The inaugural art exhibition in Denver Botanic Gardens’ new Freyer – Newman Center is *Ursula von Rydingsvard: The Contour of Feeling*, an ambitious celebration of one of the most influential sculptors working today. On view May 1 – September 20, 2020, *The Contour of Feeling* is the artist’s first solo exhibition in Denver. Von Rydingsvard is renowned for her towering cedar and bronze public outdoor sculptures; this exhibition provides a unique, indoor opportunity to experience a large collection of cedar sculptures and works on paper.

*The Contour of Feeling* is guest curated by Mark Rosenthal, former curator at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. and is organized by The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) in Philadelphia. The exhibition is included with general admission. Related programs will be announced later.

The exhibition focuses on work made since 2000, anchored by early work from the 1970s – 1980s and a grouping of small objects collected and created by the artist, including strands of her brother’s hair, fragments of cedar, knitting, linen and personal photographs. Von Rydingsvard’s abstract works on handmade linen paper incorporate surprising materials—such as knotted silk from a red scarf, tangles of thread, hair, lace, graphite and pigment—into the paper medium itself.

Guest curator Mark Rosenthal says, “This exhibition has proven to be a revelation for both those unfamiliar and well-versed with von Rydingsvard’s work. *The Contour of Feeling* has achieved universal critical praise and resulted in a greatly enhanced audience for this supreme artist.”
Lisa Eldred, Denver Botanic Gardens’ director of exhibitions, art & learning engagement; head curator of art adds, “We are thrilled to open the Freyer - Newman Center with this exhibition of significant works by Ursula von Rydingsvard. The Freyer - Newman Center is an important venue for connecting audiences with artists and the natural world.”

About the Artist
Ursula von Rydingsvard was born in 1942 in Deensen, Germany. The daughter of a woodcutter from a long line of peasant farmers, she spent her early years in the wooden barracks of refugee camps at the end of World War II. While the artist resists straightforward biographical readings of her works, she speaks of those critical years of her youth as woven into her subconscious or instinct, which in turn leaves an imprint on her art. She often uses variations of Polish words for titles, which she prefers to leave untranslated to preserve the enigmatic nature of her work. Her work is part of more than 30 museum collections, including: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, NY; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; Storm King Art Center, New Windsor, NY; and the Detroit Institute of Arts, MI. She has received honors including a Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in the Arts from the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the 2019 Artist Award for Distinguished Body of Work from the College Art Association, the Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture, the Guggenheim Fellowship, three awards from the American section of the International Association of Art Critics, the International Sculpture Center Lifetime Achievement Award, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The artist lives in New York City and works in Brooklyn.

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_Ursula van Rydingsvard: The Contour of Feeling_ is organized by The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, and guest curator Mark Rosenthal, and is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts; Heidi and Tom McWilliams; Agnes Gund; Harvey S. Shipley Miller, the Shipley Miller Foundation; the Arcadia Foundation; Barbara B. and Theodore R. Aronson; the Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation; Katie Adams Schaeffer and Tony Schaeffer; Maja Pamgarten and John Parker; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; ForGood Fund; Henry S. McNeil; Constance H. Williams; Jill and Sheldon Bonovitz; Tony and Lynn Hitschler; and Anonymous Donors.

About Denver Botanic Gardens: Green inside and out, Denver Botanic Gardens was founded in 1951 and is considered one of the top botanical gardens in the United States and a pioneer in water conservation. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Gardens’ living collections encompass specimens from the tropics to the tundra, showcasing a plant palette chosen to thrive in Colorado’s semi-arid climate. The Gardens is a dynamic, 24-acre urban oasis in the heart of the city, offering unforgettable opportunities to flourish with unique garden experiences for the whole family – as well as world-class education and plant conservation research programs. Additional sites extend this experience throughout the Front Range: Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms is a 700-acre native plant refuge with an active farm in Jefferson County; Mount Goliath is a high-altitude trail and interpretive site on the Mount Evans Scenic Byway. The Gardens also manages programming at Plains Conservation Center in Aurora. For more information, visit us online at www.botanicgardens.org.