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MINING FEATURE


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Cover: Artwork: Typeface and signage application designed by Garth Walker (2003-2004). Cover image courtesy of the Constitutional Court Trust, as part of the Constitutional Court Art Collection. For more information, visit ccac.concourtrust.org.za or follow [@concourt_art](https://www.instagram.com/concourt_art) on Instagram and Twitter.

Photograph by Angela Buckland. Constitutional Court Art Collection.
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The Face of a Nation

THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT TRUST

One of the most striking features as one approaches the Constitutional Court is the typographic application directly above its entrance. The typography announces the building in the 11 official languages of South Africa. Referred to as "The Face of a Nation", this typeface was developed especially for the new Constitutional Court building that opened its doors in 2004. Marian Sauthoff, in a research article for the University of Pretoria, wrote that unlike the formal signage of many public law buildings, this typeface signals an alternative set of core values and references.

The design brief called for a unique font that is friendly, playful and expressive, and that makes use of humanist letterforms. The font had to be sensitive to the history of Constitution Hill as a place of incarceration. It also had to be legible for it to be used on wayfinding signage throughout the court.

The designer Garth Walker drew inspiration from letterforms, numerals, graffiti and 'street type' surrounding the Constitution Hill area for the development of this typeface. The graffiti in the jail cells on Constitution Hill is perhaps the only visible evidence that inmates, many of whom were locked up for resisting apartheid's oppression and injustice, served time there. According to Walker, the legacy of the prisoners became the foundation for the typeface of the new Constitutional Court.



The handwriting of the first 11 judges of the Constitutional Court also inspired the typeface's development. The bench wrote down the constitutional values 'human dignity, equality and freedom' in their choice of South Africa's languages. Justice Zak Yacoob's handwriting, which he has never seen because he lost his sight as an infant, served as a major inspiration to the typeface along with the prison graffiti.

Sauthoff says that, in keeping with the conceptual development of Constitution Hill, the typeface is a contemporary civic-based project that draws on South Africa's political history and strives to represent its democratic aspirations. It conveys South Africa's diversity and identity - encapsulated in the design of the Constitutional Court building and the letter of the Constitution.

The Constitutional Court Trust (CCT), the custodian of the Constitutional Court Art Collection (CCAC), celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2020, along with the CCAC's 25th year in existence. In keeping with sharing various CCAC artworks on the cover of **without prejudice** in 2019, the CCT will continue to highlight works from the CCAC throughout 2020, celebrating the collection's beginnings and sustained growth. ♦