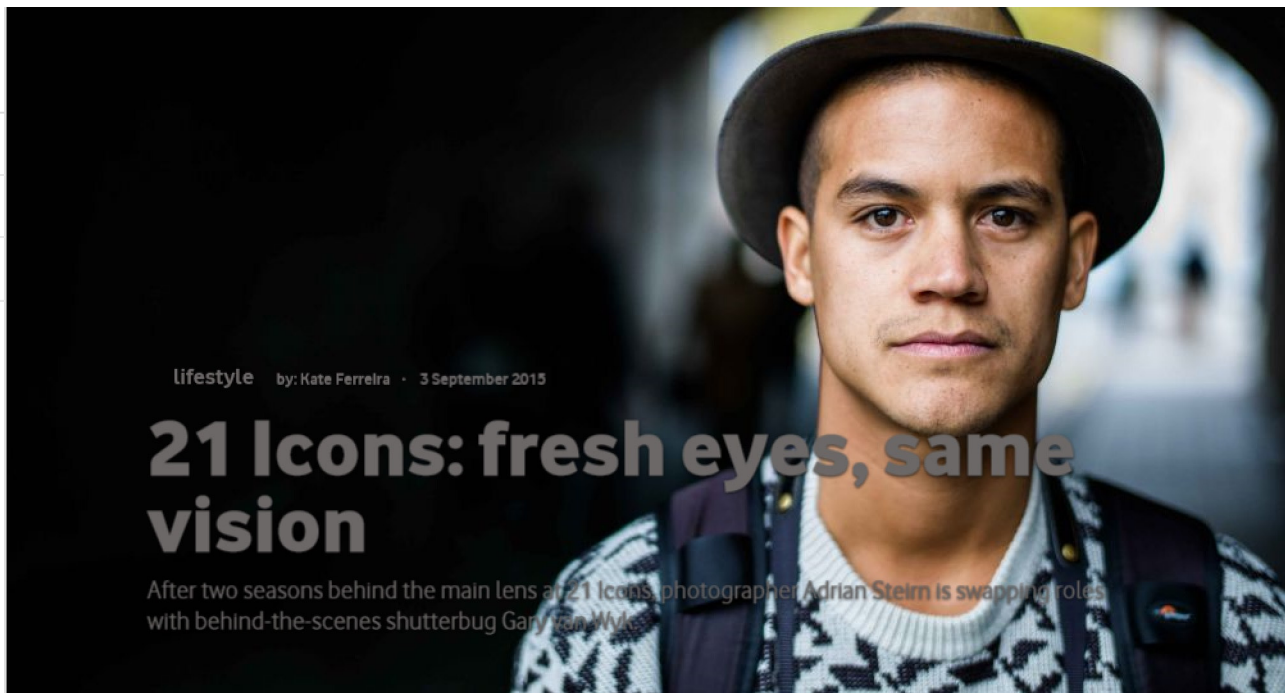


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lifestyle by: Kate Ferreira · 3 September 2015

21 Icons: fresh eyes, same vision

After two seasons behind the main lens at 21 Icons, photographer Adrian Steirn is swapping roles with behind-the-scenes shutterbug Gary van Wyk.

Adrian Steirn has been the principle photographer for two amazing seasons of **21 Icons**. Now, in their third year as they launch the new season, behind-the-scenes (BTS) photographer Gary van Wyk will be stepping into the role and producing the portraits. Adrian stays on too, this time taking Gary's previous position as BTS photographer.

It's not hard for Adrian to 'hand over'. 'Gary is one of my closest friends, and seeing him grow into the role of lead photographer has been truly rewarding for me personally,' he says. 'It just makes sense for Gary to be shooting these portraits with this season focusing on young South Africans – it's a tangible way to show the spirit behind the project.'

The role swap is more than just changing job titles. The third season of 21 Icons – which launches this month – will celebrate the 'young people making waves', including athlete Caster Semenya, entrepreneur Catherine Constantinides and musician Zahara Mkutukane.

In a statement, the 21Icons team said: 'The transition represents the renewed energy and vision that the Season III icons will drive... The objective is to inspire young South Africans through the future icons who echo the psyche and pulse of the youth.'

Alongside the theme change, one of the biggest changes that Gary will shepherd in is the use of colour. The previous two seasons were shot exclusively in black and white. Gary says: 'With colour the locations, wardrobe and overall colour balance all need to be very carefully considered. It's much more complex than shooting in black and white – and getting the right light is absolutely critical. When you get it right, light is what turns the ordinary into magic.'

Creating this magic is a challenge Gary is excited to be responsible for. 'I've got an incredible opportunity in front of me – the chance to work with some of South Africa's most remarkable people. Adrian's work in the first two seasons has obviously set a very high standard, but that's also exciting. It's a challenge that I've enjoyed,' he says.

Although this project is more forward-looking, we asked Gary which historical figure he wished he'd had the chance to shoot. 'I would go back and photograph Bob Marley,' he says. 'It would be great to be in the presence of such incredible wisdom. When you look at photographs or videos of him, he also had remarkable visual energy. Capturing that would be so special.'



About 21 Icons

This article is the fifth in a series about the 21 Icons project and its inspiring portrait subjects. For more coverage, check out our stories on the women of the [first season](#) and the [second season](#), a short piece about [icons celebrating their birthdays in August](#), and a focus on the [sports and music legends](#) of 21Icons.

See 21icons.com for more.

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