

# Athi-Patra Ruga

*"Performance art is about looking for the mundane in everyday life, and augmenting it so that people can actually see the art in it."* - Athi-Patra Ruga.



Ruga was selected for 21 ICONS South Africa Season III to honour his art forms that represent a counter proposal to ideas of nationhood and belonging, the artistic process when creating both processions and tapestries as well as his means of communicating his views on integration and acceptance.

He uses his art form to access people of all colours and levels of social classes and breakdown their stereotypical views on race, sexuality and gender identity - what he describes as people on the side-line of visual content creation. Through his work, Ruga creates characters that challenge people's non-acceptance of differences.

The National Arts Festival's 2015 Standard Bank Young Artist for Performance Art, Ruga, explores and pushes boundaries between fashion, performance, and contemporary art by creating works that reveal the body in relation to structure, ideology and politics.

## About the portrait

Taken by Season 3 photographer Gary van Wyk, the portrait titled '*Self Expression*' has Ruga standing upright, shirtless, with his hand pressed to his chest. An image from his 'Azania' series is projected directly onto his bare torso, illuminating a look of strength in his face and immersing him in his own art.

Highlighting Ruga's utilisation of his own body as one of his primary mediums of expression, the portrait constructs an increased intimacy between the artist and his art.

## View the video

## About 21 Icons Season 3

The short film-series documents the conversations between Gary Van Wyk as the photographer and filmmaker and the icons. Each short film provides insight into both the subject and photographer's creative approach to the portrait.

Behind each portrait lies a carefully planned concept that captures not only the essence of each icon visually, but also in spirit and in terms of their unique legacy.

Season three of 21 ICONS South Africa is proudly sponsored by Mercedes-Benz South Africa.

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