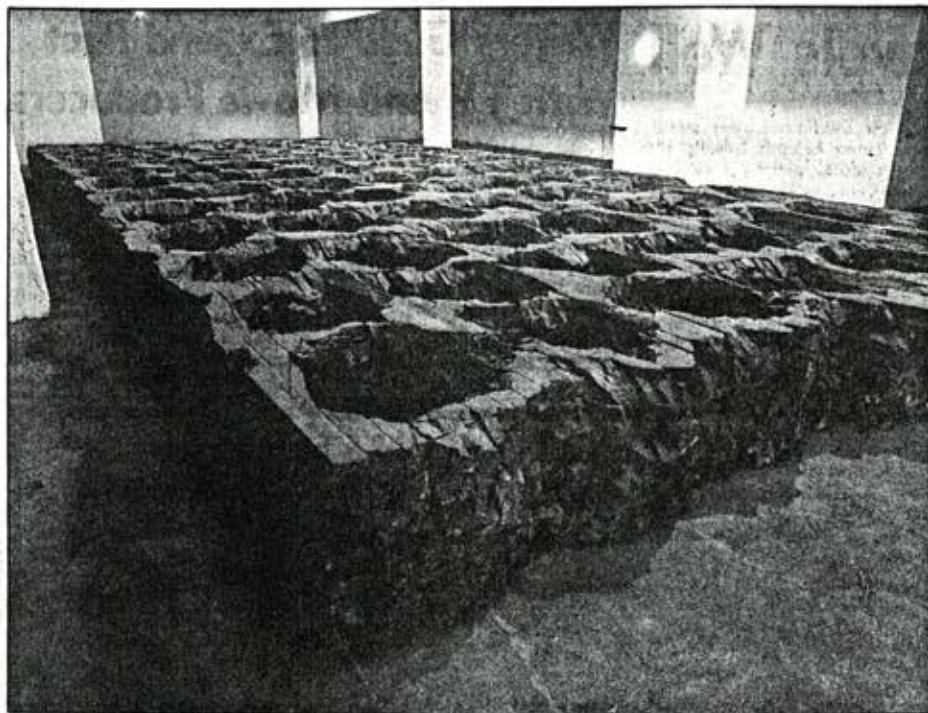


# San Francisco Chronicle

THE LARGEST DAILY CIRCULATION IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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Ursula von Rydingsvard's untitled grid of cedar and graphite is 57 feet long, 27 wide and 3 deep

## Landscape Fills a Room

New York sculptor's enormous grid at Capp Street Project/AVT

By Kenneth Baker  
*Chronicle Art Critic*

What the diamond is to baseball, the grid is to the Constructivist strain in modern art, from Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) to Sol Lewitt (born 1928) and beyond. It is one of the few 20th century remnants of artistic classicism: a token of impersonal, perhaps of transcendent or ideal, order.

The grid is thunderously de-idealized in the untitled room-size sculpture by New Yorker Ursula von Rydingsvard at Capp Street Project/AVT, 270 14th Street (through December 22).

This massive work, made over a six-week period by the artist and a team of volunteer assistants, looks something like a makeshift barge. It is a long, low structure of graphite-rubbed cedar beams, pocked by 98 deep concavities that look almost hand-hewn.

In fact, the work was assembled in units, from the ground up, each segment of four-by-four lumber cut with power tools according to von Rydingsvard's instructions. (Her instructions took the form of drawings done on each beam.) The process began with her laying out a "floor," one beam thick, and drawing on it, free-hand, a field of roughly circular shapes. These figures became a template for the whole structure.

Von Rydingsvard's piece, the largest she has made to date, is in the line of process-emphasizing sculpture practiced by Richard Serra, Richard Long and Meg Webster. Its aspects shift dramatically, depending on your vantage point and your acceptance of the imaginative promptings arising from it.

Stand anywhere near it and you can scarcely avoid seeing it as landscape sculpture on a scale rivaling anything in modern art that is not an earthwork. (It has obvious affinities to Walter De Maria's "New York Earth Room.") Its network of jagged-edged openings becomes a maze of mesas and canyons. The work is nonrepresentational, yet its complexity of physical detail yields sensations of inexhaustibility like those we feel before a spectacular natural vista.

From the gallery's balcony, the work suggests a glum, Beckettian model of stalemated society, a confederacy of foxholes in the process of erosion.

Von Rydingsvard's materials and procedures are objective as you please, yet they result in structures that seem soaked in nameless emotion and the energy of human unpredictability. We see too little contemporary sculpture of this stature in the Bay Area.