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## Richard Hawkins *Norogachi: Ceramics After Artaud*

Ground Floor  
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In 1936, the playwright Antonin Artaud made an arduous journey by horseback into the extreme terrain of the Sierra Madre of Mexico in search of a people “uncontaminated” by modern European culture. Artaud’s destination, the Tarahumara village of Norogachi, ultimately proved disappointing, but his experiences there deeply influenced the author’s thinking and writing throughout the remainder of his life.

Using the medium of ceramics, the artist Richard Hawkins extrapolates and postulates a convergence of previously undeciphered Tarahumaran iconography in the drawings of Artaud. The drawings – completed during Artaud’s institutionalization in Rodez asylum – cover the same period (1945-46) during which the author finished the imaginative chronicle of his Mexican journey, *Les Tarahumaras*. Few scholars, however, have investigated the possible connections between Artaud’s Tarahumara-influenced writings, these contemporaneously-produced drawings and documentation on Tarahumara customs and iconography.

The works in Hawkins’s “Norogachi: Ceramics After Artaud” merge, compare and unite many of the cryptic “hieroglyphics” from Artaud’s drawings with the Tarahumaran images they were conceivably influenced by. Most significantly, the “Tarahumara cross” – as seen and documented in the missions of Creel and Norogachi to this day – shows a direct visual and even conceptual relationship to Artaud’s many anal rape themes. Additionally, anthropological information regarding transvestism, “sexual play”, rituals for the dying/dead and peyote customs among the Tarahumara may throw new light onto Artaud’s most imminent subjects – nocturnal sperm vampires, spectral fetuses, raging hermaphroditic shamans, “the sexual inadequacy of god” and the author’s own daughter/wife/sexslave fantasies.

The exhibition will be Richard Hawkins’s fourth solo presentation with Greene Naftali and his fifth and final iteration of ceramic works based on research into Artaud. A PDF document, “After Artaud”, detailing the culmination of his research, will be available on the Greene Naftali web site.

Recommended reading: Antonin Artaud, *The Peyote Dance* (1971); David A. Shafer, *Antonin Artaud (Critical Lives)* (2016); Ros Murray, *Antonin Artaud: The Scum of the Soul* (2014); Margit Rowell, Agnes de la Beaumelle, et al, *Antonin Artaud: Works on Paper* (1996); John G. Kennedy, *Tarahumara of the Sierra Madre* (1996); Wendell C. Bennett and Robert M. Zingg, *The Tarahumara, An Indian Tribe of Northern Mexico* (1976); Broyles, et al, *Among Unknown Tribes: Rediscovering the Photographs of Explorer Carl Lumholtz* (2014); Antonin Artaud, *Heliogabalus or, The Crowned Antichrist* (2006); ed./trans. Clayton Eshleman and Bernard Bador, *Watchfiends & Rack Screams: Works from the Final Period, Antonin Artaud* (1995); Sylvère Lotringer, *Mad Like Artaud* (2003); Stephen Barber, *Antonin Artaud: Blows and Bombs* (1993) and *Terminal Curses: The Artaud Notebooks, 1945-1948* (2008); Jacques Derrida and Paul Thevenin, *Artaud: Dessins et Portraits* (1986); John G. Kennedy and Raúl A.

López, *Semana Santa in the Sierra Tarahumara* (1981); René (Colette Thomas), *The Testament of the dead Daughter* (2016); Peter Valente, *The Artaud Variations* (2014); Robert M. Zingg, *Behind the Mexican Mountains* (2001).

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