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Cover: Jan du Toit, 1997, “The Fruits of Labour”, metal, wood and found objects, 147 x 56.5 x 39cm. Cover image courtesy of the Constitutional Court Trust, as part of the Constitutional Court Art Collection. For more information visit ccac.org.za or follow @concourt_art on Instagram and Twitter. Photograph by Giselle Wulfsen.

Constitutional Court Art Collection / cover

The Fruits of Labour

FRANCOIS LION-CACHET

Jan du Toit (1974 -) was a student at the Foundation School of Art in Observatory when he completed this work *The Fruits of Labour* in 1997. He had grown up on a farm in Tulbagh in the Western Cape and wanted to find a way to represent the lives of farm workers in the area. The bowl on the top of the sculpture contains several objects that suggest the meagre rewards for a lifetime of labour on the wine and fruit farms in the Western Cape: a thick slice of bread, a plug of tobacco and a *dop beker* (representing the notorious dop system of payment in the form of alcohol to workers on wine farms). Aptly, 1 May 2019, Workers' Day, pays homage to the working class of the nation.

Jan du Toit

I was born in 1974 on a family farm in Tulbagh. I was the fifth generation to live on the land. From my youth, political unrest made me conscious of social injustices being committed under the system of apartheid.

I started studying fine art in 1995 at the Foundation School of Art in Observatory, Cape Town (no longer in existence). During this time, I befriended someone working at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and was kept up to date with the latest revelations.

In 1997 I created *The Fruits of Labour*. It was mostly made of found objects I picked up on the farm. It was still legal to implement the "dop system" on farms, which was used as partial payment for farm workers – they would receive wine three times a day: in the morning, lunchtime and at the end of the day. This practice had been implemented for generations and many workers became dependent on it. I did not agree with the system; I could see the negative effect it had on the workers.

The sculpture itself was made from very worn old tools that workers used daily, it was the only testament left of their existence. The identity of individuals was faded like the worn tools they had used. Everything inside the bowl I made from steel: a thick slice of bread, a tobacco pipe and little tobacco box, and a mug for wine ("dopbeker") which was a common way of measuring used on farms in apartheid South Africa.

I was against the practice of the "dop" system and its effects. As a white queer person in the 1990's, I felt that I had to speak out against the injustices being committed against black workers, many of whom had little or no voice.

Presently, I think it would be patronising to use this cause to further my own career. I moved into exploring my own identity politics, which is more relevant now. Who am I, where do I belong and what can I do to contribute to a more just society? I am of the opinion that one should start with making a difference in your immediate environment. The basic needs of every person are the same, and this is something we should all fight for. ♦

