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## DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum Presents Ursula von Rydingsvard: Sculpture



Ursula von Rydingsvard, *Krasavica II*, 1998-2001, cedar, graphite, 72 x 264 x 48 in. ©Ursula von Rydingsvard. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Lelong, New York. Photo: Rosalyn and Michael Bodycomb.

**LINCOLN, MA.-** [DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum](#) presents Ursula von Rydingsvard: Sculpture on view through August 28, 2011. This exhibition was organized by guest curator Helaine Posner for SculptureCenter in New York and features a selection of the 2008 Rappaport Prize winner's most significant sculptures, including wall reliefs and monumental cedar works created from 1991 to 2011. The presentation at deCordova additionally features von Rydingsvard's new works in handmade paper. The artist's most recent sculpture, *Elegantka*, commissioned especially by deCordova for this exhibition, has been installed on deCordova's roof and will return to the Sculpture Park at the conclusion of the exhibition tour in August 2012.

Ursula von Rydingsvard: Sculpture is the second in a planned series of major sculpture exhibitions to be held each summer at deCordova. Ursula von Rydingsvard: Sculpture and last year's summer exhibition Chakaia Booker: In and Out highlight the institution's unique exhibition environments by exhibiting large scale sculpture both indoors and outdoors. Recent sculpture exhibitions and acquisitions of works by Antony Gormley, Rona Pondick, Dan Graham, and a proposed Andy Goldsworthy site-specific installation are all part of advancing deCordova's goal to become a premier American sculpture park by 2020.

"Ursula von Rydingsvard is among the most important American contemporary sculptors, and we are thrilled to host her exhibition at deCordova," says Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs Nick Capasso. "Also, her work will look absolutely stunning in our galleries."

For more than thirty years, von Rydingsvard has worked with red cedar, a soft and fragrant wood. Using both carving and construction techniques she painstakingly stacks, glues, and clamps the cedar beams, and then operates a circular saw to roughly shape the stacked structure. In a final, unifying action, von Rydingsvard rubs the sharply textured, exposed surfaces with graphite powder to create works of enormous grandeur and stirring intimacy. Built slowly and incrementally from thousands of small cedar blocks, each work reveals the mark of the artist's hand, the artist's respect for physical labor, and her deep trust of intuitive process.

The intensity of her labor as well as her affinity for tools and materials, keep the artist physically connected to what she calls her family's "agrarian roots" in Eastern Europe.

Von Rydingsvard regards her involvement with wood as part of her history. She comes from a long line of Polish farmers for whom wood provided basic shelter and the tools to work the land. Many of her sculptures suggest domestic objects such as spoons, shovels, axes and various farm tools. Other works recall women's bonnets and lace collars or reference vernacular architecture including barns, barracks, and fences. However, it is the bowl, in its simplicity and variety that emerges as her signature form. It appears in her work as a wide, shallow basin whose physical gravity recalls the Ocean Floor (1996) and as the five voluptuous bowls that comprise Krasawica II (1998-2001), Ukrainian for a beautiful young woman. In von Rydingsvard's work, towering cedar structures are physically overwhelming, suggestive, and emotive: a pair of huge, wall-mounted plates weep (*Weeping Plates*, 2005), a precariously tall cedar structure wears a cracked skin of tightly wrapped cow intestines (*Maglownica*, 1995), and the enormous, horizontal, torqued shape of *Droga* (2009), or bride's veil, undulates across the floor like fabric. In sculptures filled with contradiction, the artist succeeds in expressing something raw and elemental with remarkable sophistication and grace.

The tightly aligned layers of wood also evoke great natural forms, from craggy cliff sides to the striations of geological formations. In her newest work *Elegantka*, made of polyurethane resin, the towering sculpture resembles a glistening ice formation, but more importantly acts as a vessel for natural light. The translucent resin allows light to pass through the form, changing the color, tone, and temperature of the sculpture depending on the season and time of day.