

New commission by internationally acclaimed artist Ursula von Rydingsvard at Princeton University



Studio assistant Lucas Strzelec working on bronze armature of the final sculpture.

PRINCETON, NJ.- A monumental new sculpture by Ursula von Rydingsvard has been commissioned to highlight the entrance to the new Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment at [Princeton University](#). The 19-foot-tall untitled work is the artist's first sculpture made primarily of copper.

The artist's full-sized maquette of stacked, texturized cedar beams shaped with a circular saw took six months to build. The finished piece of over 3,000 copper pieces, each one hammered by hand and then painstakingly assembled around a metal armature, will emulate the texture of the wooden model. The copper version is being fabricated by metal artist Richard Webber and a team of skilled metal craftspeople. This most recent addition to Princeton University's renowned outdoor sculpture collection is set to be installed in the summer of 2015 and dedicated with the new building, designed by noted architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, in spring 2016.

“This heroic and layered work of art by one of the greatest sculptors of our time is a vital addition to the Princeton campus and a stunning complement to Princeton’s exemplary collection of public art, comprised of works by master artists of several generations,” said Princeton University Art Museum Director James Steward. “Ursula’s work warrants a place in this pantheon, and this example, in its rich and textured materiality, brings a new dimension to the collection distributed across our historic campus. We are honored that the artist has chosen this occasion to stretch herself in new and extraordinary directions.”

“The Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment aims to inspire students, postdocs, staff, faculty, alumni and visitors to get involved in the daunting task of ensuring the health of our planet for future generations,” said Emily Carter, the center’s founding director. “This soaring work of art by Ursula von Rydingsvard will be the welcoming beacon for the Andlinger Center, rising into the sky, emblematic of our high aspirations. Its meticulously handcrafted construction out of copper also parallels the long-term, challenging research we undertake in the center. The results — both in art and in our science — will be beautiful, meaningful and impactful.”

Von Rydingsvard was born in Germany in 1942 to a Polish mother and a Ukrainian father, who were forced to work as agricultural laborers under the Nazis during World War II. Between 1945 and 1950, Von Rydingsvard and her family cycled through nine displacement camps in Germany, living in wooden barracks. When she was nine years old her family immigrated to Connecticut. Von Rydingsvard has been based in Brooklyn for more than 30 years and is known for monumental abstract cedar towers that she incises repetitively and methodically — typically with a hand-wielded chainsaw — and that alternately refer to personal history, the landscape, everyday objects and the body. Her work is included in such collections as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the Storm King Art Center. In 2014, the International Sculpture Center awarded Von Rydingsvard its Lifetime Achievement Award.