DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum
51 Sandy Pond Road
Lincoln, MA 01773

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Susie Stockwell, Head of Marketing and Public Relations
sstockwell@decordova.org, 781.259.3620

DeCordova Presents *Ursula von Rydingsvard: Sculpture*, May 29–August 28, 2011

Lincoln, MA, April 20, 2011 – DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum announces *Ursula von Rydingsvard: Sculpture* will be on view this summer from May 29 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, will be 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.

-more-
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.

About the Exhibition

Ursula von Rydingsvard: Sculpture was previously on view at SculptureCenter in New York from January 23–March 28, 2011. Following deCordova, the exhibition will travel to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland September 23, 2011–March 25, 2012 and to the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum at Florida International University in Miami April 18–August 4, 2012. This exhibition is accompanied by the book, Ursula von Rydingsvard: Working by Patricia C. Phillips.

Ursula Von Rydingsvard: Sculpture and its tour are made possible with the support of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and Agnes Gund.

About the Artist

Ursula von Rydingsvard’s first solo exhibition was presented in New York in 1975 and she has been exhibiting her work in museums and galleries internationally ever since.
Her sculpture is included in the permanent collections of more than thirty museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; and Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit. Major permanent commissions of her work are on view at the Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, Washington; the Bloomberg Building, New York; and the Queens Family Courthouse, New York. Mad. Sq. Art: Ursula von Rydingsvard was presented at Madison Square Park in 2006.

About deCordova
Established in 1950, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum features unique indoor and outdoor venues, allowing visitors to celebrate and explore contemporary sculpture and art across 35 acres. Outside, deCordova’s Sculpture Park hosts more than 60 works, the majority of which are on loan to the Museum. Inside, the Museum features a robust slate of rotating exhibitions and innovative interpretive programming. DeCordova is committed to exhibiting high-quality, accessible art of nationally and internationally recognized artists, while also maintaining a strong relationship with established and emerging New England artists. DeCordova offers one of the largest non-degree granting studio art programs in New England, enrolling approximately 2,000 students in various classes and workshops throughout the year and also maintains a Permanent Collection of approximately 3,400 works. DeCordova’s Corporate Program provides businesses the opportunity to support the institution and New England-based contemporary artists through membership initiatives and the Art Loan option—a unique program created to exhibit artwork from New England artists and deCordova’s Permanent Collection in Corporate Member offices. Museum attracts more than 100,000 visitors from New England and tourists from around the world to its campus each year.

General Information
DeCordova is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 am to 5 pm and on select Monday holidays. General admission during Museum hours is $12 for adults; $8 for senior citizens, students, and youth ages 6–12. Children ages 5 and under, Lincoln residents, and Active Duty Military Personnel and their dependents are admitted free. The Sculpture Park is open year-round during daylight hours. Guided public tours of the Museum’s main galleries take place every Thursday at 1 pm and Sunday at 2 pm. Tours of the Sculpture Park are given on Saturday and Sunday at 1 pm from April to November. All guided tours are free with Campus admission. Visit decordova.org or call 781.259.8355 for further information.