

CRISTIN TIERNEY

BLAKE GOPNIK on art



Mar 15, 2021

AT CRISTIN TIERNEY, MALIA JENSEN PROVES THAT ANIMALS HAVE A TASTE FOR ART.

THE DAILY PIC shows some stills from a peculiar kind of “surveillance” video included in “Nearer Nature,” Malia Jensen’s current show at Cristin Tierney gallery in New York.

Where most such videos, at least in museums, are meant to capture humans in the act of coping a feel of the art, Jensen records wild animals completing her work by touching it.

For her project, Jensen took the salt-licks that farmers put out for livestock and carved them into various traditionally sculptural shapes: a head, a breast, two hands, a foot. (Also, I’m told, a “stack of doughnuts,” which I read as biomorphic abstraction.) Then she placed the licks into wild settings and let the wilderness go at them. It turns out that deer have a fine taste for art.

I really do believe that good art has a function for humans, but it’s nice to see it having a still truer function for these beasts. For thousands of centuries, we’ve been messing

CRISTIN TIERNEY

with their nature. It seems only fair to let them mess with our culture, and really get something out of it.