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# DAILY NEWS

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## Massive sculpture at Barclays Center earns oversized praise from commuters

Statue by Ursula von Rydingsvard occupies a prime space on the Daily News Plaza. Art lovers say it fits in well with metal-skinned arena.

BY TANAY WAREKAR



The bronze sculpture has earned raves from commuters and Barclays Center officials.

Brooklyn has fallen in love with “She.”

Early morning commuters were shocked — but pleasantly so — last Friday when Ursula von Rydingsvard’s monumental sculpture suddenly appeared on the Daily News Plaza in front of the Barclays Center — a 20-foot, 10,000-pound mound of gleaming bronze named “Ona,” the Polish word for “she.”

"I love love love this," said Delia Martinez, 62, who has lived in Park Slope for 40 years. "When I saw it from afar I thought it might be a tree, but up close I can see it is a beautiful piece of art that adds to the artistic quality of this neighborhood."

Most passersby agreed — and said the tree-like sculpture adds renewed buzz to the sporting, artistic and entertainment hub that most recently hosted the MTV Video Music Awards. "It blends in really well with the Barclays Center," said Sandra Charles, 63, who has also lived in the neighborhood for 40 years. "The bronze color of the sculpture goes really well with the ceiling of the plaza. I would put it in my backyard if I had the chance."

Von Rydingsvard created the work by collecting pieces of cedar wood from forests in Canada, stacking them and then hacking at them with a chainsaw. The resulting wooden model was then sent to a foundry where it was cast in bronze to be placed as a permanent fixture on the Plaza, visible to commuters and residents as they step off the subway at the Atlantic Ave. stop. It was installed over several hours in the early morning Friday.



JEFF MERMELSTEIN

The artist Ursula von Rydingsvard, in front of her 10,000-pound, 20-foot bronze sculpture that was unveiled on the Daily News Plaza in front of the Barclays Center last week.

"I appreciate the sculpture being in a place which feels democratic, with people of all ages, and income levels who walk by," said the German-born, Brooklyn-based von Ryndingsvard. "No need to buy a ticket."

Of course, this is Brooklyn so not everyone was as mesmerized by its arrival.

"It looks like it was taken out of a cave or something," said Erik Meritt, 25. "It's weird." Andy Hamingson, 50, added that he didn't like that some of the plaza's open space would be lost to a sculpture that he likened to a "rock tornado."

But such concerns were definitely in the minority.

"It's a great addition to this neighborhood," said Zuri Marcellin, 23, who works in the area. "It adds something unique and reflects the changing quality of this neighborhood."

The work is especially loved by one of the men who commissioned it, David Berliner, a Barclays Center board member.

"The sculpture reflects a gritty vibrancy, yet it has a soft welcoming feeling to it," he said at Friday's unveiling. "It is reflective of the tough, resilient Brooklyn mindset. And it is a great addition because Brooklyn is now known as the center of the creative world."