



# Rock Art 2017

San Diego's 42nd Annual Rock Art Symposium  
Presented by the San Diego Rock Art Association

**November 4, 2017**

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**

## **Rancho Guejito Pictographs—A Convergence of Ideas**

Steve Freers and Ken Hedges, San Diego Rock Art Association

Rancho Guejito is a 36-square-mile working ranch in northern San Diego County. It is substantially comprised of the largest intact remnant of California's historic Mexican land grants. The ranch is privately owned and employs a variety of security measures to protect its prehistoric, ranching, and farming interests. Among many of the ranch's resources is a significant pictograph boulder first noted in 1960 by archaeologist Delbert True and his long-time Luiseño friend, Henry Rodriquez. Current ranch management invited the authors to inspect and record this pictograph locality, and have granted permission to report our preliminary impressions. The most remarkable finding is that this pictograph boulder contains elements of all three of the identified rock painting styles in southern California: San Luis Rey, Rancho Bernardo, and La Rumorosa. Given that the site is geographically situated along the Late Period ethnographic division between Takic Luiseño and Yuman Ipai speakers, this unique confluence of pictographic expressions provides substantial analytical value. This report offers a selection of our initial impressions and provides the foundation for a carbon-dating effort to be scheduled in the near term.

## **San Carlos: Exploring Relationships**

C. Dennis Christian, Poway, California

The San Carlos Bay, Point, and Mesa form a remote west coast desert region in central Baja California that the author first explored 50 years ago. The rock art sites were little known to the outside world when the author shared his initial findings. The rock art in this area is complex with several major and minor sites as well as scattered petroglyphs. The current presentation builds upon the author's previous work by exploring possible physical and cultural relationships between these rock art fields.

## **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's): A New Tool for Documenting Intaglios, Ground Figures, Cleared Circles, and Other Archaeological Features**

Charles Bennett <desrtratz@gmail.com>

Recent advances in technology have provided a relatively low cost answer to the problem of obtaining high-quality aerial images of archaeological sites. The modern quadcopter UAV is lightweight, reliable, able to carry a good quality digital camera, and capable of flying over a site at a variety of altitudes. This presentation discusses a recent Begole Grant Project, which developed flight/photographic protocols for documenting intaglios, ground figures, cleared circles, and other archaeological features. Aerial photographs of intaglios, ground figures, and cleared circle complexes in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park are shown.

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

## **10:10 – 10:40 MORNING BREAK**

### **Visual Prayer, and Breath Bodies: Flower World Metaphor in Pueblo III and IV Rock Art**

Bernard M. Jones, Jr., Tustin, California, and Christopher E. Drover, University of California, Irvine

Pueblo III and IV petroglyphs found on Arizona's southern Colorado Plateau have been found to relate to "Flower World" imagery outlined by Jane Hill in 1992. The "Flower World" is a spiritual world, accessed using a complex system of spirituality centered on the metaphor of flowers. We suggest that many Pueblo III and IV petroglyphs are symbol systems designed to propitiate spirits that inhabit and manipulate the spirit world. We propose that petroglyphs as prayers are an additional aspect of an extensive cultural repertoire used to request spiritual assistance to engender social and biological fecundity. We also explore influences of northwestern Mexican imagery in the same period.

### **Holy Ghost in Space: A Consideration of Form in Prehistoric Barrier Canyon Style Rock Art**

David Sucec, BCS Project, Salt Lake City, Utah

Framed by a shallow arch, the Holy Ghost Group is the physical and aesthetic center of the Great Gallery, the type-site for the Archaic Period Barrier Canyon style. The size and elevated locations of the Holy Ghost figures rarely fail to impress visitors to this well-known site. Yet, what distinguishes this panel, from other prehistoric rock art sites, is its masterful design and "modern" spatial construction—the Holy Ghost composition has the appearance of visual depth (three dimensions). This presentation is an analysis of the spatial dynamics that sets this group of figures apart in the world of prehistoric rock art.

### **A Survey of Anthropomorphs at El Vallecito, Baja California**

Jon Harman, DStretch.com, Pacifica, California

El Vallecito, near the town of La Rumorosa, Baja California, is the type site for the La Rumorosa Style of rock art. The signature element of this style is the digitate anthropomorph, with fingers and toes represented. The rock art at El Vallecito is found in more than 35 granite boulder rockshelters. In this presentation I survey the anthropomorphs at five of the most significant shelters. The pictographs at El Vallecito have suffered from both the ravages of time and the effects of vandalism. DStretch is used to help visualize the faded images. The photographs presented here were taken in 2006 at an early time in the development of DStretch. The colorful and challenging images from El Vallecito helped to develop new DStretch enhancements.

### **Iberian Insights: Elusive Enigmatic Echoes, Ever Elsewhere**

Steven J. Waller, Rock Art Acoustics, Lemon Grove, California

Reverberations encountered in the painted Cantabrian caves of Spain, and echoes heard among the engraved Côa Valley boulders in Portugal, are just as elusive as a rainbow's pot of gold. Due to sound reflection physics and psychoacoustics, it is impossible to ever actually reach a virtual sound source, lending this phenomena a mysterious aura. Live demonstrations will be given of vocal and hoofbeat-like percussive echoes typical of many rock art sites globally, giving audience members an opportunity to experience the perplexing illusion that one can never reach or catch the invisible mythical spirits that ancient cultures held responsible for echoes.

## **12:00 LUNCH BREAK**

## **1:30 AFTERNOON SESSION**

### **Coyote Hole Canyon Surprises, Part Two**

John Michael Rafter, Pico Rivera, California

This paper is part two of my presentation initiated at the November 2016 San Diego Rock Art Symposium. The author has found additional surprises in the approximately 3,000-foot-long canyon known as Coyote Hole Canyon. The canyon is located near Joshua Tree Village, California, and just north of the north entrance to Joshua Tree National Park. It stretches from south to north and rock art can be found on its east and west sides on granitic boulders. Coyote Hole is the name of the natural tank at the south end of the canyon. In 2016, the author reported evidence of several rock art alignments with significant solar events observed between 1993 and 1996. The alignments involved both direct and indirect observations, which include unique sunlight and shadow interactions with rock art. Additional findings made between 2015 and 2017 revealed more solar alignments, and one such alignment appears to be still in observance by someone or some group as recently as 2017.

## **A Tale of Two Management Plans: A Comparison of the Management Strategy and Visitor-related Impacts to Rock Art sites on Non-NPS-Managed Sites with Three NPS-Managed Sites within Joshua Tree National Park**

Jeremy B. Freeman, Great Basin Institute

In 2016 it was announced that management of the Coyote Hole rock art site would be transferred from the San Bernardino County Flood Control District to the Native American Land Conservancy. The site's proximity to Joshua Tree National Park (JOTR) provides a unique opportunity to compare the effects of different management policies on rock art preservation. JOTR staff conducted a study to collect conservation management data at three study sites at Coyote Hole and three study sites within the park that exhibit variable degrees of accessibility, visitation, and histories of graffiti remediation to examine visitor-related impacts to rock art sites.

## **Painted Rocks Petroglyph Site: Crossroads of Cultures**

Kirk A. Astroth, Archaeology Southwest, Tucson, Arizona

The Painted Rock Petroglyph Site, AZ S:16:1(ASM), constitutes one of the largest and densest assemblages of rock art in the American Southwest, with more than 3,000 petroglyphs adorning 428 boulders. Archaeology Southwest recently conducted an extensive inventory of the petroglyphs to collect benchmark data on their number, location, and condition. We also applied the Rock Art Stability Index to assess the stability of the boulders on which the petroglyphs are pecked. In addition, we took multiple photographs of each boulder so that 3-dimensional digital models could be created to facilitate research, outreach, and curation.

## **On the Origin and Significance of the Petroglyphs at Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona**

Aaron M. Wright, Archaeology Southwest, Tucson, Arizona

In 1937, acclaimed architect Frank Lloyd Wright established Taliesin West, a winter retreat for himself and his students at the foot of the McDowell Mountains outside of Scottsdale, Arizona. Upon recognizing petroglyphs on the property, Wright incorporated some of the petroglyph-adorned boulders into the campus' design. This paper reviews Wright's interpretation and reconfiguration of the rock art. It then takes a close look at the petroglyphs at Taliesin West in order to understand them within their original sociocultural setting and the larger archaeological landscape of the Phoenix Basin.

### **3:00 – 3:20 AFTERNOON BREAK**

## **Engraved in Clay: Indigenous Tile Art in Spanish Colonial San Diego**

Richard L. Carrico, San Diego State University

One of the fundamental problems in analyzing and understanding Native American art in general and rock art in particular is that many observers bring a Kantian approach to their studies. By that it is meant that Western cultures tend to conceptualize what Immanuel Kant called "art for art's sake" or art as strictly ornamental. Such an approach to native rock art, face painting, basket designs, and, as in the current study, inscribed clay tiles, fails to understand or at least to consider, the symbology of art (both collective and individual) and the inherent utilitarianism of such art. This paper and presentation focuses on the poorly documented native art form expressed by incising or inscribing wet clay tiles prior to their firing in a kiln. The hypothesis of this study is that, in creating such art forms at the San Diego Presidio and Mission San Diego, the Kumeyaay, and possibly Cochimi, artists were practicing a type of resistive or abusive art. As will be shown, the style and elements depicted on the floor and roof tiles are consistent with traditional rock art, basketry, and pottery motifs. Rather than forming a type of "hybrid" art, the clay tiles differ only in the medium used as the canvas.

## **A Sociological Analysis of Rock Art in Southern California as a Form of Social Media Communication**

Timothy Hoxha, Provo, Utah

This paper draws on sociological, media, and semiotic theory to uncover the functional similarities between rock art in Southern California and contemporary social media systems. Further, it decodes four key social media purposes of rock art, including how rock art:

- 1) Showcased leadership and governance through the circulation and control of information;
- 2) Served as a tool to instruct populations and interpret the world around them;
- 3) Cultivated tribal thinking and urban planning, and defined political and social roles;
- 4) Displayed the use of traditional technology as a valuable skill and method of quantifying information.

## Great Mural Art as Processional Art

Eve Ewing, San Diego, California

A number of Baja California Great Mural Rock Art Sites from the Sierra de San Francisco appear to encompass strong processional themes that clearly dominate the composition. Animals rush past static-appearing anthropomorphs with upstretched arms that nevertheless appear to visually assist and conduct the upward, outward directional procession of animals rushing past them. Both on-site natural rock formations and adjacent features such as storm-related seasonal waterfalls appear as important stage props for understanding a portion of this widespread phenomenon. Examples from cuevas El Batequi, San Gregorio I, Pintada, Serpiente, Mono Alto, Flechas, and El Enhambre de Hipólito will be given.

## The Allure of Brazil's Nordeste Rock Art Tradition

Anne Stoll with photos by George Stoll, Claremont, California

Arguably the heart of Brazilian rock art lies in Parque Nacional Serra da Capivara, deep in the interior in Piauí province. With some 544 painted sites containing over 40,000 images recorded to date, the concentration of rock art at Capivara is certainly phenomenal. The dominant rock art style found there has been titled the "Nordeste Tradition," marked by vibrant, animated figures painted in red, found in scenes said to have "a playful undertone" and whose characteristic movements have been described as "exuberant." On a recent exploration in Brazil, we were surprised to encounter rock art also identified as belonging to the Nordeste Tradition located at four sites near the town the Carnaúbas dos Dantas, some 425 miles east of Serra da Capivara. The search for some explanation for the long reach of this stylistic tradition is summarized, with examples of enhanced elements newly added to the Nordeste repertoire.

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### With Thanks...

We wish to thank our Symposium partner, The San Diego Community College District Educational Cultural Complex. We greatly appreciate the generous assistance of Jacqueline Sabanos and her staff for the use of the San Diego Community College District Educational Cultural Complex Theatre for this year's Rock Art Symposium.

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We are grateful to the Society for California Archaeology for their award of a 2017 Archaeology Month Mini-Grant to SDRAA and the Rock Art 2017 Symposium in recognition of our efforts to bring the findings of archaeological research to a broad audience. The 2017 SCA Mini-grants are made possible by a grant to the SCA from the Bureau of Land Management

We will return next year for Rock Art 2018—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)

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