

ARTNEWS

reviews: new york

Ursula von Rydingsvard

Dieu Donné

Ursula von Rydingsvard is best known for monumental, often totemic sculpture,

crafted from chunks of cedar and rooted in eccentric Post-Minimalist abstraction. In this, her first collaborative venture with the Dieu Donné papermaking workshop, the artist got a chance to explore other esthetic interests and express different aspects of her personality. This show of drawings revealed strains of whimsy, fragility, and spontaneity. Using paper pulp as her medium, von Rydingsvard incorporated materials such as bits of cloth

and tangles of thread, all the while grounding her imagery in gridlike arrangements.

The most sculptural of the ten works



Ursula von Rydingsvard, *Untitled*, 2010, thread, pigment, fabric, linen, and handmade paper, 29" x 30". Dieu Donné.

(all from 2009–10 and all untitled, identified only by inventory number) on view at the workshop's gallery was a 66-inch-high, irregularly shaped, brownish rectangle made from a laminated fibrous material called abaca. Its bubbled surface, rubbed with graphite, suggests a primitive shield or long-buried shroud, but a glance around the edges reveals it to be far thinner and more delicate than it appears. Von Rydingsvard's sculptures have often suggested articles of clothing—like the bonnet shape of *Damski Czepek*, part of her installation at New York's Madison Square Park, in 2006. The drawings here, with threads dangling from the bottom edges, inevitably conjure up scarves or prayer shawls or, in a couple of cases, the circular motifs of the artist's mammoth sculpture *Five Lace Medallions*, from 2007.

As with von Rydingsvard's large-scale efforts, the imagery in these drawings can be deeply suggestive of natural phenomena such as landscapes or plant life, but it always manages to veer away into a realm of the imagination that is deeply resonant but resolutely abstract.

—Ann Landi