

Weekend

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Ursula von Rydingsvard

Galerie Lelong

20 West 57th Street, Manhattan

Through March 1

A massive, undulating dark wall of wood nearly 18 feet long and 7 feet high, bristling with rough-cut edges and punctuated by deep alcoves, is the set piece of this strong show. Called "Doolin, Doolin," after an Irish seacoast town, it evokes a set of stout, ocean-battered cliffs or, more fancifully, a cluster of clifflike sentinels bent on guarding a land of myth and poetry.

The clumsily cursive flow of the piece derives from letters, traced on the ground before the sculpture was built, whose outline the sculpture was based on. But as the piece grew upward, the word, whatever it was, was blotted out and can't be read in the finished wall.

The elegantly raw look that Ursula von Rydingsvard imparts to this and all of her work comes from painstaking labor and a lively material, laminated cedar. For "Doolin" and smaller walls in the show, cedar planks were arranged and glued in horizontal striations, section by section. The projecting surfaces were cut in hundreds of strokes with a circular saw, scrubbed and coated with graphite, and then doweled together. This muscular process is a forceful presence in the finished work. In other pieces, Ms. von Rydingsvard continues her preoccupation with tools and domestic apparatus, including "Ladle," a crude, giant token of a dipper, made of cedar planks rubbed with graphite. A striking new work is "Maglownica II," a long, totemlike wall piece whose rough surface is sort of shrink-wrapped with milky-looking transparent cow gut, creating a strange symbiosis between two very different organic materials.

Profoundly attuned to her material, Ms. von Rydingsvard works it with real mastery.

GRACE GLUECK