

# CASA DE MUNECAS

Discussion with MARIANA MONTEAGUDO



**MARIANA MONTEAGUDO** is a Miami based Venezuelan artist who has been working her series of doll sculptures over the last decade. Her latex, ceramic and mixed-media dolls are intriguing and fascinating. Her artwork shows interest in a wide range of expressions, from the pre-Columbian aesthetics, to fashion, tv pop culture, Japanese manga and mass-market toys. We had a chance to talk to her recently. Enjoy.



**There is something sinister yet innocent about the doll sculptures you create. What do they mean to you?**

They mean everything to me. I cannot conceive waking up without an idea of how I will improve a piece, or how what I do during the day will contribute to my work. At the beginning the doll was just a pretext, a way of expression; after 15 years Iâ€™ve discovered that it's much more than that. For me the image of the classic doll depicts an ideal of beauty and innocence of childhood, but is somehow an over-dimension of tenderness that often touches the monstrous. My characters are inspired in dolls, but at the end they are a reflection of human expressions and emotions. Is a subtle sense of palpitation what I am looking for; is the constant search of that â€œthingâ€ you cannot quite explain





with words.

(Continues below)

"It is not easy to get out of your comfort zone and start from square one. But ultimately everything is for a good reason, and an opportunity to open your mind to new things."  
- M.M.



What's the process of making them? How do you come up with the various expressions on the faces?

It starts with an inspiration, it can be virtually anything. I usually conceive a group of pieces as if it was a cast from a theater play; every character has a specific role in the story. For instance, this time I have been obsessed with the classic images of the circus and the 1930's Tod Browning's film "Freaks". A heartbreaking story of the human dramas within a traveling circus. So my new group is taking a lot from this story, and from the circus world. I begin with a theme, a starting point; then it evolves by itself, opening new windows to other reflections and sources of inspirations.



Are you into toy collecting?

Oh yes, I love collecting dolls. In fact I could say that when it comes to my work, I have the personality of a collector. That pervasive feeling of nostalgia (and an obsessive sense of







accumulation) of collectors permeates into my work.

**What medium is one you would like to explore with your work that has not happened yet?**

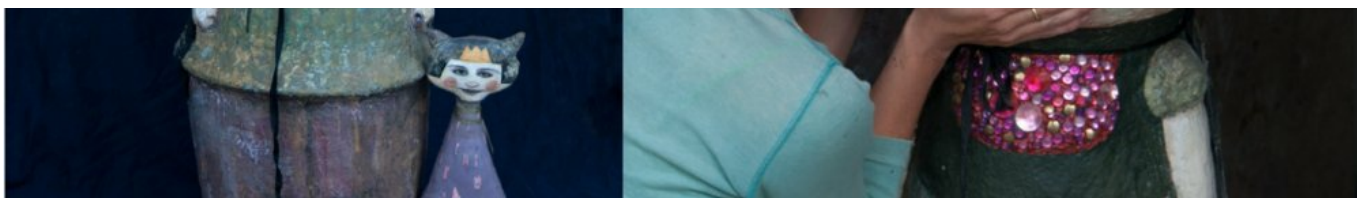
Inflatable sculptures, fiberglass, resin, bronze, so many things yet to explore.



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### Anything coming up?

Yes, a new exciting group of pieces. I am currently producing approximately 20 pieces for my representing gallery in Europe.

### Lowest point in your art career was when?

When I moved to the US and had to figure out a new way to make my sculptures. It was hard to adapt myself to a whole new environment. It is not easy to get out of your comfort zone and start from square one. But ultimately everything is for a good reason, and an opportunity to open your mind to new things.

### Highest point in your career so far has been?

It is hard to pinpoint a high point in my career. In some ways, I consider my work to be in constant evolution. So, every new set of pieces is a new highest point. But I guess that my 2 solo shows in Madrid in 2002 and 2004, and my participation in the 2010 Sao Paulo Art fair have a special place in my heart. You don't get to be alongside with great contemporary masters like Damien Hirst, Vik Muniz or Joana Vasconcelos every day. Also I am very proud of being part of collections

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To learn more about Mariana Monteagudo visit her site at:

[MARIANA MONTEAGUDO](#)

such as the MOLAA Museum of Latin American Art in California, the Everson Museum in New York, and The C sar Gaviria Trujillo collection (former President of Colombia and Secretary General of the Organization of American States).