

PEOPLE



PHOTOGRAPHS GARY VAN WYK

OUR FUTURE IS NOW

IT'S ALL ABOUT A NEW GENERATION of game changers. From youth leaders and designers to rape survivors and performance artists, the *21 Icons SA* visual project celebrates visionary South Africans with a mission.

Dawn breaks over the Cape Town cityscape, casting its pale blue light. Apart from the night revellers who spill out of clubs, the streets are cool and quiet. A *21 Icons* photographic and video crew has commandeered a corner, focused on the task of capturing a mesmerising, meaningful portrait of textile designer Laduma Ngxokolo astride a sturdy saddlehorse.

'Storytelling in this country is so important,' says photographer Gary van Wyk, who has taken over from *21 Icons* founder Adrian Steirn as chief lensman. 'It gives us a sense of understanding the challenges. With a portrait you can look at someone's eyes, their body expression, and that's a story.'

The *21 Icons* series, supported by Mercedes-Benz South Africa, honours remarkable people who stand for meaningful change. This season, the multimedia project focuses on South Africa's next generation of can-do leaders – the vibrant youth who shun complacency and push for progress.

Conceived by internationally acclaimed photographer Adrian Steirn, the three-season initiative traces South Africa's history – from the fight for freedom to its growth during democracy, concluding with a vision of the future.

Season I celebrated the founders of South Africa's new order – luminaries such as Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, Desmond Tutu and Zackie Achmat, who devoted their lives to securing the country's freedom. In Season II, the project captured the stories of those whose lives moulded South Africa's first two decades of democracy. Now *21 Icons* Season III explores the exceptional and creative people who are shaping the South Africa of the future.

Get to know some of the brightest, most original powerhouses in the country. And find out what they stand for – now.

* An episode of *21 Icons* Season III airs every Sunday on SABC 3 at 19h27 until 14 February 2016.



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