

For Immediate Release

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## **DeCordova Announces The 2008 Rappaport Prize Winner: Ursula von Rydingsvard**

LINCOLN, MA—**The DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park is delighted to announce that internationally renowned sculptor Ursula von Rydingsvard has won the Rappaport Prize**, a collaborative initiative of the Jerome Lyle Rappaport Charitable Foundation and DeCordova. The Prize, one of the largest in New England, is an annual award of \$25,000 made to a contemporary artist. Von Rydingsvard is the ninth artist to receive the Rappaport Prize.

The work of Ursula von Rydingsvard has been exhibited in galleries, museums, sculpture parks, and public art programs around the world. Her massive abstract wood sculptures generate multiple associations, and resemble vessels, tools, clothing, topography, geology, and architectural forms like walls, towers, and shelters. The content of her work is deeply humanistic, and elicits complex responses through its combination of monumental scale, rough materials, and suggestive shape and mass. The artist creates her sculpture with cedar beams which she painstakingly cuts, assembles, and laminates, finally rubbing powdered graphite into the work's textured, faceted surfaces. She deliberately uses cedar boards milled into 4" by 4" widths with varied lengths, creating a neutrality or "blank canvas" which enables her to dip into a wide range of possibilities often within the arena of the psychological and emotional. As von Rydingsvard explains this approach: "If I were to say how it is that I break the convention of sculpture (and I'm not sure that's what I do or even if that's what I want to do), it would be by climbing into the work in a way that's highly personal, that I can claim as being mine. The more mine it is, the more I'm able to break the convention."



Since its inception in 2000, the Rappaport Prize has been, foremost, an investment in both an individual and the broader community. For the artist it reflects recognition of his/her abilities, talent, and future

promise. For the international community it reflects the importance of art to encourage the value of creativity. Founded and funded by the Jerome Lyle Rappaport Charitable Foundation, the Rappaport Prize follows the Foundation's mission of promoting leadership in public policy, medical research, and art. Administered by the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, the Rappaport Prize fulfills the DeCordova's mission of supporting significant artists while educating the public about developments in contemporary American art.

"The Rappaport Prize recognizes the excitement of world class art created by someone nurtured in New England," said Foundation Chairperson Phyllis Rappaport. "We are delighted to honor Ursula's creative accomplishment and support continued expression of her vision."



Born in 1942 in Deensen, Germany, Von Rydingsvard spent much of her childhood in camps for displaced persons after the end of the Second World War. After emigrating to the United States, she received BA and MA degrees from the University of Miami at Coral Gables, an MFA from Columbia University, and an honorary doctorate from the Maryland Institute College of Art. The artist has received the Joan Mitchell Award, a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, and Individual

Artist Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and was profiled on the acclaimed PBS television series, *Art 21*. She currently lives in New York City, and maintains studios in Brooklyn and Accord, New York. In 2008 she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

"We are thrilled to have selected Ursula for the Rappaport Prize. She ranks among the most important sculptors of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and her work is consistently awe-inspiring. Moreover, she is an internationally-acknowledged leader in the fields of outdoor sculpture and public art" said DeCordova's Senior Curator Nick Capasso. "We are delighted that the Jerome Lyle Rappaport Charitable Foundation continues to support this important program and reward achievement and leadership in the art of our time."

"The Rappaport Prize is about recognizing excellence, and we are so pleased to be able to present it to an artist whom we have on display in the Sculpture Park." DeCordova Director Dennis Kois noted. "DeCordova has established the goal of becoming one of the preeminent sculpture parks in the U.S. within the next decade, and hence recognizing a sculptor of Ursula's caliber is a wonderful confluence for this institution."

Ursula von Rydingsvard's sculptures have been exhibited in the United States, England, France, Switzerland, Ireland, Poland, and Italy. She has been the subject of recent solo exhibitions at, among other venues, the Portland Museum of Art, OR; the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, NY; the Cranbrook Art Museum, MI; the Madison Art Center, WI; the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, UK; Storm King Art Center, NY; and the Laumeier Sculpture Park, MO. Her artworks can be found in many public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; the Museum of Modern Art, NY; the Walker Art Center, MN; the Brooklyn Museum of Art, NY; the Cincinnati Museum of Art, OH; the Detroit Institute of Arts, MI, and the High Museum of Art, GA.

She is represented by Galerie Lelong, New York and Paris. She has received two awards from the American International Critics Association (one for the second best exhibition in a commercial gallery in 2000 and the other for the best small museum show in 1992.)

Von Rydingsvard's large-scale outdoor sculpture, *ence pence*, has been on loan to the DeCordova Sculpture Park since 2001. This Fall it underwent conservation and stabilization for the enjoyment of future generations.

### **The Rappaport Prize Criteria**

Specifically, the Prize is established to foster two goals:

- Recognize the achievement and potential of an artist who has already demonstrated significant creativity and vision.
- Encourage the artist to continue in a career of art making.

The selected artist will:

- Produce artwork of exceptional quality
- Demonstrate excellence and leadership in their chosen practice
- Engage with 21st century aesthetic issues which have had a significant impact on contemporary visual art
- Support DeCordova's focus on contemporary American art

### **The Process for Selecting the Prize Winner**

This year the process for the Prize was significantly expanded. The Curatorial Staff of DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park invited a roster of thirty nationally prominent visual art professionals, museum directors, and curators to submit nominees for the Rappaport Prize. Among this year's nominators was Adam Weinberg, Director of the Whitney Museum, Toby Kamps, Curator of the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, Gary Garrels, Chief Curator of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and Anne Pasternak, Director of CreativeTIME, New York City. After reviewing all nominees, the DeCordova's Curators and Director select the Prize winner. Applications are not accepted for the Prize and all media are considered. DeCordova does not discriminate based on age, financial status, reputation, race, sexual orientation, or gender.

### **Past Rappaport Prize Winners Include**

- 2000 Jennifer Hall (interactive media)
- 2001 Annee Spileos Scott (multimedia installations)
- 2002 Lars-Erik Fisk (sculpture)
- 2003 John Bisbee (sculpture)
- 2004 Debra Olin (prints and printed constructions)
- 2005 Sarah Walker (painting)
- 2006 Abelardo Morell (photography)
- 2007 María Magdalena Campos-Pons (multimedia)

### **About the Jerome Lyle Rappaport Charitable Foundation**

The Jerome Lyle Rappaport Charitable Foundation sponsors the work of new and emerging leaders to increase this region's capacity for generating effective public policy solutions, breakthroughs for neurologic and mental illnesses, and world-class art. The work is accomplished through strategic partnerships with Harvard University, Suffolk Law School, Massachusetts General Hospital, McLean Hospital and DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park. The Foundation's desire is to connect individuals with demonstrated leadership capability, intellectual rigor, and integrity, who can make meaningful change in greater Boston. The Foundation fosters innovative thinking, productive dialogue, and creative alliances to build a better future. It values and rewards those who show commitment and success, and provides grant recipients with opportunities and resources to strengthen their careers in countless ways.

For more information about the Jerome Lyle Rappaport Charitable Foundation, visit:

<http://www.rappaportfoundation.org>

### **DeCordova General Information**

DeCordova is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm and on selected Monday holidays. General admission during Museum hours is \$12 for adults, \$8 for senior citizens, students, and youth ages 6–12. Children age 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. The Store @ DeCordova and the School Gallery are open Monday through Thursday, 9:30 am to 7:30 pm, Friday through Saturday, 9:30 am to 5:30 pm, and Sunday 10:30 am to 5:30 pm. The Café @ DeCordova is open Tuesday from noon to 3 pm, and Wednesday through Sunday from 11 am to 4 pm. 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 May to October. All guided public tours are free with Campus admission. Visit [www.decordova.org](http://www.decordova.org) or call 781/259-8355 for further information.

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