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Constitution Hill, a site of inclusive exclusion. A study into the relationship between nation building and the production of space at Constitutional Court

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ABSTRACT

The Constitutional Court in Johannesburg, inaugurated on 21 March 2004 (Human Rights Day), is at once a complex of working buildings, a heritage site, and a community centre. The court is a concrete symbol of the notion of redemptive justice over repressive justice that is at the heart of South Africa's democratic constitution. Built on the site of and incorporating into its precinct Johannesburg's infamous Old Fort and Number Four Prison, the project also recognises that architectural history can be manipulated to suit shifting ideologies. This thesis is concerned with the relationship between nation building and the production of space of the Constitutional Court at Constitution Hill. Utilising the theoretical framework offered by Henri Lefebvre and Dennis Cosgrove it attempts to argue that space is produced at the court in a way that reinforces the nation building narrative that is embedded in the constitution itself. Ultimately it is argued that the court is a manifestation of the end goal of the ambition of transformative constitutionalism, in this sense the court is an ode to a fantasy.