

## Ursula von Rydingsvard

GALERIE LELONG

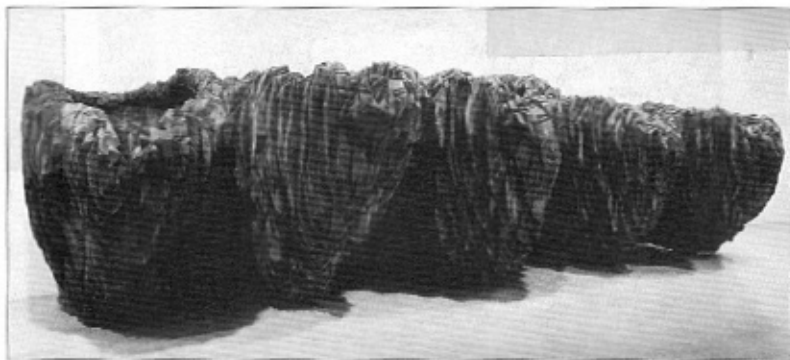
URSULA VON RYDINGSVARD SPENT THE first nine years of her life in Polish displaced-persons camps in Germany, and in recent years her work has been clearly tied to her childhood memories. Immense, melancholy, and hollow, and scrubbed with a dark graphite patina, her cedar sculptures have been poignant meditations on longing and loss.

While von Rydingsvard's new sculptures in this exhibition continued to draw on her childhood to a certain degree—several pieces suggested cultivated fields and farming tools (von Rydingsvard's father worked as a farmer in the camps)—they were far less brooding than earlier works. Not only was the graphite patina less in evidence but von Rydingsvard left

some surfaces raw or dappled with silver and white paint.

She also seems to be investigating non-Western sources. Her most recent works, a group of shieldlike sculptures leaning against a wall with carved balls protruding from their surfaces and painted with stripes of whitewash, brought to mind Oceanic and African art. Referred to as "drawings" by the artist, these could be viewed as studies for carving, which, in von Rydingsvard's hands, is a kind of drawing (and von Rydingsvard sketches on wood before making her cuts).

There's also a new and unexpected humor in von Rydingsvard's work. The largest sculpture, *Lipweave*, which has five hollow cavities and is carved into a shape that leans to one side like trees permanently blown back by the wind, and *Stolen Vision*, 20 hollowed beams filled with carved wood balls resembling giant pea pods, share something with Claes Oldenburg's soft sculptures of the 1960s. The works are far more abstract than Oldenburg's, certainly, and hard, but they alter a viewer's expectations of scale in much the same way. EDITH NEWHALL



Ursula von Rydingsvard,  
*Lipweave*, 1992–93,  
cedar and graphite,  
54" x 205½" x 59".  
Galerie Lelong.