

GLYPH TECHNIQUE

By

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Petroglyphs are images made by pecking, chipping, rubbing, or scratching a rock surface.

For my project I decided to create reproductions of rock art to help me understand the techniques used to make these panels.

I looked at glyph sites for materials naturally located in the area. I found obsidian, flint, chert, and river rocks. These were possible tools.

The oldest petroglyphs were made with stone tools, and may date back to as early as 8000 B.C. (Barnes, & Pendleton 1981) Round rocks made large dents with rough edges. Sharper rocks made finer deeper dents. (Warner 1989)

The pecking was easier to control with the use of a hammerstone. (Figure #1: My reproduction of glyphs using stone tools and hammerstones.)

The next techniques used in rock art were the pictographs, rock paintings.

Some images date back to 500 B.C. The Zuni culture still uses these techniques today. (Young 1988)

The paint is made of: 1) a binder, 2) a vehicle, and 3) pigment.

The binder attaches the paint to the rock surface and helps it to last longer. The most common binders were blood, urine, milk, animal oil and vegetable oil. Some liquids were both a binder and vehicle at the same time.

The vehicle is a liquid used to make the paint manageable. Thinning with water, or any liquid binders, would make paint easier to apply.

The pigment is the coloring part of the paint; Archeologists say the most common pigments were probably minerals found in the area. Plants were also commonly used. (Schaafsma, 1989)

For my research I made 3 colors of paint: red, black and white. The pigment for red consisted of soil with a high iron content. Black was finely ground coal, and white was limestone. I used animal oil for a binder, and when kept warm, it stayed in a liquid state, creating my vehicle.

Native Americans used several different methods of applying paint. They used brushes made from yucca or sticks. These brushes were made by pounding or chewing the ends of plants until the fibers were bare.

Hollow sticks and reeds were used in a stencil process. A hollow reed would be filled with paint. The artist could then blow paint around his hand leaving a negative image.

They sometimes used their fingers for painting tools. Hands were also dipped in paint and stamped on the rocks. (Figure #2: My reproduction using the different painting techniques.)

By the early sixteen hundreds the Spanish began to trade with the Native Americans around Santa Fe. The Utes traveled to Santa Fe to trade for metal tools, and other goods. (Barnes & Pendeleton)

Metal tools changed rock art all over the southwest, because metal points were stronger and sharper than stone tools and didn't break so often. Metal gave them the capability to have finer, deeper, and more detailed petroglyphs.

(Figure #3: My reproduction of the techniques used in creating glyphs with metal tools.)



Figure 1 (8000 B.C.-1000 A.D.)

My reproduction of petroglyphs using stone tools. This panel was made by using the round rock technique and the hammerstone technique.

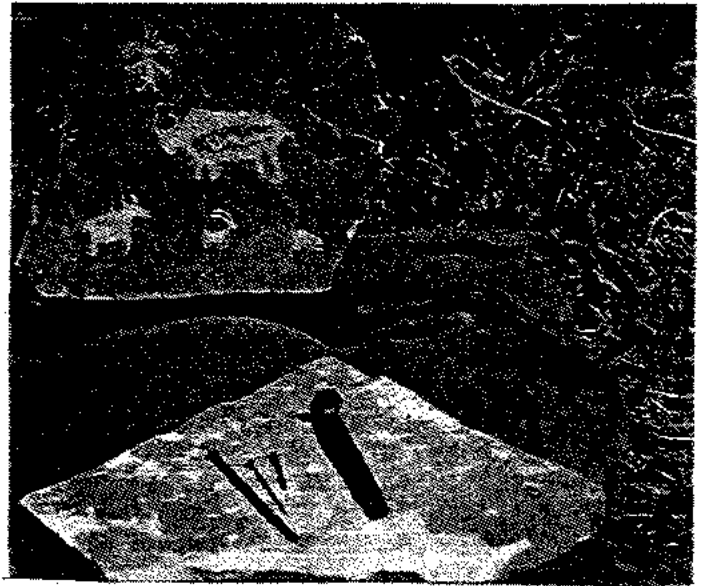


Figure 2 (1600 A.D.- Present)

My reproduction of petroglyphs using metal tools. These glyphs were made with metal tools and I also used the hammerstone technique.

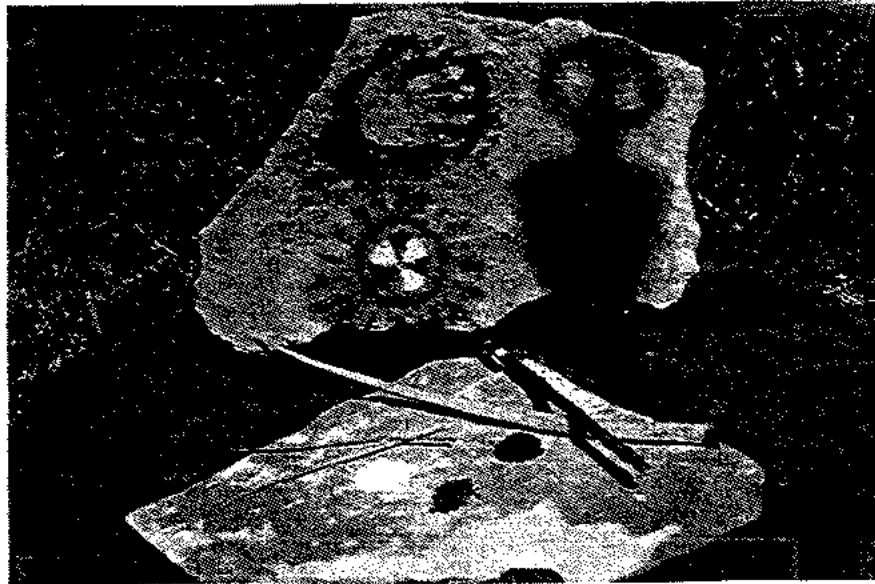


Figure 3 (500 B.C.- Present)

My reproductions of pictographs. The negative hand print was made by blowing the paint through a hollow tube. The sun dial was made with a yucca brush. The bug-eyed figure was made by rubbing the paint on with fingers.

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