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Brothers' photo art a contrast in style

By Steve Bennett - Express-News
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In Antidepressivos (antidepressants), a largescale photograph by Mexican artist Gerardo Montiel Klint, a solitary woman sits at her dining table, face and eyes cast downward in contemplation, a glass of water and a box of Prozac within reach. It is a somber, shadowy image, patterned after the Dutch master painter Johannes Vermeer.

By contrast, Queremos Pastel (We Want Cake), by Gerardo's younger brother Fernando, is a surrealistic riot of color and strange goingson, including a woman stabbing a piñata and a white-coated orderly leaning on a prosthetic leg. The pot-bellied clown collapsed in a chair has obviously already enjoyed his birthday confection.

Are the Brothers Montiel Klint opposite sides of the same coin? Distorted reflections of one another?

Yes and no. The proof, and lack of it, is evident in the stunning small exhibition No Escape: Photographs of the Brothers Montiel Klint at the San Antonio Museum of Art, part of FotoSeptiembre USA and the 2010 Mexico-San Antonio celebration.

The artists will participate in a public conversation with curator David Rubin at 6:30 tonight. The event is free and open to the public.

"What I find really interesting," Rubin says, "is the very different approaches of the two brothers. Gerardo's is sort of introspective while Fernando's is much more extroverted and confrontational."

Besides blood, one quality that binds the Brothers Montiel Klint is a sense of drama. Meticulously staged, dramatically lit and pregnant with symbolism, both brothers' work walks the troublesome side of the street, dealing with life's toughest challenges, from incurable disease to suicide. There are no easy answers.

The brothers collaborate in a successful Mexico City advertising agency (see www.klint&photo.com) but work independently when making photographic art.

"We do interchange ideas about our work, usually when we are beginning a new individual project," Gerardo says. "But, as you can see, we have different tastes and approaches to what we are looking for."

No Escape features 13 large prints — seven by Gerardo, born in 1968, and six by Fernando, born in 1978, dating to 2003.

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