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lifestyle 16 October 2015

21 Icons celebrates Laduma Ngxokolo

The latest 21 Icon portrait release applauds textile designer Laduma Ngxokolo who incorporates his Xhosa heritage into award-winning design.



Laduma Ngxokolo may have relocated from the Eastern Cape to London, but he has taken his heritage with him.

Knitwear and textile designer Laduma found inspiration in traditional Xhosa beadwork, having learnt machine-knitting from his mother, and worked to turn these strong colourful patterns into knitwear garments.

His **MAXHOSA BY LADUMA** knitwear range was initially intended for Xhosa men, specifically *amakwala* (initiates) to wear once they had left initiation school and swapped their childhood gear for more formal clothing signifying their status – but his eye for design has earned him fans from all walks of life, locally and internationally.

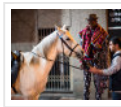
Mixing traditional and modern

It is this unique mix of tradition, culture and urban flare that made Laduma an award-winning textile designer, and the subject of the latest 21 Icons portrait and short film release.

The photo – shot on location on Cape Town's Long Street – brings these influences into sharp focus. 'Playing on the idea of a rural boy delivering his wares to the city, the portrait delivers a striking blend of modern and traditional, and speaks to a generation navigating the combination of both,' says photographer Gary van Wyk.

International success

In 2015 Laduma claimed the inaugural Vogue Scouting for Africa prize, earning him a spot at the international showcase of Palazzo Morando in Italy, and Africa International Fashion Week in Nigeria.



He was the recipient of the 2014 Emerging Designer of the Year Award at the African Fashion International Awards. He is also a Masters student at the University of Arts London where he studies Material Futures at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design.

About 21 Icons

21 Icons is a film documentary and photographic project celebrating South African heroes. The third season of 21 Icons highlights some of South Africa's inspiring youth icons, under 35 years of age, and 'mak[es] accessible the personal stories of young individuals whose lives are catalysts for positive change'.

This includes people like gender activist Jes Foord. Laduma is the sixth name of the new season, although the list is not intended to be considered a hierarchical ranking. The first two seasons focused on the local heroes who played critical roles in our transition to democracy, as well as the years immediately thereafter – including Nelson Mandela, Nadine Gordimer, Johnny Clegg, and Frene Ginwala.

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

- [Catherine Constantinides](#)
- [Lucas Sithole](#)
- [Thulani Madondo](#)
- [Jes Foord](#)
- [Athi-Patra Ruga](#)
- The third season's photographer [Gary van Wyk](#)

We have also covered aspects of the previous two seasons:

- The women of the [first and second](#) season
- Icons [celebrating their birthdays in August](#)
- A focus on the [sports and music legends](#) of 21 Icons.

See 21icons.com for more.

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