



# ROCK ART 2015

San Diego's 40th Annual Rock Art Symposium  
Presented by the San Diego Rock Art Association

**November 7, 2015**

San Diego Community College District  
Educational Cultural Complex Theatre  
4343 Ocean View Blvd, Room 159, San Diego, CA 92113

**8:00 REGISTRATION OPEN**

**9:00 MORNING SESSION**

**Conference Introduction**

### **Bradshaw Rock Art: A Biologist's Perspective**

Jack Pettigrew, Queensland Brain Institute, University of Queensland, Australia

Bradshaw rock art is highly controversial in all its aspects, not least being its age. Respected direct physical dating methods have failed, with radiocarbon invalid for a biofilm that continues to take up  $C^{14}$  from the environment, and with Uranium isotope series not so far able to give accurate dates from silica-based skins compared with their great success in limestone. Biology can help to fill the gap, based on a variety of methods, such as the identification of depicted, extinct megafauna; DNA phylogeny of organisms in the biofilm; dating of the arrival of the boab; T/L dating of wasp nests over art, etc., all of which confirm the great antiquity of the art and reject superficial impressions that it is Holocene in origin.

### **Owl Man Petroglyphs at Las Pintas and Mesa San Carlos, Baja California**

Hans Bertsch, Sociedad de la Antigua California and Instituto de Investigaciones Oceanológicas, UABC, Ensenada

The Owl Man petroglyph at Mesa San Carlos is well-documented (e.g., Ewing, 1995). Previously unreported are three Owl Man carvings at Las Pintas. The only previous description of the site (Gavin 1978) presented no photographs or precise locations of the many glyphs across the exposed Lower Cretaceous formation, nor was the Owl Man identified; moreover, one drawing of a major Owl Man panel was printed upside down. I present photographs of the Las Pintas site, showing the positions of the Owl Man images, and discuss their affinities with Mesa San Carlos and other northern Baja California sites.

### **In Search of The Origins of the Great Mural Art of Baja California**

Jon Harman, DStretch.com, Pacifica, California

In the Sierra de Guadalupe there are hundreds of Great Mural sites with a mixture of stylistic traits. At the large sites Cueva San Borjitas and Monos de San Juan superimpositions show that some painting styles are older than others. I will review the oldest figure types at those sites and show images from other sites with similar figures. These may be the oldest Great Mural sites.

**Photography of screens and images during presentations is not allowed.**

## **Possible Lunar Significance of an Iconic Petroglyph**

Kim Wallen, Department of Psychology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia

Janet Mackenzie, Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project, Velarde, New Mexico

One of the most intriguing and important images on the Wells Petroglyph Preserve in northern New Mexico appears to be an other-worldly anthropomorph with claw feet, four-finger hands, and a head with an apparent ring of fire. The “face” of the carefully pecked petroglyph is similar to the “man in the moon” and the head may represent an annular eclipse. Using the petroglyph’s coordinate location and an online calculator developed by NASA, we determined that the last annular eclipses visible at this location were on May 20, 2012, and December 3, 1062, suggesting this petroglyph may predate Spanish influence by at least 500 years.

**10:10 – 10:40 MORNING BREAK**

## **Updating the Record: Pictographs of the East Mojave Desert**

Don Christensen, Costa Mesa, California

In 1996 Christensen and Dickey published a preliminary analysis of painted imagery in the Eastern Mojave Desert based on the documentation of 27 sites containing 1,496 pictographs. Recording has continued since then and now the inventory for sites with at least one painted element stands at 146 sites with 5,412 motifs. Documentation also has been aided by the use of Photoshop and DStretch software to enhance less visible elements that were often overlooked. This has led to a reexamination of the assumptions and conclusions made almost two decades ago, particularly in regards to style, cultural affiliation, and context.

## **Modern Approaches to Rock Art Documentation**

Evelyn Billo and Robert Mark, Rupestrian CyberServices, Flagstaff, Arizona

Rapid advancement in the profession of rock art site documentation has occurred parallel with advances in technology that include digital cameras and their accessories such as Gigapan, programmable GPS units with sub meter accuracy, sophisticated image enhancement software, portable tablets with powerful applications, faster and cheaper computers with cost effective storage, and accessible photogrammetry and 3-D applications. Drone photography has also helped transform the way archaeological and rock art sites are documented in the 21st century. Examples using some of the above techniques at public and private sites on the Colorado Plateau and throughout the Southwest will be shown.

## **Pursuing the Enigmatic Formling in the San Bushman Rock Art of Zimbabwe**

By Anne Q. Stoll, Claremont, California

The painted art of the prehistoric San people of southern Africa is well-known for its remarkable aesthetic qualities. Beautifully shaded polychrome eland dance unforgettably across high rock faces of the Drakensburg and elsewhere in South Africa. In neighboring Zimbabwe, the San rock painting repertoire is equally rich and varied and includes a class of curious shapes that have heretofore defied analysis. As a result of the great strides made by ethnographically informed research in understanding San symbolic imagery, these most enigmatic elements, the so-called “formlings,” are beginning to lose their mystery. Photographs by George Stoll.

## **A Continued Study of the Orange County Rock Art Enigma**

Allison Jordan, Running Springs, California

After a fire in the hills of Orange County, numerous grooves on sandstone outcroppings were exposed. In 2014, these sites were recorded and analysis determined that most of the grooves are petroglyphs. This study focuses on Santiago Oaks Site 1, where a series of smaller motifs were discovered. The delicate nature of these forms, compared to other grooves in the study area and adjacent canyons, suggest an individualistic nature in their creation, and perhaps the associated ritual. Many of these grooves are arranged into anatomically recognizable forms, commonly interpreted to have fecundity associations.

## **It Begins With the Landscape**

Marglyph Berrier, Las Cruces, New Mexico

The American Rock Art Research Association is teaming up with the Las Cruces office of the Bureau of Land Management and the Friends of the Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks National Monument in Las Cruces, New Mexico, for ARARA’s annual symposium over Memorial Day weekend, 2016. The newly designated monument and the surrounding area is a great backdrop for the conference and an opportunity for ARARA members to visit sites and comment on management challenges. While several of the field trips are planned for sites on the monument, other destinations will include private, state, and federal restricted areas. This presentation includes examples of rock art from sites as varied as Desert Archaic, Jornada Mogollon (Ancestral Pueblo), and Protohistoric (Apache).

## **12:00 LUNCH BREAK**

## **1:30 AFTERNOON SESSION**

### **Diamonds in the Sky**

John Michael Rafter, Pico Rivera, California

In 1994, the late Delcie Vuncannon of Yucca Valley, California, suggested I investigate a rock art site in Joshua Tree National Park. She had read a published report that the site had a connection with summer solstice sunrise, and several Internet sites repeated the claim. Delcie's familiarity with the site, however, prompted doubts about the sunrise association. When I examined the site in person, I was unable to verify the presence of a summer-solstice-sunrise effect. Then, almost a decade later, I visited the site with two friends from the nearby village of Joshua Tree, Mark Wheeler and Kevin Powell. When told of the absence of a sunrise event, Kevin suggested that we check the site at sunset instead. In 2013, we made a series of summer solstice sunset observations from the site. What we found surprised us and offers additional insights on how the ancient observers viewed their world and the cosmos.

### **Filling in the Gaps: DStretch Enhancement of Rancho Bernardo Style Rock Art in Poway, California**

Gregory Erickson, Professor Emeritus, University of California, San Diego, and San Diego Rock Art Association

This paper continues my work to record Rancho Bernardo Style (RBS) rock art using DStretch enhancement technology. Since I began this work more than six years ago, I have completed a detailed analysis of three RBS rock art sites, two located in Rancho Bernardo and one in Escondido, California. The results led to a number of new and surprising findings. Here, I have used DStretch enhancement to take a fresh look at the pictographs found at three RBS rock art sites located along Green Valley Creek in Poway, California. The study confirms the early work of Malcolm Rogers and Ken Hedges and Diane Hamann, and extends it by revealing some impressive imagery that had remained unrecognized for almost a century. Two of the most intriguing are a possible stylized anthropomorph associated with what appears to be a representational image of a Kumeyaay eewa (hut), and what may be a fantastic hybrid symbol—part multi-arm cross, part diamond chain. It is clear that there is more RBS rock art than originally thought, and the elements are more complex and interesting than previous records suggest.

### **It's Not Just About the Paint: The Often Overlooked Petroglyph Component Within the Great Mural Rock Art Tradition of Baja California**

Jeff LaFave, Independent Researcher, San Diego, California

Dra. María de la Luz Gutiérrez Martínez, INAH, La Paz, Baja California Sur

Great Mural rock art includes some of the largest and most visually stunning rock painting sites in the world. However, researchers and observers have largely ignored the fact that there is a less dramatic, though important, petroglyph component that is also part of the Great Mural rock art tradition. Indeed, the original definition of the style specifically excludes petroglyphs by limiting Great Mural art to "paintings." Since fieldwork and literature review reveal numerous petroglyphs within the same geographic area that include the same subject matter as the paintings, a petroglyph component should be recognized as part of Great Mural rock art. However, not all of the non-painted rock art in the region is "Great Mural." Indeed, there are also many other sites exhibiting different styles of non-painted rock art in the region.

### **Conservation in Suburbia—Part 2: Permanent Scars**

Steve Freers, Murrieta, California

CA-SDI-8216 is a type site for the Rancho Bernardo Style in southern California. The cultural heritage site has undergone tremendous impact from encroaching suburbia and subsequent vandalism, including graffiti directly on rock art panels. This is Part 2 of a two-part SDRAA symposium report chronicling the efforts to mitigate the graffiti problem, conserve damaged rock art, and create a viable management plan with input from all relevant stakeholders. Part 1 focused on the development of the current problem and initial efforts to remove graffiti on rock surfaces devoid of rock art. This presentation shares recent conservation efforts to ameliorate graffiti paint impacting the rock art directly, and includes a focused look at pigment adherence and weathering capabilities. The most up-to-date conservation result at CA-SDI-8216 will be shown and compared to its pre-vandalized state.

## **2:50 – 3:10 AFTERNOON BREAK**

## Painting Petroglyphs Red—with Lasers: A Case Study in Sweden

Steven J. Waller, La Mesa, California

Although the DStretch technique has proven powerful for pulling out details in pictographs, especially red paint pigments, enhancement of petroglyphs has been a challenge. The technique of painting with light accentuates shadows of engravings during night photography with long shutter time exposure, using a flashlight shining at a low angle to the surface of the rock. A new application combining these two techniques involves painting with red laser light followed by D-Stretch enhancement to increase the contrast between red lighting and shadows. Proof of concept is demonstrated for shallow engravings in Sweden nearly impossible to see or photograph in daylight.

### A Brief Look Back

This year's Symposium—our 40th annual meeting—is a commemoration of 10s. In our 10th year, we issued our first T-shirt for Rock Art '85, and this year we repeat the theme of our original shirt with a new rendering of the well-known Sunwatcher from La Rumorosa. In our 20th year, we issued our first commemorative mug for Rock Art '95, featuring a double logo of a Fremont warrior and a bighorn sheep from Utah—we honor the establishment of that tradition with a shout out to the Fremont warrior on this year's mug. Our 30th year did not bring any new souvenirs, but it marked 75 years of rock art at the Museum of Man, the sponsor of the Symposium at that time (and not incidentally, Rock Art 2005 saw the first introduction of Jon Harman's DStretch to our audience). This year, we honor these landmarks in our history with two short presentations: a reprise of the role Malcolm Rogers played in establishing that 75-year reign of rock art research in the far Southwest, and a review of the far-reaching influence of the La Rumorosa Sunwatcher in establishing the importance of archaeoastronomical research in Southwestern archaeology.

### The Art of the Light: Siega Verde and Foz Côa as Landmarks of Paleolithic Rock Art

A video presentation courtesy of the Centro de Interpretación, Zona Arqueológica de Siega Verde, Spain.

The archaeological zone of Siega Verde in western Spain comprises a significant collection of open air Paleolithic engravings. In 2010, Siega Verde was declared a World Heritage Site as an extension of the similar but much larger archaeological region of the Côa Valley in eastern Portugal. Both sites occupy tributaries of the same river, the Rio Duero in Spain, which becomes the Douro as it passes into Portugal. Videos in this presentation give us an introduction to the art and landscape of Siega Verde, and a discussion of the artistic traditions of the combined archaeological parks. Further information on Siega Verde, including a virtual reality visit and online presentation of these videos, may be found at [www.siegaverde.es](http://www.siegaverde.es).

Our thanks to Bob Parker and his staff for their generous assistance and the use of the San Diego Community College District Educational Cultural Complex Theatre for this year's Rock Art Symposium. We will return next year for Rock Art 2016—visit [www.sdraa.org](http://www.sdraa.org) next summer for our announcement of next year's Symposium.

For details on Membership and Programs of the San Diego Rock Art Association, visit our website at

**[www.sdraa.org](http://www.sdraa.org)**

The San Diego Rock Art Association is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization



San Diego  
Rock Art  
Association