The background of the cover is an abstract painting featuring a complex arrangement of thick, expressive brushstrokes. The colors are primarily shades of red, orange, and grey, with some darker tones of black and brown. The composition is dynamic, with strokes varying in length and intensity, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is raw and energetic, reflecting the themes of the journal.

BI-MONTHLY JOURNAL ON ANTONIN ARTAUD

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ECHO  
ANTONIN ARTAUD

## The Tarahumaras: Antonin Artaud's Quest for Eternity

In this tenth issue of Écho Antonin Artaud, we invite you to delve into the mysteries of the Sierra Tarahumara, retracing the journey Antonin Artaud undertook in 1936. This voyage, both spiritual and mystical, marks a pivotal moment in Artaud's work and thought, fueled by his quest for a forgotten, ancestral wisdom.

Guided by the insightful perspectives and work of three influential women—Raymonde Carasco, Renée Acosta, and Sylvie Marchand—we delve into the profound connection between Artaud and the Tarahumaras, where anthropology, art, photography, and cinema converge to unveil the soul of the Tarahumara people.

We are privileged to publish an exclusive interview with Erasmo Palma, conducted by Enrique Servin, in which Palma recounts having met Artaud as a child. This testimony, from a respected figure in the region, if verified, offers a new perspective on Artaud's time with the Tarahumaras.

Additionally, we are pleased to present an insightful article by long-time, previously reserved contributor Thierry Gilabert. We also feature the photographs of Régis Hebraud and Gérard Tournebize, whose works they have generously permitted us to include.

In this review we have the privilege to present details from large size oil paintings by Katonas Asimis that had been particularly inspired by the theynamics of this publication.

Finally, we are deeply honored to reproduce, with the gracious permission of Ernest Pignon-Ernest, his Study for Antonin Artaud, Ivry Hospital, 1998 – a powerful piece that resonates profoundly within this issue dedicated to Artaud's suffering. This suffering, ever-present during his journey in Tarahumara territory, marked each step of his quest.

This tenth issue, brimming with discoveries, serves as a vivid tribute to Artaud's quest to understand and transcend his suffering. We hope you enjoy your journey into the Sierra !



COVER: ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY KATONAS ASIMIS

WEBSITE: [K-ASIMIS.COM](http://K-ASIMIS.COM)

If you would like to download the previous 9 issues of our magazine in PDF format for free, learn more about who we are, or read the thirty exclusive articles on our blog, visit: [echoantoninartaud.com](http://echoantoninartaud.com)

Photo: Tomás Montero

## Why the Tarahumaras?

Why Mexico, and why the Tarahumaras? In a letter dated July 19, 1935, addressed to Jean Paulhan, Artaud openly expresses his desire to travel to Mexico: "For a long time, I have heard about a sort of underlying movement in Mexico toward a return to pre-Cortez civilization. It seemed incredibly moving to me, so I inquired, particularly with Robert Ricard, who had just returned from there and, I believe, stayed at the French School of Mexico. (...) I don't think this pre-Cortez movement is aware of the magic it's searching for, but when I shared my project and ideas with Robert Ricard, a student of Professor Rivet, he told me: 'These people don't really know what they're looking for.'"

Who is Robert Ricard? In 1933, Robert Ricard defended a 400-page dissertation at the Sorbonne, under the supervision of Professor Rivet, titled *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*. In this work, he argues that the state of Chihuahua (Sierra Tarahumara) is one of the most untouched regions of Mexico, where the inhabitants have not changed their customs due to geographic isolation. Ricard draws on various sources, including Joseph Neumann's *The Revolt of the Tarahumara Indians 1626-1724* [1], notes from Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka (late 19th century), observations by Carlos Basauri (*Mexican Folkways*, 1927), and the reports of Norwegian ethnographer Carl Sofus Lumholtz, who conducted several expeditions to Mexico between 1890 and 1910 [2].

Could the key to Artaud's desire to travel to Mexico lie with Alfonso Reyes? Specifically, a letter dated April 16, 1936, in which Artaud asked the Mexican poet to recommend a people of "pure race" [3]. Who was Reyes? Alfonso Reyes, author of the poem *Yeras del Tarahumara* (1934) and *Situation of Atlantis* (1932) [4].

[1] Joseph Neumann was a Jesuit missionary born in Brussels in 1648. In 1678, he left Prague for Mexico, and in January 1681, he traveled to what is now the state of Chihuahua. In his book, Neumann focuses on the revolts of the Tarahumaras and their resistance against Spanish colonization. He highlights the difficulties missionaries encountered in their efforts to evangelize the Tarahumaras and, as he put it, "cure them of their vices." According to Neumann, the Tarahumaras were particularly hostile and even massacred several missionaries: "The Tarahumara people, up until then, remained in their paganism, and whether they liked it or not, the Spaniards no longer lived among the Indians. But God took pity on this unfortunate and difficult people: He sent them two Fathers of the Society of Jesus, Father José Tarda, from Valencia, and Father Tomas of Guadalajara, from Puebla de los Angeles. They were their first missionaries. (...) This people, by nature and temperament, are deceitful and cunning, and nothing sincere can be expected from them. They are unparalleled hypocrites: the best ones, apparently, are often the worst. In front of the missionary, they speak to their own people one way, and in secret, they teach them the opposite. The devil, for his part, kept them always mired in their vices: the few adults willing to be baptized was proof of this. Their faith, lacking solid roots, was only a façade of Christianity; and since they are naturally inconsistent and changeable, many of them, even after baptism, returned to their forests."

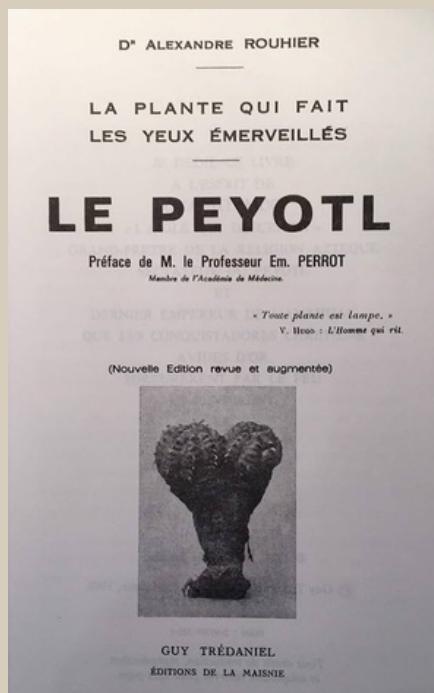
[2] Norwegian explorer Carl Sofus Lumholtz, author of *Unknown Mexico* (1902), reportedly lived among the Tarahumaras for an entire year. Descendants of Carl Sofus Lumholtz, of both indigenous and Norwegian descent, still live in the region today.

[3] REYES, Alfonso: Artaud, on ne joue pas tristement avec les dieux, University of Mexico, June 1992. [4] See: Marcello Galluci's *Antonin Artaud and the Myth of Atlantis* and Lars Krutak's *Surreal or Unreal: Antonin Artaud in the Sierra Tarahumaras of Mexico* (2014).

Why Peyote? In 1931, René Guénon published one of the most significant works of his career, *The Symbolism of the Cross*. In Chapter IX, titled "The Tree of the Middle," Guénon references Dr. Alexandre Rouhier's book *The Plant That Makes Eyes Marvel: Peyote* in a footnote. He writes: "Another symbolism that could lead to interesting parallels is found among certain peoples of Central America, who, 'at the intersection of two perpendicular diameters drawn within a circle, place the sacred cactus, peyote or hicouri, symbolizing the cup of immortality and which is thus believed to be located at the center of a hollow sphere and at the center of the world'" (A. Rouhier, *The Plant That Makes Eyes Marvel: Peyote*).

Alexandre Rouhier's *The Plant That Makes Eyes Marvel: Peyote* was published in 1927, making it contemporary with Artaud's time. It's very likely that Dr. Allendy, who treated Artaud, may have had this book in his library. Could Artaud have viewed peyote as a potential cure for his lifelong nerve disorder? To answer this, one would need to delve deeper into Rouhier's work.

You might ask, what does this have to do with the Tarahumaras? Well, there is indeed a connection. In Chapter II of the same book, two sub-chapters are titled *The Cult of Peyote Among the Tarahumaras* and *The Peyote Festivals*. In these sections, Rouhier describes the rituals, dances, and songs of the Tarahumaras. "It is interesting to note that in the north of Nayarit, the Tarahumaras of the state of Chihuahua, who have only distant ethnic and linguistic affinities with the Huichols and are geographically separated by several hundred miles, also revere Peyote."



Excerpts from the book *The Bachall Isou* or *The Cane of Saint-Artaud* by Ilios Chailly. A new edition, corrected for certain errors and expanded with an additional twenty pages, is currently in preparation.

## In the Footsteps of the Tarahumaras: Artaud's Mystical Odyssey

After traveling alone to Havana aboard the *San Matteo*; after spending seven months in Mexico City, writing day and night, subsisting on butter sandwiches at the *Café de Paris* on Calle Gante; after giving impassioned lectures, sleeping at the *Casa de Ruth* brothel, and trading his family watch for baking soda in Garibaldi Square; after mingling with the Mexican intelligentsia, frightening the maid of painter María Izquierdo, collaborating with the country's leading newspapers, and saving a dwarf severely intoxicated by heroin in the dim light of a clandestine shop in Colonia Buenos Aires; after all this, in search of healing, Antonin Artaud decided to set out once more, alone, to meet the Tarahumara Indians, deep in the wild folds of the Sierra Madre Occidental in northern Mexico.

Thanks to his persistence in the national press and the support of friends like José Gorostiza and Samuel Ramos, Artaud secured a grant from the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Public Education to study Tarahumara culture. Furthermore, through the intervention of Jaime Torres Bodet and the French ambassador to Mexico, Henri Goiran, he received a pass instructing the authorities in the state of Chihuahua to facilitate his travels and offer accommodation in village schools. "When he told us he was leaving for the Sierra Tarahumara, we were quite worried. He was so unwell and heavily intoxicated," recalled Mexican photographer Lola Alvarez Bravo.

Artaud's journey likely began at the Buenavista train station in late August, where he boarded a train, wearing beige flannel trousers, bidding farewell to his friend Luis Cardoza. In 1936, the full Chihuahua-Pacific line (*El Chepe*) was not yet operational, so Artaud would have taken the available trains of the time. After a three- to four-day journey covering roughly 1,500 kilometers, the train crossed vast plains in shades of orange and yellow. Gradually, the hills gave way to large mountains until Artaud finally reached Ciudad Chihuahua. On August 18, 1936, special agent Gustavo Pérez informed the head of Gobernación (Ministry of the Interior) that Artaud was staying with M. Henri Picard (French consular agent) in Chihuahua. Artaud then continued on to Creel, the village of Bocoyna, and the nearest train station to the Tarahumara region: Sisoguichi.

In Sisoguichi, he met his future guide, Guadalupe Loya Espino. Together, they passed by the Cusárate waterfall and trekked 130 kilometers to the village of Norogachi, the true heart of the Sierra. "That's how I accompanied him. And, you know, he's hard to forget... He was very nervous, and he didn't seem healthy," recalled Guadalupe Loya in François Gaudry's *Antonin Artaud, Corto, No. 4, Nov 1985*.

(1) As we explain in detail in issue 5 of the journal *Écho Antonin Artaud*, contrary to what his biographers claim, Artaud never traveled to Havana aboard the Albertville liner from Antwerp, but rather on the *San Matteo*.

(2) The conditions of Artaud's journey to Norogachi and the motivations driving him were fundamentally different from those of André Breton and his wife Élisa. In August 1945, accompanied by a few friends, the Bretons embarked on a road trip to the Hopi reservation in Arizona, where they stayed for four days. Unlike Breton, whose *Travel Notebook Among the Hopi Indians*, published in 2024 by Hermann, reflects his approach, Artaud did not travel as an ethnologist, a collector, or a connoisseur of primitive art during his 1936 journey. Furthermore, in August 1945, deeply affected by the death of Robert Desnos in a concentration camp, Artaud was interned at the Rodez psychiatric hospital, where he had just undergone 58 electroshock therapy sessions.

According to François Gaudry, armed with a letter of recommendation from the Indian Affairs Officer, Artaud went to the village commissioner of Norogachi, who was reportedly the father of Guadalupe Loya, then 22 years old. On September 16, Mexican Independence Day, the local authorities, informed of the presence of a French poet in their community, requested that Artaud deliver a speech for the festivities. True to his principles and unwilling to participate in what he saw as a display of national politics, Artaud reacted violently and firmly rejected the request (1). Guadalupe Loya recalls: "On the day of the celebration, in the square, he started speaking to the people, almost shouting; no one understood... He was agitated, making large gestures... My father had to calm him down." (François Gaudry, Antonin Artaud, Corto, No. 4, Nov 1985).

Influenced by the doubts of Luis Cardoza y Aragón in his correspondence with Paule Thévenin (see Artaud, *todavía* by Fabienne Bradu), I began to question the role of Guadalupe Loya as Artaud's guide. These doubts deepened when I learned that two different individuals had presented themselves to Raymonde Carasco and Régis Hébraud as Artaud's companions. However, the account by Félix Macherez in *Au pays des rêves noirs*, where he retraces Artaud's steps in the Sierra Tarahumara, enriched by details passed down from Loya's son, made this hypothesis more credible to me.

In his book, we learn that in August 2017, Félix Macherez arrived in Norogachic. He visited the church and met a priest who offered him modest accommodation in a small room. The priest explained that the dormitory of the Tarahumara diocese used to be part of the indigenous school. Did Félix sleep in the same room as Artaud, 80 years earlier? The next day, he met Hiram, an elderly man and son of Guadalupe Loya. Hiram returned to the living room with a photocopy of Artaud's Mexican visa. After serving him a hot drink, he confided: "My father said that Artaud was a reckless man. I believe him. I wasn't born yet when they met—I was born ten years later—but I believe him. Coming to the Sierra without speaking Tarahumara and taking peyote with the Indians in such places is either very brave or sheer madness. (...) He told me Artaud wasn't entirely sane. He was sweating and trembling a lot. He was very thin and wore a winter coat over his shoulders. Can you imagine? Wearing a black suit in this heat! (...) My father told me that Artaud looked the Indians in the eyes and yelled at them while they danced in front of the church. It was a cry of approval. Encouragement. Then he danced with them. For hours. The Indians liked him a lot, I think."



Guadalupe Loya

(1) With this letter, Artaud was able to sleep in schools, churches, or community houses.

(2) This anecdote was reported by Sylvie Marchand, an author, filmmaker, and ethnologist, who spent significant time in Chihuahua and developed trusting relationships with the locals.

According to the testimony of a teacher present in the region at the time, Artaud's interactions with the Tarahumaras were described as harmonious. The Frenchman Christian Bugey recounts meeting a former local teacher, Felipe Armendriz, who shared this anecdote: "These people are very attached to their traditions. The only one who succeeded with them, but who was neither a missionary nor a teacher, was a French poet who lived among them. (...) He was a thin man, with a strange, intense gaze. The Indians had great reverence for him and carried him across the mountains in a sedan chair. I sometimes attended evenings where he recited poems in French. They didn't understand a word, but they listened, mesmerized, because his acting skills, his mimicry, were extraordinary. It was as if he was shouting, even meowing his texts. The little French I learned at school didn't allow me to understand what he was declaiming. If I remember correctly, this was around 1936." (Christian Bugey, *Le Seigneur de la Nuit*, *Ailleurs*, No. 5, December 1964).

However, Artaud did not embark on this journey with the intention of making friends in Norogachi. His true objective was to participate in the peyote rituals, something he was reportedly obsessed with, according to Guadalupe Loya. His guide allegedly took him to meet Gloria El Raspador, a renowned brujo (sorcerer) living in a cave in Okochichi. Félix Macherez, who later visited the cave, described it as follows: "The cave where I settled was an exact replica of a giant uterus. It had the cracked texture of coral and the color of bone. On the wall, a horse was painted with natural pigments. The drawing looked ancient." According to Erasmo Palma, who claims to have met Antonin Artaud in his childhood, he supposedly guided him to his uncles' home in Cowerachi (near Norogachi), at the house of Antonio, who is said to have led the Hikuri ritual with Artaud.

From there, Artaud, with Guadalupe Loya and three horses, set off north toward Nararachi. Artaud had to delve deeper into the mountains, traveling by horse along the steep paths of the Copper Canyon. This perilous and exhausting journey took two to three days, often under difficult conditions: "Arriving at the foot of the mountain, I threw my last dose of heroin into a torrent, then mounted a horse. After six days, my body was no longer flesh but bone, thirsty from the many liters of liquid excrement I had lost." (XXVI, 176). His goal? To free himself from the reality that tormented him. Exhausted, Artaud collapsed and fell from his horse. A European and a mestizo traveling with him tried to lift him up, but to no avail. Finally, the strong Indian guide picked him up with one hand, placed him back on the horse, and they had to tie him down to continue the journey.

Guadalupe Loya reportedly left Artaud in the care of the Rarámuri priests, only to return to retrieve him fifteen days later. During this period, without a guide and in a region where no one spoke either Spanish or French, Artaud likely had to communicate solely through gestures. It was probably in this remote location that the events described in *La Danse du Peyotl* took place.

Upon his arrival in the village, Artaud was overwhelmed with deep despair, consumed by the thought that he would likely never be invited to participate in the peyote rite. Around him, everything was centered on mourning rituals, with priests, alcohol, and crosses dedicated to the deceased. But what struck him the most was the latent hostility of the Indigenous people. They barely tolerated the presence of a foreigner, let alone a white man eager to consume peyote. Artaud felt excluded, as though he didn't belong, as though he never should have come. Yet, after 28 days of uncertain waiting in the Sierra, everything changed: against all odds, he was finally invited to take part in a peyote ceremony. He described it as follows:

"Up there, on the slopes of the enormous mountain descending toward the village in steps, a circle of earth had been drawn. Already, the women, kneeling before their metates (stone bowls), were grinding the peyote with a kind of scrupulous brutality. (...) They planted, on the side where the sun rises, ten crosses of unequal size, but all arranged in symmetrical order; and they attached a mirror to each cross. (...) The dancer moves in and out, and yet he never leaves the circle (...) He jumps with his army of bells, like a swarm of frantic bees (...) Ten crosses in the circle and ten mirrors. A beam with three sorcerers on it. Four servants (two male and two female). The epileptic dancer, and myself, for whom the rite was performed." (The Dance of Peyote)

Then, Artaud was finally invited to partake in the peyote: "After the twelve phases of the dance ended, and as dawn was about to break, they passed us the ground peyote, resembling a sort of muddy broth; and before each of us, a new hole was dug to receive the sacred spit from our mouths, now made holy by the passage of peyote. (...) After spitting, I fell asleep (...) They laid me down on the ground, right at the foot of that enormous beam on which the three sorcerers sat between dances. Lying low, so that the rite would descend upon me, so that the fire, the songs, the cries, the dance, and even the night itself, like a living, human vault, would whirl above me. (...) But above all, beyond it all, there was this recurring feeling that behind everything, beyond everything, something else was still hidden: the Principal. (...) I knew my physical destiny was irrevocably tied to this. I was ready for all the burnings, and I awaited the first signs of the burn, anticipating a soon-to-be generalized combustion." (The Dance of Peyote) For three days, Artaud would feel revitalized and in full health.

Did Artaud truly participate in the peyote rite? While we have no definitive proof, there is no reason to doubt his account, given the precise details he provides. Furthermore, why wouldn't the Tarahumaras have helped a gravely ill man who had come specifically for this rite and stayed with them for a month? What we do know for certain is that he returned to Chihuahua in early October, likely between the 4th and 5th, as a page of his manuscript for the article *The Land of the 'Wise Men'* is dated October 6, 1936. We also have a short letter addressed to Jean Paulhan, written in Chihuahua on October 7, 1936.



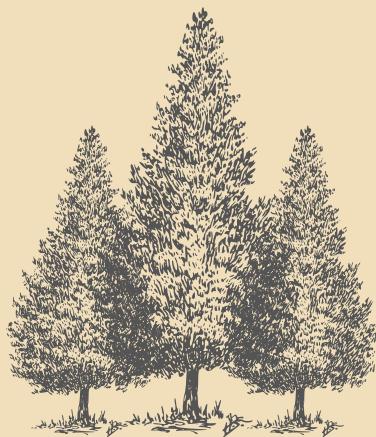
# ARTAUD'S TEXTS RELATED TO THE TARAHUMARAS

- October 16, 1936: Publication in *El Nacional* of The Mountain of Signs (*La montaña de los signos*).
- October 24, 1936: Publication in *El Nacional* of The Land of the Magi Kings (*El país de los Reyes Magos*).
- November 9, 1936: Publication in *El Nacional* of The Rite of the Kings of Atlantis (*El rito de los reyes de la Atlántida*).
- November 17, 1936: Publication in *El Nacional* of A Principle Race (*Una Raza Principio*).
- December 1936: Publication in the magazine *Grafos* of The Indians and Metaphysics (*Los Indios y la Metafísica*).
- August 1937: Publication in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (NRF) of From a Journey to the Land of the Tarahumaras, including The Mountain of Signs and The Peyote Dance, texts written in Paris after Artaud's return from Mexico.
- December 31, 1937: Publication in the weekly *Voilà* (no. 354) of The Race of Lost Men.
- Spring 1947: Publication in issue no. 12 of the magazine *Arbalète* of The Rite of Peyote among the Tarahumaras, a text written in Rodez in December 1943.
- October 1947: Artaud writes Tutuguri, The Rite of the Black Sun, which will be included in To Have Done with the Judgment of God.
- In December 1947, Artaud published *Ci-Gît*, preceded by *La Culture indienne* with publisher K.
- February 12, 1948: Artaud writes a second Tutuguri.
- October 20, 1948: Publication in the esoteric-orientalist magazine *Pralaya* of an excerpt from Supplement to the Journey to the Land of the Tarahumaras. This text will be published in 1955 in *The Tarahumaras (Arbalète Edition)*.

To better understand Artaud's journey to the Tarahumaras, it would be useful to consult a collection of letters addressed to Jean Paulhan, Henri Parisot, and Dr. Ferdière, in which he discusses this topic. Artaud also mentions the Tarahumaras in *The True Story of Artaud-Mômo* and *Head to Head*.



# FROM A JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE TARAHUMARAS



THE MOUNTAIN OF SIGNS  
THE PEYOTE DANCE

FOLLOWED BY OTHER TEXTS RELATED TO THE TARAHUMARAS.

# FROM A JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE TARAHUMARAS

From a Journey to the Land of the Tarahumaras forms a diptych comprised of The Mountain of Signs and The Peyote Dance, published in issue 287 of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* on August 1, 1937, during a period when Artaud was preparing for his departure to Ireland. At that time, much like in his writings in *The New Revelations of Being*, Artaud refused to have his name mentioned, which explains why it was replaced by three asterisks.

In 1943, publisher Robert J. Godet contacted Artaud to discuss a potential reissue of the work in an illustrated booklet format. After various delays, it was Henri Parisot who eventually published *From a Journey to the Land of the Tarahumaras* on November 25, 1945, under the Fontaine publishing house, as part of the Golden Age collection, with a print run of 725 copies.

## The Mountain of Signs (October 1936)

The Mountain of Signs is a text that Artaud wrote in Mexico, most likely in early October 1936. On October 16, it was first published in the newspaper *El Nacional* under the title *Montaña de los signos*. In this text, Artaud explains that the nature of the Tarahumaras thinks in the same way as humans. Not born by chance, it has evolved from both humans and rocks, expressing a superior philosophical and scientific thought—the thought of the Tarahumaras and nature itself. Through striking analogies, he reveals several fundamental principles, notably the rhythm by which atoms organize to form reality. Artaud describes the signs and symbols that unveil metaphysical truths, which he perceives in the nature and rocks of the Sierra Tarahumara.

## The Peyote Dance

As revealed in a letter to Jean Paulhan dated February 27, 1937, this text was written in Paris after Artaud's return from Mexico. In this narrative, Artaud recounts how, after 28 days of waiting in the mountains, he finds himself stuck. Both nature and Artaud seem to feel that he is out of place, as if a spell is trying to prevent him from moving forward. Since all the preparations for the peyote ceremony are centered around a recently deceased man, Artaud is convinced he will not be part of the ritual. However, events take an unexpected turn, and Artaud ultimately shares his experience of the ritual and the secrets he uncovered through it.

## The Land of the Magi Kings

The Land of the Magi Kings is a text published in Spanish in the Mexican daily *El Nacional* on October 24, 1936. In it, Artaud draws a parallel between the paintings of pre-Renaissance artists, particularly in their depictions of the Nativity, and the nature of the Tarahumaras. The art of these painters, which captured the essence of things, proves that they were initiated into the same science as the Tarahumaras: the science of the primitive principles of nature. In the Tarahumara mountains, everything is focused on the essential—the principles that shaped nature. Who are these three wise men, these civilizers initiated into a transcendent astronomy, whose laws were parallel to those of Mayan astronomy? The modern world has lost touch with this primordial Tradition. Today's art no longer serves this secret science. To rediscover its traces, one must follow and decipher the signs of the Tarahumara land, which is literally inhabited by them. It is a matter of receiving these signs with the emotional vibrations of the soul and extracting their forces. In the Sierra Tarahumara, the tradition of the three Magi, who brought fire to Earth, endures.

## The Rite of the Kings of Atlantis

The Rite of the Kings of Atlantis is a text published in Spanish in the Mexican daily *El Nacional* on November 9, 1936. In this piece, Artaud recounts being in Noroguachic, in the Sierra Tarahumara, on September 16, the day of Mexico's Independence Day celebrations. On that day, he witnessed a ritual that he considered similar to those described by Plato in *Critias* concerning the Atlanteans. After observing this ceremony, Artaud became convinced that the Tarahumaras shared a mythical origin with the Atlanteans and that their rites stemmed from the same legendary source.

## A Principle Race

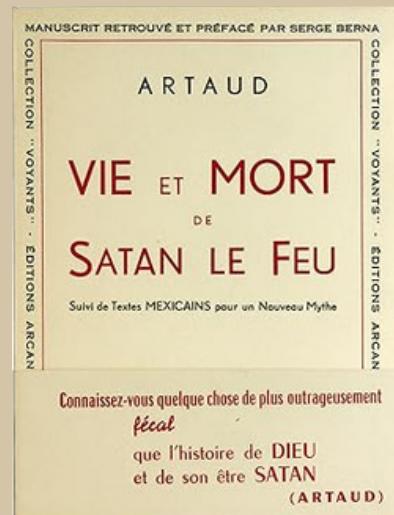
In his article titled A Principle Race, published in Spanish on November 17, 1936, in the Mexican daily *El Nacional*, Antonin Artaud describes the Tarahumaras as a "principle race." This concept refers to a primordial people, deeply connected to the fundamental forces of nature. According to Artaud, a "principle race" is characterized by a pure and direct connection with the natural forces and elements that presided over the emergence of life. Those who maintain this closeness with natural powers and understand the mysteries of the "principle Numbers" gain profound knowledge of these forces. Artaud claims that the Tarahumaras are made from the same material as nature itself, and their physical strength stems from a primordial origin, an "original blend" that places them in harmony with the natural elements.

## Between Dust and Genius: The Unexpected Discovery of Antonin Artaud's Manuscripts

In *Life and Death of Satan the Fire* (Arcanes, 1953), Serge Berna recounts an unexpected discovery made in 1952 while accompanying a friend, a ragpicker, as they cleared out basements and attics. On that day, upon arriving at rue Visconti (possibly at Cécile Schramme's place), his friend suggested taking a break to grab a drink, leaving Berna free to explore.

Following his friend's instructions, Berna went upstairs, turned left, then right, and found himself in front of an open door leading to the attic. Upon entering, he accidentally knocked over a pile of fragile objects. As everything slowly collapsed around him, a few sheets fell at his feet. Intrigued, he picked one up, and his eyes caught a partially legible signature: "Ant...". To his great surprise, he recognized the name of Antonin Artaud.

Examining the other pages, Berna realized he had just stumbled upon 43 handwritten or typed pages by Artaud. Among these documents were drafts of letters, personal notes, and reflections on Eastern religions and cosmogonies. Some texts, likely written during Artaud's stay in Mexico, included *The Land of the Magi Kings* and *A Principle Race* in their original versions.



~~art de~~  
~~trajage au pays des Tarahumaras~~



## Le pays des Rois - Mages

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é mais au Mexique que les  
vent la Renaissance ont pris  
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Dans le pays des Tarahumaras le  
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# The Indians and Metaphysics

## An article by Artaud on the Tarahumaras discovered in Cuba in 2009

In his article The Indians and Metaphysics, Artaud illustrates how the Tarahumaras steadfastly resist the grasp of modern civilization. Their ancestral worship of the sun, still vibrant and intense, constitutes an invaluable heritage unique to their community. Their way of life is based on "a peace founded on the highest philosophical principles, unchanged for centuries." These principles form the very foundation of their existence. Through them, they have preserved their social cohesion, original physical strength, and mental integrity, creating a harmonious order. "A race that has maintained its original cohesion also retains its physical strength and intensity of spirit."

The Tarahumaras possess a mental strength that allows them to consciously control their thoughts and actions. "Disorder is always the result of fatigue." Unlike Westerners, they are fully aware of the reasons behind their decisions. Heirs to a tradition of powerful forces, they have preserved the secrets and wisdom of their ancestors, visible in their social organization, which is based on sublime hierarchies. Without class divisions, their society embodies fraternities, reflecting the purity of Mexico's indigenous races.

## LOS INDIOS Y LA METAFISICA

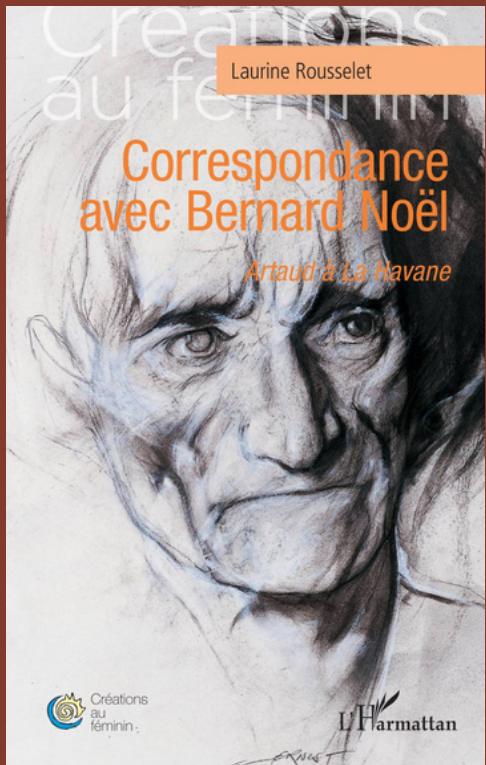
**H**AY más de cien razas de indios en México que viven al margen de la civilización moderna y rehusan esa civilización. • Hace ya cuatro siglos que la rehusan, y sin embargo la civilización nuestra ha tenido tiempo de caer en pedazos. • Si es verdad que existen todavía tribus indias que no se han mezclado con la sangre de los blancos, bien pocas se han salvado del virus puramente utilitario e interesado del mundo actual, bien pocas sobre todo han conservado sus puros ritos de la Naturaleza tales como se celebraban primitivamente. • El materialismo, científico o no, el catolicismo, los jesuitas, han minado hasta las raíces las viejas creencias de los indios, y han cortado por lo mismo—hay que decirlo—asombrosas comunicaciones. Aquí y allá, sin embargo, el antiguo culto del sol subsiste en toda su poderosa y mágica vivacidad. • Cuando llegó a México se me señaló la raza tarahumara como una de las últimas en conservar la impronta del pasado. • Arribó, en los picos más reculados de la Sierra Madre, en medio de sus horizontes ilimitadamente multiplicados, y que ocupan fondos inmensos de perspectiva escalonadas, los tarahumaras celebran todavía el rito metafísico del sol, basado sobre los números-principios. Celebran en la danza creativa del ayote, el eterno destronzamiento del hombre y de la mujer, de los cuales la Naturaleza ha reunido los principios bajo la forma de la raíz sagrada. • Por algún tiempo estuve en medio de esta raza extraña y anacrónica, constatando sus altas virtudes, que me parecieron como la consecuencia directa de un anarcosimismo privilegiado. • El mundo blanco de hoy no se da cuenta que su doloroso desorden, es un desorden de civilización. • Aquellos que han planteado como debe serlo, el problema del mundo moderno, han sido tomados por filósofos, es decir, por razonadores que no hay necesidad de escuchar; mas hoy el mundo moderno es conducido por políticos, y entre un filósofo inspirado y un político ignorante, ese mundo no sabrá vacilar. • La civilización del mundo blanco se ha equivocado, y no puede haber para curarlo sino las soluciones arqueológicas, es decir, resueltamente volverle las espaldas a la actualidad, romper con

ella. Un filósofo puede todavía decir esto sin peligro, mas un político no: porque la política de todos los tiempos ha sido hecha de remiendos. • A los ridículos esfuerzos intentados por el mundo moderno para zurcir una vida que se desgarró por todas partes, los indios puros *incivilizados* de México, oponen la imagen de una especie de paz basada sobre los más altos principios filosóficos que desde hace siglos permanecen sin moverse. • Por insensato e inviernosímil que parezca, me es necesario adelantar una verdad. • No es sólo la vida de los indios, sino también su raza que está basada sobre ciertos principios. Y una raza—principio es una raza más cercana que otras de ciertas mezclas, de ciertas fuentes físicas para las cuales la vida de la Naturaleza ha comenzado. • Una raza que ha conservado su cohesión original, conserva también su fuerza física original y la *penetración* original de espíritu, es decir, la fuerza y la intensidad de su espíritu. Estas son posiblemente verdades pasadas de moda, mas son de todos modos, verdades. • Y la fuerza del espíritu crea un orden. • El desorden es siempre el resultado de una fatiga, de una especie de disociación de principios en donde el Macho y la Hembra de la Natura, llevan cada uno por su lado una vida contradictoria y alocada. • He aquí las ideas originales y simples que la vida de la raza tarahumara me han traído a la mente. • Puedo decir que subiendo adonde viven los indios tarahumaras, la vida humana entera cambia de plan, y que uno entra con ellos en un mundo verdaderamente metafísico, porque es un levantamiento del nivel del pensamiento humano de lo que se trata aquí. • Si, todas las razas en su origen, cuando se las toma en su fuerza, las razas que no han perdido el secreto y la tradición extrahumana de sus orígenes, afirman por su concepción misma de la vida, este origen extrahumano, lo manifiestan en su organización y en su orden basado sobre las más sublimes jerarquías, y como en ellas no hay clases, es por tanto la imagen de verdaderas fraternidades ocultas que las razas de indios puros de México continúan presentándonos.

ANTONIN ARTAUD



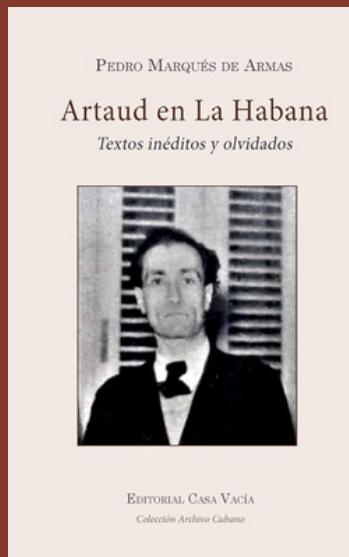
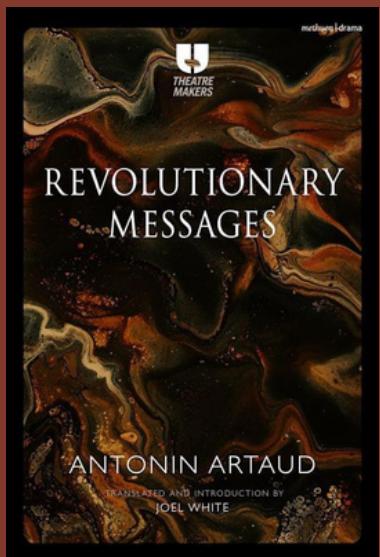
We would like to thank Laurine Rousselet for sending us a photocopy of the original text as it was published in the December 1936 issue of the Cuban magazine *Grafos*.



## Artaud and Grafos: Four Rediscovered Texts

In 2009, four texts by Antonin Artaud, originally published in the magazine *Grafos*, were discovered by Laureline Rousselet at the José Martí Library in Havana. These same texts had also been identified in 2006 by Pedro Marqués de Armas. The articles in question include *Theatre in Mexico* (published in June 1936), *Bullfighting and Human Sacrifices* (published in July 1936), *Red Painting* (published in September 1936), and *The Indians and Metaphysics* (published in December 1936). Written during his stay in Mexico, these works are aligned with *The Theatre and Its Double* and *The Messages*.

They were published in French by L'Harmattan under the direction of Laureline Rousselet, in Spanish by Pedro Marqués de Armas (Blurb Editions), in Italian by Marcello Gallucci (Jaca Book Editions), and, starting on September 19, 2024, in English by Joel White, translated by François Audouy, under the Bloomsbury Publishing house. Issue 4 of the journal *Écho Antonin Artaud* offers a detailed examination of the history of this discovery, along with a presentation of the efforts made to locate a fifth article by Artaud, published in the pages of the Argentine daily *La Nación*.





# THE TARAHUMARAS

## The Rite of Peyote among the Tarahumaras (December 1943)

The Rite of Peyote among the Tarahumaras is a text written by Antonin Artaud during his first year of internment in Rodez, after November 20, 1943. Between December 14 and 24, 1943, Artaud focused on writing this account, intended to complement his earlier work *From a Journey to the Land of the Tarahumaras*. This manuscript, which was not sent to Henri Parisot, was instead transmitted by Dr. Gaston Ferdière, Artaud's physician, to Marc Barbezat in early 1947. The text was first published in *L'Arbalète* (issue no. 12, spring 1947), alongside works like Jean Genet's *The Maids*. In the same issue, Artaud also included "A Note on Peyote," written in May 1947.

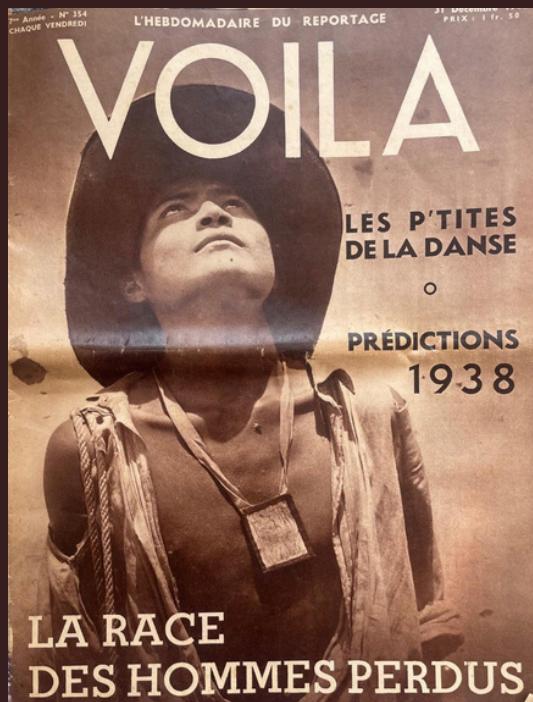
In *The Rite of Peyote among the Tarahumaras*, Antonin Artaud recounts his initiatory journey through the sacred rites of Tutuguri and Ciguri, guided by the "master of all things." This master, who governs both human relations and the deeper aspects of consciousness, introduces Artaud to complex ceremonies led by priests, aimed at reorganizing the human soul within the infinite. The Ciguri rite, marked by the symbolic strike of an old Mexican chief, represents a moment of spiritual awakening. However, Artaud, "born ill-equipped to understand the power of the sun," must transcend the limits of individuality to access the vastness of spiritual emptiness.

Artaud also tells of meeting a young couple, where the husband is initiated into the Peyote rite. At that time, the government sought to ban the festivities, and Artaud attempts to convince the school principal not to prohibit the rite. He then provides a detailed description of the ritual and his encounter with the priest who leads it. Artaud partakes in Peyote and later describes his vision. The text concludes with Artaud's reflections on Peyote and Ciguri, emphasizing the transformative nature of these experiences.

P.S.: Between January 17 and 24, 1944, Artaud also wrote *Supplement to the Journey to the Land of the Tarahumaras*, but finding it too Christian in tone, he ultimately rejected it.

## The Race of Lost Men (Voilà, n°354)

"In The Race of Lost Men, an article published under the pseudonym John Forester in the weekly Voilà in December 1937, Antonin Artaud focuses on the Tarahumaras, a group of Indigenous people whom he describes as living in a pre-Flood state, having resisted progress for over 400 years. According to Artaud, they possess nothing because they have no need to own anything. Their way of life is based on a form of spontaneous communism, where giving to those in need is a natural and unquestioned act. When offered money, the Tarahumaras do not express gratitude, as the act of giving—known as "Korima," an act of charity—enriches the giver rather than the receiver. For them, money is meaningless, and when they beg, it is to restore balance to the world. Accumulating wealth is seen as depriving others, as in their worldview, everything belongs to everyone. Artaud portrays the Tarahumaras as embodying a communal and spiritual philosophy that stands in stark contrast to the materialism and individualism of modern society.



## The Tarahumaras: A Civilization Beyond Time and Progress

(Based on Antonin Artaud's Writings on the Tarahumaras)

Dive into the heart of an ancient civilization that defies modern classification: the Tarahumaras. More than just a remote community in the Sierra, they embody a primal principle rooted in a worldview that transcends Western thought. Here, there is no concept of deities as understood in monotheistic societies. For the Tarahumaras, the idea of an external god does not exist—not out of rejection, but because their cosmogony never required one. Their relationship with nature is fundamentally different: it is neither an object of study nor a force to be controlled, but an extension of their own existence, an invisible harmony they instinctively command.

This ancient civilization is not built on material structures but on an intimate understanding of the laws of nature, which they manipulate to their advantage while seeing themselves as a living part of it. For them, physical life is but a small part of their reality. They reject Western medical paradigms and, unlike us, are not consumed by ego or emotion. Their true fear is not physical death, but the loss of their spiritual "Double," their vital essence. Their worldview, older than the Flood, holds a wisdom that predates Western myths and mysticism, such as the Grail or the Rosicrucians. They walk on invisible paths, even avoided by animals, preserving the memory of the first humans. While they do not claim to know everything, they have never lost what we have forgotten: their connection to the origins of humanity.

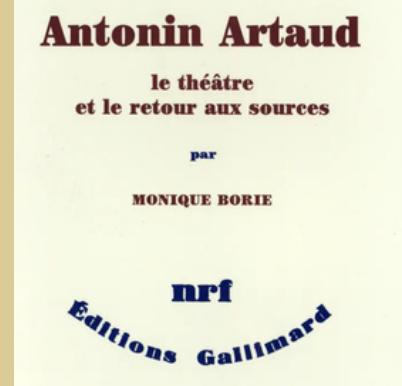
Born philosophers, the Tarahumaras are not troubled by the moral dichotomies that divide the West. Their secret lies in the union of opposites, a fusion of opposing forces that generates the energy of life itself. Their sole concern is keeping the sun alive, according to a metaphysics that far exceeds our linear understanding of progress. The concept of change, as we understand it, is foreign to them. Connected to primordial principles, they do not seek evolution; their true progress lies in preserving and perpetuating these principles.

As for outsiders, the chabochis, or "stinking ones" as they call us, they have no need for our presence. On the rare occasions they venture into cities, it is merely to observe what they see as human misguidance. According to their prophecy, they will reclaim their land when the selfishness and possessiveness of the Whites have disappeared.

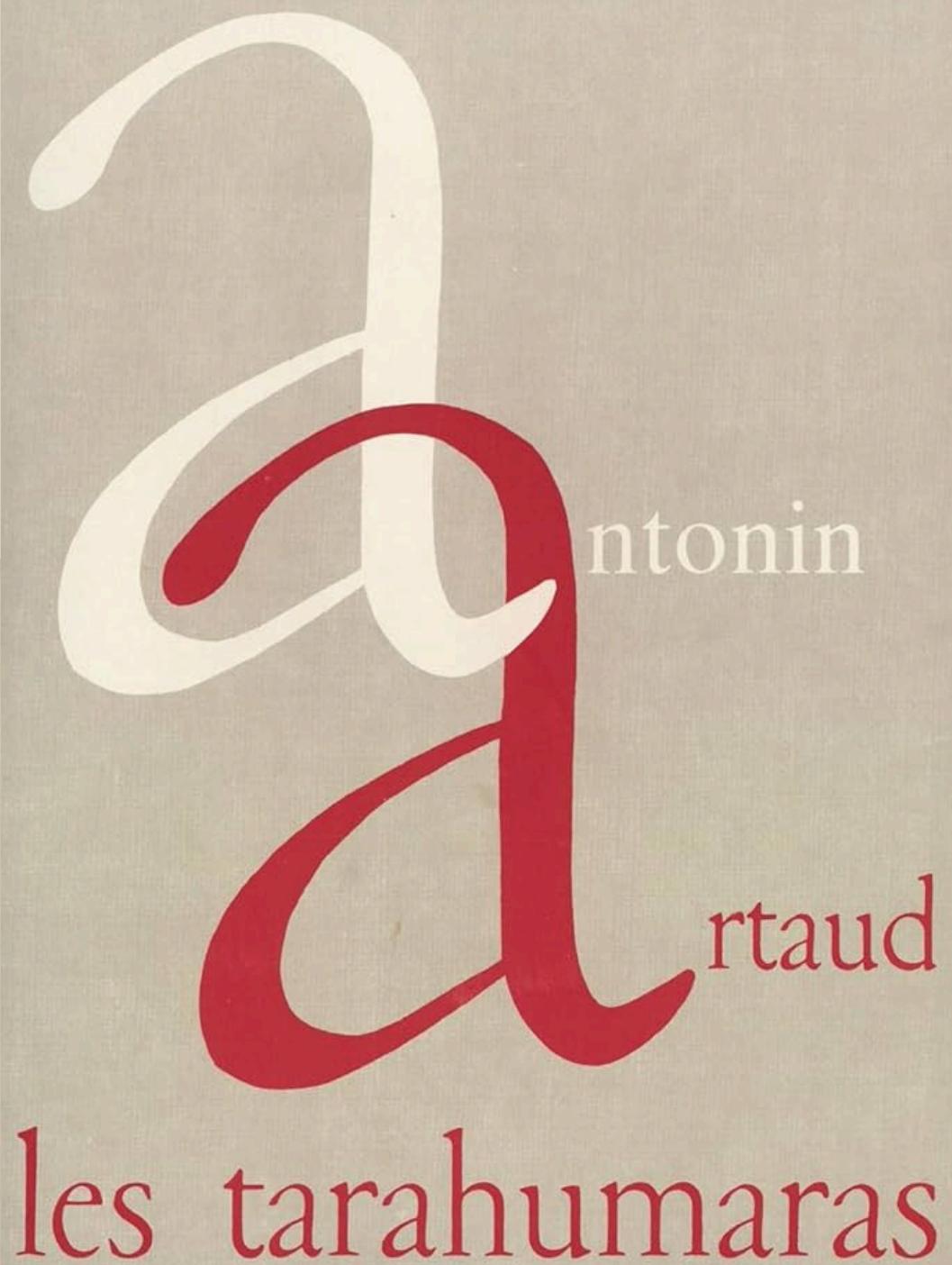


## Works related to Antonin Artaud's journey to the land of the Tarahumaras:

- “Tutuguri et Ciguri” by Virginie Di Ricci
- “Antonin Artaud ou le rêve mexicain” by Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio
- “Notes de voyage en terre Tarahumara” by Damien Castera
- “Le cri au Soleil dans la Sierra Tarahumara”, a thesis by Bernadette Theresa at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich
- “Un témoin du voyage au Mexique d’Antonin Artaud” by François Gaudry (Quinzaine littéraire, June 1986)
- “Artaud au Mexique” by François Gaudry (Mélusine, no. 8, 1986)
- “Antonin Artaud, le théâtre et le retour aux sources” by Monique Borie (Gallimard Editions)
- “La danse du Tutuguri ou le rite du soleil noir: Une performance textuelle d’Antonin Artaud”, a thesis by Anne-Sabine Nicolas







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# **RAYMONDE CARASCO**



## Raymonde Carasco

Raymonde Carasco (June 19, 1939, Carcassonne – March 2, 2009, Toulouse) was a French filmmaker renowned for her work in experimental cinema. A philosophy agrégée, she began her career teaching in secondary schools before joining the University of Toulouse-Le Mirail in 1970, where she initially served as an assistant and, later, in 1984, became a lecturer in film aesthetics. There, she founded the research group *La cinématographie*. In 1975, she defended her doctoral thesis, *La Fantastique des philosophes*, with Roland Barthes on the jury.

Balancing an academic career—teaching from 2000 at the University of Lille III—and her passion for filmmaking, Carasco directed numerous films. In 1977, she adapted *Gradiva*, a novella by Wilhelm Jensen (1903). Around the same time, alongside her husband, filmmaker Régis Hébraud, she traveled to Mexico, initially following the traces of Eisenstein's *iQue Viva Mexico!* However, her encounter with the Tarahumara people, previously documented by Antonin Artaud, profoundly influenced her work. Between 1978 and 2003, Carasco made fifteen ethnographic films focusing on the Tarahumaras, a people known for their unique cultural practices and exceptional endurance in long-distance running. Through her series of film essays on their rituals and ceremonies, Carasco developed her concept of cinema-thought.

Her filmography also includes *Julien, portrait d'un voyant* (1981), a portrait of her father, and *Rupture* (1989), a feature-length film starring Bulle Ogier as the main character.



# Raymonde Carasco

Filmography related to the Tarahumaras and Antonin Artaud

1. **Avidadero 77, une gradiva**  
Tarahumaras, 36 minutes

2. **Tarahumaras 78,**  
30 minutes, 1979

3. **Tutuguri-Tarahumaras 79,**  
25 minutes, 1980

4. **Los Pintos, Tarahumaras 82**  
58 minutes, 1982

5. **Xumari- Tarahumaras 84,**  
50 minutes, 1984

6. **Los Pascolesros Tarahumaras 85,**  
27 minutes, 1996

7. **Artaud et les Tarahumaras,**  
52 minutes, 1996

8. **Ciguri-Tarahumaras 96,**  
42 minutes, 1996

9. **Ciguri-Tarahumaras 98,**  
La danse du Peyolt, 42 minutes, 1998

10. **Ciguri-Tarahumaras 99,**  
65 minutes, 1999

11. **La félure du temps- Tarahumaras,**  
2003

# TARAHUMARAS 78



## Fifteen Journeys into the Unknown: Carasco and Hebraud Following in Artaud's Footsteps

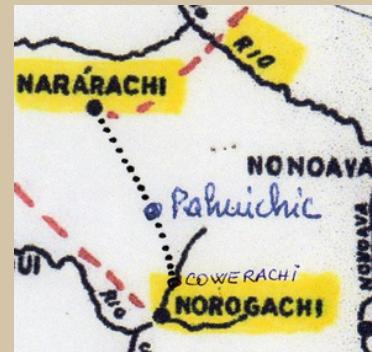
In August 1977, Raymonde Carasco and Régis Hebraud embarked on their first expedition to the remote lands of the Tarahumara people, eager to follow in the footsteps of Antonin Artaud. Their journey began at Divisadero, an observation point reached by train from Chihuahua to Los Mochis. The trip took them through towering mountains, giving them the sense of entering an entirely new world.

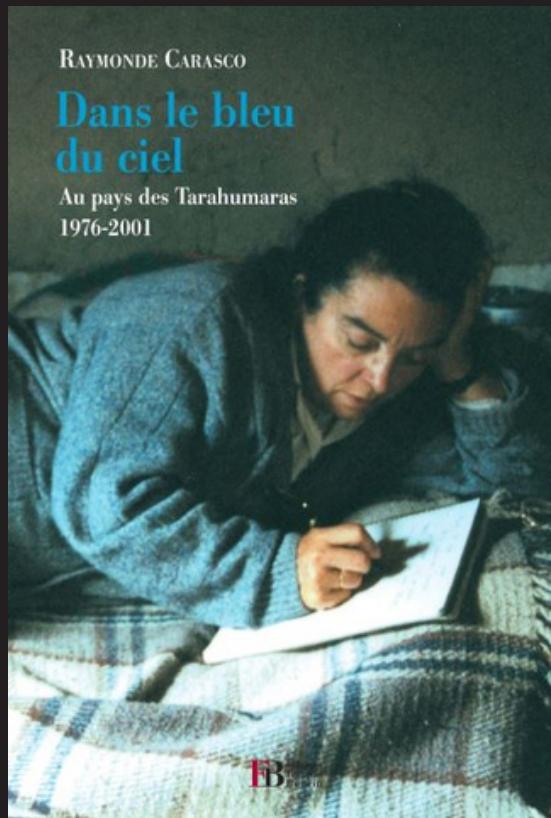
This initial voyage left a lasting impact on them. They soon returned to Divisadero before deciding to venture further to Norogachic. To reach it, they boarded an old truck that navigated a dirt road from Creel to Norogachic. Over time, their explorations grew more extensive, often involving small planes from Chihuahua to Guachochi, with the occasional precarious landing on makeshift airstrips. Dropped into remote regions with no guarantee of return, they often relied on local trucks to get back, improvising their route based on available options. In 1987, they met Erasmo Palma, who told them about the sacred site of Cowerachi, located between Norogachic and Nararachic.

In December 1994, Raymonde Carasco, traveling alone after a stop in Mexico City, took a plane back to Norogachic, determined to reach Nararachic. When the priest who was supposed to accompany her backed out, she persuaded two cowboys to escort her on horseback. Together, they crossed the Sierra at the steady pace of the horses' hooves, until she finally arrived in Nararachic.

From 1995 to 2001, Raymonde and Régis gradually traced what they called "the route of Ciguri." In the spring of 1995, they discovered a path through Cuauhtémoc and Carichic, using buses and trucks for the last few miles. In 2001, they finally reached Cowerachi and witnessed the Jikuli ritual. Raymonde was convinced that Artaud had traveled this same path in 1936, facing similar challenges in his quest to uncover the mystery of Jikuli.

Information Gathered from Régis Hebraud's Text, Our Roads in the Sierra - Antonin Artaud's Path





## In the Blue of the Sky: Among the Tarahumaras, 1976-2001

In 2009, at the age of 70, Raymonde Carasco—a philosopher and documentary filmmaker—passed away, having lived an extraordinary life profoundly influenced by Antonin Artaud and the Tarahumaras, the Indigenous people of Mexico renowned for their Peyote initiation rituals. In 1976, while working as a professor specializing in film aesthetics, she traveled to Mexico in search of the Tarahumaras, hoping to uncover traces of the poet she so admired. Yet, ultimately, it was herself that she discovered.

Over a quarter of a century, during long and sometimes perilous stays, she built connections with the Tarahumara and their shamans, engaged in peyote rituals, and familiarized herself with ways of thinking entirely foreign to her—eventually being accepted as one of their own. She had, in her own words, “reached the blue of the sky.”

Her cinematic work evoked passionate reactions, and she left behind notebooks chronicling her profound personal and spiritual transformation. These journals read like adventure novels or travelogues, written in a precise, luminous, and sensitive style.

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Publisher: François Bourin

Collection: Essays

Format: 15 x 23 cm

Pages: 528

Explore the blog dedicated to the works of Raymonde Carasco and Régis Hebraud by visiting: <http://raymonde.carasco.online.fr>.

# Raymonde Carasco

Texts and Writings by Raymonde Carasco and Régis Hébraud

1 Fragments from a Journal in the Land of the Tarahumaras, 1980

2 Notes for a Cinema of Cruelty, 1992

3 Initiation with the Tarahumaras, 1993 (Revue d'esthétique)

4 Notes for a Cinema of Cruelty (Artaud-Buñuel/ Art-Latina, 1995)

5 The Last Artaud and the Thought of Cruelty, 1994 (Conference in Mexico)

6 The Nail of the Body, French Embassy in Mexico, 1995

7 The Powerlessness of Words, 1998 (Conference at the University of Toulouse)

8 Writing a Script for the Film Ciguri 98

9 The Nail, the Body, Me Antonin Artaud, La Polygraphe no. 6, 1999

10 The Untimeliness of Antonin Artaud, Antonin Artaud, Modernity I, 2001

11 Journey to the Land of the Tarahumaras, 2001, On the Possibility of Filming Rituals

12 Our Journeys to the Land of the Tarahumaras, unpublished text intended to be published in Ecce Artaud by Alain Jugnot.



Photo of Régis Hébraud

Thierry Guilbert

Artaud / Carasco  
*In the Eyes of the Other*

“Everywhere there are men and peoples, solemnity, gravity, mystery, dark colors, something remains of the terror that once presided over transactions; over commitments, over promises (...)”  
– Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morality, 2nd essay, section 3.

“The impression (to say it in Goethe's sublime manner) of being present at the very moment when God created the world.”  
– Nietzsche, The Wanderer and His Shadow, section 149.

Anteriormente, not so long ago—let's say the last quarter of the twentieth century—when the word Tarahumara was rarely used and the more accurate term Rarámuri was almost unknown, when drug traffickers had not yet plagued this region of Mexico, turning the Indigenous people into mules, and no one, absolutely no one, thought of organizing ultra-trails across the Sierra to test their endurance against the legendary locals, said to be born to run. Previously, I say, only a few ethnologists and some literate junkies passed through these paths in the 1970s, seeking initiation into Peyote. There was also a poet, half a century earlier, whom no one remembered encountering—not even Erasmo Palma, musician, chronicler, and great custodian of Tarahumara culture, who would later testify to the Frenchman's visit.

The Sierra had not yet fallen victim to globalization, its poor population reduced to begging, earning food vouchers by running alongside Yankees, or losing their culture in the streets of Chihuahua or Ciudad Juárez. Previously, as Erasmo might have said, a French couple—a philosopher and filmmaker, and her partner, an editor and cameraman—traveled the country to meet the Tarahumara people with deep respect for their culture and words, guided by the work, the vision, and the voice of Antonin Artaud. Their names were Raymonde Carasco and Régis Hébraud. Raymonde was a professor at the University of Toulouse-Le Mirail, and I was one of her students. It was from her that my passion for cinema was born, and it is to her that I owe the first time I likely ever heard the name Antonin Artaud.

Nowadays, all it takes is to step off the famous *El Chepe*, the train that runs through the canyons, to reach—or perhaps not reach—Norogachic, catch a glimpse of the colorful costumes of Indigenous women on a train platform or in front of a church selling their woven baskets, and you can write an entire book about your journey. The express pilgrimage, tour-operator style, has replaced the slow approach and acclimatization. Earning the title of *Hajj* or high priest of the god *Zátopek* or the god *Artaud* now costs only a few thousand dollars.

“You have to feel your way toward what you are seeking” [1]. From 1976 to 2001, Raymonde and Régis made 18 trips, some lasting two months, to the land of the Tarahumaras. They brought back around fifteen films that, when watched chronologically, perfectly illustrate this approach—this gradual taming of the Tarahumara people's intimate world. Little by little, journey after journey, from the most well-known collective rites to the most secret ceremonies—from the *Tutuguri* and its variations to the *Yumari*, from the *Yumari* to the *Ciguri*—the camera shifted from filming in fixed shots at a respectful distance to daring to make contact. From daytime dances to nighttime rites, their constant goal, as Raymonde wrote, was to see “with my own eyes what it means to write, what writing recounts: how writing tells a story starting from an initial act of seeing. Confronting my vision with *Artaud*'s. A fundamental hypothesis: at the origin of writing, of text, of poetry, there is an act of seeing. A seeing that is never merely an illustration of *Artaud*'s text. Rewriting today, cinematographically and thus differently, the poetic writing process of *Artaud*, in an endless, incessant movement (the movement of all writing, of all reading)” [2].

And just as one approaches the Tarahumaras through the films and over the years, so too do *Artaud*'s words—at first timidly spoken by Raymonde, with only a few lines from the poem *Tutuguri*, the namesake of the second film in the series—become more present in *Theatre of Cruelty* in *Los Pascoleros*, filmed in 1985, and more hallucinatory in *Artaud and the Tarahumaras*, a montage of previous films created for *La Sept* in 1996, this time with the voiceover of the late Philippe Clévenot. Similarly, the focus draws closer to the bodies, to “finally make the human anatomy dance,” from the running feet of the Indigenous women in *Divisadero 77*, a key moment in Raymonde's encounter with the Tarahumara people, to the marvelous twilight black-and-white shots of the painted bodies of the *Pascoleros*.

[1]Raymonde Carasco, *Les vitesses infinies de la pensée*.

[2]Raymonde Carasco, *Ciguri. Voyage(s) au pays des Tarahumaras*.

If Artaud came to Mexico in search of a new idea of man, believing the Western man to be definitively flawed, Raymonde found a new sense of belonging there: "If there is a land I love, it is the Sierra Tarahumara; if there is a tribe to which I belong, where I left my soul and found my mind again, it is the Tarahumara people. I am in exile from that land, from those people. For a long time, I could not walk outside of this Sierra." [3]

Walk or dance? "But first start dancing, you bloody monkey / you filthy European macaque / who never learned to lift your feet." [4] The painted men's dance around the painted stick, as if at the origin of man—white dots on dark skin, or black dots on previously painted white skin, white lines on dark skin spinning on the parched ground. An endless dance to the endless refrains of untuned flutes and taut drums. The pounding of feet in sandals. The sound of the grinder crushing corn for *tesgüino*, the sacred beer. The screech of the drunken violin. The dance steps turning endlessly around the painted sticks adorned with chevrons and dots, kicking up dust until the dust fills the sky. The earth is painted and described / under the power of a terrible dance.

Watching Raymonde's films is to experience a cinematic time-image. Raymonde gives time to the image, and consequently, it is the image of time that impresses itself onto the film. Perhaps the secret of this magical operation, this Fissure of Time, lies in the small Tarahumara refrain: the violins, the drum, the rasp, the bells, the coyote's cry uttered by the dancers. These are melodies stripped of ornament, essentially repetitive, in keeping with the Tarahumara rites. As soon as the refrain starts again, I find myself in the heart of Barrancas del Cobre. A refrain that I like to believe—although it is absolutely false—shares the same etymology as the word "rite." A refrain that unfailingly evokes Deleuze's concept. Types of chants that are not yet music, whose origin could be the terror of a child marking their sacred territory, their circle of protection, in the dark by singing the refrain. Yes, the refrain is territorialized; it is connected to a people. The land and time are, in a way, punctuated by it. "I don't know if it's that the wind is rising, / or if a wind is rising from this music of long ago / that persists today, / but one feels as though lashed by a gust of night, / by a breath rising from the crypts of a vanished humanity / coming to show its face here, / a painted face, / a mocking and merciless figure." [5]

[3]Raymonde Carasco, *Le bleu du ciel*.

[4]Antonin Artaud, *Théâtre de la cruauté, états préparatoires*.

[5]Antonin Artaud, *Tutuguri*.

Suddenly the landscape... / Suddenly, a landscape. The terror might seem obvious in a territory of gorges, Apache canyons, cliffs, and geological fantasies where stone giants dominate, filmed by Raymonde at the beginning of *Ciguri 99*, outlined against an infinitely blue sky—giants that haunted Artaud: "The land of the Tarahumaras is full of signs, forms, natural effigies that do not seem to be born of chance, as if the gods, felt everywhere here, had wanted to signify their powers in these strange signatures where the figure of man is relentlessly pursued." A land shaped by the gods, attuned to the soul of a people, to that of a poet and a filmmaker. It had to be more than a backdrop, a body constructed to host the rite. The landscape had to participate in a kind of transubstantiation, just as the peyote, the dance, and the music do. And within this landscape, the most secret rite of the Tarahumaras was to unfold: the *Ciguri*.

During the winter of 1994, responding to an intimate and unconditional call, Raymonde traveled on horseback, accompanied only by a cowboy, from Norogachic to Nararachic, likely following the same path Artaud had taken in 1936: "I was on horseback and moving fast, because the true *Ciguri* is not in Norogachic; you have to go deep into the mountains." Like Artaud, she arrived in the evening: "I arrived alone at the place of the rites, in the pitch-black night, not with the intention of filming but to present myself. The spectacle was of extraordinary beauty. In a church without a priest, men were dancing, wearing the mirror crowns that Antonin Artaud spoke of when he said he had seen the Magi." [6]

The winter timing of the rite, and Artaud's limited knowledge of Spanish, cast doubt on the veracity of his account regarding the *Ciguri*. By November 1936, when winter begins in the Sierra, Artaud was already back in France. However, since the *Ciguri* is a healing rite, it is possible that the Tarahumaras took pity on the Frenchman in the throes of withdrawal: "Twenty-eight days had passed since this inexplicable torment had begun. And twelve days that I had been on this isolated patch of land, in the confines of the immense mountain, waiting for the good will of my sorcerers." [7] It is possible they decided to give him peyote during a private ritual.

[6]Raymonde Carasco, *Dans le bleu du ciel*.

[7]Antonin Artaud, *La danse du Peyotl*.

I don't know if Artaud truly experienced the Ciguri rite, but what I see is that the images filmed by Raymonde and Régis do not contradict his description in any way: the same accessories, the same dances, the same coyote cries—he leaps with his army of bells, like a swarm of frenzied bees, huddled together in a chaotic and stormy frenzy. What remains is what the image cannot show but which Artaud describes so well: that kind of joyful belonging to the limitless, induced by the consumption of peyote. "At one point, something like a wind arose and the spaces receded. On the side where my spleen was, an immense void opened up, painted in gray and pink like the edge of the sea. And at the bottom of this void appeared the shape of a washed-up root (...)" [8]

"The stones / VOLCANIC / ROSE-COLORED / LUMINOUS TOO," Raymonde would write after her own visual hallucination, concluding with these words: "TOO MUCH INFINITY TERRIFIES." Sometimes writing creates the legend. Is it so important to know whether Artaud did or did not witness a real Ciguri, since, in the end, he made us live it? As he wrote: "I had suffered enough, it seems, to be rewarded with a little reality."



[8] Antonin Artaud, *Le rite du peyotl chez les Tarahumaras*.

Later, after becoming closer and befriending Severico, the last shaman, Raymonde created a series of films with Régis, providing a unique testimony of the Ciguri rite, with Jean Rouch reciting from Artaud. Then, in the early 2000s, she produced an intimate portrayal of Severico's life and initiation in a five-film series titled *La fêlure du temps* (The Fissure of Time), where one can witness the deep friendship forged between the filmmaker and the shaman, to the point where Severico even offered Raymonde the opportunity to succeed him, an offer she declined.

The final installment of *La fêlure du temps*, *La Despedida* (The Farewell), was presented in 2004 and is Raymonde's last film before her passing in 2009. It stands as a testament to 25 years of passion, friendship, and love for the Tarahumara people. "Yes, our penetration into Tarahumara society was and will be infinitely slower than Artaud's lightning-fast one. And it is always only afterward, months and years after these stays, that reading Artaud reopens for me the events lived in a kind of darkness, stupidity, lack of understanding, and illuminates them with an unheard-of intelligence." [9]

Since 2009, Régis Hébraud has tirelessly continued the work initiated with Raymonde in 1977, presenting their films in cinemas worldwide. What Sollers said of Godard—"Someone who stands at the border and, at the same time, feels a great responsibility"—Sollers could have written the same of Raymonde Carasco and Régis Hébraud.

## Thierry Guilabert

P.S. Raymonde Carasco's work journals, *Dans le bleu du ciel*, *Au pays des Tarahumaras 1976-2001*, are published by Éditions François Bourin.

[9] Raymonde Carasco, *Le bleu du ciel*.

Thierry Guilabert was born in Casablanca in 1965. He was a student and friend of Raymonde Carasco from 1985 onward. She supervised his Master's and DEA theses. A lover of the sea and insular themes, he lives on the island of Oléron. The author of around fifteen books, he continues parallel historical research published by Éditions Libertaires, as well as literary works, including novels and short stories, such as *La fois où j'ai écouté ma mère* (L'École des Loisirs) and *Guernica Oléron* (Éditions Grandvaux).

Personal website: [thierryguilabert.wordpress.com](http://thierryguilabert.wordpress.com)



Photo de Catherine et Bernard Desjeux

RENEÉ ACOSTA



## Reneé Acosta (Chihuahua)

Reneé Acosta, a poet, essayist, and philosopher from Chihuahua, is a key figure in Mexican experimental poetry and quantum poetics. She was awarded the Agustín Melgar Youth Prize in 2002 and received an honorable mention for the State Youth Prize in 2006. Acosta was also honored with the Exceptional Woman of Chihuahua Prize in the Literature category in 2009, granted by the State Congress of Chihuahua. That same year, she received the José Saramago Medal from ASOLAPO. She was the recipient of FONCA grants in 2009–2010, and in 2012, she was awarded the Pacmyc grant. In 2020, she was part of the third generation of FOMAC fellows. In 2011, she won the Gabriela Mistral International Prize, as well as the AMMPE Prize for her literary essay *Ontic Critique of a Quantum Aesthetic*. She also received the David Alfaro Siqueiros State Fund for Culture and the Arts of Chihuahua (PECDA) in 2012, 2013, and 2014, and earned an honorable mention for the Francisco R. Almada Prize in 2013. In 2015, she won the José María Mendiola Hyperspace Poetry Prize for *Metatron*. In 2018, she was awarded the National Prize for the Promotion of Reading and Writing by the OEI and the Federal Secretariat of Culture for her literary page *Mukí Ra'íchari*. In 2019, she won the Dolores Castro Prize for essay writing, and in 2020, she was included in the anthology *The Eccentrics of Lapicero Rojo*, Tijuana B.C. In 2021, she received the Malcolm Lowry Prize, and in 2022, she won the ICM Publications Prize.

Currently, she is a member of FONCA's National System of Art Creators. In 2023, she served on the jury for the Carlos Fuentes Prize, which was awarded to Elena Poniatowska, as well as for the Malcolm Lowry Prize. As a poet, she has published *El jardín del vértigo* in 1999, *Milésima de segundo por la muerte de Pablo Ochoa* in 2003, *Moebius (Tierra Adentro)* in 2006, *El sentido de las horas* (UACH) in 2008, *Metafísica del ojo* (ICHICULT) in 2012, *La holomúsica de esferas* (Poetazos) in 2013, *Dispersión simultánea* (Mantis) in 2014, and *Walter Dardon en la octava dimensión* (Cisnegro) in 2017. As an essayist, she has published *Tras la luz de diosa blanca: en busca de Rogelio Treviño* (ICM) in 2018, *Nueva iconografía guerra de la lotería mexicana* (IMAC Aguascalientes) in 2019, *De la残酷 y lo sagrado: viaje épico mítico de Antonin Artaud en la sierra Tarahumara* (Ed. Estado de Morelos) in 2021, and *Teofanía mineral* (Municipal Institute of Culture of Chihuahua) in 2022. She has been featured in numerous national and international anthologies, including *Sombra roja. Antología de poesía femenina mexicana* (Vaso roto) in 2017.

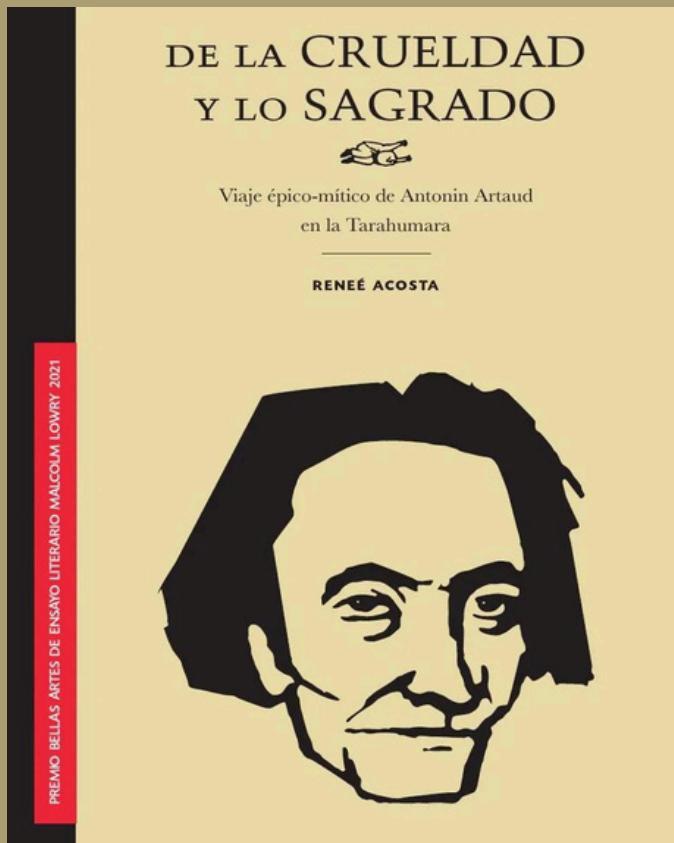
Reneé Acosta served as the coordinator of the Literature Department at the Cultural Institute of Chihuahua from 2003 to 2011. In addition to her literary work, she has been a cultural promoter, environmental activist, and feminist. Her works have been translated into Italian and English.



# Cruelty and the Sacred:

## Antonin Artaud's Epic-Mythical Journey among the Tarahumara

Cruelty and the Sacred: Antonin Artaud's Epic-Mythical Journey among the Tarahumara follows the iconic French poet and playwright as he seeks to understand the motivations that led him to the Tarahumara people in the Sierra of Chihuahua. Author Reneé Acosta explores these motivations through a comparative analysis of Artaud's journals, essays, and letters, as well as through insights from his biographers and experts in anthropological psychology.



## Antonin Artaud: The Living Arcane

Antonin Artaud is one of those visionary voices whose clairvoyance makes him indispensable for understanding 20th-century art and culture. His contributions went far beyond drafting manifestos during a time when the avant-garde was shaping future trends; they extended indirectly into fields such as psychology, anthropology, aesthetics, philosophy, sociology, and more. Even today, Artaud's writings hold mysteries of his prophetic visions and the insights he gained from his expanded awareness, straddling two worlds: the material and the spiritual. He was a citizen of both realms. The foundations of his Theatre of Cruelty have not only fueled contemporary theatre but have also influenced subsequent revolutions in poetry and literature. Artaud's legacy transcends time, genres, and artistic disciplines. His influence can be found in cinema, music, rock, pop culture, and virtually any creation emerging from the French avant-garde, whose passion was both genuinely revolutionary and legitimate.

For Artaud, the revolution of humanity was imminent, and it would undoubtedly emerge from magical Mexico, which he, as the "Master" and the "Momo," envisioned as the untainted source of the most ancient and arcane knowledge on the planet: the Sierra Tarahumara. But where did this idea originate? Artaud leaves us with few clues when he writes: "As mythical as the existence of Atlantis may be, Plato describes the Atlanteans as a race of magical origin. The Tarahumaras, whom I consider direct descendants of the Atlanteans, continue to devote themselves to the cult of magical rites" (p. 280).

For Artaud, these magical rites clearly correspond to those of the Eleusinian Mysteries, which involved the consumption of sacred, magical drinks. This raises the question: was there knowledge in Artaud's time about sacred mushrooms and power plants? How could this be possible? To our knowledge, the psychotropic revolution, related to the exploration of expanded consciousness through power plants and Native American shamanism, was not widely studied until the mid-20th century, particularly through Wasson's work in Oaxaca, where he discovered the shaman María Sabina. How, then, did Artaud come to such conclusions as early as 1936?

[1] Antonin Artaud. *Voyage au pays des Tarahumaras*.

An incredible testimony reaches us through the letters Nietzsche wrote during his psychiatric internment, revealing insights into the concerns of many European thinkers of the time. In one of these letters, Nietzsche confesses the fragility of his health and expresses an urgent need to travel to Mexico, specifically wishing to settle in Oaxaca. He also mentions that his suffering is not merely physical and that he requires assistance to undertake this journey, as his condition prevented him from traveling alone. Yet, he remains convinced that the only possible cure for his psychiatric condition would be to live in Mexico.

Reading these writings, one realizes the deep despair Nietzsche felt over his cognitive decline and the loss of clarity caused by syphilis—a feeling reminiscent of that experienced by Artaud, Nerval, or Van Gogh. However, Nietzsche and Artaud seem to share a particularly profound awareness: the cure for mental suffering could be found in Mexico, and only through shamanic healers could they attain the healing they so desperately sought.

But why did Artaud choose the Sierra Tarahumara? Why was Nietzsche so certain that his only salvation lay in Oaxaca? Why was his final wish to settle in Mexico?

I have traced Artaud's motivations to an article likely published in the 1920s by National Geographic, which described the Tarahumara people as entirely untouched by cultural penetration. In the article, the Tarahumara were depicted as true warriors, resisting the invasion of Western ideas and culture. In a way, this offered a vision of "primitive anthropology" similar to that presented by early Jesuit missions during the colonization and evangelization of the Tarahumara. The article also explained that the Tarahumara's souls were so pure that they were compared to children—a distinctly European and Spanish perspective, particularly held by religious missionaries, in contrast to the conquistadors, who saw them as savages.

This search for purity, untarnished by Western influence, may explain why Artaud, and likely Nietzsche as well, saw Mexico as a sanctuary for healing and renewal—not just of the body, but of the soul and mind.

But where in this writing is it mentioned that the Tarahumaras relied on a cactus to connect with God? This point is not addressed. The indigenous people themselves attempted to divert the attention of outsiders, including anthropologists, away from their ritual medicine and religious secrets, as we will see in the study of Gordon Wasson. It is said that the Rarámuri were among the most resistant to both converting to Christianity and revealing their foundational myths and stories to researchers or the Church. However, it is also noted that they readily embraced the syncretism of Christ, the Holy Trinity, and the Virgin. While this is true, it is equally important to acknowledge that the Tarahumaras never abandoned their original religion. Their Holy Week rituals remain a living testament to their cosmogony and to this syncretism with Onorúame, the father god, Eyerúame, the mother goddess, and the morning star. This forms the Holy Trinity of the Rarámuri.

Returning to the main point: if Nietzsche had already encountered information or believed the rumors that, in Mexico, shamans were powerful healers capable of healing the mind through plants, we must take his testimony as evidence that, as early as the 19th century, there was a belief in Europe that Mexico was a source of spiritual healing power. By the time of Artaud, this idea had already been circulating for decades, though it had not yet been addressed by the emerging field of psychology. This belief existed long before psychology took form. I believe that these two sources, Humboldt and Nietzsche, shed light on why Artaud chose to go to the root, to the true source of power, by immersing himself in the deep canyons of the Sierra Tarahumara, rather than traveling to Oaxaca, Yucatán, Durango, or Sonora.



On the other hand, there are the hypotheses of the controversial and "cursed" archaeologist Augustus Le Plongeon, who was at the height of his fame due to his theories about discoveries in the Americas, particularly the Chac Mool. He claimed this was indisputable proof that he had found Atlantis, or at least the civilization of its survivors. The question arises again: why didn't he search among the indigenous groups in central Mexico, in Hidalgo? The answer lies in the fact that the discovery of the Atlantes of Tula, in Hidalgo, occurred four years after Artaud's visit to Chihuahua, in 1940, by archaeologist Jorge Ruffier Acosta. The name "Atlantes" was only given years later, meaning that Artaud couldn't have believed the Tarahumaras were the true descendants of Atlantis for that reason. However, in his writings, he suggests this was one of the primary motivations for his journey. He also wasn't aware of the Naica mines and their giant quartz crystals, which have since sparked spiritual interest in the New Age movement, fueling magical esoteric healing practices and, unfortunately, mundane forms of charlatanism. This is yet another mystical aspect of the lands of Chihuahua, further explaining why Artaud was so enchanted with this region, which he pursued with such passion.

Another of the most fascinating mysteries surrounding Artaud's exploration of the Tarahumara people lies in his belief that the Tarahumaras were nothing less than a primordial race, the survivors of Atlantis, as I previously mentioned. This idea was probably influenced by the popular theories circulating in Paris during Artaud's time. Le Plongeon, though controversial in Europe, gained attention as an archaeologist for his claim that the Aztec culture was connected to the survivors of this mythical continent. Even today, researchers who propose that humanity might be much older than current science acknowledges, and that we may have survived several ancient "apocalypses," face harsh criticism. This includes proponents of the ancient astronaut theory, popularized by Erich Von Däniken, which posits that the gods were actually advanced civilizations, possibly even the origin of intelligent life from other worlds.

Many years later, a document would be discovered that, in my view, could suggest that Le Plongeon was not entirely wrong. I am referring to the Codex Boturini, which recounts the myth of Aztlán. According to the myth, the Aztecs fled from a land located in the water, with a circular city crossed by a central road. They traveled by raft to what is now Veracruz, crossed the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and eventually reached Lake Texcoco, where they experienced their vision. According to the codex, this land of Aztlán was in the sea and had at its center a large sacred mountain. Contemporary anthropologists have interpreted the curls emanating from the mountain as speech, a symbol tied to a sacred mountain. To me, however, these curls represent smoke—evidence that they came from a volcanic region, which may have ultimately destroyed their ancestral civilization. Yet, they sought a place with similar characteristics near Popocatépetl. Why?

A recent archaeological discovery in the Tlatelolco area revealed the existence of thermal baths. There are also indications that these baths were used by women for childbirth in warm water, likely to ease the pain of labor. Could pilgrimages have been made from the surrounding lands of Tenochtitlán and the State of Mexico for women to give birth in the waters of Tlatelolco? Or did every city have its own thermal baths, still lying beneath the weight of modern Mexico City's palaces? We do not know for sure, but the water culture in Tenochtitlán suggests that bathing, transportation, agriculture, life cycles, health, and childbirth were intricately tied to the culture of thermal health and the exploitation of volcanic lands and their waters. Thermal cultures used these principles to heal muscles, whether from war, old age, infertility treatments, or childbirth assistance. Similar practices can be observed in other civilizations, such as the Japanese and Roman ones.

Was the true reason for their migration not to find a sign but to locate a place with the same characteristics as their original civilization? A civilization reliant on volcanic energy for survival could be seen as a feminine vision of the anthropology of ancient Mesoamerican inhabitants, where the integration of the environment, motherhood, childbirth, and health formed a logical and harmonious unity of elegant simplicity.

It is therefore possible that they were a culture familiar with the medicinal benefits of these waters and that they likely harnessed volcanic energy in ways we still do not understand, possibly using eco-technologies that have since been lost. What other uses did they make of thermal energy? Another important myth linked to the lost civilization of Atlantis is their supposed knowledge of magic, proto-sciences, and technologies that remain mysterious to us today. It is said that the knowledge of Hermes Trismegistus, as well as astrology and other lost sciences, was present in Atlantis.

Artaud was a profound and intense connoisseur of Hermetic and esoteric wisdom. If we perceive contradictions between his letters to Mexican government officials and his personal journals, it is because he logically sought to project a serious and scholarly image of Mexico, distancing it from the 'superstitions' that were nonetheless common in the country. For years, in his paranoid psychosis, he harbored a fear of having been cursed on a street in Paris.

Was Artaud aware of this knowledge, or did he intuit it? Unfortunately, Le Plongeon's studies on the survivors of Atlantis in Mexico were persecuted and destroyed. However, it is possible that Artaud had access to information that we lack today, which could explain his decision to journey to the Sierra Tarahumara. One of these beliefs is recorded in his *Voyage to the Land of the Tarahumara*, where he claims that the earthly forces in this region were a source of water and light, the last hope for the mental health of 20th-century humanity. Another testimony that might shed light on Artaud's desperation to reach the Tarahumara lands comes from Aldous Huxley, who stated that the greatest epidemic of the century was schizophrenia. Today, after directly experiencing the mental scars left by the COVID-19 pandemic, we can see that Huxley was not exaggerating. Although Huxley made this statement in the 1960s, it highlights the persistent psychological aftereffects in society, dating back to the Spanish flu pandemic.

Like Artaud, Huxley also suggested that healing from the psychological disorders caused by the feverish hallucinations of the Spanish flu could be achieved by crossing the 'doors of perception' with the help of LSD and psilocybin, found in mushrooms and other Mexican cacti. It was only through the research of Alexander Shulgin, Albert Hoffman, and R. Gordon Wasson that the universe revealed through these doors began to be taken seriously by science, moving beyond mere rumors. These beliefs, supported by Nietzsche's testimony, indicate that they were already gaining popularity in Artaud's Europe.

It is clear from his travel journal that the French visionary came to Mexico in a desperate search for escape, which he explicitly stated: he came to flee his hallucinations. He sought the doors of perception as a way out, not as a means to explore the universe of altered visions. Interestingly, for Artaud, the rituals he participated in with the Tarahumara during the six months he spent among the Rarámuri revealed to him that his soul was that of a Tarahumara. Artaud's final wish was to return and live in Mexico, just like Nietzsche. And, just like the German philosopher, fate did not allow it. Upon his return to Europe, Artaud experienced immense sorrow, which ultimately consumed him. For him, death became a desirable liberation. Had he found the healing he sought from the family of Erasmo Palma? Apparently not. The moment he set foot in Europe, he felt as though he would never return to his beloved Chihuahua.

Throughout his life, Artaud embodied a complex character, with the attributes of a seer capable of perceiving beyond the obvious. He possessed a shamanic ability to observe himself and detect cracks in reality, seeing it from a different perspective.

Artaud seemed fully aware that his life was a cosmic and theatrical representation of a character—the Momo, Arcana 0, the Fool—whose esoteric counterpart is the Magician. Artaud's esoteric journey during his years of psychiatric confinement partially explains his contradictory relationship with magic, religion, shamanism, psychology, and counterculture in all its dimensions, as well as his effort to remain an objective, profound thinker and the genius he also was.

When Artaud came to Mexico, he was already an established figure, surrounded by the aura that only a French avant-garde artist could have in post-revolutionary Mexico, a country that had retained a fascination for all things French, a legacy of the Porfiriato era. However, according to testimonies from Mexican artists, his relationships with María Izquierdo and other artists did not prove particularly fruitful for him. They saw him merely as 'the Madman,' wrapped in the legend of the Avant-garde Artist. As Erasmo Palma aptly recalled from his childhood memories, Artaud appeared to be a very sick man.

Artaud struggled to integrate into the Tarahumara community, and it was his connection with the young Erasmo Palma that helped him in his quest to earn the trust of the Rarámuri, a group long accustomed to receiving white men—whether they be 'Mexican curious,' anthropologists, or missionaries. The Rarámuri were well aware that white men could not always be trusted. Their myth of Riochi, or Riablo, clearly expresses this, stating that the Tarahumara were created by God, while the white man was created by the Devil.

We must therefore understand that the testimonies of the Tarahumara, who claimed that Artaud had to earn their trust, are accurate. In the interview I share here with Enrique Servín—an anthropologist, polyglot, poet, and translator, whose significant contribution to the preservation of indigenous languages in the region earned him the Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda Cultural Merit Award posthumously in October 2019—he explains the Tarahumara worldview through the words of Don Erasmo. Servín describes Artaud's relationship with this community and the shamanic diagnosis the Tarahumara made regarding Artaud's condition.



# ERASMO PALMA FERNANDEZ

## The Life and Work of Erasmo Palma

Erasmo Palma Fernández, born on August 10, 1928, in the village of Basigochi, in the municipality of Guachochi, in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, demonstrated his musical talents from a young age, playing the violin and guitar. As he grew older, Erasmo Palma became a significant figure in his community, eventually assuming the role of Monarca and leading the Matachines in their traditional dances.

In 2016, Erasmo Palma was honored as an emeritus creator by the Honorable Congress of Chihuahua, just a few months before his passing on October 24, 2016. In 1987, filmmaker Raymonde Carasco was the first to portray Erasmo Palma as a musician of the Tarahumara people. Erasmo, who never learned to write and preserved all his knowledge through oral tradition, recounted how, as a child, his father encouraged him to dance, move, and shift his feet. In one scene, dressed in a traditional Tarahumara skirt, he demonstrated the Matachine dances. The documentary ends with Erasmo Palma playing music and singing: 'Over there, on the other side, towards Santa Rosalía, there is a very beautiful deer. There, you find a plant with great power. The name of this plant is Hikuri. And the chief of these plants is called Santo Polio. They say that God placed this plant in the world to help us when we are sick.'



## The Memories of Erasmo Palma: Artaud Among the Tarahumaras

During the International Festival of Chihuahua, in Ciudad Juarez, a literary gathering titled "Littérature à Bravo" brought Renée Acosta, a specialist in indigenous cultures, into conversation with Erasmo Palma, a respected figure of Tarahumara culture. What immediately struck her was Palma's imposing presence: tall, commanding, with a scarf that lent him an enigmatic air. The conversation, simple and spontaneous, took place in the lobby of a hotel, but what Erasmo revealed that day left a profound impact on Acosta.

Erasmo distinctly remembered meeting Artaud at the age of 8. What he vaguely recalls is a foreigner with long hair, wearing a hat, thin, pale, with bulging blue eyes. A man who was constantly taking notes, writing feverishly. "I was a child. I barely remember it. How could I have known that Antonio would bring me so many people asking questions about him?"

He then recalled leading Artaud to his aunt and uncle, priests of Ciguri, a sacred ritual for the Tarahumaras. Artaud was treated at Cowerachi and was very happy during the three days that followed his healing! In Sylvie Marchand's documentary *Canta o Morir*, he specifies that it was Antonio Espino who healed Antonin Artaud, being the only raspador (healer) to practice the Peyote ritual.

When Renée asked him what Artaud had been suffering from, Palma gave a surprising answer: according to his uncle, Artaud possessed a fourth feminine soul, in conflict with his three other masculine souls. This imbalance between these internal forces was the source of his great suffering. According to Palma, after his encounter with the healers of the Tutuguri ritual, Artaud ventured further, into the Sierra Baja, a hidden place where the *sipaàme*, mysterious sorcerers, live.

At the end of their conversation, Palma shared an intriguing thought with Acosta: for him, Artaud was not merely a foreigner but a Tarahumara by birth, even though he had been born in France. Renée Acosta believes that the child Artaud referred to, with a swollen belly and a mouth circled with sores, in a letter to Jean Paulhan dated February 4, 1937, is Erasmo Palma. While it is, of course, impossible to prove this, if we believe Erasmo Palma's account, he had just recovered from a serious illness and was learning to walk again when he met Antonin Artaud. (Source: Renée Acosta, *De la Crueldad y lo Sagrado*)



Photo of Régis Hebraud

# Erasmo Palma: Interview by Enrique Servín

## The Shadow of Artaud on the Tarahumaras: A Necessary Myth

In this issue, we are pleased to present exceptional documents that offer a unique insight into the spiritual practices and visions of the Tarahumaras, a people who deeply influenced the work and thought of Antonin Artaud. One of these significant documents is a valuable interview conducted by Enrique Servín with Master Erasmo Palma, an eminent keeper of the Tarahumara traditions and culture. This conversation, preserved and shared by Renée Acosta, provides a rare glimpse into the thoughts and beliefs of a great indigenous sage, offering a direct link to the living roots of the people Artaud so greatly admired.

Did Erasmo Palma truly meet Artaud during his childhood? This is a legitimate question and raises understandable doubts, as certain points still require clarification. Personally, I won't attempt to answer it—not out of a lack of skepticism, as there are indeed reasons to be skeptical—but because the decision to highlight this man's testimony in the context of this interview rests on two major elements.

On one hand, Erasmo Palma seems to have understood certain aspects of Artaud's thought better than anyone else. On the other hand, in the current context, where the Tarahumaras are more endangered than ever, it is crucial to listen to their voices, perhaps even more so than to Artaud's. If Artaud's journey in 1936 and the myth that arose from it can help reignite interest in their plight, culture, and worldview, it can only be beneficial. In this light, whether Guadalupe de Loya was truly Artaud's guide or whether Erasmo was indeed the child he met seems secondary to me, as long as it contributes to the Tarahumaras today feeling proud of their origins and keeps alive the flame for Artaud, whose writings about the Tarahumaras illustrate exactly why they are so important.

# Erasmo Palma: Interview Conducted by Enrique Servin

E.S. - Don Erasmo Palma, it's an honor to speak with you. Congratulations on the documentary *El ladrón de violines*. You are a source of pride, a living cultural heritage.

E.P. - Thank you, Enrique.

E.S. - Throughout your long career as a musician, preserver of the ancestral chapareque technique, and promoter of the written literature of your people's oral heritage, I know the topic of Artaud has often come up.

E.P. - Listen, Enrique, I'm old now, and I don't remember that time very well anymore. I never imagined so many people would come looking for me to talk about Antonito. I was born in 1928. I was very young when I met him. But yes, I do remember.

E.S. - What was your first impression when you met Antonin Artaud?

E.P. - Well, I saw him like I saw all white men—he seemed strange to me. I saw him like those who suffer from empacho(indigestion), or like those who are sick from alcohol. We met, and I would tell him my stories, and he would tell me his.

E.S. - What do you remember about what he told you?

E.P. - Well, we liked to look at stones. We would find shapes in the stones. Then I realized he wasn't just any ordinary sick person. He made the stones speak. He would tell me the story of the stones. He told me stories about what he saw, and it was like one idea led to another, and another. I liked listening to him.

E.S. - You once told me that Antonin had spoken to you about his illness. What did Artaud tell you he had?

E.P. - I don't remember the exact words. Well, he told me he had a sleep sickness. You could see he was always dreaming while awake. It was like listening to a sleepwalker. I took him to the place, in the middle of the trees, where you can see the earth breathe. And Antonito would start to breathe near the hole where our mother Eyerúame exhales. He told me that the air cleaned his head.

E.S. - What did your uncles, the sipaámes, tell you? How did they heal him? What did they say he had?

E.P. - They said he was trapped in a dream mirror.

E.P. – Listen, Enrique, there are things that cannot be said. You wouldn't understand.

E.S. – Try to explain it to me in your own words.

E.P. – Well, people from elsewhere believe in many things that are just dead words, simply because they've read them in a book. Time, for us, is different. When a person dies, they live in dreams, in the land of the chuparosas, which are the souls of the dead. They live like...

E.S. – That's very poetic. How do you interpret the world of the mirror of dreams?

E.P. – You fall asleep, and when you sleep, they are awake in the mirror-world. If you want to talk to them, you have to sleep. But he, he was awake here and over there. That's what Antonito had. The Venadito Azul (the Little Blue Deer), that's what awakened him. But when you wake up, you realize that everything, here and there, is also a dream. I don't know if I've explained it well enough using your words.

E.S. – So, what diagnosis did they give him?

E.P. – My uncle said that Antonin had an extra soul, like women do. A woman's soul.

E.S. – For the Tarahumaras, an extra soul would define someone as part of the third gender, right?

E.P. – As you say, yes. But Antonito wasn't like what you Whites call joto (a derogatory term for homosexual). This feminine soul was in constant conflict with his masculine souls. That's why he lived while dreaming, and when he dreamed, he was awake, like the dead.

E.S. – In his journals, Artaud mentioned feeling like he was dead, suffering from Cotard's syndrome. Is that related to what you're telling me?

E.P. – Yes, because Antonito didn't use his seed. For him, the seed transformed in the time of dreams. But you, you understand time differently. That's why I'm telling you, you Whites, there are things you just don't understand.

E.S. – And how can we understand?

E.P. – Only with the Venadito Azul, with the grandfather, with Jikuri (Peyote). If you seek it, it shows you the way. It shows you the truth in what you believed was the truth. And then you realize that it's also a dream.

E.S. – You are a philosopher! Don Erasmo, you fascinate me.

E.P. – Are you beginning to understand me? Or are you pretending to understand, thinking to yourself, "Ah, this old fool!"

(Laughter)

E.S. - Please, tell me more about how you understand time.

E.P. - Well, what can I say? For example, we don't have a word for the conditional because the conditional is a lie. Things either are or they aren't, they either happened or they didn't. When you say "would have been," you're imagining. But time is imagination. That's what you come to understand when you meet our grandfather Jikuri (Peyote).

E.S. - Let me see if I understand. For you, time and the soul are the same thing?

E.P. - The soul, Enrique, yes, the soul is time. What do you see in a mirror? You see yourself and say, "That's me." But it's not you, it's just the image in the mirror. It's the same when we're alive: we believe it's us, but no. We are the time in which we seem to be what appears in the mirror.

E.S. - And is that what all Rarámuris believe?

E.P. - Something like that. Why do you think God gave us this, to us, the most humble? Because God knows the Rarámuris. We are poor, but He gave us what we know. We don't have money. We have time. These are God's keys.

E.S. - Is that why Antonin considered himself a Rarámuri?

E.P. - Well, I believe so. (Silence) I think he lived like someone awake while sleeping, too awake and too asleep. More than us. It was as if he knew he was dreaming.

E.S. - Why do you say that, Don Erasmo?

E.P. - Because of the things he said to me. When he arrived, he was very thin, it looked like he was dying from the inside. He resembled those who are sick from malnutrition. He was afraid of time, of what he saw. He wanted to wake up, as if he were ill from nightmares. He wrote a lot in little notebooks that he carried everywhere. He would hunch over them like a madman, writing and writing until he was exhausted. We gave him food because he looked very sick, like someone who had worms. He was pale, even paler than most whites. When he arrived, it was like seeing a dead man. That's why we helped him. We pitied him. How could we imagine he was so important? We helped him because he needed it, not because he was someone important.

E.S. - What can you tell us more about his treatment?

E.P. - Well, to be honest, I don't know. Those things are for the sipaámes (spiritual healers). Not all Tarahumaras know everything about the Tarahumaras. But I heard that the feminine soul he had was what gave him visions of the future, what drove him to write his poems and behave the way he did. They gave him his nights back with ceremonies, dances, and with the scraping of Jikuri. We also took him deep into the Sierra.

E.S. - How did he behave?

E.P. - Like I told you before, it was as if he was dreaming while awake. He said things as if he were sleeping, but also spoke as if he were fully awake. He was a madman, just like me, who is also mad about the stars.

E.S. - That sounds like a poem! Mad about the stars! Don Erasmo, you continue to surprise me. When you speak of those stars, are you talking about Risopoli, the morning star?

E.P. - Risopoli is like the Virgin and the Holy Spirit combined, for you Whites. She is the messenger of God, of our father Onorúame, of our Lord Jesus Christ. The little morning star spoke to Antonito every day, all the time, everywhere. And since he didn't use this gift to heal the sick, to become a sipaáme, because he wasn't Tarahumara, it made him ill. It's like having a remedy inside your body and not giving it to anyone. The remedy then makes you sick.

E.S. - So, do you think he healed himself?

E.P. - I think he left in a better state than when he arrived. Yes, I'd say so. He no longer trembled, his skin and hair weren't dull anymore. It was as if his thoughts were no longer in chaos. He was calm, even happy. He came like a beggar and left like someone who had bathed, eaten well, and spoken with the Grandfather, with the ancestors Onorúame and Eyerúame. Antonito received affection. We all gave him affection because it pained us to see him like that.

E.S. - You told me a story connected to the chapareque that Artaud heard. What did he say about it?

E.P. - Well, he told me something like the sound was magical, like something from the stars, and that it had to do with numbers and the voice of the spheres, because stars are spheres in the sky. He hinted at something like that, but he had trouble speaking. To me, it was very... well, I don't know how to explain it, it left an impression on me. It was as if when he spoke, it left a mark, even though he didn't speak Rarámuri. I think that's why I, too, became obsessed with the chapareque and fell in love with poetry. Antonito and I became friends. I think it's because I had the most patience with him, and he was patient with me too. It was like we were alike. I didn't care that he was a gringo, because he thought like a Tarahumara, and he didn't care that I was a child. He spoke to me like I was an adult.

E.S. - How did you say goodbye to him?

E.P. – Well, it wasn't really a goodbye. He wanted to leave quickly, and my uncle told him that if he didn't come back with the Grandfather Jikuri, he would end up feeling ill again. Because since he wasn't going to become a *sipaáme*, that extra soul would continue to confuse him, and he would never be grounded. He needed to dance for many nights, just as *Onorúame* danced to create the earth. It was like a lightning bolt that doesn't touch the ground, just stirring up storms in the sky. I didn't think it would be the last time I'd see him. Later, I learned he wasn't able to return.

E.S. – Don Erasmo, your testimony is invaluable. I don't have enough words to thank you for giving me this interview. Is there anything else you remember that you'd like to share with us?

E.P. – Well, I remember that he really loved watching the sunset. He would stay there contemplating until the stars appeared. One day, we were both silently watching the stars, and a dog walked by. It was very funny because the dog joined us, as if he understood. We laughed at how seriously the little dog stared at the sky, sitting right next to us. It was as if, in that moment, the three of us were the same thing, no different from each other. We weren't a Tarahumara child, a gringo, and a dog. We were the same flame, contemplating the stars.

E.S. – That deeply moves me. It's an honor. Thank you so much for giving me this interview.

E.P. – Thank you, Enrique. You're always welcome here. You know my home is always open to you. It's always a pleasure to speak with you.

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This interview, recorded in audio by Enrique Servín and transcribed by René Acosta in 2005, was part of the work that Master Servín and I undertook to preserve indigenous languages and intangible heritage for the Indigenous Language Preservation Department of ICHICULT, under the direction of anthropologist Jorge Carrera Robles. It allows us to see the French visionary from a completely different perspective—through the eyes of the Tarahumaras who welcomed and helped him during the treatment he sought in Chihuahua.

Though this portrayal is shaped by the memory of someone who knew him as a child and recalls him at nearly 80 years old, it cannot fully capture the immense and multifaceted personality of the eccentric French artist. Nevertheless, it allows us to recognize qualities that Artaud himself may have written about in his journals and essays. Unfortunately, many of these writings remain untranslated into Spanish. But the few that are, along with his letters denouncing power, his revolutionary message, and his journey to the land of the Tarahumaras, give us a clear sense of the unique geography of his mind. As his first psychiatrist once said, Artaud was akin to figures like Nerval and Poe, an indomitable, rebellious, and iconoclastic spirit—a lineage that we also see in Burroughs.



**SYLVIE MARCHAND**

## Sylvie Marchand

Sylvie Marchand is an author, filmmaker, and multimedia artist. She has a dual background in circus arts and anthropology, with a doctorate from the Sorbonne and a degree from the Institute of Oriental Languages. Her work merges art with new technologies, centering around interactive installations. She leads international projects in collaboration with artists from the digital culture collective Gigacircus.

Her creations explore the cultural dynamics of contemporary global mobility, such as nomadism and migration, as seen in her immersive work *Continent Rouge*. In parallel with her projects in Mongolia and Egypt, Sylvie continues her "Tarahumara" work in the Sierra to this day.

Since 2008, she has created several works in the Sierra:

1. *Danzar o Morir*, a video installation (2010).
2. *Continent Rouge*, an immersive installation connected to an audio journey, premiered in Avignon (2016).
3. *Voz lactea*, *Ecucontro Tarahumara* (2018).
4. *Cantar o Morir, WIKARABO WECHIKO MUKUBO/ The Ritual Fight of the Rarámuris of the Sierra Tarahumara.*"  
Deauville Award 2023 (Documentary)
5. Planned for 2026, *The Glossolalias of the World*.

**"My search is cultural. What I seek concerns the relationship with nature, the ways of exchanging knowledge to survive, and above all, the broadening of worldviews."**

**Sylvie Marchand**

From July 22 to 26, 2024, at 7 rue de la Gare in Villefranche, the founding artists of "Hospitalité en Actions" — Sylvie Marchand, Lionel Camburet, Lelio Moehr, and Diana de la Riva — hosted online the creators of the Mexican project "Performancear o Morir," Gustavo Álvarez and Magda Rivera, along with six performers from the Guadalajara region.



Sylvie Marchand

## Art, Bodies, Rituals, and Camera

In an academic article on the work *Continent Rouge* (1), I explain how my creation Tarahumara places me at a specific point in history: an intersection without direct contact, between the oral literature of the Tarahumaras and Artaud's writings on this people. On one hand, the Tarahumaras, custodians of a rich oral culture, are excluded from book culture (2) and do not have access to Artaud's texts. On the other hand, Mexican and Western academics, writers, and booksellers are largely ignorant of Tarahumara oral literature. That's why, starting in 2011, I positioned my creation at this artistic and political crossroads. Since then, I have been working to establish a connection between these two disjointed currents (3).

### Performancear o Morir

My journey in "Tarahumara Country" began in 2008. Gustavo Emmanuel Alvarez Lugo, a Mexican performer and anthropologist, was organizing a gathering of Mexican and South American artists in Norogachic to celebrate the spring rites of the Rarámuris. "I'm diving into this adventure, es una locura! I don't really know where I'm heading," he told me, "but we'll see: I'm calling this gathering *Performancear o Morir*. It's a kind of manifesto for us, Mexican artists, who, like indigenous peoples, are fighting to survive and renew the strength of our energy."

This adventure changed my life. While I was in Tijuana preparing for the second filming of *AmeXica sKin*, I set off. I had never seen nor heard from Gustavo Emmanuel Alvarez before. Upon my arrival in Mexico City, he was living in the Sierra Tarahumara, without internet or phone access. I had only one point of reference: the name of a village and a date: Norogachic, March 21. The village seemed to be bisected by a river, but there were no roads leading to it.

[1] [https://www.gigacircus.net/fr/creations/continent\\_rouge](https://www.gigacircus.net/fr/creations/continent_rouge) - immersive installation connected to a sound journey. Created in Avignon, La Chartreuse.

[2] Except for the small minority of Rarámuris who reach university.

[3] *Danzar o Morir*, video installation (2010), *Continent Rouge*, installation connected to a sound journey (2016), *Voz lactea*, *Encuentro Tarahumara* (2018), *Cantar o Morir*, synthetic film on the Rarámuri (2022), and planned for 2026, *Les glossolalies hospitalières* ... to be continued.

[4] The term 'Tarahumara' is thought to be a Hispanicized distortion of the indigenous term Rarámuri, which, according to Erasmo Palma, means 'man'.

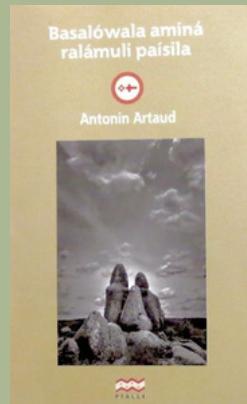
To reach the Sierra Tarahumara, I planned my route day by day. Adventurous by nature, I like to arrive on site with a sense of innocence, openness, and readiness for discovery—to run, film, and dance. From Tijuana, I had to pass through Mexico City to get to Chihuahua. I spent the night there, then took a bus to Hidalgo del Parral, Pancho Villa's stronghold, where I stayed overnight. The next day, I caught another bus to Guachochi, where I also spent the night. A pickup truck picked me up on the trail and brought me to Norogachic. The deeper you venture into the Sierra, the more basic the means of transport become. Crossing the Sierra under snow, at dusk; searching for a guesthouse in unfamiliar neighborhoods; meals of red beef in noisy diners; the shadow of Pancho Villa in Parral... Soon, I was directed to bush taxis at improbable crossroads. The bus filled up with Mestizos, and Spanish gradually gave way to the fluid language of the Rarámuri. Slowly, colorful dresses, Apache-like faces, and red headbands signaled the arrival in the País de los Tarahumaras.

Being on the move in an unfamiliar landscape, I sat on the steps of the church in Norogachic, Sierra Tarahumara; it was indeed March 21st. The drums were getting closer, and the fires splashed against the night. Artaud, like a meeting within the flow of my creation—limbo, echoes, reminiscences. It was only after returning from this first shoot that I discovered Artaud had stayed precisely in Norogachi. It is the only geographical detail he gives us about his journey through the Sierra. And I found him there.

It was the flow of my video creation that led me to Norogachic to dance and film a 'resistance' run at the heart of the Rarámuri drums—a run that will only end with mine. In Rarámuri, one of the most repeated propitiatory rituals is called 'Yumari.' It means to run, to resist—a struggle for life. This is where the Tarahumaras, Artaud, contemporary performers, and artists in general converge.

[5] Mestizos: Non-indigenous people who colonize the Sierra and take over Rarámuri lands.

Basalowala Amonà Ralàmuli Paisila is the first translation of  
Voyage au pays des Tarahumaras into the Rarámuri language.



## Restoring Antonin Artaud's writings on the Tarahumaras to the Tarahumara people

During my first filming in Norogachi in 2008, I met the poet Erasmo Palma (who passed away in 2016). He spoke to me about his encounter with Antonin Artaud in Norogachi in 1936. Erasmo, along with his son Chavo and his grandson Lucio, guided me to Cowerachi, where, according to him, the French poet had undergone an initiation into the peyote ritual. Later, I met Loya, the son of Artaud's guide, as well as the granddaughter of the schoolteacher who had hosted him. My journey led us to Nararachi in 2016. It was there that Lionel, Lelio, and I recorded the peyote ritual, "Hikuri," over several consecutive years, invited by Felipe Fuentes, the nephew of the shaman who had treated Artaud and who himself had become a Raspador. Each person shared their own version, their unique images of the French poet. Erasmo Palma, together with Felipe, was undoubtedly one of the last to embody the living Tarahumara memory of Antonin—unknown to the European public—a floating oral memory in the Sierra.

Today, many still perceive traces of Artaud in the Tarahumara dances and the landscape itself. Before my time, Raymonde Carasco (1939–2009) had created numerous ethnographic films exploring these rites and their connection to Artaud's writings, echoes of which can be found in the mountains. The Erasmo Palma that Sylvie filmed from 2012 until his passing in 2016 was no longer the young Erasmo of Raymonde's era: he had moved away from Catholicism, embracing a more political and activist outlook. He said that, in this journey, Artaud had been a guiding influence.

Tucheachi, an hour's walk from Norogachi, is the hamlet where Erasmo Palma lived. He worked on his songs in a small studio he had built near his home. This studio has since become the "Museo Erasmo Palma," inaugurated in 2021 by the Palma family and the municipality of Guachochi.

Today, visitors can meet the wonderful Elvira Palma there, his niece. Through her voice, Erasmo's words and Artaud's memory reach us. She has translated and brought to life the texts she interprets, especially the song "Antonio Artaud," a poem written in 1996 by her uncle Erasmo. You can hear this song in the sound journey of *Continent Rouge* and in the film *Cantar o Morir*, through which I aim to bring Elvira out of invisibility.

Thus, almost all of the Rarámuris, excluded from the culture of the written word, had never had access to Artaud's texts. Starting in 2012, I began rereading Antonin's writings on Tarahumara rituals with Erasmo. Shortly before his death, he told me that through poetry, Artaud had managed to describe and convey the strength of his culture better than the rigid thinking of anthropologists, especially that of Carl Lumholtz (1851-1922), who often stayed in Tucheachi during his fieldwork. With a wink, Palma added that Lumholtz had left descendants in Norogachi!

During each of my film projects, I would spend time rereading Artaud with Erasmo and his neighbors. It was one of the poetic exchanges that deepened my connection to Rarámuri rituals and shaped my way, as a French woman, of bringing Artaud's work back to the Tarahumaras. "Basalowala aminà ralámuli paisila": the Rarámuri translation of *Voyage to the Land of the Tarahumaras*.

In 2014, within this context, Enrique Servín, a poet, linguist, and head of the 'Lenguas Indígenas' department at the Secretaría de Cultura de Chihuahua, translated and published *Basalowala aminà ralámuli paisila*, the Rarámuri version of Artaud's *Viaje al país de los Tarahumaras*. Finally, the Rarámuris' perspective on Artaud intersected with the translation of his texts into Rarámuri, creating a balanced exchange of views between the two cultures. But exactly five years ago, in October 2019, Enrique was murdered. He was one of the last passionate bearers of Artaud's work in the Tarahumara region...

### **VOZ LÁCTEA, THE ENCOUNTER... and I Become Rarámuri**

In May 2018, in Chihuahua, I organized *Voz Láctea*, an international artistic gathering founded on the creative power of native languages. My aim for this event was to highlight Rarámuri women poets, whose creativity was beginning to assert itself. The image of Artaud was vividly reflected in the works of Marta Akaroari, Ana Cely Palma, and in the voice of Lolita Batista.

In 2018, a multiethnic group of women artists explored new forms of creation around indigenous languages embodied by Rarámuri women. A group formed around the Rarámuri reading of Artaud's *Voyage to the Land of the Tarahumaras*. It was at that moment that the Rarámuri women around me organized a Yumari to adopt both my son, Lelio Moehr, and me. Since that initiation ritual, I have worn the scarlet dress and the collera, the red Rarámuri headband, to dance with them.

[6] Spanish version México y *Viaje al país de Los Tarahumaras*, out of print. Available online.

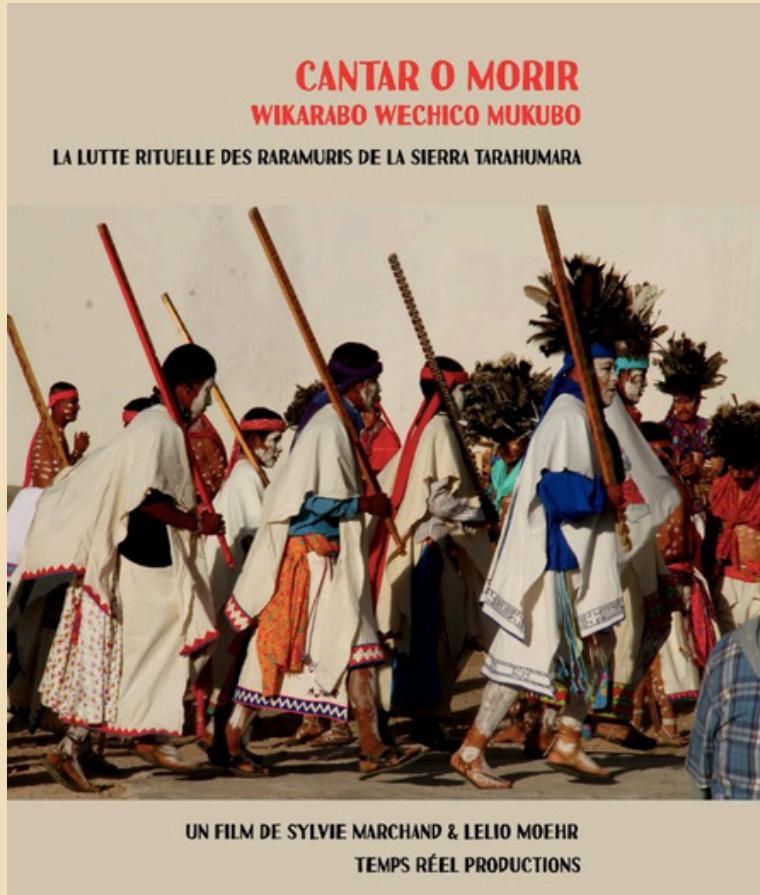
[7] Translation by Martin Makawi, Colección Rayénali, Pialli, Chihuahua, 2014



Photo of Sylvie Marchand

# Cantar o Morir

A film by Sylvie Marchand and Lelio Moehr, 2022, 53 min, languages: Spanish, French, Raramuri.



The film *Cantar o Morir* highlights the Raramuris' ritual struggle to preserve their language and traditions in the face of deforestation, drug trafficking, and acculturation. Inspired by Antonin Artaud, whom he met in 1936, Raramuri poet Erasmo Palma guides us through today's Tarahumara culture. The film reveals the growing role of women taking over rituals, as well as the new generation revitalizing traditional songs in contemporary forms, even incorporating rap. (Film description by the director).

## Artaud's Song by Erasmo Palma

The first time I discovered Erasmo Palma's song was through a documentary aired on Mexican television, dedicated to the Tarahumaras and Antonin Artaud. At the time, my limited grasp of Spanish prevented me from fully understanding the depth of the issues addressed, although the melody deeply resonated with me. It was only when I watched Sylvie Marchand's documentary *Cantar o Morir*, subtitled in French, that I could truly appreciate the richness of this work.

In this song, Erasmo Palma evokes Artaud's arrival on horseback in the Sierra Tarahumara, passing through the localities of Bocoyna and Cusararare, all the way to Nararachi, from where he continued on to the village of Norogachi. In *Cantar o Morir*, Erasmo Palma testifies: 'He told the people of his country that the truth was in the Sierra Tarahumara! And when his government learned that the truth was in the Tarahumara, they became angry and locked him in an asylum! They said he was mad! That's how it happened!' The song also recounts that before his death, Antonin Artaud put on his shoes to return to the Tarahumara, as illustrated by this excerpt: 'Before dying, Antonio put on his shoes to return to the Sierra Tarahumara to find the one who had truly healed him. For he had uncovered a mystery that he took with him to the grave. He died dreaming of his Tarahumara brothers. He died dreaming of the Sierra Tarahumara. He wanted to pass on what he had experienced here, but his compatriots didn't believe him. They tormented him cruelly and without respect.'

I highly recommend Sylvie Marchand's documentary, where you can hear Elvira Palma perform this beautiful song. Writing the lyrics in Spanish, as Erasmo couldn't write, Elvira, despite her old age, continues to dream of Artaud, spending her nights thinking of him. She still sings the words, recalling: 'And when night comes, I don't sleep, I'm calm, I pray, I sing, and sometimes I sing Artaud's song that I never forget! He is always on my mind, I start to think, to see! Yes, I dream of Artaud, I start to think! On my little piano, Artaud comes to me, and all night I sing!'

Artaud is not dead! He still lives, in some way, in the hearts of the last Tarahumaras.

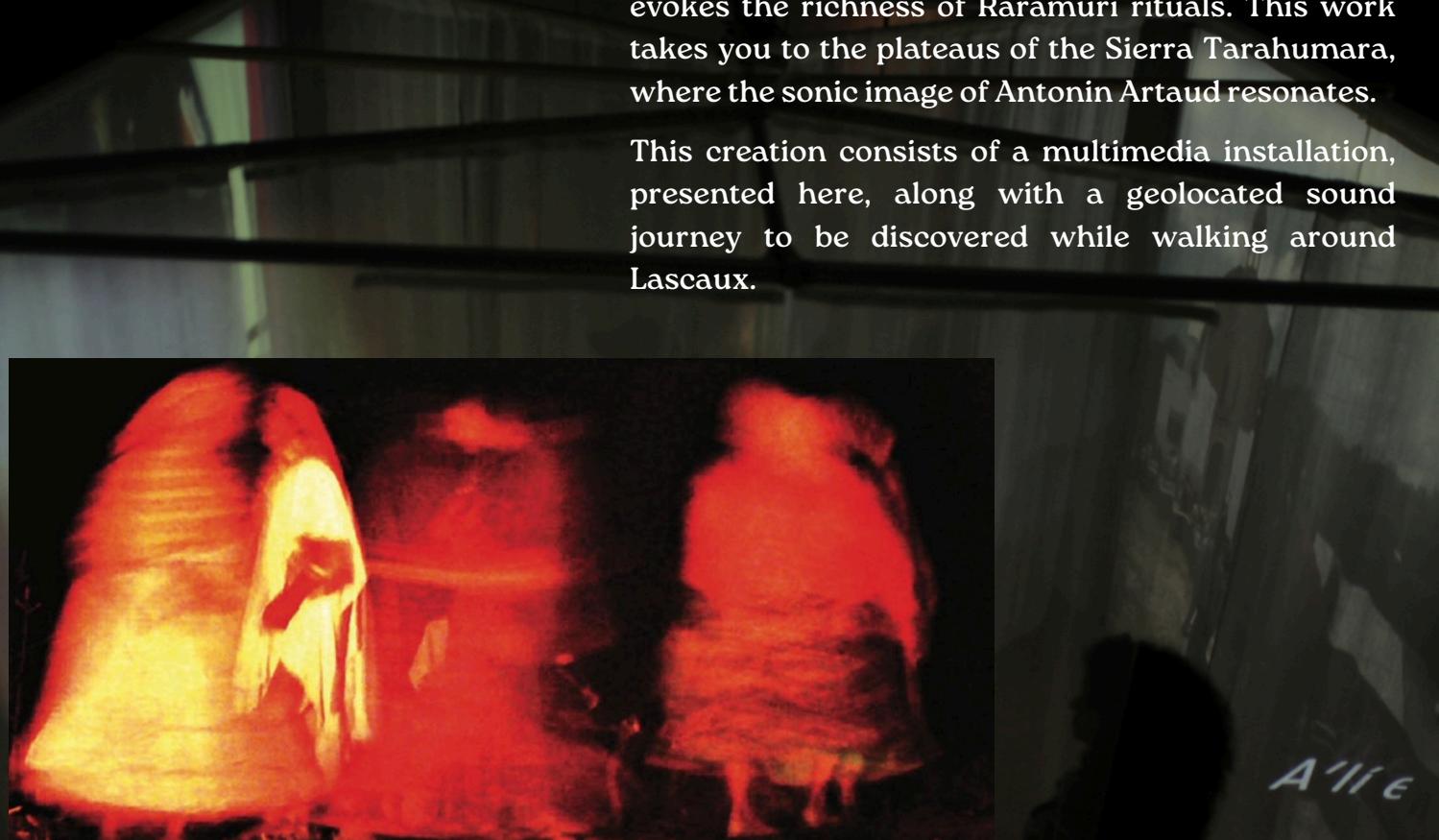


**Elvira Palma singing Artaud**

**Photo of Sylvie Marchand**

# Continent Rouge

A Journey into the Heart of Rarámuri Rituals



Embracing an aesthetics of mobility, *Continent Rouge* immerses the viewer in the world of the ritual dances of the Rarámuri Indians from the Sierra Tarahumara in Mexico. Structured around the elemental framework of earth-water-fire, the pulse and rhythm draw the audience into the imagery, granting them access to 'the magical reality of Tarahumara culture,' which Antonin Artaud once sought to uncover.

*Continent Rouge* is an artistic and sensory installation by Sylvie Marchand that poetically evokes the richness of Rarámuri rituals. This work takes you to the plateaus of the Sierra Tarahumara, where the sonic image of Antonin Artaud resonates.

This creation consists of a multimedia installation, presented here, along with a geolocated sound journey to be discovered while walking around Lascaux.



Photo of Lelio Moehr

In May 2018, the Voz Láctea event brought together women artists from diverse backgrounds in the Sierra Tarahumara (Chihuahua) to celebrate and exchange around the richness of maternal languages, particularly that of the Rarámuri women. These women, as guardians of their indigenous language, played a crucial role in building bridges between their culture and the dominant language, Spanish. The event, which paid tribute to Antonin Artaud's writings on the Tarahumaras, provided an opportunity to explore new forms of artistic creation and to highlight indigenous languages through cultural exchanges.



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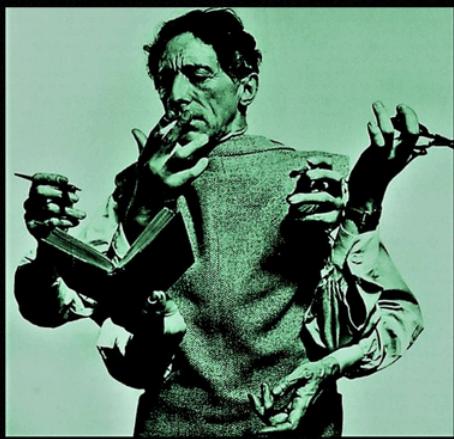


Yumari, or Tutuburi, or Rutubuli in the Tarahumara language, means the dance of resistance. And one must be resilient to be able to dance all night long.

Photo of Sylvie Marchand



## Encuentro Antonin Artaud



**OPEN CALL** 9 al 12  
NOROGACHI/CHIHUAHUA agosto  
2023

The first "Encuentro Antonin Artaud" took place in Norogachi, in the state of Chihuahua, from August 18 to 21, 2022, followed by a second event at the same location from August 9 to 12, 2023.

Both gatherings brought together artists, creators, and researchers for artistic performances and roundtable discussions. The events paid tribute to Antonin Artaud's legendary journey into the Sierra Tarahumara, seen as a rite of passage.

Through various performances and discussions, participants explored the impact of this experience on Artaud's work and thought, while also celebrating the cultural richness of the region.



## Encuentro Antonin Artaud

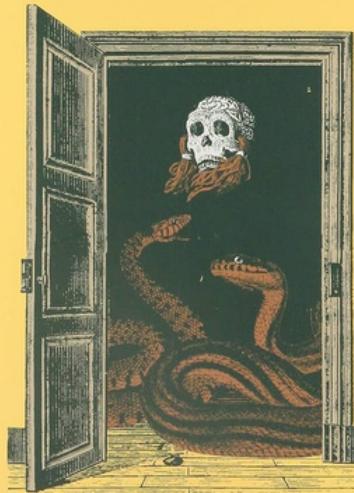
Gustavo Alvares



Photos of Lionel Camburet

# LOS TARAHUMARA

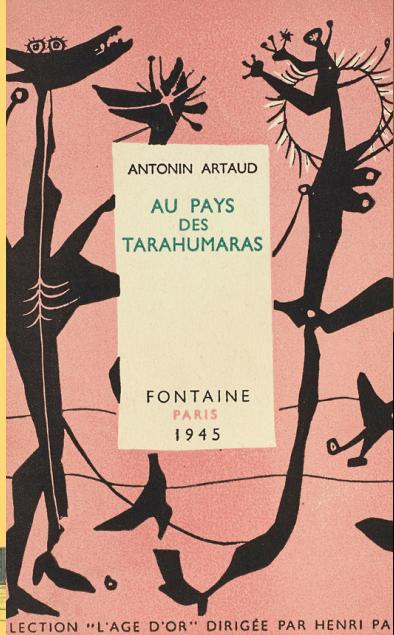
ANTONIN ARTAUD



Antonin Artaud  
MÉXICO UN VIAJE AL PAÍS  
DE LOS TARAHUMARA



ANTONIN ARTAUD  
OS TARAHUMARAS



LECTION "L'AGE D'OR" DIRIGÉE PAR HENRI PA

# ANTONIN ARTAUD

D'un voyage au Pays  
des Tarahumaras



TARAHUMARAS

# Antonin Artaud

Die Tarahumaras  
Revolutionäre Botschaften



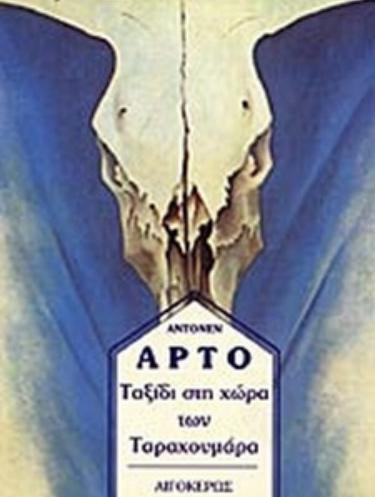
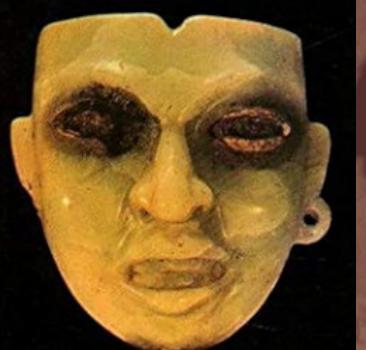
antonin artaud  
les tarahumaras



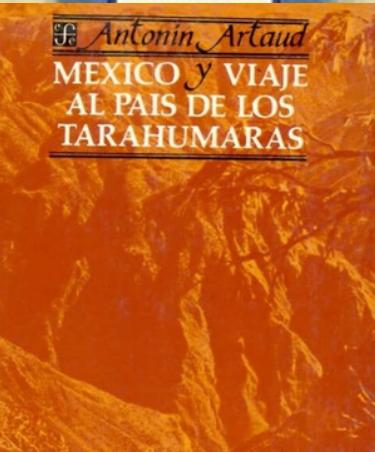
idées/gallimard

Antonin Artaud

LOS TARAHUMARA



Antonin Artaud  
MÉXICO Y VIAJE  
AL PAÍS DE LOS  
TARAHUMARAS



Antonin Artaud  
Los tarahumaras



# TUTUGURI

On June 22, 1947, Antonin Artaud signed a contract with Marc Barbezat, committing to provide a text titled Tutuguri, The Rite of the Sun for issue no. 12 of the magazine *Arbalète*. In October 1947, Artaud wrote a poem that he incorporated into a radio broadcast, read by Maria Casarès. However, in the meantime, publisher K had proposed to publish the text of this broadcast. Artaud then decided, in February 1948, to submit a new text titled Tutuguri to Marc Barbezat. On February 16, 1948, Artaud wrote to Marc Barbezat:

"A publishing house in Paris is asking me for the text of this radio show that includes Tutuguri. I gave it to them. But I am writing a new Tutuguri for you, to accompany *The Rite of Peyote*. This new Tutuguri I'm writing for you is laden with a bloody experience I didn't have in 1936."

## The Two Tutuguris: The Song of the Abyss by Antonin Artaud

It is the rite of the eternal death of the sun. Six crosses stand, each tied to a man, each man representing a sun. The six chosen ones, the purest of the tribe, lie on the ground, dressed in white. They rise, their bodies vibrating with energy, and begin a circular dance around the crosses. In silence, each turns seven times around his cross, never breaking the circle. Suddenly, clouds of purple smoke, sharp and enchanting, rise from the center of the circle. Under this veil of smoke, an intense flame bursts forth, igniting by itself. At the heart of this flame, incandescent stars and burning particles swirl, marking the birth of a new universe, a new sun carrying with it a celestial system. The sun takes shape, becoming a sphere of fire, leaping into the sky, jumping from cross to cross. This ball of fire burns everything in its path, purifying the six crosses with its searing touch. The sun, passing through the six cursed points, exorcises the darkness and restores cosmic order. The Tutuguri rite is this sacred passage: the journey of the sun through seven points before its triumphant rise in the sky. On the horizon, between the burning crosses, a horse advances. On its back, a naked man, virgin and innocent. This man without organs is the seventh. He is the sun, in its raw state, at the dawn of its full power.

# TUTUGURI

"In the face of a people who feed their horses, oxen, and donkeys the last true tons of morphine they have left,  
only to replace it with ersatz smoke,  
I prefer the people who eat straight from the earth the delirium from  
which they were born.

I speak of the Tarahumaras  
who eat Peyote straight from the ground as it is born,  
and who kill the sun to establish the kingdom of black night,  
and who pierce the cross so that the spaces of space may never meet or  
cross again.

This is how you will hear the dance of TUTUGURI."

— Antonin Artaud, *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*

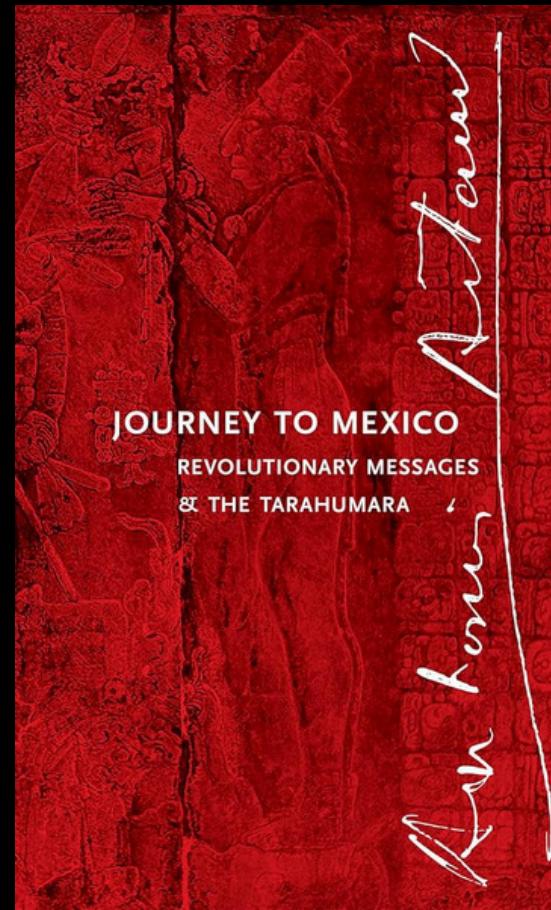
« "And in the wooden tympanum of the seventh Tutuguri,  
always an introduction of nothingness,  
always this introduction of nothingness:  
this hollow time, a hollow time,  
a kind of exhausting void between the slats of sharp wood,  
nothingness that calls to the trunk of man, the body sliced into  
segments,  
in the fury, of the inner things.  
There, beneath the nothingness,  
are chosen, the sound of great bells in the wind,  
the tearing of naval cannons, the barking of waves in the storms of the  
wind; in short, the advancing horse carries on him the trunk of a man,  
a naked man [...]."

— Antonin Artaud, *Tutuguri*



Artaud's nose

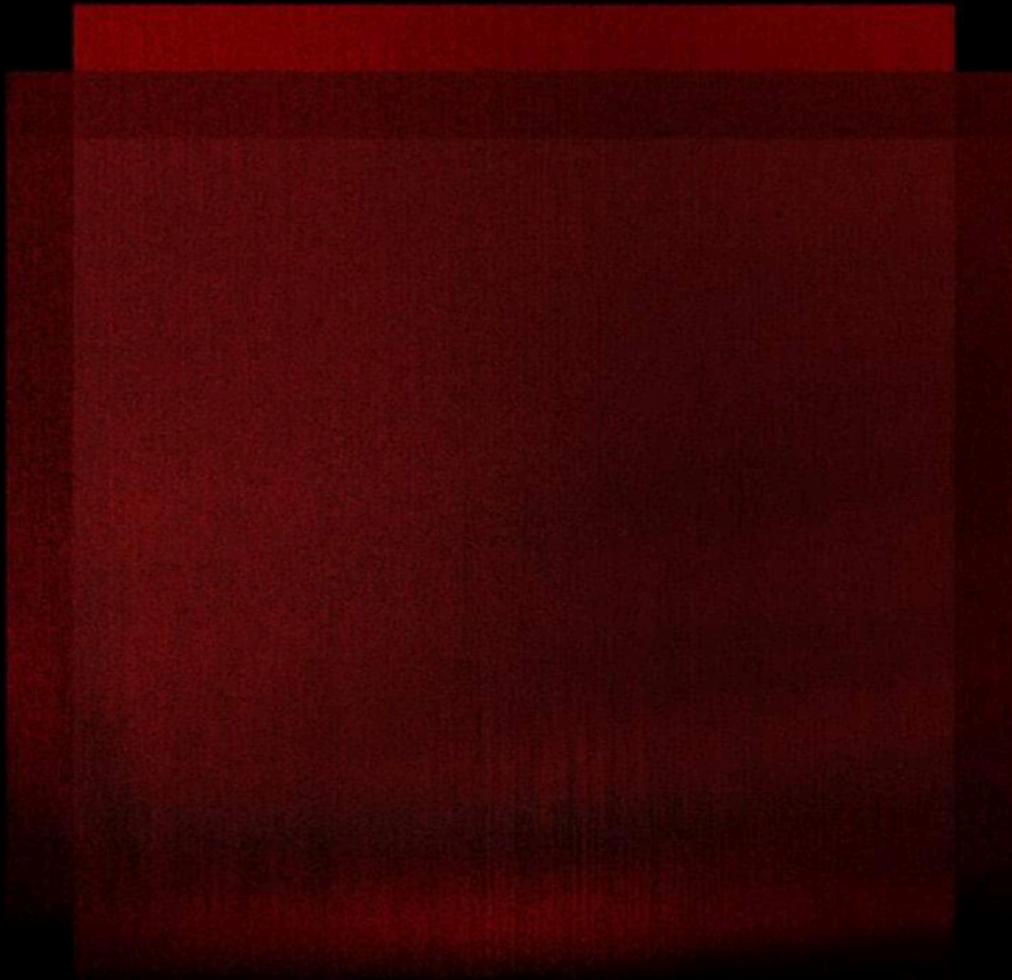
Soundwalk Collective has unveiled a new project in collaboration with Patti Smith, inspired by *The Peyote Dance* by Antonin Artaud, a work born from his initiatory experiences with the Rarámuri, an indigenous people of Mexico. Originally, this project was set to be realized with filmmaker Werner Herzog.



In March 2024, an English edition of *Voyage to Mexico*, edited by Stuart Kendall and translated by Rainer J. Hanshe, was published. This collection brings together almost all of Artaud's writings related to his journey to the land of the Tarahumara: texts prepared before his departure, articles published in Mexico, and the lectures he gave there, as well as essays, letters, and poems written after his return, where he revisits and reinterprets his experiences. A selection of letters written before, during, and after the trip reveals the personal challenges—physical, emotional, and financial—that he faced.

**ARTAUD LE MARTEAU**

**ASILES, DROGUES, PSYCHIATRIE**



**EXCERPTS**

Ilios Chailly - Katonas Asimis

## The Peyote Rite among the Tarahumaras: A Weapon of Spiritual Revolution

What are we, if not the product of our conditioning? If Peyote is revolutionary, it's precisely because it frees us from those conditionings. The strange alchemical virtue of Peyote is its ability to transmute reality. It alters consciousness and modifies our mental states. Peyote invites us to grasp the world with a deeper gaze, reconnecting us to the mysteries of an "inner time," forcing us to perceive the world as a vibration: "I didn't want to, by going to Peyote, enter a new world, but rather to escape from a false one."

Through Peyote, we finally become aware that we live in a world of automatons and automatisms (desiring machines). Everything around us deconstructs to become pure energy again (Body without Organs). Knowing how to perceive oneself as "potential" is to pierce the veil of Isis and enter the Lodges of Twin Peaks. Thanks to Peyote, "I had stopped being bored, stopped looking for a reason for my life, and I had stopped having to carry my body... I understood that I was inventing life, that this was my function and my reason for being, and I was bored only when I had no more imagination, and Peyote gave me that." (Antonin Artaud, A Note on Peyote)

(Antonin Artaud, A Note on Peyote)

The Tarahumaras believe that the state of an individual influences the rest of the community, and vice versa. The purpose of Peyote among the Tarahumaras is to transform the nayari (personal heart) into the tayari (collective heart). "The epiphenomena from the unconscious can no longer mix with true phenomena for the simple reason that Peyote is an extraction of the thing that made being, and thus it does not depend on the being, but rather the being depends on it. With Peyote, consciousness is entirely alerted and aware. It knows what is good for it and what is not: therefore, it can distinguish the thoughts and feelings that can be safely embraced and those that are harmful to the exercise of freedom." (NER, 144)

It's February 16, 2023. As I write this sentence, Théophile Choquet sends me a photo of a protest at the Bastille. Underneath the photo, he writes: "Let's fight!" I reply: "Let's dance instead, to raise our vibrational frequency like the Tarahumaras. Danzar por no morir, and have the vitality of a 20-year-old, even at 80." All struggles are noble, but the ones where we forget ourselves are the most effective![1]

[1] Enough poetry! Let's be concrete. I'll write a few more lines, then head out to join the protest.

The name of the Peyote rite among the Tarahumaras is Hikuri. When this rite lasts all night, it is called Yumari (the dance of resistance). Today, as the existence of the Tarahumara people is more threatened than ever, the Peyote rite might represent their last glimmer of hope—not just for them, but for all of humanity. Dance or die! Dance to survive. In this era dominated by screens, relearning how to feel, live together, dance, and communicate may be our greatest revolutionary weapon. Our dominant concerns lower our vibrational energy and drain us. This vital exhaustion is the root of all our social and individual illnesses. It's the quality of the surrounding vibrational energy that distinguishes a sick world from a healthy one.

To be happy and healthy, one simply needs to raise their vibrational energy. "To change your mental state, alter your vibration." The Peyote rite is the only antidote to the pervasive gloom. Let's dance and learn to vibrate like the Tarahumaras. Let's dance and transform ourselves into a primal race vibrating in tune with their red earth. Let us keep alive within us the flame of the original spirit. Let us heal this world through the simple joy of dancing. But one might ask: Who still finds joy in dancing today?

In short, Artaud dreams of a world no longer guided by mass opinions but by principles—elevating principles that invigorate and heal humanity. "He sees Mexico in general, and his visit to the Tarahumara Indians in particular, as a form of psychic surgery meant to grant him a new anatomy. (...) Thus, Mexico functions as an antibody, an antidote to the decadence that has already infected much of the planet," writes Michel Onfray in *Artaud le Tarahumaras*.

[2] Etymologically, the word Yumari comes from Humari, meaning to run-resist. If the Peyote rite serves to heal, healing for the Tarahumaras means resisting the heaviness of this world. The Tarahumaras are not a superstitious people. It's true that the matachines have Spanish origins, that some of their rituals center around Jesus, and that Che Guevara's figure is sometimes depicted on their costumes. But they don't care. What matters most to the Tarahumaras is being allowed to continue dancing and raising their internal vibrational energy.

[3] The *Kybalion*, an esoteric work published anonymously in Chicago in December 1908, explains that our aspirations, feelings, and materiality are nothing more than vibrations, and that our thoughts modify our material reality. The book also suggests that the physical world results from the sum of our collective intentions. What if the demiurge was the collective unconscious of all individuals on Earth? "Thought, like sensation, cannot be considered a transformation of vibratory movement, a physico-chemical phenomenon," writes Joseph Grasset in *Practical Treatise on Diseases of the Nervous System*.

[4] The TPMP spirit, also called the lazy spirit, is a collective fabrication that has nothing to do with the deep, intimate truth of each individual. Like the beautiful principle of staying alive. Like the beautiful principle of learning to live in community.

## From Ashes to Revolution: The Tarahumara Revolution is Underway

The Tarahumaras now number only 100,000. One day, they will return, and they will be millions! The Tarahumaras have no property titles. Today, in a Sierra where only 1% of the original virgin forest remains from before colonization, their last trees are being cut down. Soil erosion and flooding are destroying their remaining arable lands. In 2023, the Tarahumaras are being forced to sell their lands to industrialists like Vincent Bolloré for next to nothing. Drug cartels have taken control of the region. Where Peyote once grew, poppy fields (opium) now spread, and young Tarahumaras are forced to work for the drug traffickers. With no crops to sustain them, the Tarahumaras are migrating to slums, where men work in construction, paid under the table, and women become servants or prostitutes. Discrimination is so pervasive that young Tarahumaras are compelled to hide their identity.

The revolution is underway!

And despite all these catastrophes, a few Tarahumaras continue to dance. The Tarahumaras are a primal race, born to survive and resist the world. It is this resistance that makes them strong. Against capitalist civilization, these future philosophers, bearers of gnosis, and revolutionaries of tomorrow will be nourished by Tarahumara ceremonies. When all of humanity begins to dance to their rhythm, who will care about Mr. Macron or Mrs. Le Pen?

The revolution is underway!

United with the rhythm of the earth, we will make them disappear. If today it is the Tarahumaras who dance to avoid death, tomorrow it will be our current leaders who, to continue existing, will have no choice but to start dancing with us. Artaud considered the Tarahumaras a primal race, but what is the principle that drives them? Resistance! Beware of the ashes left by the last surviving Tarahumaras. Beware of the fires their embers can ignite! Prophetic words: the Tarahumara revolution is already underway! From their ashes, the thunderbird will be reborn, and with it, the true revolution of the spirit will begin.

The revolution is underway!

# I Peyotl, Therefore I Am...



Le Peyotl possesses alchemical virtues of purification and transmutation. It brings the mind closer to a state of sudden enlightenment, reconnecting us with the true nature of things. A table is no longer just a table. A table is no longer wood.

Peyotl banishes all concepts, returning the table to its vibrational form.

Peyotl shows us how things exist in the void.

Carried by Peyotl, we see where we come from and who we truly are. Peyotl represents the man not yet born—the innate. It lifts the soul from behind and places it back in the light and the eternal, connecting us with the unfathomable energy—the infinite multiplicity of our own capacities. Thanks to Peyotl, consciousness regains its perception of infinity.

Peyotl protests against all forms of mysticism. It breaks down resistance and eliminates fear.

With Peyotl, there are no emotions left to distract you. It focuses the mind and prevents it from wandering.

Peyotl brings the self back to its true source. Emerging from a state of vision like this, one can no longer confuse lies with truth. Peyotl stops us from mistaking dreams for reality. It keeps us from sinking.

With Peyotl, the fantastic can emerge and renew itself in the mind. While there is a risk of stepping out of reality with Peyotl, in these times of stagnation, it is a risk worth taking.

Peyotl works to separate what exists from what does not. It stabilizes consciousness and prevents it from getting lost in false impressions.

With Peyotl, man is left alone, “desperately scraping the music of his skeleton, without father, mother, family, love, god, or society.” (IX, 27) The epiphenomena of the unconscious no longer blend into the real. Peyotl helps us see what we have forgotten to see—the invisible. Surrendering to Peyotl is to cleanse oneself of those who cling to your skin and think for you.

The dances of the Peyotl rite free us from ruminations, those parasitic thoughts that loop endlessly.

The Peyotl rite animates us with mental and physical forces that help us better manage our emotions.

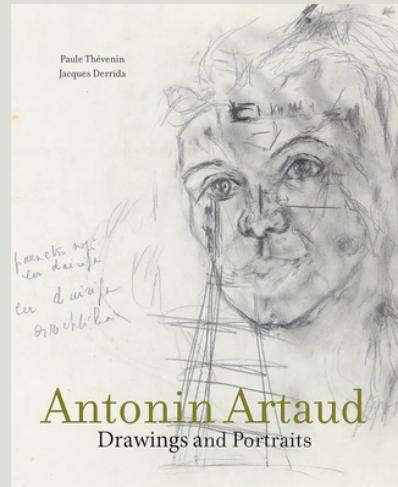
Peyotl gives us the focus we need to direct our attention. Thanks to Peyotl, our senses awaken.

Of course, this is not without danger when we do not know who we are.

## The true projection of the body.

A whole book could be dedicated to the analysis of *The True Projection of the Body* by Antonin Artaud and the strange glossolalia that accompanies it. This fascinating work, created with colored chalk pencil and dated November 18, 1946, offers, through the richness of its strokes, material for numerous interpretations. One interpretation views Artaud as a man bound, almost electrocuted by Western society and by the Tarahumaras, evoking the spells he claimed to have endured in the Sierra, as he recounted during his lecture at the Vieux-Colombier on January 13, 1947, barely two months after the creation of this work: "I wrote many other articles on this journey to the land of the Tarahumaras, which remained in Mexico and I was never able to recover, and these articles said in black and white the true nature of the obstacles I had to grapple with for a month on the mountain. These obstacles are called spells, and I had to fight day after day for nearly five weeks with tireless and indescribable waves of spells."

For those who wish to discover it, the piece is currently part of the permanent exhibition at the Centre Pompidou Beaubourg, alongside remarkable works on Artaud by Edmond Baudoïn. You can also find this piece, along with a complete transcription of its glossolalia, in the comprehensive work by Paule Thévenin and Jacques Derrida, *Antonin Artaud, Drawings and Portraits*.



Centre  
Pompidou



# GÉRARD TOURNEBIZE

## Voyage au pays des Tarahumaras

Carnet Photo/Chihuahua-Mexique



In 1988, while studying photography in Paris, I came across a book titled *Voyage to the Land of the Tarahumaras* by Antonin Artaud. This book would profoundly change my life. In 1989, inspired by Artaud's writings, I traveled to Mexico with the idea of illustrating his work. After studying a map of the Sierra Madre Occidental in northern Mexico, I selected a remote Tarahumara community that would allow me to immerse myself fully in Artaud's world. Unbeknownst to me at the time, I had chosen the very region known for its Peyote shamans. After three years working with the Tarahumara, I presented *My Journey to the Land of the Tarahumaras* in Mexico in 1992, accompanied by Artaud's texts. The fusion of images and words was met with great acclaim, and in 1993, the Cultural Service of the Government of Chihuahua acquired the exhibition of 62 photographs as part of its cultural heritage. The exhibition is permanently displayed at the entrance to the Sierra Madre Occidental, specifically in the Creel Museum. Artaud's influence on me was so profound that I later produced two additional photo exhibitions: *Poetic Theater* in 1993 and *The Theater of Cruelty* in 1996. Ultimately, I ended up living in Mexico for twenty years.

Gérard Tournebiza

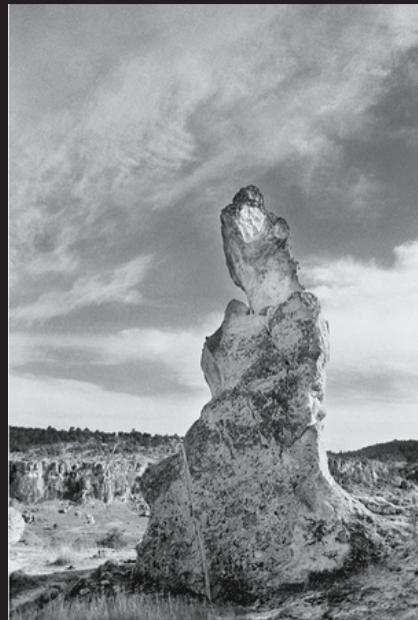




Photo of Gérard Tournebize

## LE RITE DES ROIS DE L'ATLANTIDE<sup>1</sup>

Le 16 septembre, jour de la fête de l'Indépendance du Mexique, j'ai vu à Norogachic, au fond de la Sierra Tarahumara, le rite des rois de l'Atlantide tel que Platon le décrit dans les pages du *Critias*. Platon parle d'un rite étrange auquel, en des circonstances désespérées pour leur race, se livraient les rois de l'Atlantide.

Quelque mythique que soit l'existence de l'Atlantide, Platon décrit les Atlantes comme une race d'origine magique. Les Tarahumaras qui sont pour moi les descendants directs des Atlantes continuent à se consacrer au culte des rites magiques.

Que ceux qui ne me croient pas aillent dans la Sierra Tarahumara : ils verront que, dans ce pays où le rocher offre une apparence et une structure de fable, la légende devient la réalité et qu'il ne peut y avoir de réalité en dehors de cette fable. Je sais que l'existence des Indiens n'est pas du goût du monde de maintenant ; pourtant, en présence d'une race comme celle-là, nous pouvons par comparaison conclure que c'est la vie moderne qui

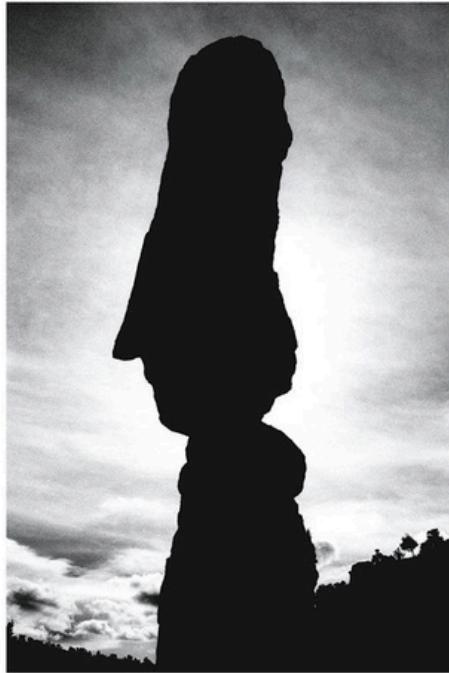




Photo of Gérard Tournebize



Gérard Tournebize, born in Sainte-Maxime in 1958, has been a photographer since 1986. His career includes participation in numerous photography festivals, biennials, and exhibitions, both solo and group. In 1989, while documenting the Tarahumara Indigenous people in northern Mexico, he experienced a transformative moment that profoundly shaped his career. He went on to spend twenty years in Mexico, collaborating with French, Mexican, and American cultural institutions. Today, his works are part of Mexico's public heritage collections as well as private collections worldwide. Gérard also collaborates with major corporations, undertaking projects in documentary photography and publishing.

<https://gerardtournebize.com>



## Tarahumara Spiritual Lexicon

**Tarahumara/Rarámuri:** According to Carl Sofus Lumholtz, "Rára" would mean "sole of the foot," and "mari" (Jumana) "to run"—in other words, "the running foot," referring to those who, like Rimbaud, move lightly, as swift as the wind. However, Erasmo Palma claims that "Rarámuri" does not mean "the people who walk" or "the running foot" but simply "Human."

**Matachine :** The Matachines dance, though of Spanish origin, did not originate from the Sierra Tarahumara. However, the Tarahumaras, who already had a rich choreographic tradition, easily integrated this ritual into their cultural practices. Their approach is not merely about following folklore but involves deep philosophical reflection, focusing on meaning rather than appearance. For example, while the idea of wearing a crown during these dances came from the Spanish, the Tarahumaras innovated by using mirrored crowns. Aware of the symbolism behind their actions, they adopt Western elements while preserving the essence of their ancestral rituals. This is why they incorporate symbols of resistance, such as the image of Che Guevara on their traditional capes. Wearing Nike shoes holds no significance for them as long as the shoes help them run or dance better. By dancing, they elevate their spiritual energy and vitality, standing in opposition to dominant capitalism, which they often associate with a form of ambient passivity. For the Tarahumaras, dancing is a vital necessity. It represents an essential spiritual connection with the forces that animate them. This is why they dance to ensure the survival of the sun, and in ancient times, those who refused to participate in this ritual were punished with lashes.

**Hikuri (Ciguri/ Jikuli) :** Hikuri refers both to Peyote, as a plant, and to the entity or higher principle that animates it, used in healing rituals. This principle is the subject of specific ceremonies. As a hermaphroditic being, uniting masculine and feminine principles (the union of spirit and matter), it can be likened to the philosophical notion of the Void. This spirit is revealed through the dreamlike state induced by Peyote.

**Onurúame:** The great benefactor of the Rarámuri people, Onurúame is a spiritual figure symbolized in rituals as both "the one who is father/mother" and "the one who guides." As the younger brother of the Devil, Onurúame was compelled to imprison him underground after the Devil abused Onurúame's wife, igniting a cosmic conflict. Although the Devil still seeks to create division and discord among the Rarámuri, the Tarahumara use storytelling and mythology to reinforce their beliefs. They acknowledge the concept of fault, yet, to them, only one true fault exists: lowering one's level of consciousness.

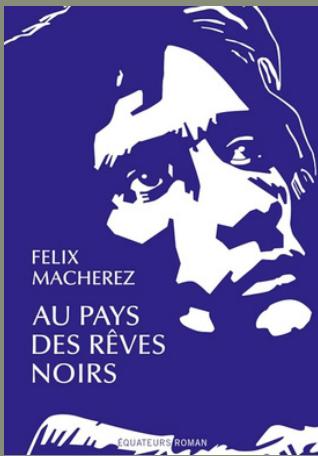
**Tutuguri** : The Tutuguri is an ancestral dance dating back to pre-Hispanic times, performed around crosses. It is a healing ritual, described by Artaud as the "rite of the black sun" (sol niger). This rite celebrates the six stages of the sun's journey. Whether these dances take place around crosses or in front of Christian churches is irrelevant to the Tarahumaras; for them, these crosses do not represent the religious abstraction of Christ but rather the tangible incarnation of Humanity in its universality. These crosses do not symbolize Christ's crucifixion but a human figure with outstretched arms, symbolizing the sun. They represent the fulfilled universe and the primordial, realized human being, much like Adam Kadmon in Kabbalah. This is a symbolic depiction of the human being as a divine archetype or spiritual model—a sort of perfect cosmic blueprint, a model for all of humanity. Artaud saw the Tutuguri as a conduit for awakening primordial forces and energies, physically connecting us to other dimensions. Once the Tutuguri is completed, the Peyote rite begins.

**Yumari** : Etymologically, the word "Yumari" comes from Humari, meaning "run-resist." Could a Yumari be a Tutuguri that lasts all night?

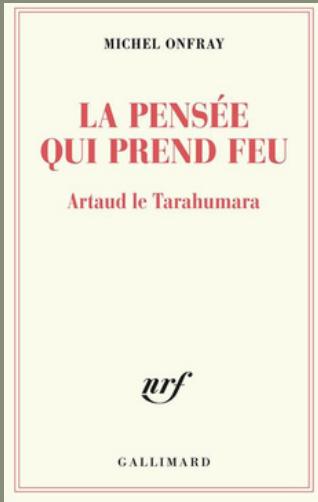
**Raspador** : The healing shaman, capable of seeing malevolent spirits through mirrors, uses his knife to free the patient from their influence. The raspador specifically is the one skilled in using the rasping tool.

**Ariwà - iwigà** : Breath, soul. In Greek, the word *ψυχή* (psyche) also means "soul" and "breath." What animates us is the breath. In this breath, humans hold a magical power.





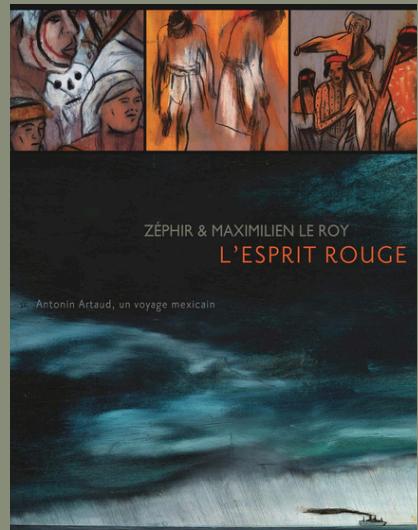
In 2017, Félix Macherez embarks on an adventure into the Sierra Tarahumara, following in the footsteps of Antonin Artaud. However, upon his arrival, he is confronted by a harsh reality: what he discovers is a world far removed from Artaud's tales. The region, once mysterious and untouched, is now overrun by mass tourism, crippled by drug trafficking, and drowning in alcohol. Has the dreamlike world Artaud depicted vanished into thin air? Félix wonders: has this mystical society, this unique community, truly disappeared? Are we witnessing the end of a civilization, the collapse of a collective dream? Or could there still be fragments of that magic, hidden somewhere beneath the surface?

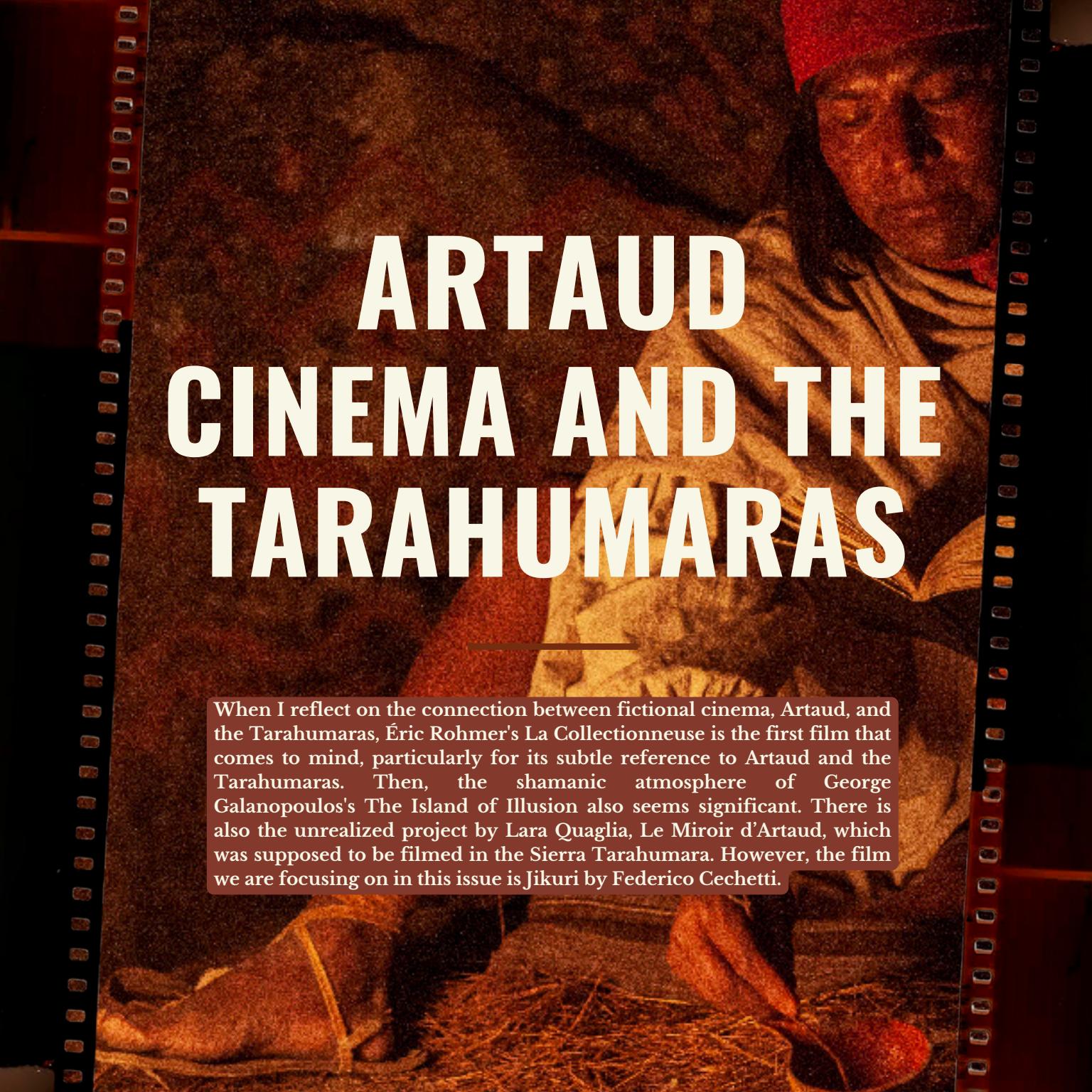


The graphic novel *L'esprit Rouge* immerses us in the radical journey of Antonin Artaud in 1937, deep in the Mexican Sierra, where he encounters the Tarahumara people. From the very first pages, the reader is drawn into a hallucinatory atmosphere, where the blurred figures of Zéphyr reveal the raw pain and downfall of a poet in the midst of chaos. Maximilien Le Roy, known for portraying figures like Thoreau, Nietzsche, and Gauguin, approaches Artaud with the precision of a scalpel. He exposes a broken man, tormented by opium, but also an intrepid explorer, willing to face any danger to reach the Tarahumaras. This graphic novel, driven by a minimalist aesthetic and striking poetry, delivers a visual narrative of rare power, where each image resonates with depth and density, providing an intense visual and emotional experience.

*La Pensée qui prend feu, Artaud le Tarahumara*, published by Gallimard, is Michel Onfray's initiation journey through the Sierra Tarahumara, retracing the steps of Antonin Artaud. Of course, Onfray's journey differs from that of Artaud: unlike the poet, he reaches the land of the Tarahumaras by plane, car, and off-road vehicle. No matter, we much prefer the Michel Onfray who travels, writes novels, and investigates, over the one who debates politics on television panels. We strongly encourage him to continue on this path.

Among the television personalities who have shown an interest in Artaud and the Tarahumaras, Bernard-Henri Lévy is particularly noteworthy. In an article about Félix Macherez's book *Au pays des rêves noirs*, published in *Le Point* on September 2, 2019, he recounts that in 1969, while in Mexico, he visited Norogachic, retracing the steps of Antonin Artaud, whom he then regarded as his "master in life and thought.





# ARTAUD CINEMA AND THE TARAHUMARAS

When I reflect on the connection between fictional cinema, Artaud, and the Tarahumaras, Éric Rohmer's *La Collectionneuse* is the first film that comes to mind, particularly for its subtle reference to Artaud and the Tarahumaras. Then, the shamanic atmosphere of George Galanopoulos's *The Island of Illusion* also seems significant. There is also the unrealized project by Lara Quaglia, *Le Miroir d'Artaud*, which was supposed to be filmed in the Sierra Tarahumara. However, the film we are focusing on in this issue is *Jikuri* by Federico Cechetti.

UNA PELÍCULA DE  
FEDERICO CECCHETTI



ESTRENO INTERNACIONAL  
Guadalajara  
COMPETENCIA OFICIAL  
2024

# Tikari

VIAJE AL PAÍS DE LOS TARAHUMARAS

EN PRODUCCIÓN MACHETE EN CO-PRODUCCIÓN CON  
IMCINE FOCINE AMPLIITUDE TERMINAL CINE-SUD PROMOTION DISRUPTIVA FILMS ESTUDIOS CHURUBUSCO AZTECA ZAFIRO CINEMA  
FRANÇOIS NÉGRET JOSE CRUZ APACHOACHI ESTHER GONZALEZ OLIVIER RABOURDIN FELIPE FUENTES CHÁVEZ MARTÍN MAKANI & IRIS & SYLVIE TESTUD

DRAGÓN FILMS

## Film Synopsis

Rayenari's life takes a dramatic turn when the poet Antonin Artaud arrives in search of the spiritual wisdom of the Tarahumaras. Rayenari introduces him to the peyote ritual, but Artaud, unable to follow the spiritual path, interrupts the ceremony and loses his soul. Later, through his dreams, Rayenari learns that Artaud has been committed to an asylum. Through this dream connection, Rayenari embarks on a journey to help Artaud recover what he has lost, all while uncovering his own destiny.

**Director:** Federico Cecchetti

**Country:** USA/Mexico

**Runtime:** 110 min

**Writers:** Federico Cecchetti & Pierre Saint-Martin

**Editor:** Omar Guzmán

**Composer:** Emiliano Motta

**Cinematographer:** Iván Hernández

**Cast:** François Negret, José Cruz Apachoachi, Olivier Rabourdin, Esther González, Aurelio González, Nicolas Sotnikoff, Sylvie Testud



### FUNCIONES :

Jueves 13 de junio / Cineteca FICG / Sala 01 / 12:00

Viernes 14 de junio / Cineforo / 17:50

Sábado 15 de junio / Cineteca FICG / Sala 01 / 14:20

## Director's Biography

Federico Cecchetti, a graduate of CUEC-UNAM, has twice been awarded the FONCA national grant. He has also participated in the Berlinale Talent Campus, Cannes' Cinéfondation, and the Locarno Filmmakers Academy. His debut feature, *Mara'akame's Dream*, won the Best First Feature award at the Morelia Film Festival. The film garnered 12 nominations at the 2017 Ariel Awards, winning both Best First Feature and Best Original Score.



# From the Unexpected to the Revelation: My Impressions on Federico Cecchetti's Film Jikuri

When François Audouy informed me about the screening of *Jikuri* on October 4, 2024, at the Luminor Cinema in Paris, as part of the Viva Mexico, Rencontres Cinématographiques festival, I hadn't initially planned to attend, as I wasn't supposed to be in Paris on that date. However, fate had other plans, and I ended up being present. Without any particular expectations, I was pleasantly surprised by the experience. The film not only captivated me with its bold direction but also deeply resonated with me due to the relevance of its themes. Rather than adopting a typical critical approach, I'd like to share my immediate impressions here, favoring the authenticity of a spontaneous reaction over a more distanced, reflective analysis.

## When Three Souls Meet: Artaud, the Tarahumaras, and *Jikuri*

My surprise with the film began in the opening moments, when a text on the screen revealed that, according to the Tarahumaras, a person has three souls. Having read the interview with Erasmo Palma, from which we publish excerpts in this issue, I immediately understood that Federico Cecchetti hadn't merely visited the Sierra in search of information about the Tarahumaras but had likely encountered the region's shamans (*sipaámes*).

But let's not get ahead of ourselves—first, a brief summary of the film: Rayenari, a young Tarahumara, leads a peaceful, simple life, awaiting the birth of his first child and training to become the best runner in the region. However, his nights are troubled by dreams in which the figure of Artaud appears. When Artaud arrives in his village, Rayenari is initially very distrustful. We sense that both are conditioned by their own realities, struggling to adapt and resisting the changes destiny seems to impose on them.

The relationship between Artaud and the Tarahumaras is strange: a mutual, almost organic, repulsion arises (the Tarahumaras nickname him “the stinky one”), but at the same time, a mysterious and powerful bond connects them—one that transcends their understanding. Artaud, uncomfortable in his own body, vaguely senses he is there for an important reason, though he cannot grasp its meaning. Troubled by Artaud's presence and the fact that this stranger also dreams of him, Rayenari consults a shaman. The shaman reveals that his destiny is to follow the path of the healer, a demanding journey that will require him to renounce his former life—a reality Rayenari seems unprepared for. Yet, despite his doubts, he makes the effort to introduce Artaud to the sacred ceremony, during which Artaud is supposed to perform a sort of death dance to awaken the *Jikuri*: “Dancers are often the dead, the dance is always permeated by the light of death. To dance is to meet the dead, to encounter the self after death, to dance as a dead person, to dance to return to death,” writes Uno Kaniichi in a completely different context, in *Hijikata Tatsumi, Thinking an Exhausted Body*.

However, although the *Onurúame/Jikuri* (a root-like creature) is ready to animate and regenerate life or elevate the surrounding vibrational energy, nothing goes as planned. Neither Rayenari nor Artaud is ready: one refuses to give up his peaceful life, while the other hesitates to embrace his destiny and abandon his status as a writer. Disturbed, Artaud ultimately interrupts the ritual, leading to the abandonment and loss of one of his three souls.

Unable to complete the three *Tutuguri* rituals, having only partially performed one, Artaud gradually descends into madness and ends up being committed to a psychiatric hospital. Later, Rayenari learns of this through a dream. Slowly accepting his role as a healer, he enters the astral world, where the two men, united by the threads of a shared fate, meet again. There, in a subtle and profound exchange, Rayenari seeks to convince Artaud to complete the three *Tutuguri* rituals to restore the integrity of his three souls.

## Between Realism and Oneirism: The Visual Evolution of Jikuri

From its very first moments, the film adopts a deliberately slow rhythm, with a minimalist style and almost modest landscapes. The peaceful, seemingly trivial scenes at times resemble a documentary on the everyday life of the Tarahumara people. This simplicity, carefully crafted by director Federico Cecchetti, reflects the life of this community in the absence of Artaud.

When Artaud arrives in the Sierra, no immediate upheaval is felt. The narrative remains grounded in realism, but an underlying tension gradually builds through the director's choices. Lighting becomes darker, shots tighten, and percussion sounds emerge, as if Artaud's presence exerts an invisible pressure. The kindness of the Tarahumara slowly fades. The atmosphere becomes increasingly strange. A recurring, almost hypnotic sound accompanies the moments when the Tarahumara dismissively call him *cabochi*, meaning "stinking foreigner."

From this point onward, the boundary between reality and dream begins to blur, especially after the unfinished ritual scene where the Jikuri rises from the ground. Federico Cecchetti then draws us into a world where the everyday gives way to a mystical dimension. The viewer is invited to enter this realm or resist, either charmed or bewitched. Gradually, the film seeks to immerse us in a dreamlike universe, an initiatory journey with pictorial power reminiscent of a Flemish painting. Two timelines intertwine: on one side, the confined, oppressive spaces of the psychiatric hospital, symbolizing material hell, and on the other, the vast landscapes of the Sierra, representing spiritual heaven. The asylum, filmed like a waking nightmare, embodies damnation. The film thus weaves a complex connection between these two worlds—matter and spirit—where every detail subtly communicates to reveal the central enigma.

Rayénari, a luminous figure, takes on an increasingly prominent role, becoming a mystical healer, while Artaud descends into darkness, slipping into the role of a shadow sorcerer. One scene in the hospital marks this turning point: Artaud, like Hermes Psychopompos, dominates the space, orchestrating a macabre dance among the insane—lost and forgotten souls. He becomes a shaman of the underworld, contrasting with Rayénari's light, in a mystical dance where worlds brush against, clash with, and complement each other.

At first glance, one might think the film offers nothing new about Artaud's journey with the Tarahumara or what we know of his internment in psychiatric asylums. However, to claim that Artaud's spirit is absent would be to miss the point. Take, for example, the imaginary encounter between Artaud and Breton. Although they never crossed paths in an asylum in real life, Cecchetti's staging reveals far more about the nature of their relationship than any realistic portrayal of a hypothetical meeting could. Breton does not appear in his real form but as an archetype. Similarly, Dr. Ferdrière transcends his individual personality to embody a timeless figure, a universal symbol of the psychiatrist. Jikuri thus conveys more about the true essence of Antonin Artaud than a mere factual evocation would, such as mentioning that he visited Norogachic or that he ate ham sandwiches at Café de Paris, Calle Gante, in Mexico City—details I plan to include in my biography.

Rather than adhering to facts, timelines, or information, the film exists in a timeless space that Bergson might have described as "Duration." It feels as though everything unfolds in Artaud's mind, in a universe shaped by his own worldview. And how can one fault the film for lacking realism when Artaud himself, whether in *Heliogabalus* or his later writings, draws on realistic, even biographical facts to reveal another reality underlying everything that exists? The film's essence lies in the clarity of its direction and the precision of its intention. A more realistic approach to the journey or a strictly formal treatment would likely have obscured the profound message it seeks to convey.

## When Acting Redefines the Boundary Between Fiction and Reality

José Cruz Apachachi's portrayal of Ranyari captivates with meticulously controlled subtlety and realistic nuance. His minimalist approach gradually reveals the character's humanity and sensitivity. Ranyari, imbued with an aura reminiscent of Artaud, sharply contrasts with other actors playing the Tarahumaras—figures of the Sierra who, though not always benevolent, exude sincerity, clarity, and precision. This distinction is particularly striking with the shaman, whose role, if I understood correctly, is filled not by an actor but by an actual shaman from the region.

Sylvie Testut, as Madeleine, the healer from the psychiatric hospital, and Olivier Rabourdin, as the psychiatrist, bring symbolic depth to their roles, evoking Persephone and Hades, guardians of the underworld's order. Their performances, marked by spectral neutrality, convey an aura of timelessness, contrasting with the chaotic energy of the inmates, whose unsettling presence amplifies the strangeness and enchantment of the film's atmosphere.

François Négret's portrayal of Artaud follows an intriguing trajectory. Initially, he appears as a somewhat aloof and detached French intellectual. While the acting is impeccable, this choice initially surprised me, as someone who has studied Artaud for over twenty years. Is this a faithful representation of Artaud or a personal reinterpretation by the actor? Here, Artaud comes across as a curious outsider, seeking truth among the Tarahumaras. Initially, I wondered if this interpretation was overly simplistic, perhaps overlooking the depth of a profoundly tormented man who arrived in the Sierra as a last refuge from his suffering. Yet, the choice by both Federico and François to depict Artaud this way proves highly effective.

Setting aside my own biases and preconceptions about Artaud, I recognized that the film does not seek to portray exactly who Artaud was, nor does it delve into his suffering, philosophy, or even his mental and psychological state. The narrative and character choices serve a different purpose.

With patience, the intentions behind these choices gradually reveal themselves as the character's evolution unfolds, guiding the film's direction. Like a snake shedding its skin, Négret gradually sheds his own identity to embody an archetypal version of Artaud. Through subtle staging effects, the director crafts haunting visual impressions of Artaud. At times, the illusion becomes so vivid that one wonders: is this François Négret or Artaud himself? This interplay between perception and reality unsettles the viewer, inviting contemplation on the line between reality and illusion.

As the film intensifies, Artaud's image transforms, giving way to an indefinable essence that once inhabited the poet. This essence appears briefly, like a dolphin surfacing before vanishing once more. It seems to take hold of the film itself, whispering to the viewer, "I am guiding your emotions." Those familiar with Artaud's life should not mistake the real man for this dark, symbolic force, which the film so masterfully captures and embodies.

## Between Sacrifice and Destiny: The Metaphysical Trial in *Jikuri*

*Jikuri* resonates with one of the core ideas of Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty: the creation of a new form of artistic expression grounded in two essential elements. On one hand, it explores metaphysical themes, and on the other, it embraces an expression that does not rely solely on text but fully utilizes the resources of the stage: sound, gesture, intonation, lighting, and more.

### a) A Film Conveying Metaphysical Truths

Although *Jikuri* takes Artaud's journey among the Tarahumaras as its theme, this is merely a pretext. The director actually focuses on central themes present in other writings by Artaud, such as *Theatre and Metaphysics*, *Theatre and the Gods*, *Man Against Fate*, *Bullfighting and Human Sacrifice*, and *Theatre and the Plague*. *Jikuri* explores three metaphysical themes central to Artaud's thought: the relationship between man and fate, the importance of sacrifice, and the question of the soul's loss.

The film presents the true initiatory journey undertaken by the protagonists, Artaud and Rayénari, in their quest to rediscover their true nature, free from all conditioning. This journey leads them along the path dictated by the mechanisms of fate. What tragic irony! It is as if the gods that animate us offer the illusion of choice in our destiny while making us understand that any deviation from the path we are meant to follow results in suffering. This echoes the testimony of Corinne Sombrun.

(1) It's true that one can appreciate the film without being familiar with certain concepts, but this is still unfortunate. Here are a few basics to help with better understanding. Man, as a catalyst of the universe, has the mission of restoring cosmic balance. This concept is rooted in shamanic tradition, which holds that there is a profound connection between the human world and the world of spirits—entities responsible for maintaining harmony in the universe. When a person faces severe difficulties, it means they have strayed from their true nature, provoking the wrath of a spirit that had charted their path. If man fails to fulfill this rebalancing role, nature steps in, often in destructive and punitive ways for humanity. This is how events such as the reign of Elagabalus or outbreaks of plague can be explained.

(2) In 2011, author Corinne Sombrun traveled to Mongolia to make a documentary about shamanism for the BBC. During a drumming session, she entered a trance, which angered the shaman present. He exclaimed, "Why didn't you tell me she was a shaman?" Corinne, surprised, explained that she did not consider herself a shaman at all. The shaman insisted and advised her to stay in Siberia for three years to receive the knowledge, which is traditionally passed from shaman to shaman. However, this was not part of Corinne's plans, so she refused and returned to France. Despite her initial refusal, a series of events, such as bereavements and misfortunes, convinced her that she could not escape her destiny and had to return to Mongolia. There, she was welcomed by the community, and her training began. During this time, Corinne, grounded in a Western perspective, stood out from the locals. By asking many questions, she earned the nickname "little asshole" from the shamans. After eight years of initiation, she managed to enter deep trance states, losing all sense of space and time—an experience similar to that of schizophrenics. Her ability to control this state, to enter and exit the trance at will, earned her the title of "Udgar" from the community.

## b) The Legacy of the Theater of Cruelty in the Staging of Jikuri

Although *Jikuri* explores metaphysical themes reminiscent of Artaud, its truly "Artaudian" nature lies not so much in its intellectual content as in its artistic execution. The film conveys a profound message through a renewed cinematic language that transcends traditional narrative conventions. Its power arises from staging choices that embody several principles of the Theater of Cruelty.

Federico Cecchetti uses the tools of cinema to reveal a truth that goes beyond mere facts. Through subtle techniques—continuous use of sound, evocative lighting, and fluid, shifting rhythms—the director uncovers a reality that transcends appearances. He reveals a deeper, more essential truth, capturing the invisible that often eludes simple narration. As Lorraine Duménil notes in *Artaud et le cinéma*: "The power of cinema, its capacity to captivate the viewer, lies in a sort of intersection between the extreme reality of what is depicted (something truly imprinted on the film, of which the movie is a trace) and the impression of unreality that arises from the projection."

Some may argue that *Jikuri* is a film, not a stage play, but as Duménil reminds us, many ideas from the Theater of Cruelty were conceived with the possibilities of cinema in mind: "When considering the texts that make up *The Theater and Its Double*, it becomes clear that the mechanisms of cruel dramaturgy, which emerged in the early 1930s, were actually modeled after cinematic imagery. (...) This is what Benjamin Fondane anticipated when, in 1933 (the same year as the *Manifesto of the Theater of Cruelty*), he wrote that Artaud's theater sought only one thing: 'the lost path of cinema.'"

## c) Beyond Logic: The Alchemical Process in Federico Cecchetti's Cinema

Although Federico Cecchetti tells a simple story with a classic structure—beginning, middle, and end—he manages to maintain an elusive, fluid quality where interpretation constantly evolves. His film follows, whether consciously or not, an almost alchemical process of creation. *Jikuri* does not impose a fixed reflection but compels us to think. What brings it to life is the absence of fixed or definitive ideas. Through its fluidity and alchemical nature, it invites the viewer to explore beyond certainties. This process connects us to life more deeply than a work based on rigid truths could. *Jikuri* does not rely on rational logic but on an intuitive, almost mystical approach. Cecchetti continuously deconstructs and reconstructs, weaving threads of logical meaning only to unravel them, revealing a more mysterious truth. If the essence of an alchemical work is to remain in a state of suspension, then *Jikuri* is its perfect embodiment.

Like a true alchemist, Federico Cecchetti merges places, ideas, and events in his creative process, amplifying emotional impact. Like a chemist, he manipulates key moments from Artaud's life as malleable material, unconcerned with their accuracy or chronology. He intertwines Artaud's 1936 encounter with the Tarahumaras, a film screening at Ville-Evrard, electroshock therapy in Rodez, and correspondence with Breton during his final years in Paris. He does not stage historical facts but rather Artaud's emotional states, subtly inspired by reality. Like Artaud's works, Cecchetti's film draws its strength from its instinctive construction. We find a "tangle of images and movements," "collisions of objects, silences, cries, and rhythms." Strange, sometimes violent scenes, whose visual dynamics act like peyote, deconditioning the mind and shaking up its familiar landmarks and habits.

## To conclude

In *Jikuri*, strange things reveal themselves in fleeting flashes, elusive and ephemeral. It is precisely this impossibility of explaining them that gives the film its strength. Is Federico Cecchetti aware of this? Has he noticed it? I don't know; I even doubt it, but that hardly matters. *Jikuri* is not simply the work of a director recounting dreams but rather a film shaped by the dreams themselves. Watching it, one senses that, consciously or unconsciously, the director and his team have at times sacrificed their individuality, their preconceived notions of cinema, and even what they thought they understood of Artaud, allowing themselves to be guided by forces beyond them. At times, it feels as though Federico Cecchetti wasn't directing the film, but rather, the film was directing Federico Cecchetti.

It would be inaccurate to claim that the film is free from clumsiness, but it is precisely this undefined, dreamlike quality that justifies its latent roughness. These imperfections are inherent to any work driven by deep, underlying principles. Isn't Artaud's own work marked in the same way? One might even think that the principles behind this film deliberately seek out flaws, allowing a "light" to emerge for those brave enough to question themselves. To grasp this film and feel its sensory impact, it is not necessary to possess an academic understanding of culture as it is often defined in the West, nor to be initiated into Artaud's ideas. All that is required is an open mind, capable of embodying the figure of Perceval—a courageous being able to pierce the veil of appearances and thus access a different perception of reality.

*Jikuri* touched me in a deeply organic, almost visceral way. It is difficult to say whether this effect was something the director sought intentionally or whether it stems from my own conditioning and my daily engagement with Artaud's work. What is certain is that this film did not leave me indifferent. Throughout the screening, a growing sense of unease took hold of me, unsettling me and at times making me feel disoriented. The unsettling use of symbols associated with Artaud stirred something within me, provoking a deep sense of discomfort. While this is undoubtedly a highly personal reaction, I must admit that this film genuinely disturbed me.

I don't know if this film will leave a mark on other viewers or if it will find widespread success. From what I understand, though it has just been released, no further screenings are currently planned. This doesn't surprise me. When principles reveal themselves through a work, they generally don't seek popularity. Like the fascinating Doctor Hijikata in Teruo Ishii's work, these creations don't offer themselves to the general public, preferring to remain in the shadows, ready to unveil themselves only to those who truly seek them. If by chance *Jikuri* crosses your path one day, stay open and let yourself be guided by the journey it offers, for beneath the surface of this film lie profound metaphysical ideas, conveyed through its structure, its rhythm, its images, and its symbols. Artaud would probably have recognized echoes of his theater of cruelty here, where the essential reveals itself beyond words, in the raw energy of creation.



# The Tarahumara Spirit in Contemporary Art and Society

Rap Rarámuri is a group of young, committed musicians who use music to remind the Rarámuri (Tarahumara) people of the importance of preserving and valuing their heritage, while also speaking out against racism and discrimination in Mexico. The duo consists of Mateo González, from Carichi in the state of Chihuahua, and Jairo Castillo, who is Rarámuri. They often collaborate with Leonel Reyes, known as Cero Style, who also teaches singing to Rarámuri children.

On January 17, 2022, Matthias Pintscher conducted Wolfgang Rihm's wild and poetic ritual Tutuguri at the Philharmonie de Paris, in the Grande Salle Pierre Boulez. The piece was inspired by Antonin Artaud's work.



## Tom BYERS – A play by Grégoire CHRISTOPHE

An untrained man embarks on the Marathon des Sables, a self-supported race through the Moroccan desert. Soon, he finds himself lost amidst the vast, shifting dunes. As he runs, he grapples with the question: is it his mind or his body that sustains him? Driven by this thought, he continues through the desert, accompanied by memories and fantasies that transport him from the streets of Paris to the beaches of northern France, and even to the high plateaus of Mexico, among the Tarahumara people.

Mulaka is an action-adventure video game developed by Lienzo, a studio based in Mexico. The game stands out for its deep inspiration from the culture and legends of the Tarahumara people, renowned for their extraordinary running abilities. Players take on the role of a Sukurúame, a Tarahumara shaman, who must battle evil forces to protect his people and restore balance to the world. The game is notable for its unique visual style and its dedication to honoring the richness of Tarahumara culture, reflected in both its landscapes and its mythological elements.





ERNEST  
figurative

*ERNEST*  
pignon-ernest

It is with profound honor that Echo Antonin Artaud presents the work Antonin Artaud - Hôpital Charles-Foix - Ivry-sur-Seine - 1997 by the artist Ernest Pignon-Ernest, who has generously granted us permission to share this unique creation.

In 1997, during an artistic intervention at the Charles-Foix Hospital in Ivry-sur-Seine, Pignon-Ernest encountered an abandoned laundry room, a desolate space where the cracked, moisture-laden walls seemed imbued with a latent, almost tangible memory. The proximity of this site to the place where Antonin Artaud passed away in 1948 likely intensified this resonance, endowing the cracks and decay with a deeper meaning.

Under the artist's gaze, these marks of time transformed into mouths, gaping eye sockets, and scars etched into the very fabric of the space, echoing the torn notebooks of Artaud, as if the poet's inner sufferings had manifested in this place. Two specific memories haunt Pignon-Ernest. The first comes from *L'Homme et sa douleur* (Man and His Pain), where Artaud wrote: "We have full vertebrae in our backs, pierced by the nail of pain," a powerful metaphor for the physical and existential suffering that consumed the writer. The second memory is of a photograph of Artaud, seated on a bench at Porte d'Ivry, pressing a pencil against his spine—a gesture of improvised acupuncture through his coat, symbolizing a body broken and punctured by pain, much like his torn notebooks.

In Pignon-Ernest's work, this dilapidated space in Ivry becomes a living metaphor for Artaud's body, itself marked by suffering—a place where the exploration of pain transforms into art. The traces of time in this abandoned room overlap with those borne by Artaud himself, capturing the mystery of a man who, until his final momen





## Exhibition "I is Another" at the Louis Vuitton Foundation 60th Venice Biennale

On the occasion of the 60th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, the Louis Vuitton Foundation is hosting artist Ernest Pignon-Ernest for *I is Another*, a new and exclusive exhibition specially designed for the Espace Louis Vuitton Venezia. Running from April 20 to November 24, 2024, the exhibition is curated by Suzanne Page and Hans Ulrich Obrist, in collaboration with Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster. It explores the theme of the "foreigner" through emblematic figures such as Pier Paolo Pasolini, Arthur Rimbaud, Jean Genet, Gérard de Nerval, and Antonin Artaud, showcasing some of their most significant works.

This event is a must-see for contemporary art lovers, offering a profound reflection on the figure of the foreigner and the boundaries of identity.

Louis Vuitton Foundation, Calle Ridotto 1351, 30124 Venice, Italy.

Ernest Pignon-Ernest, a pioneer of urban art in France, was born on November 8, 1942, in Nice. Active since the 1970s, he has placed his drawings in public spaces with a strong social and political commitment. Through his works, he exposes injustices and humanitarian crises, drawing attention to significant historical events. As early as 1974, he opposed the twinning of Nice with Cape Town, denouncing apartheid through his collages of Black families behind barbed wire.

His art, composed of sketches, stencils, and collages, seeks to confront viewers with critical issues such as the Algerian War, immigration, and abortion rights. In 1975, he supported the Women's Liberation Movement (MLF) through his artwork. His life-size representations, created with charcoal and black stone, are designed to merge with public spaces, evoking collective and historical memory.

Among his most famous works is his 2015 tribute to Pasolini, in which he juxtaposed the poet's portrait with his own body, displaying them in locations significant to Pasolini's life and death. His work continues to resonate with current events, such as his series *Expulsés*, which reflects on the contemporary migration crisis. Today, his archives and creations are recognized as fundamental works of street art.

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# **Projects in Progress**

## **Related to Artaud and Mexico**

# A Frenchman in Mexico or The Flight of the Thunder Hammer

## Essay in Progress

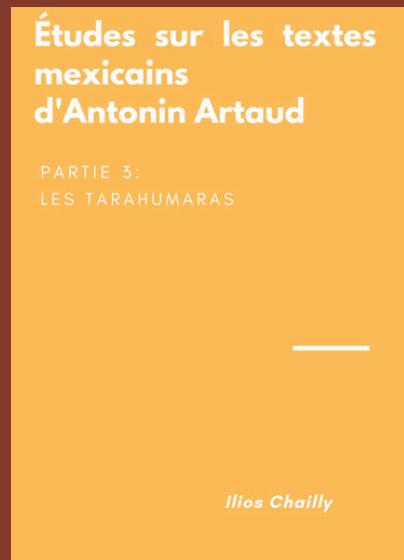
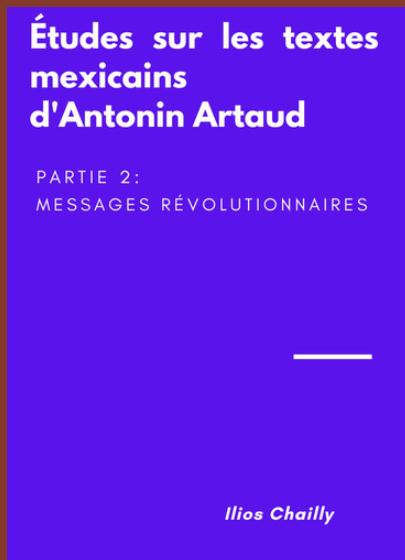
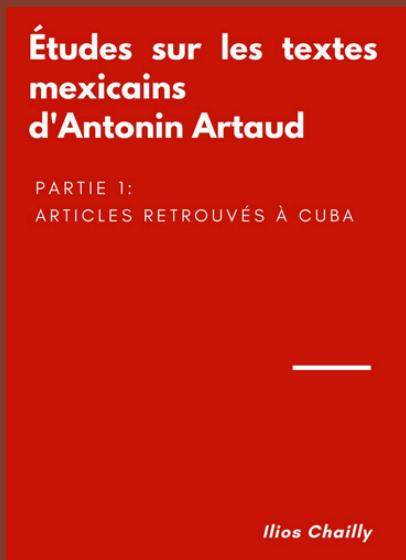


“A Frenchman in Mexico or The Flight of the Thunder Hammer” is a fascinating exploration of Antonin Artaud's initiatory journey into the heart of Mexico. This work delves into the profound reasons that led Artaud to choose such a distant and mysterious destination. Through a detailed analysis of his stay in Mexico City, we explore the political and artistic context of the city at that time, while unveiling the richness of Mexican culture: its beliefs, its gods, and the true meaning of human sacrifices.

The book also focuses on the concept of tonalli and Artaud's immersion with the Tarahumara people, whose mythology and rituals had a deep impact on him. From the majesty of the Mexican mountains to the echo of sacred drums, this book seeks to capture the mystical and violent essence of the adventure that transformed Artaud.

# Studies on Antonin Artaud's Mexican Texts

## A Three-Volume Analysis



Studies on Antonin Artaud's Mexican Texts is a three-volume series dedicated to an in-depth analysis of the author's writings during his stay in Mexico. Each volume explores a different aspect of his lesser-known texts.

### Part 1: Articles Rediscovered in Cuba (40 pages)

This first volume, already written but not yet published, offers a detailed study of four newly uncovered articles by Antonin Artaud, which appeared in the journal *Grafos* and were discovered at the José Martí National Library in Havana in 2009.

### Part 2: Revolutionary Messages

The second volume focuses on the articles published in volume 8 of Gallimard's editions. It analyzes these avant-garde and audacious texts, where Artaud develops metaphysical reflections and critiques the social and artistic structures of his time, while outlining a radical vision for the transformation of society.

### Part 3: The Tarahumaras

The final volume centers on Artaud's writings about the indigenous Tarahumara community in Mexico. The analysis of these texts sheds light on Artaud's interest in ancestral traditions and his aspiration to liberate the spiritual energy he perceived within them.

## New Screenplay: Antonin Artaud's Journey to the Land of the Tarahumaras

I am pleased to announce that the new screenplay for my project on Antonin Artaud's journey to the land of the Tarahumaras is now completed and registered with the SACD. Although there is currently no production plan in progress, the process of writing this screenplay allowed me to delve deeply into Artaud's world, free from the constraints of production or budget. I crafted it exactly as I envisioned, focusing on the narrative power of this fascinating story.

This creative freedom has provided me with a unique perspective on Artaud's life, one that differs from the dynamics found in articles or books. The screenplay here becomes an autonomous medium, a form that offers its own distinct interpretation of the work and the tormented existence of this extraordinary artist. Whether this project will one day come to life as a film remains to be seen, but for now, I am proud of the narrative journey I have undertaken through this writing.





KATONAS ASIMIS



## Passing the Torch for Upcoming Issues of the Journal

After publishing ten issues and a special anniversary edition of our journal, I have decided to entrust the creation of the upcoming editions to two exceptional figures. François Audouy, a renowned specialist in Antonin Artaud, will head the January 2025 issue, which will explore the connections between Artaud and his many "Doubles"—literary, theatrical, philosophical, as well as those drawn from rock and underground culture. Laurence Meiffret, founder of the Génica Athanassiou Association and biographer of Génica Athanassiou, will prepare the March 2025 issue, dedicated to Artaud's muses—the women who left a significant mark on his life and work, such as Génica Athanassiou, Colette Thomas, Cécile Schramme, Sonia Mossé, and Alexandra Pecker.

This decision is based on two main reasons. First, François Audouy and Laurence Meiffret have far more in-depth expertise than I do on the topics being covered, ensuring fresh perspectives and high-quality work. Second, the fast-paced bimonthly publication schedule has become increasingly challenging to maintain on my own, especially as each issue becomes more dense and complex.

Although François and Laurence will have full creative freedom over the design of these issues, I will remain available to advise them, provide information, leverage my network of contacts, and manage the layout. I may also contribute an article, if needed. My role will thus shift to that of executive support rather than the main designer.

Lastly, it is important to note that the illustrations will continue to feature original paintings by Katonas Asimis, a loyal collaborator of our journal.



Ilios Chailly

