



**Ursula von Rydingsvard, *5 Mountains*, 1989, Cedar, stain, graphite, 5' × 5' × 8½'. Courtesy Lorence Monk Gallery.**

century Western artists (male or female) primitiveness only succeeds as a metaphor for an effect of disgust at the higher responsibilities of consciousness. Von Rydingsvard declines to size up her response to the dangers of a more idealized space, as represented by the skylights. *Oj Dana, Oj Dana* reaches up into the vacated ideal space of Western sculpture—space most materialists and literalists at present shun as too rhetorical—then doesn't get there. Rather than create an effect that is aware of the impossibility of the communion the light demands, she pushes real (surface) effect—more spoons—and carves a row of buttresses that are too literal and functional to have pulse.

There is also a consistent, dark stain on the work that seems to seal it hermetically with a sense of completion and manufacturedness that renders the carving illustrative. But *Five Mountains* does advance on a facture of carving that also works well in *Book of Dreams*, *Nine Cones*, and *Three Bowls* to interact with the light and create an eerie and sufficiently empty sculpture. The light sheds a disintegrating glow on the wood: the carving responds, it's rougher, more energetic, as if escaping from, or running for cover from, this sign of a release from torture. A hint of heads and an immured or mummified figure is present as well. A tremor of figuration builds into a genuine pulse that flares out, excites, and fulfills, in turn spiraling the tactile sense and eye down onto the most detailed registers of carving. This was the only work in the show that seemed even a little bit dangerous—in terms of making me want to touch it.

**Robert Mahoney**

**Ursula von Rydingsvard** (Lorence Monk, March 3–31) has responded with a bit too much assumption (religiously speaking) in her heart to the clean light and cleaner flooring of Lorence Monk's SoHo Valhalla. The work looks very neat and clean here, all dressed up for the benefit of a museum. I missed what I remembered, vaguely, as the rawer energy of previous work. The spoon shaped work appears to represent an attempt by the sculptor to be as unself-conscious as a craftsman in a New Guinea tribe, a maker of boats and spoons. But in 20th-