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## [Filling in the Details: Mondongo & “Polyptych of Buenos Aires” \(/blogs/inside-mfah/filling-in-the-details-mondongo-polyptych-of-buenos-aires\)](#)

By [Kerry Ingram \(/blogs/inside-mfah/author/kerry-ingram\)](#)



One of the artworks you might find yourself spending the most time studying in the exhibition *HOME—So Different, So Appealing (/home)* is *Polyptych of Buenos Aires* by Mondongo, a collective of Argentinean artists.

Houston audiences may remember the group’s work from the similarly intricate *Calavera 4 (/art/detail/105433)* previously on view in the Museum’s permanent collection galleries. *Polyptych of Buenos Aires* also features many carefully modeled details, this time in a monumental display evoking traditional European altarpieces—particularly the *Ghent Altarpiece* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/19/science/ghent-altarpiece-restoration.html>) by Jan and Hubert van Eyck.



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Jan and Hubert van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, 1432, oil on wood, Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium.

Whereas the *Ghent Altarpiece* depicts the city of God above, and the world of men below, *Polyptych of Buenos Aires* features a stock-market chart dotting the sky above Villa 31, a vast shantytown that surrounds the main train station in Buenos Aires. Villa 31 is located close to the city’s financial district and “just 10 blocks from the opera,” Mondongo member Manuel Mendanha notes.

Juliana Laffitte, another member of the collective, grew up near the shantytown. Both artists say it is important to them to show how people live in their home country, because nearly a third of Argentina’s population falls under the poverty line.

***Watch Manuel Mendanha and Juliana Laffitte discuss their work in a Facebook Live video:***

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**See more in “*HOME—So Different, So Appealing* (<http://www.mfah.org/home>),” on view in the Law Building through January 21.**