

ISSN 1681-178X



9 771681 178012

THE CLASS OF 2010 – WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

# without. prejudice®



SPOTLIGHT ON  
TRANSPORT

R45.00 (Inc. VAT)  
Vol 20 No 3, April 2020

The Law Magazine

**Cover:** Artwork: Paul Stopforth (1945-), *Freedom Dancer: The South African*, 1993, Oil on cut out birch plywood / 2515 x 2100 mm. Donated by the artist to the CCAC. Cover image courtesy of the Constitutional Court Trust, as part of the Constitutional Court Art Collection (CCAC). For more information, visit [ccac.concourtrust.org.za](http://ccac.concourtrust.org.za) or follow [@concourt\\_art](https://www.instagram.com/concourt_art) on Instagram and Twitter.

Photograph by Gisèle Wulfsohn.





## Constitutional Court Art Collection / cover

## Dancing for freedom

## THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT TRUST

The artwork *Freedom Dancer: The South African* by Paul Stopforth symbolises South African anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko's ideas of black liberation and the freedom of the spirit. The artist was quoted as saying, "[this artwork] is the metaphorical rising of the ideals that Steve embodied". The hands that surround the dancer are a reference to Stopforth's interest in Buddhist and Hindu iconography where hands often indicate a combination of energy and compassion. In *Freedom Dancer* they are intended as a positive and luminous reinforcement of the dance and the dancer that celebrates this brilliant moment in time and history.

The large cut-out artwork hangs in the foyer of the Constitutional Court and is visible as one enters the highest court in the land. It draws visual reference from the anticipation of the coming celebration of the first democratic elections in South Africa, held in the year following the artwork's production in 1993. Depicted is a miner in gum-boots, which, according to Judith Mason, is at once a symbol of servitude and freedom. The man jumps on the devil in the manner adherents to South Africa's African Independent Churches do. The joy of this vibrant work is palpable through its quasi-Pop sensibility, its luminosity influenced by Aboriginal 'Dreamtime' paintings and pointillism.

Paul Stopforth has worked in a wide range of mediums including painting, drawing, sculpture and printmaking. He was born in 1945 in Johannesburg, South Africa. He graduated in 1968 with a National Art Teacher's Diploma from the Johannesburg College of Education and

taught at the Natal Technical College in Durban from 1969 to 1977. He returned to Johannesburg to join the painting faculty at the University of the Witwatersrand.

In 1977, along with Wolf Weinek and Michael Goldberg he founded the Market Theatre Gallery. In 1984, he was awarded a British Council scholarship to do post graduate work at the Royal College of Art in London. Increasingly disillusioned by the unrelenting racism and human rights abuses in South Africa, and having been invited to be Artist in Residence at Tufts University in Massachusetts, he moved with his wife Carol to the United States in 1988. After a number of years he became a lecturer in the Visual and Environmental Studies Department and Director of Undergraduate Studies at Harvard University. He subsequently became a full-time faculty member in the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston from where he recently retired.

Deeply moved by the death in detention of Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko whom he knew during Steve's activism in Durban, Stopforth created an icon of South African 'resistance' art: *The Interrogators*. According to South African History Online, this renowned triptych details the portraits of the security officers who interrogated Biko. Stopforth intended to portray "ordinary-looking" people as the torturers of Biko to represent the pervasiveness of what Hannah Arendt called, the "banality of evil" in South African society. Equally significant are a series of black and white drawings of Steve's wounded hands and feet using autopsy photographs as reference. Also included is a large, powerful drawing of Biko's body entitled *Elegy for Steven Biko*, which is now in the collection of the Durban Art Museum. "I produced a number works that continue to reflect on the brutality of the apartheid system, and the ongoing damage done to the lives of human beings everywhere who take a stand against authoritarian states, systems and regimes," the artist writes on his website. ♦