

## **BOWDOIN COLLEGE**

## Commencement

2025

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## JEREMY FREY, Doctor of Fine Arts (DFA)

Citation by Jackie Brown, Associate Professor of Art and Chair of the Department of Visual Arts

Jeremy Frey, renowned Passamaquoddy basket maker and contemporary artist, through your exquisite basketry you keep the great tradition of Wabanaki weaving alive. You do so in ways that are distinct to the Indigenous people of Maine and that celebrate the excellence of the ancient craft, while also innovating through your own unique approach in ways that put you squarely at the forefront of contemporary art.

Your work is fueled by your deep connection to the woods of Maine, where you forage your own raw materials from the forest. You then process the harvested wood, bark, and sweetgrass using your own hands and strength, honoring Wabanaki tradition in a way that carries forward generations of embodied knowledge. As you so eloquently state, your "connection to the environment and to place go to the core" of who you are. And, perhaps unknown to you, you also live out a line from a venerated piece of Bowdoin's own history, the Offer of the College, which states that students here will gain the ability "to count nature a familiar acquaintance and art an intimate friend."

With your historic awards at the Santa Fe Indian Market and Heard Museum Indian Fair Market, along with your representation by the elite Karma Gallery, your acclaimed solo exhibitions, your status as a finalist for the prestigious Loewe Foundation Craft Prize, and your work collected and exhibited in our most famous museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Smithsonian, you are recognized at the highest levels of Native art and revered as one of the finest contemporary artists working today.

Your many years of dedication to a gradual and iterative process that requires patience and a willingness to slow down serve as a powerful example for us all. As long as ash trees persist in the forests of Maine, you will skillfully use them to weave objects of ineffable beauty. As you also reckon with a shifting climate and the scourge of the emerald ash borer, you do what great artists have always done: you persevere and you adapt. With your embrace of both foraging new materials and engaging with new media—through print and video—you further demonstrate your remarkable capacity to innovate and cultivate new approaches.

We honor you today for your extraordinary talent, for reminding us of the power of tradition and culture in art, and for putting such elegant beauty into the world for all to see and experience.

President Zaki, on behalf of the College, it is my honor to present Jeremy Frey for the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, honoris causa.