

**LASA – Latin American Studies Association – International Congress**  
**May 26-30, 2026 – Paris, France**  
**Panel: Extreme Geographies in Latin American Cultural Imaginaries**

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Title:

*The Map Beyond the Seen: Speculative Geographies in the Work of the Montiel Klint Brothers*

Abstract:

Vilém Flusser argues that photography is not the world itself but a map of the world: a coded model that brings us closer to reality while allowing us to interpret, imagine, and reconfigure it. Building on this premise, this paper asks: can the invention of fictitious geographies in photography function as a laboratory for exploring distinct articulations of the human—one in metaphysical introspection, the other in dystopian projection?

I examine two photographic series by the Mexican artists Gerardo and Fernando Montiel Klint. Gerardo Montiel Klint's *Finlandia* transforms geography into an interior and metaphysical realm, where landscapes emerge as expressions of the unconscious and archetypal imagery, prompting reflection on introspection and inner experience. In contrast, Fernando Montiel Klint's *Dystopia* constructs hypermodern, posthuman scenarios: technologically modified bodies, manipulated DNA, and pervasive digital surveillance that envision unsettling yet seductive possible futures.

Framed through Flusser's notion of photography as mapping, and in dialogue with Edward Soja's theorization of imagined spaces, Gilles Lipovetsky's reflections on hypermodernity, and posthumanist thought from Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway, these series function as speculative cartographies. They suggest, through these works, two distinct articulations of the human: one immersed in the introspective, metaphysical terrains of *Finlandia*, the other navigating the synthetic, dystopian terrains of *Dystopia*.

By inventing terrains that do not exist, these works transform the act of seeing into experimentation. Photography becomes a laboratory for imagining extreme experiences, testing perceptual boundaries, and contemplating multiple possible futures, moving from the seen to the imagined, in line with the title, *The Map Beyond the Seen*.