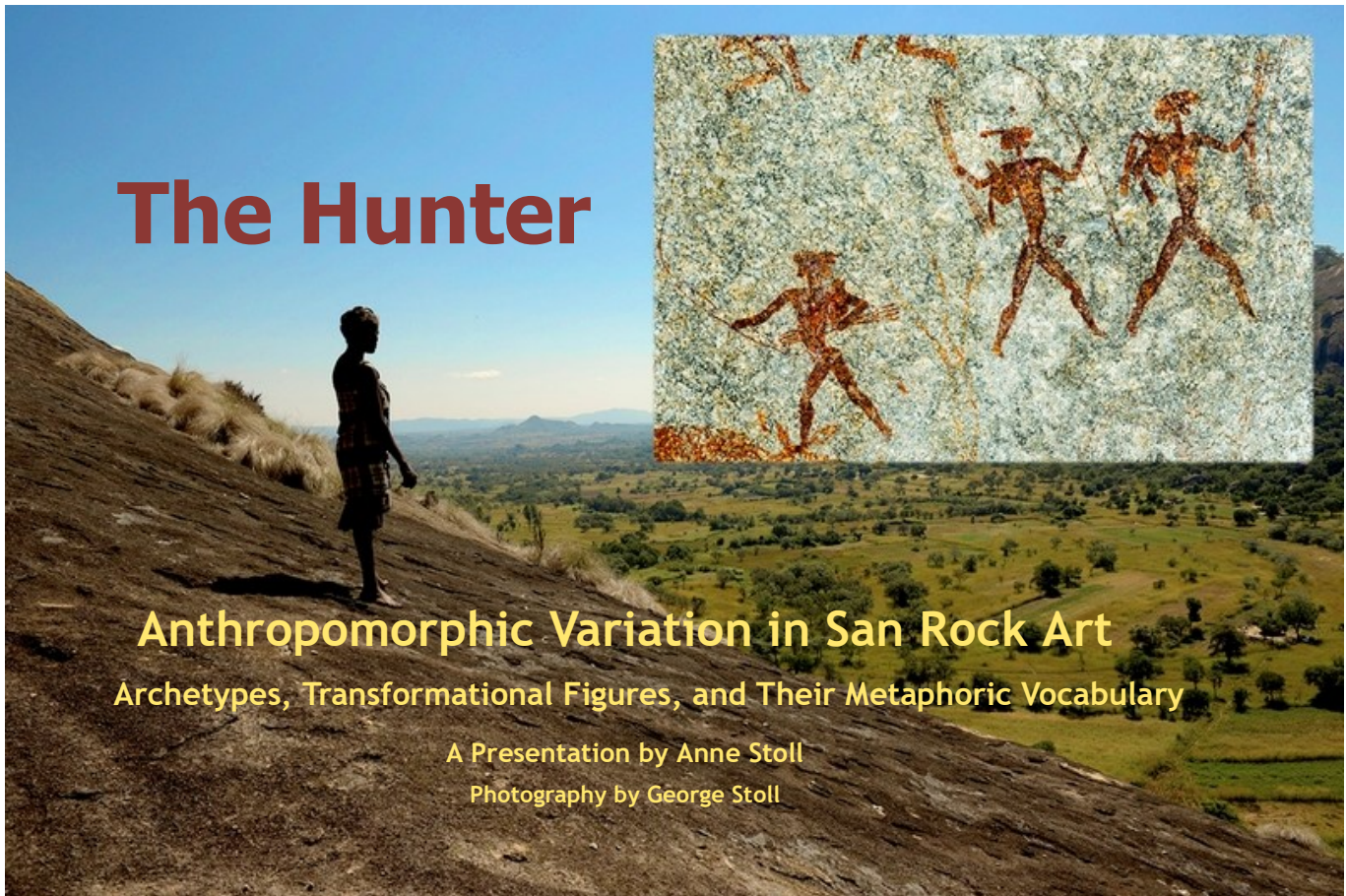




San Diego Rock Art Association Virtual Meeting
Sunday, February 27, 2022, 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time



The Hunter

Anthropomorphic Variation in San Rock Art

Archetypes, Transformational Figures, and Their Metaphoric Vocabulary

A Presentation by Anne Stoll
Photography by George Stoll

San Bushman rock art, as painted several thousand years ago by hunter-foragers in the rockshelters of Zimbabwe, depicts a fantastic, vanished world of people, animals, and enigmatic shapes. The rock art is dominated, numerically and symbolically, by an all-important anthropomorphic figure identified as The Hunter. This archetypal figure is frequently shown in a standardized, twisted-perspective pose and exhibits his vital signature through specific attributes or “emblems.” As with all human expression, constrained by its very nature to its originating cultural norms, the Hunter and his painted universe reflect the worldview of the artists who long ago created these images. Thus even without recorded ethnographic clues, by systematic examination a glimpse of the Hunter’s world can be obtained.

Though threatened, a large corpus of San Bushman rock art still exists in eastern Zimbabwe. Comparison points and opportunities for analysis are present on the walls at every site. The Hunter and his male and female companions are accessed by viewers through familiarity of form. Those depictions beyond immediate recognition are the many intriguing semi-human beings, the conflated animal-human combinations or “therianthropes”, the bloated “distended” figures (some of whom look like human balloons), and the so-called “stringbeans” who arguably function as helpers and avatars. All these belong somehow in the Hunter’s complex symbolic world. In pursuing such images, as the late Zimbabwean archaeologist Peter Garlake wrote, we are seeking “the underlying bedrock” of this remarkable prehistoric rock art.

Anne and George Stoll are retired professionals who have together spent 30 years studying and photographing rock art. Between 2011 and 2015, the Stolls traveled yearly to Africa, exploring rock art sites in Tanzania, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe. In 2019, they completed a fourth trip to Zimbabwe where, under National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe permit, they worked at the Museum of Human Science in Harare photographing endangered documents and rock art copies in the hope of securing support for conservation. This presentation showcases some of their work and conclusions regarding prehistoric San rock art in eastern Zimbabwe.

This meeting will be held via Zoom
February 27, 2022, Starting at 4:00 p.m. (Pacific Time)
Meeting room will open approximately 15 minutes early
Free Registration Required, limit 100 participants

Visit www.sdraa.org to Register