

ASHLEY, GET YOUR GUN

A SAN FRANCISCO
ARTIST'S WORK TAKES A
SHOT AT BEAUTY.



ASHLEY TUDOR'S ARTWORK, a line of bronze animal skulls with antlers, is hauntingly beautiful. For some of the pieces, her creation begins when she pulls the trigger of the gun that ends the animal's life. To understand her work, you have to know how she feels about food and hunting.

When the artist and cookbook author took up the sport five years ago, it seemed like an unlikely pursuit for the self-described "girly girl" whose appearance seems more in line with high-fashion platform heels than rugged hunting boots. But for Tudor, an avowed proponent of the Paleo diet, a search for the best protein available led her to a remote Idaho wilderness, where she shot her first elk. "Most people forget that the plastic-wrapped meat they buy in the store was once a living, breathing animal," she says. "I know the quality of my food and where it came from."

That knowledge doesn't make the process easier for a woman who grew up in San Francisco's tony Pacific Heights neighborhood, where spotting a hunter is as unlikely as trapping a jackalope. "Shooting an animal is bittersweet. You are sorry that it is gone, but you are grateful for the life-giving food," she says. "The butchering is not easy; it's a very unpleasant and dirty process. But it transforms the way you see the world."

Tudor's distaste for waste led her to explore uses for an inedible piece: the skull. After she has harvested the meat from an animal, she creates a mold of the skull and uses it to make a bronze replica. Then she adorns the metal piece with real antlers. "My work is a modern twist on a traditional European mount," she says. It's a look that has high-end designers hunting down her art at mod emporiums such as Coup d'Etat in San Francisco and BDDW in New York.

For those who don't agree with her method, Tudor has some straight-shooting talk: "Many find the process disgusting," she says. "But what disgusts me is the way many farm animals are treated. To me, that is truly revolting."