



PORTRAIT. Catherine Constantinides during the shoot for *21 Icons South Africa*.
Picture: Adrian Steirn

Change agent

21 ICONS: CATHERINE CONSTANTINIDES MAKES CUT

» **Capturing great human achievement among South Africans.**

Genevieve Vieira

They say don't judge a book by its cover. Upon first meeting Catherine Constantinides this saying comes to life. The young woman is beautifully groomed, blonde hair blow-waved, donning a full-length

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Catherine Constantinides

dress that flaunts her pencil-thin figure.
One wouldn't imagine her getting down and dirty in the sand, planting a vegetable garden for sustainable living. But before you assume, learn the facts.
While these characteristics are a part of Miss Constantinides, they in no way define her.
Chosen as part of the 21 Icons project (Season 3), Constantinides is more appropriately described as a social entrepreneur, a climate activist, a humanitarian and a food security advocate. She started her company, SA Fusion, when she was only 16 years old and has been involved in community upliftment projects ever since.
"Growing up, my parents exposed us to that kind of stuff from a very young age," she says. "It was not strange for us on a winter's night to drive through Hillbrow and hand out clothes, blankets and food. We came from a very humble home, we had very little but what we had was always enough because we were so filled with other stuff. We didn't even realise we didn't have a lot."
Now best known as the executive director of Miss Earth, Con-



21 ICONS. Entrepreneur Catherine Constantinides is pictured in Cape Town. Picture: Gary Van Wyk

stantinides continues her philanthropic efforts.
Her passion for the earth is palpable and demands your attention. "I must have been a farmer in a previous life because I am so passionate about agriculture."
"We need to inspire young people to understand agriculture. The whole industry needs to be rebranded because as a continent

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we have the most arable land in the world and yet we're not using it. Why? Because we're not giving the adequate skills and education to young people to understand that this is a very lucrative opportunity.
"We need to go far past being subsistence farmers who take care of our daily needs to become farmers who not only feed Africa, but could feed the world. And it's purely a lack of education, skills and awareness because the technology is there," she adds.
A huge advocate for local produce, Constantinides' aim is to create awareness around sustainability, planting the seed in every person she meets, in order to create agents of change.
"There are people, ordinary South Africans doing extraordinary things every day," she says. "They are the oil behind the wheels that turns our society and country from day to day. They are the unsung heroes of society."

About the project



21 Icons is a visual celebration of the lives of men and women who have shaped the world around them for the better. Inspired by the life of Nelson Mandela, it tells the stories of people who have continued his legacy – whose lives have made the world a better place. The project seeks to celebrate those who have achieved success and widespread recognition, as well as individuals whose work has been conducted without prior acclaim. – *21icons.com*

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BEHIND THE SCENES. Photographer Gary van Wyk at Llandudno Beach during Catherine Constantinides's portrait shoot. Picture: Adrian Steirn