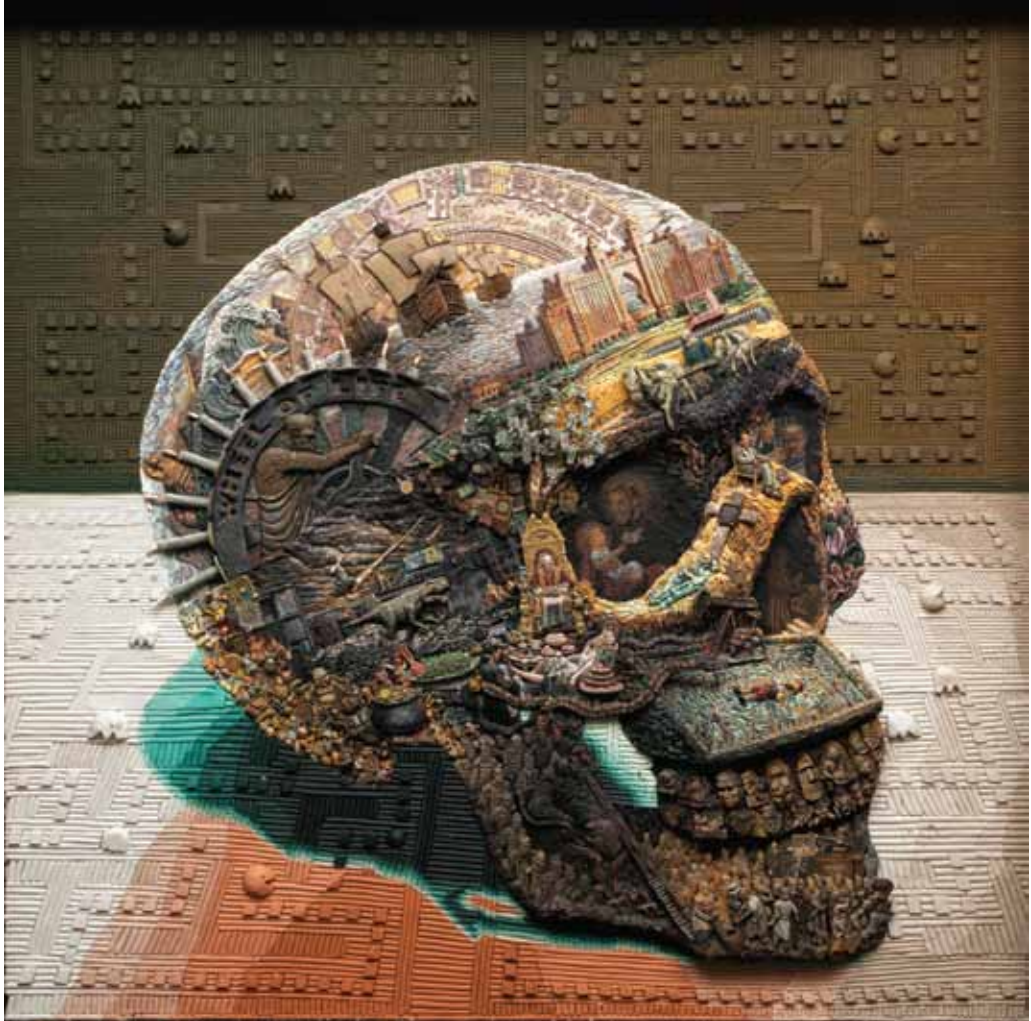




MONDONGO



SKULL, Plastilina on wood, 200X200X20cm, 2011/12
© MONDONGO, Courtesy Art Sawa

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RETABLO ,Plastilina on wood,300X182X28cm,2012

© MONDONGO,Courtesy Art Sawa



SAN FRANCISCO ,MIXED MEDIA ON WOOD ,112X82X55 cm,2012
 © MONDONGO,Courtesy Art Sawa



SANTA ISABEL ,MIXED MEDIA ON WOOD ,112X82X55 cm,2012
 © MONDONGO,Courtesy Art Sawa

|MONDONGO|

Opening : Tuesday 16th Oct 2012 07:00 PM in the presence of the artist .

Exhibition : 16|10|12 till 28|10|12

Venue : Art Sawa |DIFC

"The play's the thing"

Hamlet Act 2, scene 2, 603-605

For cultural iconoclasm, playful irreverence and magpie bohemianism, there are few to beat Mondongo, the art collective from Argentina. This feature that marks them out starts ab initio, or from the very beginning of their existence.

The trio who make up Mondongo, first looked into the kitchen to give a name to themselves. Their Muse was "Mondongo," the word for the traditional Argentine tripe stew.

Mondongo is not only partial to the name of the stew, but make their work from a cauldron of ingredients. "We've used a huge variety of materials in our art, depending on what best reinforces the concept of the work," says one of them.

"It's always a process of experimentation until we finish it. We'll keep experimenting with materials till death comes!" Or they run out of material, both possibilities which don't seem anywhere near. Just about everything – we mean everything – is grist to their feverish art making imagination.

The material they use for their mixed media art include burnt toast, stale bread, resin, gold chains, nails, clay, velvet, coloured sequins, cookies and bullets. This wide variety of mediums they use give them leverage to create an astonishing range of art results. They helped the artists burnish their works with vivid colours, subtle nuances and that often provide a three-dimensional effect to their pieces.

Scale or detail does not frighten them. They can condense a city block in a cabinet triptych or a forest in a frame. A human skull, which is thing for morbid fascination for most of us, is only yet one more object d'art for Mondongo to try their transformative skills.

In their hands, it becomes a canvas to carve African totems, dinosaur - or even Dubai's Atlantis, which fronts a sea with mediaeval sailing ships in it. The total impact is such that we are sure if Shakespeare's Hamlet had got his hands on it, he would have burst into another immortal monologue like "Alas, poor Yorick!"

"We are like three witches stirring it up in a cauldron... attempting to alchemise, to distil and to ooze all the chaos and the all possible 'all-ness' in it," they say in their manifesto, taking their Puckish Shakespearean imagery further.

Bold and inventive, Mondongo does not fear to go where others fear even to enter. What is more, their art is so inviting and unique that viewers are mesmerised into following them on their journey. Their social experiments, blessed by an in-your-face sass, does not shy away from exposing the dark undertows of daily subjects. True, some of their offerings have an erotic twist while some precariously walk the tightrope between playfulness and disrespect. But, to their credit, they have an unsullied standing in the art world. Mondongo's work is now not only held in high esteem in Argentina, with their Buenos Aires gallery talking about "Mondongo mania," but has begun to make an impact internationally, with works collected by the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, the Tate Gallery, UK and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Their work is found in public and private collections worldwide and they have exhibited at the Valencia and Sao Paulo biennials, shown in the USA, (Art Basel Miami), Spain, UK, China, Korea and Latin America.

Muhammed Yusuf /The Gulf Today/Sharjah.