



The Rock Art of Arizona: Art for Life's Sake

Ekkehart Malotki

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With an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 sites spread throughout its canyons, mountains and deserts, the Grand Canyon state of Arizona constitutes one of the premier rock art theaters in the world. Consisting primarily of engraved images (petroglyphs) on sandstone and basalt, but also offering paintings (pictographs) under overhangs, and ground figures (geoglyphs) on the desert pavements, Arizona's rock art truly commands awe and respect. This book, in a comprehensive survey, presents the full gamut of the state's impressive open-air art from its earliest beginnings until more recent manifestations in the historic era. Though *The Rock Art of Arizona* contains more than 380 color photographs, over 130 drawings, and numerous charts and maps, it goes beyond the usual bounds of a lavishly illustrated coffee-table book. In addition to describing the various Archaic and post Archaic rock art styles and traditions in the state's fifteen counties, author Ekkehart Malotki focuses on providing insights into what may have compelled Arizona's ancestral artists to produce the imagery and what functions it may have had in their daily lives. At the same time, he acknowledges the severe limitations of scientifically dating the paleoart, the subjective biases involved in stylistic classification, and the ultimate mystery of its meaning. Within the confines of this explanatory framework, drawing primarily on novel ideas derived from the field of evolutionary psychology and the concept of human universals, he argues that rock art, in a broadly defined context of art and ritual, had beneficial adaptive value in the human struggle for survival and thus can truly be perceived as art for life's sake.

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