



MONDONGO

Mondongo is the word for a traditional Argentine tripe stew. It is also the name for the internationally renowned Argentine artists' collective who will have their first UK exhibition at Maddox Arts this winter.

above: Mondongo, Tetitas, 2008.
Plasticine on board, 200 x 200 x 6 cm

right: Mondongo, Bebes, 2008,
Plasticine on board, 200 x 200 x 6 cm / 200 x 200 x 6 cm

Juliana Laffitte, Manuel Mendanha and Agustina Picasso who founded Mondongo in 1999, are not only partial to 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 Manuel Mendanha. "It's always a process of experimentation until we finish it. We'll keep experimenting with materials 'til death comes!"

A favoured medium is food, freeze-dried and vacuum-sealed in layers of resin; everything from slabs of meat to Oreo biscuits and Ritz crackers. It's all about the lowest common denominator of consumer living - trinkets, cookies, sausages, jelly babies. The work revels in the tawdry and the grotesque, '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...' Mondongo, 2008 (from the Mondongo Manifesto).

So at Maddox Arts you will see cats' heads on human bodies, posed pornographically in a forest; a portrait made up of a mass of images of a baby girl; an image of a girl whose face is made from plasticine 'breasts', raised in higher relief around her forehead, chin and cheeks, with pointillist plasticine dots marking out the nose, mouth and eyes.



Also on show are Mondongo images that Comme Des Garçons has used in its 2008 printed material. Rei Kawakubo, designer for the store, loves the power of Mondongo's work and initiated the collaboration with the collective, elements of which can be seen at Dover Street Market (London). Playing Mondongo at their own game, Comme des Garçons has appropriated the artists' work, naturally with their full approval, to communicate store openings through 2008. Mondongo's highly original, creative work is thus used to reflect the essence of the Comme des Garçons brand. Kawakubo has also customised various Mondongo images to create twenty curated pages for Wallpaper* magazine (October 2008), including a limited edition cover.

Mondongo's work is now not only well received in Argentina, with their Buenos Aires gallery talking about 'Mondongo mania', but has begun to make an impact internationally, with works collected by board members of the Tate Gallery and the Museum of Modern Art (New York). Mondongo's work is held in public and private collections worldwide and they have exhibited at the Valencia and Sao Paulo biennials, shown in the USA, Spain and Latin America and are scheduled to exhibit in Korea in 2009.

Launched in October 2007, Maddox Arts has established a varied programme to profile emerging and established

international artists, including: Artists Anonymous, Li Bo, Gordon Cheung, Mat Collishaw, Magdalena Fernandez, Peter Griffin, Simon Hitchens and Heli Rekula, amongst others. Guest curators have included James Putnam and Ruth Auerbach.

Gallery Director Mario Palencia is keen to profile the work of international artists, including those of Latin America, who are largely unrepresented in commercial

galleries outside of their own countries. Comme des Garçons has long championed the crossover between art and fashion, working with artists who, in the company's words 'mix strength and beauty'. Mondongo joins Cindy Sherman and Daniel Buren in this illustrious line-up.

Mondongo runs 21 November – 10 January 2009 at Maddox Arts, 52 Brook's Mews, London W1K 4ED. Telephone: +44 (0)20 7495 3101 www.maddoxarts.com



left: Mondongo, Cape Korea, 2008, Plasticine on board. Diptych (Two pieces of identical size), 100 x 100 cm / 100 x 100 cm

below: Mondongo, Catwalk (three pieces), 2008, Earth, cotton thread, plasticine and feathers on board. 112 x 200 x 6cm / 192 x 200 x 6cm / 176 x 200 x 6cm

