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Art

JAVIER TÉLLEZ

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In 1947, after years spent in asylums, Antonin Artaud recorded “To Have Done with the Judgment of God”—a violent, scatological, and swiftly censored radio monologue that was informed, in part, by his visit to the Sierra Madre, and by the peyote he took there. Téllez, a Venezuelan artist and Artaud fanboy, recently translated the text into the indigenous Mexican language of Rarámuri. In an impressive film, more indebted to Jean Rouch’s “ethnofictions” than to Artaud’s theatre of cruelty, we see villagers grinding corn or working at a loom while their radios broadcast Artaud’s blathering about “the crab-louse God” and so on. The longueurs in Téllez’s film are compensated for by vivid portraits of everyday life and spiritual practice among the Rarámuri people, and an accompanying display of Artaudiana includes a first edition of the text and midcentury materials on electroshock therapy.

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