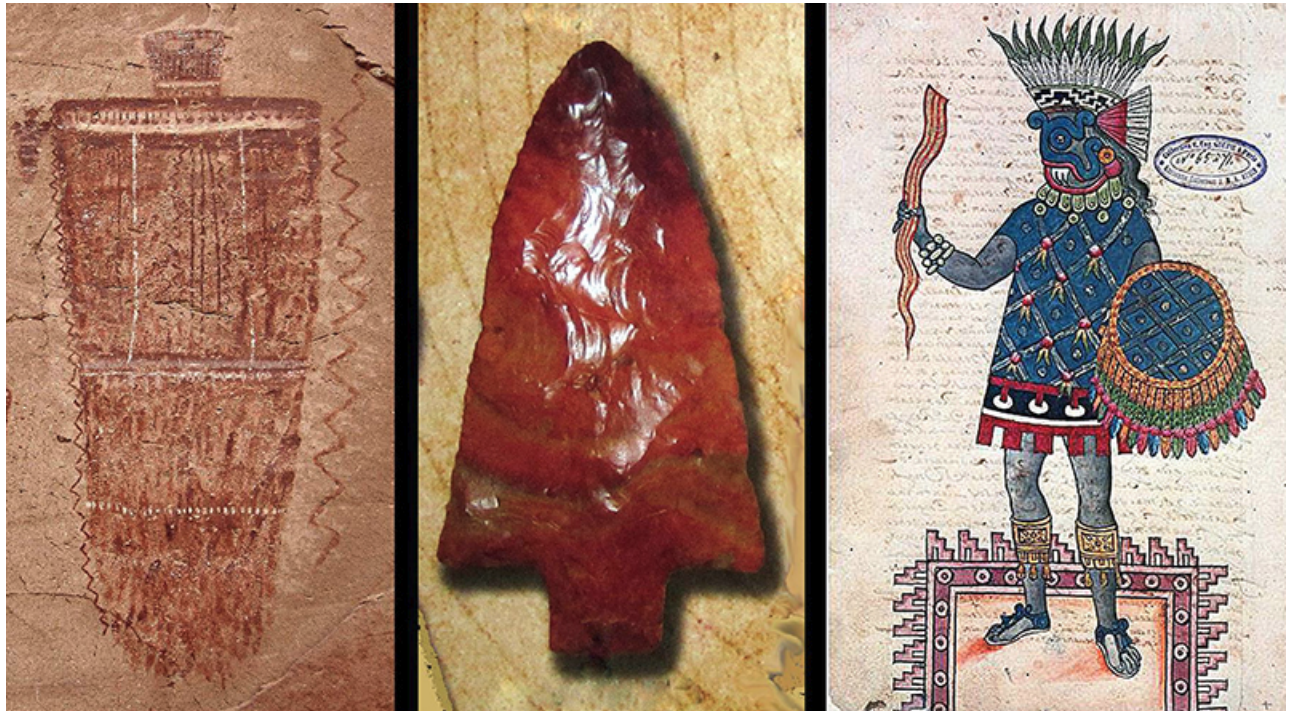




San Diego Rock Art Association Virtual Meeting
Sunday, April 14, 2024, 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time

Why Do Arrowheads Point Up?



Thunderstorms, Spear Points, and Divine Iconography in Barrier Canyon Rock Art **A Presentation by James Farmer**

The Barrier Canyon Anthropomorphic Style (or BCS) of south-central Utah has long been regarded as one of the premier ancient painted rock art styles in the Americas, if not the world. The most dominant and commonly recognized features of the style are deep red anthropomorphic figures ranging in size from a few inches to over eight feet tall, often interpreted as “gods,” “spirits,” “ancestors,” or even “mummies.” The BCS has most recently been directly linked to powerful natural phenomena such as thunderstorms, flash floods, and waterfalls, all of which incorporate dramatic visual and sonic properties. This presentation expands on previous research by suggesting that, instead of abstracted human figures, many of the most prominent BCS figures in fact represent varieties of ancient spear points, frequently adorned and “anthropomorphized,” thus investing such points with a complex divine symbolism and iconography beyond their typical utilitarian value.

James Farmer holds a Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Texas at Austin, and he has led study-abroad classes and taught art history courses throughout Latin America, the American Southwest, and Qatar, and served as museum consultant and guest curator for museums in Virginia and Texas. His publications span subjects including the San Juan Anthropomorphic and Barrier Canyon styles of southwestern rock art, Maya textiles, astronomy and ritual in Chaco Canyon, and ancient Ecuadorian ceramics and archaeology. His most recent publication is as co-editor of and contributor to *“Making Meaning”: Precolumbian Archaeology, Art History, and the Legacy of Terence Grieder*, in 2022. Since 2007 he has served as Director of the non-profit BCS project based in Salt Lake City. His theoretical and philosophical focus in his work is on cultural exchange and interaction between ancient American cultures, and the deep antiquity and sophistication of ancient American intellectual thinking, technology, and art.

This meeting will be held via Zoom
April 14, 2024, Starting at 4:00 p.m. (Pacific Time)
Meeting room will open approximately 15 minutes early
Free Registration Required

Visit sdraa.org to Register