*Nevada Rock Art: a marriage of arts and sciences*

Imagine drudging through Nevada’s hot desert all day or climbing along some of our state’s precarious ridges from daylight until dark, all for the chance to get “that one perfect shot.” Nevada Regents and Foundation Professor of Art Peter Goin has spent many of his days doing just that over the past seven years. Now his work has culminated in a new photographic book that not only showcases his renowned talent to capture the heritage and beauty of the West through his lens, but also illustrates how “the arts are not isolated, but can be used as an integral part of scientific research and scholarship,” he said.

*Nevada Rock Art*, published by Black Rock Institute Press in November, took Goin down isolated back roads and trails through Nevada’s vast and varied landscapes to photograph hundreds of ancient petroglyphs, artistic rock carvings by Nevada’s inhabitants—some from long ago and some from more recent times. The photographs were made at sites where our ancestral inhabitants lived, worked, played and worshipped.

Goin said there are approximately 22,000 such sites in the state, according to archeologists who will find both the artistry and the science of the book a treasure. “This is really a visual research project,” Goin said.

“The idea is to provoke additional scholarly focus,” he added. Goin hopes the book can play a part in determining the fate of these sites in the future, helping to save them from vandalism or careless destruction for the education and enjoyment of future generations.

“Most of the petroglyphs are incredible,” he said. “These people were truly artisans. Photographing their work was in some ways like traveling through prehistoric time.”

In order to accurately depict the beauty and intricacy of the sites, Goin not only used his photographic expertise, but also insisted the highest quality printing methods be used. To do so, he traveled to China where he spent a week overseeing the printing of the books on $22 million presses, around the clock. “It was intense, tiring work, but it was worth it,” he said. “We simply don’t have these types of presses available in this country.”

The end-result is 1,000 copies of the limited edition, 252-page hardbound book, slip-cased in 100-percent cotton cloth—appropriately “paprika-colored,” conjuring up images of Nevada’s rocky deserts. Besides the 123 color plates, the book also features essays by Goin, Nevada geography professor Paul Starrs, Mark Boatwright, and archeologist Angus Quinlan and his late wife, Alanhah Woody ’93 (anthropology) ’96M.A. (anthropology). Woody was co-founder of the Nevada Rock Art Foundation, its first executive director, and a strong advocate for the protection of the rock art of the West.

Each book is signed and numbered, retailing for $125. Proceeds from the book pay for its production and benefit the Black Rock Institute.
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