

Bowdoin College

Commencement 1992

Katherine Porter, painter and teacher, we honor you today for expanding our vision, challenging our awareness, and inspiring our imaginations through the medium of your art. From your studio here in Maine to your numerous exhibitions in museums and galleries around the world, the radiant colors, dynamic forms, and rich contrasts of your abstract compositions have distinguished themselves at the forefront of contemporary painting.

Through your teaching at Stanford, Boston University, and elsewhere, you have also shared your vision and inspired a new generation through your passionate convictions about life as well as art.

At the center of your endeavor you have given form to the generating principles of forces in opposition. Just as lines wrestle with space, colors vie against darkness, and balance contends with turmoil, your painting speak to us as well of the oppositions that shape our lives – oppression and liberty, fear and hope, despair and exuberance. You have given voice to joy and elegy alike and encompassed a range of feeling uncommon in contemporary art.

We stand today on the steps of the Walker Art Building, where just a year ago, we are proud to say, the Bowdoin Museum of Art presented your first major exhibition in Maine. Majestic in scale, your painting and drawings transformed the galleries as they did those of us fortunate enough to have seen them.

We are also privileged, in the good company of museums like the Albertina, the Guggenheim, the Metropolitan, the Modern, the Whitney, and numerous others, to have added your work to our permanent collection. A marvelous and compelling painting, *Sudek's Studio*, is currently on view as part of an exhibition entitled *Visions of Women*, celebrating women artists in the Bowdoin collection.

Today, Bowdoin honors the vision and the passion that your art has so richly embraced. President Edwards, it is my honor to present to you, **Katherine Porter**.