

## ROCK ART

For thousands of years, people have left a record of their presence in an area by creating images on the stone walls of caves and canyons and on large rocks. These images are often referred to as rock art. There are two basic types of rock art that hikers are most likely to come across when hiking in Southern Arizona: petroglyphs and pictographs.

**PETROGLYPHS ;** Petroglyphs are images usually made by pecking or chipping away the outer patina covered surface of the rock to expose the lighter colored stone underneath. In the Southwest deserts of the United States, this patina is referred to as desert varnish. Desert varnish is an orange-yellow to black coating found on exposed rock surfaces in arid environments. The coating consists primarily of fine clay particles along with iron and manganese oxides that adheres to the basic rock structure via bacterial action. The darker the varnish, the greater the concentration of manganese in the coating.

Petroglyphs may be found in a number of areas in southern Arizona. Some areas, like Cedar Canyon in the Atascosa Mountains or Cumero Peak in the San Luis Mountains, have only a few petroglyphs while there is a section of the Picacho Mountains that has literally thousands of them. Some petroglyphs are thousands of years old while others are more recent. The petroglyphs at Picacho have been determined to have been etched by three different groups of people. The oldest glyphs are from the Archaic period (8000 B.C. to 400 A.D.), then from the Hohokam culture (12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century) and finally from the Pima Indians (15<sup>th</sup> century). The two glyphs in Cedar Canyon (Figures 1 and 2) appear to be from two different eras with the glyph in Figure 1 being much more recent. There are many different styles of rock art. What each glyph meant to the artist is not known.

**PICTOGRAPHS:** Pictographs are the second type of rock art that you will find in southern Arizona. They are images that have been painted onto stone surfaces and are much more fragile than petroglyphs. The paint is a mineral or vegetal substance combined with some sort of binder like fat residue or blood. The use of a binder is essential, otherwise the paint will not adhere well to the stone and the image would quickly flake away. Also, pictographs were painted in areas that were protected from the elements such as in caves, alcoves and under ledges and overhangs.. Two areas where you can observe pictographs are in the Garden Canyon area of Fort Huachuca and in the Council Rocks area of the Dragoon Mountains. The pictographs in the Council Rocks area are believed to have been painted by the Mogollon people about 1000 years ago. Examples of petroglyphs and pictographs found in southern Arizona are shown on the following pages.

Rock art symbols have been categorized. A chart of this categorization is depicted on Page 4.

Summary by T. Johnson from various web sites in 2017. Photos by T. Johnson



Figure 1 Cedar Canyon Petroglyph



Figure 2 Cedar Canyon Petroglyph



Figure 3 Picacho Mountains Petroglyph



Figure 4 Picacho Mountains Petroglyph



Figure 5 Picacho Mountain Petroglyph



Figure 6 Picacho Mountains Petroglyph



Figure 7. Picacho Mountain Petroglyph



Figure 8 Garden Canyon Pictograph



Figure 9 Garden Canyon Pictograph



Figure 10 Council Rocks Pictograph



Figure 11 Council Rocks Pictograph

# ROCK ART MOTIF INDEX

## ANIMATE

### Anthropomorphs



### Zoomorphs



### Phantasmomorphs



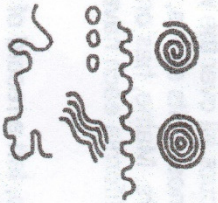
### Phytomorphs



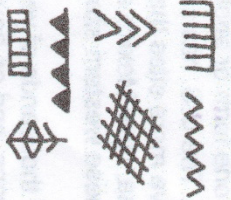
## INANIMATE

### Geomorphs

#### Curvilinear



#### Rectilinear



### Reomorphs

#### Manipulable



#### Nonmanipulable

