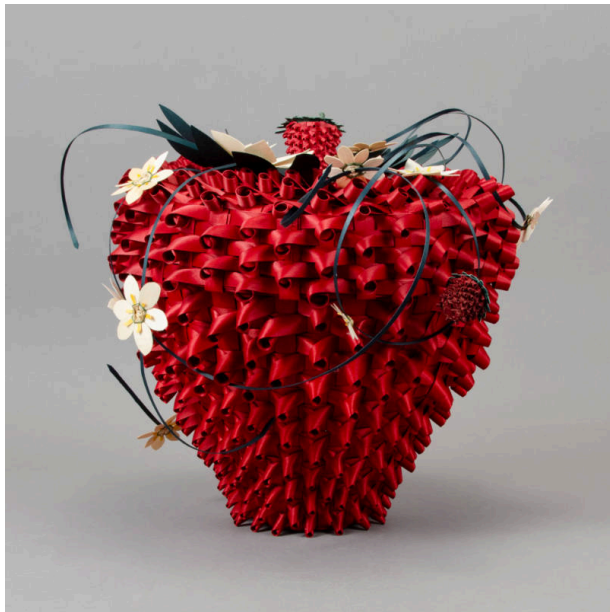




Strawberry Basket

Date

2022

Primary Maker

Kelly Church

Medium

black ash, sweetgrass, Rit dye

Description

Highly decorative basket and lid made to look like a strawberry with curled pieces of bark. The “curly-q” design makes this basket a “fancy basket.” Rit dyed red

and green. Kelly Church, a Pottawatomini/Ottawa/Ojibwe master basket maker from the Gun Lake Tribe, is a dedicated advocate for preserving black ash basketry traditions threatened by the Emerald Ash Borer's devastation of black ash trees (*Fraxinus nigra*). With black ash nearing extinction in Michigan, Church raises awareness, mentors younger generations, and has created a seed bank to enable future replanting. Since black ash trees suitable for basket making take 25-40 years to mature, her efforts represent a long-term commitment to both the environment and Indigenous traditions. A 4th-generation basket maker, Church learned the Anishinaabe techniques of harvesting black ash and basket making from her father, Bill Church, and cousin, John Pigeon. Inspired by her grandfather's stories, she has passed these traditions to her daughter, Cherish Parrish. In 2018, Church received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, contributing to the museum's National Heritage Fellows collection and its extensive holdings of American baskets. Church is renowned for her egg, top hat, and strawberry basket forms, including her copyrighted "fancy" Strawberry basket design featuring flowers and miniature strawberries. These baskets hold cultural significance, particularly during Great Lakes ceremonies honoring life events and the "strawberry moon." A self-described art activist, Church champions the preservation of traditional knowledge for future generations.

Dimensions

13 1/2 × 14 × 14 in. (34.2901 × 35.5601 × 35.5601 cm)