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Art Review: Mondongo @ Maddox Arts

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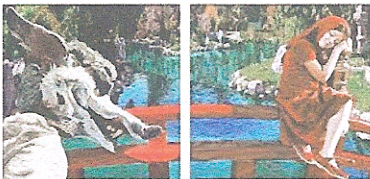
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The Argentinian art collective Mondongo (the word for a traditional Argentinian tripe stew) are renowned for using a wide range of materials in their work - freeze-dried slabs of meat and biscuits, plasticine and hair. Unenticing as it sounds, their work still manages to be reminiscent and beautiful.

The textiles-aspect of their work means that it is a delight to study up close - the feathers, cotton thread

and plasticine that make up their large-scale pieces are cleverly disguised by the mass of colour that overrules from a further vantage point. At long range, the massive works must rely on colour and style to catch the eye and create a mood - and this they do in abundance. In one piece, the bright sky nestles against the darkest image - a body lies in front of us, green and ghoulish; a pipeline leads to nowhere; a fairy castle peeps ominously from behind trees. What happened here, we want to know? Tiny distant details transport us into this strange world - a white bridge, a faraway turret - and all this achieved with hours of hard graft and industrial-sized packets of plasticine.

The work seems also seems most international in its associations - the latter piece recalls Bavaria or some magical land, as well as a hollow, spooky film set; one of the Red Riding Hood pieces suggests and Impressionistic France; and another, beautiful and tropical, across the Sargasso sea into a jungle of florid colours. Sometimes serene - Little Red Riding Hood sits quietly, her hand on her face, staring at something beyond us - and sometimes grotesque - featuring human bodies in pornographic poses with cats' heads in a dark forest - Mondongo nevertheless create something that, with all its ingredients, creates an associative feeling. It's surely what should lie within the core of an artistic product - something to look at and disappear into, that sparks off a mass of responses and reactions.

Image: Cape Korea, by Mondongo 2008, plasticine on board. Mondongo's work can be viewed at [Maddox Arts](#) until 10 January.

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