

Artist Statement

I pay homage to the worker who has harvested the crop for our taking. There are many forms of manual labor playing different roles in society, ensuring its well-being. Compared to the “brown collar” job that belongs to the agricultural worker, some blue-collar jobs are honored more. How much honor is given to agricultural labor done by Hispanic immigrants, many of whom are undocumented? The majority of American society dismisses these people, because they are uninterested in the “dirty” side of agriculture, which is field work. The thought of going through this labor seems unthinkable to many.

It is this allegiance to labor that drives my work, as I put myself through a laborious process due to my choice of medium. Clay allows me to work with my hands and mimic some processes of working physically, just like field workers. I make the fruit or vegetable out of clay, that same fruit which I unintentionally left to rot. I feel the connection to the field labor as I work with clay and recreate the crop. I want to feel the same burden that laborers feel.

Political issues surrounding agriculture include: fears of deportation, excessive work hours, unfair wages, exposure to chemicals, and an overwhelming physicality that wears down the body. These fears and burdens have been recently growing, which have also caused many of the laborers to leave the country or seek other jobs where they can feel more secure. Their status will still bring uneasiness no matter where they are, as our current politics have brought animosity from large segments of American society. If the workers are driven away what will become of the produce? As entire fields will rot and prices increase, perhaps our society will finally be forced to come to terms with the value of the work and the worker.