Welcome To San Diego's 47th Annual Rock Art Symposium

10:00 A.M. Session 1

Behold the Lowly Cupule!

Ken Hedges (San Diego Rock Art Association)

Cupules are among the most ubiquitous and least understood components of rock art studies. This presentation seeks, beginning with some basic definitions, to review some of the many contexts in which cupules occur, and to dispel some of the major misconceptions involved in their interpretation. Finally, we will place cupules in the broader framework of a unifying theory of rock art placement.

Fremont Imagery of the Uinta Basin, Interpreted Through Ethnographic Analogy

Carol Patterson (Research Affiliate, Dominguez Archaeological Research Group)

The continuity of Apache culture through time is demonstrated by comparing the Uinta Fremont style petroglyphs (A.D. 600–1100), with the creation stories in the ethnographic literature. The imagery of the Uinta Fremont is possibly antecedent to the Jicarilla, Mescalero, Chiricahua and Western Apache iconography. Supporting evidence for this hypothesis includes the iconography depicting the Creation Beings (Hactcin), spirit dancers (Gaans), and Ancestral Man and Woman; the Hero Twins with Killer-of-Enemies and Child-of-the-Water; and warriors with specific war-cap headdresses compared with historic photographs of the Eastern and Western Apache.

Serra da Capivara National Park, Brazil's Rock Art Treasure: Status and Update

Anne Q. Stoll, photography by George Stoll (Claremont, California)

Home and possible origin site of Nordeste Tradition rock art, Serra da Capivara Park, Piaui, Brazil, is said to contain the oldest and densest concentration of prehistoric sites in the Americas. With over 14,000 known rock art sites in the greater area, the public can today access 206 amazing painted sites within the park boundary.

Capture of screens and images during presentations is not allowed.

A UNESCO Heritage Site since 1991, the park is the brainchild of a remarkable Brazilian researcher, 89 year-old Dr. Niede Guidon, who first saw the art in 1970. Serra da Capivara Park's initial success was largely due to her vision and determination; her work sets a high standard for rock art tourism worldwide. We have photographed 40 sites in the park in the Nordeste rock art tradition, said to be about 12,000 years old. On our most recent visit in September, we focused on more recent paintings in the Serra Branca style variant. Covid shut down the park for eight long months, but momentum is rebuilding for interest in the area.

Astronomical Constellations: Rock or Stone Drawings in Navajo, Zapotec, and Nazca Cultures in Parallel to a Joined Early Mesoamerican Astronomical and Cosmological Calendar

Alexandre Solcà (Independent Researcher, Lausanne, Switzerland)

This short paper aims to provide new insights into early astronomical ideas and astronomical calendars used by wise early skywatchers in these sacred territories, focusing our attention on early Southwestern Native Indians and South American and Central American astronomical and cosmological tales, and calling for more attention devoted to these rock or stone monuments that aim to describe to us their night visions of early night gods.

1:00 p.m. Session 2

The Rock Art Imagery of Western Communal Trap Hunting: Visual Ethnology

Christopher Drover (University of California, Irvine)
Bernie Jones (Independent Researcher, Tustin, California)

Communal hunting of big game, using a variety of trapping technologies, had a long-term existence in prehistoric North America, providing subsistence and social and ideological benefits to the peoples of the region. Big game trap sites of the Great Basin and the American southwest focused on the capture of pronghorn, bighorn sheep, and deer, but as a group are often referred to as "antelope traps" in literature. Man-made animal traps have been a topic of research in recent years, focused mainly on the Great Basin and indicating regional, chronological, and cultural variation. Along with earlier buffalo jump sites, fabricated animal traps are reported for the Great Basin, the American Southwest and the Plains beginning in the Archaic. Archaeologically known, constructed traps are found in California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and the Plains. Surviving physical trap sites are few, perhaps the result of physical disintegration. At present, the largest number of investigated game traps are in the Great Basin. Rock art illustrations of big game hunting traps are not common. Isolated panels depicting trap symbols are found in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Petroglyphs as a form of "visual ethnology" are addressed here and compared with known archaeological trap structure. Native American mythology, societal mindsets, ideological beliefs, ethnography surrounding big game trapping, and corresponding rock art panels are analyzed.

Is This Really a Medicine Bag?

John Rafter (Independent Researcher, Pico Rivera, California)

The Coso Range in Central California is home to a number of enigmatic designs suggested by the late Campbell Grant to resemble a medicine bag with a trapezoidal body, fringes along the bottom, and a rectangular "handle." Unfortunately, too many researchers have taken this suggestion as gospel, which perpetuates the belief that the petroglyph design is that of a medicine bag. As far as we know, no such physical evidence of a bag of that shape and form has ever been recovered from archaeological sites in the area. The author has felt for a long time that the design instead represents an abstracted anthropomorphic form, presenting his alternate interpretation in a 1985 issue of La Pintura. Since then, the author has found additional rock art evidence supporting this interpretation. The main focal point of this investigation is Little Petroglyph Canyon, where a large number of the designs can be found, as well as a rock art site in the next range to the east in Nevada.

Rock Art in Time

Bernie Taylor (Independent Researcher, BeforeOrion.com)

Anthropological surveys of hunter-gatherers and pastoral peoples from Siberia and North America during the early 190's recorded widespread use of lunar calendars for the observation and harvesting of terrestrial and aquatic animals. Volumes of evidence in biological fields throughout the 20th century record animals across the biological spectrum as being cued by the sun and dark/light phases of the moon. This study explores whether geometric patterns accompanying depicted animals in Upper Paleolithic Franco-Cantabrian cave art, lunar calendars of hunter-gatherers and pastoral peoples as recorded in the anthropological surveys, and the light/dark lunar cued biological behavior of significant animals presented can be correlated. The results expand on Alexander Marshack's hypothesis of time-factored markings on Upper Paleolithic artifacts.

Rock Art Near Cerro Murciélago, Baja California Sur

Jon Harman (DStretch.com)

Cerro Murciélago is in Baja California Sur very near the border with Baja California. There are several small shelters in the vicinity containing Great Mural rock art. I will document the rock art using my program DStretch. The landscape is dry remote desert with sparse vegetation and little water. Despite this, the rock art illustrates several typical Great Mural style traits. It consists of anthropomorphs, birds, deer, and small figures probably made by children. The existence of this rock art far from the large Great Mural sites in the sierras San Francisco and Guadalupe demonstrates the movement of the Great Mural peoples into remote areas to the north.

3:00 p.m. Session 3

June Solstice Hierophany at Piedras Grandes

Angeline Duran (Independent Researcher)

In this presentation I demonstrate the experimental tools used at a visually captivating rock feature to discover a very precise June Solstice hierophany. The location features a large "yoni" stone feature at Piedras Grandes in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in California. The site is a rockshelter with grinding features in close proximity to other habitation sites and pictograph panels. The roof slab of this shelter is a naturally occurring megalith, on top of which is a series of fractures that form a bisected pear-shaped ovoid with radiating cracks, the type of feature that some call a "yoni" or "vulva." The June solstice sun, viewed from the "yoni," sets in a prominent saddle on the horizon. I demonstrate the precision of the sunset alignment with the "yoni" using a gnomon. I also demonstrate how using a gnomon to explore additional significant shadow alignments on the same rock feature may be fruitful.

Geographic Distribution and Cultural Affiliation of the Bordered Array

Steven M. Freers (San Diego Rock Art Association)

Twenty-five years go, this author compiled an extensive database of San Luis Rey Style pictographs and published his findings the following year in American Indian Rock Art, Volume 22. The data proved compelling that handprints were an integral and differentiating component of that tradition, especially when compared to other regional rock art styles. That report noted, but did not expand upon, the geographic distribution patterns of the rock art elements or panel composition concepts, nor their potential cultural linkage. Researchers such as Daniel McCarthy and Ken Hedges have informally mentioned the existence of distinct rock art panel attributes within the overarching San Luis Rey Style. This presentation will highlight one of the most distinctive and culturally-linked variants of that style, the "Bordered Array" panel composition.

Watcher of the Winter Sun

A film by Michael Bober

In the fall of 1980, Dr. E.C. Krupp led his UCLA Extension class to solstice-related rock art sites from Chatsworth to Lompoc, saving the winter solstice itself for a Kumeyaay site on the La Rumorosa plateau in Baja California. On December 20, scores of determined sunwatchers crossed the border at Tecate, dutifully bought car insurance and stopped at the bakery, drove miles on dirt tracks, and slept in tents or on the ground to await the sunrise. In the morning, they met Ken Hedges, who had discovered the solstice phenomenon in one of the many painted caves scattered on the plateau. A young filmmaker was given a prominent position as the sun rose and light entered the cave, but both batteries for his 16mm camera failed and the footage was far from complete. Dr. Krupp reminded the filmmaker that the winter solstice would come again, and proceeded to write a script. After two more winters of filming, *Watcher of the Winter Sun* was screened at the First International Conference on Ethnoastronomy at the Smithsonian in September, 1983. It went on to win a CINE Golden Eagle award, part of a program promoting American films abroad, but it was Dr. Krupp who brought it to the attention of audiences throughout the world. *Watcher of the Winter Sun* was recently digitally restored.

About the Logo: Our 2022 Logo design is a Kayenta style Ancestral Puebloan image from the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument in Utah. Original photo by Steve Freers.

Whether In-Person or Virtual, we will return next year for **Rock Art 2023**—visit 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

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