

DRAWING ROCK ART

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I. INTRODUCTION

As a drawing teacher I have used drawing as a tool to make my students observe things more closely. In order to record what one sees it is necessary to study the subject carefully.

When my girls were very small, I planned outings where we packed sketchbooks and sandwiches in a backpack and took a few hours off. We drew flowers or weeds, or the neighbors' cows and horses. Soon the girls were quite skillful. The four of us worked together on this presentation on drawing rock art.

II. PURPOSES AND MATERIALS:

The reasons one records images will often determine the methods and techniques incorporated. I began drawing rock art when we came across panels several years ago simply because I thought the images were beautiful. After we joined URARA and made regular pilgrimages to rock art sites, I began reserving sketch books just for rock art. These became my journals of study. I keep each sketch book in tack and use it as reference data. Occasionally I make other drawings from these field sketches. I now have a backlog of some 800 drawings.

I use a good quality drawing paper (70 lb. or heavier), "Flair" pens, and "Prismacolor" pencils. I make line drawings on site, and finish the drawings later at home. Vern and Andrea generally take slides of most of the panels I draw, so I can refer to their slides later if I have a question.

I try to be as accurate as possible, (leaving out graffiti) and still be quick enough to make several sketches. I generally draw 20-30 sketches per field trip.

Some people who draw rock art for recording purposes hang a string grid or metric ruler over the panel and then draw the panel on graph paper. While this is quite accurate and a good method for recording, it is too slow and tedious for my purposes.

Everyone has their own special interest and purposes for drawing rock art. Andrea usually takes photographs, but she will often use motifs found in rock art for the decorative value. (Figure 1).

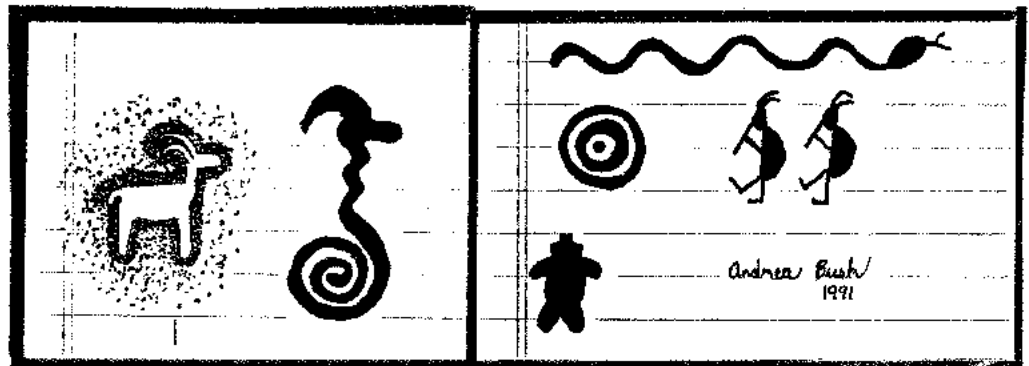


Figure 2

Rachel has a special love for horses and draws rock art horse images wherever they can be found.



Sarah has used rock art drawings in a variety of ways. She prepared a series of drawings showing various drawing techniques.

III. DRAWING TECHNIQUES:

The image or rock surface may suggest a technique for portrayal of that particular glyph. If the glyph has soft and imprecise edges pencil may work well, but if the glyph is well defined a pen drawing would be more representational.

If the drawing is to be used in a publication, solid darks do not reproduce well. If the darks are broken by screening, stippling, crosshatching or other texture techniques, the print quality will improve.

A fine point marker is used to stipple, a series of fine dots, building the dark areas. There are three main steps to stipple drawing: 1. Pencil in the main shape (Figure 3A), 2. Define the shape and add details with a fine pen (Figure 3B), 3. Stipple dark areas (Figure 3C). These drawings reproduce well but are time consuming.

Crosshatching is a technique that uses a series of crosses to build up dark areas. It is a faster than stippling but harder to control. This technique reproduces well in publications (Figure 4).

Figure 5 is a pencil sketch. The edges gradually blend making it look more like the rock surface. The glyph has been outlined with a pen, helping to defining the image.

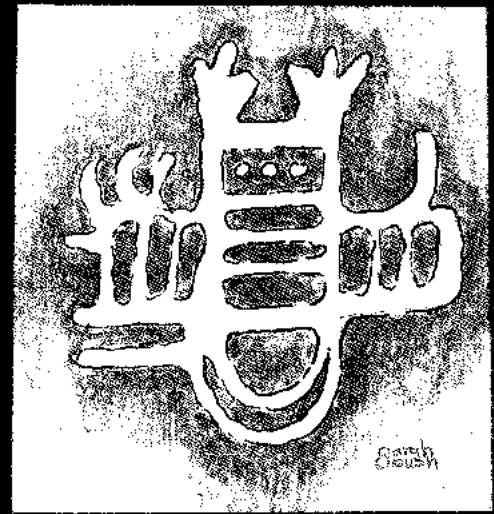
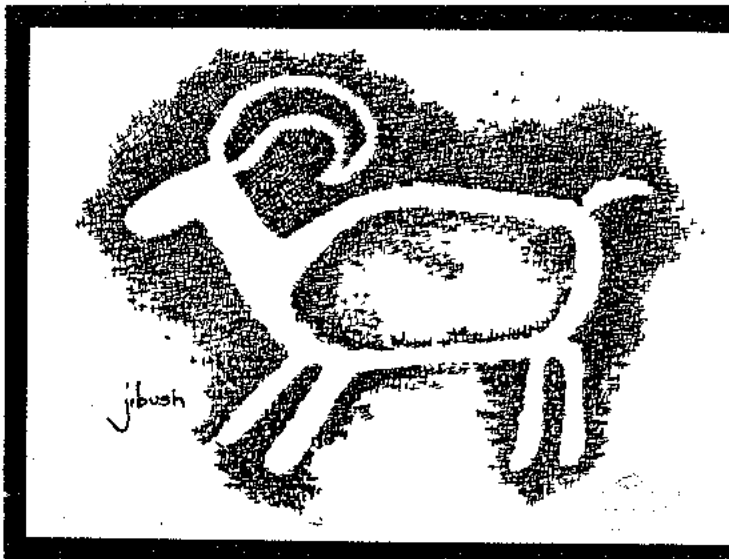
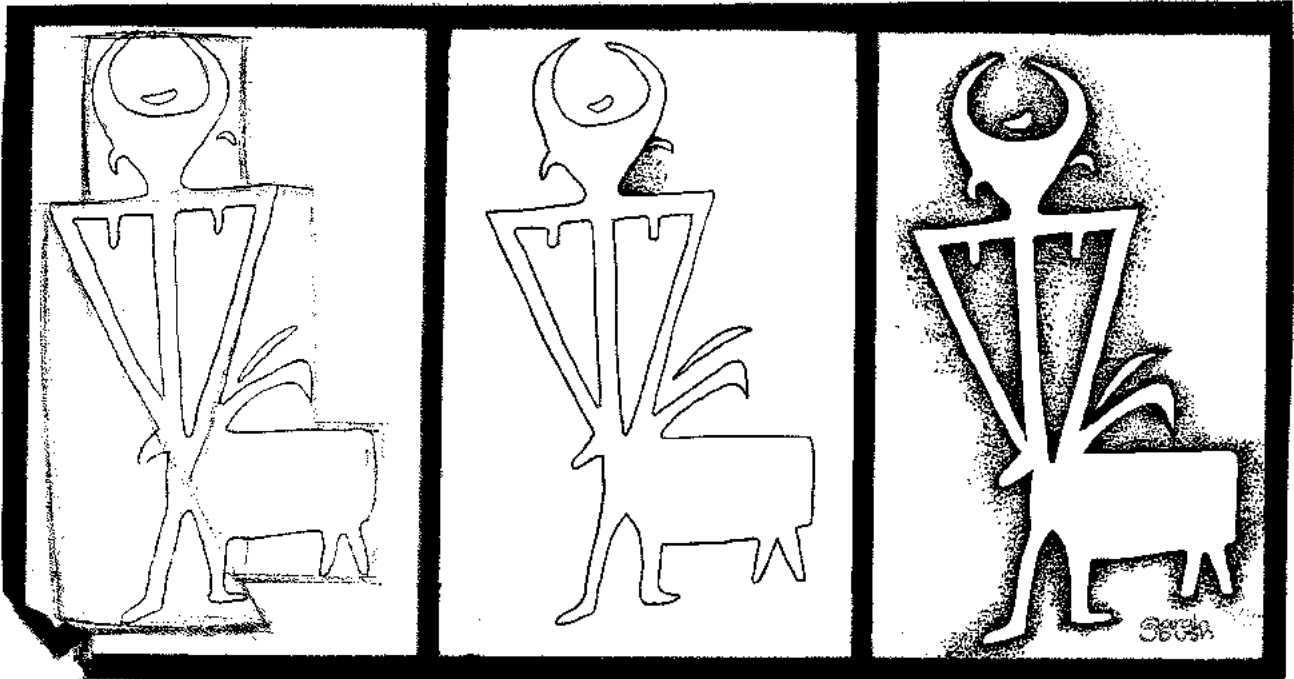


Figure 3A, 3B, 3C, Stipple Process,
petroglyph from Fremont State Park.

Figure 4, Crosshatch Process.

Figure 5, Pencil Drawing,
Petroglyph from Trail Lake, Wym.

Figure 6, Positive Drawing,
Frog from Black Point.



Negative space is the area around the image. When petroglyphs (or subtractive images) are made the original material is removed, and what is left defines the image. Generally when you draw petroglyphs you are actually drawing the negative areas (Figures 4 and 5 are negative).

Pictographs are added images, since the pigments are added to the rock, but nothing is removed. These are positive drawings. Figure 6 (Frog) is a positive drawing of a petroglyph. This drawing shows up well and is the fastest technique for illustration. However the technique is misleading because it leads you to believe that the glyph is a positive image where it really is the opposite.

Many rock art sites have images that overlap. This technique can show overlapping or a difference in age. (Figure 7) Simple lines can show overlapping. Such as in this drawing, where older painted images are behind the petroglyphs.

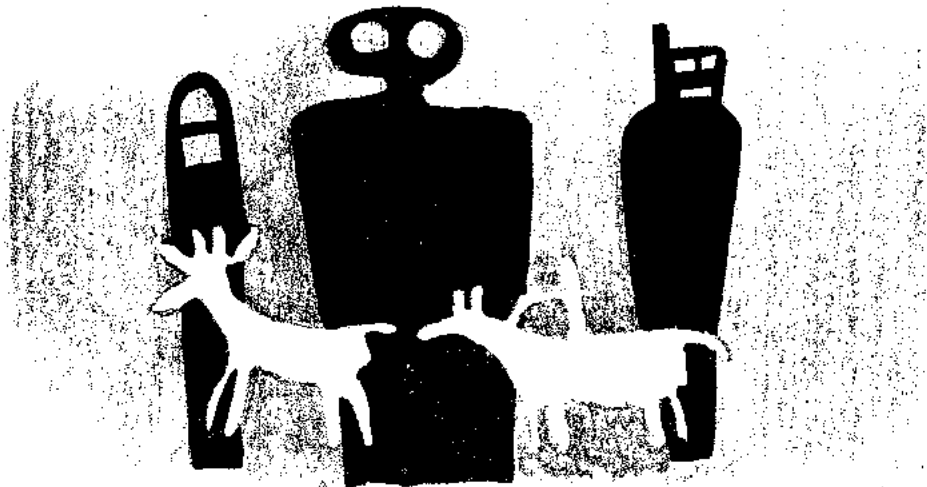


Figure 7, Canyonlands NP.

Some rock art is three dimensional for example a goat walks around a corner, a lizard's tail wraps around a rock. A glyph found inside of a metate can be represented by shading the drawing.

Rock art designs have been reproduced in stationary; silkscreened on T-shirts and posters; simplified in stitcheries, quilts, knitting patterns and collages. Simple designs are generally the most successful.

IV. NINE MILE STUDY:

We decided to use the "Hunter Panel" of Cottonwood in Nine Mile Canyon as the subject for our study. First I did a large outline drawing of the panel, and made blueprints for writing notes. We studied the panel carefully, and wrote down our observation for each image. Because there is a variance in style and technique we decided the panel was created at different periods. We drew the images we felt went together, because of the pecking technique and style, on sheets of acetate and made overlays:

Layer #1. Figure 8A. The two goat to the left of the shaman are the most carefully done of any figures on the panel. They are the only two goats with cloven hooves.

Layer #2. Figure 8B. The "shaman" with a trapezoidal shaped body is typical of the Fremont period. All the darkened figures in this illustration are carefully pecked and connected. We feel the figures in 8A and 8B made up the original panel.

Layer #3. Figure 8C. The goats and figures on the right were pecked more coarsely than those highlighted in 8A and 8B. The anthropomorph has a different shaped head and carries a bow. We feel they were added later.

Layer #4. Figure 8D. The pecking on these "shield figures" is also much coarser than the goats in 8A and 8B.

Layer #5. Figure 8E. These small figures with bows appear in profile and seem to be more typical of Ute images.

Layer #6. Figure 8F. The darkened marks here show where a metal knife was used to incise the rock.

V. SUMMARY:

This is an overview of some techniques used to record and reproduce rock art. We choose to use drawing as one of our methods to observe and study rock art, and feel it can be a useful research tool.

Figure 8A.

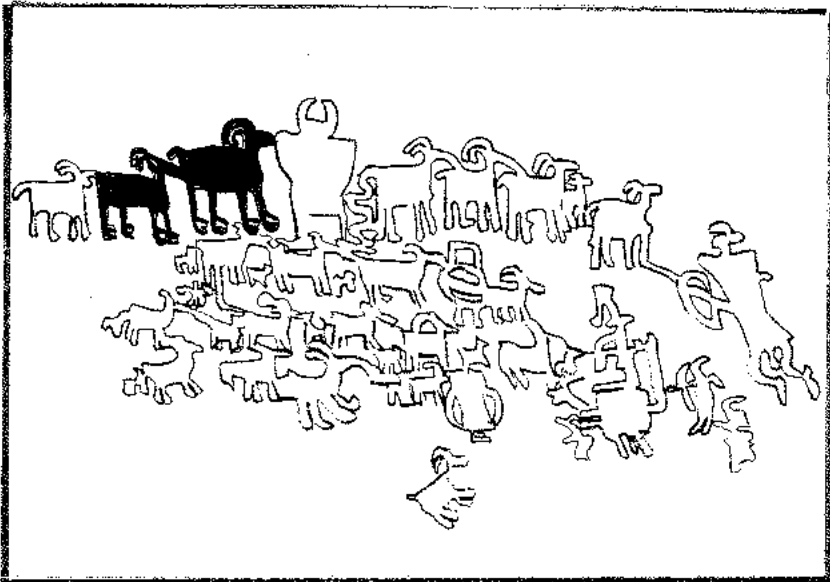


Figure 8B.

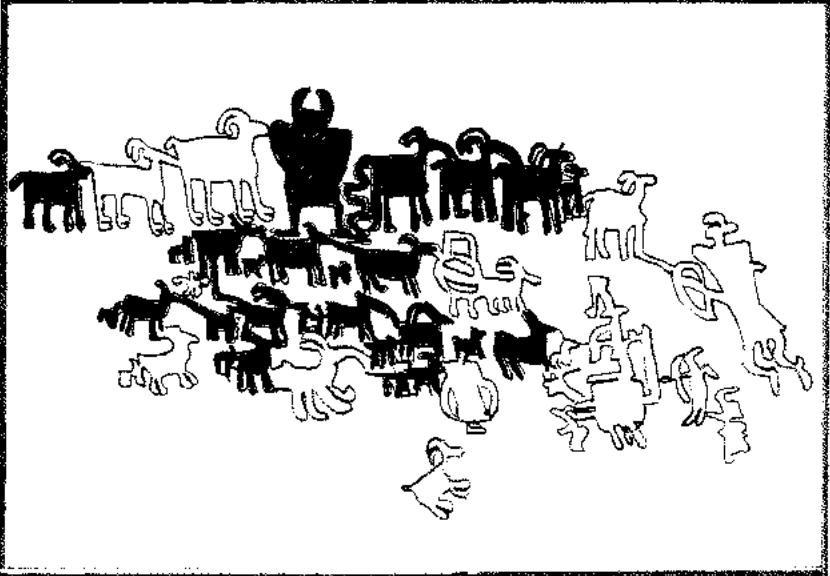


Figure 8C.

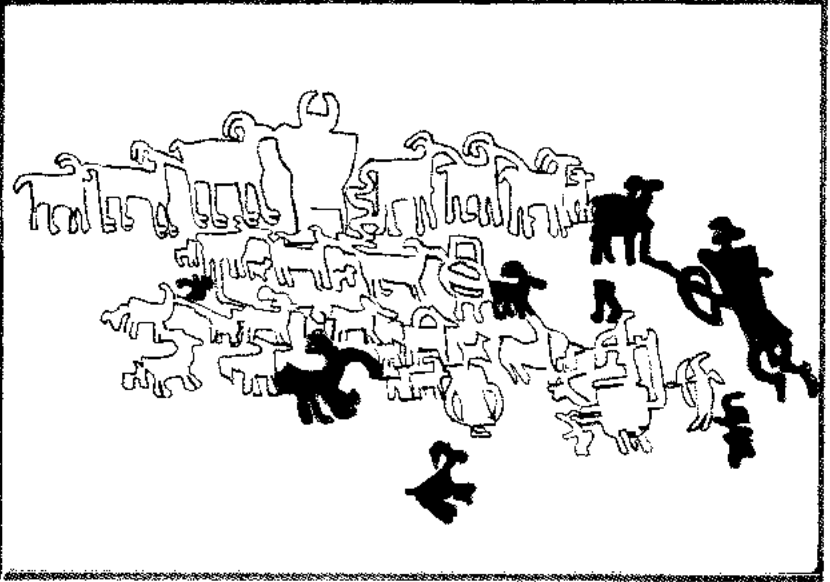


Figure 8D.

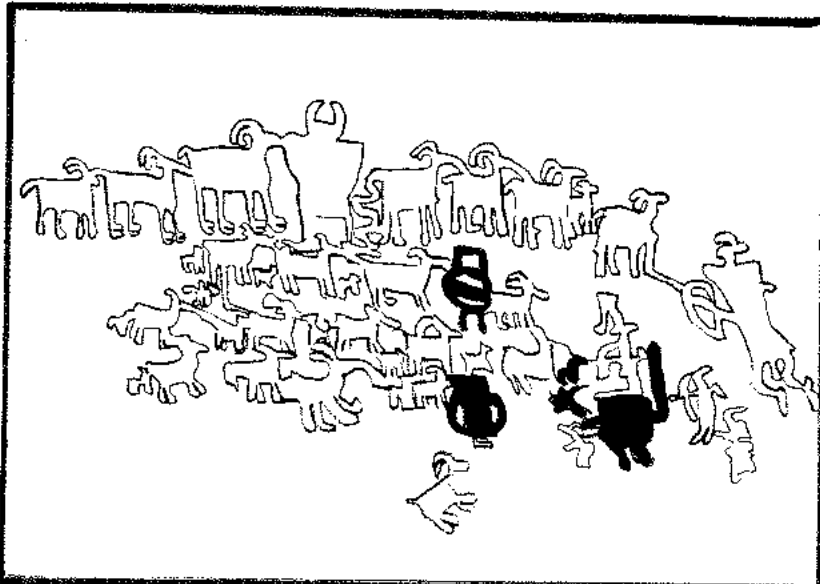


Figure 8E.

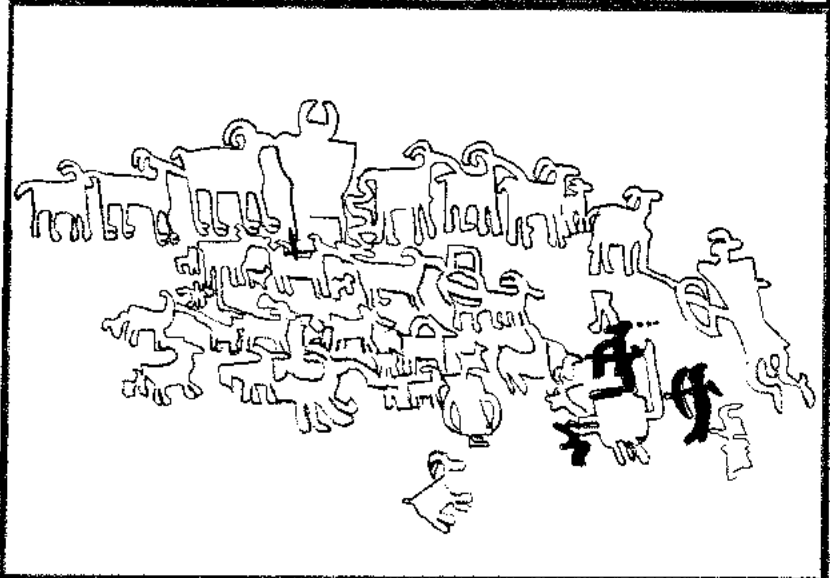


Figure 8F.

