

Go to [vodacom.co.za](http://vodacom.co.za)[Home](#)[My Now](#)[About](#)[Search Stories...](#)[Register](#)[Login](#)

Filmmaker Oliver Hermanus is broadening the horizons of local film. He's garnering international recognition while bringing some of our most fiercely held taboos, fears and dividing social issues into sharp focus.

#### Highlighting contradictions

Oliver says he's driven to tell stories that highlight the contradictions inherent in all people – their light and dark sides – and 'loving the unlovable'. His skill with these kinds of powerful narratives is why the visual storyteller has been chosen as the latest person to be featured in the 21 Icons third season.

Oliver counts 21 Icons principal photographer Gary van Wyk as a friend, having worked together previously at the *Cape Times*, so the resulting portrait and short film have a warmth, quirkiness and familiarity about them. In the portrait, Oliver holds an image that Gary had previously shot of him, giving the portrait an added layer of depth and context.

#### Local and international recognition

Oliver completed his masters at the London Film School. His first film debuted in 2009, and the awards and nominations he's won since then attest to the international appeal and standard of his work.

*Shirley Adams* (2009) premiered at the 62nd Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland, before taking home awards from both the Amiens Film Festival (France) and the Durban International Film Festival in the same year.

His follow-up feature *Skoonheid* was released in 2011, and selected as the fifth South African feature film to be invited to the Cannes Film Festival (screened at the 64th Cannes, in the *Un Certain Regard* section).

The following year, the film was SA's official entry for the Academy Awards Foreign Film category. Oliver also won Best Director at the South African Film and Television awards (SAFTAs) in 2012.



In 2015 he released *The Endless River*, debuting at the 72nd Venice Film Festival – officially the first local film invited to the festival's competition and the first to be nominated for the prestigious Golden Lion Award.

#### About 21 Icons

21 Icons is a photo and film project about South African icons, inspired by the life of Nelson Mandela. Previous seasons have focused on leaders from the struggle against apartheid and our new democracy. The third season icons are all under the age of 35, selected for their positive influence on the direction of our nation. You can engage with 21 Icons on Twitter, @21Icons, or with the hashtag #OurFutureIsNow

For more coverage, check out our stories on the third season so far:

- [Ezlyn Barends](#)
- [Mikhael Subotzky](#)
- [Jolynn Minnaar](#)
- [Kyle Shepherd](#)
- [Phindile Sithole-Spong](#)
- [Ashley Uys](#)
- [Michaela Mycroft](#)
- [Ludwick Marishane](#)
- [Thato Kgatthanve](#)
- [Laduma Ngxokolo](#)
- [Catherine Constantinides](#)

- [Lucas Sithole](#)
- [Thulani Madondo](#)
- [Jes Foord](#)
- [Athi-Patra Ruga](#)
- Photographer [Gary van Wyk](#)

See [21icons.com](#) for more.

**Tags**

[people](#) [south africa](#) [entertainment](#)

**If you liked this, you might enjoy the stories below.**



**lifestyle**  
**21 Icons celebrates Jes Foord**

Rape survivor and activist Jes Foord has turned her experience of sexual violence into a beacon of hope for others.



**lifestyle**  
**21 Icons celebrates Ashley Uys**

Ashley Uys turned a passion for science into three innovative companies, and claimed a spot in the third season of 21 Icons.



**people**  
**21 Icons celebrates Jolynn Minnaar**

Acclaimed filmmaker Jolynn Minnaar turned the lens on fracking for her powerful documentary 'Unearthed'.



**people**  
**21 Icons celebrates Ezlyn Barends**

The latest 21 Icons portrait features education humanitarian and founder of DreamGirls Ezlyn Barends.