

21 Icons: Catherine Constantinides

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[lifestyle](#)

by: Kate Ferreira · 9 October 2015

21 Icons celebrates the passion and work of environmentalist Catherine Constantinides in its latest portrait.

The fifth portrait of the latest season of 21 Icons has been unveiled. Entitled 'Force of Nature', the image celebrates environmentalist and entrepreneur Catherine Constantinides.

21 Icons is a film documentary and photographic project that aims to recognise, publicise and celebrate South African heroes and 'icons'. The first two seasons were focused on our former and current political, cultural and sporting heroes who were pivotal in the lead up to and establishment of South Africa's new democracy – including Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, Sophia Williams de Bruyn and Nadine Gordimer.

This, the third season, focuses on South Africa's inspiring youth icons, and it takes a significant departure in style, incorporating colour for the first time under the visual leadership of new lead photographer Gary van Wyk.

Catherine's image was shot at Llandudno Beach in Cape Town, and portrays her as a kind of earth goddess or natural spirit, draped in floral fabric and wearing a crown of indigenous flowers. The theme takes its lead from Catherine's title, as a former Miss Earth SA (as well as the programme's national director), but even more so from her international work in environmental advocacy and conservation education. 'Catherine is photographed surrounded by the very ecosystem she fights to protect,' Van Wyk said of the image.

In addition to her role at Miss Earth South Africa, Catherine is also the executive director of Lead SA. She is the co-founder of [Generation Earth](#), an organisation that works with the youth of South Africa on

environmental issues. They call themselves a 'green networking platform', and work with schools and groups on developing and implementing solutions, as well as identifying youth leaders. She is also passionate about working with and empowering women on environmental issues and related issues.

'We need to teach people to dream and to hope,' Catherine said in the 21 Icons announcement, 'because it's only when members of society believe in something greater than the circumstances they found themselves in, they become active citizens that achieve change.'

Catherine has racked up a slew of awards and honours. She was a recipient of an Eco-Warrior award in 2014, a Greening the Future award in 2013, named SA youth entrepreneur at the 2013 South African Premier Business Awards and the 2013 top young female entrepreneur by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). She was also included in the *Mail & Guardian's* Top 200 Young South Africans for 2014. She is an Archbishop Tutu Leadership Fellow (2013).

About 21 Icons

This article is the latest in our series on the 21 Icons project and its inspiring South African portrait subjects.

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