

CRISTIN TIERNEY



Malia Jensen at Cristin Tierney

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image: Malia Jensen, *Worth Your Salt*, 2020. HD video. 6 hours. Courtesy the artist and Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York.

Nearer Nature

In the four-channel video from Malia Jensen's current show at Cristin Tierney, a group of deer take turns to lick a white, egg-shaped object placed on top of a wooden pedestal. Upon closer inspection, the form of a head is recognized, resembling Brancusi's *Sleeping Muse*. The head, we learn, is made of salt, and the deer are attracted to it for its mineral content, using it as a salt lick.

The footage in this six-hour video titled *Worth Your Salt* includes thousands of 30-second clips taken from trail cameras set up by Jensen

across the state of Oregon. In it, deer and other wildlife are shown interacting with, or in the scenes surrounding her sculptures of cast salt. Other salt sculptures she placed outdoors include a hand (holding a plum), a foot, a chest, and a pile of donuts. Combined, they refer to parts of the human body: the head, the torso, the trunk, and the extremities.

Relinquishing control and allowing for disintegration by either animal or element, the objects in the video suggest a return to nature and the human figure offering itself back to the wild. In the gallery, the same forms are shown cast in translucent white glass, taking what became of the objects and preserving them as permanent memorials. This contrast between temporal, natural, and permanent—crossing over between video and object—gathers several ideas about the states of physical objects, being, life, and existence. Some humor, however, is also offered in the sculpture titled *Donuts*, referencing the anatomical stomach. It reminds us that joyfulness and play are equally important to our experience of nature and moments of time.

The show's title, *Nearer Nature*, refers to a larger project of Jensen's where *Worth Your Salt* counts as one of four site-oriented works. Among these, one involves natural clay deposits on the coast of Oregon that become affected by the rising tides. The same sense of Jensen's poetic ingress into the natural world is suggested there. Here at the gallery, one is offered a product of this interaction first-hand.