

ONE WALL, ONE WORK

URSULA VON RYDINGSVARD: CROSSED MIRAGE

Ursula von Rydingsvard was born in 1942 in Deensen, Germany. Her mother was Polish and her father was Ukrainian. The artist grew up in a Catholic family with six siblings. The family was relocated to nine different refugee camps in the 1940's. Numerous historians focus on her earliest connections to wood (the barracks were lumber buildings made from former American soldier housing and German concentration camps). As one could imagine, von Rydingsvard both nurtures and rejects this association. While it informs, it also limits the interpretations of her work.

Barbara Krakow Gallery is giving Crossed Mirage its first public viewing. It is made from four-by-four cedar beams that have been carved deliberately, carefully, and with intense physical exertion. Von Rydingsvard's carving techniques straddle sculpture, drawing and even painting by combining various incisions and protuberances with both exact and soft charcoal marks that are written, drawn and smudged. Looking at the sculpture as a whole, one sees the relationships between planning, chance, process, figuration and abstraction.

The title, Crossed Mirage, provides a further way to view the work. A mirage is a naturally occurring optical phenomenon in which light rays are bent to produce a displaced image of distant objects or space. The word comes to English from the French mirage, from the Latin mirari, which means "to look at, to wonder at" (this is the same root as for "mirror" and "to admire"). In contrast to a hallucination, a mirage is a real optical phenomenon that can be captured on camera. What the image appears to represent, however, is determined by the interpretive faculties of the human mind. Keeping this in mind, one can see the direct relationship between the sculpture and a mirage. The work is made up of many elements that create a new whole, yet what that whole, like all art, is up to the viewer's interpretation. In this case, it is the strong balances of appearance, form and technique that give the work its power.

Von Rydingsvard's works are in the permanent collection of Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY,

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR, DeCordova Sculpture Park + Museum, Lincoln, MA, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA, Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, NY, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, Williams College, Williamstown, MA and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, among many others. She has exhibited recently at the Venice Biennale and the Art Institute of Chicago and has an exhibition up currently at the Princeton University Art Museum.

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