



San Diego Rock Art Association Virtual Meeting
Sunday, February 4, 2024, 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time

Illuminating Event-Based Significance at Three Chumash Rock Art Sites



SBA-655, Window Cave



SBA-550, Honda Ridge



SBA-609, Rattlesnake Shelter

Vandenberg Space Force Base, Santa Barbara County, California

A presentation by Christopher Ryan

Vandenberg Space Force Base in northern Santa Barbara County overlaps the heart of the ethnographic homelands of the Purisimeño Chumash Indians. Fourteen known rock art sites on base have been documented by Campbell Grant, Georgia Lee and Bill Hyder, the RAD Group, Dina Ryan, Audrey Lindsay, and others using standard and ever-advancing documentation techniques. Three of those sites, however, stand apart—they host very different versions of the rayed disc glyph, also called the sun symbol. In December 2011, knowing that light-and-shadow events occur during winter solstice at other sites with sun symbols, and with prior knowledge that a winter solstice light-and-shadow event occurs at the Window Cave rock art site, the RAD Group (Rick Bury, Antoinette Padgett, Dan Reeves) and their close associate, archaeoastronomer Jon Picciuolo, documented the interplay between the sun symbol and the setting sun at Window Cave using multiple cameras and time-lapse photography with breathtaking results. Rick and Jon repeated those techniques during sunset at the Honda Ridge rock art site in 2014, and during sunrise at Rattlesnake Shelter in 2015. Their skillfully captured imagery broadens notions about the intentionality of the Purisimeño individuals responsible for creating these rock art sites—or at least these glyphs—and their awareness of the cycle of seasons and the role it played in their lives.

Christopher Ryan began working on Vandenberg Air Force Base in 1994 as an employee of Applied EarthWorks, Inc. Since 2007, Chris has served the Department of the Air Force in the role of cultural resources manager at Vandenberg. Over the years, Chris has had the good fortune to have worked with a talented group of rock art specialists including Rick Bury, Antoinette Padgett, Dan Reeves, Jon Picciuolo, Dave Robinson, Audrey Lindsay, Clare Bedford, and many others. The outstanding research, documentation, photography, insights, and preservation that currently exist for the rock art of the Purisimeño Chumash Indians is attributed to the enthusiasm, hard work, and dedication of all of the people who have worked at these sites.

This meeting will be held via Zoom
February 4, 2024, Starting at 4:00 p.m. (Pacific Time)
Free Registration Required

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