

Time Out

New York

February 20-27, 1997 Issue No. 74



Ursula von Rydingsvard, *Doolin, Doolin*, 1995-1997.

Ursula von Rydingsvard Galerie Lelong, through Mar 1 (see 57th St).

Ursula von Rydingsvard is no stranger to hard work. For some 20 years now, she has been using stock lumber to build huge, craggy sculptures, inch by painstaking inch.

This show's case in point is the seven-foot tall *Doolin, Doolin*, for which the artist first traced a word (in Polish) on the ground, then built it up with layers of cedar two-by-fours until it became indecipherable. If you could see it from above (which you can't), you'd at least have a chance to grasp its message; as it is, all that's visible is an irregular wall, over which you let your eyes wander, following various nooks and crannies the way the sighted might search for meaning in

braille. Basically, though, the easiest thing to read here is the effort that went into the piece.

Equally enigmatic are two of the smaller works in the show. *Untitled (Single Basket)* is a bit precious; its criss-crossed surface overly reminiscent of one of those checkerboard tables in the park. But Von Rydingsvard is having success with a new material—cow intestines—which she slits open, dries and stretches. In *Maglownica II*, these innards are sewn over a paddlelike shape made of corrugated wood; translucent flesh-colored veins bulge out slightly from the surface in a nice balance of the elegant and visceral. As with her best work, it challenges the viewer, enticing and repelling at the same time.—Sarah Schmerler