

The 12th chair - reigniting the Constitution in the hearts and minds of our people

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To celebrate the 25th anniversary of our Constitution, Constitution Hill and its agency partner Ogilvy, have come together to launch the '12th chair' - a 'people's chair' - at the Constitutional Court.



The Constitutional Court, the guardian of our Constitution, was originally created with 11 chairs for its 11 judges who uphold, promote, and defend the Constitution. The added 12th chair will represent the people's seat of power as the 12th guardian of the Constitution, to express their values and from which to speak boldly.

Peter Little, executive creative director at Ogilvy Johannesburg, comments "Our purpose for creating a 12th chair is to remind people that the Constitution was written by and for the people of South Africa. Over the course of South African history, we have witnessed that a mobilised citizenry is the source of the most potent kind of power, the people's power."

Little continues, "Human rights form the foundation on which the Constitution was created, which makes the people the guardians of our Constitution, just like the eleven judges at the ConCourt. We need a seat of power at the highest court in the land, which an ordinary citizen occupies. Reminding all of us to continue to uphold the values and principles that are enshrined in our beloved Constitution."

Currently, all South Africans are being asked to submit designs for the 12th chair — a chair for one more custodian of the Constitution, 'the people'. This is a unique and significant way for all citizens to be a part of history, that will restore a sense of pride in our Constitution and our nation. Watch the campaign video [here](#).

Vanessa September, CEO of the Constitution Hill Trust explains, “We encourage designs that re-imagine and re-invent the aesthetics of power and envision a chair in which all people will feel comfortable and empowered. The chosen chair will find its permanent place on Constitution Hill.”

The timing of the call is poignant. The impact of Covid-19, political unrest and the lack of social cohesion all bolster the need for a chair that represents the people of South Africa.

As we enter heritage month, the campaign reminds us of South Africa's shift in the aesthetics of power. During South Africa's apartheid years, seats of power were built to control and oppress, elevating the occupier of the seat above the heads of the majority of the nation. With the advent of our constitutional democracy came the rethinking of these aesthetics.

Dawn Robertson, CEO at Constitution Hill Development Company explains, “We call on entrants to immerse themselves in the site and particularly unpack the design of the Constitutional Court. This is where eleven judges take their seats to hear some of the most important matters in the life of the nation. They do so in a chamber that is inspired by the time-honoured African notion of justice under a tree. They do so by taking seats that are deliberately placed to ensure that the eye-line of the judges is in line with those they are talking to. That's why we want to make space for one more custodian of our Constitution, the people.”

We encourage South African citizens of all ages, experience, and design levels to submit their designs.

- A shortlist of 12 finalists will be prototyped and exhibited at the 12th Chair Exhibition at Basha Uhuru Festival in October 2021.
- The winning entry will be announced on 9 December 2021 at Constitution Hill.
- The winning designer will work with a manufacturing team who will assist with the making of the 12th chair.
- The 12th chair will be unveiled at the Human Rights Festival in March 2022.
- The winning entry will be awarded a cash prize of R10,000.

Submit now, visit <https://wethepeople.constitutionhill.org.za/12th-chair>

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