

BLOUINARTINFO

Stanford University Acquires Ursula von Rydingsvard Sculpture

BY BLOUIN ARTINFO | SEPTEMBER 26, 2018



Ursula von Rydingsvard's 17-foot-tall bronze sculpture "MOCNA" in its final place at Denning House, © Ursula von Rydingsvard 2018, Image credit: L.A. Cicero

(Courtesy: Stanford News Service)

Stanford University's Denning House has acquired a 17-foot sculpture by [Ursula von Rydingsvard](#) (/artists/5647-ursula-von-rydingsvard), "MOCNA." The sculpture was the first piece commissioned for the Denning House art collection, which plans to acquire one piece each year from emerging and established artists.

“[Ursula von Rydingsvard](/artists/5647-ursula-von-rydingsvard) (/artists/5647-ursula-von-rydingsvard)’s ‘MOCNA’ is a fitting inaugural work for the new collection,” said Roberta Bowman Denning, who sits on the Denning House art committee and is the former chair of Stanford’s Arts Advisory Council. “It is a powerful sculpture, with delicate pierced openings and gentle evening light, and will serve as a beacon for both scholars and visitors.”

“MOCNA,” Von Rydingsvard’s large-scale abstract work of 17 feet, reveals both the traces of the human hand and the forces of nature in its bronze structure.

“Von Rydingsvard’s use of bronze transcends traditional processes, incorporating metallic fretwork and internal LED illumination. Positioned at the threshold of Denning House, the monumental work commands the attention of those who enter,” said Susan Dackerman, the John & Jill Freidenrich Director at the Cantor Arts Center. “‘MOCNA’ joins a distinguished collection of sculptures at Stanford, including one of the largest collections of works by Rodin in the U.S. at the Cantor.”

Over a remarkable four-decade-long career, [Ursula von Rydingsvard](/artists/5647-ursula-von-rydingsvard) (/artists/5647-ursula-von-rydingsvard) has become one of the most influential sculptors working today. She is best known for creating large-scale, often monumental sculpture from cedar beams, which she painstakingly cuts, assembles, and laminates before finally rubbing a graphite patina into the work’s textured, faceted surfaces.

Her signature abstract shapes refer to things in the real world — vessels, bowls, tools, and other objects — each revealing the mark of the human hand while also summoning natural forms and forces. In recent years, von Rydingsvard has explored other mediums in depth, such as bronze, paper, and resin, continuing to expand upon her unique artistic vocabulary. Her art is represented in the permanent collections of more than 30 museums and is on view in multiple public locations across the country.

Denning House has earlier acquired two works by the artist Trevor Paglen: “Matterhorn (How to See Like a Machine) Brute-Force Descriptor Matcher;” “Scale Invariant Feature Transform (2016) and Lake Tenaya Maximally Stable Extremal (2016).” These dye sublimation prints consider the ways that machines understand images, and the gap between recognition and understanding.